

**Subject: Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan Implementation
Update 2026**

File Number: ACS2026-SI-ED-0006

**Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 7 April 2026
and Council 22 April 2026**

**Submitted on March 25, 2026 by Sheilagh Doherty, Director,
Economic Development Services**

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Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Mise à jour sur la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de développement
économique et Plan d'action 2026**

Numéro de dossier : ACS2026-SI-ED-0006

**Rapport présenté au Comité des finances et des services organisationnels le 7
avril 2026**

et au Conseil le 22 avril 2026

**Soumis le 25 mars 2026 par Sheilagh Doherty, Directrice,
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Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Corporate Services Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Receive for information the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan Implementation Update 2026.**
- 2. Receive the Kanata North Special Economic District Action Plan, attached as Document 1, and direct staff to proceed with the next steps outlined in this report and in Document 1.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et des services organisationnels recommande au Conseil de :

- 1. Recevoir à titre informatif la mise à jour sur la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de développement économique et Plan d'action 2026.**
- 2. Recevoir le Plan d'action du quartier économique spécial de Kanata-Nord, joint en tant que Document 1, et demander au personnel de passer aux prochaines étapes décrites dans le présent rapport et dans le Document 1.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan Implementation Update 2026 provides an overview of Ottawa's economic conditions, progress achieved in 2025 and key priorities for 2026. The Strategy, approved in April 2024, advances the Term of Council priority of "a city with a diversified and prosperous economy" by guiding economic growth, resilience and investment attraction across the city.

This update is brought forward in response to Council direction to report annually on implementation progress and to ensure the Strategy remains responsive to evolving economic conditions. Ottawa enters 2026 in a stable but subdued position, shaped by slower population growth, global economic uncertainty and anticipated federal workforce reductions. These factors are expected to moderate economic activity in the near term.

Despite these pressures, Ottawa's economic fundamentals remain strong. Key sectors, including technology, defence, tourism, construction and advanced manufacturing, continue to support long-term growth and diversification. Strategic investments, major

city-building projects and a highly skilled workforce position Ottawa to remain competitive and resilient.

In 2025, Economic Development Services (EDS) advanced a range of initiatives aligned with the Strategy's priority areas, including strengthening partnerships, supporting small businesses, advancing downtown revitalization and developing sector-specific plans such as the Economic Development Rural Plan. Progress was also made in implementing the Nightlife Economy Action Plan and advancing Ottawa 200 programming to support the visitor economy.

Work planned for 2026 will build on this foundation, with a continued focus on economic diversification, talent attraction and retention, downtown revitalization and coordinated support for small businesses. Key initiatives include implementation of the Talent Plan, enhancement of business support programs, advancement of special economic districts and continued investment in cultural and tourism initiatives.

The Strategy continues to be implemented within existing resources. In addition, the Ontario–Ottawa Agreement provides \$18.5 million over three years to support downtown revitalization and related economic development initiatives. No new municipal funding is required at this time, and investments are expected to generate positive economic impacts, including increased business activity and job creation.

SYNTHÈSE ADMINISTRATIVE

La mise à jour sur la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de développement économique et Plan d'action 2026 présente un aperçu de la situation économique d'Ottawa, des progrès réalisés en 2025 et des principales priorités pour 2026. La stratégie, approuvée en avril 2024, contribue à la réalisation de la priorité du mandat du Conseil, à savoir « Une ville avec une économie diversifiée et prospère » en orientant la croissance économique, la résilience et l'attraction des investissements dans toute la ville.

Cette mise à jour est présentée conformément à la directive du Conseil visant à rendre compte chaque année des progrès réalisés dans la mise en œuvre et à veiller à ce que la stratégie continue de s'adapter à l'évolution de la conjoncture économique. Ottawa aborde l'année 2026 dans une situation stable, mais modérée, marquée par un ralentissement de la croissance démographique, l'incertitude économique mondiale et les réductions d'effectifs prévues au gouvernement fédéral. Ces facteurs devraient freiner l'activité économique à court terme.

Malgré ces pressions, les fondements économiques d'Ottawa demeurent solides. D'importants secteurs, notamment la technologie, la défense, le tourisme, la construction et l'industrie manufacturière de pointe, continuent de soutenir la croissance et la diversification à long terme. Des investissements stratégiques, de grands projets d'aménagement urbain et une main-d'œuvre hautement qualifiée permettent à Ottawa de rester compétitive et résiliente.

En 2025, les Services de développement économique (SDE) ont mis en œuvre toute une série d'initiatives s'inscrivant dans les orientations prioritaires de la stratégie, notamment le renforcement des partenariats, le soutien aux petites entreprises, la revitalisation du centre-ville et l'élaboration de plans sectoriels, comme le Plan de développement économique en milieu rural. Des progrès ont également été réalisés dans la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action économique de la vie nocturne et dans la promotion des activités dans le cadre d'Ottawa 200 afin de soutenir l'économie touristique.

Les projets prévus pour 2026 reposeront sur ces fondements, en continuant à se concentrer sur la diversification économique, l'attraction et la rétention des talents, la revitalisation du centre-ville et les mesures coordonnées de soutien pour les petites entreprises. Les principales initiatives comprennent la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action pour le développement des talents, l'amélioration des programmes de soutien aux activités, le développement des quartiers économiques spéciaux et la poursuite des investissements dans les initiatives culturelles et touristiques.

La stratégie continue d'être mise en œuvre en fonction des ressources disponibles. Par ailleurs, l'Accord Ontario-Ottawa prévoit une enveloppe de 18,5 millions de dollars sur trois ans pour soutenir la revitalisation du centre-ville et les initiatives de développement économique qui y sont liées. Aucun financement municipal supplémentaire n'est nécessaire pour le moment, et les investissements devraient avoir des retombées économiques positives, notamment une intensification de l'activité économique et la création d'emplois.

BACKGROUND

The [Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan](#) approved by Council in April 2024, advances the 2023–2026 Term of Council priority, “A city with a diversified and prosperous economy.” The Strategy provides a flexible framework to guide Ottawa’s economic growth, diversification, and resilience. It also serves as a roadmap to align municipal resources and investments in economic development with priority outcomes.

A vision statement and eight guiding principles inform the Strategy and provide a local lens for assessing economic opportunities and impacts. The vision is to “Leverage bold thinking and innovative approaches to establish Ottawa as the most livable mid-sized city in North America.” The guiding principles are Environmental Sustainability; Preparedness and Resilience; Growth and Diversification; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Talent and Innovation; Unique Geography; Partnerships and Collaboration; and One City, Two Languages.

The Strategy builds on established partnerships and programs and identifies seven strategic priority areas, each supported by corresponding actions to address economic opportunities and challenges while strengthening competitiveness and quality of life. The priorities are Partnerships and Collaboration; City Building Projects; Connectivity; Talent; Downtown and the ByWard Market; City Branding; and Key Sector Support.

Strategy implementation reflects a collaborative model. While EDS leads and delivers several initiatives, the City works closely with funded service delivery partners, including Invest Ottawa, the Ottawa Film Office, and the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, as well as other economic development organizations to address sector-specific needs and advance shared objectives.

Given the need to remain responsive to emerging economic trends, challenges and opportunities, an implementation update on the Strategy is provided to Council annually. This report presents an overview of Ottawa’s economy and emerging trends, highlights key programs and initiatives delivered in 2025 and work planned for 2026, including the work of the Nightlife and Ottawa 200 Offices.

DISCUSSION

Canada enters 2026 facing a more uncertain and fragmented economic environment. Slower global growth and geopolitical challenges, ongoing tariff pressures, and trade disruptions continue to impact business confidence.

Nationally, economic growth forecasts remain modest. According to Signal49 Research’s Major City Insights: Ottawa–Gatineau (January 2026), formerly known as the Conference Board of Canada, real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to increase by approximately 1.4 per cent in 2026, following 1.0 per cent growth in 2025. Consumer spending remains cautious, and business investment is constrained by trade uncertainty, including the upcoming Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review and energy price escalation. Population growth has slowed sharply following changes to federal government immigration policy, reducing momentum in the

labour market and housing demand. With this and easing inflation, the Bank of Canada is maintaining a cautious policy stance.

Like the federal economic forecasts, Ontario's provincial outlook also anticipates modest growth amid ongoing global and trade-related headwinds. For Canadian cities, this environment suggests slower near-term growth and continued sensitivity to global and national policy developments.

Ottawa Economy

Ottawa enters 2026 stable but subdued. Slower population growth, tariff-related price pressures, and anticipated federal workforce reductions are expected to temper economic activity. While these factors present near-term challenges, Ottawa's skilled workforce, established technology and tourism sectors, investment in significant city-building projects, and high quality of life support long-term stability and resilience. Real GDP growth in Ottawa–Gatineau is projected to slow to 0.4 per cent in 2026, from 0.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.2 per cent in 2024, with gradual improvement beginning in 2027.

Population growth is projected to slow significantly in 2026 and 2027, averaging approximately 0.3 per cent annually, compared to 1.3 per cent in 2025 and 3.2 per cent in 2024. This decline is primarily linked to federal immigration policy changes, including reductions in permanent and temporary resident admissions and international student permits. Slower population growth will affect labour supply, housing demand, retail activity, and post-secondary enrollment. Weaker interprovincial migration, linked in part to slower public sector hiring, will also moderate overall population gains.

The Ottawa–Gatineau region is expected to experience net job losses in 2025 and 2026. Public administration employment is forecast to contract by an average of 1.7 per cent annually between 2025 and 2030, reflecting federal workforce adjustments. Given that public administration accounts for approximately one quarter of local employment, federal workforce reductions will have direct and indirect effects on Ottawa's economy. Sectors closely tied to public service employment, including retail trade and real estate, are expected to see weaker growth. Retail employment is projected to decline over the medium term as spending moderates. The unemployment rate averaged 5.8 per cent in 2024, increased to 6.3 per cent in 2025, and is forecast to rise to 6.6 per cent in 2026 before gradually declining to 5.8 per cent by 2030.

At the same time, several sectors are positioned to support economic resilience and diversification:

- **Technology and Professional Services:** Ottawa is home to more than 1,800 technology companies, employing more than 94,000 skilled workers, and the largest technology park in Canada. Professional, scientific, and technical services employment is forecast to grow by an average of 2.6 per cent annually through 2030, supported in part by defence-related research and innovation.
- **Defence and Security:** The region hosts more than 330 defence, aerospace and security firms employing 10,000 workers, alongside major federal institutional headquarters, more than 65 research facilities, and four NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) test centres and Invest Ottawa's Area X.O. Increased federal defence spending and Ottawa-Gatineau's positioning as Canada's Defence Innovation Hub is expected to benefit this cluster.
- **Tourism and Major Events:** Tourism is rebounding strongly, with Ottawa Tourism reporting that July 2025 set a benchmark as the busiest July ever recorded in Ottawa, surpassing the previous high from 2019. Similarly, August 2025 built on this momentum, marking the strongest August on record, supported by major events such as IRONMAN and a Rugby World Cup warm-up match, along with significant investment in marketing to stimulate domestic travel. This year, Ottawa will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of Bytown as well as host the Canadian Track and Field Championships and International Wheelchair Basketball Federation World Championships, among other major events. The arts and entertainment sector output is projected to advance 1.4 per cent in 2026, while the accommodation and food services sector will see 1.9 per cent growth.
- **Construction:** Construction will be a key contributor to growth over the medium term. Output is projected to rise 2.7 per cent in 2026 and expand further through 2030, supported by major public city-building projects and private infrastructure projects, including the Ottawa Hospital development, light rail transit expansion, parliamentary rehabilitation, and mixed-use developments.
- **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing output is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 3.2 per cent between 2026 and 2030, supported by continued investment in advanced manufacturing and defence-related production. This includes more than \$100 million in investment by Ranovus to reshore semiconductor manufacturing to the Ottawa–Gatineau region, as well as a new facility opened by SEA Canada to manufacture torpedo launch systems, further strengthening

the region's defence and technology manufacturing base.

Overall, while near-term growth is expected to remain modest, sector diversification, tourism and major capital investments provide a foundation for gradual improvement. Ottawa's current economic conditions and forecast highlight the importance of continued economic diversification and targeted supports for workforce development, downtown revitalization, and small businesses.

Ottawa's economic foundation is further supported by continued recognition of its high quality of life. The *Globe and Mail* recently ranked Ottawa as the most livable major city in Canada, based on an assessment of fifty-eight indicators spanning economic conditions, social factors, infrastructure, and climate resilience. This ranking strengthens Ottawa's competitive position and advances the City's economic development objectives by reinforcing its value proposition as a stable, resilient, and attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.

2025 and 2026 Economic Development Services' Highlights

EDS leads implementation of the *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan*, advancing economic growth, diversification, and resilience. Economic development is delivered through four primary areas:

- The Programs and Partnerships branch, which leads initiatives that support business growth, sector development and diversification, investment attraction, and job creation.
- The Nightlife Office, which implements the [Nightlife Economy Action Plan](#) approved by Council in May 2023, to strengthen a vibrant, inclusive and safe nightlife sector.
- The Ottawa 200 Office, which oversees the planning and delivery of initiatives marking the 200th anniversaries of Bytown (2026) and the ByWard Market (2027) in partnership with Ottawa Tourism, City departments, and community organizations.
- The ByWard Market Public Realm Office, which leads efforts to revitalize the ByWard Market and implement the *ByWard Market Public Realm Plan*. An update on this work and the implementation of next steps was outlined in the [Advancing the ByWard Market: A Revitalization Framework and Coordinated Redevelopment Program](#) report approved by Council in March 2026.

Programs and Partnerships

The Programs and Partnerships branch works closely with funded service delivery partners and other economic development organizations to advance Ottawa's economic objectives and priorities. In 2025, funding was provided to support Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), community economic development initiatives, and the creative industries, including the Ottawa Film Office and the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, through grants and contribution agreements. EDS also continued the City's investment in Invest Ottawa, which delivers venture development, global expansion and talent programs that support entrepreneurs and high-growth firms, strengthen economic diversification and advance knowledge-based sectors.

EDS also delivered core programs designed to stimulate economic development across the city. This included continued implementation of the Integrated Orléans and Montréal Road Community Improvement Plans (CIPs). Through the Integrated Orléans CIP, Council approved an application supporting a new \$5 million healthcare facility, with the incentive funded through the anticipated cumulative municipal property tax increase resulting from the redevelopment. EDS continued delivery of the High Economic Impact Projects (HEIP) program, which provides a dedicated City Economic Development Planner to help advance strategic development projects (i.e., Nokia campus and new Amazon fulfillment centre) aligned with city-building objectives and completed an economic impact assessment of Lansdowne 2.0 confirming projected GDP growth, job creation, increased attendance and additional property tax revenues.

In addition to ongoing funding and program delivery, EDS advanced several targeted initiatives in 2025 to support economic diversification, downtown revitalization, workforce development, and small business growth across urban, suburban, and rural Ottawa.

Economic diversification is essential to building a resilient economy that can adapt to global uncertainty and federal public sector adjustments. To strengthen Ottawa's position in strategic sectors, EDS played a leadership role in supporting the development of a regional [Defence Innovation Hub Strategy](#) led by Invest Ottawa . The strategy builds on the city's established defence and security companies and research capacity to leverage the federal increase in defence spending. A task force of thirty-three defence leaders and experts, co-chaired by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Gatineau Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette, with Honorary Chair General (Ret'd) Rick Hillier, has been established to advance the Strategy.

In response to Council direction, with support from Bloomberg Associates, EDS also developed a Kanata North Special Economic District Action Plan. The goal of the plan is to strengthen Kanata North's role and competitiveness as Canada's leading technology and innovation district with a focus on business development, entrepreneurship, infrastructure alignment, marketing and placemaking. Additional details on the vision, priority areas, actions, and next steps are provided in Document 1. Together, these initiatives continue to position Ottawa to attract investment, support sector growth and enhance long-term economic resilience.

A vibrant and active downtown is critical to Ottawa's overall economic performance and reputation as a capital city. Downtown revitalization remained a priority in 2025, with EDS continuing implementation of the \$18.5 million Ontario–Ottawa Agreement (2025–2027) investment. This work supports public realm improvements, advancement of the ByWard Market Public Realm Plan, downtown marketing initiatives aimed at highlighting positive downtown attributes and messaging, and key actions identified in the Ottawa Board of Trade's Downtown Ottawa Action Agenda. This includes the development and implementation of the Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) District, which aims to align and amplify cultural assets and foster a more coordinated downtown cultural ecosystem through shared activation and storytelling. Additional information on economic development downtown initiatives is included in the *Downtown Revitalization Framework* report which will be considered at the Finance and Corporate Services Committee in April 2026. Collectively, these actions support increased visitation, business activity, and market confidence in the downtown core.

A strong talent pipeline with the skills required by employers is essential to Ottawa's economic growth and competitiveness. Without it, businesses are less able to expand, adopt new technologies and innovate, or take on new contracts. To support workforce attraction, development and retention, EDS developed a Talent Plan focused on key sectors, including technology, health care, construction, tourism, and professional services. The Talent Plan includes promoting Ottawa as a city of choice for skilled workers and recent graduates through a new comprehensive resource portal and national marketing campaign; connecting and convening partners to improve training pathways, expand co-ops, accelerate newcomer integration, and provide leadership in talent ecosystem coordination; and establishing a shared approach to labour market intelligence and data so employers and partners have access to clear, timely information about skills needs and emerging trends. Overall, these actions help reduce skills mismatches, improve access to job-ready talent, and support more coordinated planning across the workforce ecosystem.

Small businesses are the backbone of Ottawa's economy and play a vital role in job creation and community vitality across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Supporting small business growth remains a key focus, with EDS completing a Small Business Needs Assessment and beginning implementation of its recommendations, including the launch of a [Small Business Navigator](#) to improve access to business development information and tools. An online [Economic Development Dashboard](#) was also introduced to enhance public access to local economic data. EDS also supported the expansion of the Centretown BIA, enabling the organization to deliver enhanced marketing, programming, and public realm initiatives. In response to Council direction, EDS initiated the development of the *Orléans Economic Development Action Plan* to advance investment, business growth, tourism, and marketing in the east end. EDS also drafted an updated *Economic Development Rural Plan* to support a resilient rural economy that reflects the priorities and character of rural businesses and communities, which will be considered by the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in May 2026. Overall, these initiatives strengthen the small business ecosystem and support inclusive economic growth across the city.

Despite a slower economic outlook, clear and coordinated actions are underway to strengthen Ottawa's economy over the long term. Work planned for 2026 will build on these initiatives and continue to focus on economic diversification, downtown revitalization, talent, and small business growth. Key actions include:

- Advancing implementation of the Kanata North Special Economic District Action Plan and the Orléans Economic Development Action Plan, while initiating development of the Airport Special Economic District Action Plan.
- Implementing the Small Business Needs Assessment recommendations, including initiatives to strengthen the capacity of BIAs, and hosting a Small Business Sector Support Ecosystem Roundtable and Workshop to engage directly with technical service providers to enhance and coordinate small businesses supports.
- Launching the ACE District in alignment with other cultural sector initiatives, including the new Arts Corridor and Art Asphalt projects; implementing Phase II of the downtown marketing campaign to promote awareness and positive messaging about downtown attributes and experiences; continuing to support implementation of the Downtown Ottawa Action Agenda; and developing a Downtown Toolkit, including a vacant retail storefront activation initiative.

- Implementing the Talent Plan through several key initiatives, including establishing a resource portal to support recruitment efforts and better connect job seekers with employers; launching a national marketing campaign to position Ottawa as a city of choice for skilled talent; convening a Talent Roundtable to bring together employers, post-secondary institutions and workforce partners to strengthen training pathways, expand co-op and work-integrated learning opportunities, and accelerate newcomer integration; and enhancing labour market data on the Economic Development Dashboard to improve access to labour market intelligence and support evidence-based decision-making.
- Supporting the expansion of the Preston Street BIA and the creation of a Cyrville Road BIA to enable enhanced marketing, programming, and public realm initiatives, which will be considered by the Finance and Corporate Services Committee in June 2026.
- Finalizing and implementing the *Economic Development Rural Plan* which aims to reduce barriers to services for businesses, leverage rural strengths and assets, and respond to emerging opportunities so rural Ottawa can continue to thrive as a vital and dynamic part of the city's economy. The Plan proposes to focus on improving access to business support services by expanding and decentralizing services so rural businesses can more easily access support, advice, information, and networking opportunities closer to where they operate.

Work will also begin this year on a refreshed *Economic Development Strategy*, including updated economic analysis, a review of grant programs, an assessment of emerging opportunities and trends, and consultation with key partners. In parallel, staff will begin developing new multi-year funding agreements for service delivery partners, to take effect starting in 2027.

Full details on work completed by the Programs and Partnerships branch in 2025 and planned for 2026 are outlined in Document 2.

Nightlife Office

The Nightlife Office continues to deliver targeted economic development initiatives that strengthen Ottawa's nighttime economy by supporting local businesses, increasing after-dark activity, and enhancing safety and inclusivity. This work helps drive local spending, supports jobs in hospitality and entertainment, and positions Ottawa as a dynamic and competitive destination.

In its first full year of operations, the Nightlife Office delivered on all ten recommendations in the Council-approved *Nightlife Economy Action Plan*, with particular focus on establishing a Nightlife Council which advises on nightlife policy and its implementation, informing updated City regulations to be more nightlife friendly, and piloting new safety and placemaking initiatives.

Key accomplishments in 2025 included launching OttawaAtNight.ca, establishing the Nightlife Council, hosting the Canada After Dark forum and the Nightlife Office Town Hall, implementing the ByWard Market Night Ambassadors Pilot, and facilitating activations such as Metcalfe Plaza and a Nuit Blanche teaser event. This work strengthened collaboration between City services, businesses and community partners, enhanced safety and inclusivity in nightlife spaces, positioning Ottawa as a national and international leader in nightlife policy. Together, these achievements provide a strong foundation for the continued implementation of the *Nightlife Economy Action Plan* and the sustainable growth of Ottawa's nighttime economy. A detailed 2025 Nightlife Office Annual Report is attached in Document 3.

In 2026, the Nightlife Office will focus on two primary priorities: delivering cultural and placemaking pilot projects that support a vibrant, safe, and inclusive nighttime environment, supported by \$150,000 in Council-approved funding, and developing a new *Nightlife Strategy* to guide future work and reflect the evolving realities and opportunities of Ottawa's nighttime economy.

Ottawa's first *Nightlife Economy Action Plan* was approved by Council in 2023, and the most recent economic benchmarking of the sector was completed in 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Action Plan's recommendations remain relevant, the operating context has changed significantly. Shifts in work patterns, evolving cultural preferences, post-pandemic recovery, rising inflation, and increased expectations around safety, accessibility and inclusion have reshaped how residents, visitors and workers experience the city after dark. An updated strategy supported by current economic data will ensure the City's approach remains responsive and forward-looking.

As part of this work, the Nightlife Office will commission an updated economic impact study to better understand the scale and contribution of Ottawa's nighttime economy. In addition to traditional nightlife sectors such as hospitality, entertainment, arts and culture, the assessment will examine the broader nighttime economy, including sectors such as healthcare, transportation, public safety, logistics, manufacturing, delivery services, and essential municipal operations. These sectors represent a significant share of nighttime employment but have historically been underrepresented in

economic analyses.

The development of the new Nightlife Strategy will also include consultation with City departments, businesses, workers, and community partners to identify challenges and emerging opportunities. Together, the economic analysis and engagement process will establish clear priorities and actions to support a resilient, inclusive, and well-coordinated nighttime economy. The updated Strategy will be presented to Council in Q1 2027.

Ottawa 200 Office

EDS is leading the planning of the 200th Anniversary celebrations in partnership with Ottawa Tourism and other key economic development, cultural and community partners. Ottawa's 200th anniversary will feature two years of targeted investment in community celebrations, including \$1.9 million City funding in 2026 to support innovative programming and partnerships. Celebrations officially launched at City Hall in January 2026 with an event that brought together more than one hundred community partners, unveiled Ottawa 200 programming, and announced funding and partnerships.

In 2026, the City is supporting artists and creators, cultural and community non-profits and BIAs to develop and promote high-quality events that attract residents and visitors, as part of a \$750,000 investment. To support this work, the City has launched three Ottawa 200 funding streams to existing grant programs:

- Ottawa 200 Artist/Creator Grant Program, delivered in collaboration with the Ottawa Art Gallery and Arts Ottawa, to support artist-led projects and mentorship opportunities for emerging creators and artists collectives
- Ottawa 200 Civic Events Funding Program, supporting free, family-friendly cultural and community events led by non-profit organizations
- Ottawa 200 BIA Activation Grant, distributed across Ottawa's BIAs to support local event activation through promotional materials and pageantry

The City engaged the Anishinabe Algonquin Advisory Circle to seek guidance on the 200th anniversary initiatives. Ongoing collaboration will inform engagement approaches and programming, including the development of immersive cultural experiences planned as part of the anniversary activities.

Initiatives such as Ottawa Tourism's 200th Tourism Animation Fund and Ottawa Bluesfest's signature Ottawa 200 celebration day in July further leverage the City's

investment to attract visitors, encourage longer stays, and support local hospitality, retail, and entertainment businesses. Promotional activities are also underway to build awareness and participation, including the ottawa200.ca website, distribution of promotional kits to community partners to support local activations, and the display of Ottawa 200 pageantry across the city, including throughout the transit system.

Additional events will be announced throughout 2026, including a free, outdoor, family-friendly block party at Marion Dewar Plaza on September 26. Legacy initiatives are also being advanced, including the development of an Ottawa 200 song in collaboration with the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition. In addition, planning has begun for the celebration of the ByWard Market in 2027, in collaboration with the ByWard Market District Authority.

Overall, Ottawa 200 will deliver targeted economic development programming that will increase local spending, strengthen the visitor economy, support jobs in the arts and events sector, and showcase Ottawa as a vibrant and creative city.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* will be implemented within existing resources. As part of the Ontario-Ottawa Agreement, the Province is providing the City, through EDS, \$18,500,000 over three years. The budget authority for the Ontario-Ottawa agreement is included within existing capital and operating account(s), in alignment with the fiscal years of the respective initiatives.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving this report for information.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a city-wide report.

CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation with interest holders informed the development of both the *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* and the *Nightlife Economy Action Plan*. Ottawa 200 programming was shaped through engagement with the Anishinabe Algonquin Advisory Circle and the Ottawa 200 Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from industry, tourism, community, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* considers the city's unique and diverse communities and incorporates equitable and inclusive practices. A strong economy serves the needs of Ottawa's diverse population and equally benefits people with disabilities. By incorporating equitable and inclusive actions, the City can ensure that everyone benefits from employment and economic development opportunities. EDS remains committed to working with the Accessibility Office through action plan implementation, as required, and is committed to meeting the obligations under the Accessibility Policy, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (O.Reg. 191/1) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, and the duty to consult with the community of persons with disabilities as appropriate.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations documented in this report are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Asset Management (CAM) Program objectives. The implementation of the Comprehensive Asset Management program enables the City to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure to maximize benefits, reduce risk, and provide safe and reliable levels of service to community users. This is done in a socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically conscious manner. When the City commits to the acquisition of new assets, consideration must also be given to the City's commitment to fund future operations, maintenance, and renewal costs. It must also account for future depreciation when reviewing long-term financial sustainability. When reviewing the long-term impacts of asset acquisition, it is useful to consider the cumulative value and lifecycle costing of the acquired assets being taken on by the City. Any assets acquired in future through the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan would be added to the inventory of assets and financial forecasts in the appropriate Asset Management Plan (AMP).

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

One of the Guiding Principles of the *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* is Environmental Sustainability. The strategy includes priorities and actions to address the intersection of climate change mitigation and economic development, including raising awareness of climate risks to Ottawa's business community and supporting readiness through outreach, education, and information on programs that businesses can leverage to invest in climate resilient solutions.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no delegation of authority implications associated with this information report.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing implementation of the *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* is expected to support job creation, attract business investment, and improve key economic indicators, including commercial vacancy rates, visitor volumes and spending, airport passenger volumes, and the pace of downtown revitalization.

Economic development metrics are reported through the City's Strategic Plan performance framework, and an annual update on the state of the local economy is provided to Council as part of the Action Plan implementation report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this information report.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* includes several priorities and actions to advance equitable participation in the economy for racialized and underrepresented segments of Ottawa's population. Such actions include expanding economic development partnerships with diverse stakeholders, working with partners to address challenges related to the economic integration of immigrants, ensuring the city's diversity of people and place is represented in Ottawa's brand, and reviewing economic development led and service delivery partner programs to ensure they are equitable, accessible, and inclusive. The establishment of the Nightlife Council, a key recommendation of the *Nightlife Economy Action Plan*, considered diversity and inclusion principles through the public recruitment process to ensure the Council reflected the broad diversity of communities across the nightlife ecosystem. Economic Development Services remains committed to working with the Anti-Racism Secretariat to ensure alignment with the economic development priority contained in the City's *Anti-Racism Strategy*.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this information report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Council approved the City's *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* in April 2024, identifying rural economic development as a priority and committing to update the *Rural Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* approved by Council in April 2020. The draft *Economic Development Rural Plan*, to be finalized in 2026, recognizes that rural areas have different needs than urban areas and aims to reduce barriers to services, build on rural strengths and assets, and respond to emerging opportunities. The goal of the Plan is to foster a strong rural economy that reflects the realities, priorities, and character of rural businesses and communities.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this information report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan* supports the Term of Council priority of "A city with a diversified and prosperous economy." It provides a framework to guide Ottawa's economic growth, diversification, prosperity, and resiliency, for this Term of Council and beyond.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Kanata North Special Economic District Action Plan

Document 2 – 2025 and 2026 Programs and Partnerships Branch Highlights

Document 3 – 2025 Nightlife Office Annual Report

DISPOSITION

EDS will continue the implementation of the *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan*, *Nightlife Economy Action Plan*, and *ByWard Market Public Realm Plan*.