

## Economic Development Rural Plan Summary

Recommendation	Priority Actions
<b>R1.</b> Establish a dedicated Rural Business Liaison position to support and advance rural economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead implementation of the Economic Development Rural Plan.</li> <li>• Serve as a single point of contact for rural businesses to navigate City programs, approvals, and services.</li> <li>• Conduct proactive outreach to rural businesses.</li> <li>• Identify recurring rural business issues and strengthen coordination between City teams to address rural-specific economic challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>R2.</b> Strengthen the integration of rural business perspectives across City policies, programs, partner agencies, and intergovernmental initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Rural Affairs Office to establish a formal process to assess and incorporate rural economic impacts and considerations into relevant City initiatives.</li> <li>• Economic Development Services will review rural commercial development applications highlighting their economic implications to inform decision-making.</li> <li>• Represent rural business interests on interdepartmental working groups and with external partner agencies to ensure rural needs are reflected in decision-making.</li> <li>• Represent rural business interests and priorities in City infrastructure investment decision-making (transportation, parking, water/sewer, and active transportation), including impactful investments that support and strengthen the rural economy.</li> </ul>
<b>R3.</b> Pilot the delivery of decentralized business support services across all rural wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host in-person business pop-up clinics across rural Ottawa, beginning with a pilot of one clinic per Ward, each quarter, over the next 12 months.</li> <li>• Coordinate service delivery with Invest Ottawa’s Small Business Entrepreneurship Centre, the Ottawa Public Library, the City’s Business Ambassador Service, the Centre for Social Enterprise Development, the Ottawa Innovation Farm, local business associations, and prominent local business owner-operators to maximize impact and inspiration.</li> <li>• Leverage virtual service delivery to complement in-person support and reach businesses in more remote areas.</li> <li>• Promote rural business services through targeted communications, including Councillor’s newsletters, Rural Affairs’ newsletters, and rural networks, to ensure businesses are aware of and can access support.</li> </ul>
<b>R4.</b> Strengthen engagement with rural businesses to identify and address economic challenges, and connect them to supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a volunteer Rural Business Advisory Group that brings together rural businesses, associations and City staff once per quarter.</li> <li>• Contribute information on rural business services, programs and opportunities to the Rural Affairs’ e-newsletter.</li> <li>• Coordinate direct connections between rural businesses and relevant municipal departments, partner agencies, and senior government contacts to resolve issues and support growth.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>R5.</b> Collaborate with local business associations to facilitate networking and mentoring opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate business to business connections and informal mentoring matches.</li> <li>• Partner with local business/industry associations to organize networking events and sector-specific workshops.</li> <li>• Promote virtual networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities to complement in-person events and connect businesses across the region.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to strengthen regional collaboration by facilitating connections between rural Ottawa businesses and adjacent municipalities, supporting cross-boundary networking, shared initiatives, and market access across the broader regional economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R6.</b> Strengthen marketing and promotions of rural Ottawa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess existing tourism product and identify gaps.</li> <li>• Collaborate with City communications and Ottawa Tourism to develop creative material suitable for the resident and visitor markets.</li> <li>• Engage rural businesses and community partners to contribute stories, images, and experiences to amplify campaign reach.</li> <li>• Coordinate cross-channel promotion on City and Ottawa Tourism assets.</li> <li>• Facilitate urban and suburban resident awareness of rural Ottawa attractions through information coordination and dissemination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R7.</b> Secure provincial and federal funding for projects that support rural business growth and expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Rural Affairs Office to identify and prioritize funding opportunities that align with rural economic development projects.</li> <li>• Coordinate application development with the Rural Affairs Office, including preparing supporting materials, cost estimates, and impact analyses.</li> <li>• Engage rural businesses to gather input and demonstrate local support for proposed projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R8.</b> Promote rural Ottawa as a filming destination to support local economic growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Ottawa Film Office to identify and develop marketing materials to promote additional filming locations, including natural landscapes, heritage sites, and community landmarks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R9.</b> Promote rural Ottawa as a destination for corporate and entertainment events, including weddings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and promote additional suitable event locations and facilities and promote Ottawa Tourism’s no-cost membership.</li> <li>• Support rural venues in navigating City approvals, permits, and services needed to host events successfully.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R10.</b> Commission a baseline evaluation and benchmark study of Ottawa’s rural economy to inform future policy, investment, and program decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the study scope, objectives, and methodology in consultation with internal departments, rural business associations, and agricultural interest holders.</li> <li>• Collect and analyze data on rural business activity, employment, revenue, and sector-specific trends.</li> <li>• Update demographic and agricultural industry data on the Economic Development Dashboard with the release of Canada’s 2026 Census of Population and Census of Agriculture.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Priority Actions
<p><b>R11.</b> Assess the competitiveness and capacity of Ottawa’s employment lands to support projected economic growth, and identify priority locations for future industrial development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the study scope, objectives, and methodology in consultation with Policy Planning.</li> <li>• Evaluate Ottawa’s employment lands and identify priority areas for future industrial growth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R12.</b> Explore opportunities to expand on-farm diversified uses to simplify ancillary business development and increase opportunities to enhance the long-term viability of rural farms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Official Plan, Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control By-law related to on-farm diversified uses, in collaboration with Policy Planning, including targeted consultation with rural interest holders to identify barriers, opportunities, and priority areas for expanded diversification.</li> <li>• Analyze on-farm diversification policies and frameworks in comparable municipalities to identify best practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned that could inform potential updates in Ottawa.</li> <li>• Recommend amendments to the Official Plan, Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control By-law that facilitate the development of on-farm diversified uses while maintaining agricultural primacy and bring forward a report to Committee and Council for consideration.</li> </ul>