

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Finance and Economic Development Committee
Comité des finances et du développement économique
6 April 2021 / 6 avril 2021**

**and Council
et au Conseil
14 April 2021 / 14 avril 2021**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2021-PIE-EDP-0018

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Economic Update and Recovery and Rebound Program

**OBJET: Le point sur la reprise économique dans le contexte de la COVID-19
et programme de relance économique**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Finance and Economic Development Committee receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et du développement économique prenne connaissance du présent rapport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a follow-up to the report titled [COVID-19 Economic Recovery Update](#) (ACS2020-PIE-EDP-0027) which was received by the Finance and Economic Development Committee (FEDCo) in September 2020 and provided an overview of the implications of COVID-19 on Ottawa's economy as well as details on Ottawa's economic recovery approach.

Since that time, and over a year into the pandemic, updated economic data illustrates the continuing impacts of COVID-19 on Ottawa's economy. Several sectors continue to be impacted by mandated business closures and restrictions including small businesses (retail, restaurant, service), tourism and accommodation, festivals and events, and live entertainment. In addition, immigrants, women and racialized populations have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In 2021, the City will continue with efforts to support economic recovery. This support will include providing the business community with useful and current information on safe operating procedures and providing a single point of contact in Economic Development Services to assist with small business trouble shooting. Additionally, support will focus on workplace reopening, streamlining City processes to enable recovery, a variety of recovery initiatives as well as continued support for High Economic Impact Projects (HEIPs) and a Social Procurement Strategy.

Focus will also begin to shift toward Ottawa's economic rebound to pre-pandemic levels. This will include advancing a rebound framework in collaboration with the City's economic development partners that will focus on consumer confidence, a Visitor and Event Strategy, place branding and a Talent Strategy.

Assumptions and Analysis

All initiatives outlined in this report will be delivered in accordance with public health regulations and guidelines. While economic recovery support is on-going, it should be noted that timelines for the delivery of economic rebound elements are currently being determined and will be finalized as Ottawa's economic recovery advances. In addition, it is important that recovery efforts remain nimble and respond to the evolving state of the pandemic over the next few months with efforts targeted to the areas of greatest impact, and sufficiently focused to ensure that the City is using its resources efficiently and effectively.

Public Consultation/Input

Input on Ottawa's economic recovery and rebound is provided regularly through the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force. Helping inform the economic rebound framework are the themes and outcomes of a virtual Economic Rebound Roundtable hosted by the Mayor and the City on February 9, 2021. The Roundtable brought together over 20 economic development stakeholders, representing a variety of sectors including post-secondary education, immigration, tourism, development and construction, technology, and small business.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent rapport fait suite à celui intitulé COVID-19 Economic Recovery Update ([ACS2020-PIE-EDP-0027](#)), reçu par le Comité des finances et du développement économique en septembre 2020. Ce rapport donnait un aperçu des effets de la pandémie de COVID-19 sur l'économie d'Ottawa et fournissait des détails sur l'approche de relance économique que devait adopter Ottawa.

Depuis cette époque et après plus d'une année de pandémie, les dernières données économiques mettent en lumière les répercussions continues de la COVID-19 sur l'économie d'Ottawa. Plusieurs secteurs sont toujours touchés par les fermetures obligatoires et les restrictions imposées aux entreprises, notamment les petites entreprises (commerces de détail, restaurants, entreprises de service), le tourisme et l'hébergement, les festivals et les événements ainsi que les spectacles. En outre, les immigrants, les femmes et les groupes racisés ont été touchés de manière disproportionnée par la pandémie.

En 2021, la Ville entend continuer de soutenir la reprise économique. Ce soutien consistera entre autres à fournir au milieu des affaires de l'information utile et à jour sur les procédures d'exploitation sécurisées, et à proposer un point de contact unique aux Services de développement économique pour aider les petites entreprises à résoudre leurs problèmes. De plus, le soutien fourni visera principalement la réouverture des lieux de travail, l'harmonisation des processus mis en place par la Ville pour permettre la relance, diverses initiatives de relance ainsi qu'un soutien continu des projets à fortes retombées économiques et d'une stratégie d'approvisionnement social.

De même, les efforts seront graduellement orientés vers la relance économique d'Ottawa afin de retrouver les niveaux d'avant la pandémie. Il s'agira notamment d'élaborer, en collaboration avec les partenaires de la Ville en matière de développement économique, un cadre de redressement axé sur la confiance des consommateurs, sur une stratégie relative aux visiteurs et aux événements, sur une image de marque d'Ottawa et sur une stratégie d'attraction des talents.

Hypothèses et analyse

Toutes les initiatives décrites dans le présent rapport seront menées conformément aux règlements et aux lignes directrices de santé publique. Bien que le soutien de la relance économique soit en cours, il convient de noter que le calendrier de mise en place des éléments de reprise est en cours d'élaboration et sera parachevé au fur et à mesure de la relance économique d'Ottawa. De plus, il est important que les efforts de relance demeurent souples et qu'ils soient adaptés à l'évolution de la pandémie au cours des prochains mois. Ces efforts devront porter sur les secteurs où les répercussions sont les plus grandes et être suffisamment ciblés de sorte que la Ville utilise ses ressources de manière efficiente et efficace.

Consultation publique et commentaires

Les données sur la relance économique d'Ottawa sont fournies régulièrement par l'intermédiaire du Groupe de travail des partenaires économiques du maire. La table ronde virtuelle sur la relance économique animée par le maire et la Ville le 9 février 2021 avait pour objet de mieux définir le cadre de relance économique. Cet événement a permis de réunir plus d'une vingtaine d'intervenants en développement économique, représentant divers secteurs comme l'enseignement postsecondaire, l'immigration, le tourisme, l'aménagement et la construction, la technologie ou encore les petites entreprises.

BACKGROUND

In September 2020, the Finance and Economic Development Committee (FEDCo) received the report titled [COVID-19 Economic Recovery Update](#) (ACS2020-PIE-EDP-0027).

The report provided an overview of the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on Ottawa's economy, including impacts by sector and overall economic projections. The report also detailed Ottawa's economic recovery objectives and approach and the numerous supporting actions and initiatives undertaken in 2020 by both the City and its economic development partners.

To mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19, the following objectives were established at the outset of the pandemic to guide the work of the City-led Economic Recovery Task Team and to advance Ottawa's 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 work of the Economic Recovery Task Team was informed by the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, led by Mayor Watson and co-chaired by Councillors Dudas and El-Chantiry. Established in March 2020, the Task Force meets regularly to advise the City on emerging issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide input on City support for the business community. The Task Force is comprised of 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.

With the provincial declaration of a State of Emergency and the mandatory closure of non-essential workplaces and businesses in March 2020, and subsequent closures during the second wave in October 2020 and January 2021, the City and economic partner recovery efforts were focused on limiting permanent business closures, preserving jobs and supporting the eventual safe resumption of business activity, all in accordance with provincial guidelines and public health best practices. Efforts were directed primarily toward the small business sector which was disproportionately impacted by mandated closures, restrictions and subsequent re-openings that resulted in lost revenues, increased costs to deliver new public/employee safety features, and an environment of constantly evolving business challenges. A list of economic recovery initiatives implemented to date can be found in Document 1.

With continued uncertainty regarding the potential for additional COVID-19 waves and further business and gathering restrictions, the City will continue with current recovery efforts and collaboration with economic partners to support impacted sectors, including those experiencing a slower recovery such as tourism, accommodation, festivals, events and live entertainment. In addition, given the promise of widespread vaccination roll-out by the end of Q3 2021, focus will begin to shift to Ottawa's economic rebound. This will include supporting economic development efforts that will both reboot the economy to pre-pandemic levels and allow Ottawa to build on its strengths and come back even stronger.

DISCUSSION

Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Economy

As the nation's capital and home to the federal government, Ottawa has a stable economy, somewhat insulated from significant economic shifts. However, Ottawa has not been immune to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and many sectors in the economy have been seriously impacted.

Since last reporting to FEDCo, year-end economic data has become available. These numbers demonstrate the continued devastating impacts of COVID-19 resulting from provincial restrictions, work from home, travel restrictions and more. Limited population and economic growth along with job losses, particularly in the most severely impacted sectors, are clear indicators of the challenges faced in 2020.

While the population increased in 2020, the rate of population growth slowed as a result of the pandemic. In its February 2021 Major City Insights Report, the Conference Board of Canada reported that Ottawa-Gatineau's population grew by only 1.5 per cent last year compared to 2.0 percent growth annually between 2017 and 2019. This is due in part to a decrease in immigration and pandemic related travel restrictions. The Conference Board anticipates population growth for Ottawa-Gatineau to rise at a modest rate of 1.1 per cent annually over the medium term. The high cost of living in other major cities across Canada should continue to make Ottawa an affordable alternative for those looking to relocate.

Although Ottawa's overall economic contraction has been more moderate than other parts of the country, the Conference Board estimates that real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Ottawa-Gatineau declined by 4.4 percent in 2020, the first contraction in over two decades. The Conference Board forecasts that Ottawa-Gatineau's real GDP will rise by 4.6 per cent this year with an additional gain of 3.5 per cent next year, implying that the region will be at pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

While the overall strength of the public sector, which accounts for approximately one third of Ottawa's economy, will help facilitate a faster economic recovery, it also masks weaknesses in the hardest-hit segments of Ottawa's economy, where provincial and federal restrictions will inevitably prolong the recovery timeframe.

As reported by Statistics Canada, Ottawa-Gatineau's unemployment rate in February 2021 was 6.5 per cent, down from 6.7 per cent in January 2021, reflecting a gain of close to 15,000 jobs. Although February's rate is significantly higher than the unemployment rate of 4.3 per cent a year earlier, it is the lowest rate since the pandemic began and is a welcome sign of economic recovery.

On a sector and industry level, the impacts of the pandemic have been extremely uneven. The public sector was the only sector to see a gain in GDP in 2020, and along with the manufacturing sector, the only one to see job gains. The breakdown of job gains and losses by sector in 2020 versus 2019 are as follows:

- The public administration sector saw 10,800 jobs gained between January and December 2020, following 9,000 jobs gained between January and December 2019;
- The manufacturing sector saw 5,300 jobs gained between January and December 2020, following 800 jobs gained between January and December 2019;
- The retail and wholesale sector saw 12,900 jobs lost between January and December 2020, following 13,300 jobs gained between January and December 2019;
- The accommodation and food services sector saw 10,800 jobs lost between January and December 2020, following 7,600 jobs gained between January and December 2019;
- The professional, scientific and technical services sector saw 10,600 jobs lost between January and December 2020, following 10,400 jobs gained between January and December 2019; and
- The other service sector (except public administration) saw 6,500 jobs lost between January and December 2020, following 800 jobs lost January and December 2019.

In total, job losses outnumbered jobs gains by a net 40,100 jobs lost between January and December 2020, following 59,300 jobs gained during the same period in 2019. If Ottawa's employment had continued on the 10 per cent growth trajectory recorded in 2019, a further 60,000 jobs would have been created in 2020 instead of 40,100 jobs lost.

In addition to the variation in economic implications across sectors, there have been variations across demographic groups. Specifically, COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on women, immigrants and racialized populations, who are over-represented in essential front-line jobs and in the small business and hospitality sectors. This means they are not only at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19; they are also at higher risk of job loss resulting from mandated business restrictions and uneven sectoral economic recovery.

The strength and stability of public sector employment means that Ottawa's economic recovery will be "K" shaped. This type of recovery divides the economy in two, where certain industries and individuals recover from economic impacts quickly while others lag (i.e. tourism, accommodations, festivals and events, and live entertainment).

Economic Recovery and Rebound Program

The City's economic recovery efforts in 2021 will continue to focus primarily on the small business sector and supporting the safe resumption of business activity. In addition, the City will advance and deliver a framework to facilitate Ottawa's economic rebound, with an emphasis on restoring business and consumer confidence and returning to robust economic activity at, or beyond, pre-pandemic levels.

Helping inform the economic rebound framework are the themes and outcomes of a virtual Economic Rebound Roundtable hosted by the Mayor and the City on February 9, 2021. The Roundtable brought together over 20 economic development stakeholders, representing a variety of sectors including post-secondary, education, immigration, tourism, development and construction, technology, and small business. Participants shared their priorities, challenges and opportunities related to the pandemic and provided input on how the City can best support the local economy through the rebound phase.

The following outlines Ottawa's economic recovery and rebound approach in 2021. Initiatives will be delivered in collaboration with the City's economic development partners and in accordance with public health regulations and guidelines. The advice of Ottawa Public Health (OPH) will remain a key input into the timing of the recommended actions. While economic recovery support is on-going, it should be noted that timelines for the delivery of economic rebound elements are currently being determined and will be finalized as Ottawa's economic recovery advances (in concert with vaccination roll-out) and opportunities are more fully developed.

Economic Recovery Support – Direct Actions by the City

The City will continue with current efforts to support the most impacted segments of the local economy with an emphasis on the small business community and extend those efforts through the rebound phase. It is crucial that recovery efforts remain nimble and respond to the evolving state of the pandemic over the next few months. Recovery efforts are targeted to the areas of greatest impact, and sufficiently focused to ensure that the City is using its resources efficiently and effectively.

1. Information Resource – The City will continue to provide useful and current information to the business community on items such as safe operating procedures

and public health guidelines, senior government support programs, and resources for workplaces and businesses. This will be done through the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, City social media channels and the City's Economic Support and Recovery webpage. In 2021, the Economic Recovery Task Team will collaborate with OPH and Emergency and Protective Services on messaging to the business community regarding the vaccination roll-out strategy.

2. Business Support Triage – Economic Development Services will provide businesses with a single point of contact to assist with City related issues and provide guidance and direction to relevant support programs. City staff will be empowered and encouraged to proactively problem solve and support local businesses in their recovery.
3. Workplace Reopening – The Economic Recovery Task Team will collaborate with OPH and partner organizations to communicate safe reopening requirements for workplaces. Ensuring workplaces are prepared to implement new public health guidelines including procedures for elevator use, common areas, etc. will support the safe resumption of business activity in office environments and other non-essential workplaces. This effort will be particularly important to the economic health and continued vibrancy of Ottawa's downtown, where retail stores and restaurants have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic with significant declines in customer traffic resulting from employees working from home and decreases in transit usage and tourism visitation. In consultation with OPH, the City's senior management team is actively planning for a staged return to City workplaces, which will be shared in early Q3 2021. Less than a third of City staff are currently working from home, but it is understood that the City can play a leadership role in bringing its staff back to workplaces when it is safe to do so. The City will continue to advocate for the same approach with the federal government, based on vaccination milestones and advice from OPH on the appropriate timing and workplace precautions.
4. Streamline Processes to Enable Recovery – The City will continue to streamline processes and services to benefit local entrepreneurs and owners who operate retail stores, restaurants, and other small businesses. The Patio Innovation Program, introduced in 2020 and renewed in 2021, is an example of a program that provides an efficient application, fee and approval process. The Economic Recovery Task Team and Economic Development Services will continue to work with City departments to identify opportunities to simplify and accelerate processes.
5. Implement Economic Recovery Initiatives – The City and its economic development partners will continue to collaborate and deliver initiatives in support of economic

recovery. For example, in February 2021, the City and Ottawa Tourism launched a Winter Rural Tourism Campaign to encourage residents to experience Ottawa's rural communities and support local businesses. In addition, the creation of a Small Business Tax Class Framework will be considered by FEDCo and Council in April 2021, as part of the Tax Policy Report.

6. Cultural and Special Events Sector Support – In order to support the recovery of the cultural and special events sectors, the Economic Recovery Task Team and Recreation, Cultural and Facility Service (RCFS) staff have worked together, at the request of the Mayor, to propose a 50 per cent reduction in rental fees at showcase City facilities (including Aberdeen Pavilion, Horticulture Building, Shenkman Arts Centre and Meridian Theatres @ Centrepointe) for organizations offering artistic and cultural programming and community events open to the public, starting in September 2021 and until the end of 2022 (subject to budget approval in 2022). Staff in RCFS will also apply delegated authority to ensure that City facilities remain accessible to not-for-profit groups and support the general rebound of tourism, festivals and special events, as well as visitor destinations such as Lansdowne Park.
7. Capital Spending – The City will continue its investment in infrastructure and facilities as approved in the 2021 Capital Budget. This will advance Ottawa's economic recovery by supporting critical jobs in the construction and trades sector.
8. Infrastructure Stimulus – As government infrastructure funding opportunities become available, the City will be ready to respond with a prioritized list of projects to support economic recovery. Priority projects would include those supporting mobility, innovation, tourism, social infrastructure, and public realm enhancements in high tourism areas.
9. Support for High Economic Impact Projects –The City will continue to support large development projects through Economic Development Services' High Economic Impact Project (HEIP) Program, which is focused on advancing larger commercial, industrial and institutional development projects aligned with the City's economic development priorities. An example is the Soundstage Campus and Creative Hub project to be located at the NCC's Greenbelt Research Farm. Support in this area also includes support and continued advocacy with provincial and federal partners to advance city-building projects in the planning stages, such as The Ottawa Hospital's new Civic Campus, the development of LeBreton Flats, and infrastructure projects proposed by the City's post-secondary partners.
10. Social Procurement Strategy – In February 2021, Council directed Supply Services to identify opportunities to include and encourage social procurement and social

enterprises in City procurement, in collaboration with Economic Development Services, Community and Social Services, the Human Needs Taskforce, Invest Ottawa and community stakeholders. Additional direction was given to develop an approach which increases the diversity of the City's supply chain by providing diverse suppliers with equitable access to competitive City procurement processes, especially suppliers from the most disadvantaged groups, and to explore the potential to increase the number of employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities leveraged for people experiencing economic disadvantage. Supply Services and Economic Development have begun consulting with the social enterprise sector and major City suppliers to identify opportunities and constraints to advancing social procurement objectives. Recommendations will be brought to FEDCo and Council in Q3 2021.

Economic Rebound – Collaboration with Economic Development Partners

In 2021, the City, in collaboration with economic development partners, will develop a framework to facilitate coordinated efforts in support of Ottawa's economic rebound and return to a pre-pandemic economy. The following themes were identified by partners at the Economic Rebound Roundtable and provide the basis for preliminary economic rebound efforts.

1. **Consumer Confidence** – The pandemic has resulted in significant shifts in consumer behaviour, in part to reduce the spread of the virus, but also because of economic and labour uncertainty. As a result, consumers are shopping less, cancelling or postponing major purchases, and shopping more online. This unfortunate reality has created significant challenges for small businesses and an uncertain future for many stores and restaurants. Although widespread vaccination may alleviate some of the concern regarding the safe resumption of indoor activities, it will take time and many small businesses cannot afford to wait. To help restore consumer and business confidence, the City will collaborate with the Ottawa Board of Trade and other partners to relaunch the POST Promise Campaign. The POST Promise is a national, bilingual, private sector-led initiative designed to help Canadians confidently and safely shop and work in local businesses. It signifies a business's commitment to implementing and practicing key steps to workplace safety to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Ottawa's campaign, to launch this spring, will begin by encouraging local businesses to make the POST Promise and display the campaign collateral. Later, local influencers will be utilized as part of a social media campaign to encourage residents to shop and dine safely at local stores and restaurants.
2. **Visitor and Event Strategy** – The City will look to its key delivery partners and subject-matter experts, Ottawa Tourism, Ottawa Festival Network and the Ottawa

Music Industry Coalition, to collaborate in the development of a visitor and event strategy to support economic rebound. The tourism sector will be one of the last to rebound from the impacts of COVID-19 with recovery forecast to take place over several years. As Ottawa's third largest economic driver, the lost economic impact and employment in this sector will require continued senior government intervention and a collective community effort to support hyper-local initiatives until regional and inter-provincial travel can be promoted and international travel resumes. This strategy will bring together the significant efforts already underway in the tourism and special event sector to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and position the sector for recovery. This will include working with other economic partners to capitalize on work already underway to develop the major events and conventions pipeline by utilizing business and academic contacts to secure future business and identifying opportunities to improve the current visitor experience with wayfinding, public WiFi and improved main street and public realm environments. It will also include ensuring the festival and event sector, as well as the live entertainment sector, is well equipped to safely stage events in a post-pandemic environment. In addition, the strategy will highlight the importance of continued investment in destination development to encourage new visitor attractions and experiences and capitalize on opportunities such as the 200th anniversary of the ByWard Market in 2027. It is important to recognize that a reinvigorated tourism and event sector will have a positive impact on retail, food services, the Ottawa International Airport and Ottawa's downtown.

3. Ottawa International Airport Advocacy – Led by Mayor Watson, joint advocacy efforts with the airport are currently underway to secure the funding required to complete the Stage 2 LRT Airport Station. Parallel efforts are also underway to secure a commitment from the federal government for regular international air service to resume in Ottawa. Early in the pandemic, the Government of Canada identified four hub-city airports to concentrate the flow of international traffic into Canada. The longer this model remains in place and resources from airlines and supporting services continue to be redeployed to the four hub cities, the more difficult it will be for the Ottawa International Airport to return to normal operations and volumes.
4. Place Branding – Ottawa's brand identity and reputation throughout Canada and the world is a vital component of a successful economic rebound. Effectively communicating Ottawa as a great place to live, work, play, invest, study and visit, will help attract immigrants, talent, visitors, business investment and students to the city. In collaboration with Ottawa Tourism, and building on branding work already completed, the City will initiate an outreach campaign to communicate the value

proposition of Ottawa's Place DNA™ to economic development stakeholders and deploy place branding assets to support consistent Ottawa brand messaging and approach. In a related initiative, the City, Invest Ottawa and Ottawa Tourism will engage with the Ottawa Board of Trade as they develop a new website highlighting Ottawa's competitive advantages and available for broad sector and public use to support economic activity and build community awareness and pride.

5. Talent Strategy – To ensure a return to robust economic activity post-pandemic, it is vital that Ottawa has the required talent and workforce available to compete and succeed in the global marketplace. This includes attracting and retaining talent, addressing skill shortages and matching immigrant talent with skill demand, and paying attention to women, immigrant and racialized populations who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Building on Invest Ottawa's Knowledge-Based Industries Talent Program, this talent strategy will consider broader community needs and propose actions and programs to meet those needs. Engagement and consultation with post-secondary institutions and private sector employers will facilitate new opportunities to better align skills training, co-op placements and the recruitment process. This initiative will be a collaboration between the City, Invest Ottawa and the Ottawa Board of Trade, with input from several other economic partners. As part of ongoing collaboration with Ottawa's four post-secondary institutions, the City will commit to increasing experiential learning opportunities within the Corporation by reviewing and formalizing its hiring commitments for co-op and seasonal student workers. In 2019, the City hired 60 co-op students and 1,047 summer students. These numbers reduced significantly due to COVID-19, but at the request of Mayor Watson, staff are proposing to increase the hiring of co-op students to 70 in 2022, and to surpass 100 co-op placements by 2024. The City will also explore the opportunity of launching significant research projects jointly with the post-secondary institutions.

Next Steps

The Economic Recovery Task Team, and specifically Economic Development Services, will continue to deliver the City's economic recovery efforts as outlined above. Staff will begin working with economic development partners to further develop and implement the elements of rebound support, which will be delivered in 2021 and beyond.

Both recovery and rebound efforts will continue to be based on the status and economic implications of the pandemic. Staff will continue to monitor and analyze a variety of economic indicators, such as vacancy rates in the commercial, industrial and retail sectors, modifying the approach as needed to ensure resources are effectively deployed to deliver results.

Economic Development Services has modified its 2021 work plan to reflect this additional work. As such, the new Economic Development Strategy, which was last reported to FEDCo to be delivered in Q4 2021, will be moved to the next Term of Council. This new strategy will reflect the longer-term implications of COVID-19 on the local economy and identify new growth opportunities to build back better and ensure future economic resiliency.

As economic rebound elements are refined, Economic Development staff will leverage the expertise of staff in the Community and Social Services department who can provide a gender and equity lens to the specific tactical actions to ensure that wherever possible, economic rebound activities can assist renewed employment among women, immigrant, and racialized communities who have been disproportionately affected by job loss.

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

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Businesses and organizations in rural Ottawa have been a key focus of the City's economic recovery efforts.

The City and Ottawa Tourism have delivered two Rural Tourism Campaigns to promote rural experiences and support small businesses in the rural area. Additionally, in 2020 the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee (ARAC) 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 and in 2021 the Rural Community Building Grant Program received an additional \$50,000 to promote projects that contribute to rural economic development and community well being.

As directed by ARAC, staff will be reporting to Committee and Council later this year on the City's role in improving rural connectivity, an issue that has become more important with increased resident and business connectivity requirements during the pandemic.

CONSULTATION

Consultation on Ottawa's economic recovery and rebound program has been largely through the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force and the Economic Rebound Roundtable, held in February. The organizations that form the Task Force, and that participated in the Roundtable, have provided valuable input, feedback and suggestions on Ottawa's economic recovery and rebound on behalf of their members and sectors. The Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force will continue to meet regularly and provide

strategic advice and guidance to City staff. A second Roundtable will be held in the fall to share sector updates from participating organizations and receive further input on the City's rebound plans.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are risk implications.

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.

Asset management best practice includes leveraging funding opportunities from other levels of government to help pay for infrastructure renewal. Infrastructure Services participates in the Economic Recovery Task Force and is working closely with other groups within the City, as well as our external partners and industry groups, to understand the needs of the community and to keep the capital program going through the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent stimulus application to the ICIP COVID-19 Stream included a number of projects that support mobility, social infrastructure and public realm enhancements, such as renewal of active transportation infrastructure, WIFI in community centres in vulnerable neighbourhoods, renewal of the Carling Family Shelter and wayfinding in the By-Ward Market. here are no asset management implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with 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 Economic Recovery Initiatives (as at March 18, 2021)

DISPOSITION

The Economic Recovery Task Team will continue to monitor the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on Ottawa' economy as well as advance the implementation of the Economic Recovery and Rebound Program and report back as necessary.

Document 1 – City Economic Recovery Initiatives (as at March 18, 2021)

Property Tax Hardship Deferral Program – 1,913 applications approved; 32% of applications are commercial accounting for approximately 70% of total taxes deferred

Business Support and Recovery Webpage – 18,286 page visits

Buy Local Promotional Campaign (Phase I and II) – 34M impressions; 566,284 video views; 88,370 visits to ottawa.ca/buylocal

Business Reopening Toolkit – collaboration with OPH; 20,118 page visits; 1,507 toolkit downloads

Business Recovery Town Hall – May 29, 2020; 1,300 YouTube views; also streamed on Rogers

Patio Innovation Program – patio/tourism kiosk fee waiver, patio expansions, café seating, retail vending, partial street closures; streamlined permit approvals

Food Trucks in Parks – pilot program in 2020; 6 applications received; 4 permits issued

Innovation Pilot Program Recovery Stream – 47 applications received; 5 pilots selected and complete

Summer Rural Tourism & Cycling Campaign – delivered in partnership with Ottawa Tourism; 1.17M Facebook impressions; 222,645 video views; 1,380 contest entries

Rural Business Toolkit – part of Rural Economic Development Strategy

Digital Service Squad Grant & ShopHERE Program – part of Digital Main Street initiative managed by Invest Ottawa

Business Reopening Workshops – collaboration with OPH, Ottawa Board of Trade, and the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas; sector specific workshops to help businesses reopen safely

Mask Up Outdoors & COVID Wise Together Campaigns – collaboration with OPH; provided \$1,500 in campaign collateral/signage to participating BIAs

Employer Outreach Toolkit – asked employers to encourage employees to support small businesses during holiday and winter season; 887 toolkit downloads

Winter City Grant Program – funds small capital projects in the public realm to enhance pedestrian experience; 19 applications received from BIAs and business associations; 12 projects funded

Virtual Economic Rebound Roundtable – February 9, 2021; hosted by Mayor Watson and Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department; participants included key business organizations and leaders from various sectors to identify opportunities for collaboration and shared advocacy

ByWard Market Economic Recovery Working Group – recommendation contained in Council approved ByWard Market Public Realm Plan; led by Economic Development Services; includes variety of stakeholders; action plan developed for execution in 2021

Winter Rural Tourism Campaign – collaboration with Ottawa Tourism; promotes experiences and businesses in 4 rural Wards