The Centre of Opportunity:

London's Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030

London
CANADA

Land Acknowledgement

The City of London is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples. We honour and respect the history, languages and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home.

We acknowledge all the treaties that are specific to this area: the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy/Silver Covenant Chain; the Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Haudenosaunee NANFAN Treaty of 1701; the McKee Treaty of 1790, the London Township Treaty of 1796, the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, with the Anishinaabeg, and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum of the Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee.

The three Indigenous Nations that are neighbours to London are the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; and the Munsee-Delaware Nation who all continue to live as sovereign Nations with individual and unique languages, cultures, and customs.

This Land Acknowledgement is a first step towards reconciliation. Awareness means nothing without action. It is important that everyone takes the necessary steps towards decolonizing practices. We encourage everyone to be informed about the traditional lands, Treaties, history, and cultures of the Indigenous people local to their region.

Reconciliation requires more than acknowledgement; it requires action. This strategy commits the City of London to economic reconciliation through long-term, Indigenous-led relationship building with neighbouring Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous organizations, recognizing Indigenous Nations as sovereign governments and intergovernmental partners.

Acknowledgements

This strategy was built on the insights of people across the London region. Business leaders, community organizations, post-secondary institutions, residents, ecosystem and regional partners, and the City of London's elected leaders and staff brought their sharpest thinking to interviews, roundtables, workshops, and surveys throughout the development process. Refer to Appendix B: Acknowledgements.

The City of London retained Deloitte LLP to lead the development of recommendations that inform this work. Deloitte's contribution included economic and sector research, a comprehensive review of London's economic development ecosystem, leading engagement with more than 200 participants, and the framework and implementation plan that are the foundation of this strategy. The full evidence base, including all data sources and citations, is documented in Appendix C. Unless otherwise noted, data referenced throughout this document is drawn from Deloitte's research.

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London: The Centre of Opportunity

London is a globally recognized creative city with a diverse economy, strong connections to major markets, and a collaborative business culture. Where distinctive research, industrial, and cultural strengths converge, London creates opportunity at scale.

The Opportunity

London's economy is diverse, resilient, and positioned to grow. Nearly 45,000 businesses operate across a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing, health and life sciences, agri-food, technology, creative industries, and professional, scientific, and technical services. Canada's only UNESCO City of Music designation signals London's creative economy as a genuine national differentiator. World-class research and post-secondary assets support commercialization across sectors, while London's location near major markets strengthens trade, logistics, and investment appeal.

London's competitive advantage is not only in generating ideas, but in creating the conditions for firms to scale, connecting research, industrial capacity, infrastructure, talent, and coordinated execution into real economic growth. Realizing that opportunity requires a coordinated response to workforce participation challenges, increasing competition for investment, rapid technological change, and barriers that disproportionately affect equity-denied groups, which represent both a social and economic constraint on London's growth.

The Response

This strategy establishes five strategic pillars to guide economic development over the next five years:

Investment Attraction and Retention. Investment readiness in London's priority sectors, including Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Sciences, Agri-Food, and Technology and Creative Industries. [1]

Talent and Innovation. An aligned system connecting employers, trainers, and job seekers, with barriers removed and the innovation ecosystem growing.

Regional Collaboration. Coordinated infrastructure, relationships, and mutually beneficial partnerships with regional partners.

Transportation and Connectivity. Stronger air and rail connectivity and transit aligned with workforce priorities.

System Optimization. The governance, accountability, and performance infrastructure that makes everything else work.

Together, these pillars position London to operate as a smart, aligned system with clear roles, strong partner relationships, and the coordination capacity to respond quickly and credibly when opportunity arrives.

Success Measures

Progress will be tracked and reported publicly through five community outcomes:

- Job creation and retention
- Investment attraction
- Business formation and growth
- Productive employment lands and commercial areas
- Workforce participation and inclusion

Success will be measured not only by economic growth, but by measurable improvements in economic inclusion, workforce participation, and the broader outcomes this strategy seeks to achieve.

1 In this strategy, "creative economy" refers to the broader ecosystem of cultural, tourism, entertainment, and creative economic activity that contributes to London's vibrancy, talent attraction, and economic growth. "Creative industries" refers more specifically to firms and sectors engaged in commercial creative production, including music, film, digital media, and related industries. The term "creative sector" is used more broadly throughout the strategy to refer collectively to the organizations, institutions, creators, businesses, and partners contributing to London's creative ecosystem.

The Case for London

London is a city of genuine strength and potential. For too long, that potential has not added up to what it should. London's economic energy has been fragmented where it should be aligned, cautious where it should be decisive, scattered where it should be focused. London cannot compete with other cities while competing with itself. London's opportunity is to compete as a city that works as one system: where businesses can commercialize, manufacture, and grow because the infrastructure, institutions, and coordination are aligned. This strategy is London's commitment to earn its place as the city that ambitious businesses and talented people choose.

London's economic foundation

London offers a compelling value proposition for businesses, investors, and talent, grounded in a distinctive set of competitive assets:

- **Location:** A strategic position along the Highway 401/402 corridor, within a two-hour drive of both Toronto and Detroit, providing direct access to major North American markets.
- **Cost advantage:** Housing costs are approximately 16.8% below the Canadian average (mid-2025).
- **Talent and research:** Home to Western University, ranked among the top 1% of universities globally, and Fanshawe College, one of Ontario's largest colleges.
- **Sector strengths:** A diversified economy anchored by Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Sciences, Agri-Food, and Technology and Creative Industries, and supported by a strong supply of employment lands and industrial capacity through the Industrial Land Development Strategy.
    - **Technology:** Recognized as a top-25 tech talent market in Canada and ranked #4 among North America's Next 25 Markets.
    - **Health and Life Sciences:** A concentration of health research, education, and clinical assets of national significance.
    - **Aerospace[1]:** An international airport with over 1,000 development-ready acres, more than 35 aviation-related tenants, and supported by advanced aviation training institutions.
    - **Creative:** Canada's only UNESCO City of Music designation, driving a growing creative economy in music, film, and digital media.
- **Entrepreneurship:** London has a strong entrepreneurial base, with nearly 45,000 businesses and a high share of small and self-employed enterprises.
- **Demographics:** The city also has a younger-than-average population, including higher proportions of youth and early-career residents compared to Ontario.

1 In this strategy, "aerospace and advanced aviation" includes aerospace manufacturing, flight testing, advanced aviation operations, uncrewed and electric aviation systems, aviation training, and airport-based industrial development.

London is not only a place to do business. It is a place where people choose to live, create, and build their future. Between 2019 and 2024, London added more than 60,000 residents and 18,380 net new jobs. Population projections point to between 600,000 and 690,000 residents by 2051. London is growing and doing so in a period of significant fiscal pressure on municipalities across Ontario, reinforcing the need for disciplined investment choices and a strategy that generates value by optimizing existing assets. Housing availability and affordability increasingly shape workforce attraction, retention, and economic competitiveness. Coordinated growth and infrastructure planning will remain important to ensuring London's growth supports both business investment and quality of life.

Several conditions shape whether growth will help London reach its full potential:

- **London's competitive position is real but not guaranteed.** International trade uncertainty is reshaping local business strategy. Artificial intelligence and automation are restructuring demand for skills and displacing job categories across every sector. London's workforce system and innovation infrastructure must respond to these realities.

- **London can compete for transformative investment by aligning with federal and provincial priorities.** Federal and provincial governments are prioritizing clean technology, domestic manufacturing, industrial land readiness, workforce development, housing acceleration, electrification, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Alignment with these priorities will position London as a ready partner for investment and major projects.

- **London's largest workforce gap is not supply; it's participation**. Over 43,000 working-age Londoners are not working or actively seeking work, while employers need an estimated 40,000 new hires by 2031. Barriers are well documented and disproportionately impact Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, people with disabilities, and newcomers.

- **Downtown London faces serious challenges and reversing them is an economic imperative.** Office vacancy and street-level social pressures are real. So is the opportunity: available space, heritage building stock, and accessible price points create the foundation for culture-led, mixed-use transformation that makes downtown London an attractive place for business.

- **London generates innovation and needs to capture more of its value.** The local academic and innovation base is strong. The opportunity is in commercialization and scale-up: moving ideas from prototype to production, accelerating deployment, and keeping that value in London.

- **London's geography is a strength that has not been fully unlocked.** The 401/402 corridor, rail connections, and London International Airport are competitive advantages that can be leveraged through coordinated action.

- **The system is the largest constraint.** London's economic development system is large but coordination challenges limit collective capacity to compete. The result is visible: key sectors that are individually compelling and are made stronger when investors and talent see an aligned, responsive, investment-ready system.

Together, these conditions shape the opportunity for London to act more strategically, collaboratively, and decisively.

London's economic development system

The system

London's economic development system includes major institutional anchors, dedicated economic development agencies, cultural and tourism organizations, workforce development providers, Business Improvement Areas, settlement agencies, and community organizations. Across these organizations, significant effort is directed at similar functions, which can reflect delivery of shared priorities if aligned well. A misaligned system, however, causes miscoordination; collaborative intent is genuine but collective impact is constrained. Businesses describe the consequences consistently: fragmentation, siloed efforts, and complexity for those the system exists to serve. ImpactLab[2] London research highlights that firms navigating multi-level government systems face regulatory complexity and unclear pathways, particularly in highly regulated and innovation-driven sectors.

2 Impact Lab London is a collaborative partnership between the City and local post-secondary institutions that connects academic expertise with real-world city challenges to develop innovative, practical solutions that improve life in London.

The City's role

This strategy sets a community-wide direction for a strong, competitive, and inclusive economy. The City is one committed partner in delivering on that direction through six roles:

1. **Policy.** Land-use decisions, community improvement plans, and regulatory approaches to development shape what is built, where, and how quickly.
2. **Infrastructure.** Roads, transit, water, wastewater, and the servicing of employment lands shape whether investment-ready conditions exist.
3. **Convening.** The City has the scope and relationships to bring partners to the table to align economic efforts toward shared outcomes.
4. **Advocacy.** Coordinated intergovernmental advocacy is how London competes for external investment that enables more major projects.
5. **Data and reporting**. The City works with partners to define performance through shared indicators and public reporting that help the system learn, adapt, and demonstrate results.
6. **Funding.** The City is a significant public funder of economic development in London. How funding is structured, what it requires, and what it measures influences the broader system.

London pairs municipal investment and accountability with external delivery through its economic development partners. London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is the City's designated economic development organization, accountable to Council through a purchase of service agreement. TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario (TechAlliance) and the London Small Business Centre (Small Business Centre) receive grant funding to develop the innovation ecosystem and support entrepreneurs and small business growth.

London's key sectors

London focuses on key sectors where the city demonstrates competitive strengths based on industry clusters, capacity for innovation and growth, and availability of skilled workforce. Investment attraction, talent development, infrastructure planning, and policy decisions are aligned to support sectors with the greatest potential to drive sustainable economic growth and spinoff activity. LEDC identifies the following key sectors for London:

- Advanced Manufacturing, including Defence and Aerospace
- Health and Life Sciences
- Agri-Food
- Technology and Creative Industries, including Film and Television

Strategic Foundations

Vision

London: The Centre of Opportunity

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Mission

To position London for long-term prosperity by fostering a competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy through evidence-based decision-making, focused investment, and coordinated action.

Guiding principles

- **Reconciliation.** This strategy commits the City of London to economic reconciliation through long-term, Indigenous-led relationship-building and collaboration in the London region[1].

- **Alignment across plans**[2]. Actions align with established plans and priorities, ensuring that economic commitments are considered together.

- **Coordinated action.** London's economic development partners work toward shared goals, with clear roles, reduced duplication, and accountability for results.

- **Equity and inclusion.** Barriers to employment, entrepreneurship, and participation are removed by embedding an equity lens in economic development decision making. The City of London's Equity Tool was applied to identify barriers, consider diverse perspectives, and support more inclusive economic outcomes.

- **Evidence and innovation.** New approaches are encouraged, decisions are grounded in data, and what works is scaled. Innovation will be delivered responsibly, adhering to City standards for security, privacy, and risk management.

- **Transparency and accountability.** Progress is measured against clear outcomes and reported publicly, so that results, not intentions, define success.

1 This strategy uses distinctions-based language and distinguishes between Indigenous Nations as sovereign, rights-bearing governments; Indigenous organizations as community and service delivery partners; and Indigenous peoples in broader population-level contexts. References to economic reconciliation, Indigenous-led engagement, and mutually beneficial partnerships are used intentionally throughout this strategy to reflect different stages and forms of relationship-building, collaboration, and shared economic development.

2 London has Council-approved plans with direct economic development dimensions: the London Plan, the Industrial Land Development Strategy, the Climate and Environment Action Plan, the ReconciliAction Plan, the Downtown Plan, and the Corporate Strategic Plan, among others. This strategy builds on that foundation rather than duplicating it. The Downtown Plan is the City's place-based framework for guiding growth in the city centre, while this strategy focuses on how that growth translates into economic outcomes.

The Strategy

London’s economic development system doesn’t pause between strategies. Every day, partners retain and expand businesses, attract investment, connect workers to employers, support entrepreneurs, and build the economic intelligence that sharpens decisions across the system.

The five pillars in this strategy outline actions where London builds on this foundation, concentrating additional effort, resources, and coordination toward its economic vision. How London’s economy changes for businesses, workers, and residents will be tracked publicly and reported annually. The full measurement framework, including indicators and data sources, is in the Performance Reporting section.

Strategic Pillars

- **Investment Attraction and Retention.** Build London's investment readiness, coordinate a proactive Team London investment response, and concentrate effort where London has genuine competitive advantage.
- **Talent and Innovation.** Connect employers, trainers, and job seekers through a coordinated system, remove barriers to participation, and grow the innovation ecosystem.
- **Regional Collaboration.** Coordinate infrastructure and investment attraction across municipal boundaries, build a unified regional narrative, and advance shared economic priorities with Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous organizations through Indigenous-led engagement.
- **Transportation and Connectivity.** Pursue stronger air and rail connectivity and align transit investment with workforce participation priorities.
- **System Optimization.** Establish the governance, accountability, and performance infrastructure that makes everything else work.

This strategy advances a full set of coordinated actions across five pillars. Within that work, three sector opportunities stand out for concentrated effort. While continuing to support and attract investment across key sectors, London will also focus on opportunities where the city has notable assets, momentum, and potential for long-term economic growth.

Life Sciences: Build a globally recognized life sciences cluster through commercialization, innovation district development, and the attraction of anchor firms and investment.

Aerospace: Position London as a centre for aerospace innovation and advanced aviation operations by leveraging the city's airport assets, uncongested airspace, talent pipeline, and innovation strengths.

Creative Economy: Leverage London's UNESCO City of Music designation to grow the creative economy, strengthen talent attraction and retention, support tourism and entrepreneurship, and drive downtown activation and vibrancy.

Pillar 1.0:
Investment Attraction and Retention

London's diversified economic base is a core strength. This pillar focuses incremental effort in key sectors while maintaining the broad base that sustains them. In an increasingly competitive environment, investment attraction depends on investment readiness: the infrastructure, land, servicing, approvals, workforce, and coordinated response capacity that enable businesses to invest with confidence. Investment attraction emphasizes clarity, coordination and responsiveness across partners, ensuring investors encounter a city that is aligned and investment ready. While the strategy pursues major investment opportunities, small and medium-sized businesses remain foundational to London's economy and long-term resilience.

What the evidence shows

Tariffs and geopolitical uncertainty are accelerating reshoring and prompting businesses to seek stable locations close to major markets. London's corridor location, manufacturing depth, and land supply make it a destination for investment. Federal and provincial governments are directing capital toward clean economy investments through refundable tax credits, grid modernization, and clean growth programs.

Between 2019 and 2024, London added 18,380 net jobs, holding a competitive advantage in manufacturing, finance, and construction relative to national trends. ImpactLab London research highlights the importance of aligning with major anchor firms, whose investment, workforce needs, and supply chains shape broader economic outcomes. Strengthening relationships with these firms supports both retention and cluster growth.

The Industrial Land Development Strategy maintains a 10-year supply of shovel-ready employment land. These lands are serviced and prioritized for advanced manufacturing, life sciences, digital media, and onshoring.

London's life sciences assets are strong: institutions including Western University, its affiliated hospitals, Robarts Research Institute, Lawson Health Research Institute, and the Schulich School of Medicine create a concentration of clinical and research capability that is rare outside of major metropolitan centres.

London International Airport has more than 1,000 development-ready acres, more than 35 aviation-related tenants, and less congested airspace than other regional airports. Aerospace training through Fanshawe College, Western University, and the International Test Pilot School positions London as an emerging leader in aerospace innovation.

As Canada's only UNESCO City of Music, London holds a globally recognized designation that signals cultural and creative depth to both investors and talent. London welcomed 2.1 million overnight visitors in 2023, generating an estimated $1.1 billion in local spending.

Downtown London continues to face elevated vacancy, reaching 31.5% in Q1 2026, affecting business activity and overall vibrancy. Cultural assets, tourism, and institutional presence are key strengths; however, challenges related to occupancy and public realm conditions, including the visible impacts of substance use and mental health crisis on street-level activity, constrain revitalization efforts and affect how businesses, investors, and visitors experience downtown.

London's UNESCO City of Music designation presents a significant opportunity to strengthen downtown economic activity, tourism, and creative industries growth.

Key Gaps

- The life sciences cluster has the foundations for global recognition but requires stronger coordination and growth to fully realize that potential.
- Investment attraction is uneven across the city; while industrial lands are competitive, some commercial areas face vacancy, reduced foot traffic, and unclear support pathways.
- London's existing industrial base would benefit from stronger support, particularly in advanced manufacturing and aerospace, where firms are navigating trade uncertainty, supply-chain disruption, and the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- Maximizing London's aerospace and advanced aviation opportunity requires aligned action between the City, the airport, and its partners.
- London's UNESCO City of Music designation and creative economy are underleveraged as direct drivers of economic growth and talent attraction.
- Stronger integration between the Downtown Plan's site-level actions and economic development tools is required to translate potential into economic growth.

What success looks like

- London's investment offer is consistent and compelling.
- London is winning investment in key sectors, generating supply-chain activity, sustained investor confidence, and job creation that compounds over time.
- Commercial hubs and corridors across the city are attracting investment.
- Downtown businesses and vacancy rates are recovering measurable ground.
- Creative industries are driving increased foot traffic, business activity, employer confidence, and investment in the downtown.
- London is recognized as a destination for life sciences innovation and advanced aerospace and aviation.

How this pillar delivers on London's broader commitments

- **Industrial Land Development Strategy:** This pillar builds on the ILDS's land supply foundation, consolidating London's investment assets into a coherent, sector-focused offer.

- **London Music Strategy:** London's UNESCO City of Music designation is positioned as a driver of creative economy investment, employment, and downtown activation.

- **Climate Emergency Action Plan:** Clean economy investment opportunities are tracked and responded to through this pillar's investment attraction work, supporting sustainable growth.

- **Downtown Plan:** This pillar connects the Downtown Plan's actions with economic outcomes through investment-ready site profiles, creative spaces, and business support.

Strategies

1.1 Build a world-class life sciences cluster

Action 1.1a: Define London's life sciences innovation path, including anchor firm attraction and commercialization of local assets.

London's life sciences assets are significant and can be organized to attract global investment at the scale they warrant. The long-term ambition is a life sciences innovation district, focused on areas where London has genuine world-class capability.

The first stage is a feasibility review exploring how London's life sciences assets can be better organized to attract anchor firms, attract talent, accelerate commercialization, and position London as a recognized destination. The review will examine sub-sector priorities, anchor firm attraction requirements, organizational and governance options, high-level infrastructure considerations, and funding pathways.

- **City lever:** Convening.
- **Partners:** Western University (Lead); LEDC; TechAlliance; hospitals; industry partners; City of London; Fanshawe.
- **What gets delivered:** Completed feasibility review and defined implementation pathway.
- **What changes:** London partners have a shared direction for a life sciences innovation cluster, with defined pathways to attract anchor firms and translate local research into commercial activity.
- **Headline KPI:** Feasibility review and implementation pathway completed and endorsed by life sciences leaders.

1.2 Establish London as a leader in Canadian aerospace innovation

Action 1.2a: Create an Aerospace Innovation Corridor near the London International Airport

London International Airport has the assets and training ecosystem to be a compelling location for flight testing and advanced aviation technology, including emerging electric and uncrewed systems. London International Airport is already moving in this direction. The City's role is to be an active, aligned partner.

The City developed Skyway Industrial Park, a serviced industrial area adjacent to London International Airport. Additional available employment lands within the Huron Industrial Area, which abuts Skyway, create a strategic opportunity to support aerospace manufacturing, advanced aviation operations, and related supply-chain activity. This action builds on that foundation by establishing a coordinated Aerospace Innovation Corridor with aligned land use permissions, infrastructure planning, and streamlined approvals that demonstrate London is ready for aerospace investment and growth. The City will also review the Airport Community Improvement Plan's current program suite to ensure its incentives remain competitive for aerospace and advanced aviation investment, and bring forward amendments where gaps are identified.

- **City levers:** Policy; infrastructure.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); London International Airport.
- **What gets delivered:** Aerospace Innovation Corridor designation with as-of-right permitted uses for aerospace manufacturing, testing, and aviation; assessment of ways to improve investment attraction through Airport Community Improvement Plan incentives.
- **What changes:** An aerospace firm evaluating London encounters speed, stability, and a City and airport speaking with one voice about development.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of aerospace-related tenants within the corridor, once implemented.

Action 1.2b: Advocate for investment in London's aerospace innovation position

In partnership with the London International Airport, the City will deliver a coordinated senior government advocacy strategy to strengthen London's position in aviation training, aerospace innovation, and emerging aviation technologies. Advocacy will seek policy support, servicing and infrastructure investment, and designation opportunities that advance this position.

- **City lever:** Advocacy.
- **Partners:** City of London (Co-Lead); London International Airport (Co-Lead); LEDC; TechAlliance; Western.
- **What gets delivered:** Coordinated senior government advocacy strategy for London's aerospace innovation position.
- **What changes:** The City and airport authority present a unified case for London's aerospace ambitions, which is supported by senior governments.
- **Headline KPI:** Senior government recognition of London as an aerospace innovation corridor.

1.3 Activate the Downtown as an Economic and Cultural Driver

Action 1.3a: Deliver business advisory support for downtown street-level businesses

The Downtown Plan's investment incentives, including fit-out support for vacant spaces, reduce the cost of entry. This action provides the advisory layer that improves the odds of success: one-on-one business mentorship, operational guidance, and peer network connections tailored specifically to the downtown operating environment. The program will be delivered in coordination with the Downtown Plan's incentive programs, ensuring businesses that open downtown have access to the expertise that helps them stay.

- **City lever:** Funding.
- **Partners:** Small Business Centre (Lead); Chamber of Commerce; Downtown London; City of London.
- **What gets delivered:** One-on-one advisory services for downtown street-level businesses; structured resilience programming tailored to the downtown operating environment, designed in alignment with Downtown Plan priorities.
- **What changes:** Downtown street-level businesses access specialized support tailored to the pressures they actually face; businesses entering vacant spaces have a supported pathway to establish and sustain operations.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of new businesses occupying previously vacant spaces.

Action 1.3b: Build a downtown investment portfolio

London's downtown is both an investment destination and a critical quality-of-place signal. This action applies a similar proactive, inventory-based approach that has made London's Industrial Land Development Strategy successful, adapted to the downtown context. The City and its partners will complete an inventory of underutilized sites covering ownership, zoning, servicing, and reuse potential, and develop an Investment Portfolio of market-ready site profiles.

- **City levers:** Funding; policy.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); LEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism London, Downtown London, real estate organizations, London Development Institute.
- **What gets delivered:** Investment Portfolio with profiles of underutilized downtown sites covering ownership, zoning, and reuse potential.
- **What changes:** London has a set of downtown opportunities that go beyond market availability to capture redevelopment potential, including for priority downtown initiatives such as business advisory support (Action 1.3a) and creative industries hub (Action 1.3d).
- **Headline KPI:** Number of underutilized downtown properties added to the Investment Portfolio.

Action 1.3c: Leverage London's City of Music designation for creative economy growth in the downtown

London is Canada's only UNESCO City of Music. Leveraged strategically, this designation can strengthen the creative economy, drive tourism and cultural activity that supports downtown revitalization, and signal to investors that London offers a distinctive cultural and creative environment.

Partners will develop and deploy consistent materials integrating London's cultural infrastructure into its broader investment proposition, ensuring the designation is active in investment prospecting, talent attraction, and sector promotion.

This work will be coordinated with the Downtown Plan's cultural infrastructure investments, connecting them to measurable creative economy outcomes. Creative sector firm growth, employment, and investment will be tracked and reported annually through the Economic Development Outcomes Report Action (5.1d).

This action aligns with Council direction to leverage London's UNESCO City of Music designation as a catalyst for downtown vibrancy, creative sector growth, cultural tourism, talent attraction, and economic diversification through coordinated planning and investment.

- **City lever:** Convening.
- **Partners:** Tourism London/London Music Office (Lead); LEDC/Film London; music and arts organizations; City of London.
- **What gets delivered:** A coordinated creative economy investment positioning approach that integrates London's UNESCO City of Music designation into broader sector attraction, marketing, and partnership development efforts.
- **What changes:** The UNESCO City of Music designation is an active economic development tool; cultural vibrancy supports London's investment and talent attraction proposition.
- **Headline KPI:** Year-over-year growth in creative economy employment.

Action 1.3d: Develop a Creative Industries Hub to grow London's music, film, and arts economy

London's creative industries are a defining part of the city's identity and economic potential, but recent trends highlight the need for more coordinated support and investment. Information and Cultural Industries (NAICS Code 51), which includes many creative industries, lost 976 jobs between 2019 and 2024, a 26% decline. The concentration of employed creative professionals is below Ontario's average in a city that holds Canada's only UNESCO City of Music designation.

Partners will develop a Creative Industries Hub in the downtown, expected to offer studio space, business development programming, and regular sector convening that connects music, film, arts, and digital media practitioners with each other, with post-secondary partners, and with investors. The hub's downtown location will convert vacant commercial space to active use, generate foot traffic, and create a visible creative economy anchor.

The first stage of this action is to develop an updated business case that defines the Hub's operating model, space requirements, and funding pathways, drawing on the downtown investment portfolio in Action 1.3b to identify candidate spaces. Implementation timing and scale will depend on completion of the business case, identification of partners, and funding availability.

- **City levers:** Funding; convening; policy.
- **Partners:** LEDC (Lead); Film London; City of London; London Music Office; Tourism London; Small Business Centre; London Arts Council; Fanshawe College; Western University; Downtown London; Chamber of Commerce; London Community Foundation.
- **What gets delivered:** A defined implementation pathway for a Creative Industries Hub, including business case completion, identified candidate spaces, partnership framework, and phased delivery approach.
- **What changes:** Creative entrepreneurs have a dedicated home that reduces entry costs, builds professional networks, and connects artistic practice to business formation; The UNESCO City of Music designation becomes a lived economic reality. Downtown vacancy converts to visible, productive use.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of creative entrepreneurs and businesses actively participating in Hub programming annually.

1.4 Strengthen London's investment offer

Action 1.4a: Build London's investment readiness and attraction communications package

LEDC leads investment attraction on behalf of the City of London. A shared investment readiness and attraction communications package ensures that every partner across the system can tell London's story accurately and consistently and refer interest to LEDC quickly. Any door into London should be the right door.

Partners will consolidate London's investment offer into a shared communications package organized around London's key sectors, including regional and Indigenous partnership opportunities where appropriate. The package will confirm London's water and energy capacity position, drawing on existing data from London Hydro and the ILDS, so that infrastructure questions in site selection have a clear, confident answer. It will bring together London's strongest assets, sector opportunities, and available supports into a single, consistent story that any partner can use. The package will also include an investment briefing section that ensures London's elected leaders are prepared to represent London's investment offer at any moment.

- **City levers:** Convening; data and reporting.
- **Partners:** Economic Partnership Table (Lead); LEDC: London Hydro; City of London; Huron Erie Water.
- **What gets delivered:** A regularly updated, sector-organized communications package consolidating London's investment offer, including confirmed water and energy capacity, into a single resource any partner can use.
- **What changes:** Every partner can tell London's story accurately and refer with confidence.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of partners actively using the package; water and energy capacity position confirmed and integrated.

Action 1.4b: Activate a coordinated Team London investment response

When London's most significant investment opportunities mature, Team London responds as one: partners are engaged at the right time around a common approach, while political leadership is briefed, prepared, and ready to engage at the moment it counts. This action documents the Team London response approach, ensuring coordination is consistent and the response reflects the full range of London's partners, expertise, and commitment.

- **City levers:** Convening; policy.
- **Partners:** Economic Partnership Table (Lead); City of London; sector partners as relevant.
- **What gets delivered:** A documented Team London investment response.
- **What changes:** London's most significant investment opportunities receive a coordinated, senior-level response.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of investment files where Team London response was activated.

Action 1.4c: Activate CIP tools for commercial corridor reinvestment

London's commercial corridors anchor neighbourhood economies across the city. Several face elevated vacancy and stalled reinvestment despite the existence of City incentive tools that could change that. This action focuses those tools where they can have the greatest impact: reviewing CIP programs to ensure they are competitive and well-targeted, working with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to target and promote available supports.

- **City levers:** Policy; funding.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); BIAs.
- **What gets delivered:** Review of CIP tools for commercial corridors with amendments brought forward where gaps are identified; investment profiles for priority corridors.
- **What changes:** Commercial corridor reinvestment has a proactive, City-supported pathway; small businesses and investors outside the downtown core encounter a system that is clear, coordinated, and responsive.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of CIP applications in commercial corridors; commercial vacancy rates in priority corridors.

Pillar 2.0:
Talent and Innovation

London is growing, but growth does not automatically produce prosperity. It depends on whether training leads to employment, whether newcomers are able to work at the level of their skills, whether graduates choose to stay, and whether research and innovation translate into local economic outcomes.

Talent attraction and retention are increasingly influenced by quality-of-life factors, including housing affordability, mobility, access to amenities, cultural vibrancy, and inclusive communities. Cities that create an environment where starting a business is easy create the conditions for increased labour participation and innovation.

What the evidence shows

London needs approximately 40,000 new workers by 2031 across health, technology, advanced manufacturing, and construction. Between 2019 and 2024, natural and applied sciences occupations grew by 41%. Health occupations also saw significant growth, adding 2,816 jobs, a 15% increase.

Over 43,000 working-age Londoners are outside the labour force. Removing structural barriers could bring 30,000-40,000 into employment. Barriers fall harder on some groups than others; the labour force participation rate for racialized immigrant women is 70.6%, compared to 83.6% for non-racialized, non-immigrant women. Among people with disabilities, 25% cite discrimination as a reason for non-participation. Indigenous Londoners remain underrepresented in the workforce relative to the provincial share.

In London, 12.7% of non-immigrants are self-employed, compared to 19.5% of immigrants. Despite this entrepreneurial energy, access to early-stage capital and networks remains uneven. Initiatives like Western University's Propel Fund are expanding access to mentorship and early-stage capital for emerging ventures, but the broader ecosystem for moving ideas from research to commercialization remains underdeveloped relative to London's institutional assets.

Workforce attraction has been bolstered by international students who attend London's post-secondary institutions for advanced degrees and specialized skills in areas such as health care, engineering, and information technology. However, shifts in Canada's immigration policies and caps directed at international students, temporary residents, and foreign workers are expected to have a significant impact on the ability to attract newcomers to meet growing demand for talent.

London has a talent connection challenge: between institutions and employers, between training and demand, and between research and commercialization. ImpactLab research identified the education-to-employment transition as the primary leak point, with limited early-career opportunities, lower wage competitiveness, and thin professional networks leading graduates to leave. At the same time, 48% of Canadian business leaders report their workforce is unprepared to work alongside AI, compounding the gap between what employers need and what the available workforce is ready to do.

Key gaps

- Employment pathways are fragmented: employers, job seekers, and newcomers navigate multiple processes to find supports.
- London loses talent in the transition from local education to employment.
- Workforce readiness for AI and digital transformation is uneven across sectors and is expected to be among the most acute near-term gaps employers face.
- Structural barriers to workforce participation limit Londoners' ability to work.
- The international student pipeline is contracting as immigration policy shifts reduce London's ability to attract skilled newcomers.
- London's research assets are not fully converting economic value.

What success looks like

- More Londoners are participating in the workforce and contributing to growth.
- Participation gaps narrow: Londoners from underrepresented populations access employment equitably.
- Employers can find and keep the skilled talent they need for today's economy.
- London retains more of the people it attracts.
- Local research and innovation generate more local businesses and jobs.

How this pillar delivers on London’s broader commitments

- **ReconciliAction Plan:** Economic opportunities for Indigenous people will be embedded in this pillar’s workforce navigation, entrepreneurship, and innovation investment work.
- **Anti-Black Racism Action Plan:** Supports for Black job seekers will be integrated into this pillar’s coordinated workforce system.
- **Industrial Land Development Strategy:** The attraction and expansion of employers enabled through the Industrial Land Development Strategy will be supported by this pillar’s talent and workforce development initiatives.
- **Corporate Strategic Plan:** Existing circular economy actions in the Strategic Plan can be operationalized through this pillar’s innovation priorities and infrastructure.

Strategies

2.1 Build London's connected, inclusive workforce system

Action 2.1a: Set system-wide workforce priorities

Through the Economic Partnership Table (Action 5.1a), partners will convene a Talent Working Group to set annual, system-wide workforce priorities that guide relevant programming and training decisions. Priorities will be based on labour market intelligence, creating a current view of supply and demand, and will be shared in the annual Economic Development Outcomes Report (Action 5.1d). Where system-level barriers are identified, partners will align on advocacy to senior governments to support talent pipelines.

AI and digital workforce readiness is expected to be among the first priorities the Talent Working Group addresses. Nearly half of Canadian business leaders report their workforce is unprepared to work alongside AI. London needs a shared, current picture of where AI-driven skill gaps are most acute and what interventions are most likely to close them.

- **City levers:** Convening; funding; advocacy.
- **Partners:** LEDC (Lead); City of London; Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB); TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; secondary and post-secondary institutions.
- **What gets delivered:** Annual workforce priorities; shared labour market intelligence; coordinated advocacy positions on addressing talent pipeline gaps.
- **What changes:** Workforce priorities guide collective partner programming and targeted advocacy, reducing system-level barriers to talent attraction, retention, and workforce participation.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of initiatives that reflect current workforce priorities.

Action 2.1b: Build a guided workforce navigation tool

Inconsistent referral, unclear entry points, and a system that requires job seekers to navigate fragmentation compound barriers to participation in London's economy. Partners will develop a workforce navigation tool that helps individuals entering the labour market to identify and access the right supports based on their circumstances, whether that is job search, training and upskilling, credential recognition, entrepreneurial opportunities, language training, or employer matching. The goal is to replace fragmented entry points with a single, clear entry point for navigating London's workforce system.

- **City levers:** Convening; funding.
- **Partners:** Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB) (Lead); LEDC; City of London; Small Business Centre; TechAlliance; London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP); settlement agencies; Middlesex economic development.
- **What gets delivered:** Public-facing interface for accessing information on pathways to workforce supports in London.
- **What changes:** Job seekers, including those facing systemic barriers to participation, access the workforce system through one interface and can easily connect to appropriate supports and opportunities.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of users accessing the workforce navigation tool.

Action 2.1c: Scale inclusive economic integration programs for underrepresented entrepreneurs

London has existing programs that support underrepresented entrepreneurs through mentorship, business planning, and peer networks, but demand for services is higher than current capacity. The City will invest in scaling proven inclusive economic support programs for entrepreneurs, including those with demonstrated outcomes for Londoners facing structural barriers to economic participation.

- **City lever:** Funding.
- **Partners:** Small Business Centre (Lead); London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP); Indigenous organizations; Francophone organizations; newcomer support organizations; Leads Employment Services; Apprenticeship Training Network (ATN); City of London.
- **What gets delivered:** Scaled delivery of proven inclusive entrepreneurship and economic integration programs.
- **What changes:** More underrepresented workers and entrepreneurs access supports that lead to greater economic participation.
- **Headline KPI:** Number and percentage of participants who start a business or secure employment after completing the program.

Action 2.1d: Strengthen employer-institution connections to expand student work-integrated learning opportunities in priority sectors

London's secondary and post-secondary institutions generate co-op, internship, apprenticeship, and work-integrated learning placements that connect students to employers across key sectors. These experiences place students within local organizations at a critical stage when career decisions are being made. With stronger employer engagement and clearer pathways to local opportunities, these placements can support stronger connections to the local labour market. The LEDC will work with partners to strengthen coordinated employer-institution partnerships aligned to London's priority sectors. As a first step, partners will map the full scope of placement activity in London.

- **City lever:** Convening.
- **Partners:** LEDC (Lead); Western University; Fanshawe College; Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB); London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB); City of London; Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB); TechAlliance; London Region Manufacturing Council; employer networks.
- **What gets delivered:** Structured employer-institution partnership framework and expanded placement opportunities aligned to priority sectors identified in 2.1a.
- **What changes:** Increased student participation in work-integrated learning and stronger connections between students and local employers.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of students in local work-integrated learning: internships, co-ops, applied projects.

2.2 Grow London's Innovation Ecosystem

Action 2.2a: Create a catalytic co-investment fund

The City will launch a catalytic co-investment fund to invest in economic opportunities that unlock further investment from provincial, federal, philanthropic, and private sources. The co-investment fund is a multiplier designed to deliver on London's key sectors and other economic commitments in this strategy. It will enable pilot initiatives to become operating businesses, support the commercialization, deployment, and scale-up of local research and innovation, and help businesses scale, manufacture and expand within London rather than relocating to access capital or operational capacity.

Projects will be required to demonstrate local benefit through employment, procurement, or knowledge sharing and alignment with the City's commitments to reconciliation, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Comparable approaches in other cities demonstrate the impact of this model. Calgary's Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) has leveraged municipal investment to attract significant private sector capital and create high-quality jobs in targeted sectors. Similarly, the City of Kitchener's Economic Development Investment Fund has supported strategic projects that advance innovation, commercialization, and sector growth by bridging early-stage funding gaps.

- **City levers:** Funding; policy.
- **Partners:** Economic Partnership Table (Governance Lead); Administrative Lead to be identified through competitive procurement.
- **What gets delivered:** Operational co-investment fund with defined eligibility criteria.
- **What changes:** Initiatives that generate local economic value but cannot currently secure financing move from concept to execution.
- **Headline KPI:** Ratio of external capital mobilized per municipal dollar invested.

Action 2.2b: Establish an Innovation Testbed Program

The City will seek to build on its existing experience providing targeted municipal infrastructure access for testing by establishing a governed Innovation Testbed Program. Following full design and implementation planning, the program will provide eligible organizations with structured access to municipal assets to validate new technologies at operational scale. Participating organizations must operate within a formal research or partnership framework, such as with a post-secondary institution, and demonstrate that their technology has progressed beyond early-stage experimentation. All projects will align with City priorities and be subject to City approval processes and security reviews.

- **City levers:** Policy, infrastructure.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); TechAlliance; LEDC; Western University; Fanshawe College.
- **What gets delivered:** Governed innovation testbed program with defined eligibility criteria, governance framework, and priority asset classes.
- **What changes:** London provides local businesses with access to proving grounds that accelerate market readiness.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of local organizations completing validated pilots under the program; documented service improvement outcomes or learnings from each pilot.

Pillar 3.0
Regional Collaboration

London sits at the centre of Southwestern Ontario, where major investment, infrastructure, and talent opportunities increasingly cross municipal boundaries. Working with neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous Nations, and regional partners, London can present a stronger regional offer and advocate more effectively to senior governments.

What the evidence shows

Global trade disruption and supply chain realignment are directing investment toward regions that can demonstrate resilient infrastructure, low-carbon power, investment-ready land, and coordinated approvals. Southwestern Ontario has the assets to respond to these priorities by aligning strategically across municipalities, utilities, and senior governments. ImpactLab research confirms that projects of national scale depend on coordinated advocacy across levels of government.

More than 80% of London's workforce lives in the city, while approximately 7.5% commute from surrounding municipalities including St. Thomas, Middlesex Centre, and Thames Centre. London is part of a broader regional labour market, with commuting flows extending to nearby communities.

Opportunities to expand regional collaboration are built on an active foundation. The City participates in established forums such the Southwestern Ontario Mayors' and Wardens' Caucus and maintains bilateral relationships with Middlesex County and neighbouring municipalities. LEDC coordinates investment attraction and cluster development with regional partners across key sectors, while the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board provides shared labour market intelligence. The region is supported by a network of municipal economic development offices, small business centres, Community Futures organizations, and innovation hubs such as TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario.

Economic reconciliation is a commitment embedded in this strategy. The City's ReconciliAction Plan commits London to long-term relationship-building with Indigenous Nations; this strategy affirms that commitment in the economic sphere. Partnerships must be earned through sustained relationship, not assumed through strategy.

Key gaps

- London's participation in regional infrastructure planning and investment positioning lacks a formal mechanism to align across jurisdictions and respond to major opportunities at speed.
- London's position in the regional investment narrative is fragmented.
- Pursuit of economic partnerships with neighbouring Indigenous Nations is at an early-stage; without sustained, Indigenous-led engagement, other partnership actions cannot proceed with integrity.

What success looks like

- Indigenous-led engagement is underway and deepening on mutually respectful terms and timelines; the work is actively informing this strategy's evolution.
- London is an active and trusted participant in regional economic initiatives.
- Regional collaboration supports coordinated land use, infrastructure planning, and environmental sustainability across shared systems while ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities across communities.
- Infrastructure planning, land readiness, and investment positioning are coordinated across jurisdictions, enabling the region to respond to major investment opportunities with speed and coherence.

How this pillar delivers on London's broader commitments

- **ReconciliAction Plan:** The City's commitments to economic reconciliation with Indigenous Nations are advanced through this pillar's Indigenous-led engagement process, following principles of the ReconciliAction Plan.

- **Climate Emergency Action Plan:** Coordinated regional infrastructure and land use planning are supported to enable sustainable growth and clean economy opportunities.

Strategies

3.1 Strengthen relationships with the region's municipalities and industry partners

Action 3.1a: Build partnerships for regional infrastructure and investment readiness

Major investment opportunities increasingly require infrastructure, land, workforce capacity, and supply-chain networks that extend beyond municipal boundaries. The LEDC and the City will work alongside neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous Nations, and regional partners, where there is shared interest and alignment, to strengthen regional infrastructure coordination, investment readiness, and investment attraction efforts across Southwestern Ontario.

This work will identify regionally significant employment lands, infrastructure priorities, and sector supply-chain opportunities that support coordinated responses to major investment opportunities. Partners will also work collaboratively to strengthen regional investment positioning through shared narratives, coordinated marketing approaches, and multi-jurisdictional investment responses where appropriate.

Findings will inform joint advocacy efforts under Action 3.1b and support more aligned planning, infrastructure sequencing, and investment attraction activities across jurisdictions. This work will build on existing regional coordination mechanisms and partnerships, ensuring alignment rather than duplication.

- **City levers:** Convening; advocacy.
- **Partners:** LEDC (Lead); London Hydro; Middlesex County Economic Development; area municipalities; Indigenous Nations; London Regional Manufacturing Council; City of London.
- **What gets delivered:** Inventory of regionally significant employment sites, infrastructure priorities, supply-chain connections, and coordinated regional investment positioning materials that support regional investment attraction efforts.
- **What changes:** London participates in a more coordinated regional approach to major investment opportunities, enabling stronger multi-jurisdictional responses and presenting investors with a more coherent regional value proposition where appropriate.
- **Headline KPI:** Number of joint regional infrastructure or investment initiatives advanced through coordinated action.

Action 3.1b: Coordinate regional advocacy for trade-enabling infrastructure

Coordinated advocacy with a unified ask is how the region competes for the senior-government investment that enables major infrastructure projects.

The City will partner on trade-enabling infrastructure advocacy through joint engagement with provincial and federal ministers, aligning appropriate funding requests with regional partners. Where Indigenous Nations have infrastructure priorities that benefit from a municipal contribution, the City will be ready to add its voice to those efforts in support of shared economic development objectives. Priority advocacy areas include transportation, energy and clean energy transition, and water infrastructure that enables investment and trade across the corridor.

- **City lever:** Advocacy.
- **Partners:** City (Lead); Middlesex County Economic Development; area municipalities; Indigenous Nations; London Hydro; London International Airport; regional transportation partners; LEDC.
- **What gets delivered:** Coordinated regional advocacy positions and joint ministerial engagement on priority infrastructure investment.
- **What changes:** London and regional partners speak with a unified voice on infrastructure priorities; London's advocacy is amplified by regional alignment.
- **Headline KPI:** Amount of provincial and federal funding secured for regionally aligned infrastructure through coordinated multi-partner advocacy.

3.2 Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous Nations

Action 3.2a: Resource and support dedicated Indigenous-led economic engagement

The City of London's ReconciliAction Plan commits to listening, learning, and taking meaningful action in partnership with Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous organizations. This is a long-term commitment that must run through every pillar of the economic development strategy.

The City will resource and support a dedicated, Indigenous-led engagement process on economic reconciliation, assigning dedicated staff capacity to support and coordinate this work, subject to the priorities, timelines, and forms of participation determined through Indigenous-led engagement. The approach will align with the ReconciliAction Plan and proceed at a pace that respects the Indigenous Peoples and processes involved.

This work will also draw on the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Action Plan framework, which supports municipalities in advancing practical, relationship-based approaches to reconciliation.

The initial phase focuses on relationship-building, engagement process co-design, and establishing shared priorities, recognizing that ongoing partnership development and implementation may require additional resourcing.

What is built through the engagement process will reach beyond this action. The relationships, the priorities, and the commitments developed will inform how the economic development strategy evolves across all five pillars, through the same mechanisms that govern the strategy's ongoing adaptation (see Actions 5.1a and 5.1e). Engagement is the means; sustained partnership is the goal.

The City will build its internal capacity to engage as an informed, prepared, and credible partner where and when Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous organizations are ready to proceed.

The City of London is committed to meaningful partnership with the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee-Delaware Nation, as well as all eight First Nations communities represented through the London District Chiefs Council, recognizing their integral role in shaping a prosperous, inclusive, and reconciliation-informed economic future for the region.

- **City levers:** Funding; policy.
- **Partners:** Indigenous Nations (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware Nation) — sovereign Nations and intergovernmental partners (Co-Lead); Urban Indigenous organizations — community and service delivery partners (Co-Lead); City of London; Chamber of Commerce.
- **What gets delivered:** Indigenous-led engagement process seeking economic reconciliation and mutually beneficial economic partnerships; priorities that guide the evolution of the strategy as a whole.
- **What changes:** The City, Indigenous Nations, and urban Indigenous organizations establish shared economic priorities that shape this strategy and create opportunities for partnership.
- **Headline KPI:** Engagement process underway and sustained, with progress reported to Council annually in the Economic Development Outcomes Report.

Action 3.2b: Pursue economic partnership where there is shared interest

Subject to the outcomes of Action 3.2a, and where there is shared interest, the City will explore opportunities to advance economic priorities with Indigenous Nations and partnership opportunities with urban Indigenous organizations. These may include partnerships in major infrastructure projects, Indigenous procurement commitments aligned with provincial frameworks, workforce and employment pathways, and other forms of economic collaboration identified through the engagement process. The form, pace, and priorities of partnership will be determined through that process, not in advance of it.

- **City levers:** Funding; policy.
- **Partners:** Indigenous Nations (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware Nation) — sovereign Nations and intergovernmental partners (Co-Lead); Urban Indigenous organizations — community and service delivery partners (Co-Lead); City of London; Chamber of Commerce.
- **What gets delivered:** To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.
- **What changes:** To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.
- **Headline KPI:** To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.

Pillar 4.0
Transportation and Connectivity

As London's population grows faster than the provincial average, pressure on transit, roads, rail, and air services will intensify. Mobility shapes whether workers can reach jobs, whether businesses can reach markets, and whether London can attract the talent and investment it is competing for.

What the evidence shows

London's population grew by over 14% between 2019 and 2024, intensifying demand for transit. Limited direct flights and intercity rail are cited barriers to investment attraction, talent retention, tourism, and competitiveness.

London welcomed approximately 2.1 million overnight visitors in 2023, including over 160,000 international visitors, generating an estimated $1.1 billion in local spending. London International Airport handled approximately 314,000 passengers in 2024 and serves as a key regional transportation and economic asset. The airport ranks as the 12th busiest passenger airport in Canada and the 11th busiest airport by aircraft take-offs and landings. It supports over 50 businesses, generates more than $623 million in economic impact, and employs over 1,200 people, ranking among the top employers in the London area. It also plays an important role in general aviation, supporting aircraft manufacturing, flight training, and maintenance. While the airport has the infrastructure to support higher volumes, current utilization remains below capacity, representing an opportunity to strengthen connectivity and enhance its economic contribution to the region.

A 2021 City of London survey found that 23% of residents with a disability or physical health condition who were not in the labour force cited transportation as a barrier. Connectivity is therefore also a labour market participation issue, directly linked to workforce goals in Pillar 2 of this strategy.

London's rapid transit program and service expansion are actively improving connections between downtown, campuses, hospitals, and major employment areas. Additionally, the City contributes to Middlesex County Connect, supporting inter-municipal transit and regional labour force access.

Key gaps

- Regional improvements in rail, intercity transit, and expanded air service require coordinated advocacy with senior governments and transit authorities.
- London International Airport has capacity to serve more passengers, attract new routes, and grow cargo activity that strengthens the region's trade connections.
- Aligning land use, infrastructure, service planning, and economic priorities into a coordinated regional mobility system requires collaboration across jurisdictions.
- Transit is a barrier to labour market participation for some residents with disabilities, shift workers, and those commuting from surrounding municipalities.

What success looks like

- Reliable, frequent, and accessible transit connects residents to employment areas, campuses, downtown, and key services when they need them.
- Rail, bus, and air connections support commuting, business travel, and tourism to and from London.
- London International Airport has more direct routes, stronger cargo activity, and growing aviation-related employment.
- Mobility gaps for equity-denied groups, including residents with disabilities, are reduced, improving access to employment and services.

How this pillar delivers on London's broader commitments

- **Climate Emergency Action Plan:** Regional transit expansion is both a climate action and a labour market investment. This pillar strengthens the economic case for CEAP transit commitments at the senior government level.

- **The London Plan:** Rail, air, and rapid transit connectivity are city-building tools advanced through coordinated advocacy work.

- **Master Mobility Plan:** Expanded transit commitments are connected to specific workforce participation outcomes through advocacy.

Strategies

4.1 Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London

Action 4.1a: Implement an Air and Rail Connectivity Advocacy Strategy

Business leaders identified limited flights and slow intercity rail as barriers to talent attraction and investment. London's transit connections have not kept pace with its growth or its economic ambitions; closing those gaps requires coordinated advocacy around specific, shared asks.

A coordinated Air and Rail Connectivity Advocacy Strategy will target service gaps identified through analysis of business travel demand, talent mobility needs, priority global markets, and regional cargo and logistics requirements. The strategy will advance coordinated asks to Transport Canada, VIA Rail, and relevant federal and provincial ministries, and engage NAV Canada directly on airspace and regulatory matters affecting London's aviation ambitions.

- **City lever:** Advocacy.
- **Partners:** London International Airport (Co-Lead); City of London (Co-Lead); LEDC; Transport Canada; VIA Rail; Middlesex County Economic Development; neighbouring municipalities.
- **What gets delivered:** An advocacy strategy targeting air and rail service gaps, with aligned asks advanced to senior governments and transportation agencies.
- **What changes:** London's advocacy for improved connectivity is coordinated, specific, and regionally unified.
- **Headline KPI:** Annual passenger volumes at London International Airport and intercity rail service frequency.

4.2 Drive local and regional transportation improvements

Action 4.2a: Align transit and mobility investment with economic development and workforce priorities

Transit gaps are labour market gaps. When workers cannot reach industrial parks, employment areas, or shift-work jobs, London loses labour force participation. The Master Mobility Plan sets London's transit expansion commitments – this action ensures economic development priorities, workforce access, employer co-funding opportunities, and cross-boundary routes are explicitly embedded in how those commitments are sequenced and advocated for.

The City will convene workforce and transit partners to prioritize the gaps with the greatest workforce participation impact, producing evidence-based advocacy positions and identifying opportunities for employer co-funded routes where gaps are most acute.

- **City levers:** Convening; advocacy.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); LEDC; London Regional Manufacturing Council; London Transit Commission; Middlesex County Economic Development; Middlesex County Connect; employers.
- **What gets delivered:** Map of transit gaps with workforce participation impacts; advocacy positions for service expansion.
- **What changes:** Transit planning and advocacy are grounded in documented workforce evidence; Employers, LTC, and Middlesex County Connect coordinate around specific gaps.
- **Headline KPI:** Increase in transit routes to major employment areas, including industrial parks and hospital campuses.

Pillar 5.0
System Optimization

A well-coordinated economic development system is a competitive advantage, particularly for a city positioning itself as a scalable platform for investment, commercialization, and industrial growth. Cities that can align partners, move quickly on opportunities, hold investments accountable to outcomes, and adapt as conditions change will outperform those that cannot.

London's system has the partners, the relationships, and the shared commitment to execute effectively; what it has lacked is the system-level coordination architecture to optimize delivery. Businesses require different supports at different stages of growth, from early-stage entrepreneurship to scaling firms and those competing in global markets. The economic development system must respond to each of these moments, providing an accessible and responsive experience aligned to business needs.

What the evidence shows

London operates a hybrid economic development delivery model, pairing municipal investment and accountability with service delivery through specialized external partners. Analysis of London's economic development system identified opportunities for stronger coordination between organizations, clearer links between strategic priorities and implementation, and consistent outcome-based reporting. Deloitte's survey of 47 economic development organizations found overlap in mandates: 14 led on business retention and expansion with 13 more in supporting roles; 8 led on business attraction and investment, with 16 organizations indicating a supporting role. Most reported multiple objectives. The result is a system where collaborative intent is genuine but collective impact is constrained by unclear roles, inconsistent referral pathways, and no formal mechanism for aligning shared priorities[1]. These are coordination gaps, not structural failures, and they are addressable. Business leaders called directly for a single point of contact to help navigate City services and processes.

A review of economic development governance in 28 comparable Canadian cities found that coordinated, cross-sector leadership tables improve alignment across partners, strengthen accountability, and enable faster, more effective responses to major investment opportunities.

1 For more information refer to Appendix C: Evidence Base - Deloitte Research and Recommendations

Network analysis found that London's culture and tourism organizations, including Tourism London, the London Music Office, and Film London, form a well-connected internal cluster but are not well integrated with the broader economic development system. The potential for these organizations to contribute to investment attraction, talent retention, and creative economy growth is impacted by this disconnection.

London has demonstrated strong residential approvals performance relative to many peer municipalities, supported by consistent housing activity and streamlined processes. The same discipline, speed, and predictability are needed for the commercial and industrial files that economic development depends on.

Existing funding agreements lack standardized performance definitions and comparable reporting timelines, making it difficult to report on a coherent system-wide story about what London's economic development investment is producing or to identify where the system needs to adapt and improve.

Key gaps

- Roles across the system are not clearly defined, with organizations reporting multiple overlapping mandates.
- Employers, job seekers, and businesses navigate multiple entry points to economic supports and services with no formal coordinating mechanism across the system.
- Shared performance data across the ecosystem is limited.
- London's cultural and tourism functions operate at a distance from its investment attraction mandate, leaving assets like the UNESCO City of Music designation under-deployed.

What success looks like

- System partners have clear, distinct mandates and work in a coordinated way that reduces duplication and closes gaps.
- Service agreements are tied to strategic outcomes and results are more visible so the system can trace impact and learn from what it produces.
- A business or investor at any stage of growth encounters a single coherent system: the right support at the right moment, clear pathways forward, and one door that is never the wrong one.
- London's cultural and tourism functions operate as an aligned, integrated part of the economic development system.

How this pillar delivers on London's broader commitments

- **ReconciliAction Plan:** This pillar commits to Indigenous representation in implementation governance.

- **Industrial Land Development Strategy:** Process improvement and more coordinated data are enabled through this pillar's work.

- **Climate Emergency Action Plan:** This pillar can be employed to advance the CEAP's commitment to convene a business and institution-led body focused on local and regional economic development in the low-carbon transition.

Strategies

5.1 Build a coordinated system that performs and improves

Action 5.1a: Establish the Economic Partnership Table

This is the foundational action of the strategy.

The Partnership Table is this strategy's economic development coordinating body: a group of business, institutional, and community leaders who keep implementation on track, make calls when priorities need to shift, and ensure the system delivers on the strategy's commitments. It is where London's economic development system aligns around what matters most and makes decisions about what to advance, adjust, or stop.

Deliberately small to enable effective decision-making, its composition will seek to reflect London's economic breadth and independent, business-minded expertise, including Indigenous representation informed through Indigenous-led engagement approaches.

The Table's functions include reviewing progress against strategy commitments, providing input on major investments such as the co-investment fund (Action 2.2a), and serving as the mechanism through which this strategy adapts over time, including updates informed by Indigenous-led engagement under Action 3.2a.

A Talent Working Group will be established at the outset (see Action 2.1a), and additional working groups may be established as priorities emerge, such as the Low Carbon Transition and responses to technology change, including AI, automation, and digital transformation.

The Table is the governance mechanism connecting to the Downtown Plan's governance approach.

- **City lever:** Convening.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead), TBD.
- **What gets delivered:** A cross-sector Economic Partnership Table with the mandate and resources to keep the strategy accountable, responsive, and impactful.
- **What changes:** London's economic development system has a shared forum for honest reflection, course correction, and collective decision-making.
- **Headline KPI:** Economic Partnership Table completes strategy review and reports findings to Council through the Economic Development Outcomes Report.

Action 5.1b: Update funding agreements to strengthen accountability and alignment

The City will update service and grant agreements with funded partners to clarify roles, establish shared outcome expectations, and align reporting to the community outcomes framework in this strategy.

Agreements will reflect shared commitments to delivery: clearer and more distinct roles across the system, coordinated action where mandates overlap, and stronger outcome-based reporting that tells a coherent story about what London's economic development investment is producing.

Updated agreements are a shared commitment to transparency about results and a structured basis for collective learning. Outcome reporting expectations enable system partners to understand what is working, where conditions have changed, and what adjustments the strategy needs. As outcome expectations increase, funding levels must be commensurate with delivery expectations to be successful.

- **City levers:** Funding; policy; data and reporting.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); LEDC; TechAlliance; Small Business Centre.
- **What gets delivered:** Updated agreements with defined roles, shared outcome expectations, reporting requirements, and coordination commitments.
- **What changes:** The accountability and coordination expectations governing London's economic development partnerships are clearer, more consistent, and more directly connected to the outcomes this strategy is working toward.
- **Headline KPI:** Updated funding agreements in place.

Action 5.1c: Align culture functions with London's economic development mandate

London's cultural and tourism organizations generate economic value through visitor spending, film and music production, and creative employment. That value is not fully captured in London's investment attraction and talent retention efforts because these organizations are less integrated in London's economic development system.

The City will convene with Tourism London, Film London, the London Music Office, RBC Place, and other pertinent partners around shared economic development objectives, common performance indicators, and a unified brand narrative that integrates London's cultural assets into its investment and talent attraction proposition.

- **City levers:** Convening; policy.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); LEDC/Film London; Tourism London/London Music Office; RBC Place; Museum London; Grand Theatre; London Arts Council; London Heritage Council.
- **What gets delivered:** A shared performance framework and a path to more aligned governance for City-supported cultural and creative industries organizations.
- **What changes:** London's cultural functions operate as a coherent and vital part of its economic development strategy.
- **Headline KPI:** Shared performance indicators established and creative economy outcomes reported through the Economic Development Outcomes Report (5.1d).

Action 5.1d: Publish the annual Economic Development Outcomes Report

Each year, the Economic Partnership Table, the City, and partners will report on what was delivered, what changed, and what the evidence says about whether London's economy is moving in the right direction.

The report draws on five inputs: updated economic data that tracks how London is performing relative to the strategy's headline indicators; feedback from the business community gathered through the feedback mechanism in Action 5.1e; reporting from funded partners; City departmental reporting on enabling actions; and the Economic Partnership Table's assessment of where the strategy is on track and where it needs to adapt. Together these inputs give Council and the community a full picture of what the system is delivering and what it needs to do differently.

- **City levers:** Data and reporting.
- **Partners:** Economic Partnership Table (Lead); City of London; LEDC; TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; Tourism London; broader ecosystem partners.
- **What gets delivered:** Annual public report on economic development outcomes.
- **What changes:** Council and the community have a single, consistent annual account of what London's economic development system is delivering.
- **Headline KPI:** Annual Economic Development Outcomes Report published.

Action 5.1e: Build a structured feedback and adaptation cycle

The annual Economic Development Outcomes Report is a formal review trigger. The Economic Partnership Table will convene to assess what the report shows, receive structured feedback from businesses, investors, and community members, and determine whether priorities warrant adjustment. What is learned through Indigenous-led engagement under Action 3.2a flows into this cycle as the relationship deepens.

Strategic direction changes require Council approval. Tactical adjustments within the strategic framework are delivered by the Economic Partnership Table and Civic Administration, with changes documented transparently in the annual report. This allows the system to move at the speed the economic environment demands while retaining accountability commitments.

Not every action in this strategy will produce the outcome intended, and not every opportunity London should pursue exists yet. The adaptation mechanism is designed for both realities: to surface what isn't working and adjust course, and to position London to move when new opportunities emerge. It is designed for "Strategy X" – the one that cannot be written yet.

- **City levers:** Convening; data and reporting.
- **Partners:** Economic Partnership Table (Lead); City of London LEDC; TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; Chamber of Commerce; broader ecosystem partners.
- **What gets delivered:** Annual structured review by the Economic Partnership Table informed by the Outcomes Report and direct business and community feedback.
- **What changes:** The strategy adapts as conditions change and London is positioned to respond to opportunities that do not yet exist.
- **Headline KPI:** Annual Economic Partnership Table strategy review completed, with adjustments documented in the Economic Development Outcomes Report.

5.2 Align City Economic Service Delivery

Action 5.2a: Strengthen the City's Business Navigation function

Businesses and investors need a single, accountable point of contact with the authority to coordinate across departments, provide proactive guidance, and move files efficiently through City processes. The City will strengthen its Business Navigation function, building on the existing Business Hub and concierge models, to ensure that businesses with multi-departmental needs encounter a coordinated and responsive City. This will include establishing a dedicated concierge-style navigation role, connected to the City of London's Business Hub, to support businesses looking to invest, develop, or expand in London. This function will provide proactive, end-to-end support, coordinating approvals, licensing, and service requirements across City departments.

For large-scale and complex investment files, a designated navigator will own the file from first contact through to resolution. For more straightforward inquiries, clear pathways and referrals to ecosystem partners will provide efficient and immediate support.

- **City lever:** Policy.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead).
- **What gets delivered:** Enhanced Business Hub with dedicated concierge navigation capacity, defined authority, service standards, and escalation protocols.
- **What changes:** Businesses experience a "no wrong door" approach, with coordinated, proactive support across City services.
- **Headline KPI:** Business and investor satisfaction with City navigation; time to resolution for multi-departmental files.

Action 5.2b: Streamline development approvals for priority investments

London competes on how easy it is to do business. Multi-departmental projects and investments in priority areas currently face timelines disproportionate to their scale. This action works in conjunction with Action 5.2a and matches process complexity to project size, deepens cross-departmental coordination, and ensures land use permissions and approval pathways for priority areas are established before investors arrive. Where AI-enabled tools can improve the speed, consistency, or transparency of review processes, the City will evaluate and adopt them as part of this modernization work.

- **City levers:** Policy; data and reporting.
- **Partners:** City of London (Lead); Development Community; Downtown Business Association; London International Airport.
- **What gets delivered:** Coordinated review models for complex projects; refined service standards with external benchmarking and public reporting; dedicated streamlined pathways for downtown and airport development and redevelopment.
- **What changes:** Specific friction points are removed for complex projects and strategic priorities such as downtown redevelopment and aerospace innovation.
- **Headline KPI:** Median processing time for defined file types, tracked against published service standards.

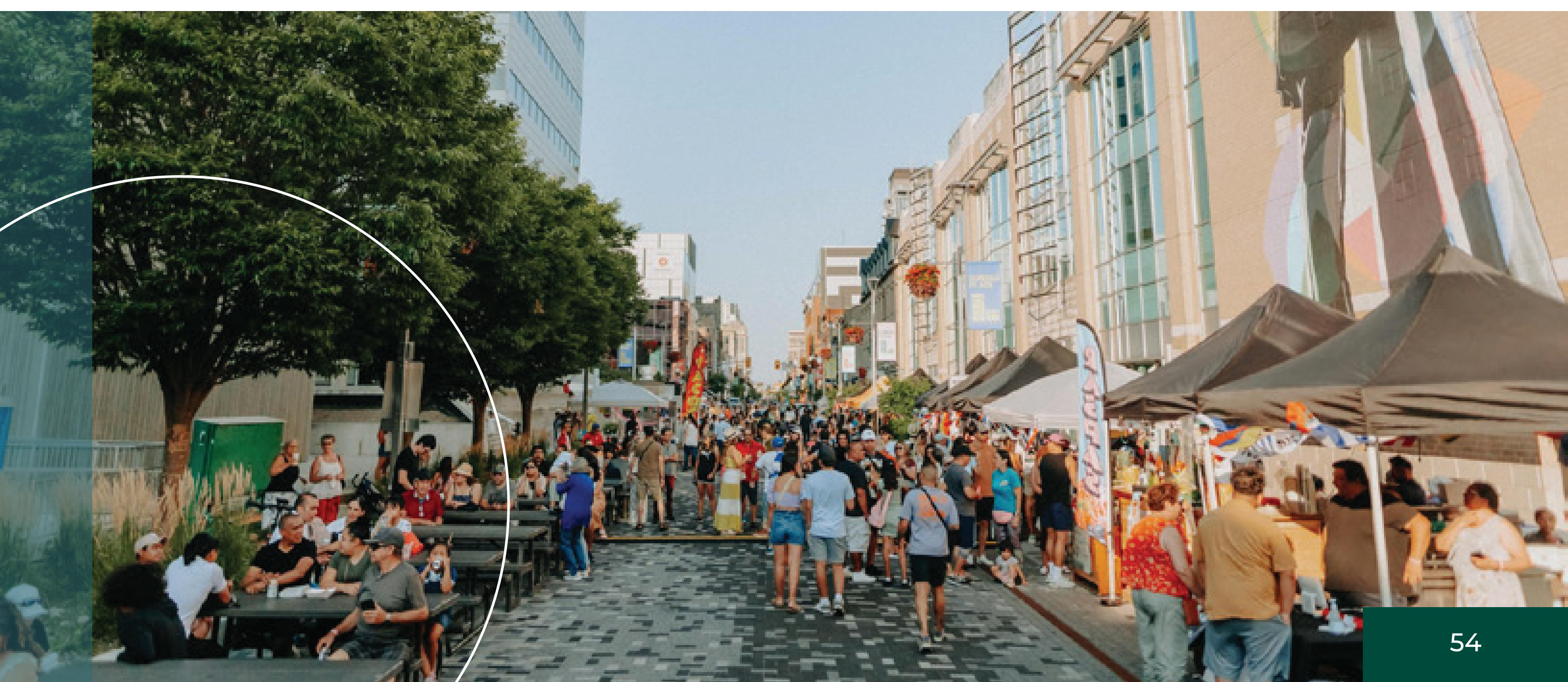
Implementation

Implementation of this strategy will be managed with a disciplined, execution-focused approach. Implementation begins immediately following Council approval, with priority actions initiated within the first 18 months. Refer to Appendix A for the implementation Plan.

Implementation Structure

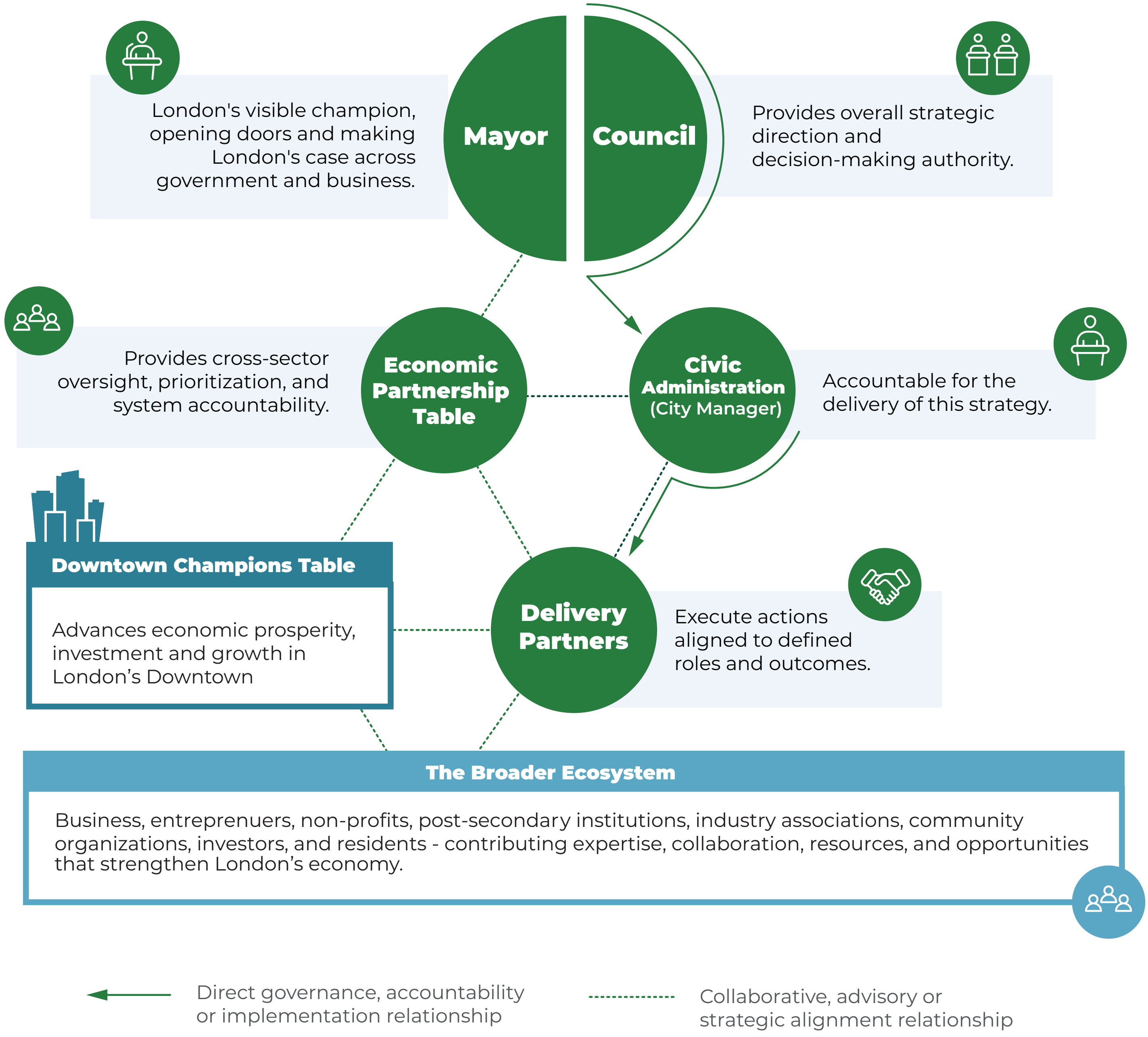
This strategy is delivered through a coordinated governance model that aligns political leadership, civic administration, and external partners:

- **City Council** provides overall strategic direction and decision-making authority.
- **The Mayor** serves as London's visible champion, opening doors, building relationships, and making London's case at the highest levels of government and business.
- **Delivery partners (LEDC, TechAlliance, Small Business Centre, and others)** execute actions aligned to defined roles and outcomes.
- **The Economic Partnership Table** provides cross-sector coordination, prioritization, and system accountability.
- **Civic Administration**, through the City Manager, is accountable for delivery of this strategy.



Coordinated Governance Model

A coordinated approach that aligns political leadership, civic administration and external partners to deliver London's economic development strategy.



Phased Implementation Approach

While activity across pillars and actions begins from day one, not all actions in this strategy will be pursued at the same intensity at the same time. Some actions are prerequisite to others and establishing them first determines what becomes possible later: the governance, coordination, and readiness investments that the rest of the strategy depends on.

Phase 1: Foundational Actions

The first phase focuses on strengthening the core systems required for growth, ensuring London can operate as a coordinated and investment-ready city. System coordination and governance is an "unlocking" action that creates conditions for other actions across the strategy to succeed.

- System coordination and governance (Pillar 5)
- City service delivery and business navigation (Pillar 5)
- Indigenous-led engagement (Pillar 3)
- Workforce navigation (Pillar 2)
- Investment readiness and Team London response (Pillar 1)

Future Phases: Accelerate Growth

Building on this foundation, future phases focus on scaling targeted sector and place-based initiatives, including: scaling sector development in life sciences, aerospace, and the creative economy; growing the innovation ecosystem; deepening regional collaboration; advancing downtown economic activation; and strengthening the governance and performance systems that keep the strategy accountable.

Detailed implementation sequencing for these phases will be developed by the Economic Partnership Table and Civic Administration as the strategy matures, informed by the annual Economic Development Outcomes Report and adapted to what the evidence shows is working.

Performance Reporting

This section outlines what results look like, how they will be tracked, and what the City and system partners are expected to report.

Community outcomes: what this strategy is working to change

The five indicators below are lag measures. They confirm whether broad economic conditions in London are improving or not. Data collection, interpretation, and sharing related to Indigenous-specific indicators will be guided by OCAP principles and informed through Indigenous-led processes, in alignment with the City's ReconciliAction Plan.

Community Outcome	Headline Indicator	Direction
Job creation and retention	Total jobs, net new jobs overall and in priority sectors; average annual wages compared to Ontario average.	Rising
Investment attraction	Total value of new capital investment, including expansions and new firm attraction.	Rising
Business formation and growth	Active employer business count; new business starts.	Rising
London's employment lands and commercial areas are productive	Employment land uptake; vacancy rates; tax assessment growth.	Rising; vacancy falling
Workforce participation and inclusion	Labour force participation rate, disaggregated by equity-denied groups; unemployment rate.	Unemployment falling; participation rising

Reporting

London's economic development system reports collectively against this framework. The City, its funded partners, and other organizations, where relevant, will contribute to an annual account of what was delivered and what changed. As funding agreements are updated through the actions in Pillar 5, partner reporting will align to shared outcome definitions and the community outcomes framework, so that the annual account tells a coherent system-wide story.

The City will publish an Economic Development Outcomes Report annually. The report will document progress against the five community outcomes, delivery across the strategy's actions, and recommendations for adaptations based on emerging opportunities. Economic conditions are complex, competitive, and shaped by forces no single actor controls. Accountability means an honest account of what is working and what is not. Where indicators fall short of expectations, the Economic Partnership Table will treat that as information and determine how strategies and actions need to evolve.

Made for London.

Made for what's next.

London's growth is a choice. The businesses that chose to expand here, the researchers whose discoveries are finding their way to market, the musicians that earned this city a designation no other Canadian city holds, the workers who decided to stay - these are the cumulative decisions of people who are betting on London.

To London's businesses and investors: the City is ready. When you are ready to grow, London will make it easy. When you need to move a file through City Hall, you will find a system organized around your needs, not the other way around. When you choose London, you will find a partner that moves with you - fast, accountable, and fully committed to your success here.

To Londoners: the growth this strategy pursues is measured not only in investment attracted or jobs created, but in whether this city becomes more opportunity-rich for everyone already here.

To the organizations and partners who make this system what it is: the vision for London's economic future belongs to all of London, and the City is committing to doing its best work alongside you.

Made for London. Made for what's next.

Appendices

- A: Implementation Plan
- B: Acknowledgements
- C: Evidence Base - Deloitte Research and Recommendations (attached)

Appendix A: Implementation Plan

Appendix A: Implementation Plan

Resource Note: Cost estimates reflect incremental municipal investments to support priority actions and do not include existing staff time. Some actions may require modest external advisory, legal, benchmarking, or technical support, also funded through existing operating budgets where possible. Short-term funding includes focus on feasibility work, pilot programs, and enabling activities. Larger-scale investments are subject to future business cases and Council approval, and many actions are designed to leverage external funding and partner contributions. Cost estimates are indicative and will be refined through implementation. Where multiple funding sources are identified, the City of London's actual contribution may be less than the total shown, depending on the success of cost-sharing and external funding applications. Funding for Indigenous engagement reflects initial estimates for Indigenous-led processes. Future resourcing will be informed by engagement outcomes. Implementation sequencing will evolve based on performance outcomes, partnership capacity, funding opportunities, and emerging economic conditions.

Implementation Partners Note: The partners identified throughout this implementation plan reflect the best available understanding of current roles, mandates, and delivery relationships at the time of strategy development. As initiatives evolve, additional partners may emerge, existing partnerships may shift, and responsibilities may change in response to organizational capacity, funding opportunities, Council direction, and emerging economic conditions. Partner listings should be understood as illustrative of anticipated collaboration, not exhaustive or fixed.

S = Short-term (0–18 months); M = Medium-term (19–36 months); L = Long-term (37–60 months).

Strategic Pillar 1: Investment Attraction and Retention

1.1 Build a world-class life sciences cluster

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.1a: Define London's life sciences innovation path district, including anchor firm attraction and commercialization of local assets.	S-L	Western University (Lead); LEDC; TechAlliance; Fanshawe; Hospitals; Industry Partners; City of London.	Staff time; Market analysis and feasibility; $125,000 (new one-time); Remaining work TBD following feasibility study.	FedDev Ontario (REGI); applied research programs; Federal/ Provincial funding.	Completed feasibility review and defined implementation pathway.	London partners have a shared direction for a life sciences innovation cluster, with defined pathways to attract anchor firms and translate local research into commercial activity.	Feasibility review and implementation pathway completed and endorsed by life sciences leaders.

1.2 Establish London as a leader in Canadian aerospace innovation

Actions	Time-line	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.2a: Create an Aerospace Innovation Corridor near the London International Airport.	M-L	City of London (Lead); London International Airport.	Staff time; Research and analysis; Corridor planning; investment attraction readiness; $100,000 (new one-time).	Economic Development Reserve Fund.	Innovation Corridor designation with as-of-right permitted uses for aerospace manufacturing: testing and aviation assessment of ways to improve investment attraction through Airport Community Improvement Plan incentives.	An aerospace firm evaluating London encounters speed, stability, and a City and airport speaking with one voice about development.	Number of aerospace-related tenants within the corridor, once implemented.
1.2b: Advocate for investment in London's aerospace innovation position.	S-M	City of London (Co-Lead); London International Airport (Co-Lead); LEDC; TechAlliance; Western.	Staff time; cost-shared with airport authority.	Operating budget; Airport Authority cost-sharing.	Coordinated senior government advocacy strategy for London's aerospace innovation position.	The City and airport authority present a unified case for London's aerospace ambitions, which are supported by senior governments.	Senior government recognition of London as an aerospace innovation centre.

1.3 Activate the Downtown as an Economic and Cultural Driver.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.3a: Deliver business advisory support for downtown street-level businesses.	S	Small Business Centre (Lead); Downtown London; Chamber of Commerce; City of London.	Staff time; $50,000 (program costs) (new/yr). Funding supports delivery of focused advisory and resilience programming aligned with Downtown Plan priorities, leveraging existing partner capacity.	Economic Development Reserve Fund.	One-on-one advisory services for downtown street level businesses; structured resilience programming tailored to the downtown operating environment, designed in alignment with Downtown Plan priorities.	Downtown street level businesses access specialized support tailored to the pressures they actually face; businesses entering vacant spaces have a supported pathway to establish and sustain operations.	Number of new businesses occupying previously vacant spaces.
1.3b: Build a downtown investment portfolio.	S	City of London (Lead); LEDC: Chamber of Commerce; Tourism London; Downtown London; Real Estate Organization; London Development Institute; City of London.	Staff time; Market analysis, investor-ready site profiles; $125,000 (new one-time).	Economic Development Reserve Fund; Federal/ Provincial funding.	Investment Portfolio with profiles of underutilized downtown sites covering ownership, zoning, and reuse potential.	London has a set of downtown investment opportunities that go beyond market availability to capture redevelopment potential, including for priority downtown initiatives such as the creative industries hub (Action 1.3d).	Number of underutilized downtown properties added to the Investment Portfolio.
1.3c: Leverage London's UNESCO City of Music designation for creative economy growth in the downtown.	M	Tourism London/ London Music Office (Lead); LEDC/Film London; music and arts organizations; City of London.	Staff time; Marketing and prospecting; $100,000 (new one-time).	Tourism MAT Fund; Federal/ Provincial funding.	A coordinated creative economy investment positioning approach that integrates London's UNESCO City of Music designation into broader sector attraction, marketing, and partnership development efforts.	The UNESCO designation is an active economic development tool; cultural vibrancy supports London's investment and talent attraction proposition.	Year-over-year growth in creative economy employment.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.3d: Develop a Creative Industries Hub to grow London's music, film, and arts economy.	TBD	LEDC (Lead); Film London; City of London; London Music Office; Tourism London; Small Business Centre; London Arts Council; Fanshawe College; Western University; Downtown London; Chamber of Commerce; London Community Foundation.	TBD	Economic Development Reserve Fund; London Community Foundation: Federal/Provincial funding.	A defined implementation pathway for a Creative Industries Hub, including business case completion, identified candidate spaces, partnership framework, and phased delivery approach. Downtown vacancy converts to visible productive use.	Creative entrepreneurs have a dedicated home that reduces entry costs, builds professional networks, and connects artistic practice to business formation. The UNESCO designation becomes a lived economic reality.	Number of creative entrepreneurs and businesses actively participating in Hub programming annually.

1.4 Strengthen London's investment offer

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.4a: Build London's investment readiness and attraction communications package	S-M	Economic Partnership Table (Lead); LEDC; London Hydro; City of London; Huron Erie Water Supply.	Staff time; Marketing and prospecting $100,000 (new one-time).	Operating budget; Economic Development Reserve Fund; Federal/ Provincial funding.	A regularly updated, sector-organized communications package consolidating London's investment offer, including confirmed water and energy capacity, into a single resource any partner can use.	Every partner can tell London's story accurately and refer interest to LEDC with confidence.	Number of partners actively using the package, water and energy capacity position confirmed and integrated.
1.4b: Activate a coordinated Team London investment response.	S-M	Economic Partnership Table (Lead); LEDC; elected leadership; City of London; London Hydro; TechAlliance; sector partners as relevant.	Staff time.	Operating budget.	A documented Team London investment response.	London's most significant investment opportunities receive a coordinated, senior-level response.	Number of investment files where Team London response was activated.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
1.4c: Activate CIP tools for commercial corridor reinvestment	S-M	City of London (Lead); BIA's.	Staff time; delivered through existing resources (CIP review and corridor profiling integrated into current planning and economic development work programs)	Operating budget.	Review of CIP tools for commercial corridors with amendments brought forward where gaps are identified, investment profiles for priority corridors	Commercial corridor reinvestment has a proactive, City-supported pathway; small businesses and investors outside the downtown core encounter a system that is clear, coordinated, and responsive.	Number of CIP applications in commercial corridors, commercial vacancy rates in priority corridors.

Strategic Pillar 2: Talent and Innovation

2.1 Build London's connected, inclusive workforce system

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
2.1a: Set system-wide workforce priorities.	S–M	LEDC (Lead); City of London; Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB); TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; secondary and post-secondary institutions.	Staff time; Labour market analytics; \$10,000–\$20,000; Annual Conference; \$50,000 (new/yr).	Operating budget; Federal/ Provincial funding.	Annual workforce priorities, shared labour market intelligence, and coordinated advocacy positions aligned to identified talent pipeline gaps.	Workforce priorities guide collective partner programming and targeted advocacy, reducing system-level barriers to talent attraction, retention, and workforce participation.	Number of initiatives that reflect current workforce priorities.
2.1b: Build a guided workforce navigation tool.	S–M	EMOWPDB (Lead); LEDC; City of London; Small Business Centre; TechAlliance; LMLIP; settlement agencies; Middlesex Economic Development.	Staff time; \$50,000 for tech solution (new one-time). Initial funding supports development of a minimum viable product, leveraging existing platforms where possible. Future enhancements will be informed by user uptake and system integration opportunities.	Operating budget; Federal/ Provincial funding.	Public facing interface for accessing information on pathways to workforce support in London.	Job seekers, including those facing systemic barriers to participation, access the workforce system through one interface and can easily connect to appropriate supports and opportunities.	Number of users accessing the workforce navigation tool.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
2.1c: Scale inclusive economic integration programs for underrepresented entrepreneurs.	S–M	Small Business Centre (Lead); LMLIP; LEADS Employment Solutions; ATN; Indigenous organizations; Francophone organizations; newcomer support organizations; City of London.	Staff time; $100,000 (new/yr) (mentorship and programs).	Operating budget; Federal/Provincial funding.	Scaled delivery of proven inclusive entrepreneurship and economic integration programs.	More underrepresented workers and entrepreneurs access supports that lead to greater economic participation.	Number and percentage of participants who start a business or secure employment after completing the program.
2.1d: Strengthen employer-institution connections to expand student work-integrated learning opportunities in priority sectors.	S-M	LEDC (Lead); Western University; Fanshawe College; TVDSB; LDCSB; City of London; EMOWDB; TechAlliance; London Region Manufacturing Council; employer networks.	Staff time; Student entrepreneurship bootcamps; mentorship; $50,000 (new/yr).	Operating budget; Economic Development Reserve Fund.	Structured employer-institution partnership framework and expanded placement opportunities aligned to priority sectors identified in 2.1a.	Increased student participation in work-integrated learning and stronger connections between students and local employers.	Number of students in local work-integrated learning: internships, co-ops, applied projects.

2.2 Grow London's Innovation Ecosystem.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
2.2a: Create a catalytic co-investment fund.	M	Economic Partnership Table (Governance Lead); Administrative Lead, to be identified through competitive procurement.	Staff time; Initial municipal contribution to catalytic co-investment fund; $500,000 (new/yr). Funding will support early-stage project enablement and is intended to leverage external capital (public and private). Fund structure, governance, and scale will be refined through implementation.	Economic Development Reserve Fund; Seek provincial/federal funding.	Operational co-investment fund with defined eligibility criteria.	Initiatives that generate local economic value but cannot currently secure financing move from concept to execution.	Ratio of external capital mobilized per municipal dollar invested.
2.2b: Establish an Innovation Testbed Program.	S-M	City of London (Lead); TechAlliance; Western University; Fanshawe College; LEDC.	Staff time; Program scope and funding requirements will be evaluated following pilot phase.	Operating budget; Federal/Provincial funding.	Governed innovation testbed program with defined eligibility criteria, governance framework, and priority asset classes.	London provides local businesses with access to proving grounds that accelerate market readiness.	Number of local organizations completing validated pilots under the program; documented service improvement outcomes or learnings from each pilot.

Strategic Pillar 3: Regional Collaboration

3.1 Strengthen relationships with the region's municipalities and industry partners.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
3.1a: Build regional economic partnerships to coordinate infrastructure and investment readiness.	S-M	LEDC (Lead); London Hydro; Middlesex County Economic Development; area municipalities; Indigenous Nations; London Regional Manufacturing Council; City of London.	Staff time.	Operating budget.	Inventory of regionally significant employment sites, infrastructure priorities, supply-chain connections, and coordinated regional investment positioning materials that support regional investment attraction efforts	London participates in a more coordinated regional approach to major investment opportunities, enabling stronger multi-jurisdictional responses and presenting investors with a more coherent regional value proposition where appropriate.	Number of joint regional infrastructure or investment initiatives advanced through coordinated action.
3.1b: Coordinate regional advocacy for trade-enabling infrastructure.	S-M	City of London (Lead); area municipalities; Indigenous Nations; London Hydro; London International Airport; regional transportation partners; LEDC; Middlesex County Economic Development.	Staff time.	Operating budget.	Coordinated regional advocacy positions and joint ministerial engagement on priority infrastructure investment.	London and regional partners speak with a unified voice on infrastructure priorities; London's advocacy is amplified by regional alignment.	Amount of provincial and federal funding secured for regionally aligned infrastructure through coordinated multi-partner advocacy.

3.2 Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous Nations.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
3.2a: Resource and support dedicated Indigenous-led economic engagement	S–M	Indigenous Nations (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; Munsee- Delaware-Nation) — sovereign Nations and intergovernmental partners (Co-Lead); Urban Indigenous organizations — community and service delivery partners (Co-Lead); City of London; Chamber of Commerce.	Staff time; Facilitation and process support; $150,000 (one-time); Funding supports Phase 1 engagement, including facilitation, relationship-building, and process design. Ongoing resourcing will be determined based on engagement outcomes.	Operating budget; Economic Development Reserve Fund; Indigenous Capacity Support Program (ISC); Ontario Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF).	Indigenous-led engagement process seeking economic reconciliation and mutually beneficial economic partnerships, internal City capacity building, findings that guide the evolution of the strategy as a whole.	The City, Indigenous Nations, and urban Indigenous organization establish shared economic priorities that shape this strategy and create opportunities for partnership.	Engagement process underway and sustained, with progress reported to Council annually in the Economic Development Outcomes Report.
3.2b: Pursue economic partnership where there is shared interest.	M–L	Indigenous Nations (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; Munsee- Delaware-Nation) — sovereign Nations and intergovernmental partners (Co-Lead); Urban Indigenous organizations — community and service delivery partners (Co-Lead); City of London; Chamber of Commerce.	Staff time; TBD based on engagement outcomes.	TBD following completion of Action 3.2a.	To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.	To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.	To be determined following outcomes of Action 3.2a.

Strategic Pillar 4: Transportation and Connectivity

4.1 Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
4.1a: Implement an Air and Rail Connectivity Advocacy Strategy.	S-M	London International Airport (Co-Lead); City of London (Co-Lead); LEDC; neighbouring municipalities; Transport Canada; VIA Rail; Middlesex County Economic Development.	Staff time.	Operating budget.	An advocacy strategy targeting air and rail service gaps, with aligned asks advanced to senior governments and transportation agencies.	London's advocacy for improved connectivity is coordinated, specific, and regionally unified.	Annual passenger volumes at London International Airport and intercity rail service frequency.

4.2 Drive local and regional transportation improvements.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
4.2a: Align transit and mobility investment with economic development and workforce priorities	M-L	City of London (Lead); LEDC; EMC/ London Regional Manufacturing Council; London Transit Commission; Middlesex County Economic Development; Middlesex County Connect; employers.	Staff time. Other costs TBD (future analysis, pilot, or implementation costs may be brought forward separately following gap mapping).	Operating budget.	Prioritized map of transit gaps with the greatest workforce participation impact, specific advocacy positions for service expansion, identified opportunities for employer co-funded routes.	Transit planning and advocacy are grounded in documented workforce evidence. Employers, LTC, and Middlesex County Connect coordinate around specific gaps.	Increase in transit routes to major employment areas, including industrial parks and hospital campuses.

Strategic Pillar 5: System Optimization

5.1 Build a coordinated system that performs and improves.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
5.1a: Establish the Economic Partnership Table.	S	City of London (Lead); TBD	Staff time.	Operating budget	A cross-sector Partnership Table with the mandate and resources to keep the strategy accountable, responsive, and impactful.	London's economic development system has a shared forum for honest reflection, course correction, and collective decision-making.	Partnership Table completes strategy review and reports findings to Council through the Economic Development Outcomes Report.
5.1b: Update funding agreements to strengthen accountability and alignment.	S	City of London (Lead) LEDC; TechAlliance; Small Business Centre.	Staff time; legal advisor support as required: funded through existing operating budget.	Operating budget	Updated agreements with defined roles, shared outcome expectations, reporting requirements, and coordination commitments.	The accountability and coordination expectations governing London's economic development partnerships are clearer, more consistent, and more directly connected to the outcomes this strategy is working toward.	Updated funding agreements in place.
5.1c: Align culture functions with London's economic development mandate.	S	City of London; (Lead); Tourism London/London Music Office; RBC Place; LEDC/Film London; Museum London; Grand Theatre; London Heritage Council; London Arts Council; Eldon House	Staff time.	Operating budget.	A shared performance framework and a path to more aligned governance for City-supported cultural and creative sector organizations.	London's cultural functions operate as a coherent and vital part of its economic development strategy.	Shared performance indicators established and creative economy outcomes reported through the Economic Development Outcomes Report (5.1d).
5.1d: Publish the annual Economic Development Outcomes Report.	S	Economic Partnership Table (Lead); City of London; LEDC); TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; Tourism London; broader ecosystem partners.	Staff time; dashboard development; up to $50,000 (new one-time); leveraging existing City data infrastructure where possible.	Operating budget; Economic Development Reserve Fund; Federal/ Provincial funding.	Annual public report on economic development outcomes across all five strategic moves organized around the strategy's outcomes and KPIs.	Council and the community have a single consistent annual account of what London's economic development system is delivering.	Annual Economic Development Outcomes Report published.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
5.1e: Build a structured feedback and adaptation cycle.	S	Partnership Table (Lead); City of London; LEDC; TechAlliance; Small Business Centre; Chamber of Commerce; broader ecosystem partners.	Staff time.	Operating budget.	Annual structured review by the Partnership Table informed by the Outcomes Report and direct business and community feedback.	The strategy adapts as conditions change, and London is positioned to respond to opportunities that do not yet exist.	Annual Partnership Table strategy review completed, with adjustments documented in the Economic Development Outcomes Report.

5.2 Align City Economic Service Delivery.

Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	Output (What gets delivered)	Outcome (What Changes)	KPI (How success is measured)
5.2a: Strengthen the City's Business Navigation function	S–M	City of London (Lead).	Staff time; delivered through realignment of existing departmental resources, building on existing Business Hub functions.	Operating budget.	Enhanced Business Hub with dedicated concierge navigation capacity, defined authority, service standards, and escalation protocols	Businesses experience a "no wrong door" approach, with coordinated, proactive support across City services	Business and investor satisfaction with City navigation, time to resolution for multi-departmental files
5.2b: Streamline development approvals for priority investments.	M	City of London (Lead); development community; downtown business association; London International Airport.	Staff time; external benchmarking or process review support may be required and would be funded through existing operating budgets where possible.	Operating budget.	Coordinated review models for complex projects, refined service standards with external benchmarking and public reporting, dedicated streamlined pathways for downtown and airport development and redevelopment.	Specific friction points are removed for complex projects and strategic priorities such as downtown redevelopment and aerospace innovation.	Median processing time for defined file types, tracked against published service standards.

S = Short-term (0–18 months); M = Medium-term (19–36 months); L = Long-term (37–60 months); Ongoing = continuous throughout the strategy period.

Total investment

Total over 5 years $4,570,000

- One-time $820,000
- Per Year $750,000

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

The City of London gratefully acknowledges the contributions of hundreds of business leaders, industry groups, community organizations, and economic development partners during the development of this strategy, including those who participated in roundtables, interviews, and survey research.

The City of London would also like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Economic Development Advisory Panel for their leadership, expertise, and ongoing contributions throughout the development of this strategy. The Panel was comprised of senior leaders from London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario, the London Small Business Centre, and the London Chamber of Commerce. Their insight, collaboration, and commitment to London's economic future helped strengthen the direction, relevance, and implementation focus of this work.

Adelaide Metcalfe
All Women Lead
AMO (Indigenous Reconciliation)
Argyle BIA
Armo Tool
ATN Access Inc.
Auburn Development
BioNext
Black Community Employment and Empowerment Services
Boom Intertribal
Business Help Centre
Canada Life
Canada Media Fund
City of London Council Members
City of London - ARAO Team -Equity and Inclusion lens
City of London - IE Internal, Climate lens
City of London - London Regional Employment Services
City of London - Senior Leadership Team
- City Manager's Office
- Social and Health Development
- Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services
- Environment and Infrastructure
- Housing and Community Growth
- Finance Supports
- Legal Services
- Enterprise Supports

City-County Liaison Meeting
Community Futures Western Ontario
Community Leader - Past President and COO of Canada Life
Covent Garden Market
Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)
CSC Providence
CUI - Downtown Plan
Deep Breath
Digital Extremes
Douglas Windows and Doors
Downtown London Business Association
Drewlo Holdings
Easy Financial
Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board
EMC Canada
Fanshawe College
Feather Fields
Film London
Forest City Gallery
Forest City Sport and Social Club
Forward Vision Games
Francophone Community Group
Gleed Inc.
Go Easy
Goodwill Industries
Grand Theatre
Great Lakes Copper
Hamilton Road BIA
Hard Rock Hotel
Heritage London Foundation
Hutton House Employment Services
Hyde Park BIA
ImpactLab London
Info-Tech Research Group
Innovation Village
Jones Healthcare Group
Kings University College
Launchit Solutions
Lawson Research
LBMX
LEADS Employment
LHSC's CSTAR
Libro

London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
London Arts Council
London Chamber of Commerce
London Community Foundation
London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)
London Development Institute
London District Catholic School Board
London District Chiefs Council
London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) - Board
London Environmental Network
London Heritage Council
London Home Builders Association (LHBA)
London Hydro
London International Airport (YXU)
London Music Hall
London Music Office
London Region Manufacturing Council
London Regional Employment Services
London Small Business Centre
London Small Business Centre – Board
London Training Centre
London Transit Corporation
Michael Clark Construction
Middlesex Centre
Middlesex County
Minister Rob Flack, Government of Ontario
Mobials
Morisette Institute for Entrepreneurship
MP Arielle Kayabaga
MP Peter Fragiskatos
Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
Museum London
N'Amerind Friendship Centre
Newcomer Strategy Advisory Body
Nokee Kwe
North London Dance Centre
North Middlesex
Nuts for Cheese
Old East Village BIA
Old South Business Association
Oneida Nation of the Thames
Orca Intelligence
Oxford Dodge
Pathways Employment Help Centre
Pillar Nonprofit Network
PolyAnalytik
Q5X
RBC Place London (London Convention Centre Corp.)
Regional Leaders Meeting
RHA Ventures
Richard Ivey Business School at Western University
Rick Gleed Construction
Ronald McDonald House
Schulich School of Business
Small Business Centre
Southwest Middlesex
St. Joseph's Health Care London
St. Thomas
Starlim
TBK Creative
TechAlliance
TechAlliance - Board
Teppermans Inc.
Thames Centre
Thames Valley District School Board
The Branding Firm Inc.
The Grove at Western Fair (Agri-Business Hub)
Toboggan/Fellini Koolinis/Joe Kools
Tourism London
Township of Lucan Biddulph
Trojan Technologies
Trudell Medical
Ukranian Pierogies
United Way
University of Western Students' Council
Videogame Executive/Canada Media Fund
Village of Newbury
Western Fair District
Western Research Parks
Western University
WIL Employment Solutions
XO Homes
YMCA of Southwestern Ontario
Young London
Youth Opportunities Unlimited

London
CANADA