

Toyota Mobility Foundation Shortlists 10 Cities in \$9 Million Global Challenge to Drive Innovation in City Mobility

November 07, 2023

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PLANO, Texas (Nov. 7, 2023) – The Toyota Mobility Foundation, in partnership with Challenge Works and World Resources Institute, announces the shortlist for the \$9-million [Sustainable Cities Challenge](#). Launched in June 2023, the global mobility challenge aims to help cities prepare for the future and has the potential to transform the lives of millions of people around the world.

Cities were invited to enter the Challenge by identifying areas in which innovation would help them expand access to safe, affordable, and inclusive modes of transportation; harness the power of data to create connected and resilient mobility ecosystems; and reduce environmental impact through low-carbon and renewable solutions.

Over 200 entries were received during this entry period from over 150 cities in 46 countries globally. They were assessed on the impact the Challenge would have, the receptiveness of the issue to open innovation approaches, capacity within the city, and the focus of the entry. The shortlist includes cities in Brazil, Colombia, India, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The 10 shortlisted cities are:

Bengaluru, India

Bengaluru is predicted to be the fastest-growing city in the Asia-Pacific and is the second most congested city in the world where traffic accidents are common. The ever-expanding city is looking for innovative ways to enhance road safety by crowdsourcing the identification of road safety concerns such as faulty traffic signals and accident-prone areas.

Detroit, United States

Detroit, known as the first motor city, has a heavy manufacturing and commercial freight industry. High vehicle traffic has led to severe health and environmental problems, particularly poor air quality. To combat these issues, Detroit aims to address growing freight emissions as global trade expands.

Fortaleza, Brazil

Fortaleza, has revolutionized its urban mobility systems in the last 10 years. However, there are still challenges to be overcome, such as access to public transport for low-income communities. Now, the city is seeking ways to make transportation more affordable and efficient.

Medellín, Colombia

Nicknamed the “City of Eternal Spring,” Medellín’s mountainous terrain and sloping streets create significant mobility challenges for people with disabilities and those who care for them – the majority of whom are women and low-income workers. The region is looking for integrated approaches to make mobility more inclusive and accessible.

Mexico City, Mexico

The historic center of Mexico City is not only a World Heritage Site, but also the largest commercial hub in the city. Its heritage status means that it is difficult to carry out substantial modifications to the urban landscape or its infrastructure. The city needs to find innovative ways to improve its transport systems to meet the needs of its residents.

New Orleans, United States

Known for its French and Spanish Creole architecture and rich culture, the “Big Easy” faces a huge challenge: evacuations ahead of rapidly intensifying hurricanes. As the increase of rapidly intensifying hurricanes threaten coastal communities, the City of New Orleans and stakeholder partners seek an innovative solution to the challenge of evacuating vulnerable residents as hurricanes become increasingly dangerous on a much shorter timeline.

Seberang Perai, Malaysia

Evidence points to a settlement in Seberang Perai since the Neolithic era. Today, industrial parks consume large amounts of energy and produce high levels of emissions, creating health risks for nearby communities. As the Batu Kawan Industrial Park in Seberang Perai expands, the city aims to work with local businesses and industry to reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact of freight.

Varanasi, India

One of the world’s oldest continually inhabited cities, Varanasi has seen the use of e-rickshaws grow exponentially in recent years. However, the sector is currently highly disorganized and poorly regulated. The city is looking for ways in which efficiency can be optimized, with routes more evenly distributed across the city.

Venice, Italy

Venice’s exceptional historical and cultural heritage is integrated into a unique environment made of dry land and water. In recent years, the City administration has invested resources to increase sustainable mobility options within the City. The Challenge faced by the City of Venice is to overcome cultural, technological, and operational barriers to enhance sustainable transportation options and encourage behavior change towards more sustainable choices.

York, United Kingdom

York is a perfect mix of heritage and hi-tech, with a Viking past and Roman roots, the ancient city of York is seeking to use existing and future innovation to future-proof mobility in the city. It wants to combine its fragmented modes of public, shared and private transportation into a single, cohesive fleet to increase accessibility, affordability, reduce emissions and journey times.

The shortlisted cities are invited to attend a capacity building academy and will receive support developing their challenge design, becoming part of a wider network of other innovative city teams. Open innovation Challenges often develop and evolve throughout the process as the city’s specific needs are understood more closely.

Three cities from the shortlist will be selected to launch their own City Challenges and in mid-2024, the call will be launched to global innovators to work with the winning cities. Innovators could be homegrown – living in the city or country chosen – or may be from anywhere across the globe, but with solutions applicable and tailored to the winning cities.

The semi-finalist innovators for each city will be decided in late 2024, and the winning cities and innovators who are announced in 2026 will share \$9 million in funding to test and roll out their solutions.

“This shortlist shows how cities of all sizes around the world face a wide variety of mobility challenges,” said Ryan Klem, director of programs at the Toyota Mobility Foundation. “We can see how these cities are already making efforts to improve their transportation systems and we are very excited to begin supporting them directly in the next stage of the Sustainable Cities Challenge.”

“These cities have highlighted different areas where innovation has the potential to make mobility systems more sustainable, resilient, and accessible,” said Kathy Nothstine, head of future cities at Challenge Works. “The Sustainable Cities Challenge will bring cities and innovators together with city residents to tailor solutions to real world challenges through open innovation.”

“By making transport systems safer, more sustainable and affordable, cities can improve access to jobs and education, and improve people’s health,” said Ben Welle, director of integrated transport and innovation at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. “The Sustainable Cities Challenge will help to improve the quality of life for people living in cities all over the world.”

The Sustainable Cities Challenge is funded by the Toyota Mobility Foundation and has been designed in partnership with Challenge Works and World Resources Institute. Challenge Works is an international leader in developing challenge programs to drive new thinking and find creative solutions to problems facing society. World Resources Institute is a global research organization which works with partners to develop practical solutions that improve people’s lives and ensure that nature can thrive.

To find out more, visit the [Sustainable Cities Challenge website](#).