

Spotlight on Akron | Collaboration for Economic Development

Overview

- ▶ Mayor: Daniel Horrigan
- ▶ Lead staff on innovation: Heather Roszczyk
- ▶ Population of municipality: 197,846 (2017)
- ▶ Innovation/open data website: www.bouncehub.org

For nearly a year, City of Akron leadership, County of Summit leadership, and Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce leadership have been **engaged in an intensive project to develop alignment for economic development**. With a **desire to re-architect the nature and level of collaboration to leapfrog outcomes from the current system**, both the elected and board leadership of the Partners have endorsed the work. In addition, a series of five specific strategies with specific tactics and outcomes are being finalised to drive this unique collaboration forward. This new work includes a joint project management office; a number of joint working teams and joint investment in the new initiatives.

Vision and approach to innovation capacity

The city's innovation strategy

Along with 44% of cities surveyed, Akron has an **explicit innovation strategy**.

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with the following terms:

Big picture re-thinking

Hierarchy-busting

Approaches to innovation capacity

Similar to 24% of cities surveyed, Akron approaches innovation capacity from a **holistic/macro level** focusing on breaking down barriers to entry and eliminating silos.

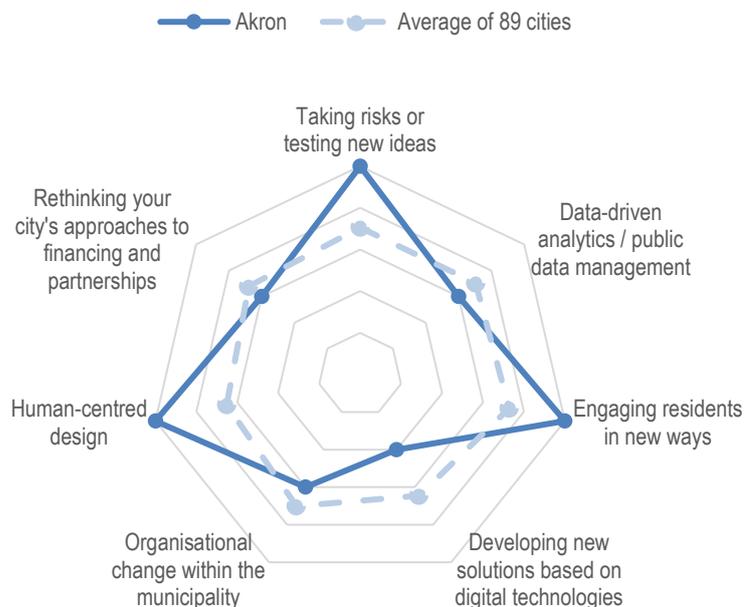
The **top two priority policy areas** for the city's innovation work include:

Economic development

Ecosystem development

Most common innovation activities

Akron's most common innovation activities are **taking risks and testing new ideas; engaging residents in new ways; and human-centred design**.



Funding for innovation capacity	
<p>Funding to support innovation capacity</p> <p>Like 77% of cities surveyed, Akron has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which originates from the following source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Municipal budget (operating budget approved by city council) 	<p>Types of activities being funded</p> <p>While launching or sustaining a project, and generating ideas & brainstorming are the two most commonly funded activities among all cities surveyed, Akron's innovation funding is directed towards paying for services to a third party including Bounce, Akron's innovation hub, and one innovation-focused staff position.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: 45%; text-align: center;">Launching or sustaining a project</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: 45%; text-align: center;">Idea generation & brainstorming</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: 45%; text-align: center;">Investing in digital systems</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: 45%; text-align: center;">Investing in physical infrastructure</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: 45%; text-align: center; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white;">Paying for services</div> </div>

Organisational structure & staffing	Partnerships for innovation & data
 <p>Akron's innovation work is led by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Advocate working at the Mayor's Office.</p> <p>The Advocate's skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project management ✓ Communication 	 <p>Akron has developed partnerships to promote its innovation capacity with other public agencies, private firms, and not-for-profit organisations.</p>

Measuring outcomes	
<p>Policy areas that benefit from sufficient data, or lack sufficient data, to support innovation capacity in the city:</p> <div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: repeat(5, 1fr); gap: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Transport / mobility</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Economic development</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Housing & built environment</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Policing & law enforcement</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Health</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Water</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Waste and sewage</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Labour markets & skills</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Environment & climate change</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Education</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Culture</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Social inclusion, equity</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #76b82a; color: white; text-align: center;">Public works</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Tourism</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #c0392b; color: white; text-align: center;">Digital governance</div> </div> <p><i>NB: No response provided by the city for the policy areas in grey.</i></p>	<p>Innovation is helping the city to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve resident outcomes ✓ Generate new sources of revenue ✓ Improve internal government operations <p>The most critical success factors in supporting the city's innovation work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dedicated funding ✓ Dedicated innovation staff position ✓ Leadership from Mayor ✓ Support from outside city administration