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TO: Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

DESTINATAIRE: Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales

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FILE NUMBER: ACS2024-PRE-EDP-0018

SUBJECT: 2024 Rural Affairs Workplan

OBJET: Plan de travail 2024 des Affaires rurales

PURPOSE

As directed by the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee on November 30, 2023, this IPD provides a detailed update on the workplan of the Rural Affairs Office for 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Affairs Office was created following amalgamation and the 2005 Rural Summit to serve rural residents of Ottawa. The role of the Rural Affairs Office is:

- To monitor and support issues affecting rural Ottawa ensuring that current and emerging rural issues are a prime focus of City staff and Council;
- To facilitate a productive relationship between the City and its rural citizens by assessing the impact of the City's rural policies, by-laws and programs and negotiating change;
- To establish links with provincial and federal governments and to keep City officials informed of developments in legislative and policy efforts; and
- Advocate for the rural perspective in accordance with City Council's direction.

The Rural Affairs Office supports the implementation of solutions identified at the [Rural Summit](#) (in 2005 and 2008), and the work of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. Members of Council were last updated on work plan for the Rural Affairs Office on August 15, 2023 as part of an IPD from the General Manager of PRED on the department work plan.

DISCUSSION

The 2024 work plan for the Rural Affairs Office includes the following:

1. Wildlife Damage Compensation Program: coordination and administration of wildlife damage compensation claims from farmers. **On-going.**
2. Rural Community Building Grant Program: administration of the program, including the review of applications, coordination with applications, recommendations to ARAC for approval, receipt and review of reports, and processing of payments. **On-going.**
3. Rural Affairs Mailbox: receipt and response to inquiries from rural residents, including referrals to other departments and branches as required. **On-going.**
4. Rural Affairs Newsletter: publication and distribution of an electronic newsletter containing information on City of Ottawa programs and initiatives, as well as third party information of interest to rural residents. **On-going.**

5. Ottawa Smart Farm: financial support for the Invest Ottawa Smart Farm research initiative at Area XO on the Agriculture Canada research farm, in conjunction with Economic Development Services; work with the Smart Farm to communicate with the farming community and build relationships with producers. **Renewed for 2024 – 2026.**
6. Area XO Building Lease: financial support covering the lease of the Area XO building from the Federal Government, in conjunction with Economic Development Services. **Renewed to December 31, 2026.**
7. Rural Summit 2024: provision of organizational support for the Councillor-led 2024 Rural Summit, in conjunction with Business and Technical Support Services. **2023 – 2024.**
8. ATV, ORV, and Snowmobile By-law Update. **2023 – 2024.**
9. Support for Rural Ottawa Broadband Internet: support City right-of-way and roads staff and communicate the needs of rural stakeholders to Rogers. **2023 – 2024.**

In addition to these formal work plan items, the Rural Affairs Office reviews and comments on major policy initiatives related to the rural area, such as the four on-going Master Plan reviews, the Rural Economic Development Strategy, the new Comprehensive Zoning By-law, the Wildlife Strategy Review, and the Stormwater Taxation Analysis. The Rural Affairs Office also supports Planning Services in the review of major, rural development applications, where those applications support rural strategic directions such as agricultural diversification.

Original signed by

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