

Mayoral Candidate Question: Building Resilience for the Ottawa Business Community

Pandemics, protests and power outages (and other extreme weather impacts).

These have had devastating impacts on our business community throughout Ottawa and in many instances have paralyzed economic activity. There will be more.

How do you plan to lead a resilient Ottawa and mitigate the impact of these events? Please provide concrete actions or steps you will take as mayor to build resiliency for our business community.

Businesses across the city have faced unprecedented challenges in the last few years: the COVID-19 pandemic, the convoy and major weather events have kept people at home, impacted infrastructure, and caused property damage. Businesses have been taken significant hits to their operations putting at risk their sustainability, jobs and the economic future of Ottawa.

These are issues that are likely to be repeated, and in many cases are predictable. We need leadership at city hall to be prepared for both expected and unexpected events, to have both the plans and the financial sustainability to withstand a crisis, like COVID-19, and we need leadership that fully understands the integral role that small businesses play in pushing Ottawa's economy forward.

To build a resilient Ottawa, we need to build an Ottawa that is:

- Affordable - so that we can continue to keep and attract new talent to grow our economy;
- Safe - so that residents and businesses can operate in safe environments while having the confidence that our emergency services and front line responders will be there when they need;
- Reliable - City operations need to be reliable and provide the services that people need like fixing our OC Transpo routes, repairing our roads and having responsive bylaw services.

Here's what I'll do:

Reform the Emergency Measures Management Unit

Ensure that first responders are prepared to respond to a range of situations, from a major occupation such as the convoy, to a massive power outage. This reform will provide better collaboration and accountability for responding entities, rather than laying blame and playing politics when residents expect results. I also commit to convening with law enforcement

officials at all levels, including the Parliamentary Protective Service, in my first 100 Days to put a plan in place that would prevent this type of demonstration or occupation from occurring.

Should an illegal protest arise and an occupation is a possibility my message will be swift and effective action. Any truck or other vehicle impeding city traffic or business that is parked illegally will be ticketed and towed,

Downtown Revitalization

Work with small business owners, BIAs, and other organizations including the Board of Trade and Ottawa Tourism, on a strategy to animate the core with more festivals, events, and activities that will bring people downtown.

Work with tourism leaders, the federal government, and other stakeholders to develop a plan for a new major national attraction in downtown Ottawa, such as a museum or cultural centre.

Work with the federal government to create a vibrant Parliamentary precinct that serves as a grand national gathering place that invites Canadians and others from around the world to our capital city.

Work closely with the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Associations and all downtown BIAs on the revitalization plan.

Building Arts and Culture Infrastructure

Reviewing and updating city bylaws to ensure that they enhance and support the music community and accelerate the myriad of economic impacts and benefits concerts and festivals return to our neighborhoods without limiting the ability of artists to perform in public (like buskers).

Creating a Music Office as a single point of contact for the music community to champion the city's music strategy development.

Completing the City of Ottawa's nightlife economy strategy and implementing its recommendations.

Not defund the police.

Modernize our emergency services to ensure we are delivering a safer Ottawa for everyone. Some candidates in this race have voted to cut funding from our emergency services. Some activist organizations are advocating that the police budget be slashed by over \$200M. I do not support either of these proposals.

I will enable the police services to grow as the city grows. This will add at least 100 new positions over the next four years, with a focus on priority areas including violence against women, hate and bias crimes against marginalized communities, and gun violence.

Police Board Oversight

Ensure proper oversight by the Police Services Board and increase opportunities for community representation and input to re-establish trust and ensure our police service is better for everyone.

It's time to take the politics out of policing. We cannot cut spending on emergency services, including policing, when crime is rising and the city is short on available paramedics. Instead, we must invest in and modernize emergency services, address leadership issues, inequities, and systemic flaws, and restore public trust.

I will ensure proper leadership and representation on the Ottawa Police Services Board, in the following ways:

- I will sit on the Board, and ensure every region of our city is represented on the Board.
- I will work with Council and the provincial government to ensure that each group of appointees to the Board have the necessary skills, experience, diversity and training to hold the leadership of our police service accountable for their performance.
- Working with others, I will recruit a strong independent community member who is qualified not only to serve on the Board but also to ensure members of the Ottawa Police Service are adequately trained and resourced to respond in a timely and compassionate manner to incidents of gender-based violence, sexual assault, and harassment.
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Cooperation

In the very early days in office I will convene all relevant agencies, either collectively or in one-on-one meetings, to satisfy myself that the city is prepared and protected from any illegal protest that could harm our city. The goal is a coordinated, effective and timely deterrence, and response to any threat that impacts the city. This assessment will include the Ottawa Police Service, OPP, RCMP and Parliamentary Protective Services, and all intelligence agencies.

Communications

A lesson from the convoy is that businesses were unprepared for the severity, on-the-ground impacts, and duration of the occupation. There was frequently contradictory messaging from the city, which was detrimental to downtown businesses (businesses didn't know if they should or were allowed to stay open, if their staff would be able to get to the core, if deliveries could be received if they could do home delivery of services). Hotels and Ottawa Tourism need to be able to explain how visitors are going to be impacted. Businesses need to be informed with timely

and accurate information. A constant reminder from the city for residents to support physical businesses, especially in a crisis, including shop local campaigns.

Greater Climate resiliency initiatives

Double the city's annual tree planting goal to replace and enhance the urban canopy, helping to cool the city and clean the air. This would mean 250,000 new trees planted annually, or one million by the end of the first term.

Monitor the stormwater management and outfall rehabilitation programs to improve the water quality of the Ottawa and Rideau rivers with real-time reporting of sewage overflows and regular reporting on water quality.

Work with the National Capital Commission, the City of Gatineau and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority to improve the health, biodiversity and water quality of our rivers and watershed, as well as on climate change mitigation measures and in developing adaptation strategies focused on addressing flooding and extreme heat.