

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Finance and Economic Development Committee
Comité des finances et du développement économique
1 September 2020 / 1er septembre 2020**

**and Council
et au Conseil
9 September 2020 / 9 septembre 2020**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2020-PIE-EDP-0027

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Economic Recovery Update

OBJET: Mise à jour relative à la reprise économique pendant la pandémie de COVID-19

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommend that City Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et du développement économique recommande au Conseil municipal de prendre connaissance du présent rapport.

BACKGROUND

In March 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic and declaration of a State of Emergency in Ontario resulted in the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces and businesses. These closures had an immediate and detrimental impact on Ottawa's economy including a sharp decline in business revenues, employment and economic activity. In response, the City has undertaken several actions to help inform and guide Ottawa's economic response and recovery efforts.

The Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, led by Mayor Watson and co-chaired by Councillors Dudas and El-Chantiry, was established at the outset of the pandemic to identify emerging issues and opportunities to support the local business community. The Task Force is comprised of the senior leadership from the following business organizations: Invest Ottawa, Ottawa Board of Trade, Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas, Ottawa Festival Network, Ottawa Film Office, Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, Ottawa Tourism, and the Regroupement des gens d'affaires. Working together and speaking with a unified business voice through the Task Force, these organizations have created important momentum in Ottawa's economic recovery and have positioned the city to move effectively through each stage of recovery.

In addition to the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, the Economic Recovery Task Team, consisting of staff from various City service areas, was initiated to coordinate a strategy and undertake a series of measures in support of the city's economic recovery. The strategy, based on data and research, provides clear objectives aimed at mitigating the impacts of the pandemic by delivering a series of City process improvements, tools, and programs. The Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force provided significant input into the development and implementation of the City's COVID-19 economic recovery program over the past six months and continues to be actively engaged as the local business community moves through recovery.

The availability of economic data and projections in the early weeks of the pandemic helped identify and quantify those sectors most impacted by emergency orders and ensuing business closures. It also provided a critical focal point for early response

measures and subsequent recovery initiatives. Further, the opportunity to engage directly with key economic development partners through the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force provided additional valuable sector-specific insights.

Clear objectives were established to guide economic recovery efforts:

- Limit business closures and preserve local jobs;
- Support the safe resumption of business activity;
- Restore consumer and business confidence;
- Return to robust economic activity; and
- Develop future economic resiliency.

The ability, extent and timelines to achieve these objectives remains dependent upon several factors such as the threat of a second wave of COVID-19, availability of safe and secure transit service, availability of childcare, the pace of the Provincial Framework for Reopening, and the city's general resilience and capacity to navigate a highly uncertain economic future and lingering impacts.

The City's approach to supporting economic recovery is comparable to other Canadian municipalities. However, Ottawa's collective efforts were underway early and provided meaningful, tactical support to the local business community, positioning the corporation and our economic partners as leaders in COVID-19 economic recovery.

DISCUSSION

Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Economy

The pandemic has deeply affected Ottawa's economy and the impacts have been felt differently across various sectors.

Retail, food services, entertainment and accommodations – all industries that rely heavily on discretionary spending, in-person service, and “experiences” – have been the most impacted. While recovery has commenced with the easing of restrictions and resumption of most business activity, the pace of full economic recovery is anticipated to be drawn-out and uneven given the severity of business impacts, uncertainty around the evolution of the virus, the potential for a second wave and the timing of a vaccine. Sectors such as tourism, accommodations and the airline industry are measuring the pace of recovery in years, not months. Together with retail and restaurant closures and the resulting impact on commercial property vacancy rates, the picture seems bleak. A recent survey by the [Canadian Federation of Independent Business](#) released on

August 5, 2020 reported that one in seven Canadian small businesses (158,000) are at risk of closing as a result of the pandemic. The survey further reported that 63 per cent of small businesses are fully open, 39 per cent are fully staffed, and only 26 per cent are seeing normal sales volumes.

However, the outlook is not all negative. Ottawa generally weathers economic downturns far better than other large cities given that government is the city's biggest employer and economic driver. This coupled with Ottawa's second most significant economic driver, a strong technology sector, places the city in a more solid position to withstand the impacts of the pandemic.

To date, the federal government has not provided any signals suggesting downsizing is imminent. In fact, it is currently the opposite, as the public service works to deliver a variety of new COVID-19 programs and spending.

Additionally, as underscored by [CBRE's annual Scoring Tech Talent Report](#), Ottawa is poised to drive post-pandemic growth and many technology companies have begun to do so. The report noted that Ottawa has the highest concentration of tech talent across the 50 markets surveyed at 11.3 per cent of all jobs, and ahead of San Francisco at 10.5 per cent. This sizeable concentration of tech talent (as a percentage of total employment) creates a unique opportunity for Ottawa to accelerate economic transformation post-pandemic and lead the next growth cycle.

Economic forecasts predict Ottawa's real GDP will decline by 2.4 per cent in 2020, with a 2.6 per cent real GDP growth annually from 2021 through 2024. The 2020 decline is the lowest decline amongst the top 13 cities in Canada and, not surprisingly, the growth recovery rate is also the lowest. Stable government employment and increased pandemic spending combined with a robust technology sector are the key reasons Ottawa's economic contraction will be less than the national average.

The impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, Ottawa's third largest economic driver, have been devastating. Pre-pandemic, 11 million visitors spent \$2.2 billion in Ottawa annually. Tourism businesses employed 43,000 residents and generated \$755 million in tax revenues. The ongoing impacts of COVID-19, including the loss of Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenue due to continued low hotel occupancy and an expected slow rebound, will result in a forecasted loss of approximately \$1.4 billion in visitor spending in 2020 alone. Ottawa Tourism reports over 100 cancelled or postponed major events, meetings and conventions, accounting for 83,000 delegates, 111,000 room nights and over \$100 million in lost visitor spending. Hotel occupancy was 30.7 per cent for the month of July 2020, which is higher than Toronto (22.1 per cent) and Montreal (17.6 per cent), and modestly behind Niagara Falls (31.3 per cent)

and Quebec City (34.9 per cent) pointing to consumer perception of Ottawa as a safe destination, a competitive advantage moving forward. Year-over-year hotel occupancy is still down significantly (-58.0 per cent) and projected to decline this fall. According to Destination Canada, tourism is not likely to recover back to 2019 levels until 2023 or 2024.

According to work recently undertaken by the City's Cultural Development and Initiatives Unit (COVID-19 Related Income Loss Projections - Understanding the impact on the arts, culture and heritage sector in Ottawa-Gatineau), the arts, culture and heritage sector is facing an unprecedented economic challenge as a result of the pandemic. It was noted that between mid-March and the end of September, in the absence of a festival and performance season, the sector is forecast to lose between \$92 million and \$150 million in employment and self-employment income.

The COVID-19 lockdown has cooled a previously hot labour market and resulted in approximately 53,600 jobs lost across Ottawa between February and July 2020. Statistics Canada estimates current employment at 547,400. As of July, the unemployment rate was 9.8 per cent (not seasonally adjusted) compared to 3.9 per cent in February. Ottawa is outperforming the national unemployment rate of 12.3 per cent. Three of 15 employment sectors have seen net gains in employment over the past year – agriculture (includes marijuana farming; +2,200 jobs or +220 per cent), construction (+8,500 jobs or +36 per cent), and public administration (+3,700 jobs or +3.0 per cent). Five sectors saw a marginal net decline in jobs while the remaining seven sectors accounted for most job losses including professional services, accommodation and food services, business, finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, as well as information, culture and recreation. Not surprisingly, the local economy has been shedding part-time jobs (-21 per cent) at a faster rate than full-time jobs (-6.0 per cent).

According to the Ottawa Real Estate Board, housing starts have remained relatively stable in Ottawa throughout the pandemic although there was a significant decrease in the number of multi-unit (condos, apartments, town homes) starts in June 2020 (-31 per cent) compared to June 2019. However, there was an increase in the number of new single-family dwellings (+5.0 per cent). The real story is the state of residential resale market in Ottawa. In July 2020, the average resale price of a family home was \$585,000, an increase of 20 per cent over July 2019. Condo prices increased by 19.4 per cent to \$358,000. This trend is amplified by a significant shortage of new listings. The biggest increase is being seen in homes selling for more than \$700,000, suggesting families are looking for home office space and larger backyards. In addition, there has been an increase in resale activity in communities just outside of Ottawa reflecting the increasing acceptance of telecommuting as a long-term business shift post-pandemic.

The CoStarGroup, a multi-national commercial real estate site selection and research company, predicts the Ottawa office vacancy rate will continue to climb for the balance of 2020. However, given the market's reliance on federal government leasing and occupancy and strong fundamentals pre-pandemic, Ottawa will fare better than other markets. The city's industrial market has entered a period of new opportunities, as the growth in on-line shopping and elements of distribution and supply chain have created an increase in the demand for space. Given Ottawa's strategic location, there is potential for transportation and logistics users to pursue large industrial footprints. One example is the development of Amazon's second distribution centre in Barrhaven, a five-level industrial building spanning 250,838.21 square metres (2.7 million square feet). Ottawa's retail market is experiencing devastating declines like other large cities across the country. Retailers were struggling before the pandemic began and those struggles have now been compounded by early pandemic non-essential business closures and the resulting rise in e-commerce. With changing consumer shopping habits, retailers need to adapt their business models and focus on customer needs and expectations. Retailers must have a robust online presence to complement their storefront location, but for some retailers, the pandemic will force permanent closure or a pivot to a direct-to-consumer business model, leaving behind a significant number of vacant storefronts along Ottawa's traditional main streets and in shopping centres across the region.

Economic Recovery Program

Following the provincially mandated closure of non-essential businesses, the City's immediate response was to focus on mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on those sectors most affected including small retail, restaurant and service businesses. The creation of a Business Support and Recovery page on ottawa.ca provided information and links to support programs and resources available through the City, the Province of Ontario and the federal government. The first phase of the Buy Local campaign encouraged residents to support local retailers and restaurants by purchasing goods and services online and ordering take-out and delivery. The objective of the campaign was to help local businesses continue to generate revenue and employ staff. As well, the 2020 Property Tax Hardship Deferral Program was implemented to provide qualifying residents and commercial property owners with temporary tax relief by extending property tax payment deadlines.

Once it became clear non-essential business closures and restrictions on public gatherings would be in place for several months, the Economic Recovery Task Team, in collaboration with the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, developed additional recovery initiatives focused on the principles of restart, reset and resilience. The Provincial Reopening Framework provided a roadmap of how restrictions would be lifted in a phased approach and provided useful context for evaluating possible opportunities.

As the City progressively moved through each provincial reopening stage and business activity slowly resumed, the Economic Recovery Task Team continued to identify and implement opportunities to streamline City processes, permits and approvals and deliver economic development related tools and programs focused on the safe resumption of business activity, restoring business and consumer confidence, and setting the foundation for a return to increased economic activity. One of the successful programs developed was the Business Reopening Toolkit, a City-led collaboration with Ottawa Public Health. Another initiative was the Patio Innovation Program, a series of measures developed to encourage new restaurant and retail patios by reducing/waiving fees and accelerating approvals. Additionally, the City, in partnership with Ottawa Tourism, launched a very successful Rural Tourism Campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to encourage residents to safely explore Ottawa's rural wards, strengthen Ottawa's rural tourism with local demand, and support small businesses in these areas. Document 1 – City Economic Recovery Initiatives, provides a full listing of economic recovery measures implemented by the City.

With the implementation of various economic recovery measures, it has been critically important for the Economic Recovery Task Team to embed Province of Ontario requirements and Ottawa Public Health directives and guidelines into all economic recovery activities.

Future economic resilience is an important consideration over the next six to 12 months and beyond. The City, along with our economic development partners, has a role to play in supporting business preparedness to handle a second wave of COVID-19, protracted impacts on the vibrancy of the local economy, or a future pandemic/similar event. The ability of businesses to adapt their operating models to preserve revenue generation through business continuity planning, safety protocols, and a robust digital presence is critical now and in the future. New programs such as Digital Main Streets and ShopHERE, described in Document 1, are focused both on stimulating economic recovery today and future-proofing businesses for tomorrow.

Economic Partner Recovery Efforts

The City's economic development service delivery model features partnerships with several business organizations who provide specific sector leadership and subject matter expertise to the benefit of the entire local economy. COVID-19 has highlighted how fortunate Ottawa is to have high-quality leadership steering these organizations and created opportunities for new collaboration between organizations. Document 2 – Economic Partner Recovery Efforts provides short descriptions of how the city's key business organizations have been working to pivot priorities, support their members, and innovate to overcome economic challenges during this difficult period.

Next Steps

In the coming months, the Economic Recovery Task Team will continue to monitor and analyze the economic impacts of COVID-19 to inform the ongoing approach to local economic recovery. This will include shifting the City's response to one that is forward looking and considers the longer-term implications of a prolonged pandemic or a second wave, resulting in a possible roll-back of permitted activities and/or business closures.

Additionally, the Economic Recovery Task Team will continue to work with the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force and other internal and external stakeholders, including Ottawa Public Health, to ensure ongoing collaboration and alignment of recovery efforts.

Economic Development Services will modify the current departmental workplan to reflect the current and projected economic climate with an increased focus on business support, job creation and investment attraction. In Q4 2021, Economic Development Services will deliver a new Economic Development Strategy that reflects the impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy, sector specific impacts, the pace of recovery, and new growth opportunities to ensure future economic resilience.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Businesses and organizations in rural Ottawa have been a key focus of the City's economic recovery efforts. As described above, and in Document 1 – City Economic Recovery Initiatives, the City, in partnership with Ottawa Tourism, developed a Rural Tourism Campaign that ran throughout the summer. As well, the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee approved one-time funding of \$15,000 to each of the five rural fairs to assist them in mitigating the financial impacts of the pandemic on their organizations. Lastly, the Ottawa Board of Trade, in partnership with Ottawa Public Health, hosted a virtual workshop for agricultural and rural businesses, as part of a series of reopening workshops.

CONSULTATION

Consultation with the business community on Ottawa's economic recovery from COVID-19 has been done largely through the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force. The organizations that form the Task Force have provided valuable input, feedback and suggestions on the city's recovery on behalf of their members and various sectors and will continue to do so. In addition, the Economic Recovery Task Team regularly engages with various businesses and industry groups on specific recovery initiatives.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with receiving this information report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The City's economic recovery efforts align with the Economic Growth and Diversification priority of the 2019-2022 City of Ottawa Strategic Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 City Economic Recovery Initiatives

Document 2 Economic Partner Recovery Efforts

DISPOSITION

Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Development staff will continue to monitor and report back as necessary.

Document 1

City Economic Recovery Initiatives

Property Tax Hardship Deferral Program

The City offered a Property Tax Hardship Deferral Program for residents and small business property owners with an assessed property value of up to \$7.5 million who were financially affected by the pandemic. The program extended the interim and final property tax deadlines of March 19, 2020 and June 18, 2020 to October 30, 2020. The deadline for applications was July 31, 2020. The City approved a total of 1,913 applications for 1,309 residential property owners and 604 non-residential property owners (commercial).

Business Support and Recovery Webpage

In late March 2020, the City launched a business support and recovery page on ottawa.ca to provide useful links and resources for businesses looking for information on various government assistance programs and other business continuity support. The page was updated, and new content added regularly over the past five months. To date, the page has received 10,759 visits.

Buy Local Campaign

The Buy Local campaign, delivered in two phases, was designed to create awareness and support for Ottawa's small business community using primarily digital content including video and digital banner ads. The campaign directed residents to the ottawa.ca/buylocal page where they could find links and resources to listings of area businesses serving customers online through Business Improvement Area, business association and other local websites/platforms. Phase I launched on March 26, 2020 (four weeks) and Phase II launched on July 9, 2020 (4 weeks). The emphasis for the Phase II campaign shifted to reflect Ottawa entering Stage 3 of the Provincial Reopening Framework and the Ottawa Public Health directive and subsequent City bylaw making the wearing of masks in indoor public spaces mandatory. Campaign creative not only encouraged residents to safely resume shopping and dining but also highlighted the many outdoor experiences available in our City.

By any measure, the Buy Local campaign was very successful and achieved its primary objective of supporting Ottawa's small, main street businesses through the pandemic response and recovery phases. The eight-week campaign generated 34,075,453 impressions, 566,284 video views and 59,941 link clicks to the ottawa.ca/buylocal webpage. In total, there have been 73,792 visits to ottawa.ca/buylocal.

Business Reopening Toolkit

The Business Reopening Toolkit, launched on May 20, 2020 and available on ottawa.ca, was developed by the City in consultation with Ottawa Public Health to provide guidance to businesses to prepare for safe reopening and resumption of business operations. The toolkit included downloadable signage, safety procedures, best practice guidelines, sector specific guidance documents and links to other resources including several Provincial documents. The toolkit webpage has received 14,389 visits and the toolkit has been downloaded 1,229 times.

The toolkit was very well received with several positive comments. It was shared by external organizations including the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association and Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

Economic Recovery Town Hall

The City hosted a virtual Economic Recovery Town Hall on May 29, 2020. The purpose of the Town Hall was to highlight the activities of the Economic Recovery Task Team and Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force and provide a framework describing how the City and its key economic partners were working together in support of the local economy as the city moved from initial pandemic response to recovery. Participants included Mayor Watson, Councillor El-Chantiry, Councillor Dudas, Stephen Willis (General Manager, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department), Michael Crockatt (Ottawa Tourism), Michael Tremblay (Invest Ottawa), Sueling Ching (Ottawa Board of Trade), and Mark Kaluski (Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas).

Innovation Pilot Program Recovery Stream

In May 2020, Council directed staff to shift the focus of the City's existing Innovation Pilot Program toward COVID-19 economic recovery efforts. The City extended a challenge to the business community to submit proposals to the [Innovation Pilot Program – Recovery Stream](#), to accelerate Ottawa's ability to get the local labour force back to work and safely resume business operations while the economy gradually reopened. The program supports an innovative technology eco-system in Ottawa and offers the opportunity to test and quickly deploy technology in real-life testing environments with the City or one of its economic development partners. It also provides companies with valuable feedback on their innovations prior to scaling and production.

The 47 applications received were reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of City staff and economic development partners. The five pilots selected support a broad

range of sectors, including government, health, non-profit, retail, agricultural, and cultural. They are currently being piloted within the City and with local organizations and businesses.

Patio Innovation Program

- Right of Way (ROW) Patio and Café Seating Permits

In June 2020, Council waived the daily rate for ROW patios collecting only the \$62 administration fee for renewing ROW patios and café seating and a \$340 administration fee for new ROW patio permit applications. In addition, the circulation process for new ROW patio permits was streamlined from four to six weeks to 10 business days. The program has seen a 26 per cent increase in ROW patio permits and a 42 per cent increase in café seating permits from last year. To date, 95 ROW patio permit applications and 37 café seating permits have been received.

- Patios on Private Property

The Temporary Zoning By-law amendment to permit new and expanded patios on private property resulted in more than 60 private patio operators contacting the City to go through the process. No fees were collected for this program. An online form with a dedicated webpage of resources and information was developed to assist patio operators through the process. The private patio program only required patio operators to register with the City if the property was within 30 metres of a Residential Zone. Therefore, the number of new or expanded private patios is likely more than 60, as patio operators outside of the 30 metres radius of a Residential Zone were not required to formally register with the City.

- Building Permit Process

In addition to the above patio programs, Building Code Services developed a streamlined system to review inquiries and building permit applications for tents and awnings related to patios with a timeline of 5 business days for permit issuance.

- Street Closures

Several street closures were undertaken as pilot projects to facilitate patio expansions:

- Somerset Street West from Bank to O'Connor; Friday 5 PM to midnight; Saturdays and Sundays 12 PM to midnight
- Flora Street; Friday 5 PM to 11 PM; Saturday noon – 11 PM; Sunday noon to 10 PM

- Frank Street at Bank Street for approximately 15 metres
- Clarence Street from Dalhousie Street to William Street
- ByWard Market Square from York Street to Clarence Street
- York Street from ByWard Market Square to Sussex Drive

In addition, William Street from George Street to York Street has been closed for the season to facilitate physical distancing and as part of a continuing pilot project from 2019. Bank Street from Queen Street to Catherine Street has been closed every Saturday for the month of July to facilitate physical distancing. This pilot, led by the Bank Street Business Improvement Area, has been so successful that the Business Improvement Area has submitted a request to extend Saturday closures until the end of September.

- New Retail Patios

A new retail patio program (Vending in the ROW) was developed and outdoor retail patios on private property was also included as part of the above noted Temporary Zoning By-law amendment. To date, no permits have been issued as part of the ROW retail patio program. Like patios on private property, outdoor retail patios were not required to register with the City; however, City staff have fielded several inquiries regarding outdoor retail patios on private property in commercial plazas.

Food Trucks in Parks

The 2020 Food Trucks in Parks program was developed to provide an opportunity for existing restaurants to shift or supplement their food service operations to a food truck operation during the 2020 season. This program was also available to current food truck operators who lost all or most of their business due to office building closures and decreased foot traffic. The City received six applications from restaurants and food truck/cart operators and issued four permits for food vending in select City parks (Andrew Haydon Park, Strathcona Park, Cardinal Creek Park, Ken Ross Park).

Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project

City Council approved the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project for 2020 and associated by-law in June. Shared e-scooters (520) are currently available for rent from two providers (Bird Canada and Lime). A third provider (Roll Canada) is set to launch in the coming weeks, bringing the total fleet size to 600 vehicles. Since the program launched on July 16, 2020, this new physically distanced transportation option has proven extremely popular with Ottawa residents. Over 65,000 trips have been logged, with 22,732 trips in the week of August 3 alone. With most trips beginning and/or ending in a

Business Improvement Area, residents are using these vehicles to get to areas where they can support local businesses. Providers will have the opportunity to apply to increase their fleet size after September 10, subject to City approval.

Rural Tourism Campaign

An initiative within the City's Rural Economic Development Strategy, this campaign was launched in partnership with Ottawa Tourism over a six-week period in the summer. The purpose of the campaign was to encourage residents to safely explore Ottawa's rural wards, strengthen Ottawa's rural tourism with local demand, and support small businesses in these areas. The campaign consisted of customized cycling routes and itineraries for each of Ottawa's four rural wards as well as a series of photo contests. Additionally, it included a promotional video and content shared through social media and a landing page. The campaign proved very successful in promoting rural Ottawa during a time when both the tourism industry and small businesses are suffering. The promotional video saw a total of 21,633 views, making it Ottawa Tourism's second most viewed IGTV video ever. Key campaign results include:

- Total Facebook impressions: 1.17 million
- Total video views: 222,645
- Landing page views: over 42,000
- Total contest entries: 1,380

Digital Service Squad Grant and ShopHERE Program

The Digital Service Squad Grant program, a component of the Digital Main Street Program, provides funding to qualifying municipalities and business associations to set up Digital Service Squads to deliver one-on-one assistance to small main street businesses in communities across Ontario. The squads provide assessments, consulting, and advice to help business owners promote, sell and manage their businesses more effectively. The City has partnered with the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas and Invest Ottawa to submit a joint application for funding to ensure eligible businesses in Ottawa can benefit from this opportunity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of bricks and mortar stores having an online presence to sell goods and services. To address this, the Digital Main Street Program is now working with Google to expand its ShopHERE program across Canada. The City, in collaboration with Invest Ottawa and Google, launched the ShopHERE program in Ottawa in July 2020. The program provides businesses with a quick, easy, no-cost way to start selling online right away. The purpose of ShopHERE is

to focus on small independent businesses that currently do not have the resources to build an online store. The program provides businesses with seventeen plus (17+) hours of hands-on support to develop a digital presence.

High Economic Impact Projects Recovery Stream

High Economic Impact Projects (HEIP) are large development projects that provide significant benefits to Ottawa including job creation and economic growth. In response to the evolving business environment resulting from COVID-19, as well as the increased need to target investment attraction, Economic Development Services is currently working to develop a HEIP Recovery Program. This program will be focused on larger commercial, industrial and institutional development projects aligned with the City's economic development priorities. Eligibility will be dependent on the project's scope, scale, complexity, timelines, estimated economic impact, and job creation potential. The program will provide assistance with site selection, business intelligence, planning approvals, navigation of regulatory requirements, information on funding and incentives, local business organization introductions, and any other project support that may be required. The City will assign an Economic Development Officer (EDO) and Planner to assist and support businesses and developers looking to advance significant projects or pivoting operations in response to changing economic conditions. The EDO will function as an Account Manager and provide a single point of contact for clients to support the advancement of the project. The Planner will be the File Lead for development applications and work with the client and City technical experts to address any planning, building and/or permitting requirements. In addition to this program, Planning Services is also investigating a similar program aimed at assisting and advancing high social impact projects, such as affordable housing.

Document 2- Economic Partner Recovery Efforts

Invest Ottawa

Invest Ottawa (IO) and Bayview Yards remain committed to helping entrepreneurs, start-ups, scaleups and multinational firms survive the pandemic, and thrive in the new economy. Leveraging support from all levels of governments (including FedDev Ontario), industry, and the investment community, IO has established several new programs and services including:

- **[Digital Main Street](#)** This new pan-provincial program will inject \$9.3 million into Ottawa and Southeastern Ontario and will help companies to evolve, maintain jobs and revenue, and thrive in any economic climate. IO will lead the creation and delivery of the new Future-Proofing Main Street program to support 4,100 companies and create 350 jobs for students across the region.
- **[COVID-19 Special Initiative – Brokering Connections](#)** IO has pivoted their talent services to help companies address key talent management challenges during the pandemic. This special initiative connects displaced Ottawa and Canadian talent with local employers and provides specialized talent management support, including coaching, mentorship and diversity, and inclusion strategy. Going forward, IO will continue to evolve this program to help retain top tech talent in Ottawa.
- **[Invested in Our New Reality](#)** This podcast hosted by Shav Hasfal-McIntosh (Global Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Shopify, and Director on IO Board), as well as other online workshops, training sessions and advisory services provide entrepreneurs, firms and partners with timely, actionable insight they can apply in their business.
- IO joins MaRS Discovery District, Communitech, OCE, CCCR and DMZ as an anchor **[Innovation Economy Council](#)** (IEC) founding member. This national council will respond to industry issues by pooling data and information and generate evidence-based thought leadership papers on key opportunities for Canada in the global economy.

Reinforcing Ottawa's potential and impact as a global tech hub, recent wins and successes include:

- Companies that are seizing new opportunities and investment in global markets despite the pandemic – examples include BluWave ai, Spartan Bioscience, Tehama, Lytica, and Equispheres

- [FedDev Ontario's provision of loans valued at \\$11.2 million to Lytica Inc., Solace and You.i TV](#) to help them expand into new markets and refine their products as they extend their global reach.

Over the coming months, IO and Bayview Yards will continue to work closely with entrepreneurs and firms to address their changing needs and help further position them for competitive advantage in global markets. This includes the pursuit of additional funding to support market-led initiatives and new capabilities for companies in smart health, govtech and clean and connected communities. In addition, there will be a focus on the ramp-up and delivery of new and existing programs, services and projects across IO and Bayview Yards (including SheBoot, an investment-ready bootcamp for women founders that concludes with a pitch competition for \$100K in investment, and those under development at the Ottawa L5 in defence, public safety, smart farming and connected and autonomous vehicles).

Ottawa Board of Trade

The Ottawa Board of Trade (OBOT) has been working strategically in several areas to support local economic recovery. Advocacy and communication efforts include: supporting safe business reopening, providing constructive feedback to government on sector specific relief programs as well as relief programs targeted to business sustainability, wage subsidy and rent assistance, and advocating for stimulus investment to support the private sector leading the recovery and policy making that supports growth (i.e. tax reform, internal trade barriers, etc.). A key priority for OBOT has been engaging with members and other business leaders to identify emerging issues and recovery priorities, share relevant information, and continuously promote “support local” messaging, being COVIDWise and COVIDKind.

Over the past several months, OBOT has deepened their already strong relationships with several important stakeholders including the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce. They joined the Canadian Global Cities Council for targeted advocacy for Canada's key urban areas and have been exploring potential partnerships with the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University for internships and the University of Ottawa for new programming to support business. Finally, OBOT is partnering with the Toronto Board of Trade on the Recovery Activation Program which delivers digital transformation for business.

OBOT has developed or is participating in several new programs/initiatives in support of economic recovery including:

- [Canada United](#) – a national buy local campaign that will generate small business funding

- [POST](#) – People Outside Safely Together – program to help businesses declare they have reopened safely
- Business Reopening Workshops with the City, Business Improvement Areas and Ottawa Public Health
- Business Peer Groups – currently operating five groups with a new cohort starting in the fall
- [Business Insights and webinars – business education and trends](#)
- Promoting businesses through member spotlights
- Trade Accelerator Program – <https://www.ottawabot.ca/tap-program/>

Over the coming months, OBOT will continue to focus on activities and opportunities to reinvigorate the local economy, support Ottawa Public Health programs aimed at reducing virus transmission and preserving hard-won reopening privileges, and continue advocacy efforts around topics to help build future economic resilience (i.e. government procurement/local spending, access to broadband, remote work trends, etc.)

Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas

The Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA), representing Ottawa's 19 BIAs, has been working in support of main street businesses by helping owners/operators develop an online presence, encouraging 'future proofing' of business operations, and continuing advocacy on issues of fairness, funding programs, and removing barriers to business recovery ("red tape").

Grant funding has been secured from FedDev Ontario, through a partnership with Invest Ottawa and the City, to implement a Digital Mainstreet program (Digital Service Squad) that will assist OCOBIA in meeting its main street businesses support objectives over the next six to eight months. The organization is working to ensure that every BIA member business will have an online retail presence by March 31, 2021.

OCOBIA and its member BIAs have been critical to ensuring small business compliance with Provincial reopening regulations and Ottawa Public Health directives and guidelines. Ottawa's BIAs represent over 6,000 businesses city-wide and have well-established communication channels enabling the timely dissemination of information. Access to information has made it easier for most small businesses to physically operate in a safe manner and has helped boost consumer confidence in a safe resumption of visits to local stores, restaurants and services. In addition, Ottawa's BIAs have been extremely proactive over the past several months with area specific

marketing and promotion, beautification and mural initiatives, and member signage and collateral promoting COVID-19 safety protocols.

Ottawa Festival Network

The Ottawa Festival Network (OFN) continues to engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of the local festival and event industry. While the Province has recently increased social gatherings under Stage three to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, many questions remain regarding logistics and guidelines for a safe return to events. At the request of Minister MacLeod for sectoral solutions, OFN's Recovery Task Group is developing a safe event return blueprint and workbook for the industry to use as a model. This will be submitted to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries and then to the Ontario Ministry of Health for approval. To help inform local industry recovery initiatives and priorities, OFN developed a survey (also being implemented nationally by Festivals and Major Events Canada) that is currently in the field with results shared by the end of August. Approximately 20 per cent of festival, fair, and event members have reimaged their offering and have successfully presented, or are planning, digital or modified in-person events. A priority remains to provide tools and guidance to help as many local events as possible pivot to digital or modified in-person events to ensure their survival until such time as it is safe to gather in large groups again. OFN continues to advocate to all three levels of government about the urgency of supporting the industry by maintaining funding levels. Government funding combined represents 13 per cent of festival operating budgets.

Ottawa Film Office

The most significant economic recovery priority for the Ottawa Film Office (OFO) during the past few months has been finalizing details of the new Soundstage Campus and Creative Hub. This project will create and maintain hundreds of sustainable jobs, attract new investment and workers to the city, and provide a controllable environment in which crew and talent can work safely. Construction is anticipated to begin early fall 2020 with a fall 2021 opening date.

To support a skilled workforce post-pandemic and prepare for soundstage productions, OFO has been working with Provincial industry organizations, unions, and guilds to discuss and develop training initiatives. OFO also compiled a list of current training programs which provided the framework for the Ontario Creates Professional Development and Training Hub.

A new initiative to stimulate local tourism, OFO recently launched several film tours which showcase Ottawa neighbourhoods and businesses where film and television productions have filmed. The film tours have the added benefit of increasing residents'

awareness of the local film and television industry. Productions have already resumed in Ottawa, with the city being the first in Ontario to host a feature-length film post-pandemic. OFO anticipates year-end numbers to be almost on par with 2019, despite a four-month hiatus in live-action productions.

Ottawa Music Industry Coalition

The Ottawa Music Industry Coalition (OMIC) is a bilingual member-based non-profit organization and industry association dedicated to growing the local music industries of Ottawa and the surrounding region.

Economic recovery priorities are focused on providing music industry professionals with up-to-date information such as funding opportunities, health and safety protocols and skill sharing. The 2020 Ottawa Music Development Fund (OMDF), funded by the City of Ottawa and administered by OMIC, will provide COVID-19 relief grants of \$500 for 50 local musicians / industry professionals. New programs/initiatives include pairing OMDF recipients with live performances/streaming opportunities, the establishment of the REVS (Reopen Every Venue Safely) working group which connects to over 30 live performance venues, and the creation of resources for musicians to enhance their skills to adapt to virtual platforms.

OMIC will be exploring several opportunities in the coming months such as partnering with the City and other local organizations to create content showcasing Ottawa musicians and iconic locations across the city and continuing to work with the industry and Ottawa Public Health to ensure safe venue reopening as indoor gathering numbers are increased. As the arts and entertainment sector has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the ability to secure reliable, stable funding is an organizational priority.

Ottawa Tourism

Until the recent Phase 3 re-openings, the tourism industry has been largely at a standstill, with the latest industry survey data from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) indicating that for many tourism businesses, reopening has not equated to recovery.¹ This sentiment, combined with the latest Abacus data, which is reporting a preference by 75 per cent of Canadians to stay closer to home², reinforces the long

¹ A July 2020 survey by TIAO tracking the impacts of COVID-19 on Ontario's tourism businesses (unpublished) indicates that as of July 31, 2020: 37% of respondents are partially open with limited operations and reduced capacity; 74% are facing significant losses of cash flow; and 53% report that the current financial aid that has been made available through the provincial and federal levels is not sufficient for businesses to remain economically viable.

² Abacus Data – COVID-19 & Travel Impact Study (RTO 10), June 2020

road to recovery that lays ahead for the industry. In this vein, Ottawa's tourism restart will be a gradual affair – more like turning a dial than flicking on a switch. The restart will begin initially with hyperlocal tourism marketing with Ottawa Tourism enlisting the support of residents to buoy businesses during reopening. From there, the focus will broaden to capture the regional “drive market” and eventually provincial/interprovincial, then domestic, and finally international markets.

Recently, Ottawa Tourism (OT) secured funding to support recovery marketing and operations. Destination Ontario and Destination Canada have committed \$1 million to be used in support of marketing campaign activities – both immediate locally-led/locally focused and for content that aligns to Destination Canada-led national and international efforts. TIAO has provided \$5.2 million through FedDev Ontario's Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) to help support economic recovery in Ontario, drive visitors back into local communities as the economy reopens and generate new revenue for tourism dependent businesses.

OT recently launched a visitor incentive campaign called [It's On Us](#). Visitors who book at least a two-night stay in Ottawa at one of 30 participating hotels receive a \$100 Visa Gift Card. This promotion joins other initiatives developed to encourage both locals and visitors to explore Ottawa, including:

- The [#MyOttawa Pass](#), aimed at residents and recently extended to Labour Day, includes deals and discounts from more than 80 area businesses. To-date, over 7,700 people have signed up for the #MyOttawa Pass, with redemptions made at over 75 of the participating businesses.
- A joint [Rural Ottawa](#) campaign with the City of Ottawa, encouraged the exploration of Ottawa's rural regions by bike or car, either as a day trip or on the way in or out of town. This campaign generated over 1.17 million Facebook impressions, over 42,000 pageviews and Ottawa Tourism's second highest IGTV video viewed to date, with 21,663 organic views, and reaching nearly 41,000 people.
- A weekly emailer [What's Happening in the Ottawa Area](#), outlines fun activities and attractions available over the next week.
- The [Ottawa Unlocked](#) webpage amalgamates articles, itineraries, events, and other resources to plan the ultimate Ottawa staycation.

Overall, Ottawa's tourism industry faces a steep uphill climb, with an expected recovery trajectory that is years away, not months. Recognizing this reality, including the ongoing impacts of lost MAT revenue, OT is actively working on its strategic restart plan in

response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [Project Reset](#). Priorities for the next six to 12 months include supporting tourism businesses as they reopen and adapt their offerings to address the realities of a COVID-19 tourism landscape, enhancing the focus on community engagement and organizational sustainability, and reigniting Ottawa's visitor appeal through strategic marketing and destination development initiatives.

Regroupement des gens d'affaires

Over the past several months, Regroupement des gens d'affaires (RGA) has been very focused on servicing their members and providing strategic advice and guidance in support of economic response and recovery. RGA has successfully obtained grant funding through Heritage Canada for a renewed Bilingualism Program and is awaiting responses on three additional grant funding applications. The organization has been working closely with other business organizations including Ottawa Tourism and the Ottawa Coalition of BIAs. As well, RGA is continuing their partnership with the Ottawa Board of Trade and the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce which has proven to be a useful forum to discuss issues of mutual concern.

As the RGA looks ahead to the next six to 12 months, they will be focused on several activities:

- Working with the Francophone School Board and provincial government for safe return to school;
- Launching the 2020-21 Calendar of Events (September);
- Hosting the 2020 Virtual Gala (October 1, 2020);
- Launching a province-wide campaign to promote support for francophone businesses through the Propulsion Program <https://rga.ca/propulsion-project>;
- Moving forward/continuing translation program and new French customer service training; and
- Launching a Provincial Francophone Business Federation in the fall.