Advancing Strategic Priorities

The City recently launched its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, which will help guide many of the strategic investments to be included in future budgets. For the 2024 Budget, the proposed strategic priorities for Council's consideration reflect actions identified during the first two years of implementation the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Funding has already been allocated in the draft 2024 budget in order to hit the ground running to implement the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Approximately **$5.5M** has been allocated to advance strategic priorities, including investments being made under the following five strategic goal areas:

Building a Connected City Together

- **$1.2M** from the Affordable Housing Reserve to advance the implementation of the Housing for All Strategy
- **$700k** to support the continued implementation of the downtown cycling grid
- **$300k** for trail improvements along the Walter Bean Trail

Cultivating a Green City Together

- **$300k** to continue greening the City's fleet, including the replacement of two traditional ice resurfacers with electric
- **$190k** to advance the City's tree canopy plan
- **$670k** to support GHG reduction pathways for City facilities and advance the City's facilities capital workplan

Creating an Economically Thriving City Together

- **$240k** to launch additional special events, including one new major festival in Kitchener in 2024
- **$117k** for the Creative Hub Affordable Artist Workplace Program, to continue to provide a space to support artists in our community
- **$150k** to support the launch of the Centralized Service Provider, increasing coordination across City arts and entertainment facilities

Fostering a Caring City Together

- **$172k** to reduce financial barriers to recreational programming for youth, new Canadians, seniors, and those with low-income
- **$173k** to expand some community centre hours on weekends
- **$200k** to create a permanent Indigenous space in Huron Natural Area
- **$136k** to add library collections to some City-owned community centres in partnership with KPL

Stewarding a Better City Together

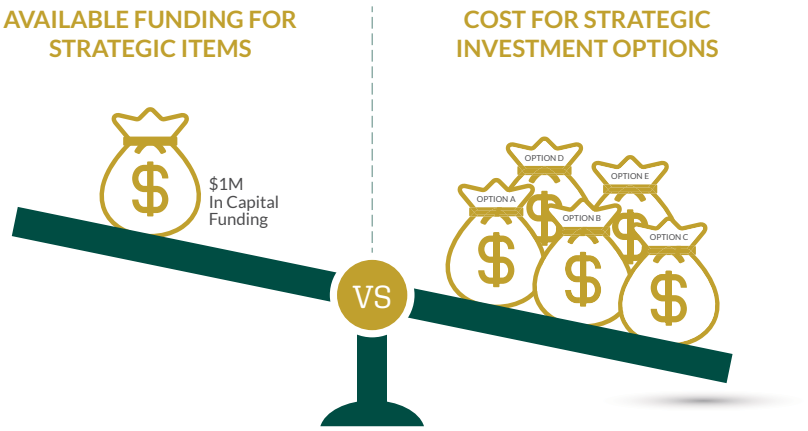
- **$100k** to advance procurement innovation with the launch of the Pitch Kitchener initiative
- **$900k** to increase wages for the lowest paid city employees, providing a sustainable wage while remaining a competitive employer

In addition to items that have been built into the City's draft budget, $1M in one-time capital funding is available and unallocated. The funding available is a result of one-time dividends received as part of the ENOVA hydro merger.

Potential options for consideration are summarized below. All of these options will help advance the priorities articulated through the Strategic Plan. The complete list of options totals $2M, so some items will need to be addressed through future budgets.

Further information about strategic items, both built-in items and investment options are included in the appendices.

FUNDING VERSUS COSTS IMBALANCE:



STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS OF FOCUS		
A	Building a Connected City Together	$500,000

- $200k to support the continued implementation of the City's Housing for All Strategy
- $300k for additional cycling and trail connections that support City-wide Active Transportation Routes

B	Cultivating a Green City Together	$500,000

- $200k for the development of an arena energy strategy as part of the City's Corporate Climate Action Plan 2.0
- $300k for two additional playground replacements in 2024

C	Creating an Economically Thriving City Together	$200,000

- $100k to Accelerate Commercial Business Approvals
- $100k to support the initial implementation of a new Arts & Culture Master Plan

D	Fostering a Caring CIty Together	$500,000

- $200k to develop a Municipal Newcomers Strategy, including community engagement
- $300k to improve access and increase usage at Cameron Heights Pool

E	Stewarding a Better City Together	$300,000

- $100k for a Digital Kitchener Strategy refresh to investigate and adopt technologies to improve service delivery to residents
- $200k for the implementation of a city-wide data strategy to build organization-wide data practices to deliver better services for residents