

**City of Ottawa
Nightlife Economy Action Plan
2023-2026**

The Nightlife Economy Action Plan includes three key recommendations for implementation by Economic Development Services in 2023 as well as subsequent recommendations for implementation by the Nightlife Commissioner Office, in collaboration with other parties, between 2024 and 2026. Together, these recommendations create a foundation for future growth of Ottawa’s nightlife economy and aim to:

- Empower dedicated leadership to accelerate nightlife collaboration, coordination, and contribution to city place branding and quality of life;
- Foster nightlife compatibility, responsibility, and stewardship between residents, businesses and organizations;
- Nurture the resilience, viability, aspirations and prosperity of nightlife businesses and organizations;
- Enhance the safety, security, health, and wellbeing of nightlife workers and customers; and
- Ensure the quality, authenticity, diversity, and inclusiveness of nightlife experiences.

Recommendation	Lead	Priority Actions	Desired Outcomes	Timing
R1. Establish the framework for a ‘Nightlife Commissioner’ Office, for implementation in 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Services (EDS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the vision, mandate, roles and responsibilities for the Nightlife Commissioner Office • Develop the operating and funding model • Submit a proposal for one Full-time equivalent (FTE) role as part of the 2024 City budget process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated resources to support the growth and development of Ottawa’s nightlife economy • Improved promotion of Ottawa’s nightlife economy and coordination and resolution of nightlife issues 	2023
R2. Promote city-wide and neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood participation of residents, visitors and businesses in the nightlife economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Ottawa Tourism and the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) to identify, promote and increase awareness of nightlife businesses and experiences across the city • Provide funding to support the development of marketing tools, such as nightlife guides to promote nightlife businesses and experiences • Leverage existing City marketing and communication channels to promote the guides, and participation of residents, visitors and businesses in the nightlife economy • Integrate nightlife messaging into City place branding initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved promotion of nightlife activities and businesses in neighbourhoods across the city • Increased awareness of Ottawa’s nightlife amenities and experiences among residents and visitors • Increased participation of residents, visitors and businesses in nightlife activities 	2023

*Note: *Assumes Nightlife Commissioner Office will be established in 2024*

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<p>R3. Consider amendments supportive of the nightlife economy while undertaking planned reviews of City by-laws, policies, procedures, and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider opportunities to support more night markets and food festivals through Right-of-Way permitting Encourage public and private sector developments that include dedicated, outdoor, multi-use event spaces that incorporate permanent event elements, such as ‘security by design’ principles in lieu of temporary road closures, lighting, washrooms, furnishings, hard-scaping, etc. Explore ways to simplify City approvals, licensing and permitting processes, subject to cost recovery and regulatory requirements of the City Explore reduced transit fares on low demand evenings/nights and reduced parking fees in designated nightlife nodes between 6 pm - 6 am Explore expanded zoning, in areas within, and outside of the downtown core, to broaden permitted land uses and establish controls on potentially impactful uses to support more nightlife activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplified approval, licensing and permitting processes for nightlife activities Increased nightlife businesses and events across the city Zoning and permitted land uses are broadened, where appropriate throughout the city, with balanced protection of employment lands and other considerations Increased participation by residents and visitors in nightlife activities Improved Zoning By-law minimizes the number of applications for zoning by-law relief and amendments The new Zoning By-law is clearer and easier to work with for all stakeholders 	2023
<p>R4. Establish a Nightlife Ambassador Council comprised of industry and community leaders to provide feedback and support to the Nightlife Commissioner Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Terms of Reference for the Nightlife Ambassador Council, including the number of members, mandate, composition, member term lengths, meeting schedule, etc. Develop and implement a recruitment strategy for Nightlife Ambassador Council members Select Nightlife Ambassador Council members that represent nightlife businesses, key organizations, and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication and collaboration between the City, nightlife businesses, and residents Strategic guidance and support provided to the Nightlife Commissioner Office 	2024
<p>R5. Develop an annual ‘Nightlife Commissioner’s Report’ that highlights Nightlife Office achievements and nightlife economy developments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) and economic impact metrics as well as processes for tracking the indicators and metrics Share the annual report with City departments, elected officials, nightlife industry stakeholders, community organizations and the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of the Nightlife Commissioner Office’s achievements and developments in the nightlife economy Increased awareness of the value of nightlife among Ottawa residents and businesses Ottawa is recognized as having a vibrant nightlife that is growing, well managed, safe, diverse, inclusive and welcoming 	2024

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<p>R6. Collaborate with Ottawa Tourism to promote nightlife experiences to visitors as part of destination marketing investments and advocate for the development of new nightlife experiences through the Destination Development Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a database of nightlife stakeholders and assets as well as a dedicated nightlife communications platform Develop a marketing and communication strategy to ensure residents and visitors can easily find information on what is happening at night, by neighbourhood and interest, and that leverages Ottawa Tourism’s existing marketing and communication initiatives Engage nightlife businesses, participants, influencers, and other stakeholders to promote nightlife offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved promotion of nightlife activities and businesses in neighbourhoods across the city Increased awareness of Ottawa’s nightlife amenities and experiences among residents and visitors Improved collaboration between nightlife businesses and other nightlife stakeholders 	2024
<p>R7. Develop a city-wide Nightlife Safety and Security Plan for nightlife workers and participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage City departments, Ottawa Public Health, Ottawa Police Services, community safety and security experts, and key industry organizations Outline crime reduction strategies, as well as improvements to public transit options, design, street lighting and public washroom access between 6pm and 6am, that support nightlife Leverage and promote existing City and industry programs such as the City’s Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, Anti-Racism Strategy, Party Safe Program, Accessibility Policy and other public health and safety tools and resources Seek funding sources (i.e., safety and security grants, infrastructure grants) to incorporate ‘security by design’ principles and other permanent elements into multi-use spaces Develop communications, training programs, and other initiatives to promote the Nightlife Safety and Security Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved safety at night for residents, workers, and visitors Ottawa is recognized as having one of the safest nightlife experiences in the world Public realm design elements that encourage nightlife activity and allow residents and visitors to move and spend time outdoors at night conveniently, safely and comfortably The Nightlife Safety and Security plan considers homelessness and mental health and addiction challenges 	2025
<p>R8. Facilitate, with partners, new and diverse cultural and placemaking activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with embassies and consulates to develop culture nights and activities across the city With partners, leverage existing plans such as the National Capital Commission (NCC) Capital Illumination Plan 2017-2027, and identify opportunities for new lighting and/or artistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of accessible nightlife activities Increased support for innovative not-for-profits, including equity-deserving groups, and do-it-yourself event organizers planning nightlife activities 	2025

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		<p>lighting projections/installations on buildings and in the public realm, where permitted, at night</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish processes to ensure City-permitted and City-led events and activities are reviewed for quality, diversity, and inclusiveness With partners, incubate new high quality, authentic, diverse, and inclusive nightlife events in public spaces, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop-up events in City and NCC parks/courtyards with music, cultural offerings, food/drink, etc. All-ages events for families No-charge events/festivals to encourage residents to visit different areas of the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater support for all-ages events, including events for families with children Increased number of nightlife events held in venues and green spaces, including NCC properties, outside the downtown core In partnership with NCC, increased animation of Ottawa's waterfront and green spaces, that is appropriately located, designed, and balanced with the protection of natural heritage 	
<p>R9. Develop a virtual nightlife resource centre of tools and resources for new and established nightlife businesses and event organizers to encourage diverse, sustainable, inclusive and compatible experiences, events, and businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile tools and resources relevant to nightlife entrepreneurs, businesses, and events, including laws, bylaws, and nightlife venue listing, as well as information on business events, multi-use zoning, licensing etc. Develop a dynamic virtual platform for housing the tools and resources Develop a marketing and communication strategy to promote the virtual nightlife resource centre to nightlife businesses and event organizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightlife entrepreneurs have the resources they need to launch nightlife businesses with diversified revenue sources (i.e., businesses that operate 24 hours a day or are retail / service-focused during the day and nightlife-oriented at night) Nightlife event organizers and businesses have the information and resources to operate successfully, support good-neighbour principles, and comply with applicable laws and by-laws Indigenous, Black, and other racialized-owned businesses have the information, resources, and support to be contribute to the inventory of nightlife amenities and experiences More nightlife event organizers utilize venues outside the downtown and program underutilized outdoor spaces, including NCC parks and green spaces 	2025
<p>R10. Identify opportunities to support the establishment of new mid-size venues (1,500-2,000 person capacity) for events and live music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDS Nightlife Commissioner Office* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider encouraging new mid-size venue developments through public/private partnerships, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ottawa has a 1,500-2,000 person capacity music and event venue Ottawa is a destination of choice for music artists, live entertainment and events requiring a mid-sized venue 	2026

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