

November 29, 2023

## **COMMUNITY LEADERS LAY GROUNDWORK TO BUILD UP DOWNTOWN OTTAWA**

Ottawa, ON – There is an immediate need to transform Downtown Ottawa into a diverse, resilient, and vibrant urban center. The Ottawa Board of Trade’s Downtown Summit held on November 23, 2023, brought key stakeholders together to refine their united goal – and all agree, the time for change and action is now.

“We brought together business and community leaders to discuss how we can transform and build a downtown core that will serve the next generation – and we learned that the opportunities are limitless,” said Sueling Ching, President of the Ottawa Board of Trade. “The issues our downtown is facing are complex and require an all-hands-on deck approach to plan and action a transformation”.

Over 100 community leaders participated in working groups to provide feedback and find common ground on OBOT’s four main pillars for downtown transformation:

- Affordable, walkable amenity rich communities
- Public and private investment in infrastructure, public realm and placemaking
- Employment growth and economic diversification
- Safety and security for workers, residents, visitors, and vulnerable people

The Ottawa Board of Trade will be integrating the feedback received at the summit and fine-tuning the recommendations, including accountability and performance measures.

The final report and Downtown Ottawa Action Plan are being prepared by the Canadian Urban Institute with the support of the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Tourism, the NCC and other partners, and will be released in early 2024. While the report is being finalized, OBOT has identified five immediate actions government and community partners are encouraged to work towards:

1. Guarantee 10-Year PILT (payments in lieu of taxes) and support for transition of core from federal government.
2. Fund transit gap from federal and provincial governments to enhance mobility to the core.
3. Pilot an incentive strategy to build more residential units and support office-to-residential and other adaptive re-use developments.
4. Commit to a collaborative effort including experts in homelessness and support service providers, and funding from all levels of government to urgently address homelessness, mental health, and addictions.
5. Prioritize Public Realm Investments and Create Downtown Animation Fund to enhance vibrancy.

Learn more at [buildupottawa.ca/downtown](http://buildupottawa.ca/downtown)

**Quotes from community leaders:**

“The Downtown Summit brought together the top community leaders and experts in our city,” said Brendan McGuinty, Chair of the Board, Ottawa Board of Trade. “We are confident in our ability to unlock the full potential of downtown Ottawa and deliver a plan backed by experts with best practices from other metropolitan cities around the world.”

“I am excited at the momentum of many parts of our community coming together to transform Downtown Ottawa for the better. With collaborative action and bold leadership from all members of Team Ottawa, I am confident that real change can be brought to our core for the benefit of all residents of our city.” – His Worship Mayor Mark Sutcliffe

“Ottawa is facing a housing crisis like never before. With the transformation of our downtown core, we have an opportunity to create a safe, inclusive community where everyone has an affordable, appropriate home.” – Kaite Burkholder Harris, Executive Director, Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa

“We’re ready to work together to build a downtown that highlights Ottawa's strengths as a culturally rich and diverse destination that represents all of Canada in one city, drawing in visitors from across the country and the world. This is a crucial moment for our city, an opportunity for growth and innovation. Ottawa Tourism is proud to be a part of this transformative journey.” – Michael Crockatt, President & CEO, Ottawa Tourism

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**About The Ottawa Board of Trade:**

The Ottawa Board of Trade is the voice of business in Ottawa. We advocate for collaborative and sustainable community prosperity, build support for local businesses as they launch, pivot, or grow. We are champions of the City of Ottawa as the best place to live, work and in invest.