



The Corporation of the City of Stratford  
Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee  
Open Session  
AGENDA

**Date:** Tuesday, May 20, 2025  
**Time:** 4:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Council Chamber, City Hall  
**Sub-committee Present:** Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar  
**Staff Present:** Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Michael Koktan - Manager of Financial Services, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair to call the meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence

from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

**3. Delegations**

**3.1 Request for Delegation - Stratford Arts and Culture Collective**

Chris Leberg, Co-chair, and Marian deWever, Board Member, on behalf of Stratford Arts and Culture Collective will be appealing the Community Grants decision and requesting reconsideration of the denied application.

Motion by

**THAT Chris Leberg and Marian deWever of Stratford Arts and Culture Collective be heard.**

**4. Report of the Director of Corporate Services**

**4.1 Destination Stratford 2025 Update 1 (FIN25-012)**

4 - 26

Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford, will be in attendance to present the update.

Motion by

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Destination Stratford 2025 Update 1" (FIN25-012), dated May 20, 2025, be received for information.**

**4.2 Deposits for Land Leases and the Procurement Process (FIN25-014)**

27 - 29

Motion by

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Deposits for Land Leases and the Procurement Process" (FIN25-014), be received for information;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff regarding changes, if any, to be included in the procurement policy and process.**

**5. Report of the Manager of Financial Services**

**5.1 Operating Budget Variance Report as of March 31, 2025 (FIN25-013)**

30 - 35

Motion by

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Operating Budget Variance Report as of March 31, 2025" (FIN25-013), be received for information.**

**6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes**

There are no Advisory Committee/Outside Board minutes to be provided to Sub-committee.

**7. Next Sub-committee Meeting**

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is June 17, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

**8. Adjournment**

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

**Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting adjourn.**




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## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** May 20, 2025  
**To:** Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee  
**From:** Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer  
**Report Number:** FIN25-012  
**Attachments:** Destination Stratford 2025 Update 1

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**Title:** Destination Stratford 2025 Update 1

**Objective:** To receive an update on activities and financials for Destination Stratford for 2024 and 2025 to date.

**Background:** Destination Stratford gives regular updates to Council through the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee.

**Analysis:** Zac Gribble from Destination Stratford has been invited to attend to present the attached report for Destination Stratford.

### **Financial Implications:**

#### **Financial impact to previous year and current year operating budgets:**

In 2024, the City contribution to Destination Stratford was \$618,800 plus \$150,000 toward the Lights On Stratford program, for a total contribution of \$768,800 (\$75,000 coming from Municipal Accommodation Tax revenues and \$693,800 via the tax levy). Destination Stratford had a total operating budget of \$1,469,921 in 2024. Based on the presented information Destination Stratford had a modest surplus of \$2,165 after transferring \$35,000 to reserve.

In 2025, the City contribution to Destination Stratford is budgeted at \$643,552 plus \$150,000 toward the Lights On Stratford program, for a total contribution of \$793,552 (\$150,000 coming from Municipal Accommodation Tax revenues and \$643,552 via the tax levy). Destination Stratford has a total operating budget of \$1,440,802 in 2025.

Beyond the financial contributions from the City, there are some in-kind impacts that are provided in the form of facility costs at 47 Downie, and specific program supports from the Community Services division including the Al Fresco program. The costs relating to the building are included in the City Facilities division and were estimated at

\$89,930 in 2025, consisting of custodial costs, heat, hydro, water, and other general maintenance.

**Financial impact on future year operating budgets:**

Financial impacts on future operating budgets are determined based on the City's support of Destination Stratford through annual operating contributions. The Lights On event will also continue to require support as outlined in presentations.

**Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

**Work Together For Greater Impact**

This includes building meaningful partnerships to address community needs and implementing the Sports Tourism strategy in partnership with the City, Destination Stratford and local sports development groups and industry partners.

**Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

**Equity and Local Economy**

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Destination Stratford 2025 Update 1" (FIN25-012), dated May 20, 2025, be received for information.**

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer
<b>Recommended by:</b>	Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer
<b>Approved for Council by:</b>	Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



# Council Finance & Labour Relations Update

May 20, 2025

- 2025 YTD budget is on track
- 2024 Audited Financial Statements awaiting Board approval
- MAT Q1
- \$25,000 Ontario Seniors Community Grant Program | Stratford Walking Soccer
- \$50,000 OCAF Lights On Stratford grant application
- Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF)
- Stratford After Dark / Après Theatre Music Pop-up Fund
- 2025 RESEARCH:
  - Stratford Tourism Resident Sentiment Survey
  - Tourism Supply-Chain Analysis Report
  - Indigenous Tourism Assessment

Destination Stratford 2025 Budget	2024 Adjusted	2024 Actual	2025 Adjusted	2025 Actual	Notes
				as of 2025-04-24	
<b>REVENUE</b>					
3999 · MAT DS PORTION	300,000	329,536	325,000	0	Estimate based on 2024
4050 · MARKETING SALES	138,500	137,947	143,250	19,816	
4260 · PARTNERSHIPS	722,800	696,108	747,552	651,441	
(4001 · City of Stratford Portion)	618,800	618,800	643,552	643,941	
4017 · CITY LOS CONTRIBUTION (MAT)	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	
9999 · TRANSFER FROM RESERVES	158,621	83,621	75,000	0	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>1,469,921</b>	<b>1,397,216</b>	<b>1,440,802</b>	<b>821,258</b>	
<b>EXPENSE</b>					
5100 · CONTRACT AND CONSULTING	15,000	23,675	17,500	7,623	Destination Stewardship Cou
<b>DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT</b>					
5992 · STRATFORD AL FRESCO (MAT)	35,000	37,252	37,500	60	
5997 · LIGHTS ON STRATFORD (MAT)	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	City + DS matched contributi
5999 · SPORT TOURISM OFFICE (MAT)	75,000	49,283	72,500	17,833	
6480D · PAYROLL · DEVELOPMENT	157,991	151,117	165,761	56,297	Destination Development Pro
5950 · SPECIAL PROJECTS	78,000	57,291	65,000	28,228	Destination Development Fu
5990 · PARTNERSHIPS	31,000	36,125	31,750	3,875	
<b>Total Development</b>	<b>676,991</b>	<b>631,072</b>	<b>672,511</b>	<b>406,293</b>	
<b>DESTINATION MARKETING</b>					
6480M · PAYROLL · MARKETING	236,986	226,676	248,641	84,446	
6000 · MARKETING - INTERNET	19,475	20,627	19,477	3,995	
6150 · MARKETING - MEDIA & PRINT	132,590	121,456	97,490	48,855	
6151 · MARKETING - RADIO	2,500	0	2,500	0	
6152 · MARKETING - TRAILS, INFLUENCERS	130,971	133,824	138,750	8,384	
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>522,522</b>	<b>502,586</b>	<b>506,858</b>	<b>145,679</b>	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>					
5637 · BANK CHARGES	4,000	4,051	4,000	1,343	
5645 · INSURANCE	5,250	5,683	8,500	6,344	
5660 · TRAVEL	2,500	406	2,500	100	
6153 · PROFESSIONAL FEES	23,200	17,827	28,200	719	
6155 · FACILITY MAINTENANCE	2,000	2,359	4,750	0	
6480A · PAYROLL · ADMIN	131,659	125,931	138,134	46,914	
6540 · OFFICE EXPENDITURES	32,800	22,947	25,850	4,421	
6550 · EVENT EXPENSES	2,000	5,750	5,000	1,638	
7000 · TELEPHONE/COMMUNICATIONS	17,000	17,763	17,000	5,654	
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>220,409</b>	<b>202,717</b>	<b>233,934</b>	<b>67,133</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>1,434,921</b>	<b>1,360,051</b>	<b>1,430,802</b>	<b>626,727</b>	
5154 Transfer to Reserve	35,000	35,000.00	10,000	0	
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,165</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>194,530</b>	



# DESTINATION STRATFORD US- CANADA TARIFF STATEMENT

March 5, 2025

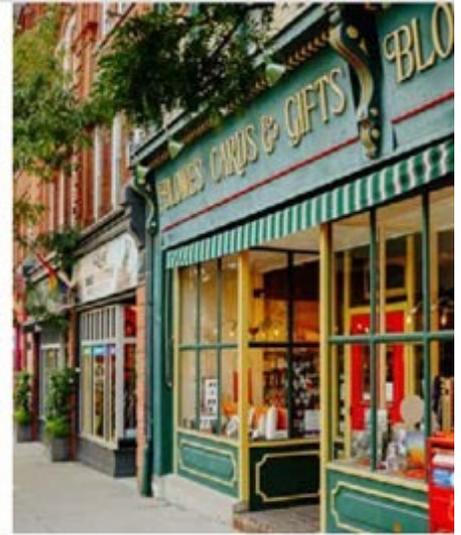
As a prominent Canadian cultural destination for over 70 years, Stratford has proudly welcomed and hosted millions of visitors from across Canada and around the world, including many from the United States.

With the unfortunate recent trade tariffs imposed by the United States on Canada, Stratford's community and economy may face significant challenges. Destination Stratford's mission is to improve the quality of life for all our residents and visitors, and we stand united with our city and country as we navigate through this period of uncertainty and disruption.

To our friends, families and visitors who reside south of the border, we recognize and are grateful for the deep friendship and ties that connect us, despite the current challenges. We will continue to welcome you as we always have.

To our fellow Canadians, we encourage everyone to support, explore and celebrate all the incredible destinations and experiences across our amazing country!

Stratford is a welcoming community, and we look forward to hosting your visit.



**2024 YEAR IN REVIEW**  
**DESTINATION**  
**STRATFORD**  
**ARTS** THE ARTS ARE WHAT WE ARE



**DESTINATION MARKETING** Destination Stratford strategically crafted and executed impactful marketing campaigns designed to elevate destination awareness and drive year-round visitation. These campaigns were thoughtfully deployed across a range of platforms, including print, radio, digital media, broadcast television, regional billboards, social media, and influencer partnerships. As a result of influencer partnerships and joint collaborations, over 2 million people were reached through social media alone. Targeting both Canadian and U.S. border-city audiences, as well as regional visitors, the campaigns aimed to attract overnight stays. Performance metrics highlight notable achievements, including impressive website traffic, successful culinary trail sales, and exceptional engagement and storytelling across social media channels.

# 58

**INFLUENCER  
COLLABORATIONS**



# 1,873,608

**INFLUENCER COLLAB SOCIAL MEDIA REACH**

**55,693 LIKES**

**11,474 COMMENTS**

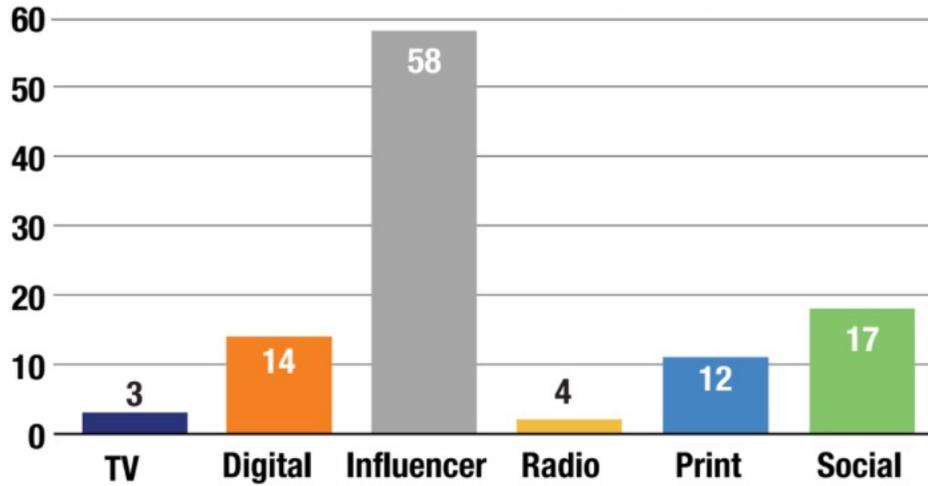
**57,020 SHARES + SAVES**

**2,910,857 VIDEO VIEWS**

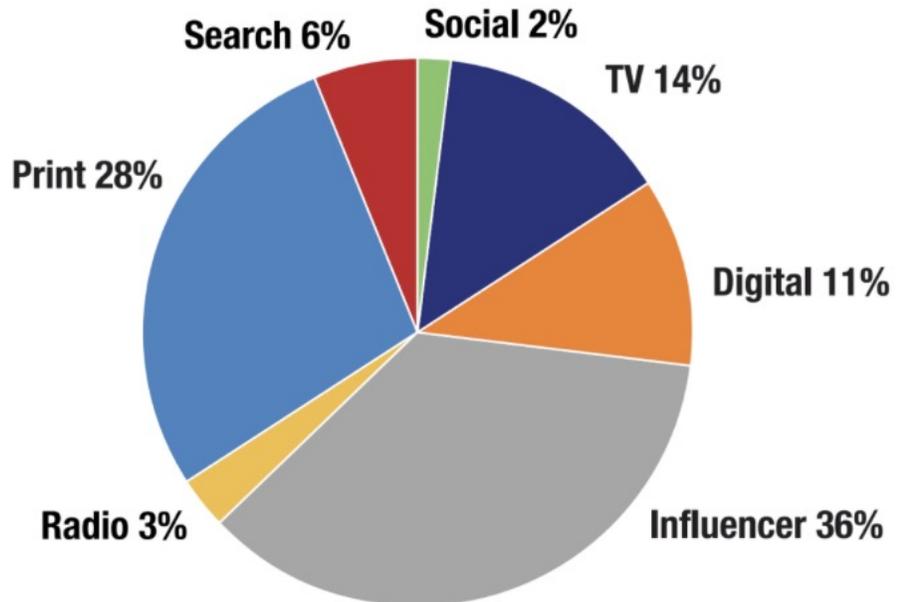
Destination Stratford secured over 90 tourism-related articles and features across various media platforms, including print, online, and radio, encompassing both owned and earned content. The team crafted 10 press releases and facilitated numerous interviews with local and regional outlets, in addition to sending quarterly round-ups to key publications and freelancers. The resulting articles spanned a wide range of subjects, such as Destination Stratford's marketing initiatives, industry news, press release coverage, community events, collaborative efforts, and curated blog posts.



## 2024 MARKETING CAMPAIGNS (108) BY CHANNEL



## 2024 ADVERTISING SPEND BY CHANNEL



## Digital Promotion with Google Ad Grants

In our third year with Louise Street Marketing working on our Google Search Ads using the Google Grants Program, Destination Stratford had over 18,919 new users visit our Web site and a total of 9% of our site visits linking from the Google Ads. The quality of clicks from the ads in 2024 had some gains in the engagement rate and the time on site increasing by 28% and 70% respectively. The 2024 total value in free ads gained through this program was \$40,603. Louise Street Marketing is paid a monthly management fee for their work on our behalf.

*"From superlative restaurants and trendy cafes to great indie shopping, a thriving art scene and beautiful walking and hiking trails, Stratford's attractions are myriad, multifaceted and enjoyable in every season." Danny S*

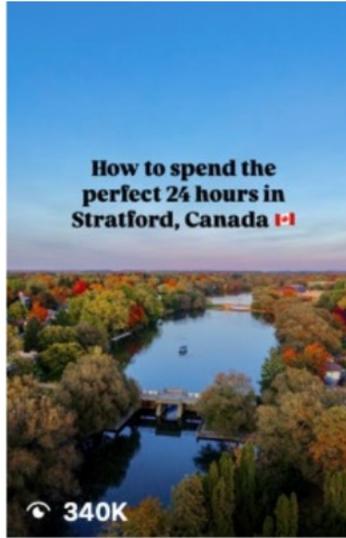
*"Stratford is such a great little town with so many amazing things to do and places to eat and shop and also the perfect destination for a wedding!" Jessica S*

*"Just a three hour drive (from Michigan) and yet a world away, Stratford is one of my favorite weekend getaway destinations." Liz M*





1.2M  
VIEWS: 1,237,958  
ENGAGEMENT: 44,446



340K  
VIEWS: 338,434  
ENGAGEMENT: 24,808



319K  
VIEWS: 319,269  
ENGAGEMENT: 12,911



180K  
VIEWS: 180,712  
ENGAGEMENT: 2,381



97.9K  
VIEWS: 97,469  
ENGAGEMENT: 8,331

# Top 10 Instagram reels of 2024



103K  
VIEWS: 96,890  
ENGAGEMENT: 3,338



66.9K  
VIEWS: 66,969  
ENGAGEMENT: 6,017



61.3K  
VIEWS: 61,357  
ENGAGEMENT: 2,300



51.6K  
VIEWS: 51,681  
ENGAGEMENT: 2,205



41.5K  
VIEWS: 41,561  
ENGAGEMENT: 1,317

*“Wandering through Lights on Stratford felt like stepping into a winter dream – glowing displays, cozy vibes, and a little bit of magic in every corner. Definitely a must-see and something we are excited to make a yearly tradition!!”*  
*@inspiredbyyouradventures*

# Destination Stratford Culinary Trails

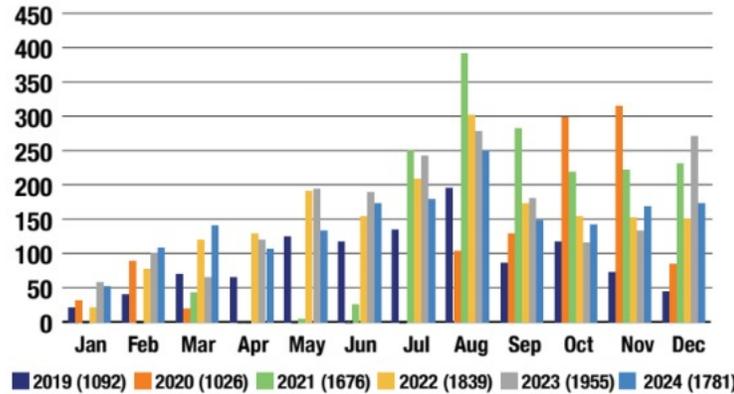
Destination Stratford's culinary trails have been a cornerstone of the city's tourism offerings for 14 years, having first debuted with the Chocolate Trail in 2010. The program currently features two year-round trails—the Chocolate Trail and the Bacon & Ale Trail—along with two highly successful seasonal offerings: the Christmas Trail (November and December) and the Savour & Sip Trail (May through October). Each trail, priced at \$35 + HST, provides participants with vouchers that can be redeemed at a curated selection of participating businesses, complemented by an interactive digital map for easy navigation.

These culinary trails represent a remarkable year-round attraction, offering a diverse, seasonal experience for visitors. The trails have garnered significant popularity, drawing both locals and visitors alike with thousands of passes sold annually. This initiative not only supports the local economy by driving traffic to participating businesses but also provides a dynamic platform for Destination Stratford to promote its range of retailers and dining establishments through an engaging, hands-on experience. Furthermore, it enables Destination Stratford to track sales and monitor the increased foot traffic to businesses, while encouraging visitors to extend their stay and fully immerse themselves in the offerings of our vibrant destination.

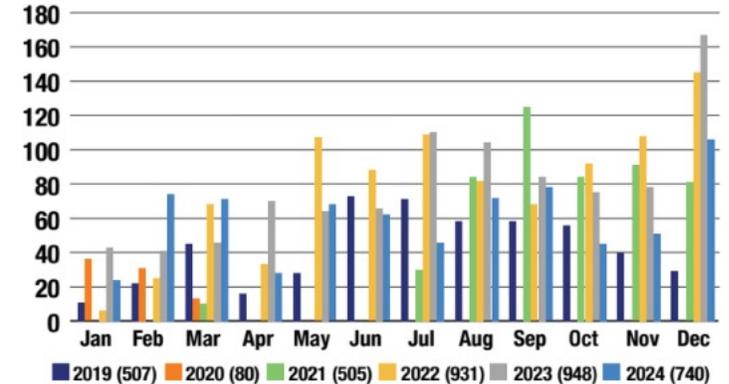
In 2024, over 110 local businesses collectively participated across our 4 culinary trails. **These participants saw over 20,000 visits to their businesses!**

## Destination Stratford has seen a consistent rise in culinary trails sales across all 4 trails, resulting in over 20,000 local businesses visited in 2024

Chocolate Trail - 2019 through 2024



Bacon & Ale Trail - 2019 through 2024



### PERCENTAGE INCREASE OVER PRE-PANDEMIC 2019

CHOCOLATE TRAIL

+79%

BACON & ALE TRAIL

+87%

CHRISTMAS TRAIL

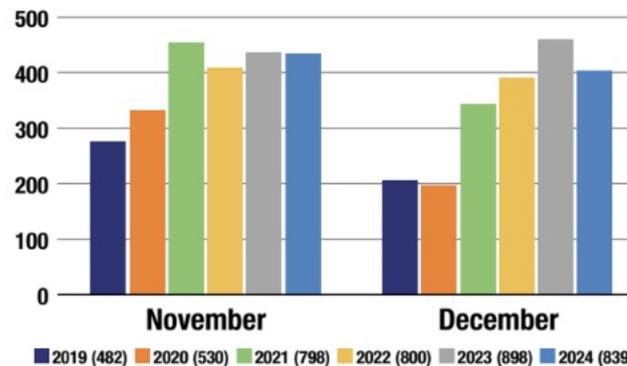
+86%

SAVOUR & SIP TRAIL

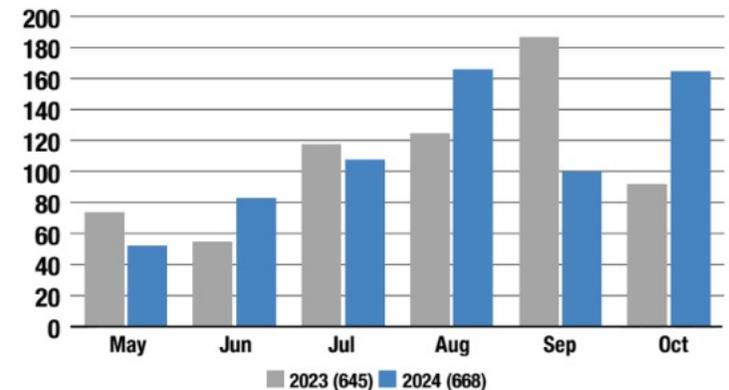
NEW

## OVER 100,000 LOCAL BUSINESSES VISITED OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

Christmas Trail - 2019 through 2024



Savour & Sip Trail - 2023 & 2024



## Stratford Al Fresco

Building on its success from the previous 4 years, Stratford Al Fresco dining areas were in as high demand in 2024 as they have been since the start. Destination Stratford's Al Fresco staff provided visitor information and seasonal daily cleaning and maintenance of Al Fresco tables at all locations, especially first thing each morning, and at peak use times during the day.

NEW for 2024, Stratford City Council adopted Destination Stratford's recommended liquor-with-food in public spaces bylaw revisions to remove restrictions regarding consumer purchases and containers and to expand it to a year-round program with a wide variety of participating restaurants. With Al Fresco tables remaining outside year-round and events like Lights On Stratford in the winter, local businesses are offering both warm alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to be enjoyed during our chilly months. A year-round European approach to liquor in public spaces, together with our creative local culinary sector, uniquely positions Stratford as a progressive destination that is clearly differentiated from other competing Ontario locations.

[VisitStratford.ca/alfresco](https://www.visitstratford.ca/alfresco)



# 15 Sport Tourism

2024 marked a transformative year for Stratford Sport Tourism, as efforts focused on fostering partnerships, developing strategies, and delivering impactful initiatives that enriched the community.

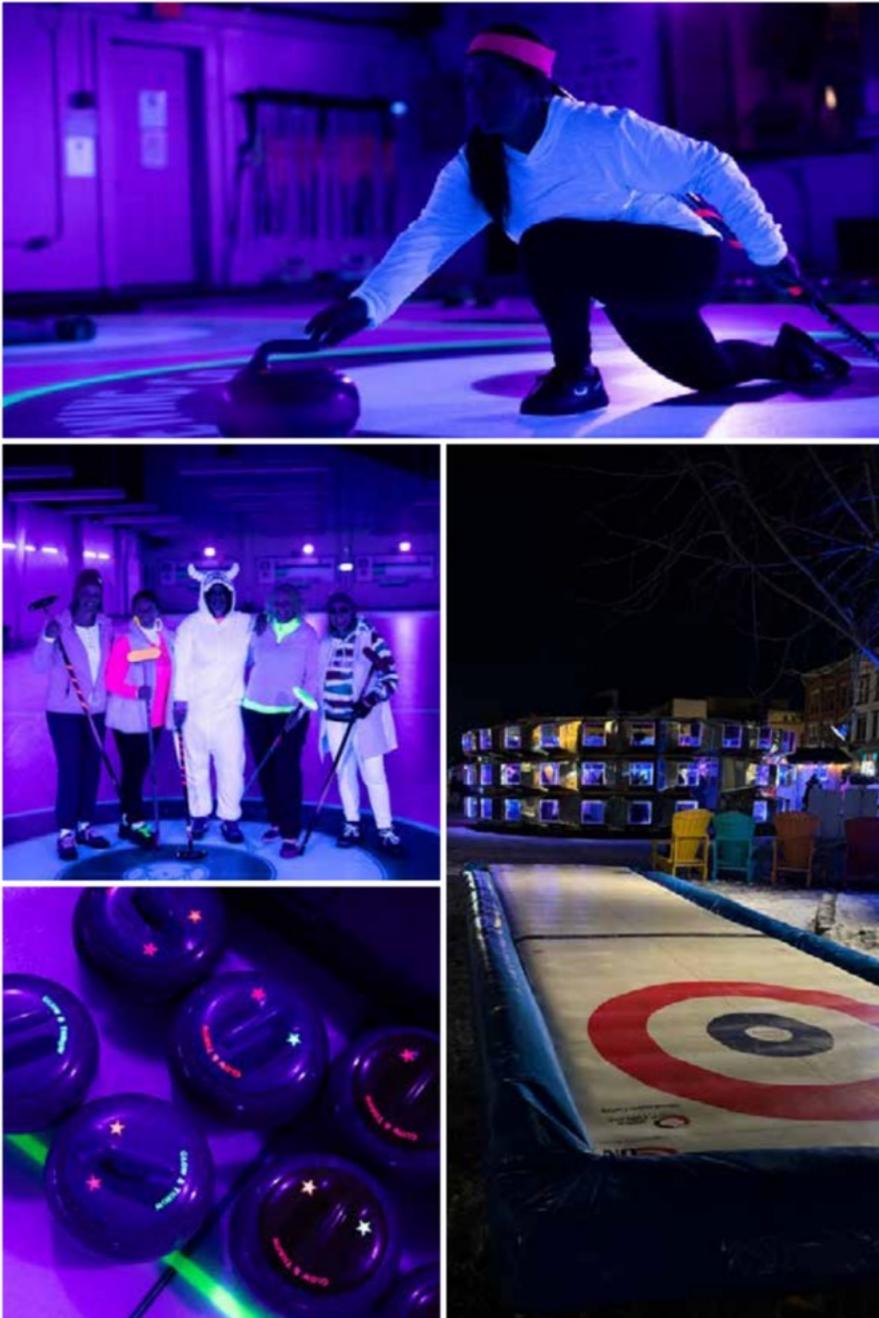
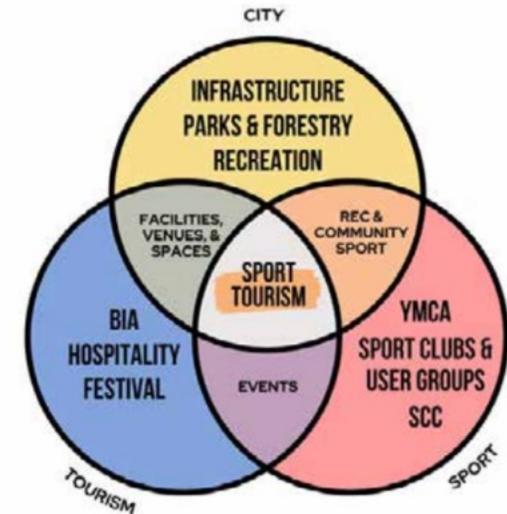
- The appointment of a dedicated Sport Tourism Director in March 2024 brought strategic leadership and a renewed focus on integrating sport tourism into the city's broader tourism vision.
- Over 30 new partnerships were established locally and beyond, laying the foundation for shared success across sport, recreation, and tourism sectors.
- Efforts were focused on aligning sport tourism with the overall strategies of the BIA and local businesses. This work emphasized the value of sport tourism as an asset rather than a challenge, fostering a shared vision and collaboration to enhance the local tourism experience.
- Comprehensive grant application packages totaling \$8,485,000 were assembled in collaboration with local partners, targeting the expansion of offerings and enhancement of resources.
- Successful glow-in-the-dark curling experiences were held in partnership with

the Stratford Country Club as part of Lights On Stratford. Glow & Throw attracted over 550 participants over 5 weeks and received overwhelmingly positive feedback, including testimonials such as:

*"The family experience of Glow and Throw Curling was excellent. We had no experienced curlers, and it felt really comfortable playing for fun and not worrying about technique or abilities...Everybody had an amazing time, and we would go again if the opportunity ever arises.." – Monique B*

*"I was so pleased with the afternoon. From a kind hello when we entered, to excellent instruction, everything was covered. The venue was beautiful, the hot chocolate made with care, and the Glow added a fun element.." – Marjori M*

[VisitStratford.ca/sporttourism](https://VisitStratford.ca/sporttourism)



## Municipal Cultural Plan

The City of Stratford, in partnership with Destination Stratford, started work in 2022 on a Municipal Cultural Plan for Stratford. The project gathered information through public consultations and provided recommendations for growth and next steps. The final Municipal Cultural Plan was presented to City Council in June 2023. The Municipal Cultural Plan offers guidance on the long-term and short-term growth of Stratford's cultural fabric and community, and knits together policies covering a wide range of areas and cultural sectors into a growth strategy that sets the city on a path towards its desired long-term vision.

In 2024, the position of Culture, Sport & Sponsorship Coordinator within the City of Stratford's Community Services department began in August. Destination Stratford has regular meetings and communications with Community Services in order to move forward on fulfilling the intentions of the Municipal Cultural Plan.

[VisitStratford.ca/municipalculturalplan](https://www.visitstratford.ca/municipalculturalplan)



## Poet Laureate

The Stratford Poet Laureate Program aims to celebrate and elevate the literary arts through written and spoken word. The program will collect, save, and share unique stories from Stratford and the surrounding area. These stories reflect our community's character, both now and for years to come.

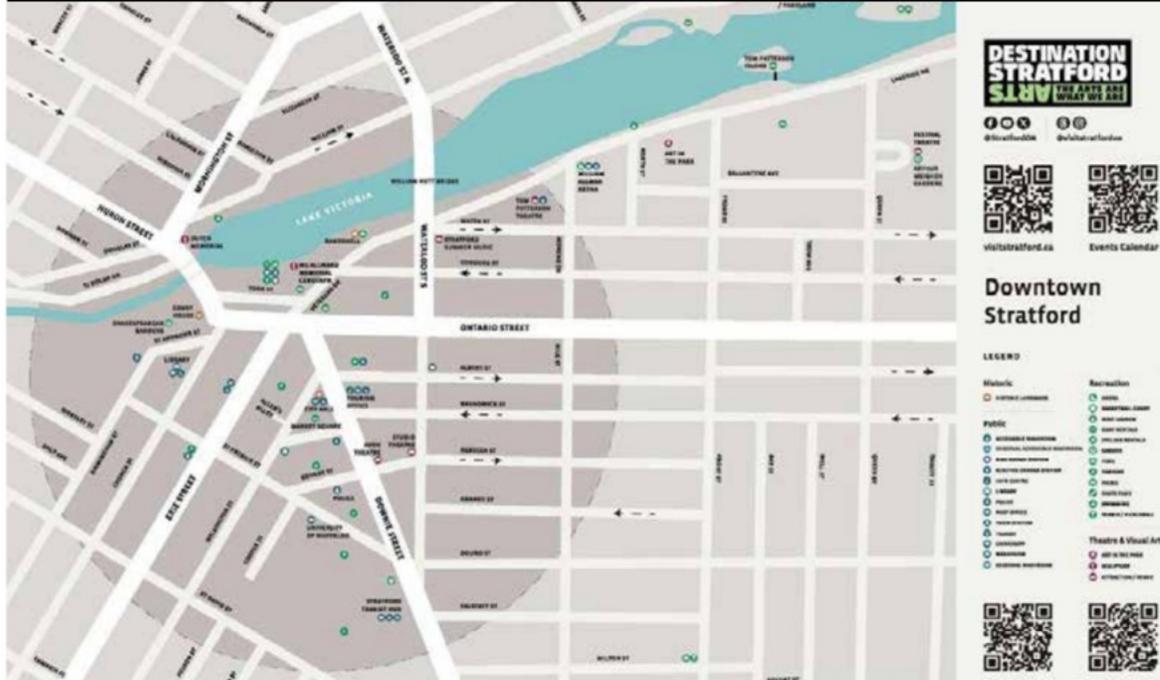
The poet laureate writes poetry about the area, composes poems for special events, participates in public performances, works with local poets and writers, and acts as a literary ambassador for the city and the region. The work of the poet laureate culminates with the creation of a legacy project which is a unique and lasting contribution to the community.

This initial Stratford Poet Laureate program is a three-year pilot project (February 2025 to February 2028) managed by Destination Stratford and Stratford Public Library, and is formally recognized by City of Stratford Council via the Community Services department.

[visitstratford.ca/poetlaureate](https://www.visitstratford.ca/poetlaureate)



**DESTINATION MANAGEMENT** Destination Stratford continues to prioritize destination management year-round; working closely with various community stakeholders and the City of Stratford to enhance the destination and ultimately improve both the visitor experience and quality of life for residents.



**Tearaway Maps** After receiving visitor and partner feedback regarding the usage of paper maps, Destination Stratford created a new tearaway map in 2024. These maps are easy to use due to their size and that they come in pads of 50. These maps are clean for marking locations for visitors, without bleed-through, and are small enough to carry easily. The maps were well-used and received positive feedback from users. There were at least 167 map pads picked up or delivered by the Destination Stratford team to our tourism partners in 2024 and a reprint is planned to prepare for another busy year.



## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives

In continuing with our initial diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) project goals, Destination Stratford incorporates this work across our projects. In 2024, Destination Stratford team members worked with Community Services on their New Horizons grant to bring ideas to help shape how this grant could impact our community. These meetings resulted in a newcomers to Stratford breakfast and bus tour, plus a multicultural celebration. A few other events were grown and cultivated from these group meetings that celebrated several facets of our community.

Another Welcoming Community initiative from 2024, in collaboration with the Stratford Public Library and the City of Stratford's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department, was Welcome to Stratford resources in the form of an online directory and physical welcome package. These resources assist newcomers to Stratford in finding services that they will need to set themselves up in our community. A community that is a welcome place to live is also a welcome place to visit.

In 2024, Destination Stratford was pleased to financially support the Chinese cultural event in City Hall Auditorium in August and the Navaratri celebration in October. Using our development funds to support the sharing of culture for our residents was something new for our organization and we were proud to play a role in these celebrations.

Destination Stratford remains committed to DEI, and fully participates in this ongoing journey with other like-minded community businesses and organizations.

## 2025 AND BEYOND

Destination Stratford is excited to work collaboratively with our community towards realizing the vision contained in our 2030 Strategic Plan.

In practical, tangible terms, Destination Stratford is committed to:

- An inclusive, collaborative and community-first approach to developing and marketing Stratford as a year-round cultural destination.
- Creating annual work plans, starting in 2025, with prioritized destination development and marketing initiatives informed by our Strategic Plan and by community input, and tied to the annual budgets.
- Transitioning our Stratford Tourism Office into a Welcome Centre with continual cultural activations that benefit visitors, residents and local businesses.
- Creating new Sport Tourism and Sport Development opportunities that fit the size, scale and seasonality of Stratford.
- Working in partnership with the City of Stratford and local organizations to collaboratively implement the Municipal Cultural Plan through enabling local arts and culture and supporting placemaking.
- Continuing to host Tourism Advisory Committee meetings each Spring and Fall including specific committees for Accommodation, Culinary, Retail, Sport, and Festival & Events.
- Forming a new Destination Stewardship Council that brings a more diverse community perspective to help determine and shape destination development priorities and indicators.
- Continuing to present reports and fiscal updates to Stratford City Council regularly throughout the year.
- Creating and publicly sharing a refined annual Year-In-Review report that links back to the annual work plan as well as the Strategic Plan to evaluate progress over time.



“Back in the 1950s, the founding of the Stratford Festival made Stratford a top Canadian cultural travel destination. The theatre season has grown over the years to almost eight months, but it is vital for local tourism partners to have visitor trade 12 months of the year. Creating winter cultural activations like Lights On Stratford and developing new sport tourism opportunities are part of a smart strategy to expand the visitor economy and help our community thrive year round.”

Anita Gaffney,  
*Executive Director,  
Stratford Festival*

# LIGHTS ON STRATFORD

WINTER FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

## 2024/25 REPORT



**DESTINATION  
STRATFORD**  
**ARTS** THE ARTS ARE  
WHAT WE ARE

## LIGHTS ON STRATFORD

WINTER FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Over six extended weekends between Dec. 13, 2024 through to Jan. 19, 2025, record numbers of festivalgoers immersed themselves in the Canadian premieres of This Is Loop's Emergence and Chalk River Labs' Stargate in Market Square. Visitors delighted in Amigo & Amigo's Shrooms and Trumpet Flowers on Tom Patterson Island. They experienced LightWall, HEART, Everbright, LightBridge, Tower of Light, Free Hop-On-Hop-Off shuttle buses, student works at University of Waterloo Stratford School, and the Makers Space light exhibit at the Stratford Public Library.

With a multitude of cultural events including live music pop-ups, silent discos, glow-in-the-dark curling, and an incredible NYX performance at the Tom Patterson Theatre, winter in Stratford has never been so bright!



## LIGHTS ON STRATFORD MANIFESTO

- We bring light and joy to Stratford's public spaces.
- We believe in the importance of public art.
- We are free to the public and accessible for everyone to participate.
- We are a cultural anchor tenant that enables additional events and experiences.
- We celebrate and embrace winter.
- We help grow a vibrant year-round visitor economy for the region.
- We strive to continually reduce our environmental footprint.
- We improve the quality of life within our community.

# LIGHTS ON STRATFORD

WINTER FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



## 3 YEAR PROJECTION

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<b>Festival Attendance</b> Combined across main locations  								
<b>Daily Av. Attendance</b> Combined across main locations	-	1,818	1,860	4,254	3,758	4,348	5,217	5,869
<b>Production Days</b> *Closed early due to Covid shutdown	30	44	45	18	23	23	23	23
<b>Main Light Art Installations</b>	4	5	6	5	7	8	8	8
<b>Additional Cultural Activations</b>	0	2	8	10	15	18	20	20
<b>Funding</b> DS = Destination Stratford MAT = Municipal Accommodation Tax	<b>\$422K</b> CITY \$0 GRANTS & PARTNERS \$311K SPONSORS \$111K	<b>\$470K</b> CITY \$0 GRANTS & PARTNERS \$407K SPONSORS \$63K	<b>\$740K</b> CITY \$0 GRANTS & PARTNERS \$669K SPONSORS \$71K	<b>\$575K</b> CITY \$150K DS \$150K GRANTS & PARTNERS \$200K SPONSORS \$75K	<b>\$600K</b> CITY MAT \$150K DS \$150K GRANTS & PARTNERS \$200K SPONSORS \$100K	<b>\$650K</b> CITY MAT \$150K DS \$150K GRANTS & PARTNERS \$225K SPONSORS \$125K	<b>\$675K</b> CITY MAT \$150K DS \$150K GRANTS & PARTNERS \$225K SPONSORS \$150K	<b>\$675K</b> CITY MAT \$150K DS \$150K GRANTS & PARTNERS \$225K SPONSORS \$150K

FOUNDING PARTNERS



2024/25 GOLD SPONSORS



MARKET SQUARE

2024/25 SILVER SPONSORS

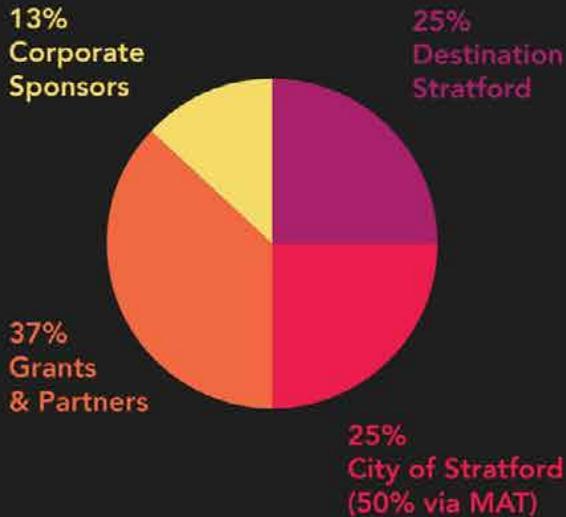


2024/25 BRONZE SPONSORS



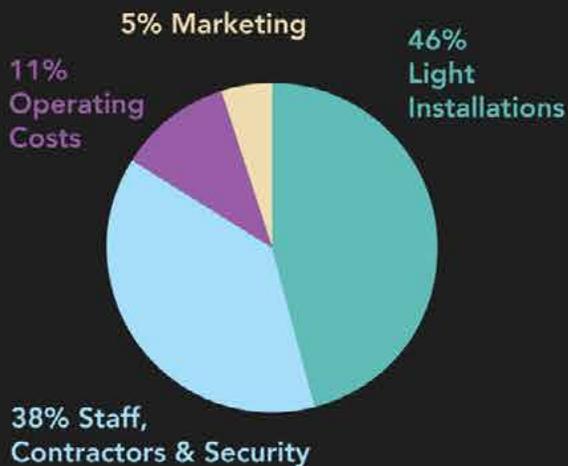
2024/25 BUDGET | FUNDING

The Lights On Stratford 2024/25 funding sources (excluding in-kind) include:



2024/25 BUDGET | EXPENSES

The unaudited annual budget for 2024/25 is approx. \$600,000 (excluding in-kind):



2024/25 IN-KIND SUPPORTERS



2024/25 COMMUNITY SPONSORS



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Funded by: Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario / Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).



This event has been graciously hosted by Experience Ontario, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

## PATRONS | PLACE OF RESIDENCE

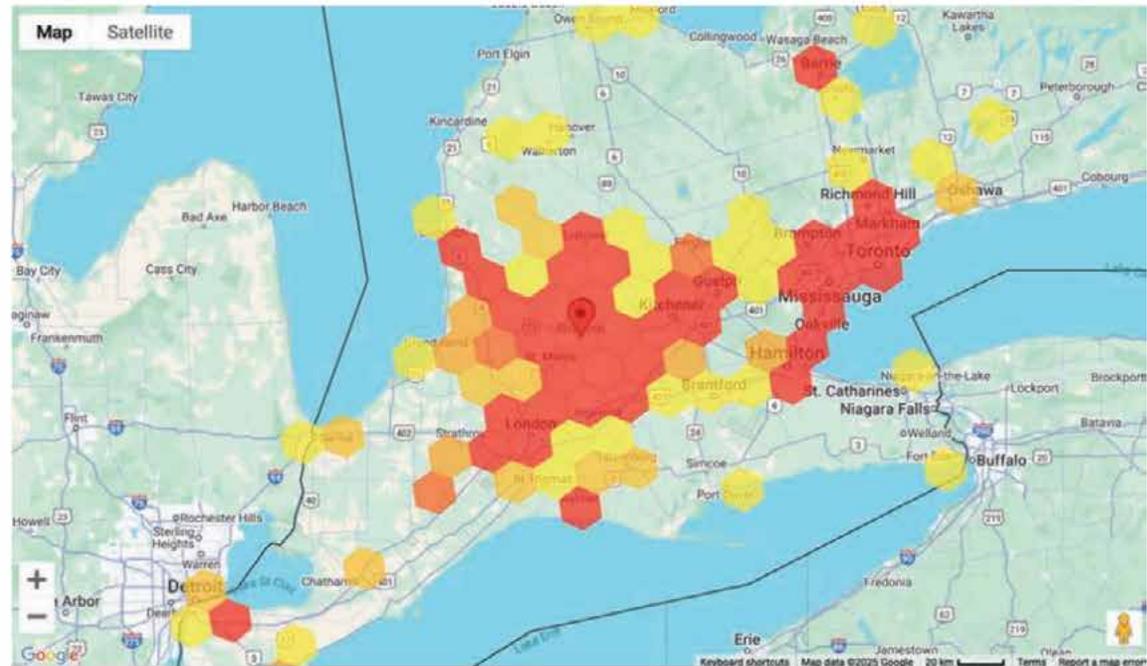
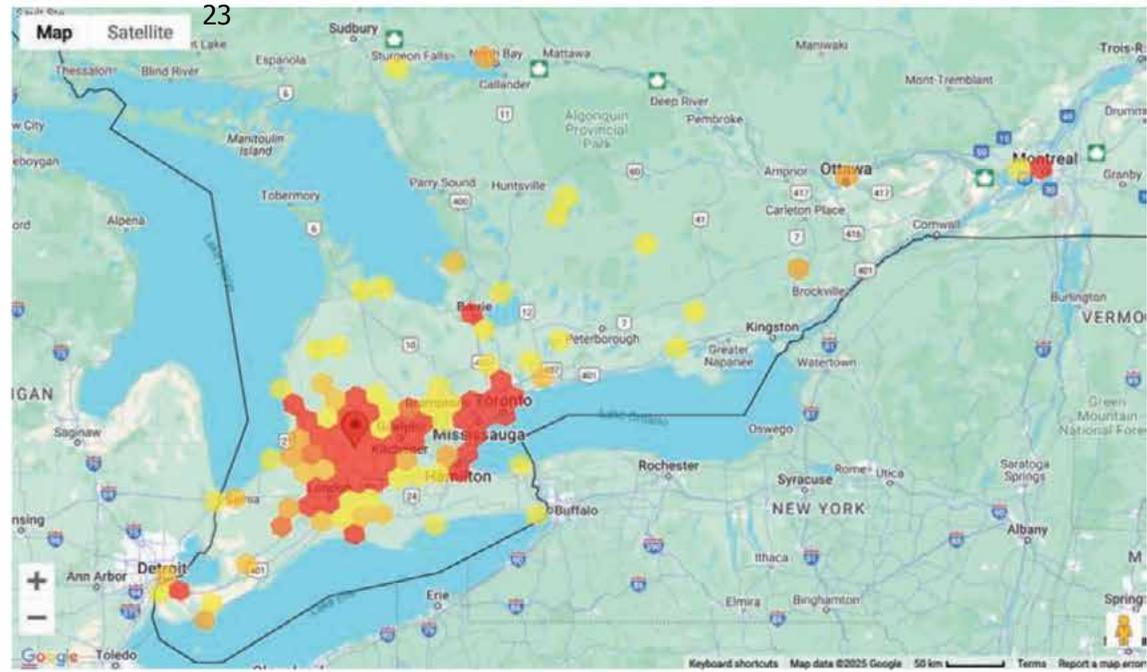
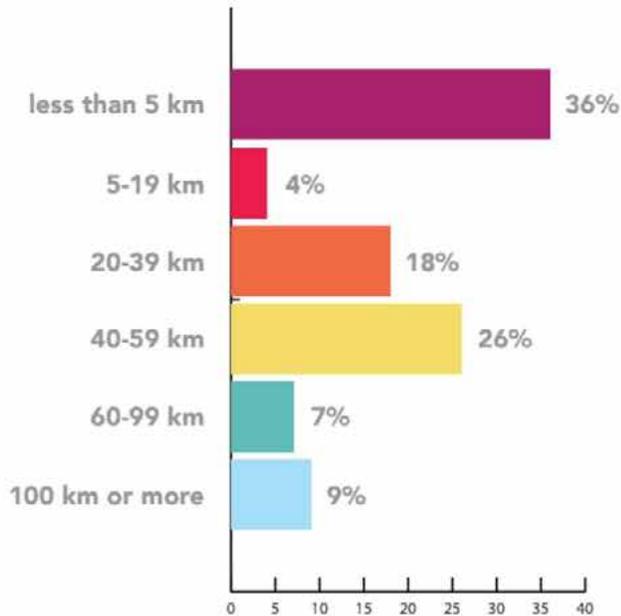
Mobility data reports (provided by Propulso: Ethical Data Intelligence Platform - propulso.io) for the December 13, 2024 to January 19, 2025 festival period used mobility data to accurately provide the place of residence of patrons that visited the geo-fenced Lights On Stratford main locations (Market Square, Tom Patterson Island, Veterans Drive Bandshell and LightWall).

Patron residence location is reflected in the 2 heat-maps to the right, with red being the highest density.

## PATRONS | TRAVEL DISTANCE

Similarly, the mobility data reports provide the distance from the patron place of residence to Stratford.

The average travel distance was 35.7 km with 36% local, 22% regional and 42% from over 40km away.



## 2024/25 BIA SURVEY | BACKGROUND

Downtown Stratford BIA surveyed its members between February 5, 2025 and February 14, 2025 about Lights On Stratford 2024/25 and received **34 RESPONSES**.

Survey respondent comments included:

*"I met customers from as far away as Michigan, as well as from the GTA, London, Kitchener, etc... who have regularly visited for the Theatre, but came specifically for LOS this year."*

*"I like how it brings people together. I loved seeing groups of friends and families out enjoying the lights together. I wish it was longer :)"*

*"Well-organized, engaging, and clearly well-marketed based on our conversations with customers."*

*"Great family and friends activities that only enhances Stratford as a place to visit or enjoy as a resident."*

*"I love everything about Lights ON!"*

## 24 2024/25 BIA SURVEY | RESULTS

**79%** Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the 2024/25 Lights On Stratford festival of winter lights. **0%** Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied.

**88%** Agree or Strongly Agree that Lights On Stratford is an effective strategy for growing a cultural tourism draw in the winter. **9%** Disagree and **0%** Strongly Disagree.

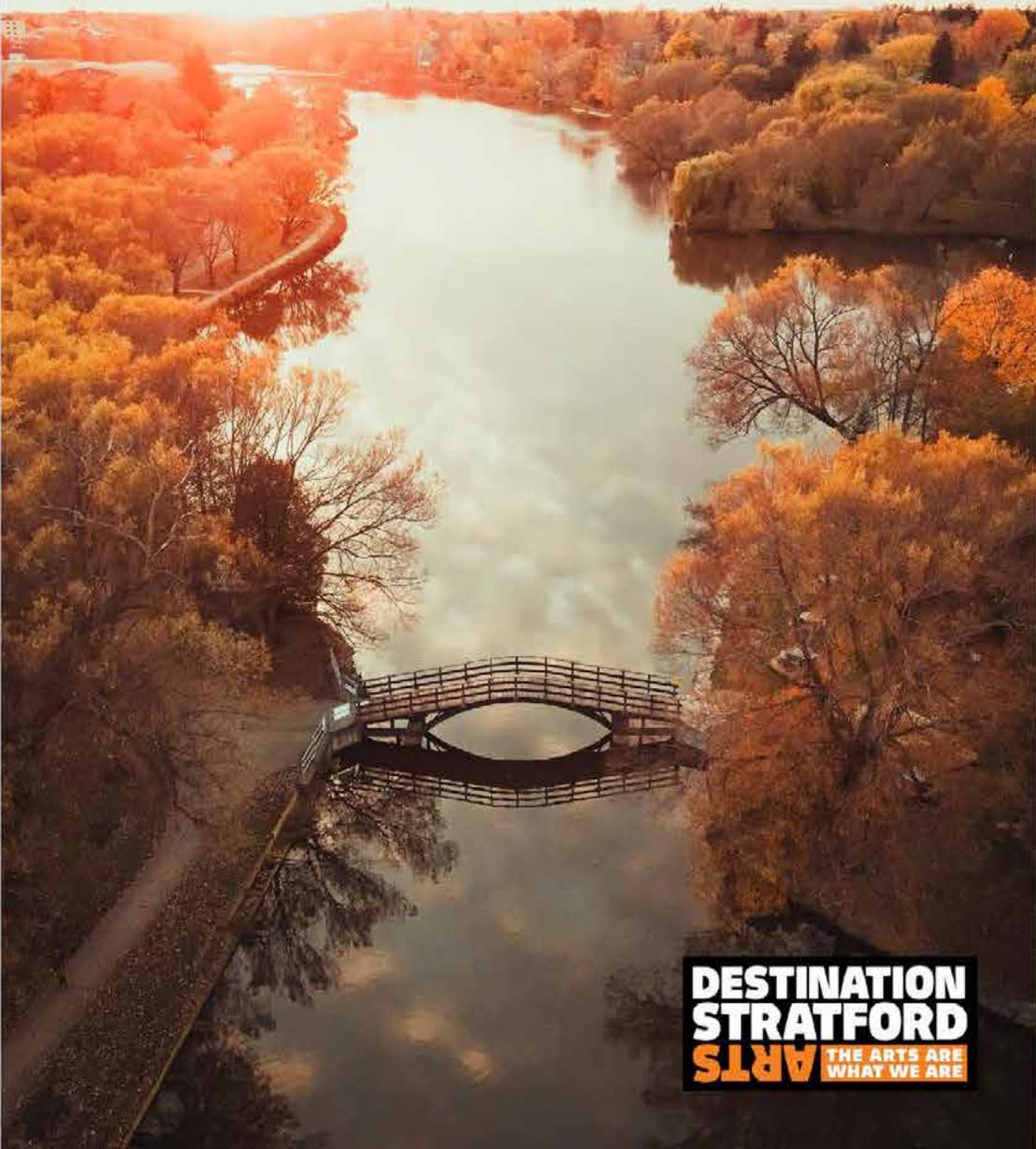
**76%** Agree or Strongly Agree that Lights On Stratford is effective in activating the downtown and park system for the community and visitors during the festival period. **6%** Disagree and **0%** Strongly Disagree.

**8.41** (average out of 10) for how likely are you to recommend future Lights On Stratford festivals to friends or colleagues.



# Destination Stratford 2030 Strategy

2025-2030



**DESTINATION  
STRATFORD**  
**ARTS** THE ARTS ARE  
WHAT WE ARE

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# Experience Ontario 2025



**\$55,000**



This event has been financially assisted by Experience Ontario, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.




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## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** May 20, 2025  
**To:** Finance and Labour Relations Sub-Committee  
**From:** Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services  
**Report Number:** FIN25-014  
**Attachments:** None

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**Title:** Deposits for Land Leases and the Procurement Process

**Objective:** To provide information and clarification to members of Sub-committee and Council regarding the use of deposits in the procurement process.

**Background:** At the April 14, 2025, Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following resolution:

**THAT staff be directed to investigate and prepare a report on the ability to require a deposit from proponents of land leases.**

This report is intended to clarify current practices and when and how deposits are utilized for the various types of procurement methods.

**Analysis:** Staff recently issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) to determine whether there was any interest in leasing farmlands the City owns but is not intending immediate use of near the Stratford Airport.

A Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) is appropriate in specific scenarios where preliminary information is needed before proceeding with further procurement actions. These are preliminary, non-binding statements of interest and are meant to be an exploratory step, followed with a more detailed open tender or proposal once the specifics of the direction are better defined.

In many cases, RFEOI is followed by a formal tendering process or RFP to obtain detailed bids or proposals from qualified suppliers. In this case, the agreement to lease the land is very straightforward, so staff used the information obtained from the RFEOI to seek Council approval to proceed with entering into an agreement with the highest valued expression of interest. This is effectively sole-sourcing and is appropriate when there are not likely to be any additional bidders based on new information issued by the City.

The City's procurement policy is currently being revamped to include some of this information to help guide staff, Council and potential partners with the City as to the appropriate tools for procurement.

### **Use of Deposits:**

Deposits are usually intended to secure a transaction, demonstrating a serious intent and commitment from the buyer or lessee.

Because Expressions of Interest as well as Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are preliminary and are non-binding, requiring a deposit within this tool would be inconsistent with the intent of the type of procurement. It could discourage potential buyers or lessees, potentially hindering the process of finding suitable parties.

In the context of land leases, if the City were seeking a bid deposit, such would be more appropriate at the point of a formal lease agreement, not during the initial Expression of Interest phase. Instead of requiring a deposit, the City could have considered other methods for gauging interest, such as a pre-application process or a non-binding survey, and then used that to create a more binding proposal document. However, as noted, given the number of EOI responses and the simplicity of the agreement proceeding with the next more formalized procurement where a bid deposit may have been considered, it was determined not applicable.

The City does obtain deposits for other types of procurement:

**During the Bidding Process:** Deposits, also known as tender deposits, may be required by bidders to demonstrate their seriousness and good faith in submitting a bid. These deposits are refunded to unsuccessful bidders. Municipalities would most often use them for bids submitted for large or complex projects, as reviewing the tenders submitted for those projects is also more complex.

**When Security for Contract Performance is needed:** Deposits act as a form of security, ensuring that the buyer/purchaser is serious about fulfilling their obligations under the contract. If the buyer breaches the contract, the deposit is forfeited to the seller/vendor. This type of deposit is much more common and again is usually reserved for the more complex or unique projects, whereas if the City were forced to seek alternatives mid-project, there would be some funds available to complete the project, or at the very least ensure that no incremental costs were incurred to complete the project.

The staff recommendation is to maintain the status quo for when deposits are required, however if Council wished to direct staff to amend the purchasing policy to require a deposit regardless of the nature of the procurement type, this can be inserted into the upcoming revision to the procurement policy, with the caveat that in some cases, this will result in a smaller number of partners submitting proposals.

**Financial impact to current year operating budget:**

There are no financial implications as this report is for information.

**Legal considerations:**

None, as this report is for information purposes.

**Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

**Not applicable:** This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as it is provided for information.

**Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

**Not applicable:** This report does not align with One Planet Principles as it is for information.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Deposits for Land Leases and the Procurement Process" (FIN25-014), be received for information;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff regarding changes, if any, to be included in the procurement policy and process.**

**Prepared by:** Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer  
**Recommended by:** Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer  
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



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## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** May 20, 2025  
**To:** Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee  
**From:** Michael Koktan, Manager of Financial Services/Deputy Treasurer  
**Report Number:** FIN25-013  
**Attachments:** Q1 2025 Variance Report

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**Title:** Operating Budget Variance Report as of March 31, 2025

**Objective:** To analyze variances between operating results and the budget as of March 31, 2025 (Quarter 1), and report to Council on any known significant factors expected to impact the annual outcome.

**Background:** Regular monitoring of budgetary performance provides early warnings of potential problems and flags in areas requiring attention, allowing decision-makers time to address significant budget deviations. As such, the Finance Division is required to prepare regular updates on budget performance, including variances from approved budgets.

**Analysis:** As is typical, the first quarter results are not a reliable predictor for the remainder of the year, and the emphasis is on qualitative information to identify any areas of potential concern.

Detailed commentaries on each of the departments' variances have been included in the attachment with this report. A high-level early corporate overview has been provided below.

### Overview

The City's 2025 budget was approved on February 10, 2025, so aside from day-to-day planned activities there was nothing notable undertaken until after that date.

In the first quarter of 2025, there were notable impacts in divisional cost centres including City Buildings, Roads, and Fire due to higher-than-expected winter maintenance requirements. These increased costs are expected to be mitigated later in the year through strategic management of other operating expenses.

Overall, departments are expected to remain aligned with budgetary plans for the rest of the year, as the majority of their scheduled activities are set to take place. At this time, no significant variances are anticipated.

**Financial Implications:**

**Financial impact to current year operating budget:**

Year-end forecasts, as noted in the attached, currently indicate that no surplus or deficit is expected at this time.

**Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

**Not applicable:** This report is a summary financial report for informational purposes and does not directly align with any specific Strategic Priority. It does however provide benefit by offering insight into overall operational performance and supports informed decision-making.

**Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

**Not applicable:** As this report is being prepared for informational purposes, the One Planet Principles do not apply.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Operating Budget Variance Report as of March 31, 2025" (FIN25-013), be received for information.**

**Prepared by:** Michael Koktan, CPA, CA, Manager of Financial Services/Deputy Treasurer

**Recommended by:** Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer  
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

City of Stratford Q1 Operating Variance Report as at March 31, 2025						
Department	2025 Net Budget	Unaudited as at March 31, 2025	% of Budget Spent	(Surplus) / Deficit FORECASTED Variance As at Dec 31, 2025	Variance as a % of Budget	Explanation
<i><b>Mayor/Council/CAO Office</b></i>						
101 - Mayor & Council	\$705,158	<b>\$118,913</b>	16.9	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected at this time, but is dependent upon activities and conferences through the year.
102 - Committees of Council	\$110,365	<b>\$420</b>	0.4	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected at this time, but is dependent upon activities and may be balanced through the council committee reserve if required and funds are available.
111 - CAO's Office	\$1,018,339	<b>\$204,265</b>	20.1	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected at this time, but is dependent upon activities through the year. Depending on CAO recruitment timing, some activities may not be completed in the year.
<i><b>Human Resources</b></i>						
112 - Human Resources	\$1,522,097	<b>\$398,033</b>	26.2	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected at this time, but is dependent upon activities and subsequent use of consultants and how wage structure will move forward.
<i><b>Corporate Services</b></i>						
1010 - Taxation	(\$86,038,828)	<b>(\$40,574,690)</b>	47.2	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected as this represents the required revenues from taxation approved with the 2025 budget.
100 - General Revenues	(\$2,352,511)	<b>(\$378,452)</b>	16.1	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected as revenues relating to dividends are typically recorded later in the year.
121 - City Clerk	\$1,014,888	<b>\$217,454</b>	21.4	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected as budgeted expenditures and activities typically occur through the remaining quarters.
134 - Information Technology	\$0	<b>\$600,589</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated. All amounts are charged back to divisions or transferred to IT reserve fund.
135 - Parking	(\$524,458)	<b>(\$102,786)</b>	19.6	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected, timing differences are due to the seasonality of parking volumes. The parking reserve fund will balance any other variances if they exist at year-end.
136 - Crossing Guards	\$272,950	<b>\$49,378</b>	18.1	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected, any timing differences are due to the seasonality of the school year.
139 - General Financial Services	\$3,492,290	<b>\$1,781,767</b>	51.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected as budgeted expenditures and activities typically occur through the remaining quarters.
513 - Industrial Land Sales	\$0	<b>\$922,989</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected, any variances are balanced through industrial land reserve.

<b>City of Stratford Q1 Operating Variance Report as at March 31, 2025</b>						
<b>Department</b>	<b>2025 Net Budget</b>	<b>Unaudited as at March 31, 2025</b>	<b>% of Budget Spent</b>	<b>(Surplus) / Deficit FORECASTED Variance As at Dec 31, 2025</b>	<b>Variance as a % of Budget</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
810 - Requisitions from Others	\$8,364,379	<b>\$2,536,174</b>	30.3	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance expected, however there could be timing differences in payments to partner agencies through the year.
872 - Community Supports	\$1,196,870	<b>\$0</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variance expected, but there could be timing differences in timing of Bill 23 effects which will be unknown until later in the year (and dependent upon related building activity).
<b><i>Building and Planning Services</i></b>						
250 - Building Permits	\$0	<b>\$99,174</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated. Balanced through building permit reserve fund.
251 - Planning Services	\$785,492	<b>\$140,789</b>	17.9	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
252 - By-Law Enforcement	\$703,814	<b>\$70,568</b>	10.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
<b><i>Infrastructure Services</i></b>						
310 - Engineering	\$1,218,172	<b>\$332,821</b>	27.3	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
315 - Fleet	\$0	<b>\$755,970</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated. All amounts are charged back to divisions or transferred to fleet reserve fund.
320 - Roads	\$9,005,268	<b>\$1,219,535</b>	13.5	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year. Winter maintenance exceeded cost estimates, however can be mitigated potentially by the latter half of 2025, as well as existing reserve funds.
330 - Sanitary	\$0	<b>(\$1,277,966)</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	User-fee division is balanced through reserve funds.
340 - Storm	\$5,074,485	<b>\$390,994</b>	7.7	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
350 - Water	\$0	<b>\$50,182</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	User-fee division is balanced through reserve funds.
360 - Waste	\$970,208	<b>(\$395,001)</b>	-40.7	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.

City of Stratford Q1 Operating Variance Report as at March 31, 2025						
Department	2025 Net Budget	Unaudited as at March 31, 2025	% of Budget Spent	(Surplus) / Deficit FORECASTED Variance As at Dec 31, 2025	Variance as a % of Budget	Explanation
<i>Fire</i>						
211 - Fire	\$10,114,855	<b>\$2,288,135</b>	22.6	<b>\$0</b>	0%	Winter maintenance exceeded cost estimates, however can be mitigated potentially by the latter half of 2025. No significant variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
512 - Airport	\$76,899	<b>\$61,288</b>	79.7	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities occur in the seasonal months.
<i>Community Services</i>						
141 - City Buildings	\$1,574,923	<b>\$165,045</b>	10.5	<b>\$0</b>	0%	Winter maintenance exceeded cost estimates, however can be mitigated potentially by the latter half of 2025.
711 - Parks	\$3,278,922	<b>\$317,183</b>	9.7	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
715 - Facilities	\$3,795,911	<b>\$649,454</b>	17.1	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
721 - Recreation	\$4,541,070	<b>\$481,956</b>	10.6	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
731 - Cemetery	\$753,551	<b>\$75,927</b>	10.1	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and departmental work plans occur in the remaining quarters of the year.
750 - Transit	\$3,873,410	<b>\$484,833</b>	12.5	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and ridership occur in the seasonal months.
751 - Parallel Transit	\$657,520	<b>\$154,546</b>	23.5	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No variance anticipated at this time as much of the activities and ridership occur in the seasonal months.
752 - Community Transportation	\$46,583	<b>(\$13,817)</b>	0.0	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variance anticipated, balanced with community transit funding and partner billings.

<b>City of Stratford Q1 Operating Variance Report as at March 31, 2025</b>						
<b>Department</b>	<b>2025 Net Budget</b>	<b>Unaudited as at March 31, 2025</b>	<b>% of Budget Spent</b>	<b>(Surplus) / Deficit FORECASTED Variance As at Dec 31, 2025</b>	<b>Variance as a % of Budget</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b><i>Social Services</i></b>						
610 - Social Services Administration	\$142,240	<b>\$895,284</b>	629.4	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Q1 chargebacks to divisions within the Social Services Department have not yet been completed.
611 - Ontario Works	\$585,703	<b>\$8,392</b>	1.4	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Partnering municipality chargeback entries have not yet been completed for Q1.
612 - Homelessness	\$349,760	<b>(\$824,890)</b>	-235.8	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time.
613 - Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre	\$330,725	<b>\$359,804</b>	108.8	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Children Services funding entries for Q1 have not yet been completed for Q1.
614 - Perth & Stratford Housing Corp	\$2,553,958	<b>\$339,062</b>	13.3	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Q1 PSHC Yardi entries and partnering municipality chargeback entries have not yet been completed for Q1.
615 - Housing Division - Service Mgr	\$760,220	<b>(\$73,748)</b>	-9.7	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Partnering municipality chargeback entries have not yet been completed for Q1.
616 - Child Care	\$413,940	<b>\$2,684,189</b>	648.4	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Partnering municipality chargebacks and upper-tier government funding allocation entries have not yet been completed for Q1.
618 - Affordable Housing	\$585,722	<b>(\$98,705)</b>	-16.9	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variances anticipated at this time. Q1 LTD and reserve transfer entries have not yet been completed for Q1.
<b><i>Police</i></b>						
231 - Police	\$15,931,981	<b>\$2,988,589</b>	18.8	<b>\$0</b>	0%	No significant variance anticipated. Any surplus or deficit is managed from the police reserve.
<b><i>Library</i></b>						
411 - Library	\$3,093,129	<b>\$718,635</b>	23.2	<b>\$0</b>	0%	Any surplus or deficit is managed from the library reserve.
<b>Total Net Expenses (Revenue)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$21,177,720)</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>Projected (Surplus)/Deficit</b>