



Conor Baldwin
Assistant City Manager/ CFO

Austin Ball
Deputy CFO

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager

FROM: Conor Baldwin, Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs 

CC: Yovani Baez-Rose, Assistant City Manager/ DPD Director

DATE: November 14, 2025

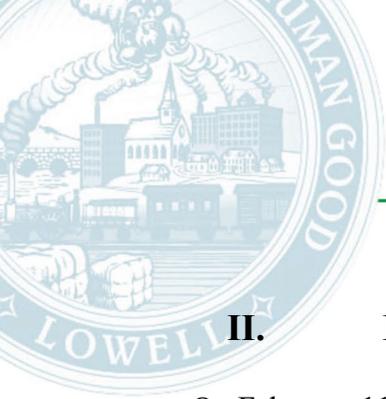
SUBJECT: Frontrunner City Costs to Date

I. BACKGROUND ON FRONTRUNNER CITY

In alignment with Lowell’s Vision 2040 and its commitment to sustainable, inclusive urban development, the city has engaged with the internationally recognized Frontrunner Cities Initiative through the Urban Economy Forum (“UEF”). This initiative positions Lowell as a national model for post-SDG urban transformation—one of only a few cities globally selected to pilot innovative approaches to climate resilience, economic revitalization, and digital modernization. Participation in this program has already yielded foundational deliverables, including a comprehensive city profile, an urban transformation dashboard, and a sustainable business model tailored to Lowell’s long-term development goals.

These deliverables are not abstract planning tools; they serve as strategic assets that enhance Lowell’s ability to attract external investment, development finance, and global partnerships. Frontrunner status functions as a quality signal to ESG-aligned investors, multilateral banks, and national agencies, indicating that the city is ready to implement scalable, future-ready solutions. The initiative also provides Lowell with access to a global network of peer cities, technical experts, and policy platforms, increasing the city’s visibility and influence in international urban development circles.

The program’s emphasis on capacity building ensures that the benefits extend beyond planning documents. Through knowledge exchange, training, and stakeholder engagement, Lowell is strengthening its internal governance, institutional readiness, and community participation—key ingredients for long-term success. The work completed to date lays the groundwork for measurable improvements in public services, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability. By investing in this initiative, Lowell is not only advancing its own strategic goals but also contributing to a broader movement shaping the next generation of cities. The Frontrunner framework ensures that this investment delivers both immediate value and long-term returns, positioning Lowell as a leader in sustainable urban transformation.



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II. FUNDING SOURCE

On February 11, 2025, the Lowell City Council voted in open session to appropriate \$750,000 from Free Cash to support economic development initiatives, including the Frontrunner City Initiative. That vote was taken transparently and in accordance with all applicable public meeting laws. The funding source—Free Cash—is composed in part of unspent, unencumbered appropriations from the prior fiscal year. As such, this appropriation placed no additional burden on taxpayers. The investment to date reflects a strategic use of available resources to position Lowell for long-term growth, innovation, and leadership on the national and global stage.

III. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Of the \$750,000 appropriated for this purpose, as of October 23, 2025, the city has expended approximately \$466,768, detailed below as follows. The available balance is \$184,927.32, including an aggregate encumbrance of \$97,699.

EXPENSE CATEGORY	COST
CATERING (GENEVA/ CANADA/ UEF VISIT TO LOWELL/ UEF7)	\$ 7,319.53
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 2,502.75
UEF VISIT TO LOWELL - TRAVEL & LODGING	\$ 5,558.00
TRAVEL, LODGING, MEALS (CANADA & SWITZERLAND)	\$ 48,888.23
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 1 - Comprehensive Profile of Lowell (DRAFT); Urban Transformation Dashboard (WIP); Sustainable Business Model (WIP); Briefing Notes; Pre-EGM Framework Document.	\$257,600.00
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 2 - Comprehensive Business Model (DRAFT); Expert Group Meeting (EGM) Conference; Urban Transformation Dashboard (WIP); Sustainable Business Model (WIP); Technical Work Plan (WIP)	\$144,900.00
Grand Total	\$466,768.51

Please let me know if there are any questions.