The following represent "key elements," stated as outcomes, some combination of which, if achieved, would confirm that cities are “equipt to innovate” or that innovation is occurring in that city government; and evidence exists that the government is likely experimenting with, using and embedding new urban practices to improve the lives of low-income people and all their city’s residents.

Equipt to Innovate®
A clear long-term vision for the city, broad strategic goals, and an overall plan exist, and transparent systems for facilitating material progress toward that vision and plan are in place.

The strategic plan is widely supported by the city’s elected and appointed officials and serves as the driver for performance in the city.

A robust performance management system exists and is used by managers to assess progress.

Within the overarching vision, all other city plans (comprehensive, transportation, sustainability, resiliency, etc.) are well-sequenced and coordinated.

High-quality research and evaluation practices guide program development and are adequately resourced.
Government collaborates internally and externally and freely partners to achieve better results for residents.

Government facilitates and participates in cross-sector initiatives focused on improving outcomes, whether or not those initiatives originate from city hall.

City staff is empowered to collaborate across departments and externally to achieve their targeted outcomes, including intergovernmentally (county, state, federal).

Communication mechanisms are in place to help internal and external stakeholders stay informed of government activities and assess progress towards the city’s goals.
Local government **effectively engages a broad spectrum of the community**, especially harder-to-engage and underrepresented populations (such as youth, low-income residents, people of color, and new immigrants) in making policy, improving service delivery and solving complex problems.

City designs **effective engagement strategies** based on the issue-at-hand.

...  

**Strategic use of data and technology** supports engagement practices.

...  

Resident input is meaningfully incorporated into decision-making and program improvement, and feedback loops work so that residents know when and how their ideas are and aren’t used.

...  

Electronic communications go beyond "one-way."
City is intentional about addressing racial disparities through policy and practice, and effectively adapting to changing population demographics.

Race, class and other markers of identity are substantively considered in policymaking and operations.

City staff is trained in and understand how race affects their work and the outcomes of it for city residents.

Disaggregated data is used to understand racial disparities and their drivers.

City is working to achieve consistently better results across races and income levels, and close disparity gaps.
Local government resources are strategically deployed toward the best, biggest outcomes.

Financial timeframes are future-focused using five-year budgeting, ten-year fiscal planning, and thirty-year capital plans, at a minimum.

City leverages private and philanthropic capital for the benefit of low-income people and communities in need.

Budget allocations are based on evidence and oriented toward results, realigning to highest and best use of funds as appropriate and decommissioning programs as warranted.

Public and private resources are expended to support or leverage innovation and experimentation.
All city employees, from elected and appointed officials to frontline staff, are engaged at a high level, and contribute to the city’s goals as drivers of innovation and continuous improvement.

Ideas generated from within local government or from outside are vetted, tested, and adopted, as appropriate, through a consistent and transparent process.

Human resource policies broadly drive effective performance and support innovation.

City employees are empowered to take appropriate, calculated risks toward greater efficiencies and creative problem-solving.

Local government has a robust talent pipeline at all levels of advancement.

Staff composition in every department reflects the talent and diversity of the city itself.
Data and modern technologies are appropriately utilized for better performance, innovation and engagement.

Data on the city’s progress toward its desired results are regularly reviewed, publicly available, and easy to understand.

Government and vendor data are available for public review and analysis.

Analytics are used to proactively support better outcomes.

Procurement practices allow new players to engage government contracting opportunities.

Cities use free, lightweight and open-source technological tools in addition to enterprise-level software solutions for effective information flow and innovation activities.