City of Seattle 2025-2026 AI Plan

This plan guides the responsible and equitable integration of artificial intelligence into municipal operations, programs, and services. It ensures technological progress serves the community while improving the responsiveness and efficiency of City services.

ADDRESSING CIVIC CHALLENGES RESPONSIBLY WITH AI, AT SCALE, AND TO CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SEATTLE COMMUNITY

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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Harnessing Responsible Innovation to Meet Civic Priorities

The City of Seattle's 2025–2026 AI Plan lays a thoughtful, robust foundation for integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into public services, municipal operations, and civic engagement. The City does this firmly rooted in the principles of equity, transparency, privacy, and public trust. As AI redefines industries and work globally, Seattle's approach centers on ensuring that it serves people and advances responsiveness, opportunity, and resilience for the Seattle community.

Building on its 2024–2025 Learning for Impact Phase, Seattle is now moving AI toward targeted implementation aligned with the civic priorities defined by the Mayor, City Council, and departmental leadership. AI will be harnessed to accelerate permitting and housing, improve public safety, enhance the responsiveness of services for Seattle residents, and enable more accessible and plain-language interactions to remove barriers. Pilots with technologies are evaluated through a "Proof of Value" framework that prioritizes City impact, cost, and operational experience over vendor hype and anecdote.

FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

The City's AI plan rests upon strategic pillars, providing a foundation for successful long-term use for people and City operations.

DATA EXCELLENCE

- Establishing enterprise-wide data governance and data management for quality, accessibility, and security
- Integrating AI with the "One Seattle Data Strategy" set forth by the Mayor's Office and lead departments, to ensure insights are equitable, accurate, and actionable
- Using AI to assess and improve data quality, classification, and metadata generation

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLIANCE

- Building scalable cloud-hosted AI environments
- Strengthening cybersecurity through NIST Risk Management Framework and MITRE ATLAS
- Updating legal and privacy protocols for AI-related services and public records

WORKFORCE UPSKILLING

- Launching a comprehensive Citywide AI training program with tiers focused on Fundamentals, Approaches, and Solutions
- Reskilling staff to navigate ethical AI use and prepare for shifts in roles and responsibilities
- Establishing continuous education, cultural change management, and collaboration with unions to support workforce transitions

SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

- Collaborating with academia (e.g., University of Washington), nonprofits, and industry to pilot solutions that reflect shared values
- Engaging the public through educational campaigns, resident-focused tools, and community feedback mechanisms
- Aligning with other governments to monitor policy impacts and advocate for responsible technology legislation

EXECUTION ROADMAP

Seattle IT will scale from pilot testing toward Citywide use of its first main AI options between 2025 and 2026, navigating the volatility of the AI marketplace with strategic discipline. Governance structures like the Mayor's IT Subcabinet and centralized review will steer investments, ensuring alignment with community needs and ethical standards. Performance indicators and ROI analyses, including bias audits, user satisfaction, and supportability, will determine success.

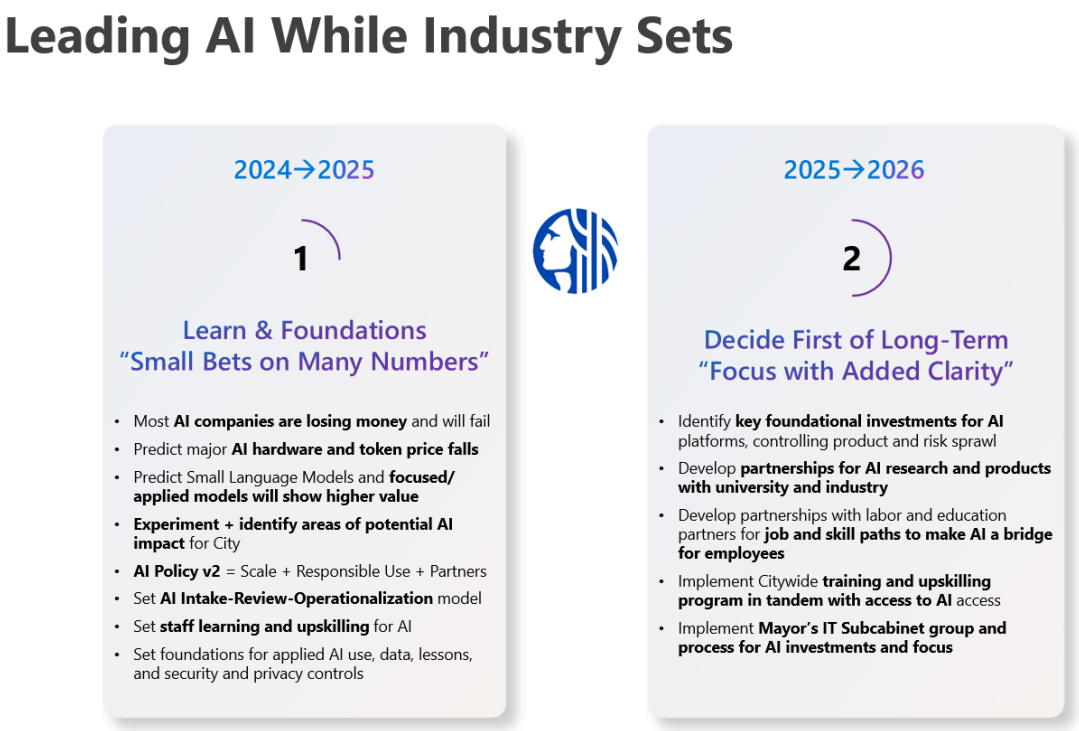
VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Seattle envisions AI not as a cost center or a replacement for workers, but as a catalyst for reimagining public service: amplifying staff capacity, enhancing digital accessibility, and advancing responsive municipal services. Innovation will be co-created with employees, residents, and partners, and governed through transparency and continuous feedback. Ultimately, Seattle aims to reflect the brilliance of its people by responsibly shaping the future of civic technology.

BACKGROUND

The acceleration of AI use shifts both community and staff expectations. Building on the City's 2025-2027 IT Strategic Plan's strategic pillars, this City of Seattle 2025-2026 AI Plan adds focus to its AI efforts. Just as the industry is clarifying legal and intellectual property grounding, technical direction, fiscal and power feasibility, and other aspects of the AI industrial wave, communities are better able to shift from practical pilots and learning to longer-term direction. Equally important is how AI will change the work patterns and jobs in communities like Seattle— impacts that can be clarified through technology use but must be addressed through policy direction with local leaders.

Technology's role is to connect people, provide information flow, and solve problems at scale. In that role, technology serves as a multiplier for effective work processes and people. With AI solutions, we add the capability of heightened and independent intelligence but insist on appropriate governance**. This plan builds around the precepts that (1) community and staff trust are core to moving quickly on the community's most complex challenges and (2) all technologies added for use in the City's portfolio must be well-managed fiscally, operationally, and from security and privacy maturity levels.** Shortsighted decisions will unequivocally damage the City's ability to achieve its goals with partners.



This 2025–2026 AI Plan shifts the City from its 2024-2025 learning phase to focused 2025-2026 efforts by training organizational energies on priorities set by the Mayor's Office, as well as City Council in the City Budget. Priorities include Improving Public Safety, Accelerating Permitting and Housing Production,

Advancing Customer Trust and Resident Responsiveness, and Accessibility and Plain Language Interaction for the Community. With these priorities in focus, overcoming critical civic challenges with industry, academia, and non-profit partners is a rare opportunity at a specific time in AI's development. The City is looking to Seattle IT to shepherd priorities and commitments. We will use chartering, prioritization, product-project management, and Mayor's IT Subcabinet coordination processes to execute AI efforts so that they maximize the City's resources, capabilities, and organizational results.

The City's ability to leverage AI effectively will be transformative to service delivery, operational efficiencies, and City outcomes. We must move swiftly to implement measures that temper real risks of bias, misuse, job shifts, and inadvertent harm. The City is committed to implementing AI in a manner that is ethical, transparent, and equitable. Our aspiration is to be as innovative as the community we serve, and to guide it well in the journey towards AI adoption. The Seattle IT Mission speaks well to our AI work:

Putting powerful information and tools in the hands of people to unleash brilliance in service to our community.

PRACTICAL STEPS

In the application, the City's 2025–2026 AI Plan provides a focused roadmap for transitioning from early AI exploration into strategically aligned, impactful implementation that directly advances the City's top civic priorities as of mid-2025: public safety, housing and permitting acceleration, customer trust, and accessibility. AI will not be treated as a passing trend or vendor experiment. Seattle *will* use AI as a disciplined lever to improve outcomes where urgency and community needs are most significant.

To do so, Seattle IT will work with City departments to harness AI where it is tightly aligned with priorities set by the Mayor, City Council, and department heads that make a compelling case. The chartering and governance processes will vet and guide every AI investment, ensuring that resources are directed toward projects that are impactful, scalable, and responsible. Early pilots like those with Microsoft, C3.ai, Gooey.ai, OpenAI, Kopius, the University of Washington, and others inform the City's approach to operationalizing AI responsibly and sustainably. The City's AI Proof of Value framework ensures pilots are judged on clear objectives, business value, responsible use, and long-term supportability, not hype-fueled adoption we hear from sales staff.

Even more critical is how the City invests in its people. Seattle is laying the foundation for a workforce that is not only AI-aware but also AI-capable. A three-tiered Citywide AI skilling program covers fundamentals, approaches, and solution creation with technical platforms. This ensures that elected leaders, managers, frontline staff, and technologists apply AI appropriately, navigate vendor offerings wisely, and maintain public trust. Commitment to workforce development must be matched by proactive engagement with labor partners and ongoing review of our changing work patterns. Recognizing that AI will shift how work is done, the City is prioritizing communication, joint planning, and co-design of workforce transitions. There absolutely will be tensions in these shifts. Still, our message is clear: AI is a tool to augment staff and service levels, not replace people. Efforts to retrain and reposition employees for future-ready roles get us to the service level goals Seattle aspires to.

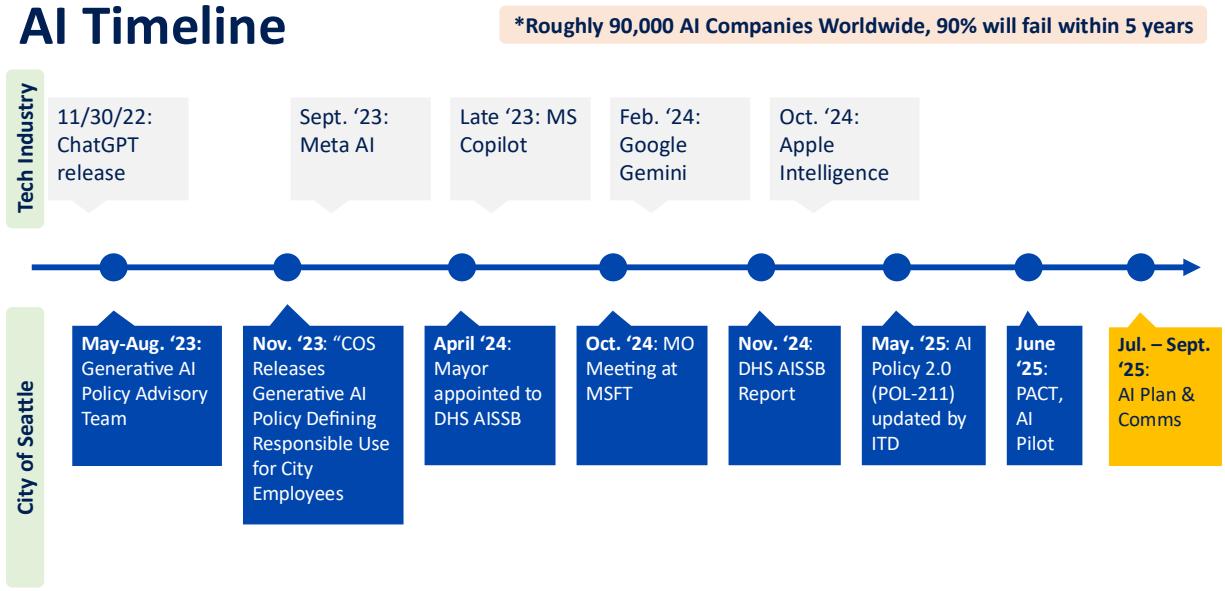
Seattle's AI work is embedded in its broader data and digital strategy, ensuring AI is fueled by governed, high-quality data and built on infrastructure that meets performance, privacy, and security standards. The City's

One Seattle Data Strategy is managed by Seattle IT and the Office of Innovation and Performance for this outcome. Rather than siloed deployments, AI efforts are supported by a unified Citywide governance structure that includes labor, legal, technical, and departmental voices, all aligned to Seattle's responsible AI principles: transparency, bias mitigation, explainability, and resiliency.

By moving deliberately, investing wisely, and centering employees and residents in the process, Seattle is positioning AI not as a cost center or compliance challenge, but as a multiplier for trust, service improvement, and long-term community resilience. Through this plan, Seattle shows that innovation done right means choosing people first, choosing focus over fragmentation, and choosing public benefit over vendor hype.

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY CONTEXT

Artificial intelligence is the defining technology of our moment and is reshaping how institutions, companies, and universities make decisions and structure their people and resources to serve their purposes. Like cloud computing before it, AI brings speed, scale, and new ways to collaborate. Yet, its volatility is starkly apparent, with costs and vendor viability dropping unpredictably since the user explosion of ChatGPT.



On this point, the global AI market ballooned up to an estimated $340 billion in 2024 and is projected to hit $2 trillion by the end of the decade. Thousands of startups are clamoring for a position, even as many face bleak odds of survival. Almost all will be acquired or fail within two years. Most are not profitable as of 2025. Amid the churn, local governments must be wise and not leap into foolhardy bets, questioning what it means to make enduring choices on ground that keeps shifting. Seattle must decide based on what delivers results, on what we learn of the impacts on security and privacy, on what we can shape into economic and jobs policy, and on what we can deploy and support at scale.

CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

This is the challenge and the opportunity for a City like Seattle. In a moment of flux, strategy and tactics matter. Once we begin to make decisions for scale or duration, the City cannot afford to treat AI as a loose

collection of pilots or departmental curiosities. Nor can we sit idle, waiting for the market dust to settle, while critical civic challenges or harms deepen.

And so, Seattle IT designed and deliberated an approach that channels this extraordinary technological energy directly into the places our community most needs. Based on the voices of the Mayor, City Council, and City departments in building a program, we shape our AI future through three clear stages:

- **Shared Intake Reviews**, so we gather ideas rooted in real needs and approve the small set resourced to go forward, together.
- **Responsible Use Reviews**, so we weigh privacy, security, community engagement, and equity before proceeding; and
- **Operationalization**, to decide whether these tools truly deliver on their promise and can scale sustainably.

This structure is more than a process; it is how we ensure limited resources flow toward work that makes maximum difference, stays true to City values and priorities, protects sensitive information and processes, and builds a shared body of learning we all draw from.

Seattle's intentions and aspirations to use AI are a set of choices. Seattle chooses not to treat AI as a black box handed to the community by vendors, driven by hype cycles. Seattle chooses to use AI as a strategic lever for building the kind of community representing its values—where innovation answers to community, experiments are measured by impact, and each step we take with new tools is a step toward a more abundant, resilient, and just City.

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE CITY'S DIRECTION

Aligning both City and IT strategies with AI in support of City priorities is essential to ensuring cohesive, future-ready governance. By embedding AI considerations into both operational planning and digital infrastructure planning, the City of Seattle will drive more thoughtful decision-making, improve service delivery, and foster innovation across all departments. This alignment enables cross-functional efforts, reduces redundancy, and ensures that AI investments are tied to priority City values such as equity, transparency, and resilience. Ultimately, this approach transforms AI from a stand-alone experiment to a strategic lever for modernizing municipal functions and achieving long-term policy outcomes.

Toward this end, IT is implementing a process for identifying appropriate AI solutions essential for aligning technology initiatives with City priorities to deliver meaningful programmatic outcomes. A targeted, use-case-driven approach will be designed to allow departments to identify where AI can add the most value – whether its enhancing public safety, improving housing and homelessness challenges, addressing resident mental and physical health, or supporting initiatives for a thriving downtown. This will focus critical

investments to support AI investment that map to priorities:

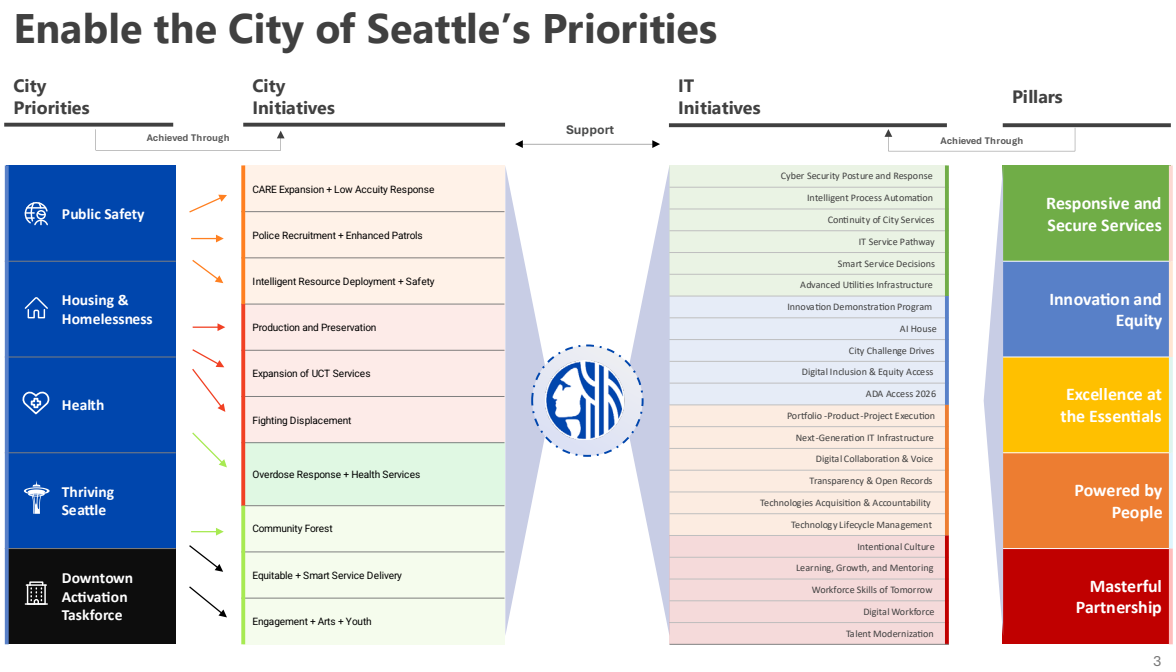


Figure 1: Crosswalk of City Priorities, IT Strategic Pillars, and Joining Initiatives

SOLVE PROBLEMS AT SCALE AND SPEED

AI and data science are revolutionizing how governments solve complex challenges by harnessing the rapid, scalable problem-solving capabilities of massive data sets and powerful computational algorithms to uncover patterns, inform decision-making, and automate tasks. Advances in parallel computing, graph algorithms and large-scale model training allow organizations to process billions of data points efficiently, delivering insights and solutions in near real-time. This shift in capabilities empowers industry, governments, and researchers to find solutions faster and with greater precision than previously possible. [1]

REINVENT OUR PROCESSES AND ORGANIZATION

With generative AI and other automation tools, the City of Seattle can streamline business operations, eliminate inefficiencies, and reimagine legacy systems with adaptive and data-driven solutions. AI and machine learning tools offer new ways of performing work, along with the potential to create a more responsive environment to meet important civic challenges with tools and structurally.

UNIFIED DATA APPROACH

Our AI Plan is in alignment with the three-year IT Strategic Plan and the City of Seattle's One Seattle Data Strategy. This three-year vision and action plan (2023-2026) seeks to advance our use of data, scale data excellence across the City, and achieve better and more equitable outcomes for residents. This strategy largely outlines an internally facing effort, but once implemented, it will lead to measurable community

[1] *Modeling relationships to solve complex problems efficiently*, MIT News, Adam Zewe, Oct 4, 2024.
Advanced AI_Based Techniques Scale-up Solving Complex Combinational Optimization Problems, UC San Diego Today, Ioana Patringenaru, June 10, 2024.

impacts and government efficiencies. Good ideas and successful pilot projects will be implemented at scale, and the use of data will lead to more opportunities for empowerment, improvement, and reflection.

The benefit of a unified strategy is to enhance the appropriate use of AI solutions through data-informed decision-making, balancing utility and risk of data access and analysis, working collaboratively across the enterprise instead of in silos, addressing best practices for moving to a more data-driven environment, and addressing complex challenges with technologies to support innovation. Seattle IT's Data Governance Plan follows later in this document.

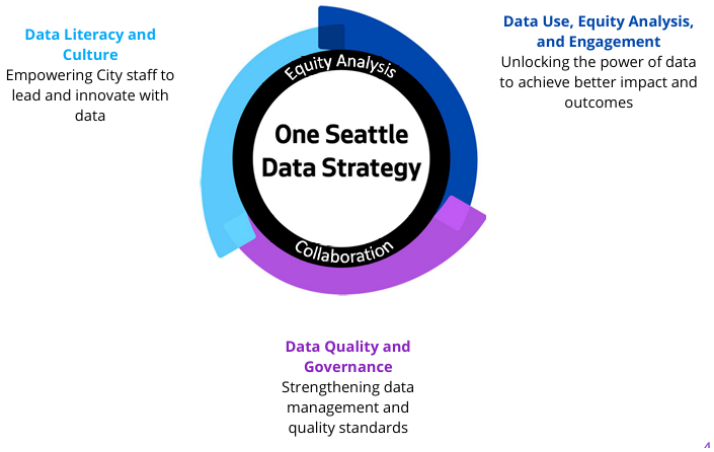


Figure 2: City of Seattle One Seattle Data Strategy

INNOVATION AS A CORE COMPETENCY

Creating a technology environment where innovation is faster and reinvention becomes a core competency will position the City to continue to drive toward operational excellence. Embedding Responsible AI into our strategic direction will provide the potential to accelerate optimized decision-making, personalize resident interactions with City processes, and drive overall service improvement. Investing in technologies such as AI will assist us in building agile systems that adapt to emerging technologies, ensuring relevance and resilience in a complex and evolving digital landscape.

SUPPORTING THE IT STRATEGIC PLAN DIRECTION

The City of Seattle 2025-2027 IT Strategic Plan anticipated the impacts of AI across the City organization. Every strategic pillar either benefits from or allows for the technology in its connected work plans.

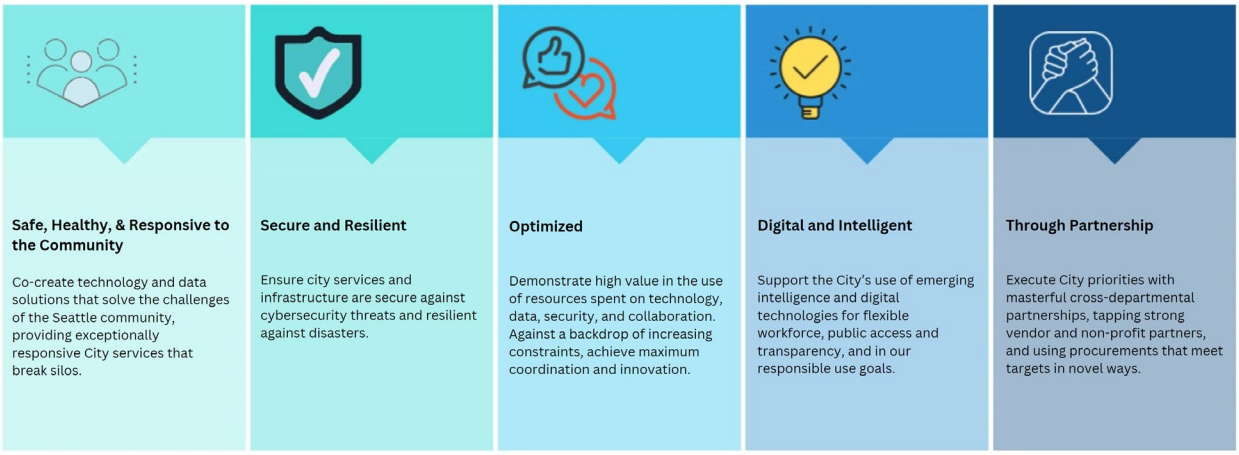


Figure 3: IT Strategic Plan Pillars

Seattle IT must support all City departments by driving secure and resilient solutions that help deliver the safe, healthy, and responsive services that the community desperately requires, even as fiscal pressures intensify. AI holds significant promise for optimizing resources to those ends, enabling proactive, data-informed decisions, multiplying staff impact, and bolstering critical infrastructure security through advanced safeguards. By improving transparency, public access, and adaptability, AI advances a more digital and responsive government, all underpinned by Seattle IT's commitment to strong cross-departmental and community partnerships that ensure AI is deployed responsibly, aligned with City priorities, and in service of public trust.

At the same time, the City must ensure human oversight remains integral—where people guide, review, and ultimately own AI-driven outcomes. In this way, AI can enhance efficiency and amplify impact while the City wisely manages its adoption and thoughtfully transitions work as AI's effects unfold.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Artificial Intelligence will inevitably create tensions as it shifts people from routine processing tasks into more creative, analytical, and large-scale roles. It's clear that AI has the power to fundamentally reshape the City's work processes and the very nature of many jobs. This evolution demands thoughtful planning to ensure that as work changes, our employees are supported, engaged, and prepared for new opportunities.

Looking beyond the City organization, Seattle IT must also partner broadly to help the community navigate these shifts. This means working with Economic Development to map potential job impacts and position Seattle to capture emerging AI-, green tech-, and clean energy jobs. It also involves collaborating with education and economic partners to transition or incentivize high-risk jobs and land uses toward future-ready industries. At the same time, the City must work to support proactive conversations with labor partners who will rightly focus on how AI will affect City jobs, ensuring we manage transitions with care, transparency, and clear plans.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOVERNANCE

The City's first AI policy focused narrowly on generative AI and was developed in 2023, after a six-month working period with the City and Seattle Information Technology employees and Generative AI Advisory

Team. The Team comprised technology industry leaders from the University of Washington, the Allen Institute for AI, and members of the City's Community Technology Advisory Board (CTAB).

The new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy replaces the previous version and expands its guidance to encourage partnerships and engagements that will use AI to solve City challenges. It also establishes requirements and controls that City departments will apply when using Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions and systems to improve City services as follows:

- Innovation and Sustainability
- Transparency and Accountability
- Validity and Reliability
- Bias, and Harm Reduction and Fairness
- Privacy Enhancing
- Explainability and Interpretability
- Security and Resiliency

PILLAR 1: DATA EXCELLENCE

DATA GOVERNANCE

Data Governance is a foundational set of IT practices to promote accessible, high-quality, and reliable data that fulfills the needs of the organization. This is an essential prerequisite for the use of AI, specifically regarding the trust and expectations of responsible, consistent, and high-quality output from training intelligent services. The City's enterprise data governance framework is being developed under the leadership of Innovation and Performance and Seattle IT to provide the structure, standards, policies, and practices for the broad range of data and initiatives across the City. Included in the enterprise data governance framework will be provisions to increase data quality, data security, data literacy, data access, and data sharing (or data collaboration).

The work of advancing the City's Enterprise Data Governance practice, driven by the City's One Seattle Data Strategy, will incorporate, support, and advance departmental data governance practices that may have already been established and well-defined. The end goals of Enterprise Data Governance are to establish a common framework shared among City departments, ensure all data falls under proper governance, and enable departmental staff to clearly understand their role relative to the data governance framework, policies, procedures, and practices.

The success of the City's Enterprise Data Governance will rely on the execution of Enterprise Data Management and the implementation of safeguards and controls, such as Data Loss Protection (DLP) and AI Data and Security Governance. It is essential that the City does not expose private and sensitive information, nor critical City processes.

DATA MANAGEMENT

The City's Enterprise Data Management will put processes, practices, and tools into place to ensure the City maximizes the value extracted from data assets. Data Management will address data quality (including maintenance and upkeep), reliability, accessibility, documentation (metadata), integration, security, and architecture. Data Management is also intended to deliver fundamental components of our data

environment, such as an inventory of data discoverable from an enterprise-scaled data catalog, access controls, and the safeguards necessary to ensure sensitive and confidential data are appropriately handled.

Data Management technologies have been evaluated in the past to support the implementation of the processes and practices described above. Other City departments, such as Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Seattle Department of Transportation, are also evaluating these products as part of their data governance and data management initiatives. Seattle IT's goal is to draw these departmental initiatives together and implement cross-departmental data management in a way that honors the needs of the departments and the work that they have completed, while ensuring that, collectively, we implement Enterprise Data Management according to the intent of our One Seattle Data Strategy.

These data management processes and practices will directly benefit the City's use of AI by improving the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of AI outcomes. Additionally, Data Management and AI will combine, providing increased data collaboration and data sharing across the various City departments, offices, and lines of business.

The City may also explore AI's benefits in executing data management activities. For example, AI may serve as a utility to assess data quality, data errors, data utilization, and the enforcement of various Governance policies. AI may also be recognized as an automation tool to aid data classification efforts and produce portions of required metadata.

DATA SERVICES AND TOOLS

As the City's Open Data posture moves from open-by-preference to open-by-default, increasing volumes of data will become more readily available, encouraging and empowering City staff to leverage data to meet business objectives. The proliferation of data access will apply to AI, highlighting the need to provide reliable access at the source and discouraging the duplication of data. Published data services will serve both traditional end-use, data science and predictive analytics, and future AI uses. Proper classification of City data must be implemented so that data services deliver outputs that do not conflict with the City's security and privacy rules.

For AI to be fully enabled, the City must be prepared and equipped to support the variety of data access vehicles that AI may rely upon, including:

- Web-based data services
- Vendor and custom APIs
- Database connections

PILLAR 2: TRANSITIONING INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLIANCE

The use of AI requires a forward-thinking and adaptable approach to assess and implement needed enhancements to Citywide IT support, including critical areas of service delivery such as computing power, data storage and protection, robust data management systems, network performance, and cybersecurity. Cybersecurity and compliance frameworks must evolve to manage new data risks, regulatory requirements, and transparency obligations. Ultimately, we are also aligning infrastructure strategy with business goals so that AI initiatives drive meaningful value without overwhelming operational resources.

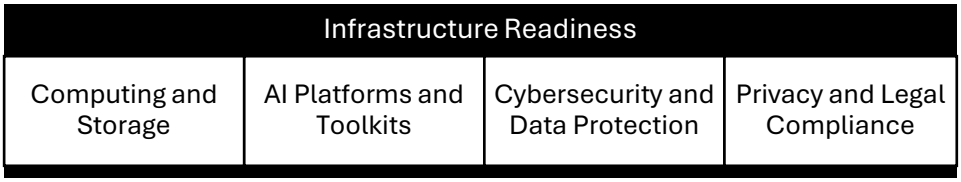


Figure 4: Infrastructure Readiness Foundation

COMPUTING AND STORAGE

The City is adjusting to the need for responsible and scalable adoption of AI across all services. We are executing on a phased strategic plan to address the requirements for a supportive computing and storage infrastructure. Hosted and managed AI systems operate differently than traditional third-party services and applications, mainly as AI models require continuous data processing to train and evolve outputs. Every AI service and new technology request will undergo intake assessments to analyze compliance, cybersecurity risk, and support viability to issue the appropriate determination. To adhere to our IT policies, including security, an updated AI Policy, and cloud infrastructure availability, IT can host authorized AI systems in enterprise cloud service providers that meet City security standards. Seattle IT will establish, provision, configure, and administer CSP tenants, services, and instances with the City departments ultimately responsible for approved AI service management.

AI PLATFORMS AND TOOLKITS

Seattle IT is actively reviewing and piloting AI solutions for Citywide and departmental-specific use. These include development platforms compatible with our environment, security, and regulatory compliance requirements. Once reviewed and assessed against performance metrics (detailed in the Proving Value section of this plan), we will make these tools available for Citywide use. Review and consideration of new solutions and development platforms will continue as the marketplace evolves and new products are introduced.

CYBERSECURITY

Introduction of AI requires advanced tooling and specific attention to the unique security threats that this technology exposes. The following are actively pursued in 2025-2026 to ensure the security of our critical infrastructure and sensitive data:

- Adoption of the National Institute of Standards AI Risk Management Framework (RMF), a comprehensive, adaptable, and performance metric-driven 7-step process developed by NIST to assist enterprises in integrating security, privacy, and cyber supply change management into their operational model.
- Threat modeling for AI solutions to ensure readiness for real-world demonstrated threat vectors.
- Updated incident response protocols to include AI-specific attacks and incidents.
- Adoption of MITRE ATLAS (Adversarial Threat Landscape for Artificial Intelligence Systems), a globally accessible living database of adversarial tactics and techniques against AI-enabled systems and a comprehensive resource for understanding and safeguarding AI systems against focused cybersecurity threats.
- Data enablement and protection through implementation of Data Loss Prevention, Information Protection and data labeling. The project is being rescoped to include AI-specific data protection. The objective is the implementation of data protection controls across the City.

PRIVACY AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

- The existing Privacy Review Process now includes questions addressing AI use, data ownership, and other aspects of solutions or projects under consideration that intersect with the City's Responsible AI Principles and AI Policy.
- Training and awareness plans are focused on incorporating AI principles, working with industry partners and internal capabilities to build an overview of basic technical information, benefits and potential risks of AI.
- Data sharing agreement terms have been incorporated into purchasing and vendor contracts.
- Public records compliance training for AI, developed in partnership with the City Attorney's and Clerk's Offices, for Public Disclosure Officers and other stakeholders has been developed and will continue to be a part of ongoing training and support for that community.

PILLAR 3: WORKFORCE UPSKILLING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

With so many AI technologies available and innumerable vendors pushing to sell to the City, we face an urgent need to equip its leaders, managers, and employees with foundational knowledge to navigate this evolving landscape responsibly.

Toward this end, we are working with industry partners to develop an **AI skilling program centered on AI Fundamentals, AI Approaches, and AI Solutions**. AI Fundamentals ensures that everyone—from officials to managers to front-line employees—can distinguish fact from fiction, understand core AI concepts, account for required human decision-making, and speak the general terminology the City will use. This common grounding empowers all City staff to approach new AI opportunities with informed caution, recognize ethical considerations such as bias and privacy, and uphold community trust by knowing how to safeguard sensitive data and ensure equity.

Structured lessons on AI Approaches and AI Solutions are essential for those who will decide how and where to use AI, or who will directly apply it in their work. Training will build capacity to match problems with the AI technologies the City can use for the long term, apply the correct science and AI models, and engage the City teams and resources on security, privacy, ethical reviews, and development. The training also connects them with the City's AI priorities and the communities of practice that help operationalize AI.

Meanwhile, for the technologists and operational staff who build and maintain AI solutions and systems, the program delivers practical knowledge on what technologies and platforms the City has approved, where to find technical and contracting standards, and how to participate in expert forums to share lessons learned. Together, this comprehensive AI skilling effort ensures the entire organization is on the same page—aligned in language, priorities, and process—so the City can responsibly harness AI to serve its residents.

TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION

AI will continue to impact recruitment and outreach, making it faster, more efficient, and more data-driven while making the candidate's experience clearer and more equitable. AI will also elevate the organization's ability to analyze recruitment data and help organizations make strategic decisions about where and how to recruit talent.

LABOR IMPLICATIONS

The impact of AI on the IT and overall City workforce is multifaceted and evolving at a rapid pace. In addition to understanding how AI will impact the Citywide organization, we must also address potential impacts on our employees. One of the first priorities is communicating with our staff to discuss the technology of AI and how the organization's vision with AI will impact the workforce. It is critical that we communicate early and often about the AI strategic direction to reduce employee fear and anxiety.

- **Skill-Building:** AI technology will lead the organization and workforce to do a gap analysis and skills inventory to determine required employee skills to keep up with the changing workforce and to stay current with evolving opportunities.
- **Union Coordination:** It is imperative to work with union partners in the directions the City is taking with AI.
- **Job Automation Impacts:** AI will naturally impact job automation. With the advancement of AI technologies, we will increasingly see opportunities for automating routine or repetitive tasks. The City can focus on where the organization aims to increase service responsiveness and overcome delays or other challenges.
- **Economic Impact:** As artificial intelligence increases operational efficiencies in business, the region and state will see community impacts. This will profoundly touch Seattle's families, non-profits, and academic community. What economic and community guidance should City departments collectively prepare as AI affects livelihoods and the tax base in our region?

OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

AI has already and will continue to change how talent outreach and recruitment are handled significantly. AI will allow us to create chatbots and process improvements for functions that were previously done with a person and will also make some processes more efficient.

- **Bias Reduction:** Many tools help identify bias in our writing and ensure that job postings are inclusive. These include AI solutions that ensure resumes are standardized and focused solely on skills and qualifications while omitting factors such as demographic information that may exclude people from consideration.
- **Engagement Improvement:** AI chatbots and audience publication tools can improve how the City activates new and deeper candidate pools for the organization and its partners, both for employment and procurements. This can broaden the reach of City opportunities in the Seattle community and generationally.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT FOR EXISTING LABOR FORCE

Organizational leaders across the City will need coaching to be clear and intentional about how AI will impact their organization. Each step below needs focus and attention, as they are all crucial to the successful implementation of a new AI technology-enhanced approach. Part of staff fear and anxiety regarding AI is just not knowing enough about the technology and how it may be used.

- **Comprehensive and Consistent Communications:** Successful AI change management in the workforce will require an effective communication plan to convey that AI technology use is not designed or intended to replace jobs but to align the organization for the future.

- **Continuous Training and Education:** To reduce employee anxiety, the City must dedicate ongoing time and resources to training and educating staff members. This will involve members of the workforce in implementing AI technologies to encourage organizational adoption.
- **Directional Clarity:** The organization needs to provide directional clarity about where roles will increase and what skilling up will look like for this work, as well as how some roles will be changed or not needed in the organization.
- **Focus on Culture:** During this time, the City leadership needs to embrace concepts like growth mindsets, encouraging innovation, skill development, and continuous learning. These organizational behaviors will help in the sustainability of the transition to new AI-enhanced processes.
- **Feedback:** Organizational change will require periodic temperature checks to help determine how the organization is adjusting to the AI tools and direction. We can improve and identify any blind spots we might have missed.

PILLAR 4: SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

In a world facing rapid change, a community that brings everyone along on the journey, especially those who have been historically marginalized, must be equipped to adapt, innovate, and thrive. Individuals who are included in discussions and decision-making are more likely to contribute their talents, trust institutions, and support collective goals. Inclusive engagement also fosters shared ownership and encourages collaboration across differences.

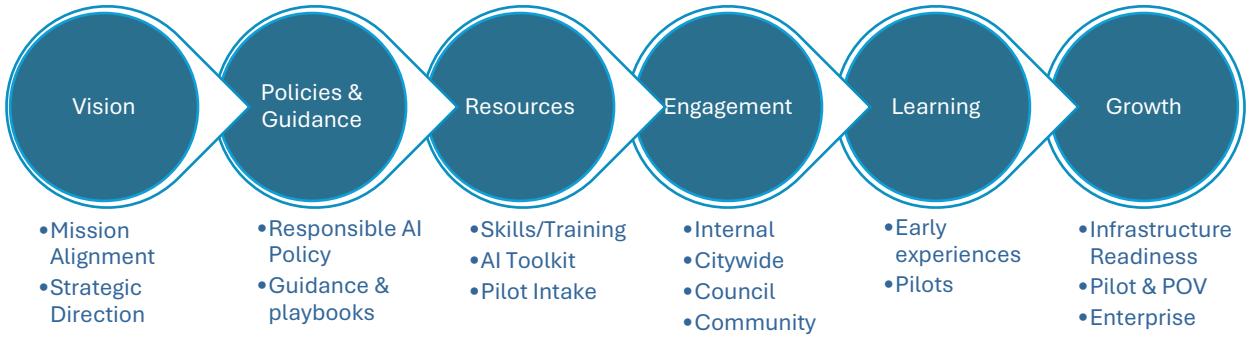
By collaborating with academia, industry, and communities, the City of Seattle has the potential to gain access to cutting-edge research, expertise, and diverse perspectives that shape effective and ethical AI solutions. Ultimately, collaboration on AI-focused solutions fosters trust, drives responsible AI innovation, and empowers governments to serve the public more effectively.[2] We are actively seeking out opportunities to engage the private sector, non-profit, government, and educational communities to enable joint work, including:

- **Innovation and Performance Coordination** to ensure collaboration and efforts are focused on City priorities around data analytics, performance metrics, and One Seattle Data objectives.
- **Academic Collaborations** with the University of Washington, Seattle University, and other institutions.
- **Partnerships Across Sectors** to address data-sharing, infrastructure readiness, and workforce upskilling by offering resources and aligning objectives.
- **Industry Engagement** in the form of participation in innovation challenges, grant-funded projects, and support of AI startups and accelerators.
- **Community and Non-Profit Partnerships** to accelerate innovation while ensuring focus on public values and digital equity advocacy while building a resilient, inclusive, and empowered community to solve challenges non-profit service organizations face in delivering needed services.

[2] *Artificial Intelligence in Government: The Federal and State Landscape*. NCSL, Sanam Hooshidary, Chelsea Canada, and William Clark. November 22, 2024.

EXECUTION—OUR ROADMAP

Much of the foundational work identified in this document is currently underway, with many elements (such as policy, guidance, training, and early pilots) completed in 2024 and continuing into 2025. The rest of the plan timeline is outlined below in a phased approach:



PHASE 1: 2024-2025

From 2024 into 2025, the focus has been to pilot AI products and learn from early experiences to create an initiative onboarding process to see and prioritize efforts. During this learning phase, our objective has been building the **City's Intake, Review, Learn, and Operationalization Model,** using the AI Responsible Use policy approach to map organizational and community impacts.

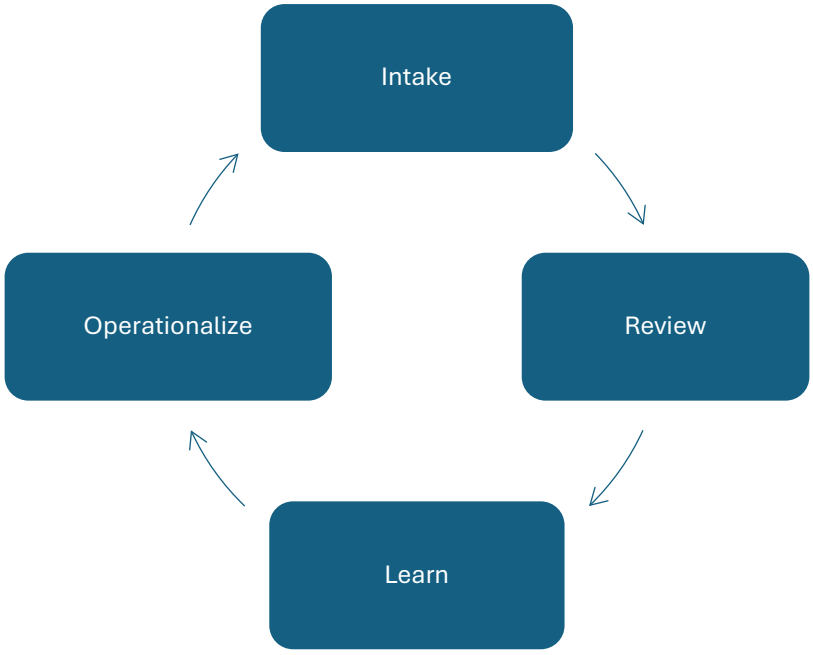


Figure 5: AI Pilot and Adoption Model

The following are focus projects that have been completed and are in process to align resources for successful AI introduction:

PHASE 2: 2025

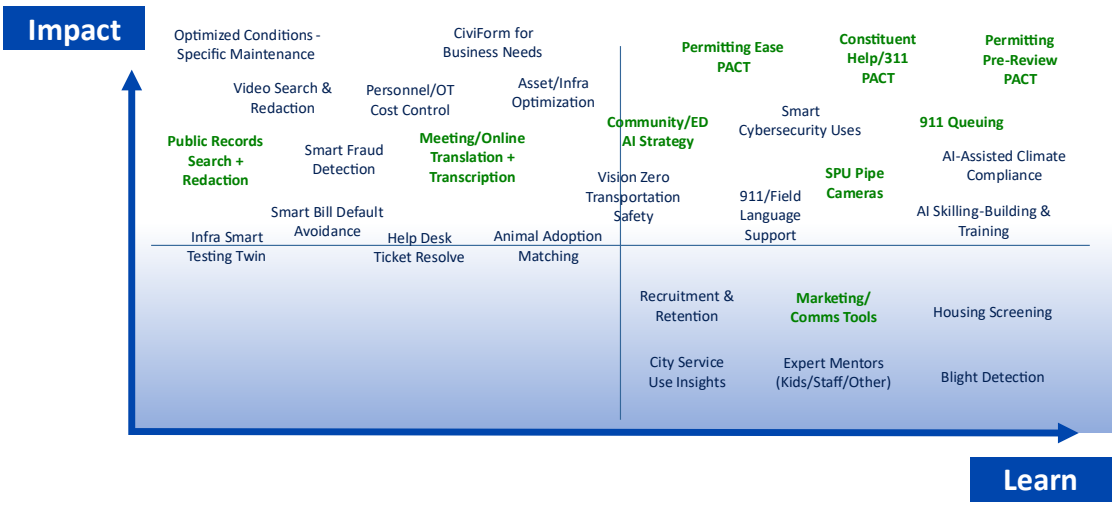
In 2025, we have shifted efforts into focusing on Big Bets for Citywide benefit and refining our strategy and approach to vendors and technology architecture. During this period, we expect to see one or two shifts in industry modelling approaches and pricing that will help guide our longer-term investments. The following are pilots that move us toward these commitments to the City's civic priorities, including piloting Microsoft's CoPilot suite and Open AI ChatGPT to address employee productivity and efficiency needs:

AI Priority Pilots

Enhancing Public Safety Communications	Amazon Bedrock chatbot
Streamlining Permitting Process	Zendesk chatbot Archistar AI CivCheck AI
Increasing Utilities Efficiency	Workforce Efficiency Pipe Assessment
Improving Government Access	Online Business Directory Public Records efficiency
Expanding Data Analytics Availability	Chatbot for One Seattle Data Strategy Performance metrics dashboards
Increasing Employee Productivity	GIS problem ticket improvement Enterprise generative AI solution
Improving Community Support	Unified Resident Contact System

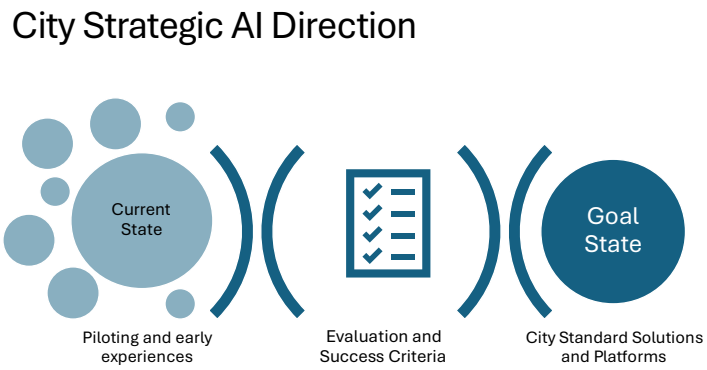
Future solution discovery and piloting will be guided by continuing to focus on high-impact opportunities across the City and in support of specific City and departmental priorities. This currently looks like this:

AI Impact & Opportunity Roadmap



PHASE 3: 2026

Having completed significant solution pilots in 2024-2025, we will have enough experience to set the City's AI Technology Architecture and make procurement decisions for our main AI vendors in 2026. By then, we expect the industry to start showing direction and less volatility.



PROVING VALUE

To ensure that AI initiatives deliver tangible impact aligned to City priorities, we follow a structured Proof of Value (PoV) process to determine which solutions we bring into the City. This begins with small-scale, agile pilots chartered with clear objectives and performance metrics that explore specific use cases tied to City priorities and resource capacity. As pilots demonstrate success and potential for scalability, we move them to larger implementations. Each PoV phase, from concept to go-live, is documented and reviewed through a formal chartering framework that feeds into centralized AI governance. This group includes representation from stakeholders across the City, and ensures alignment with our values and principles, ethical standards, public interest and resource feasibility. Ultimately, with collaboration with other governance bodies, including the Mayor's Information Technology (MITS) Group, this process guides AI solution adoption at scale through an accountable and transparent process.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) ANALYSIS

Measuring the benefits of technology to ensure thoughtful adoption will be specific to each pilot and dependent on the features and functions of the solution under consideration. In general, assessing the return on investment for a pilot will include the following performance metrics:

Objective	SMART
Business Value	By the end of a pilot, 80%+ of pilot users reported that they found business value in using the solution.
Alignment with Business Goals	Confirm that the solution aligns 100% with business goals and City values
Responsible AI	By the end of the pilot, 100% of pilot users will be educated on the City's Responsible AI principles.
Success Criteria	Establish a benchmark and record measurable benefits of an AI-supported solution compared to the previous solution/approach.
Accuracy and Reliability	Measure against the acceptable accuracy of output, including bias and hallucination audit results.
User Experience and feedback	By the end of the pilots, achieve an 80%+ positive rating for overall user experience.

Supportability/Scalability	By the end of the pilots, achieve a "Yes" to supportability and scalability of the piloted solution at the City of Seattle.

COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

As the City of Seattle advances the responsible use of artificial intelligence to improve public services and internal operations, City leadership must work in close partnership with labor partners early. Piloting AI solutions without the input and collaboration of represented employees risks undermining both effectiveness and the trust that sustains successful innovation.

The City's labor partners bring a critical understanding of workflows, resident interactions, and the on-the-ground realities that shape implementation. By working together, the City ensures that AI solutions are co-designed to enhance and not disrupt, and that we realize our shared vision of equitable, people-centered, high-performing municipal service.

AI will not remove the need for City workers. Instead, it will shift the nature of work. As intelligent systems begin to automate routine and/or administrative tasks, job roles will indeed refocus on higher-value, creative, people-facing, and decision-making responsibilities. The City and its labor partners cannot shield our people from those shifts, but can give our teammates the training and skills to have a path into that future.

Technology and human resource leaders recognize that the AI transformation requires intentional planning: reskilling opportunities, role evolution, and career path development. These must be built into the City's AI efforts. Labor is a key ally in shaping the transitions, ensuring that changes uplift rather than displace employees. Working in this partnership, Seattle IT will help departments better respond to residents and businesses, unburden from workloads, hit the higher performance levels they target, and lead in creating a City as innovative as the community that we serve. AI will become a capacity amplifier, supporting our workforce, not undermining it.

Human resource leaders will be a key voice in how jobs and skills transition. Transparent engagement and communication are central to this work. Seattle must commit to honest, timely, and sustained dialogue with employees, labor unions, and community stakeholders about what AI is, what it is not, and how it will be used. Based on the Mayor's Office direction, City leadership is working together with Seattle IT to build communication frameworks and feedback loops so that employees can help shape, test, and improve the tools they will use. We are not just implementing new technology—we are supporting a process of human and organizational change. When we lead with transparency, shared values, and partnership, we build trust and ensure that Seattle's AI future strengthens both our workforce and the communities we serve.

Seattle IT's internal communications about this AI direction will have multiple parts, including a Q3 2025 deliverables launch of our direction statements, AI Policy, and a SharePoint toolkit consisting of resources, guidelines, and a Citywide AI overview training for employees. The channels for information delivery include the Mayor's Office Communications Team and other stakeholders, who will distribute information through direct Citywide emails, internal newsletters for staff, intranet sites, AI Champions network meeting presentations, leadership briefings, and departmental roadshows.

EXTERNAL OUTREACH

Given the interest shown in previous City of Seattle policy introductions with resident impact, such as the Privacy Program and Generative AI Policy, we anticipate continued attention from City residents and the media in our AI planning, pilots, and implementation activities. We will be using communications channels to provide the public with general updates, where we are looking for input and testing, and where we have produced noteworthy results and impacts. We will also take a leadership role when there is engagement required to properly co-build aspects of use connected to the City's Surveillance Ordinance and Privacy Principles.

Additionally, Seattle IT is in the early stages of planning resident outreach via media, social media, and website stories and posts. We will continue to engage City Technology Advisory Board (CTAB) and other boards and commissions as appropriate. Staff will host community engagement campaigns and educational events about the benefits and safeguards of AI to continue to be a resource for the community.

COMMITTING TO CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

The City aims to support the immediate needs of our departmental partners while establishing a process to meet future requirements and opportunities for this fast-evolving technology. Toward that end, in the next 90 days, staff will focus on the following aspects of this two-year plan:

1. **Partner** with City leadership and vendors to complete the July launch of this AI Plan, provide Citywide training, and launch other online resources.
2. **Formalize** the Citywide AI Governance Group to provide input and guidance on priority direction and foundational plan decisions.
3. **Execute** on the emerging technology pilots for Citywide adoption.
4. **Support** the 15+ departmental and priority pilots that are in active status.

These critical steps will establish a firm foundation for incorporating AI into our operations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the services we deliver to the City of Seattle and our community.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used to ensure a clear and consistent understanding of our direction:

- **Artificial Intelligence or AI:** A machine-based solution or system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers from the input it receives how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments.[1]
- **AI System:** Any data system, software, hardware, application, tool, or utility that operates in whole or in part using AI.[2]
- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI):** A class of computer software and systems, or functionality within systems, that use large language models, algorithms, deep learning, and machine learning models, and can generate new content, including but not limited to text, images, video, and audio, based on patterns and structures of input data. These also include systems capable of ingesting input and translating that input into another form, such as text-to-code systems.
- **Responsible AI Use:** An approach to developing, procuring, and using AI systems ethically, in a manner that centers community needs and considers equity, innovation, efficiency, transparency, privacy, security, and resiliency in the delivery of exceptional City services. Use of AI that aligns with City and community values, rooted in trust and consideration of impacts to residents.

APPENDIX B: ONE SEATTLE DATA STRATEGY

One Seattle Data Strategy (2023)

1. **Establishing Citywide governance** to establish standards and unified processes for data management to provide a united view of data and create value while protecting privacy and compliance.
2. **Advancing data literacy and culture** across the City through collaboration and training opportunities, a centralized approach to using analytics, and a collaboration portal to create a community of data users to achieve better outcomes.
3. **Leveraging knowledge and resources,** including analytical tools, for collaboration, equity analysis, and consumption of data that will lead to responsive data-informed outcomes for City programs and strengthen practices to identify and understand disparities in services and increase transparency and citizen engagement.
4. **Increasing accountability** for City program and service delivery performance by launching work to drive better data transparency, communication, and connection with community members.
5. **Addressing real-world challenges** by institutionalizing and expanding our existing good data practices and building shared best practices and guidelines across departments, using data to achieve better and more equitable outcomes for residents.

APPENDIX C: PROOF OF VALUE FRAMEWORK

1. Pilot Charter Elements

- Project Title
- Objective(s) Tied to Mayoral Executive Order, City Budget Priority, Departmental Priority, or Published Strategic Plan
- Department Sponsor and Accountable Lead
- Expected Duration and Scope
- Success Criteria (Measurable and Time-based)

2. Evaluation Dimensions

- **Impacts**:
  - What does it improve on a City priority (EO, Budget, Strategic Plan) and by how much?
  - Is staff time saved, service delivery improved, and decision quality enhanced?
- **Equity & Inclusion**: Are vulnerable communities considered?
- **Fiscal Review**: Cost savings, avoided costs, ROI projections? One-time and ongoing costs?
- **Viability**: Is scalability, security, and integration feasible? Are staff administration and skills required?
- **Seattle IT Review**: Alignment with Seattle's IT Technology, Security and Privacy Standards; AI Policy and Responsible Use Guidelines; One Seattle Data Strategy; and Surveillance Ordinance (if applicable).

3. Measurement & Evidence

- Baseline vs. post-pilot metrics
- User/staff satisfaction surveys
- Bias and error audit results
- Independent validation (if applicable)

4. Decision Path

- ✅ Scale Citywide
- 🔄 Revise and retest
- ❌ Stop (with reasons documented)

5. Transparency & Accountability

- Publish Pilot Charter, Outcome, Lessons Learned
- Record and Update in AI Initiatives Log on SharePoint