TORONTO

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In reply please quote:
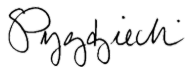**Ref.: 25-GG20.14**

(Sent by Email)

May 20, 2025

CITY AGENCIES AND CORPORATIONS:

Subject: **General Government Committee Item 20.14**
Establishing The City of Toronto Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence
Innovation within City Divisions, Agencies, and Boards (Ward All)

City Council on April 23 and 24, 2025, adopted Item GG20.14 as amended and, in so doing, has:

1. Directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Technology Officer to establish the annual Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge to recognize, celebrate, and inspire non-City individuals and organizations as well as City divisions, agencies and corporations that leverage data and AI to showcase research, projects, or solutions that address opportunities to foster civic engagement and public service delivery in Toronto.

2. Requested the boards of City Agencies and Corporations to participate in the Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge.

Yours truly,

[signature]

for City Clerk

S. Przezdziecki/mm

Attachment

Sent to: CreateTO
Exhibition Place
Heritage Toronto
TOLive
Toronto Atmospheric Fund
Toronto Investment Board
Toronto Parking Authority
Toronto Police Service
Toronto Public Health

Toronto Public Library
Toronto Transit Commission
Toronto Zoo
Sankofa Square
George Bell Arena
Larry Grossman Forest Hill Arena
Leaside Memorial Community Gardens Arena
McCormick Playground Arena
Moss Park Arena
North Toronto Memorial Arena
Ted Reeve Community Arena
William H. Bolton Arena
519 Church Street Community Centre
Applegrove Community Complex
Cecil Community Centre
Central Eglinton Community Centre
Community Centre 55
Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre
Ralph Thornton Community Centre
Scadding Court Community Centre
Swansea Town Hall Community Centre
Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre
Build Toronto Corporation
Casa Loma Corporation
Lakeshore Arena Corporation
Toronto Community Housing Corporation
Toronto Hydro Corporation
Toronto Port Lands Company
Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

c.   City Manager

City Council

General Government Committee - Meeting 20

GG20.14	ACTION	Amended		Ward: All

Establishing The City of Toronto Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence Innovation within City Divisions, Agencies, and Boards

City Council Decision

City Council on April 23 and 24, 2025, adopted the following:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Technology Officer to establish the annual Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge to recognize, celebrate, and inspire non-City individuals and organizations as well as City divisions, agencies and corporations that leverage data and AI to showcase research, projects, or solutions that address opportunities to foster civic engagement and public service delivery in Toronto.

2. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Technology Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, to set evaluation criteria, award categories, selection process for the judging panel, and the types of awards and recognition to be offered by the fourth quarter of 2025, issue the first call for submissions to the Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge by the first quarter of 2026, and select, recognize and celebrate recipients of Challenge awards by the second quarter of 2026.

3. City Council request the boards of City Agencies and Corporations to participate in the Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge.

4. City Council request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Technology Officer to report on the progress of implementing the Challenge at an appropriate point in the development of the Mayor's Data and Artificial Intelligence Innovation Challenge, as well as lessons learned from the 2026 Challenge and plans for the 2027 Challenge by first quarter of 2027.

Summary

This motion proposes the establishment of dedicated "Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence Innovation" to recognize and celebrate the innovative work of internal city divisions, boards and agencies developing and implementing Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence) solutions. While external organizations and government bodies currently acknowledge the City's progress in Artificial Intelligence, internal innovations often lack recognition from elected officials, such as the Mayor. These awards will bridge this gap, enhance the visibility of employee efforts, broaden public awareness of the City's Artificial Intelligence initiatives, and foster a stronger culture of innovation aligned with the City's Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework (DISF).

Research findings indicate a growing trend of governments embracing Artificial Intelligence's transformative potential and actively integrating it into public services. This is often recognized by external organizations through prestigious awards, as demonstrated by the Intelligent Transportation Society of Canada (ITS) award to York Region and the MeriTalk Artificial Intelligence Honors Awards. Furthermore, government bodies like the City of Toronto and the City of San Antonio have established internal "City Manager's Awards of Excellence" to acknowledge innovative projects within their departments.

However, a significant gap exists in the recognition of Artificial Intelligence innovations developed by our own city divisions and departments by elected officials, specifically the Mayor. While the Mayor's Office of Innovation in San Francisco provides an example of highlighting broader innovation efforts, dedicated recognition for Artificial Intelligence advancements originating within our internal teams is currently absent.

This lack of direct acknowledgment from elected officials can limit the visibility of these crucial projects, potentially hindering employee morale and public awareness of the City's commitment to leveraging Artificial Intelligence for improved services and operations.

Establishing "Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence Innovation" will address this gap and offer several key benefits:

- Enhanced Visibility: Mayor's Awards, due to their association with the highest elected office, will bring greater public attention to the innovative Artificial Intelligence initiatives being developed and implemented by city employees. This heightened visibility can foster pride within city departments and increase understanding among constituents.

- Broadened Recognition: These awards will extend recognition beyond external organizations and City Manager-level acknowledgments, directly involving elected officials in celebrating the achievements of internal teams. This can significantly boost morale and encourage further innovation.

- Encouraging a Culture of Innovation: By implementing both City Manager's and Mayor's Awards, the City can cultivate a more comprehensive and robust culture of innovation. This dual recognition system will incentivize departments to continuously explore and implement Artificial Intelligence-driven solutions, knowing their efforts can be acknowledged at various levels.

- Alignment with Existing Frameworks: The proposed awards directly align with the principles of the Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework (DISF), particularly emphasizing innovation and public benefit. Recognizing Artificial Intelligence projects that adhere to these principles will reinforce the City's strategic direction in leveraging technology for the betterment of the community. The success of past Artificial Intelligence initiatives within the City, such as the COVID-19 Chatbot Pilot, further underscores the value and potential of internal Artificial Intelligence development.

Establishing "Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence Innovation" represents a significant opportunity to formally recognize the valuable contributions of our city employees in leveraging Artificial Intelligence to improve public services and operations. By bridging the current recognition gap, these awards will foster a stronger culture of innovation, enhance public awareness of the City's Artificial Intelligence advancements, and align with our strategic goals for a technologically advanced and citizen-centric municipality. We urge the Committee to approve this motion and support the implementation of this important initiative.

Background Information (Committee)

(April 7, 2025) Letter from Councillor Paul Ainslie on Establishing The City of Toronto Mayor's Awards for Artificial Intelligence Innovation within City Divisions, Agencies, and Boards.
(https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/gg/bgrd/backgroundfile-254360.pdf)