

**State of the City Address**  
**Mayor Jim Watson**  
**Wednesday, January 26, 2022**

I want to sincerely thank Elder Claudette Commanda for once again offering this beautiful Algonquin blessing, which has become a cherished tradition during my last few years as Mayor.

I hope your guidance will once again help us in our last year of this Term of Council.

*Migwetch, Claudette.*

Claudette's Algonquin ancestors have been the stewards of these lands across Ontario and Quebec for over 6,000 years – and we need to acknowledge that we are simply tenants on their land.

I very much value our relationship with our surrounding Algonquin communities – Pikwakanagan and Kitigan Zibi – as well as with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit residents of Ottawa. I look forward to strengthening those relationships in the coming year.

As you all know, this will be my last State of the City Address as Mayor of Ottawa.

It's a little bittersweet, as it's a yearly tradition I've grown quite fond of over the years; one that provides a good opportunity to look back on the year that's gone by and ponder the important decisions that lie ahead.

Since this is my last Address, I'll ask for your indulgence as I also look back on some of the

successes we have delivered as a City during the last three terms of Council.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished by working together – and these projects and initiatives would have never become reality without your support.

What had been a dream for decades became a reality when we invested in arts and culture and opened the new Ottawa Art Gallery and the revitalized Arts Court.

We also approved the new Central Library project, in partnership with Library and Archives Canada, a net-zero carbon facility that will become a flagship destination at LeBreton Flats and an important attraction in our city – with more than 1.5 million visitors expected annually.

I'm extremely proud that this iconic building will bear the Anishinabe name Adisoke, or story telling, as a testament to our Reconciliation efforts with our Algonquin host nations.

The design of this facility was widely acclaimed, and with the contract now awarded, we will break ground on our new Central Library in April, along with our federal and Indigenous partners.

In the last few years, I believe we've truly acknowledged that we are tenants living on Algonquin lands and we've embarked on the path to Reconciliation with our Indigenous partners through the many concrete actions we have taken to strengthen this relationship.

In the case of our new Central Library, we have engaged a Curator of Indigenous Art who will

oversee the commissioning of five significant pieces of Algonquin art for the facility – with final artist selections being made in the coming months.

After renaming the Prince of Wales Bridge in honour of Chief William Commanda last year, we once again dedicated funding towards Algonquin art and inserted economic opportunities for Algonquin workers as part of the construction RFP – a first at the City of Ottawa.

I'm also pleased to report that, over the last few months, we have held preliminary discussions with Chief Jocko and her team about the possibility of establishing an urban addition to their reserve in Ottawa – one that would create economic and cultural sharing opportunities in our city for members of Pikwakanagan.

A resolution giving the green light to the project was adopted yesterday by Chief Jocko's Band Council – and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan are presently in discussions with their development partners on possible locations within the City of Ottawa.

This follows in the footsteps of similar urban reserve projects that have taken place in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Vancouver in the last few years.

As this initiative progresses in the coming months, staff will keep us apprised of developments – and I look forward to confirming Council's support for this project that further strengthens our commitment to our First Peoples.

Work has now begun to transform the Chief William Commanda Bridge connecting Gatineau and Ottawa

into a multi-use pathway for walking, cycling and cross-country skiing.

And I'm pleased that this great project – which will feature a new timber deck on top of the existing rail tracks, as well as new railings and lighting from Bayview Station to Gatineau – will be opening to the public in the fall of 2022.

We invested in connecting communities and built many important bridges to help our residents rediscover our beautiful waterways – with most dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists.

- The Max Keeping Bridge
- The Adàwe Crossing
- The Jackie Holzman Bridge
- The Flora Footbridge

- The Juno Beach Bridge
- The Vimy Memorial Bridge; and
- The Rideau River Bridge at Carleton University, being delivered as part of Stage 2 LRT.

Since 2010, we have grown our cycling network in a significant way, and those investments – including those we will make in 2022 – total over \$202 million dollars in standalone cycling infrastructure.

This is in addition to the many complete streets and road renewal projects that have also improved active transportation in our city during this time.

In 2010, we had 672 kilometres of cycling infrastructure across our city.

By the end of this year, we will have 1,065 kilometres – for an increase of 58% in our cycling network over the course of these 12 years.

As a result, Ottawa's Gold Bicycle Friendly Community Award was renewed last year by the Share the Road Coalition for a three-year period – and we remain one of only three cities in Ontario to be recognized with this designation.

We've invested in our Francophone community by overseeing the opening of the brand new La Nouvelle Scène theatre on King Edward, as well as la Maison de la Francophonie serving the west-end's growing Francophone community.

I'm proud that we are now supporting the expansion of the MIFO facility in Orléans, which has provided important services and programming to hundreds of

Francophone families in the east end for over four decades.

In 2016, we welcomed new residents to our community when we opened our doors and our hearts to roughly 4,000 Syrian refugees who were fleeing war and violence in their home country.

I'll never forget the pride I felt when I saw hundreds of Ottawa residents coming to City Hall wanting to learn how to help our new neighbours find a home in Canada by privately sponsoring their arrival.

We've also decided to address systemic issues that create barriers for women and racialized individuals living in our community.

We now have a Council Liaison for Women and Gender Equity, as well as a Council Liaison for Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Relations Initiatives.

We've created the Anti-Racism Secretariat, which is currently hard at work consulting with members of the community to develop the City's first Anti-Racism Strategy, which will be presented to Council in June of this year.

I know we have a lot of work to do to eliminate racism in our city, but I'm confident that having a strong, measurable plan with clear deliverables and expected outcomes will help us address issues of systemic racism in the coming years.

And this important work is not limited to the Anti-Racism Secretariat – as signs of progress can be found across many other departments.

For example in Cultural Funding, we increased the Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Fund from \$337,000 in 2020 to \$459,000 in 2021 – a boost of 36%.

As part of that fund's micro-grant program, we were able to distribute \$60,000 to 30 artists and art projects from Indigenous and equity-seeking communities – and most of these recipients were first-time applicants to the City's cultural funding programs.

I believe it's these concrete actions taking shape within all services at the City that will help us make a real difference moving forward.

We invested in our environment by taking bold decisions early on – like replacing thousands of bus trips from our streets thanks to our electric LRT,

reducing our GHG emissions and ensuring that future generations will have clean air to breathe in our city.

The purchase of our first four electric buses – which was a campaign promise of mine in 2018 – begins the transition of the rest of the bus fleet towards zero-emission buses.

These four buses will soon operate on select trips on dozens of routes across the city and at various times of the week, including peak hours and weekends.

This year, OC Transpo will purchase another 74 electric buses which will come into service next year, with 450 scheduled to serve transit users by 2027.

Our ambitious plan will convert the entire diesel fleet to zero-emission buses by 2036.

We also invested significantly in the Ottawa River Action Plan, and thanks to the commissioning of the Combined Sewage Storage Tunnel last year, we are now preventing frequent sewage overflows into the Ottawa River and keeping our water clean for wildlife and our beaches open more often.

We invested in our local economy and jobs by creating Invest Ottawa in 2012, before giving the economic development agency a brand-new home at the Innovation Centre at Bayview Yards in 2017.

According to a recent economic impact study, between 2012 and 2020, the team at Invest Ottawa played a pivotal role in attracting over a billion dollars in foreign and direct investment to Ottawa, as well as facilitating over 11,000 well-paying jobs in our city.

In recent years, Invest Ottawa was instrumental in establishing Area X.0 and the Smart Farm in Nepean, initiatives that are putting Ottawa on the map as a leader in autonomous vehicle technology and precision agriculture, which will be required to feed the planet's growing population in the coming decades.

During the pandemic, Invest Ottawa pivoted to deliver the Digital Main Street future-proofing program, which helped over 1,700 local business owners increase their online presence and stay afloat during lockdowns.

I know the team at Invest Ottawa will play a pivotal role in helping our entrepreneurs and start-ups continue to grow as we rebound from the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, our tourism and hospitality sectors were growing at an impressive rate, thanks to some key initiatives we had delivered.

Just think back on the excitement that Ottawa 2017 brought to our community and the impressive year-long program of events we delivered all across the city to mark Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I'll never forget the magic I saw in the eyes of children and grandparents alike, as hundreds of thousands of spectators descended on downtown Ottawa to catch a glimpse of Long Ma the dragon and Kumo the spider chasing each other on our streets.

Between La Machine, the Grey Cup, the NHL 100 Classic, the JUNO Awards, Red Bull Crashed Ice and hundreds of other special events, we set

records for visitors, hotel occupancy and airport traffic.

And although we had feared a tourism hangover in the following years, that did not materialize and the momentum was sustained until the start of the pandemic.

Working with our tourism partners, we were the first municipality in Ontario to put in place the Municipal Accommodation Tax in 2018.

This new revenue stream quickly provided Ottawa Tourism with an important cash injection to continue its great work of marketing and developing our city into a world-class destination.

And I want to thank our partners at Ottawa Tourism for their incredible efforts throughout the pandemic,

as they turned their attention to promoting Ottawa's bike trails, its natural beauty and many exciting experiences discovering our rural villages.

Over the years, our municipal investments in public spaces around the city have helped Ottawa Tourism attract major events to the nation's capital.

After decades of being nothing more than a parking lot surrounded by crumbling infrastructure, we revitalized Lansdowne Park and made it a real people place with new sports teams, retail, restaurants – not to mention a tremendous amount of greenspace, trees, gardens – and even an apple orchard.

Today we have the 67s playing hockey, the RedBlacks playing football, the Atletico playing soccer and the BlackJacks playing basketball at TD

Place – offering world-class entertainment almost year-round to thousands of sports fans.

We've also hosted amazing events like the Grey Cup, the NHL 100 Classic, the Davis Cup, the Brier, the National Figure Skating Championships and the Volleyball Men's Nations League Championships, to name only a few.

Lansdowne is a jewel in Ottawa's crown – and it's in no small part because of the wonderful heritage buildings we have preserved on that site and once again made available to the public.

Both the Aberdeen Pavilion and the Horticulture Building have become very popular venues to host special events.

And I'm proud that to support the rebound of our festivals, culture and music sectors, we're making these venues and other great City facilities like Shenkman and the Meridian Theatres at Centrepointe available to not-for-profit partners at 50% of the regular cost.

The Aberdeen Pavilion is a one-of-a-kind structure that dates back to 1898, when it was built to welcome the Central Canada Agricultural Exhibition.

In the following years, it also served as a meeting point for soldiers heading to combat in the Boer War and World War I – but also as an ice pad where the original Ottawa Senators won the Stanley Cup in 1904.

That building has seen it all – and it remains today the only unsupported building of its type in North America.

Unfortunately, after decades of neglect in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Aberdeen Pavilion was abandoned and taken over by thousands of pigeons before being condemned for demolition.

Thankfully, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1992, Council voted to reverse that decision and to invest the funds required to save the building and to restore it to its former glory.

We will be working with the Central Canada Exhibition Association to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that important day on July 2<sup>nd</sup> this summer – and for the occasion, I've asked City staff to work with

the former organizers of the Ex to host an old-fashioned exhibition at Lansdowne.

I know it will bring back some good memories for many residents who enjoyed the Ex – and probably create some new ones for those who weren't around at the time.

Unfortunately, some of the facilities at Lansdowne are no longer up-to-par with modern hosting requirements – like the arena, which dates back to 1967 and no longer meets accessibility or environmental standards.

City staff are currently working with our partners at OSEG on a plan that will include the renewal of the arena, as well as the addition of affordable housing units.

Over the years, we've had the honour to watch a few of our own in action at Lansdowne, some of whom have gone on to great acclaim – like tennis star Gaby Dabrowski – and Vanessa Gilles, who won an Olympic gold medal in women's soccer last summer.

Vanessa seemed quite flattered and excited to have the City park where she learned to play soccer renamed in her honour during a ceremony that took place this last December in Pineview.

Our many parks around the city offer not only learning opportunities to children – but also an escape for families and residents year-round.

And I'm proud of the investments we've made together to grow these opportunities for physical activity, fresh air and an improved quality of life.

Since 2010, we will have opened 166 new parks in all corners of the city, including 11 new parks this year – and that’s something we should all be very proud of.

We’ve also delivered some important regional recreation facilities across the city – like the François-Dupuis Rec Centre in Cumberland, the Richcraft Recreation Complex in Kanata North, the Minto Rec Centre in Barrhaven, and the new arena at Cardel Rec Centre in Stittsville, just to name a few.

Beyond regional facilities, we’ve also delivered and improved facilities in many neighbourhoods like:

The expansion of Centrepointe

The Terry Fox track replacement

The Overbrook expansion

The Jules-Morin fieldhouse

The Richcraft SensPlex East

The Dovercourt expansion

The Kanata Recreation Centre renovations

The Constance Bay Community Centre expansion

The Bayshore fieldhouse expansion

The Canterbury Park covered rink

And the Manotick Arena and Hall expansion

Later this year, we'll reopen the Beacon Hill North Community Centre following its expansion and renovation, which will greatly benefit at-risk youth in this neighbourhood.

I think there's a lot that we can be proud as a city and a community – and I believe that it's also our role as elected officials to talk up our city as opposed to talking it down.

When we talk up the city; we help build up the city.

We have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country.

The quality of life of Ottawa residents is very high because we live in a beautiful, green and liveable city with hundreds of parks and extensive networks of walking and cycling paths along some beautiful waterways.

The compassion and generosity of our residents is second to none.

I agree that we should all take a critical thinking approach to the legislative reports and proposals that are before us – and there's a lot of work for us to do...

But we also have a duty to recognize the good things that make Ottawa one of the best cities in the world to live in.

Our residents love their city and they're proud of it – and I witness this each and every day when I'm out in the community.

I hope that in the coming years, we can find a return to balance and a more objective appreciation of how great this city is when compared to others.

While I'm quite proud of what we've delivered together over the last 12 years, we can't ignore the hardships and challenges we've been through – and those that remain.

Although our LRT has performed at approximately 99% since it relaunched on November 12, our transit

users have had to be very patient through several issues that have plagued the system since its launch in 2019.

I recognize that this has been a source of anxiety and disappointment for many users who rely on LRT to go to work, school or even medical appointments.

That said, I was comforted to hear our safety experts from TRA state during a Transit Commission meeting that they thought this was an excellent system that needed a more rigorous inspection and maintenance regime.

But I can assure you we will continue to hold RTM and Alstom's feet to the fire over the coming months.

Another ongoing challenge in our community is the crisis facing our homeless residents.

Despite historic increases in support and investments into affordable housing by all levels of government, the number of residents living without a fixed address across the country has only increased due to the pandemic.

I'm proud that we have made historic capital investments of more than \$60 million in this Term of Council in order to build new affordable and supportive housing units for our residents in need.

This is of course in addition to the City's overall contributions to housing and homelessness supports, which will total \$119 million in 2022.

Last year, we started welcoming veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless into a

new facility called Veterans House, located at Wateridge Village, or the old CFB Rockcliffe.

Delivered by Multifaith Housing Initiative, Veterans House is providing supportive housing to these veterans in need.

The residence has all the necessary facilities to help them establish a stable lifestyle – including a communal kitchen and outdoor barbecues, an indoor gym and a dog park for training service dogs.

The initiative has been a great success and Veterans House has plans to deliver similar facilities in other Canadian cities.

We're continually making progress, and thanks to our Long-Range Financial Plan for Housing and our contributions of \$15 million per year, we will be able

to build up to 500 affordable housing units every year, delivering on the commitments we have made as part of our 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Our Finance staff are also preparing a report for us to introduce a Vacant Unit Tax this year, which is projected to raise roughly \$6 million annually for us to invest in affordable housing.

Of the 1,700 units in various stages of development across the city, 232 supportive housing units and 229 affordable units will be completed in 2022.

And we must keep in mind that poverty and homelessness are not only downtown issues.

We have residents in need right across the city, and we need to reach them where they need our help.

That's why the 232 supportive housing units coming online this year are taking shape right across the city and include developments on Carling Avenue with the John Howard Society, as well as units on Merivale Road and Castlefrank Road delivered with the Shepherds of Good Hope.

These units will bring 232 individuals out of chronic homelessness and into homes, along with the supports they need to start rebuilding their lives.

Earlier in January, Housing Services issued another RFP to find a partner to deliver at least 40 units of affordable housing on surplus City land near Ogilvie Road and Jasmine Crescent.

Thanks to an investment of \$5 million from the City, we will deliver new affordable housing units as well

as a brand-new space for the Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard for residents in that community.

But despite this progress, over 12,000 residents in need remained on the City's centralized waitlist for rent-geared-to-income housing at the end of 2021 – reminding us that we must continue to invest more and more every year to address this ongoing crisis.

But the greatest challenge of our time remains climate change, which threatens the very existence of human life on this planet – and it's led to some very local impacts here in Ottawa.

In 2018, we had to respond to tornadoes that tore through and devastated a number of communities.

In 2017 and 2019, we had to deal with significant flooding events that affected hundreds of residents living along our waterways.

But through it all, our community came together to help those who needed it.

During the flooding in 2019, in addition to the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces, 15,000 volunteers showed up to lay sandbags and help protect homes along the Ottawa River.

Following the tornadoes that touched down in multiple neighbourhoods, the West Carleton Warriors hockey team initially raised \$4,000 to help those affected.

But they stepped up their donations in a very big way after they were awarded \$100,000 from the

Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup in recognition of their efforts to help their community.

Imagine 11- and 12-year-old kids showing that kind of generosity to help their neighbours get back on their feet following a traumatic event.

It's this kind of gesture that embodies the spirit of this community: neighbours helping one another.

And we've seen that generosity from Ottawa residents helping those in far away places as well.

Following the devastating Fort McMurray wildfires in 2016, Chris Phillips led the charge and brought our community together to host a fundraiser at Lansdowne, which raised over \$128,000 for those in need in Alberta – almost 4,000 kilometres away.

Over the years, the compassion and generosity of Ottawans is something that has consistently impressed me and inspired me as Mayor of this great city.

Throughout the pandemic – which is undoubtedly the worst health crisis in recent history – we’ve witnessed thousands of gestures from residents and business owners wanting to help their neighbours in need.

Under the leadership of Rabbi Kravet and Rabbi Rotenberg, a small group of volunteers has been hard at work at the Ottawa synagogue making kosher chicken noodle soup – or Jewish penicillin, as they affectionately call it – to bring to those who need to be cheered up.

The team is convinced that a bowl of chicken soup has a sort of healing quality – and it's true that it usually has a way to make you feel better when you're down or sick.

They recently helped out when a couple contracted COVID and was stuck in isolation at home, with the husband already battling cancer.

As their daughter was out of town on holidays, she got the Ottawa Kosher Soup Registry to step in and had comforting chicken noodle soup delivered to her parents.

Just two weeks ago, Lorna Forbes contracted COVID and was stuck at home and feeling weak.

Lorna is a regular customer at Ogilvie Pizza on Montreal Road, and when owner Hani Soueid

learned that she was feeling quite sick, he sent her more than just the soda she had called to order.

And in the same week that his business was broken into, Hani put aside his own troubles and sent his driver to assemble a care package for Lorna, which included every kind of medication required to treat a cold.

Lorna ended up going to the hospital because her symptoms worsened, but through it all, Hani kept calling her every day to check up on her until she got better.

Once word of Hani's good deed got around, donations started pouring in from across the country.

And of course Hani decided to pay it forward and ended up donating between 50 and 75 pizzas to customers.

And to add to this heartwarming story, when David Baker, the owner of European Glass and Paint, heard about Hani's good deed and the break in at the pizzeria, he decided to step in and to replace the broken door at no cost.

And I very much like David's philosophy on good deeds:

“You know, I figured we're coming up to kindness week next month – and if one act of kindness spurs another act of kindness, it's like a domino effect. And if everyone did an act of kindness for somebody else in this city – as great as this city is – it would be that much greater.”

During the spectacular snowstorm of January 17, eight-year-old Clayton McGuire came to the rescue of his elderly neighbour, who he noticed had fallen in deep snow and was almost covered, injured and unable to get up.

Clayton and his parents called 9-1-1 and waited with the gentleman – warming him up with blankets and hot chocolate until the paramedics got to the scene and took over.

And these acts of kindness in our community have come from outside of Ottawa as well.

Canadian actor Ryan Reynolds, who spent a part of his childhood growing up in Vanier, has certainly shown his generosity and attachment to our city time and time again.

Early on in the pandemic, he and his wife Blake Lively generously donated to the Ottawa Food Bank, knowing how many families in our community depend on their essential services.

In a tweet, Ryan said: “I used to live in Ottawa (in Vanier). It holds a special place in my heart. I’m so happy to donate to your amazing food bank.”

They then went on to provide funding to the Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region.

Ryan also agreed to spend some time with Ottawa’s own Interview Dudes – Jack, Ben and Nathan – the three eleven-year-old friends who interview interesting people with interesting jobs as part of their podcast.

And Ben says this was one of the best episodes so far!

And as part of a tongue in cheek moment following the Superbowl last year, Ryan Reynolds took the hit claiming that he was in fact Bruce, the fictional OPH intern who had forgotten to insert the proper team name and logo of the winning team in the parody congratulations tweet.

It's clear that Ottawa does have a special place in Ryan's heart – and in his honour, I'll be bringing forward a notice of motion later today to have a street named after him.

Ryan Reynolds Way will be located in a new subdivision named Cassette, adjacent to Avalon, at the corner of Mer Bleue and Brian Coburn in the east end – and I want to thank Caivan Communities

for accepting this street name as part of their new development.

When we broached this idea with Ryan, he said:

“Very excited, flattered and honoured here. I’m even a little choked up. This means the world to me. Thank you on behalf of me and my entire family!”

I hope I’ll be able to count on your support to honour Ryan and acknowledge his constant support and contributions to our community throughout the pandemic.

COVID-19 has had an impact on all facets of our daily lives and what we considered to be normal prior to March of 2020.

The pandemic has placed a significant strain on our first responders, who have had to deal with an increase in service requests that has taken a toll on their wellbeing – and that goes for our officers at the Ottawa Police Service as well.

I know that public safety is top of mind for most residents, who want safe streets and neighbourhoods for their children and families to enjoy.

But over the last few years, we've witnessed an increase in gun violence and gang activity that has created challenges and anxiety in many neighbourhoods around the city.

The calls for enhanced police presence have been voiced by many Councillors as well as thousands of concerned members of the public – and that is why I

defended the three percent budget increase we had initially allocated to OPS as part of our Budget Directions in July.

I believe these public safety concerns are still very much top of mind for these residents – and it will take some time for us to understand whether the redirection of these OPS funds was the right thing for the betterment of our communities.

Another ongoing impact of COVID in our community has been its disproportionate effect on the vitality of our downtown core, where so many businesses and restaurants lost tens of thousands of regular customers from one day to the next.

It's been a tough time for businesses everywhere – but especially for our business owners downtown, where “for lease” signs are more visible than ever.

Thanks to an innovative partnership between Finance and Economic Development, the City has been monitoring the health and recovery of our downtown using water usage as an indicator – and staff believe we're the only city in Canada to do so.

For 2021, this data reveals a slight increase of between 14 and 19 percent in activity for commercial properties compared to 2020, but an increase of only three percent for federal properties – so we have a long way to go before we get back to normal.

That said, there are other indicators that are cause for optimism – like the city-wide office vacancy rate dropping more than a full percentage point in the last quarter of 2021, from 9.7 percent in the third quarter to 8.6 in Q4.

And with a vacancy rate of 9.9 percent for our downtown alone, Ottawa maintains the third lowest vacancy rate in North America after Vancouver and Toronto.

Despite the lingering uncertainty and hardship we've endured over the last two years, our city has managed to continue on its path of growth and progress.

Thanks to the impressive efforts of Ottawa Public Health and our Paramedic Service, the City led a massive vaccination campaign that has placed us amongst the most vaccinated in the country.

Working with our many healthcare partners, our Emergency Operations Centre transformed numerous City facilities into vaccination centres that have so far provided more than 2.2 million doses of

vaccine to protect our residents from illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19.

The Emergency Operations Centre has now been reactivated since early December and is hard at work delivering the important boosters that will protect us against the rise in Omicron.

In the early days of the vaccination campaign, our paramedics administered over 53,000 doses to our seniors in long-term care homes.

Throughout the pandemic, our City team quickly innovated and continued to serve residents and deliver on strategic priorities to advance our city.

Community and Social Services, as well as our Human Needs Task Force, played a key role in

helping our residents most in need during the pandemic.

Last spring, they answered the call and offered emergency childcare services to 736 children of essential workers who had to be present on the frontlines.

They also provided 24/7 supports and services to over 1,000 households in need of temporary accommodations across the city.

They established multiple respite centres and physical distancing centres to help avoid overcrowding and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our homeless shelters.

The 2021 Youth Futures program was still able to go ahead, and the City ultimately offered paid

placements in seven City departments to 51 marginalized youth.

Throughout the pandemic, the Inclusive Recreation Branch continued to deliver much-needed therapeutic and rehab programming to residents with developmental or physical disabilities – with 60 to 80 participants attending daily despite COVID-19.

This year, in response to a growing need for more mental health supports in and around the ByWard Market, the City will be contributing \$435,000 to develop and deliver an innovative pilot program led by Ottawa Inner City Health with partners like the Canadian Mental Health Association.

I know the Market's business community has been requesting more assistance to address these ongoing mental health issues that are affecting their

businesses and livelihoods, and I am confident that this is a step in the right direction.

Our team in Public Works never skipped a beat either.

Their hazardous waste depots collected and diverted 548 tonnes of harmful substances from the landfill – which is a 10 percent increase over 2020.

As part of the first phase of the Bike Parking Strategy, Parking Services installed 121 racks with 305 spaces in 2021 so our cyclists can access to convenient and safe parking across the city, with approximately 150 more racks to be rolled out in 2022.

Following a successful pilot project that saw eight Automated Speed Enforcement cameras installed in

high-speed school zones, the Road Safety and Mobility team will be deploying 15 more cameras this year at warranted locations – for a total of 23 cameras.

Not only are these cameras effective at reducing travel speeds in these zones with a high number of school children; they're also raising important funds for Council to reinvest in road safety initiatives.

In 2022, those investments total \$44.3 million, up significantly from \$37.1 million in 2021, of which \$7.2 million was funded by Automated Speed Enforcement cameras.

In the coming months, red light cameras will be installed at 10 new locations, and that revenue will also be reinvested in road safety initiatives.

The teams in Planning and Building Code Services have also been hard at work throughout the pandemic.

Even as the pandemic was taking a foothold in 2020, the number of building permits issued that year went up three percent.

Last year, the City issued 11,436 building permits – its highest number ever – for a further increase of 14 percent, which demonstrates that our teams never stopped serving the public and responding to the ongoing need for more housing options in our city.

We also saw an increase of 30% in the number of planning applications submitted last year, which is a good indicator that the construction industry will continue to be fairly busy in the coming years.

And the team delivered all of this while also leading the adoption of the City's new Official Plan, which includes climate change policies that will guide our sustainable growth over the next 25 years.

The City played a key role in supporting our business community in the depths of the pandemic, working alongside our partners to deliver initiatives like buy local campaigns, or the elimination of patio fees and street closures that led to more paying seats for restaurants.

We put in place a Small Business Tax Subclass that will provide 10,000 small business owners with a 15 percent tax discount, phased in over two years starting in 2022.

Event Central supported our growing TV and film production sector and issued 15% more film permits

in 2021 than the year before – and I know we’ve all seen many exciting film sets taking shape in every part of the city.

In 2022, we will continue this important collaboration, starting with our second Economic Rebound Roundtable next month, which will bring together many business leaders to exchange ideas and best practices to support our collective recovery in the coming months and years.

We will also continue to work with national cultural institutions and festivals, as well as our partners in tourism, culture and music, to deliver an impactful program of exhibits and events under the banner of the Year of Cultural Tourism in the Nation’s Capital.

I'm confident that this coordinated effort will help us make a splash and will convince visitors to choose Ottawa as their destination this year.

Economic Development will also work with the Ottawa Festival Network to deploy a new volunteer tool to support their recovery this festival season.

Last year, the Ottawa Festival Network celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary – but due to the pandemic, they were unable to mark that milestone, something they hope to do this spring.

We've put in place the committee to plan our celebrations for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ByWard Market's, a celebration of our most historic district and farmers' market, which I hope will take place under more normal circumstances in 2027.

In the last few years, we've also recognized the importance of our rural economy.

As you know, 82% of Ottawa is rural and agricultural lands – and it is home to the 1,045 farms you will find while exploring our beautiful rural areas.

I'm proud that in 2021, our Rural Affairs Office provided over \$175,000 to 25 organizations delivering community-building and economic development projects in our rural communities.

This includes a renewal of the City's funding commitment to the Smart Farm, where many agricultural partners are working together on important research to reduce GHG emission from agriculture and increase farm yields.

In 2022, we are also investing \$44.1 million into our rural roads, a record amount that will help our residents safely get where they need to go – like school and work.

Infrastructure Services also continued to deliver important city-building projects for our residents.

We completed the renewal of the Lois Kemp Arena in Blackburn Hamlet – adding new dressing rooms, universal bathrooms and accessible bleachers that make it a far more inclusive community hub.

We've completed the Campeau Drive Extension, an important new link that connects communities and businesses in Kanata.

We also opened the new Bay Street cycling facilities, which are an important bidirectional link

connecting the Laurier bike lanes to the Portage Bridge cycle tracks.

This year, we will complete the revitalization of Montreal Road and its transformation as a complete street with cycling infrastructure – which will give residents and business owners in Vanier a much-needed boost.

Construction will also begin on the renewal of Albert and Slater corridors.

When completed, these two streets will also offer cycle tracks.

We will also begin the work to deliver a two-way facility along Colonel By Drive, which will connect the Mackenzie Avenue bike lanes to the NCC's Rideau Canal pathway at Daly Avenue.

This cycle path has been identified as a missing link for some time.

But our largest ever city-building project – Stage 2 of LRT – can be seen taking shape all across the city to better serve our residents.

The progress is obvious all along the 174 in the east, where the installation of the rail between Blair Station and Trim Station will be completed this year.

In the west, station construction will begin at all remaining stations – including Moodie, Bayshore, Iris, Kichi Sibi and Westboro – and the crews will begin laying down the rail along the extension.

On the Trillium Line south extension, the teams will complete the construction of all 13 stations as well

as the new Walkley Yard MSF – and we'll receive all our new Stadler FLIRT trains, which we will continue to test along the corridor.

OC Transpo is also delivering other exciting initiatives this year to make using transit simpler and more accessible to residents.

In the first half of 2022, Para Transpo users will begin using a full suite of online services that will let them book and cancel trips, receive reminders of trips that are coming up, and see when their ride is coming – along with alerts a few minutes before the minibus or taxi arrives.

Staff are also working with a supplier to install smartcard readers in all Para buses and taxis, so customers can use their Presto card to pay their fare.

In March, OC Transpo will start issuing up to 2,000 weekly and monthly transit passes to clients of emergency shelters, so they can get around the city as they pursue opportunities to get back on their feet.

Over the course of the year, the green smartcard readers on all buses and at O-Train stations will be replaced with a new technology that will give all customers the ability to pay their adult fares with their credit card, in addition to using Presto cards.

As the pandemic subsides, I believe these measures will help us to attract new users and increase ridership on our transit system.

And we need to rebuild our ridership and increase transit revenue in order to continue balancing the City budget.

I'm quite proud of the fact that we have delivered 12 balanced budgets while respecting the tax cap commitments I had made to residents.

I believe both residents and business owners have benefited from this over the years – one that has provided them with stability and predictability in planning their own finances at home.

I certainly encourage all those who will be running in this election and then our future Council to take a similar fiscally responsible approach going forward.

We have to remember that thousands of residents in our city unfortunately live paycheque to paycheque and they need that stability and predictability.

During the State of the City Address two years ago, I announced I would give the Key to the City to a number of accomplished Canadians who have had an impact on our city and its image on the national and international scene.

I know the recipients were looking forward to their Key to the City ceremony, which we had to cancel due to COVID-19 – but I'm hoping 2022 is finally the year that we get to host them at City Hall.

As a reminder, the recipients are:

- Accomplished golfer and three-time Canadian Press female athlete of the year: Brooke Henderson;

- Former Governor General, veteran journalist and global ambassador for La Francophonie: Michaëlle Jean;
- TSN sportscaster and proud Carleton University journalism graduate: James Duthie;
- and last but not least, the Ottawa Citizen, an organization that has been providing news coverage in the nation's capital for 175 years – the longest continuing local business in Ottawa today.

This year, in recognition of her outstanding efforts and leadership, I will be giving the Key to the City to Dr. Vera Etches, our Medical Officer of Health, who has been an incredible leader to an incredible team since the start of COVID-19.

She has inspired control, confidence and calm to our residents in the darkest days of the pandemic – and as a result of her efforts, Ottawa has been a leader in the fight against COVID-19.

Because Dr. Etches could not have delivered such a professional and coordinated response without the help of others, I will also be giving the Key to the City to the entire team at Ottawa Public Health – who have been instrumental in these efforts all along.

As we head into this third year of the pandemic, I want to encourage all our residents to remain hopeful, to continue to listen to public health guidelines and to get vaccinated – which is truly our way out of this.

I want to thank our outstanding City staff for their work during this difficult last year.

From the snowplow operators to our public health nurses, and our firefighters to those helping our small businesses in need – as well as our senior leadership team for their commitment to helping our residents day in and day out.

As I mentioned in my announcement on December 10, I very much look forward to my final months in office – and I will continue to give my all to our city and our residents.

I look forward to continuing our important work together during this time, as we serve our residents and plan for the future of our city.