

## PRELIMINARY STAFF BUDGET MITIGATION IDEAS & CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the City’s financial planning and consideration process, staff held internal discussions to explore potential ideas to respond to budget pressures. The items outlined below reflect early, exploratory ideas intended to identify possible mitigation approaches, and where possible, with little or no impact on service levels. These ideas are provided for information only and have not been evaluated, refined or advanced through the City’s formal budget development process. They do not represent recommendations, proposed actions or endorsed options of staff or Council. Any options that may be formally recommended in the future would be subject to further analysis and Mayoral and Council direction.

Reduction Category	Key Service Mitigation	Ward	Budget Impact (net)	Service Impact	Change	Rationale for mitigation	Rationale to reject the mitigation
Line by Line Review: Rightsizing	2027 Waste Calendar (mail and print) <b>(PW – Waste Management)</b>	City Wide	\$50 K	Yes –  Impact to residents who prefer or require print guides	Discontinue the printing and mailing of annual waste and diversion guides to approximately 180,000 homes starting in 2027.	Discontinue the mailing and printing of annual waste and diversion guides to approximately 180,000 homes every March. Residents would instead access waste program information online only. Continue to offer printed copies of the guide for pick up at Municipal Service Centres on request basis only.	Not advanced for 2026 due to implementation readiness and equity considerations. At the time this option was discussed in late 2025, the waste and diversion guide (including envelopes and trash tags) had already been fully designed and sent to print. Additional work is required to ensure accessible communication for all residents and to determine an appropriate approach for the distribution of essential materials, such as annual trash tags, before considering implementation in a future year.

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Additional Revenues	Transit Fare Revenue Increase <b>(PW – Transit)</b>	City Wide	\$400 K	No	Increase transit fare to \$0.10 effective June 1, 2026.	Consistent with directive on service levels.	Rejected as inconsistent with the Mayor’s Directive to prioritize affordability.  Fare increases could disproportionately impact low-income residents and those reliant on transit for employment, education, and essential services.
Line by Line Review: Rightsizing	Further reductions to program costs areas (staff training and development). <b>(HSC - OW)</b>	City Wide	\$18 K	No	Manage reductions by reducing activity in these areas.  <b>FTE Impact - 0</b>		This mitigation was not advanced due to potential impacts on staff development and capacity-building in an increasingly complex caseload environment. Further reductions would also result in the loss of matching provincial funding. Training reductions were already implemented through the initial line-by-line review and adjustments; additional reductions risk diminished service effectiveness and are inconsistent with workforce sustainability and service excellence objectives.

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Line by Line Review: Rightsizing	Reduced 2026 Operating Grant Expenditures (HSC - Rec)	City Wide	\$50 K	Yes – Groups applying for recreation grants	Existing operating grants in recreation will be capped at the revised budgeted amount.  <b>FTE Impact – 0</b>	Operating grants were recently increased by 2 per cent.	This mitigation was rejected due to downstream impacts on community-based organizations delivering recreation services. Grant reductions would weaken local service capacity and conflict with the City’s role as an enabler of community well-being.
Line by Line Review: Rightsizing	Wild Waterworks Adjustment (PW – Environmental Services)	5 & 10	\$522 K	Yes – Community impact to waterpark users  Service: The waterpark will no longer be open to visitors; however, Confederation Park would remain open.	Closure of Wild Waterworks to visitors for 2026. The current 2026 operating budget amount for Confederation Park is \$1,286,000. If Wild Waterworks was closed to visitors in 2026, considering the Seasonal staffing savings and operating costs, but also considering revenues not generated, the	The closure would see a savings in operating, maintenance and staffing costs. Confederation Beach Park would still be open and require maintenance including Lakeland pool and spray pad.  Review underway for future options of this location to be brought forward to Council in 2026, per direction from Council	Rejected due to service level and community impacts. The facility is a valued recreational asset, and closure would reduce summer recreation options. This mitigation does not align with the Mayor’s directive to protect core services and ensure that the service levels Hamiltonians rely on are not compromised.

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					levy request for 2026 would be reduced to \$764,000, resulting in savings of \$522,000.		
Line by Line Review: Rightsizing	Sale of unused and underused community halls (PW – Facilities)	City Wide	\$339 K (up to annually)	Yes – implications would need to be investigated further.	Sale of unused and underused community halls.	This has been considered previously by Council in 2017 and was not supported.	Not advanced due to community impacts and prior Council direction.  Additional consultation is required given the role of community halls in neighbourhood cohesion and service delivery. More appropriate for future budget consideration.

**Note:** All proposed mitigation options from **City Manager’s Office, Corporate Services, and Planning & Economic Development** were accepted into the Mayor’s Budget. As a result, no additional items from these departments are included in this Appendix. Numerous mitigation options were also accepted for **Healthy and Safe Communities** and **Public Works**. While individual budget impacts varied by department, these mitigations collectively contributed to achieving an overall average departmental increase of **2.1%**.