



DAIR STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031

November 2025



DAIR

DOWNSVIEW AEROSPACE | DOWNSVIEW AÉROSPATIALE
INNOVATION & RESEARCH | INNOVATION & RECHERCHE

A message from the Chair of the Board

DAIR stands today as a strong, connected and trusted voice for Canada’s aerospace innovation community. Through collaboration and ongoing engagement, the organization has evolved from a promising idea into a platform linking industry, academia and government around shared goals of competitiveness, sustainability and growth.

The results speak for themselves: stronger partnerships, expanded research capacity, and a growing network of companies that are innovating and contributing to Canada’s leadership in aerospace and defence. This progress reflects the dedication of our members and partners—and the steady leadership of the DAIR team.

Looking ahead, the environment for innovation is changing rapidly. With renewed federal focus on defence, supply chain modernization, and sustainable aviation, DAIR is well positioned to help translate these priorities into real outcomes for Canada’s aerospace sector. The next phase of DAIR’s journey will build on the momentum we have created –

deepening collaboration, fostering talent and ensuring that Canadian ideas continue to take flight.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to everyone who has helped make DAIR a catalyst for progress. Your commitment continues to drive the success of this organization and the future of aerospace innovation in Ontario and across Canada.



Andrew Petrou
Chair, Board of Directors

A Message from the Executive Director

Since its incorporation five years ago, Downsview Aerospace Innovation & Research (DAIR) has taken tremendous strides in strengthening Canada’s aerospace innovation ecosystem. What began as a shared vision to bring industry, academia and government together under one collaborative umbrella has matured into a platform driving research, training and industrial growth.

Together with our partners, we have built ever-increasing capabilities: new R&D partnerships between companies and researchers, testbeds for advancing sustainable technologies, project showcases highlighting innovations and the organizations shaping the future of our industry, and programs helping small and medium enterprises adopt digital tools and compete globally. In doing so, we are expanding DAIR’s reach from our regional base in Toronto to a provincial and national network that reflects the strength, ingenuity, and ambition of Canada’s aerospace community.

The landscape ahead presents opportunities, but also a need for urgent action. The federal budget and the forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy reaffirm the importance of aerospace and defence as critical drivers of Canada’s prosperity and sovereignty. At the same time, the global push for sustainability, digital transformation and resilient supply chains is reshaping how – and where – we innovate. These shifts present DAIR and our partners with an opportunity to secure Canada’s place at the forefront of next-generation technology.

As we look to the next five years, our mission remains clear: to enable collaborative innovation that accelerates growth across Canada’s aerospace and defence ecosystem. This means deepening partnerships, investing in shared infrastructure, advancing skills and training and creating pathways for SMEs to scale. Our work also contributes to the broader vision for Ontario’s aerospace sector – one built on collaboration, competitiveness and shared capacity – and we remain committed to leading with courage and working closely with partner organizations to align efforts and amplify impact.

The strategy presented here is ambitious by design. It reflects the bold opportunities before us – and the unprecedented moment we are in. Global challenges and technological disruption are transforming the aerospace and defence sectors faster than ever. To succeed, Canada must think bigger, move faster, and invest in shared capacity that enables innovation at scale. This plan positions DAIR to do exactly that: to be the connector, catalyst, and convenor that turns potential into progress. And as always, DAIR remains agile – ready to adapt, pivot, and respond to the evolving needs of our partners and the ecosystem we serve.

DAIR’s progress has always been the product of its community. I want to thank our partners – industry leaders, academic institutions, government departments, and innovators across the country – for their ongoing commitment and trust, as well as the DAIR team who drive our success. Together, we have proven what collaboration can achieve. Together, we will build what comes next.



A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Arthurs'.

Phil Arthurs
Executive Director



Who we are

DAIR is incorporated federally as a not-for-profit organization, a consortium of aerospace companies and post-secondary institutions.

MISSION:
Downsview Aerospace Innovation and Research (DAIR) catalyzes world-class innovation by facilitating collaboration within industry, academia, and government to develop transformative technologies and a future-ready workforce.

- We do this by:**
- Enabling access to state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure to accelerate leading-edge research and technology adoption.
 - Creating training solutions for business and technology challenges of today and tomorrow.

- Providing a platform for industry, academic and government to foster collaborative innovation.
- Supporting continuous improvement and innovation in the supply chain.
- Harnessing our collective voice to bring awareness to and promote the industry and innovation ecosystem locally, nationally, and globally.

MAIN EFFORT :
At all times, the principle focus of DAIR is on the effective collaboration within academia, industry and government on innovation and research.



DAIR Values

Our VALUES inspire our actions and decisions internally and with stakeholders.

TRUST

Trust is the foundation upon which we build our relationships with each other.

We build trust through our interactions with our members and stakeholders.

COMMITMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to teamwork, transparency and accountability in everything we do.

We are committed to supporting the Canadian aerospace industry, the public good and honouring the spirit of Downsview’s aerospace legacy.

CREATIVITY

We use our imagination to drive innovation.

Creativity and ingenuity are the root of the innovative solutions we bring to our members.

ADAPTABILITY & AGILITY

Adaptability and agility are critical to our success as a lean organization.

We continuously adapt to meet the needs of our members and maintain a sustainable organization.

COURAGE TO LEAD

Having the courage to lead, even in the face of adversity, is a key component of our success.

DAIR will lead with courage and determination to secure Canada’s position as a leader in the global aerospace industry.

ETHICS & INTEGRITY

Integrity underpins everything we do.

We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and always operate with honesty and integrity.

Concept of Operations

Over the next five years, DAIR will deliberately secure its place as a world class collaboration organisation. It will support the development of co-located, high calibre and sought after infrastructure that enables and fosters innovation through enhanced collaboration to the benefit of Canadian industry, academia, and government. Bringing these players together, either through innovative funding programs, inspired research, and transformative technologies, DAIR will catalyse innovation, drive change, and help form a workforce that is on the cutting edge of future requirements. Throughout, DAIR will strive to be a voice for aerospace and defence innovation.

Scheme of Maneuver

DAIR will execute on this strategy in three phases:

PHASE 1: Foundation and Validation (2026–2027)

DAIR will lay the foundation upon which the other phases will be based. By finalizing a deliberate strategy, as well as build out the associated governance framework, we will validate exactly how DAIR will advance over the next five years. Throughout, DAIR will execute on already underway early initiatives. In this phase the MOTH construction progresses. In addition to the continuation of DAIR’s current programs – specifically the DAIR Green Fund (GF) and DAIR Supplier Development Initiative (SDI), pilot R&D activities and workforce initiatives begin. Finally, within this phase, DAIR secures funding required to advance the next phase of a modular designed and built Innovation Hub. Throughout this phase DAIR’s Thought Leadership programming gains momentum.

PHASE 2: Design and Strategic Positioning (2028–2029)

DAIR designs the world class enablers and positions itself to be the collaborator of choice within aerospace and defence, and more broadly and as applicable, advanced manufacturing. DAIR will launch the Coordination

Office as the catalyst for innovation and research. DAIR will also seek to formalize academic/industry alignment. Prior to the end of this phase the Innovation Hub design and permitting is completed and the early modules of the Hub near completion. Throughout this phase and in concert with the planning and execution of confirmed Hub modules, DAIR works to secure additional funding to support growth of the Hub and growth of the broader DAIR District (including supporting its partner organizations).

PHASE 3: Execution and Expansion (2030–2031)

Realization of many of the DAIR foundational ideas takes place. Monumentally, DAIR will open the next phase of its world class enabler, the Innovation Hub. This will allow for innovation and research on a drastically increased scale allowing DAIR to achieve set operational targets for collaboration and workforce engagement. Although currently focused on Southern Ontario, in this phase DAIR attracts nation wide collaboration and communicates as a global-facing policy voice and strategic integrator for innovation. It is also within this phase that DAIR revisits the end state and determines the next evolution of its mission (sequel planning).

Lines of Operation

To synchronise the key elements of this strategy, DAIR has divided efforts into four key Lines of Operation (LOO), each containing Decisive Points (DPs, or intermediate objectives):

- ➔ **LOO 1 - Collaborative Innovation & Research (Main Effort)**
- ➔ **LOO 2 - Workforce Development**
- ➔ **LOO 3 - Physical Infrastructure**
- ➔ **LOO 4 - Aerospace and Defence Awareness**

1

LOO 1 – Collaborative Innovation and Research (Main Effort)

- DP1.1** – Launch and complete a comprehensive review of the DAIR Innovation Network (I.N.), including its model, governance, ROI, and revenue generation (2026)
- DP1.2** – Beyond the scope of current Green Fund (GF) and Supplier Development Initiative (SDI) programs, launch 2–3 collaborative pilot projects (2026–2027)
- DP1.3** – Execution of current government funded programs, namely FedDev Regional Innovation Ecosystem (RIE) (2027)
- DP1.4** – Secure funding for the continued delivery of the GF and SDI (2026)
- DP1.5** – MOTH facility operational (2028) and acting as headquarters for DAIR and meeting space to support collaborative innovation activities [LOO3]
- DP1.6** – Establish DAIR R&D Coordination Office (2028)
- DP1.7** – First academic-partnered solution adopted by industry (2028)
- DP1.8** – 10 or more collaborative projects per year with diverse participation (2030–2031)

2

LOO 2 – Workforce Development

- DP2.1** – DAIR-anchored post-secondary aerospace education coalition (2026-27)
- DP2.2** – Agreements with all Ontario aerospace education institutions (2028)
- DP2.3** – DAIR formal advisory role in provincial / federal workforce policy (2031)

LOO 3 – Physical Infrastructure

- DP3.1** – MOTH building operational (2027-28)
- DP3.2** – Funding secured for the next phase of modular Innovation Hub, aligned with the broader vision for the entirety of the Hub (2027)
- DP3.3** – Next modules of Innovation Hub completed and operational (2029–2031)
- DP3.4** – Begin planning and securing funding for next phases of Innovation Hub (2029)

3

LOO 4 – Aerospace and Defence Awareness

- DP4.1** – Review begins and completed on current Thought Leadership activities, combined with planning for the next phases of activities (2026)
- DP4.2** – Solidify DAIR’s place as a voice for innovation in provincial / federal forums (2026-7)
- DP4.3** – Planning for an annual thought leadership meeting / activity related to Workforce Development (2026) [LOO2]
- DP4.4** – International recognition as aerospace and defence innovation node (2030–2031)

4



End State

By 2031, DAIR will be:

- A globally recognized aerospace innovation hub facilitating breakthrough solutions for the aerospace and defence industry
- Financially self-sustaining, with core operations (including physical infrastructure management) funded through recurring, diversified sources
- A provincial and national R&D integrator trusted by industry, academia and all levels of government
- The primary workforce interface between Ontario's post-secondary institutions and the aerospace industry
- A respected voice in national and international development and policy networks

End state indicators:

- 10 collaborative research / innovation projects per year
- Infrastructure operating at >85% capacity
- Agreements / MOUs with all Ontario aerospace post-secondary institutions
- Positive operating balance
- Regular participation in at least 2 national and 2 international forums

Sequel Planning

Once the final phase of the strategy is underway, sequel planning for the follow-on strategy must begin. This sequel planning will need to be aligned with the ongoing strategy implementation and therefore may dictate modifications to both the current (Phase 3) execution as well as a tailoring of the new strategy to the (then) current reality.



An example of a possible sequel strategy would be:

Transition and advance DAIR and the current DAIR District to an Innovation Centre for Advanced Manufacturing, including electric vehicles, automotive, aerospace, rail, and related underlying technologies.

Objectives:

- 1. Inspire students to pursue a career path in these industries across Ontario, through engagement with participating colleges/universities;
- 2. Use onsite machinery and technology, as well as qualified support people for Proof of Concept (PoC) projects with students and Ontario manufacturers, across industries;
- 3. Train students on applicable, current, and innovative technology.

Sequel planning would require a commitment of resources, the size of which would depend on the scope of the change to core elements of DAIR. The above example would require as a minimum:

- 1. Designing a new governance structure, to accommodate a full multi-sector Innovation Centre as well as focused programming;
- 2. A core planning and implementation team to develop the plan with representatives from industry and education institutions;
- 3. A review of government expectations for immediate and future funding applications.

LINES OF OPERATION/ DECISIVE POINTS TIMELINE

LINES OF OPERATION	PHASE 1: 2026-27	PHASE 2: 2028-29	PHASE 3: 2030-31	END STATE
Collaborative Innovation and Research (main effort)	DP1.1 DP1.2 DP1.3 DP1.4	DP1.5 DP1.6 DP1.7	DP1.8	• A globally recognized aerospace innovation hub facilitating breakthrough solutions for the aerospace and defence industry • Financially self-sustaining, with core operations (including physical infrastructure management) funded through recurring, diversified sources • A provincial national R&D integrator trusted by industry, academia and all levels of government • The primary workforce interface between Ontario's post-secondary institutions and the aerospace industry • A respected voice in national and international development and policy networks
Workforce Development	DP2.1	DP2.2	DP2.3	
Physical Infrastructure	DP3.1 DP3.2	DP3.3 DP3.4		
A&D Awareness	DP4.1 DP4.2 DP4.3		DP4.4	



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