

Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035) - Update on Implementation

Date: April 21, 2026

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In November 2024, Toronto City Council adopted Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035). Shortly following, in March 2025, City Council adopted the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs responding to significant changes in American economic policy relating to Canada. This report provides an update on the City's progress in implementing Sidewalks to Skylines in 2025, the Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs in 2025 and 2026 and the Red Tape Hotline for Businesses pilot project.

Sidewalks to Skylines and the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs are City-wide efforts, spanning work across multiple City Divisions. With the support of other City Divisions, the Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC) is coordinating the tracking of implementation of these two comprehensive economic development plans.

One year into the implementation of Sidewalks to Skylines, over 90 percent of the plan's original 73 actions are completed or in process. This report provides an overview of the work in 2025 toward achieving these actions and highlights key progress and successes. The report recommends Council adopt updates to the original 73 Sidewalks to Skylines actions and add four actions from the Tariff Action Plan not otherwise addressed in Sidewalks to Skylines and three actions focused on Inclusive Economic Development. This report also recommends City Council grant the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, delegated authority to make updates to actions and success indicators from time-to-time, where updates are consistent with the consideration of the Sidewalks to Skylines plan adopted by Council in 2024.

Attachment 1 provides a detailed status update on the first year of implementation for all original Sidewalks to Skylines and additionally lists the four net-new long-term actions of the Tariff Action Plan and three actions on inclusive economic development, for a total of 80.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, recommends that:

1. City Council adopt updates made to Sidewalks to Skylines Actions 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 32, 52, 60 and 70, the integration of Actions 74 to 77 from the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs, and the addition of Actions 78 to 80 focused on Inclusive Economic Development as part of Sidewalks to Skylines first five-year work plan as outlined in Attachment 1 to this report from the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to make amendments to Action items and success indicators in Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035) as deemed required by the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, where such amendments are consistent with the original Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035) adopted by City Council in November 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial impacts resulting from the adoption of recommendations contained within this report. If adopted by City Council, Economic Development and Culture will continue to implement the Sidewalk to Skylines actions that can be advanced within the Division's annual budget in 2026.

Through the 2025 budget process, EDC secured and administered new and enhanced funding to support Sidewalks to Skylines. No new and enhanced requests for Sidewalks to Skylines or the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs were included in the 2026 budget. For 2027 and future budget processes, EDC will continue to advise Council of resource requirements including staffing impacts, to advance recommended actions that are currently unfunded.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on November 12 and 13, 2025, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report back on the Red Tape Hotline

for businesses as part of the progress report on the Action Plan for Toronto's Economy in the second quarter of 2026, with a plan to make the program permanent within existing resources.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EC24.7>

At its meeting on July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to continue to monitor the evolving trade relationship with the United States and report back on the progress of the implementation of the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to United States Tariffs in the first quarter of 2026, as part of the Year 1 progress report of Sidewalks to Skyline: Action Plan for Toronto's Economy or before then, if and as necessary.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX25.6>

At its meeting on November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in partnership with relevant divisions, to implement the actions in Sidewalks to Skylines: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035, and report annually to the Economic and Community Development Committee on the progress of implementation, with the first annual report back by the first quarter of 2026.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EC16.2>

City Council also directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with relevant divisions, to identify success indicators or relevant tracking measures for actions identified in the 2025-2029 Five-Year Work Plan as outlined in Attachment 1 to the report (October 8, 2024) from the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in its first annual report back report to the Economic and Community Development Committee.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EC16.2>

COMMENTS

Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035) ('Sidewalks to Skylines') provides a roadmap to guide Toronto's economic development over the 10 years starting in 2025. The plan contains four priorities: Getting the Basics Right, Strong Main Streets, Quality Jobs and Global Competitiveness. Within these priorities there are 73 actions, including 29 leading actions.

Sidewalks to Skylines builds on and amplifies priorities of the City's current key multi-year strategies, including the Long-term Financial Plan, the Congestion Management Plan, Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, TransformTO, Net Zero Strategy, HousingTO Action Plan, the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the Visitor Economy Strategic Directions, the Reconciliation Action Plan, and others. Sidewalks to Skylines also aligns with the Toronto Official Plan, which supports Toronto's leadership role in building a more liveable, inclusive region, championing Toronto's competitive position as a business location which reflects the diversity and strength of the broader regional economy.

This report provides the status update on the first year of implementation of Sidewalks to Skylines, the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs (Tariff Action Plan), and the Red Tape Hotline. In each of the annual updates to come, revisions and/or additions to the actions in Sidewalks to Skylines will be identified. As outlined in Attachment 1, the plan now identifies 80 actions up from 73, with the inclusion of four net-new long-term actions of the Tariff Action Plan and three actions identified through work to develop an Inclusive Economic Development Framework for the City. Attachment 1 also identifies success indicators for all actions in Sidewalks to Skylines.

After one year of implementation, the actions have seen considerable progress. Of the 73 original actions in Sidewalks to Skylines, seven have been completed, 59 are currently in progress, and seven have not yet been started (including one recommended to be removed - action 70). This report highlights key achievements and outcomes to-date and a full list of status updates for all actions is provided in Attachment 1.

Toronto's Economy

Since Sidewalks to Skylines was adopted in November 2024, global trading relationships have been undergoing fundamental transformation, driven by rising US economic protectionism and geopolitical tensions.

In February 2026, the US Supreme Court ruled that one of the authorities used to apply global tariffs was not legal, introducing new uncertainty into the long-term prospects of US tariff policy and the question of whether refunds are owed to companies is currently before US courts. Negotiations on the Canada-United-States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), seeking a renewal for the tariff-free trade zone for many goods and services, are currently underway with the ultimate results uncertain. US trade representatives indicated that Canada, like other countries, must also accept “protective tariffs” as the cost of accessing the American market, noting the US Administration's desire to keep tariffs in place to reshore American industries. This highlights the risks and uncertainty leading up to the CUSMA negotiations. These and other factors contribute to the current environment of uncertainty for businesses and workers. Businesses face pressure from direct tariffs, impacts to the global supply chain and threats of additional tariffs and other policy treatment from the US, leading to overall reduced business and consumer confidence. There remains a strong need for continued engagement, monitoring, and action to support impacted businesses in Toronto.

As of April 8, 2026, the following tariffs are in effect for Canadian businesses:

- **10%** tariffs on all non-CUSMA eligible goods (effective February 24, 2026)
- **10%** tariff on energy products and potash
- **50%** tariff on steel and aluminum
- **25%** tariff on automobiles, light trucks and auto parts
- **50%** tariff on copper imports
- **35%** tariff on softwood lumber
- **25%** tariff on certain upholstered wooden furniture, kitchen cabinets and vanities

- Goods exported to the U.S. that are valued at or under \$800 and that would otherwise have qualified for the de minimis exemption will be subject to all applicable duties.¹

Toronto's economy is highly diversified and a significant contributor to Canada and Ontario's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), providing good jobs and economic opportunities. Over the course of 2025, rising geopolitical instability, shifting U.S. trade policies, and ongoing supply chain realignments introduced greater uncertainty into Toronto's economic growth. These pressures softened earlier optimism and underscored the importance of the City's long-term economic strategy -- particularly its focus on strengthening fundamentals and enhancing competitiveness, as outlined in Sidewalks to Skylines. Toronto's economic performance in 2025 was lower than forecast achieving 1.7 percent GDP growth from 2025 to 2026 versus the 2.2 percent forecast, reflecting the impact of emerging global challenges.²

Labour market conditions in Toronto strengthened through late 2025 and into early 2026, with broad employment gains across higher skill and knowledge-based industries as well as transportation and warehousing, while some consumer facing, community serving sectors, and trade exposed manufacturing industries saw declines in employment. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 8.0 percent in February 2026, down from 9.1 per cent in February 2025, supported by a 67.1 per cent labour force participation rate and continued employment growth of roughly 3.7 per cent in both full time and part time employment.³

Business activity and market conditions showed a mixed picture through 2025 and early 2026. Hiring intentions strengthened, with the Toronto Hiring Index rising 1.3 points year over year in January 2026.⁴ Meanwhile, the number of active businesses fell by 1,610 in December 2025 compared with the previous year despite fewer closures, mainly driven by fewer openings, indicating more cautious investment and a weaker business formation climate.⁵

Economic Outlook

As the Toronto CMA emerges from a year of moderated growth, the outlook for 2026 reflects a period of gradual stabilization rather than strong recovery. Real GDP growth is expected to be around 0.8 percent.⁶

The outlook for 2026 points to modest improvement, supported by ongoing strength in key service industries, resilient consumer demand, and early signs of stabilization in office market conditions. At the same time, uncertainty remains elevated as business

¹ <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/site/us-tariffs> (accessed on April 8, 2026, 12:25PM)

² EDC Research calculation, Moodys Analytics, Signal49 (fmr. Conference Board of Canada), Oxford Economics

³ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, EDC Calculations

⁴ Signal49

⁵ Statistics Canada, Active Businesses and Closures

⁶ EDC Research calculation, Moodys Analytics, Signal49, Oxford Economics

confidence stays weak, trade dependent sectors continue to face external pressures, and upcoming CUSMA negotiations introduce both opportunities to reinforce North American trade and renewed uncertainty for exporters and investors.

To strengthen how the City assesses evolving economic conditions, new inclusive economic development indicators were identified to be added to the [Toronto Economic Dashboard](#) in alignment with the City of Toronto Inclusive Economic Development Framework. The dashboard currently tracks labour-market dynamics, financial and business activity, and real estate conditions, and expanding it with additional measures will support a clearer understanding of economic performance and how residents, entrepreneurs and small businesses are able to participate in, and benefit from, growth.

2025 Sidewalks to Skylines Implementation Updates for Year One of the Ten Year Plan

Since the initial adoption of Sidewalks to Skylines in November 2024, City staff have updated actions to respond to Council direction through the Tariff Action Plan and the Inclusive Economic Development Framework, both of which have complemented the key objectives of Sidewalks to Skylines while adjusting for changing circumstances and bringing a sharper focus on economic inclusion.

Year One Key Achievements

Of the 73 Sidewalks to Skylines actions, 59 are underway, seven are complete, and seven are yet to begin. Attachment 1 provides details on the status of each action with key updates, and includes new actions related to the Tariff Action Plan and Inclusive Economic Development.

In 2025 and early 2026, the City took significant action within its own areas of responsibility to support Toronto's economy, advancing Sidewalk to Skylines and supporting businesses through uncertain economic conditions. Highlights include:

Supported manufacturing investment by launching the enhanced Economic Development and Growth in Employment (EDGE) Incentive Program to give 100% of incremental taxes back to companies that apply to invest by the end of 2027.

- In December 2025, Council approved a time limited enhancement to the Economic Development and Growth in Employment (EDGE) Incentive Program, bringing the grant up to 100 percent of the incremental tax growth for eligible projects submitted before the end of 2027 ([PH26.1](#)).
- Since implementation, staff have recommended approval of two applications supporting Toronto-based companies, including (1) a new 12,323 square foot industrial manufacturing facility and ancillary office space for a company which will produce timber modular housing components and create approximately 100 new jobs and (2) an expansion of a locally-owned and operated manufacturer who independently bottles consumer beverages totaling 45,000 square feet and creating 20 new jobs.

Supported businesses through the launch of the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to United States Tariffs.

- Created in March 2025, the Tariff Action Plan ([2025.EX21.2](#)) included 10 initial actions the City took to protect Toronto workers, businesses and residents in response to US tariffs. The July 2025 update added six long-term economic objectives to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the changing global economic conditions.
- All 10 immediate actions have been implemented and those which have ongoing work aligned to existing actions within this plan have been incorporated into updates on the relevant Sidewalks to Skylines actions as outlined in Attachment 1.
- Starting in 2025, the City worked with Build Canada Homes to explore funding and partnership opportunities to expedite construction of rapid and modular homes on City-owned land. This will build on the City's experience using innovative construction technologies to rapidly build more homes, including through the Modular Housing Initiative and Rapid Housing Initiative.

Supported large manufacturers and industrial businesses by making water rates more affordable for large water users through an increased benefit from 30 to 35 percent phased-in over 3 years.

- In December 2025, City Council adopted a phased-in implementation to increase the benefit received by large industrial water users to 35 percent from 30 percent, phased in over three years beginning in 2026 for the [Industrial Water Rate Program](#). This will provide meaningful benefit for businesses which may be facing impacts of tariffs and other pressures due to the reordering of global trade relations.
- A business with the average consumption in the program of 150,000 cubic metres will realize a savings of over \$12,000 in 2026, with additional savings in the phase-in years to follow.

Supported small businesses by increasing the benefit for the Small Business Property Tax Subclass.

- In February 2026, City Council approved an increase to the Small Business Property Tax Subclass, raising the municipal tax reduction for eligible small business properties from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, which is being matched by the provincial government for the education portion. This delivers meaningful, ongoing savings to approximately 28,000 properties, representing 63 per cent of all commercial properties in Toronto.
- For a small business property with an average current value assessment of approximately \$672,000, the total tax savings in 2026 would be over \$700. This includes approximately \$400 in savings from the municipal portion and \$300 from the education portion.

Supported local businesses through the Love Local Campaign.

- The Love Local neighbourhood-based promotion campaign used strong social media amplification to encourage people to shop local. The campaign featured large marquee signs deployed on key commercial main streets in collaboration with local BIAs, over 26,000 decals displayed at small businesses featuring local products and services, and booths at small business and community events. The Love Local marketing campaign, which features both main street businesses and

the City's manufacturing sector, encourage people to shop local and garnered over 335,000 impressions. The program will continue throughout 2026.

Established the Red Tape Hotline Program.

- The City established the Red Tape Hotline (RTH) pilot program in 2025 to gather reports from Toronto businesses and entrepreneurs on unnecessary or burdensome municipal rules, regulations, and permitting requirements. At Council's direction the Red Tape Hotline has been made ongoing within existing resources. The submission form remains open online.
- The information gained through the Red Tape Hotline has not only allowed the City to resolve issues that impact small business but also gain a clearer understanding of what process barriers most challenge small business in Toronto.
- To date, the survey has received 183 submissions from businesses within Toronto, with roughly 90% of submissions coming from small businesses. The majority of submissions were found to be concerns that are not red tape. These were related to concerns about service levels, expressed individual frustration, or raised concerns about provincial or municipal policy decisions.
- Red tape concerns focused on business licensing, residential construction permit timelines, public space permitting, grant programs, solid waste services and having to engage with multiple contacts across City divisions for business concerns.
- As directed by Council, the Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division has reviewed all submissions specific to business licensing regulations. MLS is actioning the feedback received through implementation of the Business Licence and Permit Applications Action Plan, a four-year roadmap to modernize business licensing and reduce regulatory burden in Chapter 545, Licensing (the Licensing Bylaw). MLS provided an update on the Action Plan as part of [EC27.1](#) in April 2026 and the report recommendations will be considered by Council. The report outlined recent business friendly customer service enhancements, including simplifying business licence applications, launching a Business Licensing Information Phone Line, and upgrading the licence renewal portal.
- Interdivisional staff have been engaging with businesses who have requested a response and EDC staff are in the process of ensuring that each of these businesses receives a response to their Red Tape Hotline submission. Staff continue to work through the submissions to identify common issues, in collaboration with an interdivisional working group.
- As the RTH moves from pilot to ongoing service, enquiries will be monitored and triaged by the Small Business Office, liaising with relevant interdivisional partners who deliver the service to ensure follow-up with businesses. This service will form part of the broader suite of supports offered by the Small Business Office to support Toronto's tens of thousands of small businesses.
- The Red Tape Hotline pilot project did not identify any issues that could be addressed or resolved through the temporary additional [delegated authority granted to the City Manager](#), which included the ability to sub-delegate to Deputy City Managers. As a result, there were no instances where this delegated authority was used to provide interim relief to complainants.

Developed the Inclusive Economic Development Framework to embed inclusivity across existing and new City initiatives.

- A clear focus of Sidewalks to Skylines is to shape a Toronto economy that benefits all residents by advancing Inclusive Economic Development (IED).
- The IED Framework was presented to Economic and Community Development Committee on April 9, 2026 and will be considered at Council.
- The IED Framework aims to ensure improved outcomes and sustainable prosperity for residents and communities through alignment, coordination, and accountability across existing and new City initiatives.
- The IED Framework report included a chart with Sidewalks to Skylines actions that are intended to support inclusive employment and inclusive entrepreneurship - the two key policy/program pillars of the framework.
- Progress achieved on these IED-related actions is embedded in the Additional Milestones section below. In future Sidewalks to Skylines updates, these actions will be grouped as a sub-set to enable evaluation and highlight progress towards inclusive employment and entrepreneurship objectives.
- Future Sidewalks to Skylines updates will also include a summary overview of anticipated reports on initiatives aligned with the IED Framework and led by different divisions.

Launched TradeTO to support Toronto businesses to diversify export markets.

- On June 11, the City launched Toronto's Trade Diversification Initiative, TradeTO - a comprehensive engagement program designed to equip Toronto businesses with the knowledge, connections, and tools needed to succeed in global markets beyond the US.
- In 2025, over 13 activations supported Toronto businesses to expand globally, including a trade mission to Dublin and London, a series of webinars to support trade diversification, dedicated sessions on supporting businesses to take advantage of Canada's free trade agreements through a Canada-UK export roadshow, a session on uncovering the Canada Europe Trade Agreement opportunity, and a session promoting export and trade in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. With over 1,300 businesses participating in diversification webinars, tens of businesses participating in trade missions, 26 businesses receiving trade accelerator grants, and almost 6,500 businesses participating in the Small Business Forum focused on trade diversification, TradeTO supported over 7,500 businesses in 2025.

Completed Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship capital project.

- In alignment with Actions 5 and 64 of Sidewalks to Skylines, construction of the new Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is substantially complete. Staff are working with a prospective operator to target an early Q4 2026 launch.

Made significant progress on an Indigenous Procurement Policy.

- In alignment with the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, the City is co-developing a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Procurement Policy with Indigenous procurement specialists, including working to fully leverage existing tools and create new mechanisms that increase Indigenous procurement. To date, the City has held 10 Advisory Circle meetings to co-develop this policy. The Purchasing and Materials

Management Division expects to bring forward the policy to City Council in July 2026 for consideration.

- In alignment with Action 9 of Sidewalks to Skylines, the City took steps to increase City business with Indigenous suppliers, including hosting two Indigenous Supplier Networking Events and completing national engagement sessions which included a session focused on Indigenous Youth.

Additional Milestones:

Getting the Basics Right (Actions 1-10, 30-50)

Sidewalks to Skylines identifies a priority to "get the basics right" with 31 actions to achieve this. The overarching goal is for Toronto to have the best quality of life and high performing municipal services essential to providing a competitive environment to attract and retain businesses and new residents and provide economic opportunities for a diverse population by 2035.

4 Actions Completed	26 Actions In progress	1 Action Not Started
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Progress highlights include:

- Continuing negotiations with the federal and provincial governments for a long-term intergovernmental funding deal for Toronto.
- Taking action to address congestion through the 2025 Congestion Management Plan ([2025.IE20.3](#)), with a 2026 update presented at the April 2026 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting ([2026.IE28.1](#)) which will be considered at Council.
- Advancing climate action through the TransformTO Action Plan (2026-2030) ([2025.IE26.3](#)) adopted by Council in November 2025.
- Getting more affordable housing built faster through the HousingTO Action Plan ([2025.PH25.4](#)) adopted by Council in November 2025.
- Building a safer, healthier and more resilient Toronto through the SafeTO Community Safety and Well-Being Plan ([2025.EX23.5](#)), with 2025 priorities approved by Council in April 2025.

Strong Main Streets (Actions 11-15, 51-57)

Sidewalks to Skylines identifies Strong Main Streets as a priority with 12 actions and an overall goal for Toronto’s unique main streets across the entire city to be animated and beautiful, acting as commercial, cultural, and civic anchors for their neighbourhoods by 2035.

1 Action Completed	11 Actions in progress	0 Actions Not Started
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Progress highlights include:

- The creation of the Small Business Solutions Office, which will be a first stop for small businesses to provide tailored support for business development, navigating City processes, funding, webinars, training and networking. The office is under

development and currently in the consultation stage with an intention to officially open in October 2026 during Small Business Week.

- Work to advance the Business Improvement Area (BIA) Growth Strategy is underway. In 2025, two new BIAs were launched. In 2026, new staff positions in the BIA Office have been hired to support the rapid growth of BIAs and currently there are four expansions, and five additional BIAs currently in development.
- With planning that began in 2025 and continuing through 2026, the BIA Office will be growing to support the next phase and better equip staff to balance the needs of BIAs, local businesses, and the City. This will include a co-ordinated city-wide approach, strengthening transparency and decision-making, and engagement with Councillors and Council.
- The City is funding the creation of a dashboard to provide critical business intelligence to BIAs to monitor and report on the vitality of Toronto's streets with completion of the tool anticipated for Q2 2026.
- The expansion of neighbourhood retail approved zoning amendments that would enable small-scale retail, service and office uses to be within reach of communities across Toronto, was adopted by Council in November 2025 ([2025.PH25.3](#))

Global Competitiveness (Actions 20-29, 61-73)

The Action Plan identifies Global Competitiveness as a priority with 23 actions and the goal for Toronto to rank Top 10 in North America in its specialized and globally competitive sectors by 2035.

2 Actions Completed	16 Actions in progress	5 Action Not Started
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Progress highlights include:

- The Office of Technology and Innovative Sectors (OTIS), within the Economic Development and Culture Division, will launch in Q2 2026 and focus on enabling sector development, supporting the innovation ecosystem and advancing initiatives that attract investment, talent, and global recognition for the City of Toronto.
- The City hosted an Employment Lands and Industry Leaders Forum in February 2026. This forum brought together a broad coalition of stakeholders to shape a shared narrative around the importance of employment lands and initiate the development of a Strategy for Advancing the Productivity and Protection of Good Manufacturing and Industrial Jobs in the City of Toronto.
- The City is currently completing a broad economic competitiveness study, working with Signal49 Research (formerly known as the Conference Board of Canada), to be completed in Q2 2026. The study will identify nine key sectors, the factors affecting their global competitiveness, and their relative performance against peer cities. The findings will inform future sector-specific municipal economic development strategies to help deliver on the goal of having Toronto rank top 10 in North America in specialized and globally competitive sectors.
- To unite interests in the future of downtown Toronto, the City supported the formation of an alliance of downtown BIAs in 2025 by the six leading BIAs in Toronto's downtown core: Bloor-Yorkville, Old Town Toronto, Financial District,

Downtown Yonge, Downtown West, Waterfront. The six BIAs represent over 10,000 businesses, \$50 billion in commercial real estate, and 400,000 employees. In September 2026, the City will co-host with the Downtown BIA Alliance a major international conference on main streets, small business and local economic development with the International Downtowns Association annual conference in Toronto.

Quality Jobs (Actions 16-19, 58-60)

The Action Plan identifies Quality Jobs as a priority with seven actions and goal for Toronto to be an inclusive economy that adds quality jobs and leverages the diverse talent, networks, and expertise of all the people who live here by 2035.

0 Actions Completed	6 Actions in progress	1 Action Not Started
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Progress highlights include:

- The Youth Employment Table launched in 2025 which brought together City divisions, agencies, employers, and community partners to better align youth employment pathways, reduce employer barriers, and support models that lead to paid work and job conversion. In 2026, the Table will focus on expanding employer participation and co-developing a Youth Employment Charter that outlines shared commitments and goals across partners to create more youth employment opportunities across the City.
- The City has formalized AI governance to support the responsible use of AI. The Technology Services Division developed the first iteration of an Algorithmic Impact Assessment to ensure responsible use of AI technologies in public service. In Q3 2026, the City will launch an AI registry to inform the public about how artificial intelligence and data are used to improve City services and outcomes.
- Toronto’s Artificial Intelligence Economic Development Strategy, launching in 2026, articulates a clear vision to ensure Toronto remains globally competitive and internationally recognized as a leading centre of excellence in Artificial Intelligence. The strategy is organized around four priority pillars designed to strengthen Toronto’s AI ecosystem and drive economic growth:
 - 1) Recruiting and retaining world-leading AI talent to sustain innovation and long-term competitiveness;
 - 2) Accelerating AI adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises, enabling productivity, growth, and commercialization;
 - 3) Advancing Toronto’s international brand as a premier destination for AI investment, research, and innovation; and,
 - 4) Leveraging City procurement to both strengthen local AI businesses and enhance the delivery of City services.
- The Artificial Intelligence Economic Development Strategy has been informed by broad consultation led by Economic Development and Culture, and developed in partnership with The Dais, a public policy and leadership think tank at Toronto Metropolitan University. To support implementation and ongoing engagement, an Industry Advisory Board—comprised of leaders from business, academia, and the public sector—will be established in Q3 2026. The Board will provide strategic

guidance and ensure diverse perspectives, including representation from the Toronto Region Board of Trade, Toronto Global, the Vector Institute, and leaders from corporate Canada's AI sector.

- The Toronto Public Library (TPL) launched an AI Upskilling initiative in 2025. The programs were well attended and received positive feedback: 57 learning circles reached over 1,000 learners and a 95 percent customer satisfaction; over 400 people attended the Innovator in Residence (AI and Digital Creativity) program; nearly 300 people attended the 3rd annual Digital Expo: "Bridging the AI Divide"; over 700 people participated in the inaugural AI Summit on the future of the economy; and over 400 scholarships were distributed to members of Indigenous and equity-deserving communities – to complete the Google AI Essentials Certificate course on their own. The City continues to work in collaboration with partners, agencies and corporations to support training and upskilling.
- A report titled "The Electrification Advantage" was brought to the April 7, 2026 Infrastructure and Environment Committee for consideration, based on additional direction given by Council in December 2025. The report responds to direction from City Council, as part of the Tariff Action Plan, to increase local renewable energy generation and storage. City staff have worked together with Toronto Hydro and The Atmospheric Fund to develop the report, considering input submitted by stakeholders, which will highlight ongoing and additional work over the coming year. The report will be considered at Council.
- City staff are consulting with key stakeholders, including CreateTO, Waterfront Secretariat and the Toronto Port Authority, as well as local marine and industry uses, to develop a coordinated strategic approach to strengthen the economic functions of the Port. Beyond establishing regular communication and collaboration opportunities, the first step may include an independent study of industry needs and long-term economic opportunities for marine uses, in conjunction with City partners.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to advance the work of Sidewalks to Skylines in 2026 and beyond. In 2027, staff will report back to City Council with the next annual update on activities, outcomes and success indicators as the plan continues to be implemented.

In 2030, informed by the success of and lessons learned from the first five years, a new five-year work plan responsive to the economic context of the time will be presented for consideration by City Council. Through the implementation of Sidewalks to Skylines, the City will help advance liveability, inclusion, and shared prosperity beyond the traditional measure of economic growth in partnership with other organizations and for all communities across Toronto.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Sidewalks to Skylines Year One Implementation Status