



REPORT

ENVISIONING A GREAT DOWNTOWN

REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN
OTTAWA - A CALL TO ACTION
FOR OUR CITY

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION TASK FORCE

ISSUE DATE: NOVEMBER 2023

PREPARED BY

EVOO
STRATEGIES

This report was prepared by EVOQ Strategies, a firm based in Ottawa and with offices in Montreal and Toronto that is dedicated to envisioning human and natural spaces differently for a sustainable future. Specialized in strategies for sustainable urban environments, protected areas, and heritage conservation.

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Cover illustration :

Aerial view of Ottawa Parliament and Ottawa River, 2018

Source: Ottawa Tourism

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Task Force would like to express its sincere appreciation to all the participants in the Downtown Discussion Groups for their commitment and enthusiasm in being a part of this project. Participants in the group included representatives from the four selected focus areas of Small Businesses, Downtown Commercial Landlords, Arts & Culture, and Housing, Settlement and Immigration. Through these discussions, the Task Force recognizes that the revitalization of Downtown Ottawa is a multifaceted challenge that requires diverse, flexible, and creative approaches, and that its future transformation will depend on leadership, collaboration, vision, and new opportunities.

The dedication of the participants to the Task Force discussions, and their willingness to explore innovative ideas and share their unique expertise, has been instrumental in the success of this endeavor and the creation of this report.

The Task Force would also like to extend its appreciation to the hundreds of participants in the online discussion who have contributed creative ideas and concrete proposals to improve our city's Downtown. Lastly, the Task Force is grateful for the support and participation of federal and municipal officials who appreciated the value of this citizen initiative and were available to listen, share information, take stock of the concerns and of possible solutions.

The work of the Task Force members now shifts towards encouraging the use of this report to continue to leverage the power of these discussion groups to drive positive change within Downtown. Its members remain dedicated to exploring innovative strategies, engaging with key stakeholders, and advocating for the revitalization of the urban core. By working together, Downtown can become a vibrant hub of economic activity, cultural richness, and social cohesion.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE TASK FORCE AND THE REPORT

- The Task Force is composed of members from the private sector, industry associations, organizations, civil society, and other leaders who live, invest and work Downtown.
- The mission was to stimulate discussions, reflect on the future of Downtown, and offer its own assessment of the many levers to transform Downtown into a dynamic, productive, and welcoming neighbourhood that is the pride of the city.
- These levers are supported by four pillars that activate short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities to achieve transformation in Downtown Ottawa.
- The four pillars are Living, Playing, Doing Business, and Shaping Downtown.
- The list of priorities encourage stakeholders to take action together.
- The Task Force believes that change will occur if it is guided by principles that will result in a future Downtown being resilient and community-focused. It encourages all those involved in shaping and activating Downtown to adopt them.

WHY DOWNTOWN MATTERS

- In the city's Downtown, which includes our study area, there are over 30,000 residents and over 600 businesses who together generate the most tax revenue for the city. Downtown accounts for over \$150M in property taxes to support all of Ottawa. The Downtown wards (Somerset, Kitchissippi, Rideau-Vanier) account for over \$ 350M or about 20% of the city's over \$1.5B in property taxes revenue (2019).
- Downtown is Ottawa's "front door", the location of most of the city's major attractions, and the first impression for 11 million annual visitors, who contribute enormously to its economy and tax base, generating \$2.2 billion in visitors spending each year and amounting to \$755 million in taxes to all three levels of government, including reducing the burden on Ottawa taxpayers by about \$1800/household.



1- Winter Lights at National War Memorial, November 2020 © Ottawa Tourism

URGENCY TO ACT

- Downtown Ottawa is experiencing multiple crises at once, including a housing crisis, a mental health crisis, a drug consumption crisis, an economic crisis, and an environmental crisis.
- The majority of respondents to online and in-person exchanges stressed that the time to transform our Downtown is now and that it is too important for Ottawa as a whole to not invest in solutions to address the multiple crises simultaneously.
- Downtown needs to change from a neighbourhood largely designed around cars and commuters to a place that is people-centric, with mixed-use buildings, increasing residential buildings, around-the-clock amenities/entertainment, public assets, and public spaces.
- Downtown's uses and tensions are changing, requiring a rethink of the policies and incentives that guide decisions around infrastructure, public spaces, services and amenities.
- A number of 'ingredients' required for a healthy, thriving, socially-sound Downtown are lacking or need to be strengthened. These include: services and assets for people, cultural assets and activities, street life, economic growth, symbiosis of residents and workers, green spaces and assets, office conversions, climate change adaptations, connectivity and transportation, and transformational projects.

A CALL TO ACTION

- **Work together:** The federal, provincial, and municipal governments as well as the private sector, civil society and individual citizens need to work together to reinvent our collective relationship to Downtown. Solutions need to be sustainable and integrate the full capacity of the municipal and federal administrations. Break silos and integrate decision-making and solutions.
- **Incentivize change:** The three levels of government must actively apply policies and financial measures to incentivize change, address the social issues and spur economic growth. These support, but are not limited to, office conversions, marquee events, supporting businesses, mental health programmes, shelters, and public spaces.
- **Balance immediate with long-term:** The three levels of government need to apply a strategy to balance investments to generate immediate visitors (e.g. tourism-related activities, entertainment and cultural events) with building the foundation for the long-term (e.g. new infrastructure).



2- Students at Major's Hill Park, June 2014 © Ottawa Tourism

- **Attract people:** Tens of thousands of people no longer come Downtown daily with the advent of hybrid workplaces and the loss of many businesses. We need the ability to immediately attract visitors and in the long-term attract new residents, especially families. Residents and businesses need to feel supported by the city.
- **Federal responsibility:** The federal government is a major asset owner and employer and its decisions has a disproportionate impact on the Downtown's future. It needs to become a purposeful partner in city building, involved in housing, supporting the city's productivity, and growing its tourism industry. Savings from a reduced federal footprint should be reinvested in Downtown. The disposal of federal assets, such as the Jackson Building and L'Esplanade Laurier, should be accelerated to transfer directly to municipal, not-for-profit, or private entities as a means to address the impact of federal decisions on Downtown's economy.
- **Provincial support:** The provincial government is an essential partner to activate opportunities and responsibilities under its jurisdiction such as repurposing of educational assets, incentivizing housing options, funding cultural and tourism related entities, training workers, and supporting funding for community health initiatives.
- **Create value:** Public assets are required based on their ability to increase the value and attractiveness of the neighbourhood. Strategic value creation should influence decision-making by considering the return on the public investment, for example the return from investments in events, arts and culture is at least \$21 for each \$1 public fund, and the creation of green spaces results in about 15% uplift of neighbouring property values.
- **Be bold and say 'yes':** Municipal and federal entities need to embrace an attitude of saying 'yes', taking risks to affect change, and consider the impact of not pursuing ideas. Less focus on process and more on results will help shift the tide on changing things.
- **Small details to build trust:** Safety, cleanliness, ease of getting things done, positive promotion, visibility of municipal services are small actions that can be done to reassure businesses and residents that Downtown is worth investing in.
- **Be transformative and sustainable:** Solutions need to be able to transform Downtown and be different from what has been done in the past. Solutions balance cultural, social, economic and environmental imperatives, don't demolish the past for the sake of progress. Big projects and small initiatives need to coexist to make that transformation possible and successful. Addressing the future of L'Esplanade Laurier as a city building initiative is an immediate priority to set the course for a transformed Downtown.
- **Lead differently:** Reimagine leadership to engage public, private, and citizen stakeholder partnerships. Leadership is to be shared through partnerships and committed to achieving results.



3- Panoramic view of Downtown Ottawa with Parliament Hill, October 2013 © Ottawa Tourism

MESSAGE FROM MP YASIR NAQVI



YASIR NAQVI

Member of Parliament
for Ottawa Centre

My fellow Ottawans,

In the face of unprecedented challenges, we have a golden opportunity to reimagine and revitalize our beloved Downtown Ottawa. The last two years have witnessed profound shifts in our city's landscape, with remote work becoming the norm, and our once bustling city center suffering the brunt of it.

But in every crisis, there lies an opportunity for transformation, and that's exactly what the Downtown Ottawa Revitalization Task Force is all about.

As your Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, I am deeply committed to our community's wellbeing and resurgence. This Task Force, composed of affordable/social housing advocates, notfor-profit and for-profit housing developers, Indigenous leaders, sustainability advocates, local business improvement area representatives, and tourism stakeholders, is working tirelessly to reshape our Downtown. Our aim is nothing less than a brighter, more vibrant, and inclusive future for Downtown Ottawa, where people strive to work, live, and visit the area.

One of our core strategies is to breathe new life into the vacant office buildings. We envision these spaces as vibrant residential hubs that will not only address housing shortages but also infuse life into our Downtown. It's about creating a sense of home and belonging for all Ottawans.

We are also determined to make our streets safer and more inviting for everyone. This Task Force is about forging a healthier, more sustainable, and connected urban environment that promotes active transportation and fosters community bonds.

This is our moment to rise, to shape a Downtown Ottawa that will not only cater to our residents but also attract visitors from near and far. We're determined to boost tourism, reignite economic growth, and transform our Downtown into a vibrant and thriving destination.

Together, we can rebuild and revitalize Downtown Ottawa, making it a symbol of national pride, unity, and vibrancy. Our future is what we make of it, and the Downtown Ottawa Revitalization Task Force is working to build a brighter tomorrow for all Ottawans.

MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS



GRAEME HUSSEY

Dear Ottawans,

As co-chairs of this Task Force, we were motivated to get involved by the firm belief that our Downtown is a vital part of the city. We are convinced that the health of Downtown is deeply connected with that of Ottawa as a whole.

Whether as a destination for work, entertainment, commemoration, tourism, or celebration, Downtown is the place where Ottawa shows its best self to the country and to the World. This is where some 20% of the city's revenue from property taxes are collected. Over 11M visitors annually come through Downtown, the city's 'front door', to take part in entertainment activities, attend cultural events, gather in conferences, generating some \$ 2.2B in revenue.

Downtown is also where some of Ottawa's most vulnerable citizens reside and find the services to support them. Helping them has to be addressed urgently, as our city is seeing an ever expanding need for shelter, affordable housing, mental health support, safe drug consumption services, and access to meals. Addressing these needs is a sign of our humanity and compassion as a community. It is also an important way to support the local businesses who too often are the first to offer assistance to those in need without the right support and to make the community welcoming and safe for everyone.



NEIL MALHOTRA

In preparing this report, we reached out to those with knowledge and experience of these issues. We wanted to hear first-hand about ideas to make things better. The Task Force is grateful for the over 1000 people who were generous in offering their perspective in person or online through our Howspace platform. In the space of a few months, we got the evidence we needed to say that Downtown matters to many.

We want to thank all the members of the Task Force who undertook the difficult task of outlining a path forward for Downtown and reimagining a familiar but in many ways now outdated place. Each member, relying on their individual realities, was committed to working with others for the benefit of the city. We believe that this is a really critical ingredient for the success of our collective mission of transforming Downtown.

We wish to thank the Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Centre, Yasir Naqvi, for taking the initiative to bring us together. It is his vision of a group of invested citizens from a range of backgrounds that led us to the difficult but necessary

conversations. We carried out our mission without consideration for the politics and perceived obstacles to getting things done. We aimed to give an impetus to a culture of collaboration, ambition, and saying ‘yes’. With that aim, we offer in this report a set of principles and some important levers to lead us to effective action.

Our work is a modest contribution to raising the profile of Downtown and offer a foundation for action. This is the time for Ottawans to be bold and ambitious in shaping the future. We need to work together, all three levels of government, but also the public and private sectors, civil society and individual citizens to affect change. We need to invest in our infrastructure, in cultural activities, in ideas, in citizen services, in our environment, and in our people. We believe that the time for creativity, innovation, vision, action and leadership is now. The future of our city depends on it.



4- Poutine Fest on Sparks Street, 2022 © lezumbalaberenjena, Flickr

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CONTEXT AND APPROACH



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE

Downtown Ottawa is the beating heart of the city. For almost a century, people have come Downtown to experience the capital of Canada, but also to work, to invest, to access unique services, to settle, to study, and to launch their dreams. This shaped the infrastructure and the way citizens related to it. The COVID19 pandemic and the Freedom Convoy Occupation changed this, probably permanently.

That change needs to be positive. Before even these events, several factors were impeding the Downtown from achieving its full potential in meeting the needs of its residents, workers, and visitors. We now have the once in a generation opportunity to consider these and more in imagining a revitalized Downtown.

The Task Force is a gathering of individuals representing the breadth of interests in a healthy Downtown. These citizens, at the invitation of Yasir Naqvi MP, worked for the better part of the year to understand the challenges and contribute their experience and commitment to transforming the neighbourhood.

Through online interactions and group discussions, the Task Force engaged citizens from a range of backgrounds in exploring solutions and understanding aspirations.

The Task Force gave itself the mission to stimulate discussions around the future of Downtown and offer its own assessment of the many levers that, if used appropriately, can affect the change we are looking for collectively.

The result is a report that calls upon the federal, provincial, and municipal governments as well as the private sector, civil society and individual citizens to work together and reinvent our collective relationship to Downtown.



5- The Downtown Ottawa Revitalization Task Force at their launch announcement at Bank St & Laurier Ave in Downtown Ottawa on July 29, 2022

SCOPE OF THIS CALL TO ACTION

The Task Force aimed to stimulate discussions, give a big picture of the initiatives of many partners, and provide some overarching direction on the type of priority actions that might effect change. The group recognized the range of issues that impact Downtown and tried to focus on giving momentum to solutions.

Downtown is a vast area in the heart of Ottawa with no officially established boundaries (see Appendix B for boundary definition map). For some it includes parts of Lowertown, Rideau Street and Sandy Hill on the east side of the canal, Centretown, and parts of Chinatown, and the Glebe on the west side. The Task Force focused on a particularly challenging area that was hard hit by the effects of the pandemic and is home to a large concentration of office towers.

The study area extends North-South from Wellington Street to Somerset Street, with an extension on Bank Street south to Gladstone Street, and East-West from the Rideau Canal to Bronson Avenue. This captures the office towers as well as the immediate residential and commercial areas that historically related to the development of Downtown.

The Task Force observed that there are many groups in Ottawa who over the years have been very active in shaping Downtown. From the arts, to social services, to building extraordinary places, several organizations have made a mark. Their continued commitment to the city and especially Downtown was recognized by the Task Force and is seen as an incredible strength.

This report aims to add to the public discussion along with these other initiatives and be useful to provide a sense of priorities and possibilities.

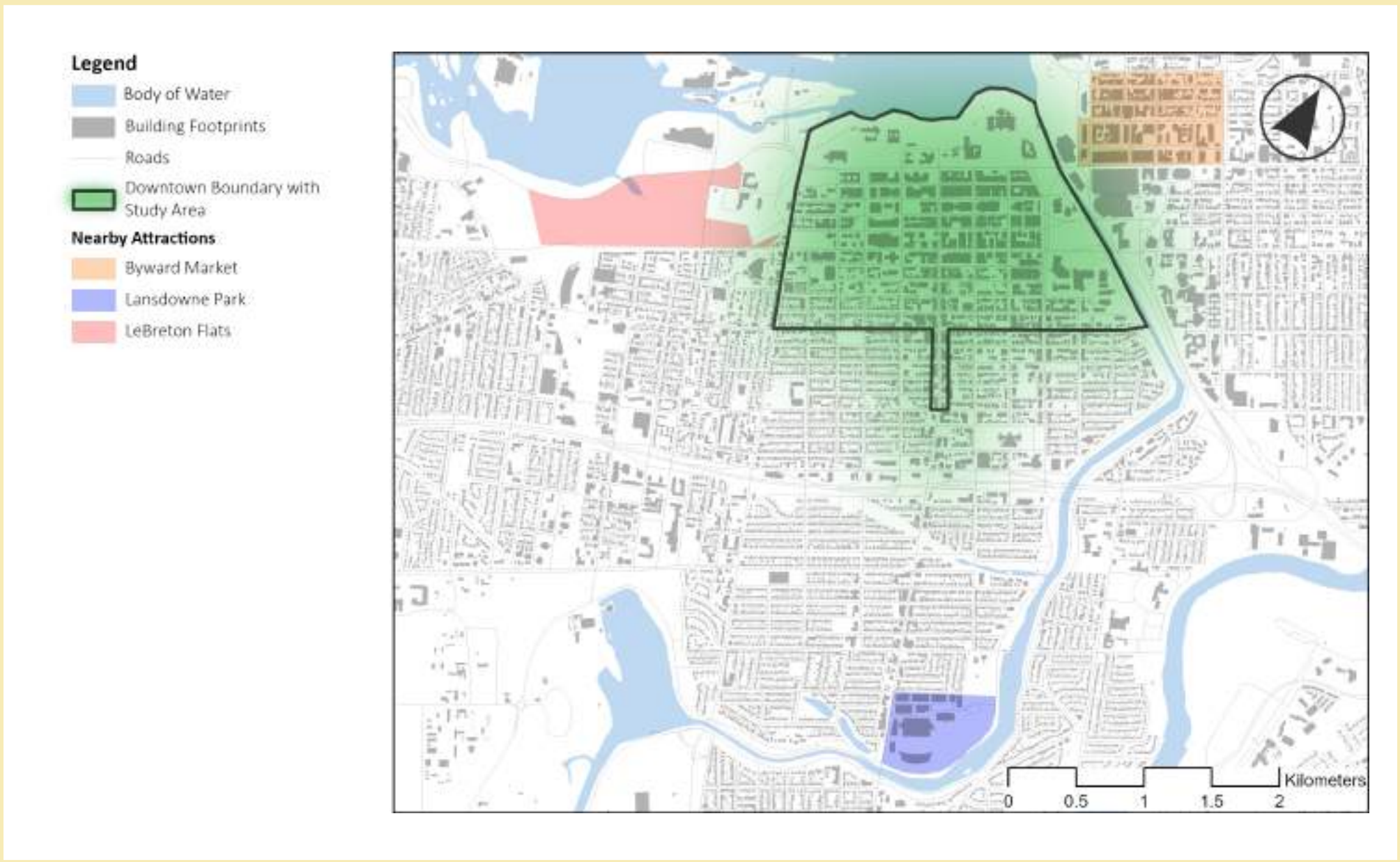
The work of the group relied on available public data, the expertise of its members, the ideas of citizens on the online platform, and the contributions of the community leaders who participated in thematic discussions. It met regularly for nine months to discuss issues and debate direction. Fieldwork was carried out to collect data on opportunities and obstacles to the revitalization. Additionally, it relied on the strategic priorities of partners to identify those that had a direct benefit for Downtown.

Ultimately, this report adds the voice of its participants to the chorus of calls to action directed to all those involved in shaping our city. This includes the federal, provincial and municipal governments as well as to the private sector, not for profits, and civil society. It also includes each and every one of us, individual citizens.



6- Ottawa Downtown skyline, 2009

TASK FORCE DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY WITH STUDY AREA

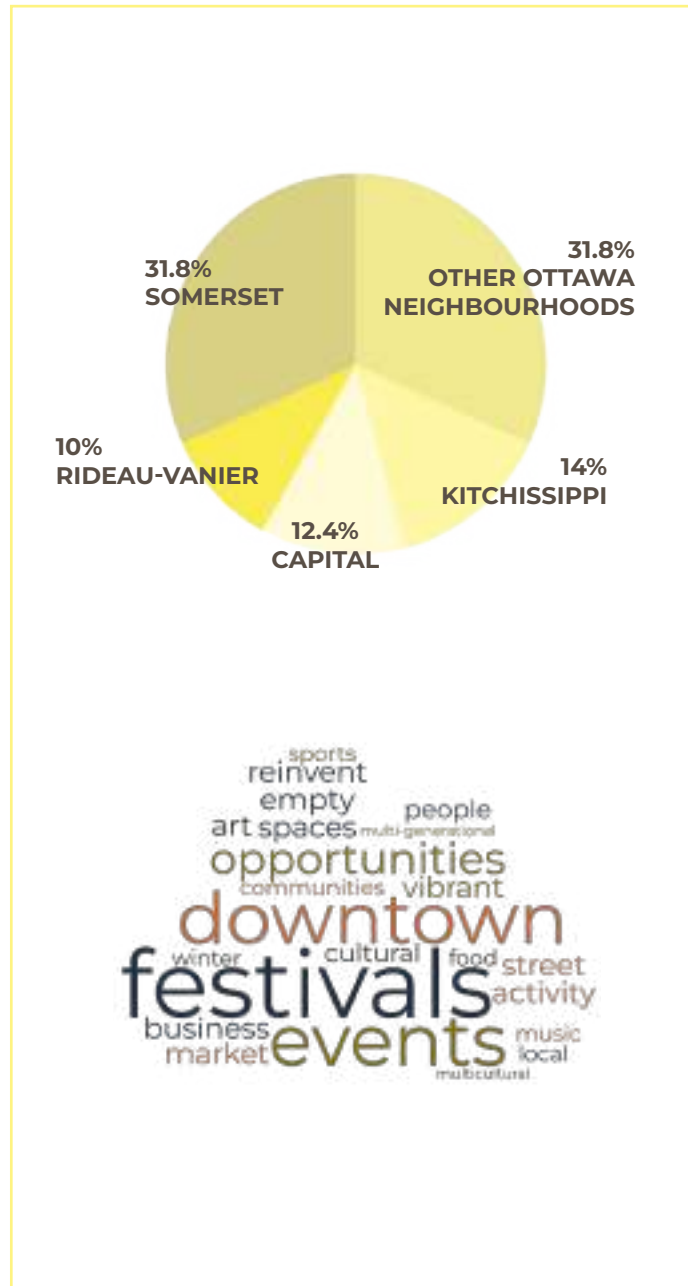


ENGAGING WITH CITIZENS

Early on, the Task Force was interested in hearing from others involved in Downtown. While the group is representative of a diversity of interests, the complex issues that underlie the revitalization of that space required opening the conversation to a broader spectrum of participants.

This was achieved through an online platform housed by Howspace which attracted thousands of comments from over one thousand registered users. Over the course of multiple months, through regular updates, users were invited to provide feedback on multiple topics such as transportation, housing, arts and culture, or small and mid-sized businesses. The comments were rich in ideas and demonstrated that a wide range of people cares about the future of Downtown. (Sample pages and questions – Appendix A)

The Task Force was also interested in getting more in-depth knowledge about certain key sectors and strategies that were particularly promising.



It organized small group discussions with community leaders and experts on the themes of immigration, affordable housing, office conversions, small and mid-size businesses, the cultural sector, the role of academic institutions, and environmental adaptation. These conversations generated significant information about the potential solutions to revitalize Downtown.

Citizens, business owners, landlords, and workers have similar concerns. They feel Downtown is unappealing, dirty, and unsafe. It is empty, lifeless, and uninspiring. They are concerned about the significant homelessness, drug use, and the issues of individuals suffering from mental health being in open display. They feel displaced from their parks, the main streets, and even other residents. They felt forgotten and abandoned during the pandemic and the Freedom Convoy Occupation. They wish to reclaim the neighbourhood to see it attractive, lively, and vibrant. Urban life is about diversity, energy, and creativity.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT: HOWSPACE

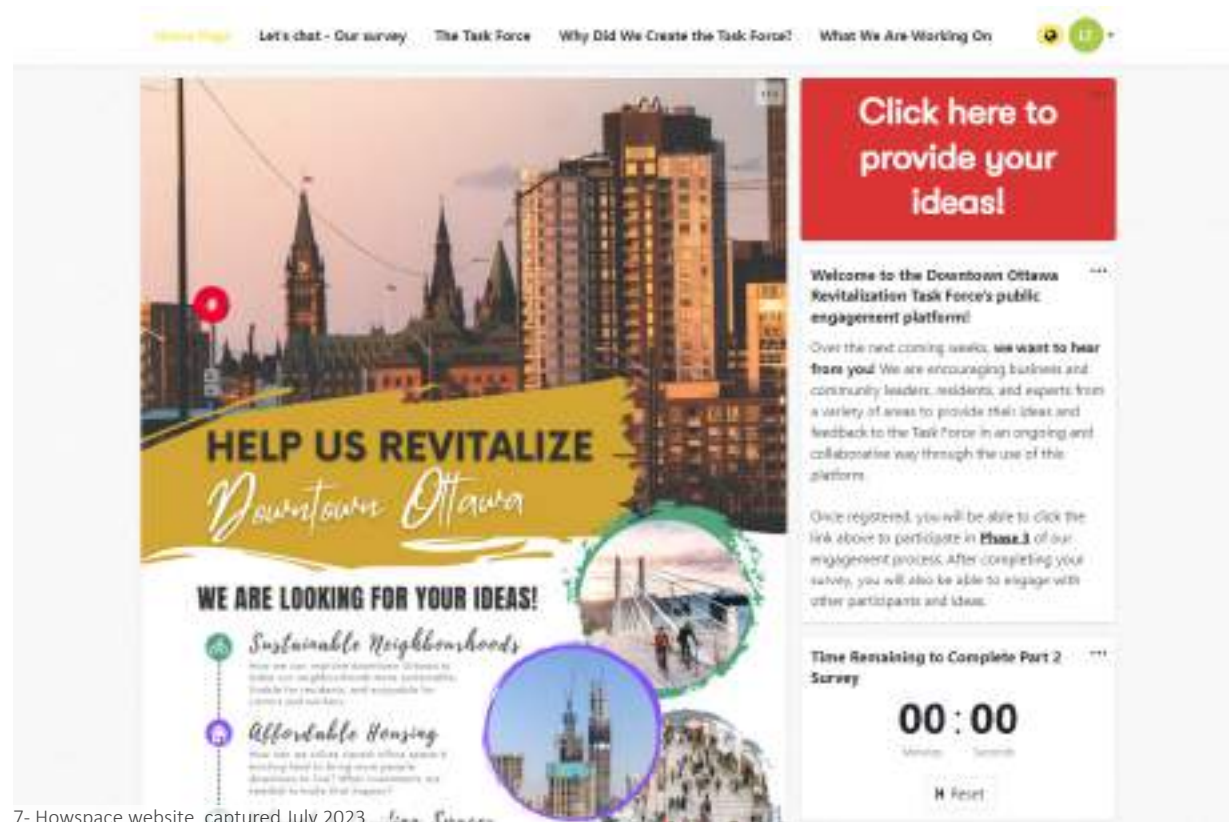
Howspace is a citizen engagement platform which provides a way to communicate with a wide group of stakeholders on a topic, through the creation of a website. Howspace is aimed at citizens and citizen groups with direct or indirect links to the mandate. It is a useful, comprehensive and engaging online tool for sharing interactive content with the public, as well as for collating and analyzing the feedback received.

The platform was open for a fixed period of time, following the progress of the project. Within this timeframe, the platform was updated several times a month to allow sufficient time for participants to interact with the content while offering them new information. Content was available in both French and English.

The aim of the platform was to raise citizens' awareness and gather their feedback by interacting via informative and engaging content. Photos, videos, maps, polls and quizzes were prioritised. The Chat tool collected and analyzed user comments using the artificial intelligence built into the Howspace platform. Each question was subject to various analyses (summary, word cloud, recurring themes, etc.) to ensure opinions were taken into consideration, and general statistics on citizen use of the platform were collected.

958
registered users

almost **4000**
comments in 4 months



7- Howspace website, captured July 2023

ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Downtown Ottawa is on the unceded and unsurrendered traditional territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation and as such its future includes the Host Nation's view and vision for its people. Additionally, Downtown Ottawa is where the political, cultural, economic leadership of the national Indigenous organizations is located, defining the terms of a renewed relationship with the federal government. Lastly, Ottawa has one of the largest urban Indigenous populations in the country and the largest Inuit population south of Inuit Nunaguat. For these reasons, the future of Downtown requires that Indigenous people be actively engaged in shaping the solutions for a revitalized neighbourhood.

Indigenous peoples are leaders. The creativity and entrepreneurship of Indigenous peoples is leading the way in many parts of the country. Through arts, culture, technology, and business Indigenous peoples are showcasing with pride their identity and attracting new opportunities. Ottawa is an ideal location to tap into this energy and leadership, and the Downtown even more so. With the concentration of organizations that represent Indigenous peoples, the location of institutions that showcase Indigenous arts and culture, the proximity of national decision-makers, and the status as a significant tourism destination, Downtown is well positioned to being the

home of new major Indigenous businesses and cultural institutions. Projects like Zibi on the Ottawa River are extraordinary in that they demonstrate the significant benefits of working with the Host Nation to create new and sustainable initiatives.

Indigenous peoples come to Ottawa to seek health care, meet with family, pursue education, and follow work opportunities. As part of the legacy of residential schools and colonization Indigenous peoples continue to experience hardships, including homelessness in our city. The Ottawa Indigenous community have established and maintain Indigenous service organizations that alone through the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, represent \$350M in assets in Ottawa and employ close to 600 people in Ottawa. The OAC is currently building

three new service initiatives into the City of Ottawa. Indigenous peoples are an undeniable presence in Downtown Ottawa. First Nation, Inuit and Métis voices will need to be heard in shaping the future of our city.

The Task Force initiated conversations with representatives of the city's Indigenous peoples that need to be continued and will expand to others in the Host Nation and in the organizations that deliver services, represent business interests, and promote culture.

The Task Force acknowledges that this report is an initial effort to showcase the critical role of Indigenous peoples to the revitalization of Downtown and should not be understood as reflecting the voices and interests of Indigenous peoples in that project.



8-Rideau Canal Skateway at night, 2006 © Ottawa Tourism

DOWNTOWN MATTERS

The current Downtown was shaped starting in the 1960s as the push to modernize cities around the world took hold in Ottawa. Through the ambition of an expanding federal government and the capital city-building vision of the National Capital Commission, Downtown changed from a home for workers, labourers, immigrants, and a place of theatres, music halls, hockey arenas, community halls, to the centre of office work in Ottawa and the home of major federal institutions.

That change had significant consequences. For some cultural communities, they lost their neighbourhood and their traditional places of gathering. The city lost many cultural assets that once were the places where Ottawans were invited to discover new movies, exhibits, musical, theatrical and dance performances. The vibrancy that accompanied a true neighbourhood life was replaced by the beat of a nine-to-five office life.



9- St Patrick's Basilica, 2022.



10- Ho-Ho Café, 248, Albert Street, 1955 © City of Ottawa Archives

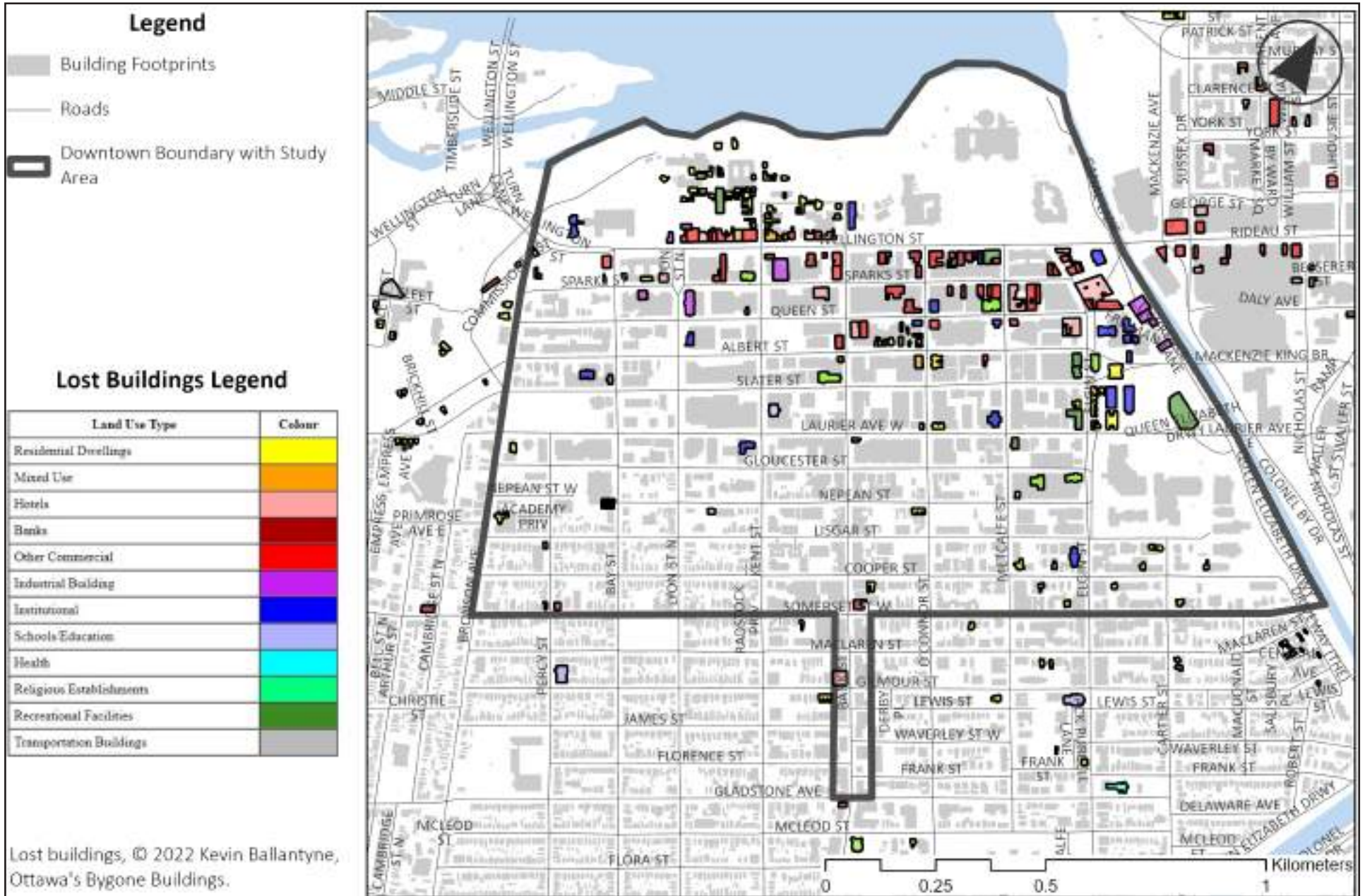


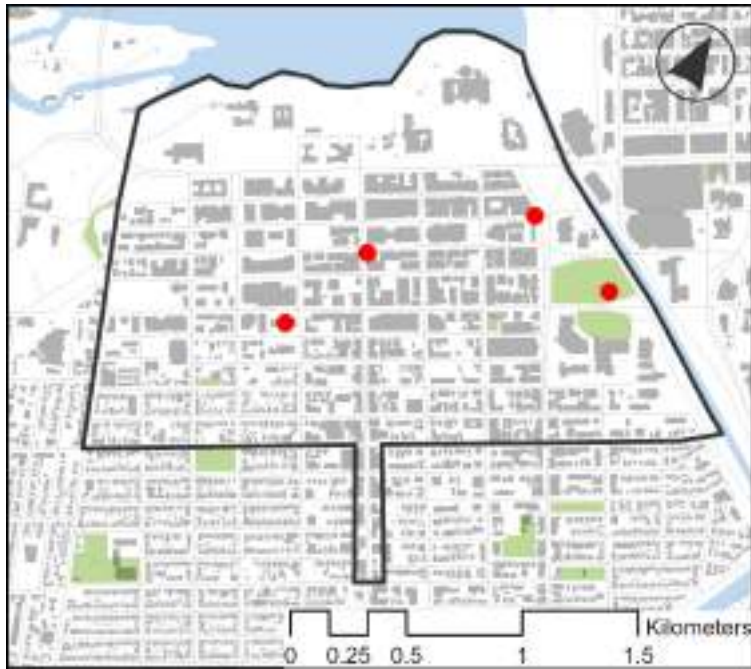
11- Exterior of the Russell Theatre, 1927.



12- The Arena or Dey skating rink, 1910.

BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA THAT NO LONGER EXIST





These changes equally introduced new opportunities for Ottawa. As new towers were built, government workers flocked towards Downtown, as well as new industries seeking a place to start and grow, reflecting positively on the city's economic vitality. Downtown accounts for over \$150M in property taxes to support all of Ottawa. The Downtown wards (Somerset, Kitchissippi, Rideau-Vanier) account for over \$ 350M or about 20% of the city's over \$1.5B in property taxes revenue (2019). It is truly a vital area for the city as a whole.

Downtowns are distinct from any other city neighbourhood. They showcase the city's identity, including through its heritage since they are often one of the older neighbourhoods, and tie together its urban narrative. They are essential areas for citizens to gather to celebrate, to protest, to express themselves, and to display city pride.

They are magnets for collective emotions, expressions, investments, and initiatives. Ottawa needs such a Downtown that all citizens, from whichever part of the city, naturally recognize as the place to be when things that matter happen.

Downtown is the essential hub connecting the Byward market, Lansdowne, and LeBreton Flats, areas where all levels of government are committed to investing for the future of Ottawa. Without a vibrant Downtown, the impact of these investments will be diminished.

There are over 30,000 residents and over 600 businesses who together generate the most tax revenue for the city.

Downtown is the location of most of the city's major attractions with 11 million annual visitors generating \$2.2 billion in visitors spending each year and tens of thousands of jobs.

Its impact on the city is one that we cannot do without.

Downtown matters because it is our City's heart, heart, our heritage and the quality of our new build speaks to our identity, this is where we meet, we gather, and we showcase what we have best to offer to the world. Now, we have a chance to envision a Downtown that is great and is a reflection of our collective pride. This is a chance to make it ours.

DOWNTOWN IN CRISIS

Ottawa's Downtown is experiencing a crisis that requires visionary and transformative action. The planning, design, and service delivery models that created the current Downtown need to be re-examined to assess their relevance to today and tomorrow's challenges.

Downtown is experiencing a housing crisis, a mental health crisis, a drug consumption crisis, an economic crisis, and a climate change adaptation crisis.

HOUSING CRISIS

- 1,300+ homeless individuals in Ottawa
- 12,000 people waiting for social housing
- 3.5% family dwellings
- Average cost of 2-bedroom is \$777,179.26
- Average rent for 2-bedroom \$2,434

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- 4 mental health clinics and 1 mobile unit in Study Area
- 5+ years wait time for supportive housing

DRUG CONSUMPTION CRISIS

- 3 supervised consumption sites
- Serving 160 people per day
- 72.1 monthly opioid overdose emergency visits
- 83.5% increase since 2018 in opioid overdose emergency visits

ECONOMIC CRISIS

- Commercial properties are the highest revenue generating property type
- 19% less visits Downtown than before pandemic
- 54% post-pandemic economic recovery

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

- 1.3°C temperature increase from 1946-2016, expected 2-3°C by 2050
- 37.5mm increase in precipitation by 2030
- Almost entire Study Area is a heat island between 27-32°C in July 2019

OUR SHARED VISION

OUR SHARED VISION FOR DOWNTOWN OTTAWA IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER TO LIVE, WORK, VISIT, EXPLORE AND EXPRESS THEMSELVES.

We envision a Downtown that is a top cultural destination with a vibrant street life. Where residents, workers, and visitors appreciate the artistic and cultural creativity of Downtown, and can enjoy numerous green spaces, a quality heritage and contemporary built environment, and outdoor events. We see Downtown as an area where the relationship between public and private sectors is strong, and where all sectors prioritize impactful projects in a collaborative approach to support Downtown Ottawa as a hub of activity.

We envision a neighbourhood with easily accessible services and available affordable housing that will attract new residents and workers. We foresee new residents, both families and young professionals alike, shaping a new culturally diverse and inclusive Downtown, while participating and strengthening the local economy. A place where city programs improve the sense of well-being and safety for everyone. We can imagine Ottawa as a leader in key growth industries, where communities and businesses can incubate and grow. We anticipate that Downtown Ottawa will be a model of climate change adaptability, benefiting from innovative energy technologies and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure with year-round universal accessibility.

In order to reach this vision, we recommend fast-tracking processes that encourage actions of transformation. By identifying and incorporating specific levers of change, which can be implemented by a future entity dedicated to coordinating all relevant actors, we can work together to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.



ENVISIONING A SUSTAINABLE DOWNTOWN

A revitalized Downtown needs to embrace a vision of change and transformation, not in the way the 1960s have where demolition of the past made way for 'progress' but instead in a sustainable way that balances cultural, social, economic and environmental imperatives. The world in 2040 is trending to be very different from the one we know now. A changing climate, demographic, economy, technology are some of the predictable changes for which we can prepare the City.

In fact, the current circumstances are explained in part by a Downtown designed by Jacques Gréber, planner commissioned by the federal government to design the national capital's master plan in 1950, that favoured the concentration of certain activities to the detriment of a broader urban diversity. This approach created a monoculture, a type of urban ecosystem that is vulnerable to shocks, just like in nature. Our Downtown was largely built in the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on office towers, parking lots and the services that appealed to office workers and to support an expanding federal public service. This displaced communities elsewhere in the city, leaving the core largely as a place to work, from 9 to 5, five days a week and connected to the suburbs through

highways and arterial roads to get people in and people out.

With the accelerated implementation of hybrid work due to the pandemic and the disposal of federal assets, the Downtown monoculture has suffered a significant blow. The concentration of towers and reduction of green spaces and assets has created an urban heat island that will continue as climate change increases temperatures. Additionally, the mineralized surfaces through sidewalks, parking lots and spaces, and roads make it difficult for the increased amount of rainfall to be absorbed through

DOWNTOWN OTTAWA WAS THE CORNERSTONE OF A CAR CENTRIC CITY DESIGNED IN THE 1960S-70S



14- Downtown Ottawa , 1979 © City of Ottawa Archives

the ground and instead will put pressure on the water management infrastructure. The place is ripe for change.

A future Downtown Ottawa has more residents, embraces diversity, is adapted to a different climate, contributes to the city's cultural and economic well-being, is culturally vibrant, and is a destination. It has its own city narrative, an identity based on the conservation and rehabilitation of the historic built environment as well as the presence of quality contemporary architecture. Workers still come here but they are no longer mostly public servants. Homelessness and mental health issues are addressed by a well-supported network of services. Families can find a home and grow Downtown with access to housing and schools.

These are some of the ingredients that feed into the vision of a transformed Downtown. They are also the ingredients that allow a place to be sustainable.

This report adopted the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide its thinking. Canada has committed to implementing the SDGs in 2015 and since then government departments, civil society, municipalities, and not-for-profits have embraced that framework to design policies for a better future.

The SDGs are 17 goals that together ensure sustainability. They cover the range of social, environmental, cultural, and economic matters that make a society thrive. By consciously adopting an SDG approach, the priority actions of this report aim to achieve sustainability by touching on all these matters. Sustainability is the outcome.

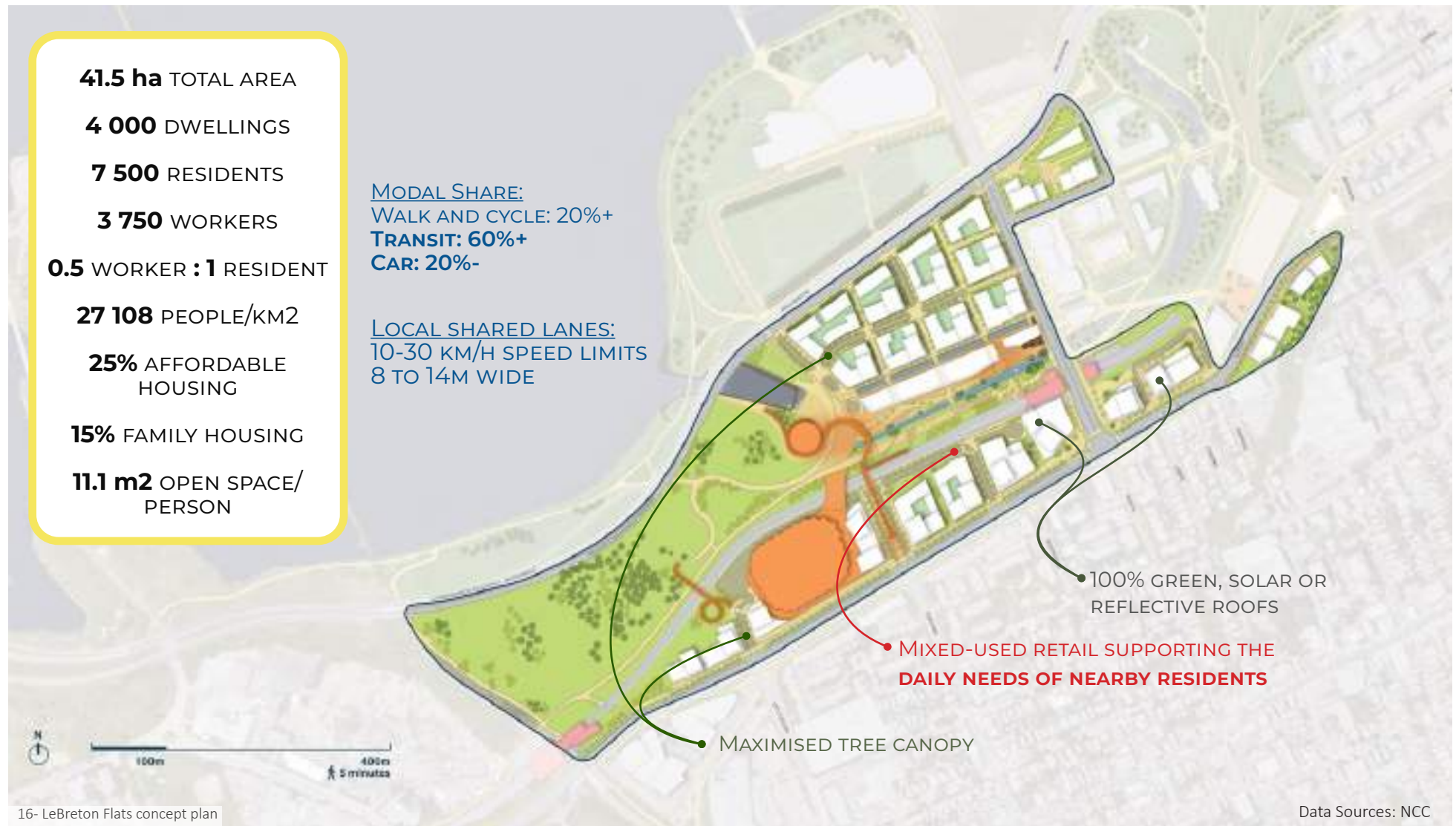


15- The 17 SDGs © United Nations

A TALE OF TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS:

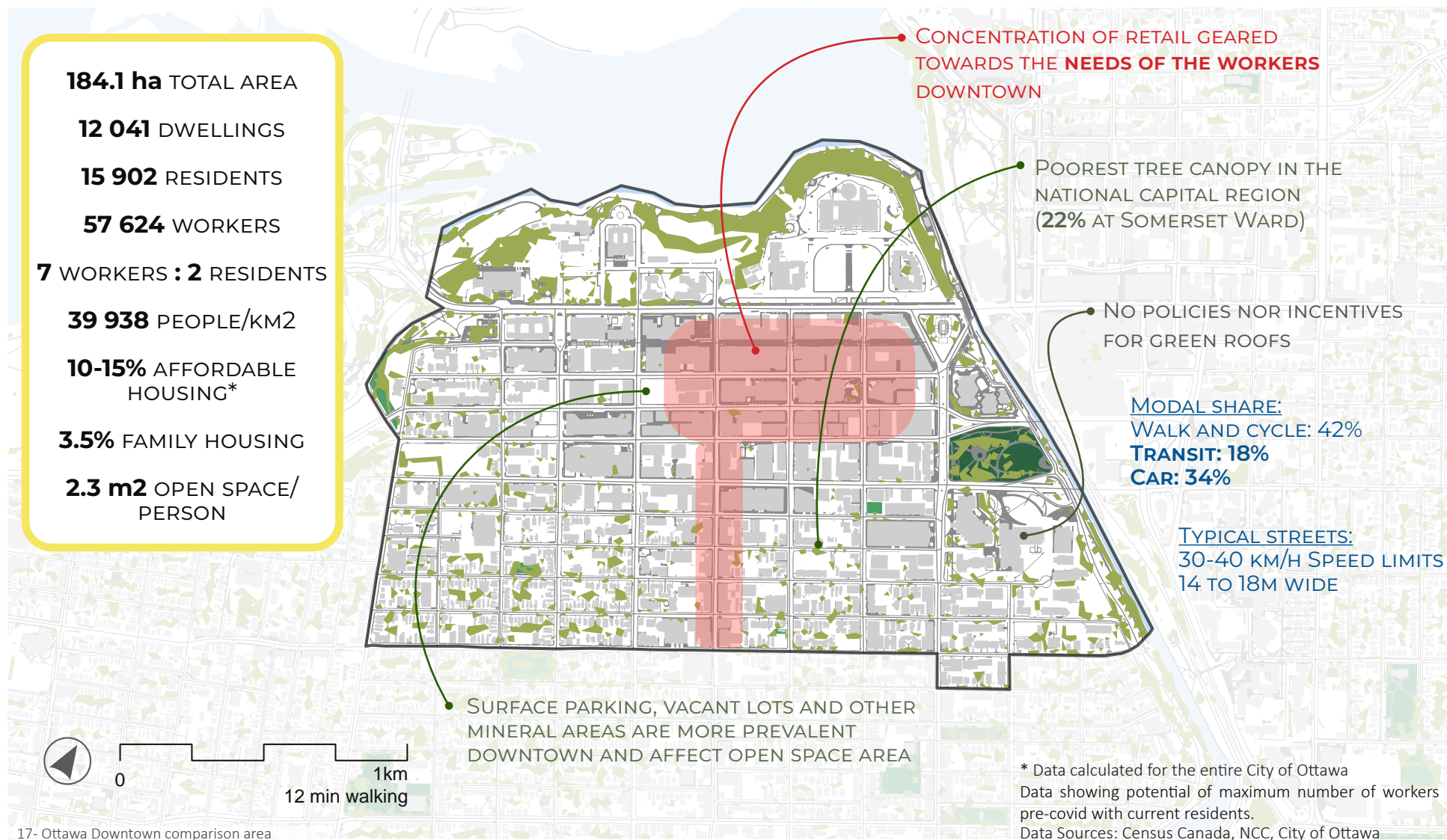
LE BRETON FLATS

The development of LeBreton Flats is envisioned as the creation of a sustainable neighbourhood where considerations for the well-being of residents and users includes climate resilient infrastructure, a mixed-use built environment, inclusion of affordable housing, green spaces, and limited car use.



AND DOWNTOWN

By contrast, Downtown Ottawa is a neighbourhood to be transformed sustainably. Using the same ingredients of sustainability that are included in the vision for Le Breton Flats, the sustainable transformation of Downtown would drastically change its shape and function.



17- Ottawa Downtown comparison area

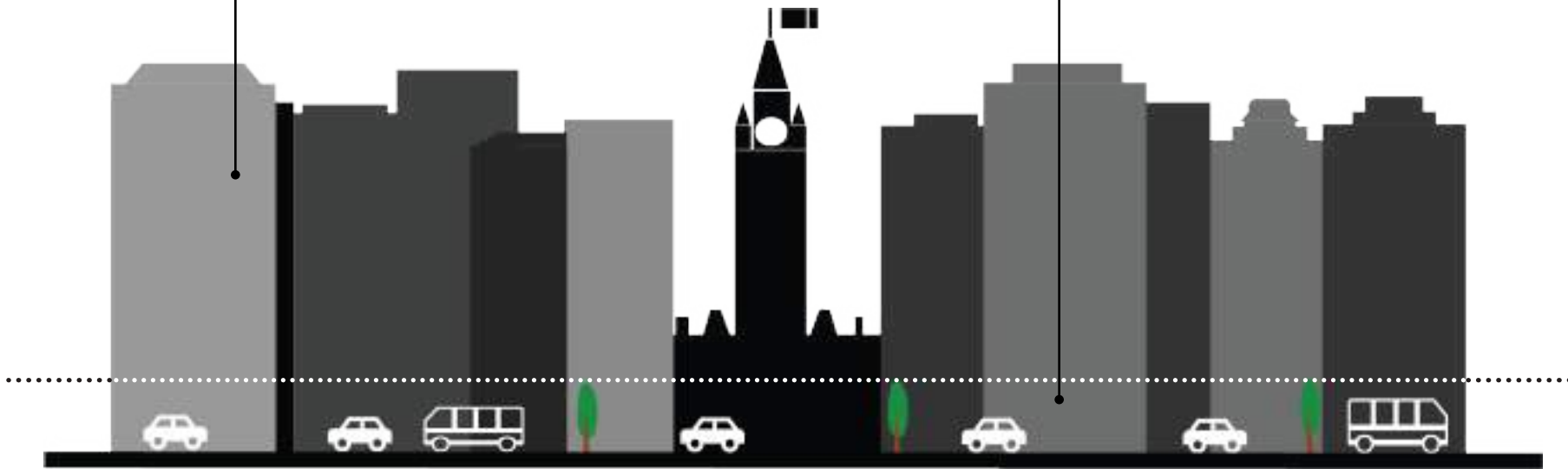
SHIFTING PURPOSES FOR DOWNTOWN

Ottawa's Downtown is the product of a 1960s city vision built around cars and having central business districts. Today, that vision has lost its purpose. Downtowns are to be reinvented primarily around their civic function for people as places of gathering. They are centres of innovation, entertainment and recreation.

Policy environment
General zoning, restrictive policies on uses and activities

- Predominance of office towers
Specialized businesses, white collar economic activities
- Economic drivers
Large and mid-size businesses
- Innovation hub
Private sector in high tech

- Car centric parking, roads
- Public assets
concert halls, public park
- After work entertainment
pubs, restaurants



DOWNTOWN OF THE PAST

Legend

- Residential use
- Office use
- Commercial and Services

Policy environment
General zoning, adaptive policies to respond to new uses and activities

Mixed uses with increasing residential
Diversity of businesses, increase in resident families
Economic drivers
Small-mid size businesses, gig economy, temporary uses, innovation
Innovation hub
Private sector in high tech and emerging high value sectors, public sector, academia

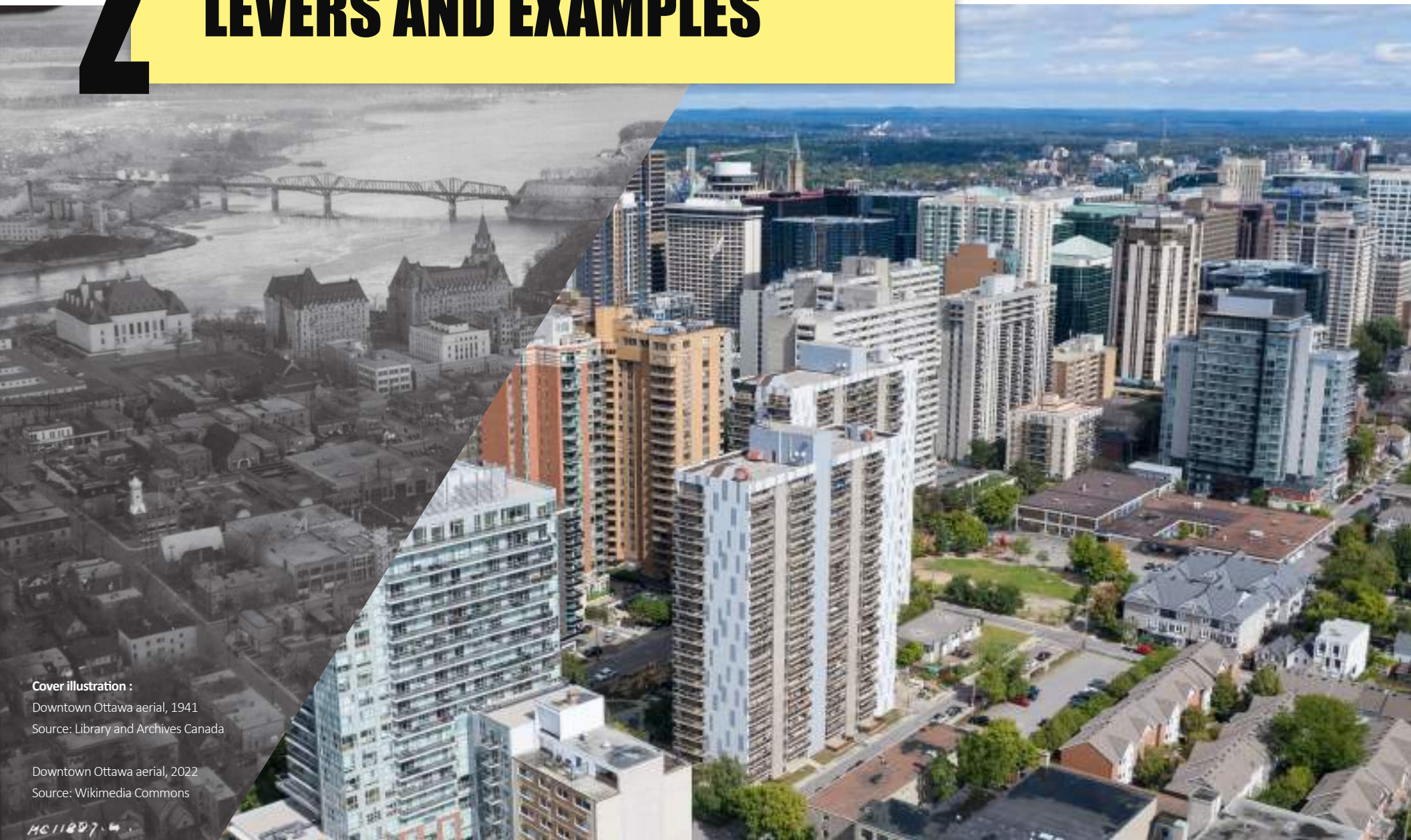
People centric
Green spaces, pedestrian-centric areas, all season uses
Public assets
Concert halls, public parks, knowledge centre, community centres, galleries
Round the clock entertainment
Restaurants, theatres, concert halls, arenas



DOWNTOWN OF THE FUTURE

2

LEVERS AND EXAMPLES



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

HC11807.4

PILLARS AND LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION

The range of issues and potential solutions discussed during our work are structured around four pillars that are foundational to the transformation of Downtown. These pillars are described as Living, Playing, Doing Business, and Shaping Downtown.

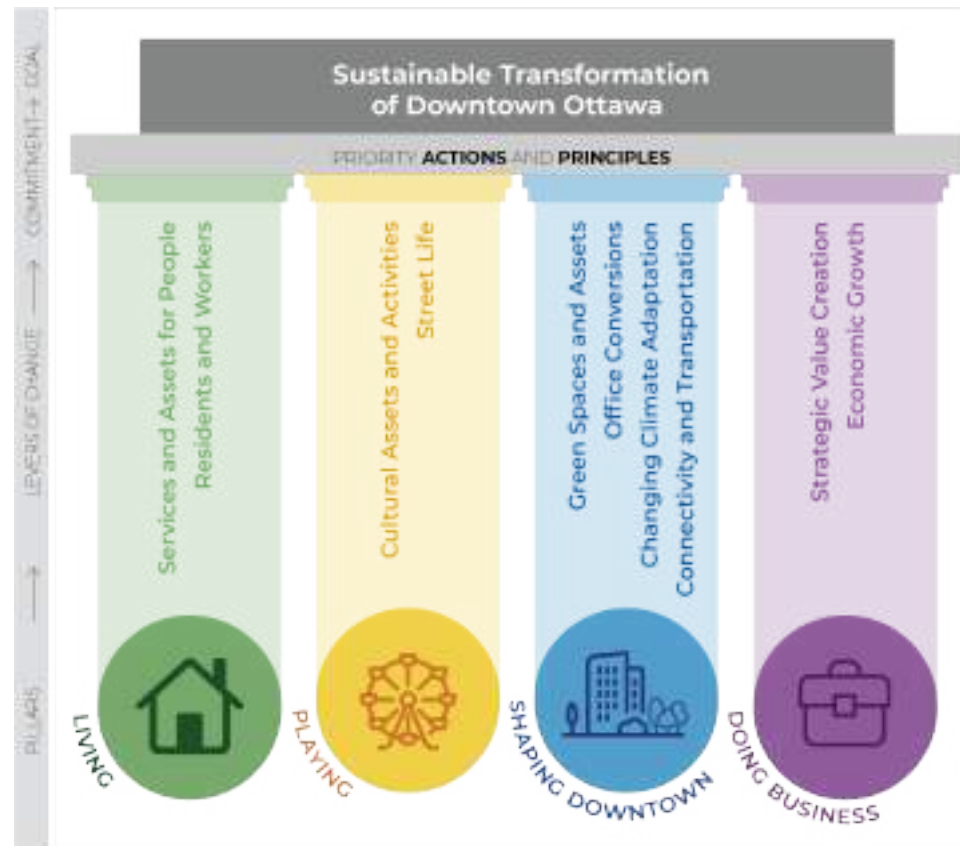
Living is about the conditions that allow a community to thrive, to feel safe, and to experience well-being. Playing focuses on the activities that give life to a place, culture, sports and entertainment. Doing Business considers the economic conditions that make it possible for a range of businesses to take root, grow, and contribute to the city’s revenue. Shaping Downtown is the physical transformation of the place to adapt to a changing demographic, environment, economy, and technology. The pillars provide the complete picture of the foundation of a transformed Downtown.

To pursue the full potential of a revitalized Downtown, this report identifies transformative levers that once activated are expected to stimulate the change and yield the highest sustainability benefits. The levers are provided here with tangible examples of their effectiveness in Ottawa and elsewhere.

All the discussions generated ideas and solutions that demonstrated a need for action. This report is offering a list of actions that the Task Force recommends as priorities to support change.

A sustainable approach to transforming Downtown is based on the need to

manage demographic, economic, social, environmental, and cultural changes. The car centric Downtown imagined by Greber and other mid-century city builders is to evolve to a people centric neighbourhood that contributes to the city’s economy and identity.



DOWNTOWN STRATEGY BUILT UPON THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

 CULTURAL ASSETS & ACTIVITIES



 SERVICES & ASSETS FOR PEOPLE



 GREEN SPACES & ASSETS



 STREET LIFE



 OFFICE CONVERSIONS



 ECONOMIC GROWTH



Each lever is an opportunity that has an impact on transforming Downtown. These levers have demonstrated their benefits, as shown by the work of a selection of partners Downtown and elsewhere in the city, as well as in other places comparable to Ottawa. Each lever includes a sample of partners in action and examples of their effectiveness.

 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



 STRATEGIC VALUE CREATION



 RESIDENTS & WORKERS



 CONNECTIVITY & TRANSPORTATION





Cultural Assets & Activities



WHY CULTURAL ASSETS & ACTIVITIES IN DOWNTOWN?

Culture generates significant economic and social benefits and can further be enhanced in Downtown Ottawa. There is an extraordinary opportunity to boost investments in this under tapped sector through activities, events, infrastructure, support to artists, and public art. Downtown combines one of the city’s oldest neighborhoods and its newest infrastructure making it ideal to showcase the city’s identity as historic, innovative, and creative. This will help support the city’s vision of becoming a hub of creativity and a destination for culture.



28- Ottawa Jazz Festival at Confederate Park, 2016.

KEY FIGURES

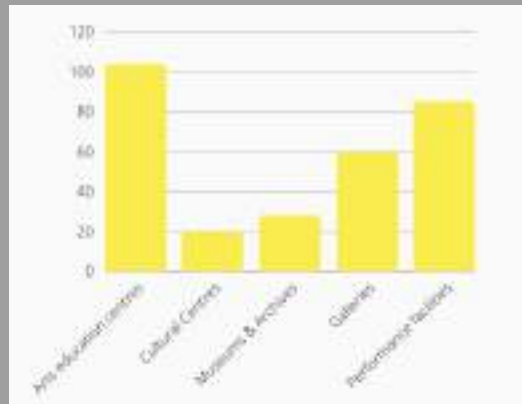
\$3.4 billion

Culture GDP in Ottawa 2016
Source: Ottawa Cultural Alliance, 2019

11 million tourists

in Ottawa per year

Source: Ottawa Tourism



Source: Ottawa Community Foundation, 2016

113 FESTIVALS

IN OTTAWA

Source: Ottawa Culture Research Group, 2018

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“

Cultural offerings could include events and exhibitions that showcase Indigenous art, music, and storytelling, as well as opportunities for non-Indigenous people to learn about the history and ongoing experiences of Indigenous peoples.

IMPACT



For every dollar of culture/cultural activities invested, the return is \$6. Neighbourhoods where cultural activities, heritage structures, and quality architecture are most concentrated rank highest in sense of well-being, attractiveness, and creativity.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa is a vibrant cultural district that Ottawans flock to for year-round entertainment, where Ottawa artists get to showcase their creativity, and that positions the city as a top cultural destination in North America. Downtown Ottawa completes the investments made at Lansdowne, the Byward Market, and LeBreton Flats.

CASE STUDY: MONTREAL

Quartier des Spectacles

The Quartier des Spectacles neighborhood of Montreal is a vibrant centre for arts and entertainment. Known as one of the largest cultural districts in the world, the area presents a variety of theatres, performance venues, art galleries, and public spaces, and hosts many music festivals, exhibitions, performances, and cultural productions (such as the Montreal International Jazz Festival and the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival) attracting both local residents and visitors. The Quartier des Spectacles is a mosaic of arts, community engagement, and cultural exchange, and has become a recognized symbol for creativity in Quebec.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



29- Mural on Preston Street in Little Italy, 2018 © Ottawa Tourism

Ottawa's Italian Week is an arts and cultural festival held annually since 1975 to promote Italian cultural experiences. It is one of the longest running art and cultural festivals in Ottawa and celebrates the rich heritage of Italians and Italian-Canadians. While focused on the neighbourhood of Little Italy, there are events and activities hosted throughout Ottawa including a masterclass in Italian cheese tasting, lectures by local Italian-Canadian authors, Italian chamber music concerts, and a Mercato di Preston St featuring local artists.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



OTTAWA MUSIC
INDUSTRY COALITION
COALITION DE L'INDUSTRIE
DE LA MUSIQUE D'OTTAWA

Ottawa Music Industry Coalition works with music artists, businesses, festivals, and venues to create and promote a vibrant local music industry in the National Capital Region.

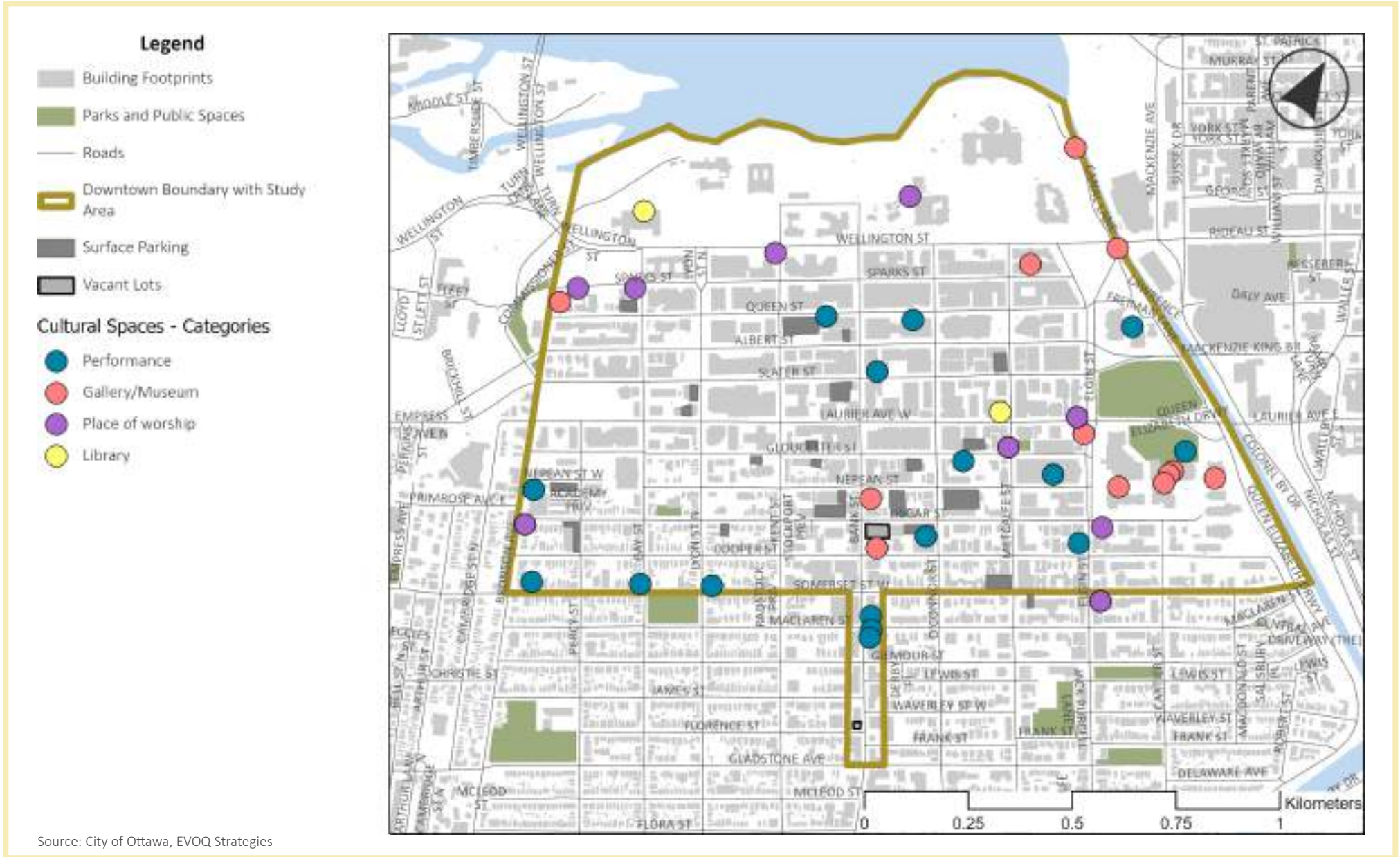


Ottawa Tourism is dedicated to creating a responsible, sustainable, and positive tourism industry, in the National Capital Region, which empowers and benefits local, social-cultural, and Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs.



30- Quartiers des Spectacles © Stéphan Poulin, Tourisme Montréal

CULTURAL SPACES OR SPACES WITH POTENTIAL CULTURAL USE IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA





Street Life



WHY STREET LIFE IN DOWNTOWN?

Street life is a low-hanging fruit lever that allows a transition from an office worker environment to one that is traditionally associated with urban life. It offers a different mindset to stimulate activity. It's a lever that first requires a policy review and eventually physical changes to the urban environment. It focuses on conserve heritage assets and rehabilitate them where they help build the identity of the neighbourhood. It introduces quality architectural and urban structures to strengthen the narrative of its identity. It helps with social inclusion, economic opportunities, and with the quality of life of residents.



31- Busker Festival on Sparks Street © Ottawa Tourism

KEY FIGURES

0.637 KM
OF PARKING ENTRANCES AND BLIND WALLS
WITH NO STREET CONTACT
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

Total pedestrian network length
76.978 km
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

5 PLAZAS
2 PUBLIC + 3 PRIVATELY OWNED
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

Sparks Street
1 PEDESTRIAN STREET
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“*More and wider sidewalks with separate cycling lanes, protected intersections throughout Downtown Ottawa, more shade for pedestrians.*”

IMPACT



Facilitating street life increases the number of small businesses, increases tourism revenue, increases opportunities for the economic integration, reduces conflicts between people living in the streets and businesses, displays a city's identity, and strengthens a neighbourhood.

TOWARDS A VISION

Street life in Downtown is vibrant and exciting, catering to the needs of residents, workers and visitors. It is organic in nature where some activities are permanent while others are temporary. Street life is at its liveliest when food, music, art, performances are in full swing. People gather at different times of the day and evening for spontaneous activities, to participate in events, or simply to stroll and enjoy the sight, sounds and smells of the neighbourhood (see Appendix C map).

CASE STUDY: PARIS, FRANCE

Paris-Plages

The 'Paris-Plages' scheme was started in 2002 for Parisians who were unable to leave the city during the warmest months. Every summer, temporary artificial beaches are set along the river Seine in the centre of Paris that offers its residents and visitors free places to relax and enjoy leisure waterside activities. There are cool lawns, sun umbrellas, deckchairs, palm trees, cultural and sports activities. Since it began, the 'Paris-Plages' scheme has added new structures, features and activities, including a shuttle ferry, a floating swimming pool, dance lessons, sand-sculptures, cafés and sports competitions along the banks.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



32- Parliament Hill Yoga © Ottawa Tourism

Residents and visitors alike have participated in free outdoor yoga classes on Parliament Hill during summer months, partnered with Lululemon and Pure Yoga.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



Aims to advance the knowledge and appreciation of music through creative programming, unique musical experiences, and collaboration with diverse artists.



A commercial district where business and property owners collaborate with local partners to improve the marketing, business recruitment, and special events of the pedestrian-friendly area.

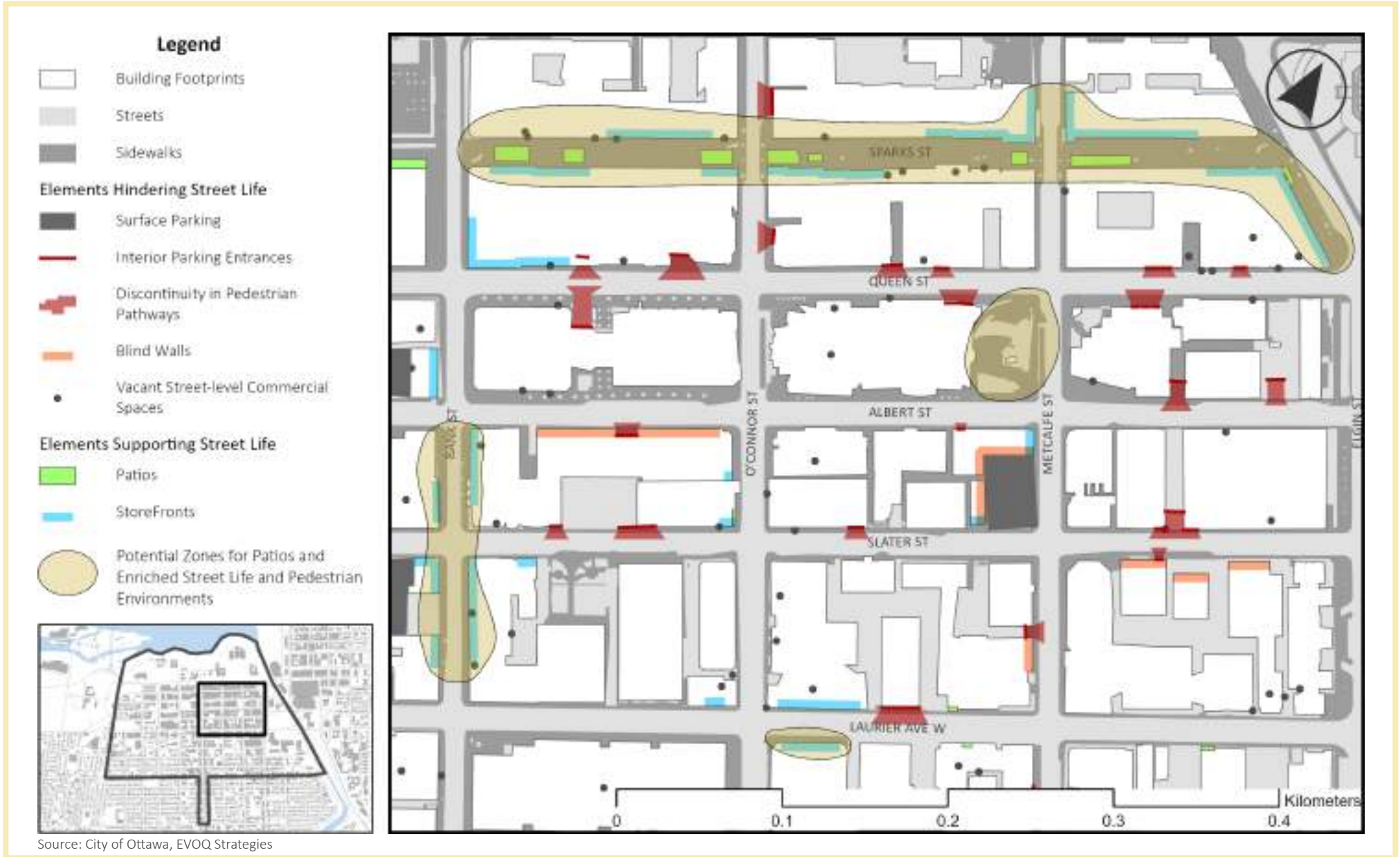


A vibrant community and shopping area focused on connecting people to the Downtown core. Includes local programs that enhance the community, expand businesses and investments, and becoming a cultural, entertainment and business district.



33- Paris-Plage artificial beach, 2013.

STREET LIFE OPPORTUNITIES AND WEAKNESSES : SAMPLE IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA





Economic Growth



WHY ECONOMIC GROWTH IN DOWNTOWN?

Downtown is a significant source of revenue for the city and for many businesses. That ability is under pressure and is a major focus of revitalization. Economic growth is a lever to prioritize and reinvent the way Downtown will respond to the economy of the future. This is the opportunity to lay the foundation for a Downtown that continues to actively contribute to the city's economy.



34- Shopping at Byward Market © Ottawa Torusim

KEY FIGURES

\$13.9 **billion in GDP**
Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2021

\$2.2 billion
in visitor spending each year
Source: Ottawa Tourism, 2023

424
RETAIL STORES
in Downtown Ottawa
Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2021

461
BARS AND RESTAURANTS
in Downtown Ottawa
Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2021

**Tourism, Arts & Culture,
 and Entertainment
 are value generating sectors**

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

entrepreneurship
 employment
 products, synergy
 services, creation
 amenities, hospitals
 work and growth
 innovation, retail, city, sustainable
 spaces, development
 lab opportunities, Life, Ottawa
 creation, Sciences
 opportunities, industry

“

[We want to see] lively local artisan markets, less resellers, street music, reduced car traffic on some streets in the byward market, more places to sit. More residences mean more people, more activity, more economy.

IMPACT



An economically vibrant Downtown has an impact on inclusion by offering more opportunities for people to start or expand businesses and enter the labour market, attracts new residents who live and invest in Downtown, and provides opportunities for universities to establish relationships with prospective employers. Shaping Downtown to respond to the economic drivers of the future has impacts on the City’s growth, competitiveness, and ability to sustain its long-term needs.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa is home to a significant number of businesses that are shaping and are active participants in the economy of the future. New residents have made their home Downtown and have strengthened the community. The economic impact of Downtown continues to be significant and its economic strength allows the City to expand its programs to help the most vulnerable and improve the sense of wellbeing of its residents.

CASE STUDY: TORONTO

The Distillery District.

A previously neglected industrial area, now serves as an important area for economic growth and is recognized as a hub for arts, culture, and entertainment in the region. Following renovations, the historic buildings were converted into areas for economic development and tourism drivers, and include art galleries, boutique shops, restaurants and bars, and event spaces. Seasonal uses include festival and entertainment space, a Christmas market area, and locations for film shoots. This has generated employment opportunities, increased tourism revenue, and boosted the economic importance of the region.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



35- Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus, 2019 © Iezumbalaberenjena, Flickr

The new Ottawa Civic Hospital campus will be one of Canada’s largest adult acute care hospitals with a focus on neuroscience and trauma centre in addition to surgical suites, outpatient clinics, and areas for specialized care. It is estimated the project will provide approximately \$2 billion for Ottawa’s economy, create over 4,000 full-time jobs and provide an output of more than \$3.75 billion. It is estimated the new campus will support over 6,000 workers and boost Ottawa’s reputation as a global hub for medical innovation that will help support the creation and growth of health sector industries.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



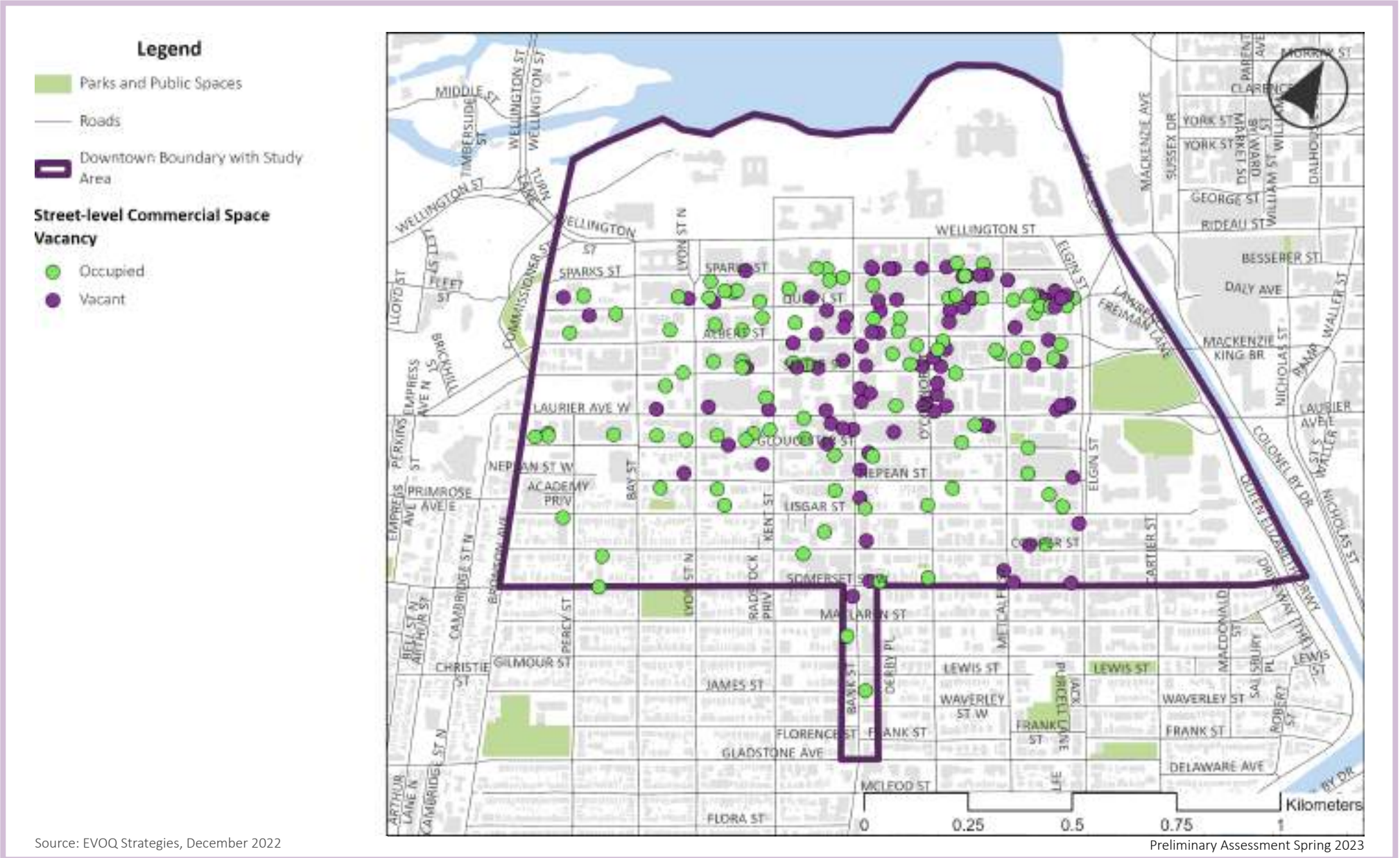
OBoT advocates for collaborative and sustainable communities, supports local businesses, encourages citizens to live, work, and invest in Ottawa, and creates opportunities for positive resource use and business development.

Ottawa Tourism is dedicated to creating a responsible, sustainable, and positive tourism industry, in the National Capital Region, which empowers and benefits local, social-cultural, and Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs.



36- Distillery District in Toronto, 2015

STREET LEVEL COMMERCIAL VACANCY IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA





Strategic Value Creation



WHY STRATEGIC VALUE CREATION IN DOWNTOWN?

At a time when the City experiences budgetary pressures, the ability to determine the best way to leverage investments is critical. Furthermore, the federal government is reducing its footprint, with impacts such as the sale of Esplanade Laurier, and at the same time redeveloping significant parcels of land, such as Block 2 on Wellington Street. These are opportunities that affect the future of Downtown and for which prioritizing the strategic approach to public investments, in some cases in partnership with the private sector, for maximum value creation is critical. Such an approach is a lever to capitalize on the long-term transformation of Downtown by offering an overarching cohesive vision and is an essential aspect of city building.



37- Ottawa sign in Byward Market, 2022 © Ottawa Tourism

KEY FIGURES

12 ROAD WORKS
MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

Source: City of Ottawa, 2023

6 MAJOR PROJECTS
AFFECTING DOWNTOWN AREA

Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

a PUBLIC LIBRARY can bring
\$256,000,000
DIRECT AND INDIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Source: Ottawa Culture Research Group, 2018

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

artistic streetscape
events
investment tourist
street-level transport
activities attractions
residents small businesses

“

Enable Downtown Ottawa’s revitalization by investing in public transit, supporting economic development initiatives, promoting affordable housing, preserving and celebrating heritage, and collaborating with local government and stakeholders.

IMPACT



Since land Downtown has significant value, applying this lens helps enhance the breadth of benefits to the community, direction for private investments, leverage and coordinate public investments for neighbourhood development for a greater impact. Other impacts include supporting growth, nurturing innovation, improving the quality of the built environment, enhancing the attractiveness of Downtown for visitors, and providing services to the community.

TOWARDS A VISION

The relationship between the public and private sectors and between the federal and municipal governments is strong as the work of investing in Downtown and prioritizing impactful projects is the result of a collaborative approach to city building. Through policy and financial incentives, investments, partnerships, and other creative mechanisms Downtown is a hub of activity.

CASE STUDY: WINNIPEG

Waterfront Drive

Located in Downtown Winnipeg, along the west bank of the Red River and Winnipeg's Exchange District, Waterfront Drive project strove to revitalize the Downtown waterfront by creating a focal point for new mixed-use development. Previously characterised by parking lots and warehouses, Waterfront Drive is a successful initiative that created a thriving Downtown neighbourhood, increased access to the river and the renewal of the Exchange District.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



38- Rendition of North View of Wasa Zibi Plaza

Zibi is a 34-acre community on the banks of the Ottawa river that includes commercial space and retail opportunities, event centres and office spaces, riverfront greenspaces, parks and plaza locations, and residential areas. It includes several districts including the Heritage Promenade, Laurier Corridor, Chaudière East and West, Albert Island, North Shore, and the Waterfront Quarter. The area is envisioned as a sustainable community and productivity hub with areas for networking, creative workspaces, and co-living/co-working spaces.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



The OBoT advocates supporting local businesses and citizens by creating sustainable and collaborative opportunities for positive business development.

Invest Ottawa develops programs and services for businesses, and creates value through innovative collaboration and development opportunities to create growth for business communities.

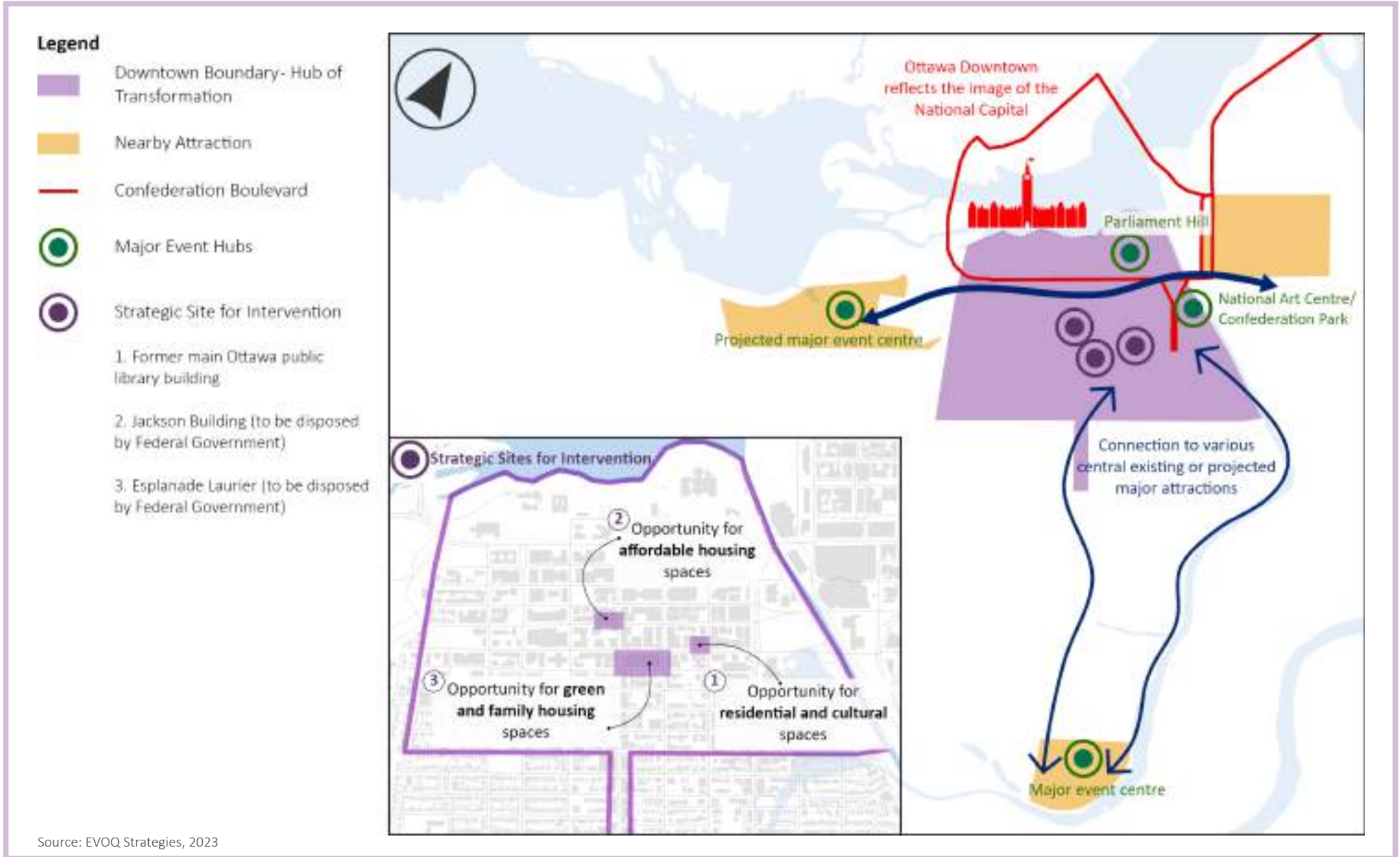


The Ottawa Cultural Alliance ensures that needs, concerns, and opportunities of Ottawa's cultural sector are recognized through a network of collaborative cultural community engagement.



39- Waterfront Drive, Winnipeg, 2012

STRATEGIC VALUE INVESTMENTS CONTEXT





Services and Assets for People



WHY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE IN DOWNTOWN?

Providing services to address homelessness, helps individuals suffering from mental health issues, supports harm reduction for those suffering from addiction, and reduces outdoor drug use. These are immediate levers to alter the perception of Downtown as unattractive and problem riddled. Providing services and facilities to support families, such as community centres, schools and clinics, are attractive for the demographic that Downtown needs to grow. Providing services and settlement support for the integration of immigrants and refugees helps capitalize on their social and economic contributions to Ottawa's growth. Where immigrants and refugees land first is usually where they grow roots.



40- Community housing ©Community Housing Transformation Centre

KEY FIGURES

2 schools
Source: City of Ottawa, 2023

6.3%
families with children
in Centretown
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

12.9%
over 65+
in Centretown
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

6 General Health Clinics
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

1,230
people living in homelessness
in Ottawa
Source: The Homeless Hub, 2021

4 Mental Health Clinics
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

1 Addiction Treatment Centre
in Study Area
Source: Ottawa Public Health, 2023

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“More affordable housing, more shelters, safe injection sites, more focus on the underlying causes of homelessness and working to address those...start building deeply affordable, fully subsidized public housing, including supportive housing for vulnerable people.”

IMPACT



Reducing homelessness, reducing outdoor drug consumption, reducing police and paramedic interventions, increasing public and individual safety, supporting inclusion, and improving the quality of neighbourhoods are the significant impacts of applying this lever. The economic outcomes include new business opportunities, increased tourism revenue, and increase in property value.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa is an inclusive community that is safe for everyone. People can access the services they need in an effective way. They feel included, heard, and valued. The means for the neighbourhood to thrive are all available within the area, such as schools, clinics, and specialized services.

CASE STUDY: VIENNA

The 'Vienna Model'

More than 60% of residents live in subsidised dwellings, owned by municipal government and state-subsidized, not-for-profit cooperatives. Affordable housing units have rent subsidies which ensure that residents don't spend any more than 30% of their income on housing. Municipal housing in Vienna includes larger housing complexes, green space courtyards and playgrounds, and a wealth of community services. New building complexes are often developed in conjunction with transport routes, health care clinics, schools, and other amenities. Vienna's approach creates not only housing, but community.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



41- Housing First Program system © City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa's Housing First Program connects people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing and supports based on their needs. The service uses an assessment tool and referring agencies to ensure those with the highest needs are able to access support more quickly. The City of Ottawa has seen major reductions in homelessness thanks to the collective efforts of community partners in the implementation and redevelopment of the Housing First Program.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



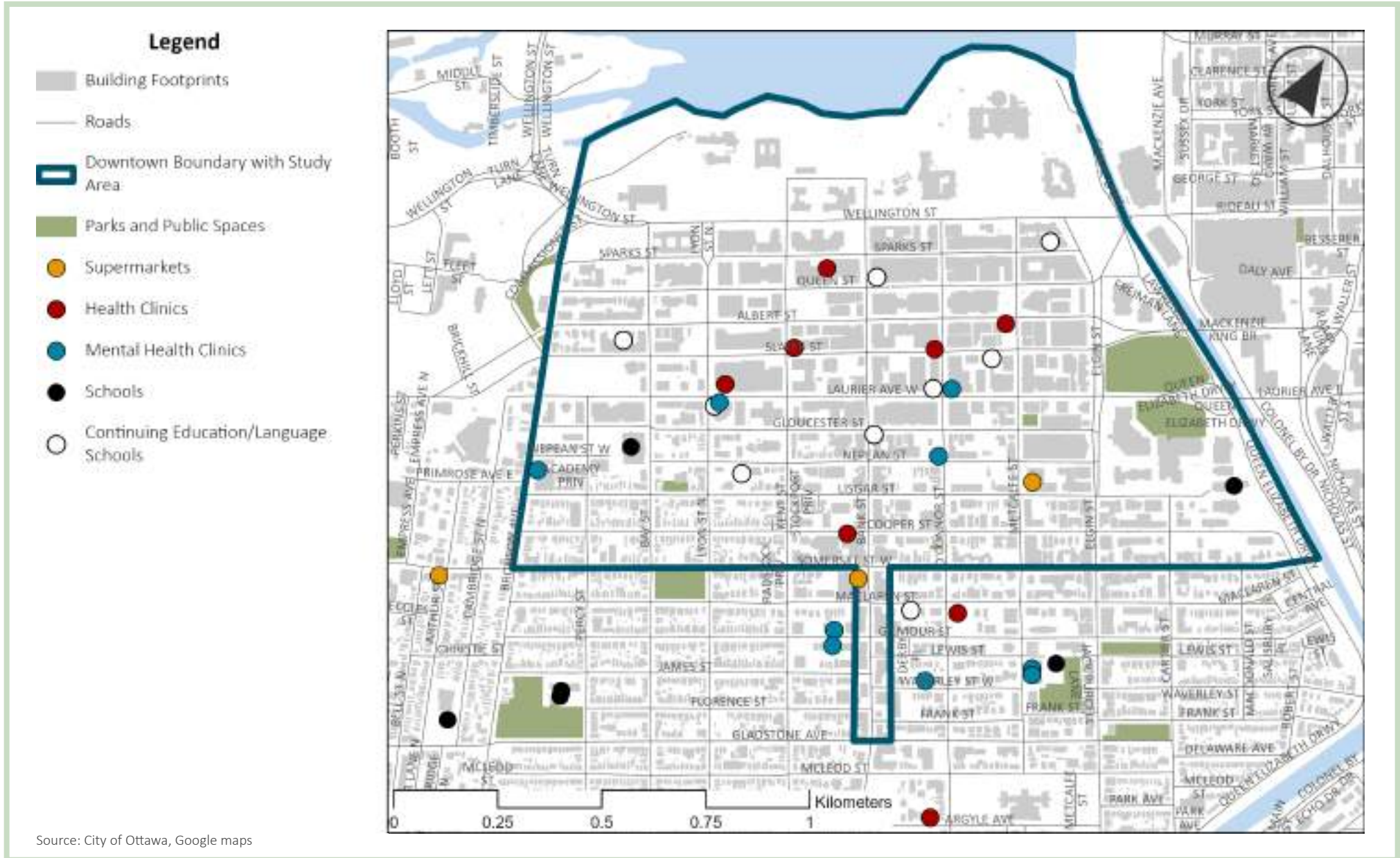
The Centretown Community Health Centre provides quality health and social services to individuals and families in local communities to ensure multiple levels of care. Through active engagement, the organization tailors their services to local needs and issues, creating improvements for both individual and community health.

A member-driven coalition of people and organizations working together to end homelessness through systems planning and coordination, public education and advocacy, and community-wide mobilization.



42- Vienna social housing, 2016.

SERVICES AND ASSETS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA





Residents & Workers



WHY RESIDENTS & WORKERS IN DOWNTOWN?

The revitalization of Downtown is dependent on people living here. It needs to focus on attracting more residents, especially families, and consider a changing demographics. The federal government has committed to attracting over half a million new immigrants annually which is an opportunity for Ottawa to become a destination of choice for many. This is also an opportunity to establish a strategic relationship between attracting new residents and encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting high growth economic sectors. These new businesses would add to the well-established ones ushering a new era for our Downtown.



43- Children's playground at Lansdowne Park, 2021.

KEY FIGURES

over 30,000 residents
IN CENTRETOWN
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

57,666 WORKERS
IN CENTRETOWN

Source: Employment Study, 2016
*with post-covid-45% decrease

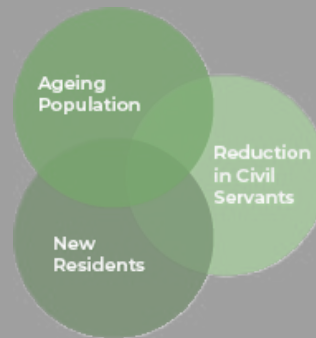
60.5%
one-person households
Source: CMHC, 2016

highest crime rate in Ottawa
15,162 crimes/100,000 people
IN SOMERSET WARD
Source: Ottawa Police, 2022

64.1%
apartment in building that
has five or more storeys
Source: CMHC, 2016

8,640 RESIDENTS/KM²
POPULATION DENSITY
IN MODIFIED STUDY AREA
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

TRENDS IN
DOWNTOWN
AREA



Source: City of Ottawa, 2003

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“

*A work-life balance possible
Downtown makes residing there
attractive when affordable housing,
shopping for necessities, access to
public transportation, and a diverse
cultural life is available.*

IMPACT



Residents, owners and renters, add to the city’s property tax revenue, spend more locally and are invested in shaping a healthy, attractive and safe neighbourhood. Immigrants typically settle and raise their families in the first neighbourhoods they find a home. They also attract the services and products that cater to the needs of cultural communities, such as grocery stores, cultural institutions, and community centres.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa is a vibrant neighbourhood where families mix with young professionals. Many new Canadians have shaped Downtown making one of the city’s new destinations as a cultural neighbourhood, where shops, places, and events bring to life our city’s cultural diversity.

CASE STUDY: CALIFORNIA

Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley, California is an example of a prosperous area that has been shaped through the actions and entrepreneurship of immigrants and their families. By 2005, over half of all technology and engineering companies in Silicon Valley had at least one immigrant founder, and that number has continued to rise with contributions from the next generation. In Silicon Valley specifically, immigrants have been instrumental in positioning the region as a hub for technological advancement and attracting talent from around the world. Immigrants bring diverse perspectives, increase community connections and collaboration, and encourage economic innovation and entrepreneurship.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



In 1979, Ottawa embraced private sponsorship, with the city’s mayor Marion Dewar leading an effort known as Project 4000. Ottawa residents sponsored 4,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Since then, the Vietnamese community has contributed to the economic and social fabric of the city, with businesses, restaurants, cultural events, and international exchange. In addition to promoting cultural diversity and stimulating economic growth in the region, the Ottawa chapter of the Vietnamese Canadian Centre also raised \$16,000 in funds for displaced Ukrainians in 2022.

44- Saigon Square, 2020 © R. D. Barry, Flickr

PARTNERS IN ACTION



The Centretown Community Association helps to improve the quality of life for all residents of Centretown by informing and engaging with Centretown residents on issues of importance in the community and promoting interests of the community with all levels of government.



45- Silicon Valley, 2013.

BEDROOMS PER DWELLING ACROSS DISSEMINATION AREAS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA





Green Spaces & Assets



WHY GREEN SPACES IN DOWNTOWN?

Green spaces are critical to the sense of well-being, addressing climate change, activating an area and the ability to densify a neighbourhood. Centretown already has the highest density in Ottawa and will continue to attract more people, with a focus on families. The neighbourhood also has the lowest proportion of green municipal amenities per capita in the city. Some areas may be ripe for a new signature green space others more suitable for smaller parkettes. The study of obsolete buildings for potential conversion may be an opportunity to increase the number of green spaces and assets by converting space into parks and increasing the requirements for trees and other green assets.



46- Commissioners Park, 2018.

KEY FIGURES

4 community gardens

Source: Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2019

2.4 M2

of green space/resident & worker

Sources: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

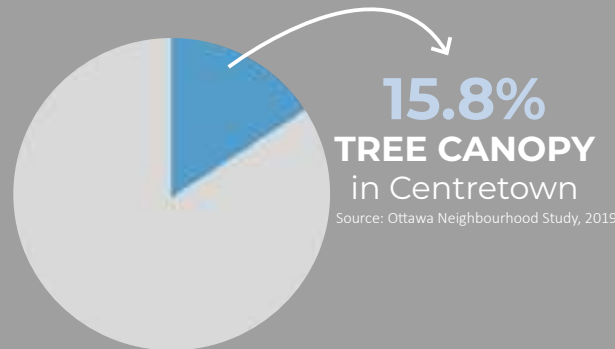
5 green spaces + 5 private and public plazas

Sources: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

93,398 m2

Total green space in Centretown

Sources: EVOQ Strategies, 2023



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“...access to green space in Downtown Ottawa could be improved by redeveloping surface parking lots and vacant lots into parks and plazas.”

IMPACT



Properties in the vicinity of green spaces have a higher value on average of 20%. The increase in green spaces and assets in Downtown will reduce the number of heat pockets, increase the safety of vulnerable people, increase pedestrian traffic, increase the activation of public spaces, offer additional opportunities for events, and increase the absorption of excess water.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa is an area of the city where it is enjoyable and comfortable to walk and cycle in the heat of summer. The number of green spaces allow people living in the apartment buildings easily reach an outdoor space, away from the confines of their homes together with their neighbours and friends. Parks welcome buskers and are animated with the sounds of children playing. The spaces become host to outdoor events in winter to seal the status of Ottawa as a northern capital of culture.

CASE STUDY: NEW YORK CITY

The High Line

Created on a former New York Central Railroad track, this elevated urban linear park was reimagined as a public space that includes gardens, art, performances, food services, and more.

The High Line has now become one of the most popular visitor attractions in New York City.

The project has inspired cities throughout the United States to repurposing disused infrastructure as public space.



48- High Line Park, over the 18th Street crossing, 2012.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



47- Dundonald Park, 2012.

Dundonald Park

In 2021, the organization 8 80 Cities conducted public surveys, workshops, and public-engagement sessions to collect community vision and strategies for Dundonald Park. In partnership with Gehl Architects & St. Lawrence BIA, and funded partially by the Ontario Government, a report was created to inform stakeholders about opportunities for implementing recommendations for the park to encourage greater public use and community building.

EnviroCentre designs and supplies practical solutions to dramatically reduce climate emissions to achieve a sustainable net-zero future in Ottawa and beyond.

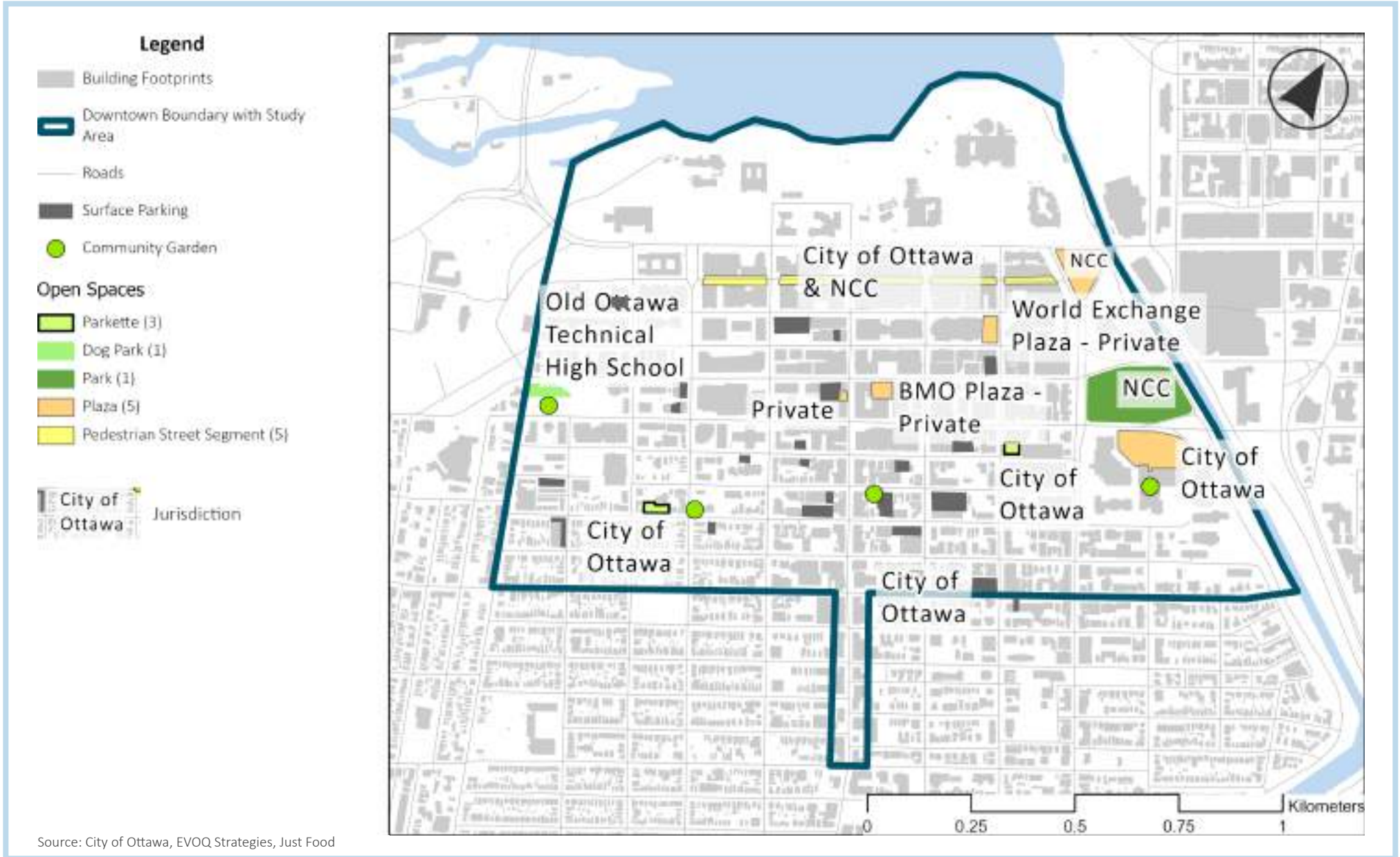
The Centretown Community Association has a number of very active committees that deal with a wide range of issues. The Centretown NeighbourWoods team was formed in 2021 to promote actions that protect and enhance the urban tree canopy within Centretown and beyond. These efforts will help mitigate local impacts of climate change.

PARTNERS IN ACTION

envirocentre



GREEN SPACES AND ASSETS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA





Office Conversions



WHY OFFICE CONVERSIONS IN DOWNTOWN?

Downtown Ottawa has been defined for 50 years by its office towers. This model is not adapted to the needs of today's economy, workforce, and urban life. Additionally, Ottawa is lacking housing, especially affordable housing, spaces for creative industries and for the life science sector, and research facilities. With millions of square feet of real estate, office conversions are a lever of transformation to address these and to foster inclusion, economic growth, and reduce the pressure on landfills by reducing construction waste.



49- Ottawa Skyline, 2009.

KEY FIGURES

+/- **100** OFFICE TOWERS
Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

59.8%
Of condos in Ottawa owned by an investor with 3+ properties
Source: Canadian Housing Statistics Program

11-17
potential buildings for conversion

in Downtown Ottawa
Source: Canadian Urban Institute, 2023

Adequate Floor plate size

required for conversions to residential range

24 ft - 50 ft

Source: Canadian Urban Institute, 2023



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

more mid-level density
accessible housing
high costs for conversion opportunities
affordable housing
long-term care
commercial and residential development
families
apartments
incentives
mixed-use spaces
new build is easier
slow process for conversions
density

“

It is important to develop a range of housing options, including affordable housing for low-income residents, social housing for vulnerable populations, and market-rate housing for middle-income residents.

IMPACT



The conservative assessment of office conversions to housing would introduce up to 4000 new units to the current stock. Universities would have access to spaces Downtown to support their strategic priorities in research and development. Street life would be enhanced by the conversion of buildings to support a diversity of commercial activities at street level.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa has seen an increase in number of residents and workers from private sector industries attracted by the availability of housing, retaining Ottawa’s competitive edge in housing affordability. Housing has been made available for individuals to transition off the streets, for refugees to settle, and for immigrants to find a home. Ottawa is a leader in key growth industries, such as the life sciences. They can incubate and grow without needing to move to other cities.

CASE STUDY: AMSTERDAM

The Entrepotdok

The Entrepotdok (Warehouse Dock) on Kadijkseiland in Amsterdam consists of 84 warehouses used for shipping storage from 1708 onward.

In the 1980s, a plan was implemented for the adaptive reuse of the warehouses into social housing units, private residential, and commercial. To encourage a community aspect, the long, dark warehouse spaces were hollowed out in the centre to create a communal courtyard for residents to enjoy. Ground floor areas and larger warehouses are now used for small business units, restaurants, garages, and storage areas, and upper areas are mainly residential.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



50-Slayte Building, 2019

The Slayte building on 473 Albert Street is an adaptive reuse development converted from an existing office building into apartments. It includes 158 small suites, amenities and communal facilities including a rooftop terrace and fitness centre, and an underground garage with both car and bike parking spaces. This project provides an example of how Ottawa’s older Class B and C office buildings can be reinvigorated through adaptive reuse to bring new life to the Downtown core.



51-The Entrepotdok in Amsterdam, 2010.



**PARTNERS
IN
ACTION**



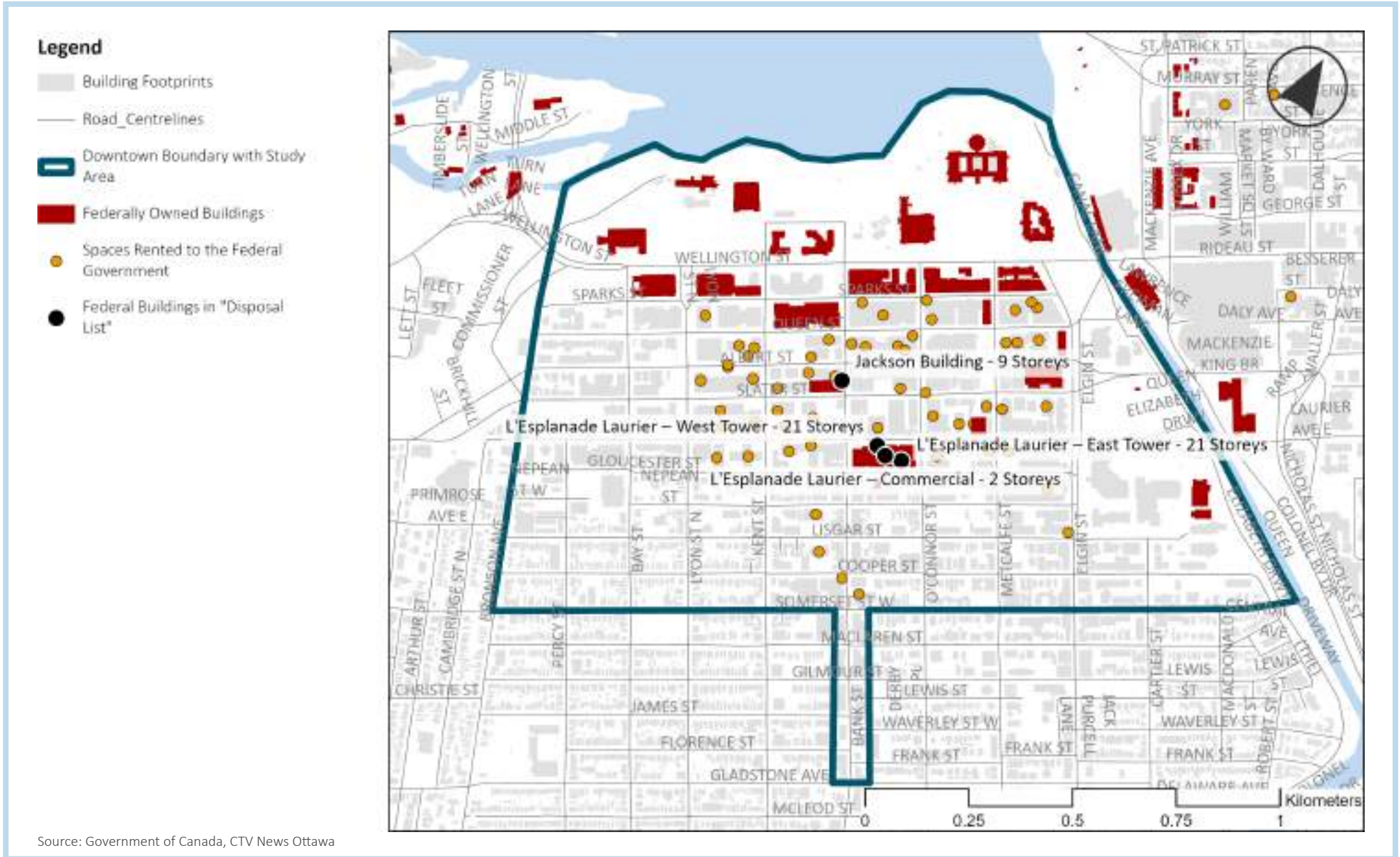
The OBoT published the 5-Pillar Plan to reimagine the future of Downtown, advocating for collaborative and sustainable communities, supporting local businesses, encouraging citizens to live, work, and invest in Ottawa.

BOMA represents the interests of commercial real estate owners and managers through advocacy, highest industry standards, educational development, and by fostering business relationships within Ottawa.



Cahdco collaborates with all levels of government, non-profits and private industry to create new and innovative space of social benefit and affordable housing in Ottawa.

FEDERALLY MANAGED BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA





Climate Change Adaptation



WHY CHANGING CLIMATE ADAPTATION IN DOWNTOWN?

Downtown Ottawa is about to undertake significant physical change as offices are going to be converted, new homes are built, and new activities are being planned. The transformation of the built environment is the opportunity to put in place the measures for future proofing it against the impact of climate change and improving its energy efficiency. Additionally, it facilitates the greening of the public realm. Lastly, it requires tackling waste management differently. Investments in that adaptation will offer a faster return and make the city more competitive.



52- High efficiency building Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 2019

KEY FIGURES

More **EXTREME** events for all seasons

Source: City of Ottawa, 2020

WARMER Winters

Source: City of Ottawa, 2020

Annual snowfall will decrease **20%**

Source: NCC, 2022

WETTER Springs

Source: City of Ottawa, 2020

8% increase in annual precipitation

Source: City of Ottawa, 2020

4x over 30°C Summer days

Source: City of Ottawa, 2020

about **30%** of waste in Ottawa is from construction & demolition

Source: City of Ottawa, 2009

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

cycling
shade environmental benefits public transit
green downtown spaces
reducing cars
pedestrians



By placing environmental considerations at the forefront, the Task Force can highlight the significance of sustainability and its role in driving Downtown's revitalization

IMPACT



Investing in adapting the built environment to climate change will reduce emissions, reduce the impact of climate change, increase the safety of residents and visitors, reduce operational costs, increase economic opportunities.

TOWARDS A VISION

The built environment of Downtown Ottawa is a model of climate change adaptability. The neighbourhood benefits from district energy (see maps in Appendix C) and other area adapted technologies to generate energy. The public and private infrastructure optimizes the use of innovative green technologies to manage emissions, for water management, and to reduce the effects of heat.

CASE STUDY: CHICAGO

The City of Chicago’s Climate Change Action Plan identifies the city’s vulnerability to extreme heat and weather events. In order to prepare adaptation strategies, Chicago identified ‘heat islands’ and adopted heat island reduction strategies through municipal programs which included green infrastructure projects. Through the identification of ‘hot spots’, heat reduction strategies like reflective roofing, green infrastructure, and rooftop gardens were put in place for existing buildings, including heritage buildings. New buildings were required to include flat roofs (meeting EPA Energy Star Cool Roof Standards) and promote new technologies like reflective roofing. It will help address construction waste by encouraging a reuse of materials, the rehabilitation of existing structures, and efficient building methods. This work incorporated green or cool roofs, cool pavements, and the increase of vegetation and trees to decrease heat islands and increase stormwater management.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



53- UOttawa campus, 2017 © lezumbalaberenjena, Flickr

In 2017, the University of Ottawa adopted Policy 72: Environmental Management and Sustainability which instigated the creation of a ‘Campus Sustainability Plan’. A series of deep energy retrofits have been implemented to reduce the amount of CO2 production and decrease the university’s carbon footprint. New buildings conform to green standards and the university facilities have replaced 1/3 of their vehicles with electric machines. By 2040, the University of Ottawa aims to have a completely carbon neutral campus through carbon offsets through direct emissions of gas and fuel.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



EnviroCentre designs and supplies practical solutions to dramatically reduce climate emissions to achieve a sustainable net-zero future in Ottawa and beyond. They are working to accelerate practical climate action at the pace required to ensure a healthy, sustainable future for all.

To demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship, Algonquin College is committed to lowering its ecological footprint, increases awareness in our community, and research new processes and innovative thinking to restoring and regenerating natural and built environments.

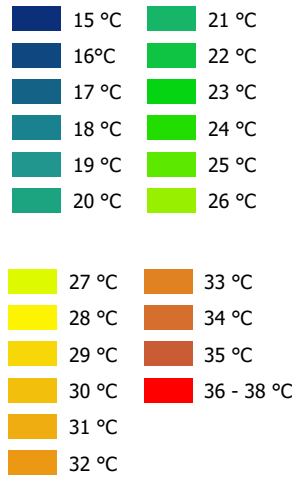


54- Green roof on Chicago City Hall, 2008.

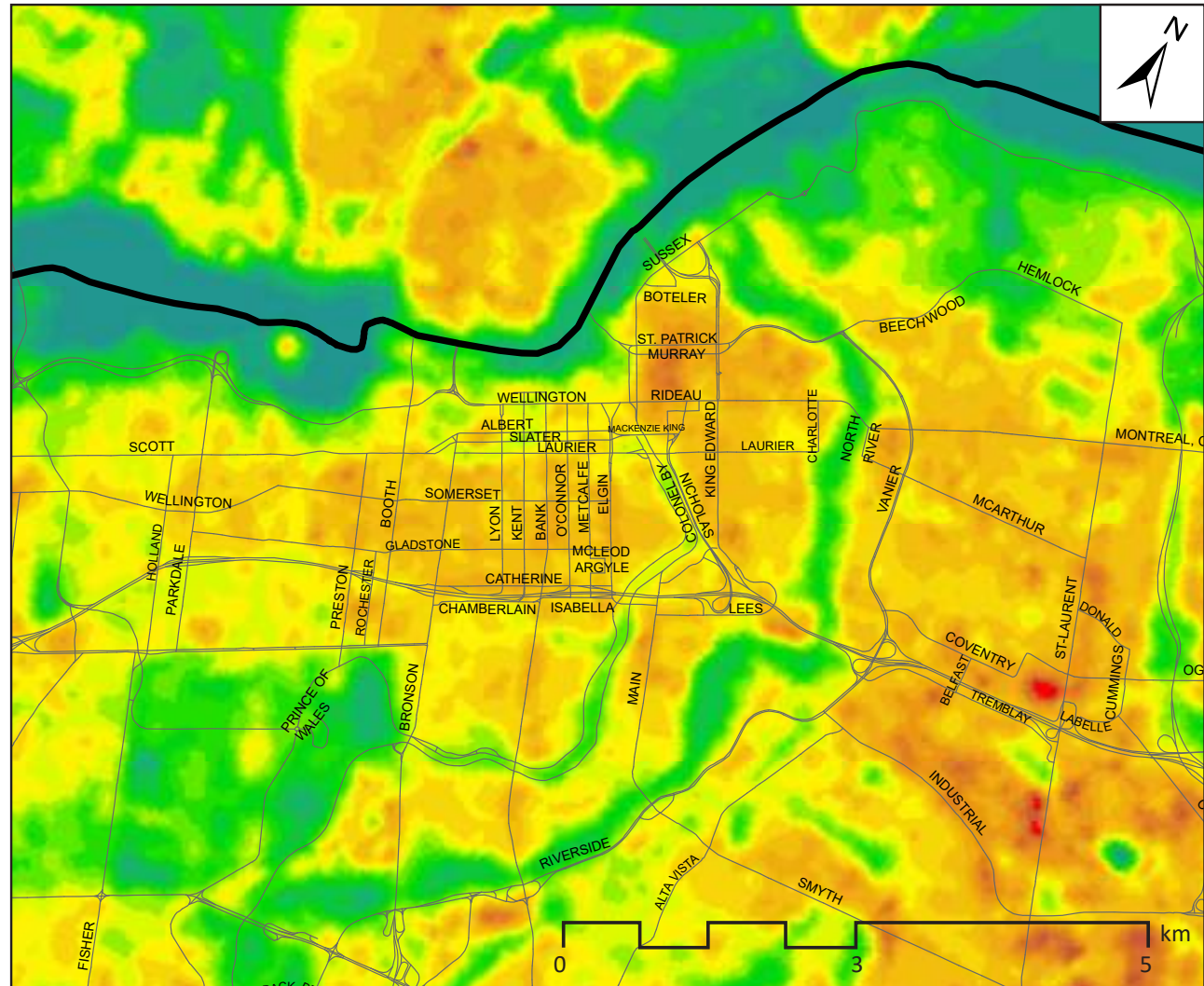
DOWNTOWN OTTAWA HEAT ISLAND MAP

Legend

Surface Temperature - July 18, 2019



Recorded temperature on that day:
partly cloudy; noon: 25°C; high of 27°C



Source: City of Ottawa



Connectivity & Transportation



WHY CONNECTIVITY & TRANSPORTATION IN DOWNTOWN?

A focus on the connectivity of Downtown with the surrounding areas and improving its non-car related infrastructure will ensure that people come here and enjoy the various assets on offer. It will help with the revitalization by making it a destination as much as a transitioning area to the connected neighbourhoods.



55- O-Train in Ottawa, 2015.

KEY FIGURES

12.76 KM
TOTAL CYCLING NETWORK

Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

487 bike stations

Source: Bike Ottawa, 2023

50 bus stops
+ 20 bus routes

Source: OC Transpo, 2023

76.98 KM
TOTAL PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

2 LRT stations:
Lyon + Parliament

Source: OC Transpo, 2023



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

streetscapes
wider sidewalks
transport
lack of availability
protected biking lanes
lack of accessibility
lack of affordability
increased accessibility
reduction of car traffic
lack of reliability and efficiency
transportation hub

“

...complete streets with wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and slow car traffic would make it much more pleasant to use active transportation.

IMPACT



Planning for the full connectivity of Downtown reduces emissions, increases economic opportunities, increases the value of investments, and strengthens the sense of neighbourhood. A focus on people achieves universal accessibility and improves safety, health and inclusion.

TOWARDS A VISION

Downtown Ottawa has the most complete network of pedestrian friendly infrastructure in the city. People can walk the trails along the canal, jump on a water shuttle, and connect with every corner of Downtown. Moving around Downtown is universally accessible, year-round, to help kids walk to school, elderly residents and visitors feel comfortable year round moving on the streets.

CASE STUDY: BUENOS AIRES

Avenida 9 de Julio

The “widest avenue in the world”, located in Buenos Aires has undergone an impressive transformation - 20 lanes of car traffic through the Downtown area was reimagined to include 11 bus-only lanes.

The change cut daily commuting times in half for 200,000 passengers. The project is part of a citywide Sustainable Mobility Plan that includes around 100 fully pedestrian blocks, extensions of the public bicycle system, and road safety infrastructure.

HAPPENING IN OTTAWA



56- Bus in Downtown Ottawa, 2008 © Ryan Flores, Flickr

The OC Transpo’s Bike and Ride Program has streamlined the transit service between bikes, bus, and trains. Bicycle racks have been installed at O-Train stations and most Transitway stations, the Rack and Roll service has equipped over 600 buses with bike racks, and bicycle repair stations have been included in some bus stations- all in the effort to make a multi-use public transit system more efficient for its users.

PARTNERS IN ACTION



OC Transpo provides local transit services in Ottawa and Gatineau, including bus and O-Train networks, accessible transportation, and Park and Ride programs.

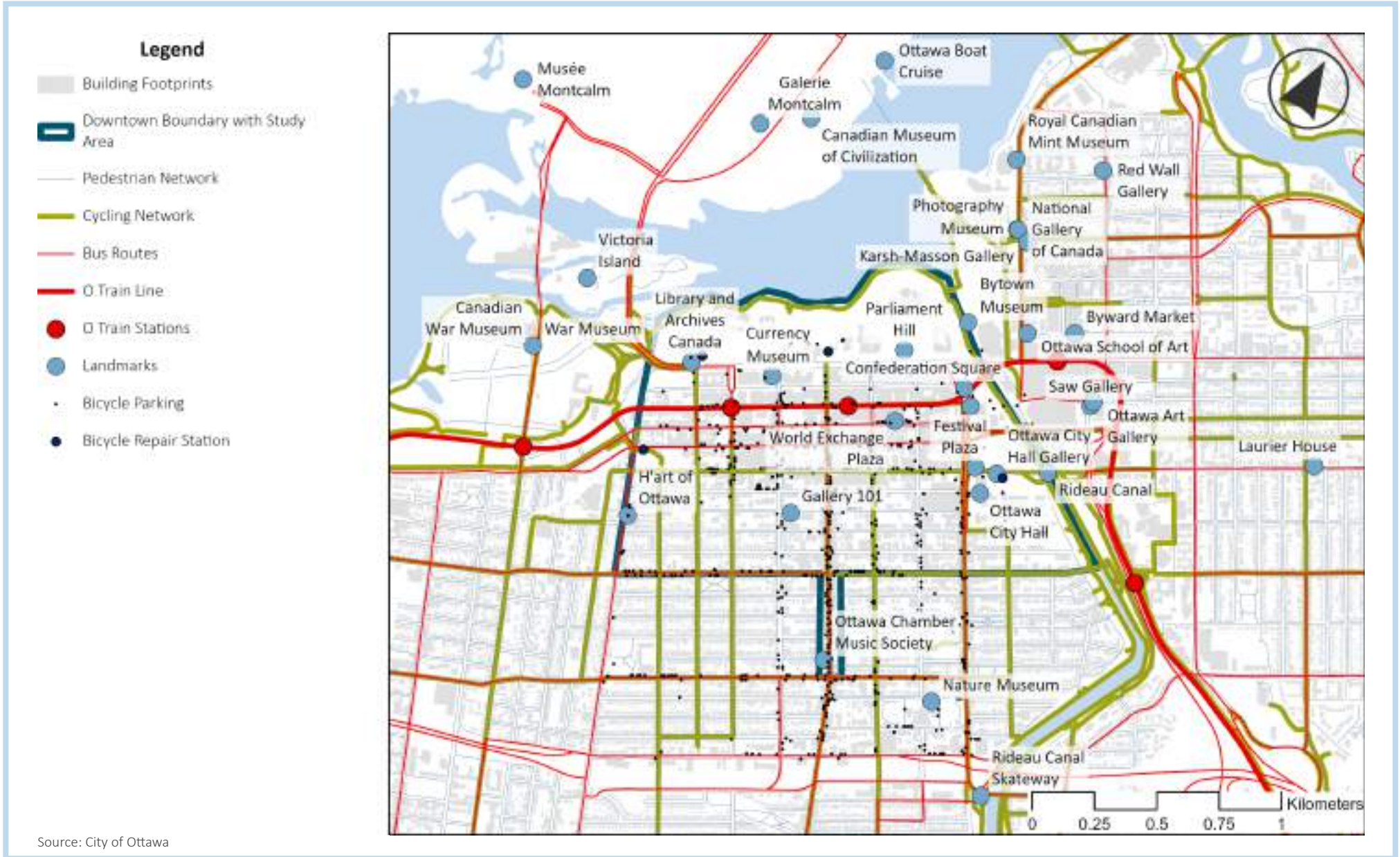


Bike Ottawa aims to make Ottawa a bike-friendly city which benefits individuals and communities by providing safe, accessible, comfortable, and convenient avenues for transport and mobility.



57- Avenida 9 de Julio after transformation, 2011

PUBLIC TRANSIT IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA



In collaboration with



3

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

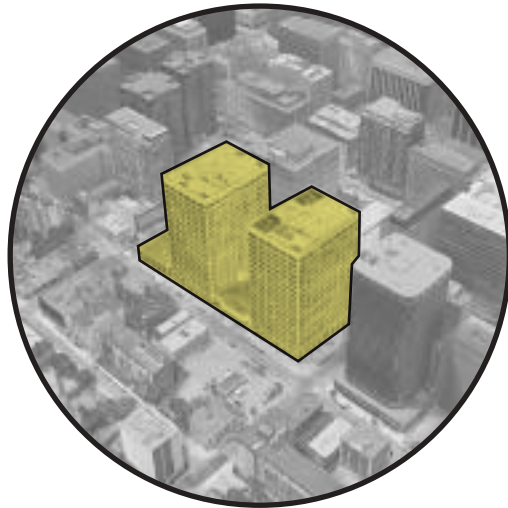


Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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IMAGINING A DOWNTOWN TRANSFORMATION

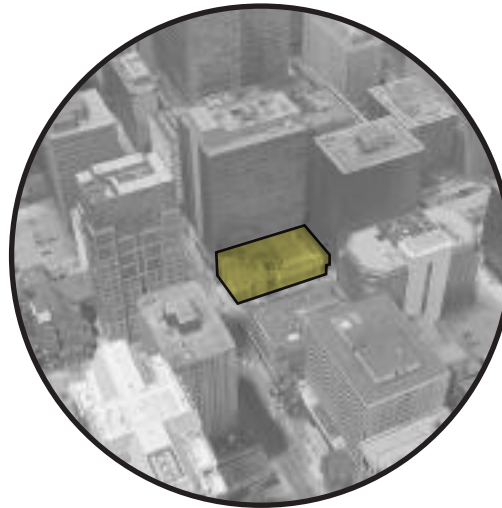


ESPLANADE LAURIER 300 LAURIER

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING
IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1973-1975

2 TOWERS OF 23 STOREYS

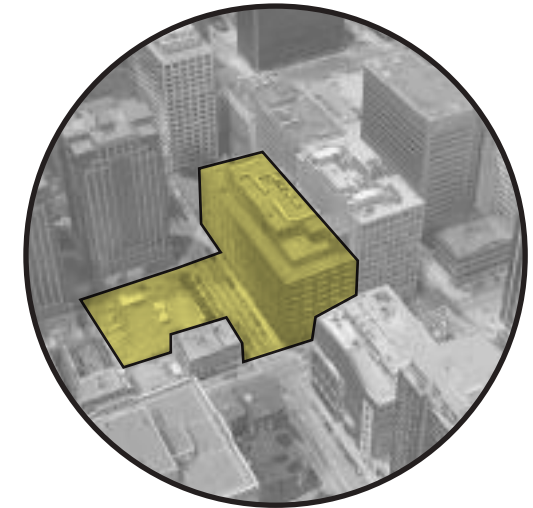


PUBLIC LIBRARY 120 METCALFE

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WILL BE MOVING TO IT'S
NEW MAIN LOCATION IN 2026

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1973

3 STOREYS



JACKSON BUILDING 122 BANK STREET

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING
IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1919-20,
REMODELLED IN 1969-71

9 STOREYS

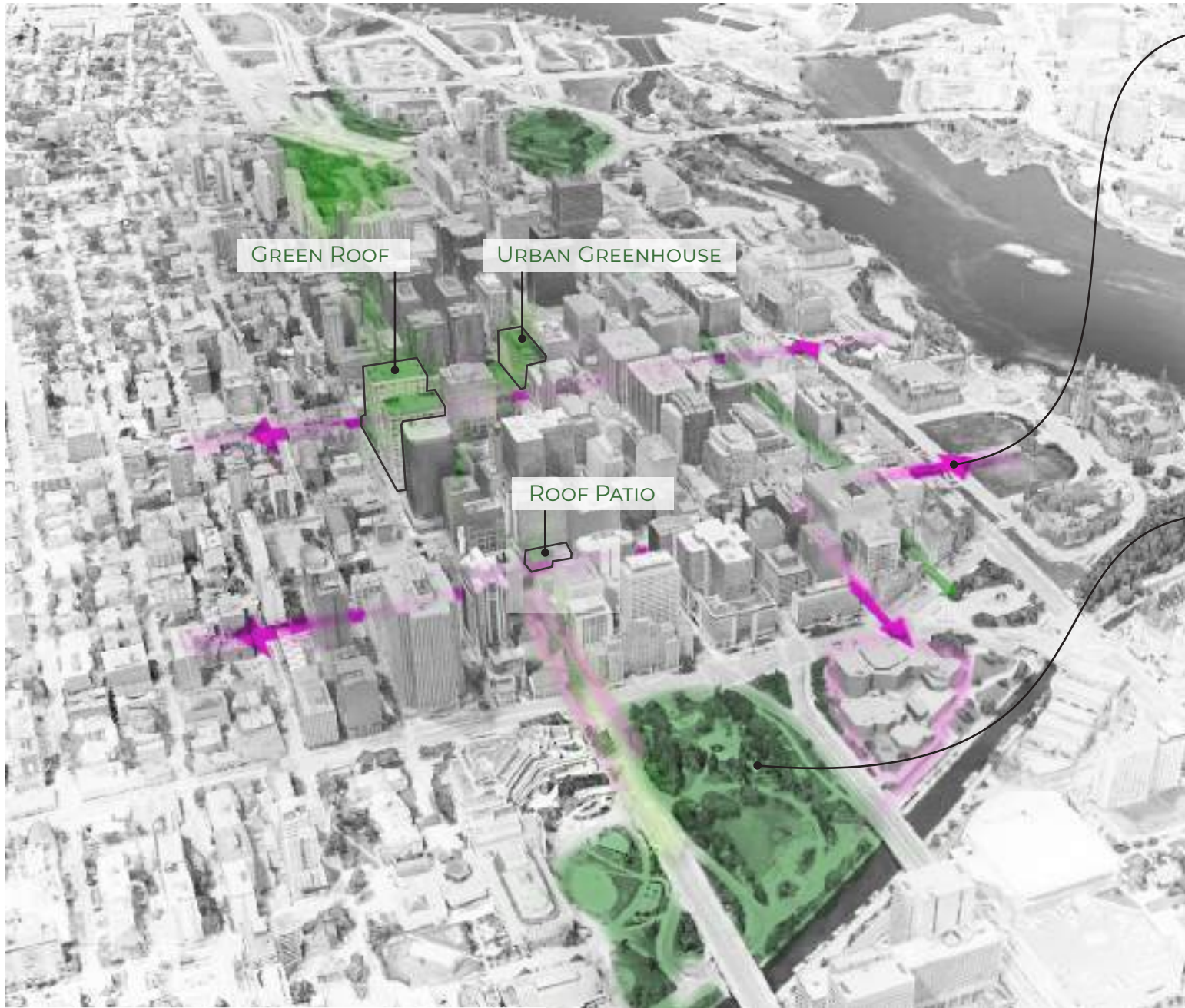
FACING A PUBLIC PARKING LOT

HOW THESE PROJECTS WERE SELECTED AND ILLUSTRATING POTENTIAL

The transformation of Downtown will be successful through a **combination of short-term actions and long-term investments**. In support of these investments, the Task Force looked at some strategic opportunities to pursue.

The selection of these projects was based on the list of properties that the federal government intends to dispose of, the location of sizeable infrastructure whose long-term use is yet defined, the ability to apply one or more levers, and the potential **contribution to city building and lifting the neighbourhood**.

Three buildings were identified: the Jackson building, L'Esplanade Laurier, and the Ottawa Public Library. The illustrations included in this section are **ideas to demonstrate the possibilities based on a sustainability approach**. There are many other considerations that could influence design and uses, including but not limited to supporting Indigenous peoples, addressing climate change, and supporting municipal growth strategies.



CULTURAL ROUTE

- ▶ CONNECTING ARTISTIC CREATION SPACES AND EXHIBITION SPACES
- ▶ CONNECTING RESIDENTS TO CULTURAL VENUES
- ▶ ENCOURAGING ANIMATED STREET LEVEL ACTIVITY AND TEMPORARY ART INSTALLATIONS

GREEN ROUTE

- ▶ CONNECTING EXISTING, FUTURE AND POTENTIAL GREEN AND PUBLIC SPACES
- ▶ INCLUDING PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY DESIGN STREETS
- ▶ REDUCING PAVEMENT, PLANTING AND MAINTAINING GREEN STREETS

58- Diagram showing potential cultural and green networks in Ottawa Downtown

THE JACKSON BUILDING

HOUSING AND A NEW CORNER

The Jackson building can be converted into a **multi-functional building focusing on residential uses**. It could be operated as a **co-op and include revenue-generating functions**. The vision for its transformation includes a **green-house roof structure**, embedded within the building's structural grid, making it suitable for urban agriculture. Viewed from Bank Street, the transformation into a luminous sawtooth structure would be emblematic of the building's re-purposing.

Produce grown on the roof is sold at a **ground level market** sheltered by a double height colonnade. The market supports the residents and enlivens the corner of Bank and Slater streets. Opening glass panels allows the market to operate outdoors in the summer. The southern bays of the building, with limited access to natural light, hosts artists' and crafts studios on the east and west sides with pop-up galleries at street level on Bank street.

Areas in the northern bays not occupied by the building's core, services and artist's spaces are used as commercial storage space, generating more revenue for the project.

The core function of the converted building, lining the south-facing bays on Slater street, offers **residential units of varied types and sizes from the current 3rd floor up**. Recessed loggias featuring vertical gardens animate the principal elevation. Fixed windows are replaced with operable ones and the envelope upgraded from the interior. The building's brick piers and brick and concrete spandrels are preserved as a nod to James Strutt's design on the original rehabilitated building following its damage from a major local explosion in 1955.

The central bay of the Bank street is recessed, its spandrels removed, to divide the building into two thinner masses and distinguish between the residential and the artists' blocks.



Cultural Assets and Activities
Street Life
Economic Growth
Strategic Value Creation
Green Spaces and Assets
Office Conversions
Climate Change Adaptation
Services and Assets for People
Residents and Workers



59- Detailed concept diagram - the Jackson Building



60- View of the transformed Jackson Building on Slater Street looking West

THE FORMER OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY

CULTURAL DESTINATION AND A NEW CORNER

The Ottawa Public Library located at the corner of Metcalfe and Laurier streets is to be vacated in the next five years and is located in a strategic location, in proximity to existing arts and culture destinations. This supports the revitalization of the inner-city core by creating a **space for quality artistic and cultural events that draw people** as well as providing a new opportunity for uses that connect with street life to maintain a **vibrant hub**.

The volume of the building suggests a natural division of functions on either side of the main entrance. Towards the corner are located the **studios, galleries, and workshops, associated with smaller individual owner-operators** such as students, professionals, or amateurs. On the other side, a black box **multi- purpose theatre** space is located with a spill out onto both an exterior terraced roof where films are projected, as well as a landscaped entrance lobby at ground level. **A corner café** further activates the area, **projecting the building's activities to the outdoors** and visually standing out on Metcalfe Street. An association with Ottawa's universities and colleges offering small-scaled cultural workspaces supports the operations of the converted building and draw a broader public.

The solid character of the existing structure is contrasted with light, transparent or illuminated new forms, that enliven its roofscape and activate this **new elevated green space**.



Cultural Assets and Activities
Street Life
Economic Growth
Strategic Value Creation
Green Spaces and Assets
Connectivity and Transportation
Services and Assets for People



61- Detailed concept diagram - the former Ottawa Public Library



62- Night view of the proposed culture centre, Metcalfe Street and Laurier Street corner

L'ESPLANADE LAURIER

GREEN SPACE, HOUSING, COMMERCIAL, AND A NEW HEART

The Esplanade Laurier complex is a prime candidate for a project that can help define the transformed Downtown. **Addressing its transformation is a critical priority.** It is a key location for a significant **new municipal green space, an attraction, and housing.** The illustration here is to offer a vision for green space and housing.

The concept preserves the east tower, adapting it for residential units from the 2nd floor up. The building configuration could be **converted to accommodate appropriate-sized units.** The elevations are enriched by periodic composed interventions, introducing linear planters and set back glazing to interrupt the sleek smoothness of the facades. The roof level is emptied to provide **indoor and outdoor amenities within the existing volume.** Residential access is from O'Connor across a greened forecourt. **Retail or service establishments ideally serving the residents** face and open onto Gloucester, Laurier and O'Connor streets.

In order to create a green space of significance and interest, the two-storey podium structure facing Bank street as well as the western tower are removed, conserving only part of its base. It is then possible to green this recovered half-block in a way that permits **dense planting and mature native trees.** The **new municipal park** continues as a wide green band, absorbing the sidewalk and leading to the east tower's colonnade and the O'Connor Street parvis, thus greening the full block facing Gloucester, Bank and O'Connor. The current central podium and partial west-tower base are adapted to accommodate street-accessed townhomes facing Gloucester street, keeping it essentially residential in character. Where it faces the park, the base is well suited to businesses which benefit from fronting a park such as cafés, ice cream shops, book stores and the like. A variety of food stalls and grocers are located in the spaces facing O'Connor or Laurier streets.

Above the base, facing the park, stacked townhouses of up to six storeys above the base are built to achieve an appropriate mid-rise density. The townhomes are articulated to provide **substantial terrasses for each unit** as well as the potential of a freer architectural form. The stacked townhomes can be accessed from a common lobby facing Gloucester street.

The roof of the remaining podium between the east tower and the stacked townhomes serves as a **semi-private landscaped courtyard and gathering space for the building's community and includes playgrounds, a small amphitheater, and a communal gardening space.** The ground floor of the east tower facing the **courtyard includes space for a daycare with its associated outdoor playground, and other amenities that benefit from a direct access to the garden.**



Street Life

Strategic Value Creation

Green Spaces and Assets

Office Conversions

Climate Change Adaptation

Connectivity and Transportation

Services and Assets for People

Residents and Workers



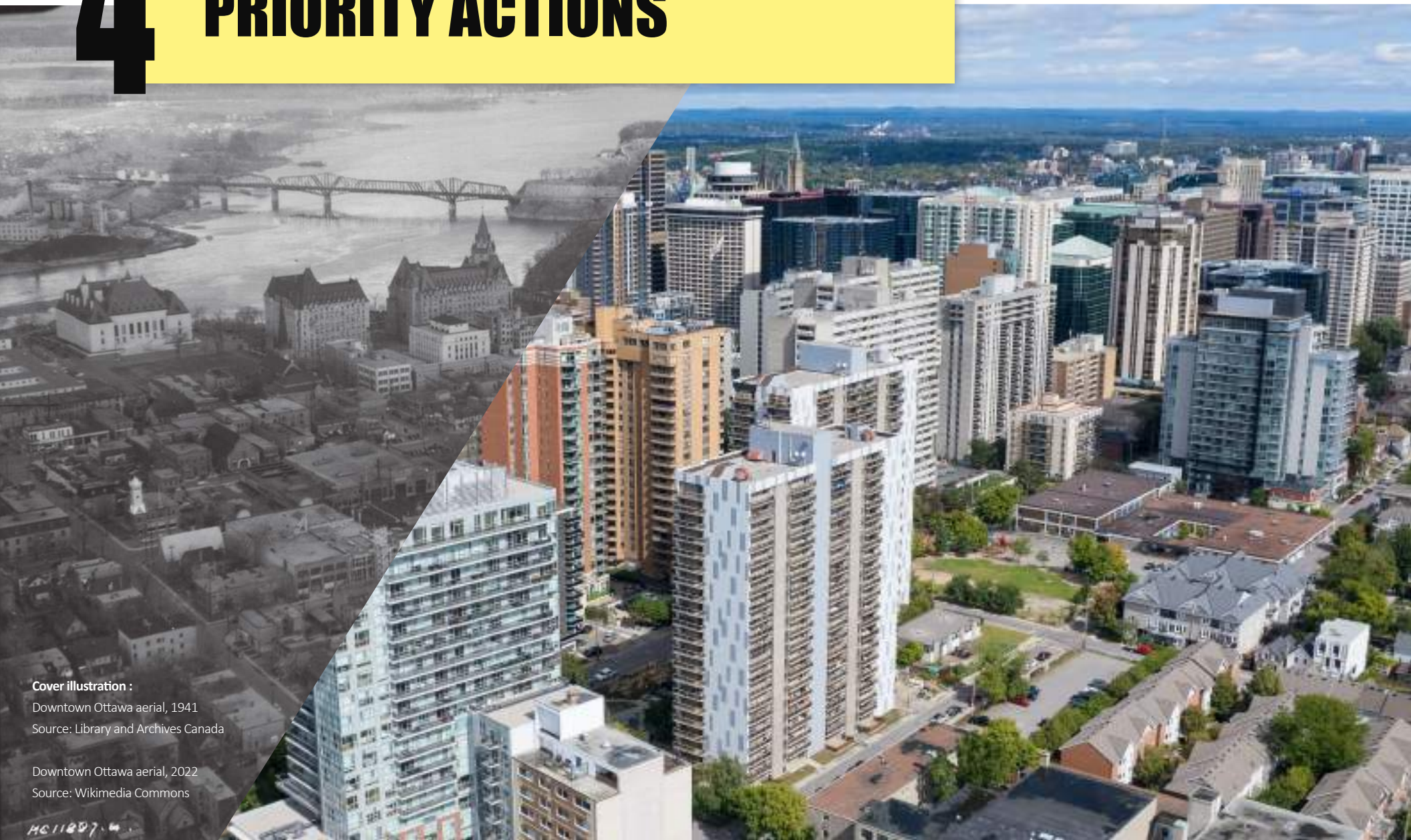
63- Detailed concept diagram - L'Esplanade Laurier



64- View of the proposed park and transformed Esplanade Laurier, from Laurier Street looking East

4

PRIORITY ACTIONS



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada


Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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PRIORITY ACTIONS


The Task Force’s work aims to offer concrete guidance. The following actions were considered as priority based on the concerns heard and the impact of using certain levers.

The priority actions are organized around the four pillars of transformation and along the lines of what is required to maintain what we have, addressing the immediate issues and pressures, and creating the foundation for the long-term transformation. The time frame is proposed to convey urgency and effort. Each pillar is activated simultaneously in order to create the right momentum for change.

| PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION | MAINTAINING OUR ASSETS (YEAR 1) | ADDRESSING OUR IMMEDIATE ISSUES (YEARS 1-3) | CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION (YEARS 2-5) |
|---|---|--|--|
|  <p>PLAYING</p> | <p>Prioritize and incentivize cultural, sports, and entertainment activities Downtown.</p> | <p>Incentivize major cultural, sports, and entertainment events to establish a major or satellite presence Downtown.</p> | <p>Establish a cultural district that connects to the Byward Market, Sandy Hill, LeBreton Flats, and Lansdowne by incentivizing the arts and culture community to live, work, and perform Downtown.</p> |
| | <p>Encourage temporary and short term uses for vacant and public spaces by arts and culture collectives.</p> | <p>Prioritize and support the activation of spaces for cultural activities outside of festival periods in partnership with the cultural sector and private partners, such as mural exhibits, street performances, and cultural events.</p> | <p>Implement a city cultural strategy together with municipal, private, and not-for-profits.</p> |
| | | <p>Identify and establish permanent outdoor staging locations for mid-size events to support local festivals.</p> | <p>Support the work of the Nightlife Commissioner.</p> |
| | | <p>Identify the ability to convert existing spaces into mid-size performance.</p> | <p>Establish an anchor cultural asset to serve as the heart of a cultural district geared towards the city’s cultural needs and to complement existing assets, such as the Ottawa Art Gallery, the Arts Court, and Public Library.</p> |
| | <p>Provide a clean, safe, reliable LRT service to encourage use for the enjoyment of cultural activities and sports events.</p> | <p>Incentivize the reliance on the LRT service to prioritize its use for the enjoyment of cultural activities, sports events, and festivals.</p> | <p>Enhance the all-season pedestrian and cycling connectivity between Downtown destinations and surrounding areas including the ByWard Market, the Arboretum and Experimental Farm, Lansdowne and LeBreton Flats, including by using the canal for public modes of transportation.</p> |

| PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION | MAINTAINING OUR ASSETS (YEAR 1) | ADDRESSING OUR IMMEDIATE ISSUES (YEARS 1-3) | CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION (YEARS 2-5) |
|--|--|--|--|
|  <p>DOING BUSINESS</p> | <p>For the next three years, reduce the municipal and federal fees that apply to small and mid-size businesses, such as garbage removal and outside patios, and cultural activities (i.e. busking and events).</p> | <p>Review the municipal and federal business to business services to reduce delays and encourage a ‘yes’ culture.</p> | |
| | <p>Encourage temporary and short term uses for vacant and public spaces by small and mid size businesses.</p> | <p>Establish a pilot program to incentivize new activities, temporary uses, policies, and infrastructure.</p> | <p>Incentivize research and academic institutions to establish a satellite presence Downtown focused on innovation in the creative, life science, and engineering industries supported by an entrepreneurship program.</p> |
| | | <p>Create a program geared towards small and mid-size businesses to help identify and apply for sources of funding to innovate, grow, and enhance their presence Downtown.</p> | <p>Support Growth of Public and Private sector employment.</p> |
| | <p>Launch a Downtown campaign to advocate for the area and promote its assets.</p> | <p>Develop a science and technology innovation hub strategy for Downtown together with universities, colleges, and private sector.</p> | <p>Establish an integrated business and economic development delivery area for Downtown through the BIAs and the Board of Trade.</p> |

| PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION | MAINTAINING OUR ASSETS (YEAR 1) | ADDRESSING OUR IMMEDIATE ISSUES (YEARS 1-3) | CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION (YEARS 2-5) |
|--|---|--|---|
|  <p>LIVING</p> | <p>Focus on keeping the neighbourhood clean by improving the city maintenance program and engaging with relevant partners (eg. BIAs).</p> | <p>Develop and promote a ‘beautify your neighbourhood’ program.</p> | <p>Pilot innovative waste management programs for Downtown residential and multi-residential properties in preparation for an increase in population with a target for significant increased diversion from the landfill.</p> |
| | | <p>Promote the adoption and implementation of the Declaration by a range of stakeholders.</p> | <p>Federal departments, agencies and Crown Corporation policies promote opportunities for affordable housing, accelerate the transfer of property and contribute to city-building.</p> |
| | <p>Invest in and prioritize Downtown services related to homelessness and mental health.</p> | <p>Establish an integrated coordination table of organizations delivering services on homelessness and mental health and create an integrated action plan.</p> | <p>Disseminate services related to homelessness and mental health in various neighbourhoods in the city to avoid concentrating them Downtown.</p> |
| | <p>Encourage temporary and short term uses for vacant and public spaces by community organizations.</p> | <p>Create a ‘one-stop-shop’ phone service and a mobile unit to address mental health issues, wellness checks and homelessness.</p> | <p>Establish a pilot program on public land to accelerate the building of individual emergency modular dwellings to provide immediate temporary housing.</p> |
| | <p>Develop and fund a strategy to address open air drug use and methadone clinics to reduce the conflicts in use in public areas : parks, streets, residential areas.</p> | | |
| | | <p>Develop design guidelines to guide the conversion and densification of Downtown in a sustainable way.</p> | <p>Prioritize the transformation of ground level spaces for direct access to the street and support the activation of the street.</p> |
| | <p>Prioritize and incentivize the availability of family-sized residential units.</p> | <p>Support and incentivize the conversion of office towers into residential units where feasible.</p> | <p>Incentivize the availability of market accessible and affordable residential units.</p> |
| | | <p>Prioritize a people-first snow maintenance program.</p> | <p>Prioritize interventions in the public space that enhance the sense of well-being and comfort of people (e.g. snow clearing, accessibility of sidewalks, shading and wind-sheltering).</p> |
| | | | <p>Develop an integrated immigration strategy for Downtown that takes into account housing, integration services, and entrepreneurship.</p> |

| PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION | MAINTAINING OUR ASSETS (YEAR 1) | ADDRESSING OUR IMMEDIATE ISSUES (YEARS 1-3) | CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION (YEARS 2-5) |
|---|--|---|--|
|  <p>SHAPING</p> | | <p>Establish a municipal Task Force with the mandate to develop a Strategy for the Transformation of Downtown.</p> | <p>Develop a Downtown Transformation Action Plan that includes a vision, strategic priorities, and pilot projects. The Plan should also include a resident strategy that addresses the needs of existing residents and a strategy to settling new residents through immigration, affordable housing and high value businesses.</p> |
| | <p>Invest in maintaining parks and green spaces and activate open spaces.</p> | <p>Establish a pilot program that promotes the beautification and activation of Downtown through the pausing or modification of application of bylaws and policies.</p> | <p>Create a new signature green space through the improvement or creation of a new space that is central and accessible to Downtown residents and visitors.</p> |
| | <p>Establish a municipal single point of contact to coordinate the review and approval of proposals aimed at activating Downtown quickly and with the objective of delivering on activation.</p> | <p>Review municipal and federal policies to identify the policies that restrict the beautification and activation of Downtown and make recommendations for changes.</p> | <p>Establish a Downtown Transformation Action Committee to advise Council on priorities, progress, and issues related to the Plan.</p> |
| | <p>Create a joint municipal, federal, and not-for-profit Task Force to determine the next steps for the buildings that are to be released from the federal inventory.</p> | <p>Prioritize the redevelopment of l'Esplanade Laurier as a city-building initiative.</p> | <p>Establish a federal/ municipal/ private/ civil society Downtown improvement framework based on value planning to accelerate the conversion, development, and rehabilitation of buildings for housing and mixed uses.</p> |
| | | <p>Develop a Downtown wide strategy to address public infrastructure priorities and private-public partnerships for redeveloping vacant spaces.</p> | <p>Support and incentivize the conversion of office towers for new commercial uses that support economic growth sectors, such as high tech and life sciences.</p> |
| | <p>Review building codes and development charges to identify incentives that favour family oriented housing, supportive housing, affordable housing, and high growth innovative commercial activities.</p> | <p>Encourage the flexible use of vacant spaces for innovative commercial and community uses, such as for urban agriculture, youth activities, and housing.</p> | <p>Incentivize for profit and not-for-profit developers to convert buildings, rehabilitate heritage structures, and develop existing vacant spaces.</p> |
| | | <p>Plan to maintain a mix of residential, public and commercial spaces.</p> | <p>Manage densification Downtown and avoid overdensifying so as to maintain quality of life, encourage families to settle, and property values.</p> |

5

MOVING FORWARD



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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LEADERSHIP

Leadership comes in multiple forms in the city. It is based on place, activity, profession, responsibility, and authority and is most effective when coming together around a common vision. The transformation of Downtown is one such project that requires vision and shared leadership.

Shared leadership requires that the federal government and the City of Ottawa strengthen their ability to collaborate and coordinate their action. This envisions that the National Capital Commission, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), and other federal actors strategize and plan together with the City of Ottawa.

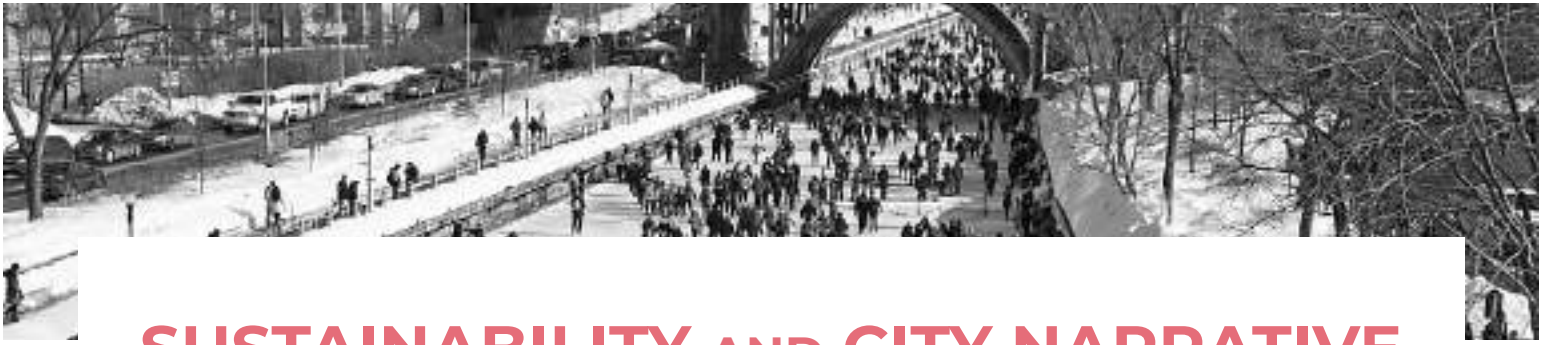
Shared leadership also requires that government authorities work with sector and professional associations, business improvement areas, not-for-profits, academic institutions, and civil society organizations to leverage the best expertise and the most efficient ways to deliver on the transformation. This is possible when transparent, empowering, and accountable mechanisms are created under clear authority to focus on the delivery of that vision, such as special advisory committees and Task Forces.

The future of our Downtown is a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors. Like any major city-building initiatives there is a role and responsibility for public investments to meet the needs of citizens as well as leverage private investments towards creating a better built environment. For that dynamic to succeed, trust needs to be established through dialogue, clear rules, predictable outcomes, problem solving, a focus on value, commitment to investments, and an understanding of the wide scope of public benefits.

Shared leadership is an invitation for each citizen to do its part. Public budgets and resources will continue to be under pressure and citizens have a role in taking initiatives however small to better the city and the City and the federal agencies have to be responsive to these initiatives. Citizens have to engage with their elected officials and their federal and municipal public service to express their needs and hold them accountable. Citizens have to be the first to display the pride they have in their city by making it alive and distinctive. From planting flowers, to keeping properties tidy, and helping each other out, there are many ways for Ottawans to show their pride.

Successful leadership leads to more solutions than problems. It breeds a culture of 'yes' across the different parts of the decision-making machine, it is proactive rather than reactive, it takes action as much as it plans, and it stays committed to a transformative vision while adapting along the way to reality. Someone leads the way and others join to do their part, the best they can.

There is no single bullet solution to the immense challenge of reimagining Downtown, which is why we cannot be afraid to try things and fail, learn, and try again, to pilot test innovative ideas from elsewhere and to lean on the creative spirits of our City. We need a vision and people to own and deliver on it. Our City depends on this.



SUSTAINABILITY AND CITY NARRATIVE

Cities are built on ideas. Jacques Gréber offered a big idea in the 1950s that remains today the blueprint for Downtown's identity. That idea led to a car-centric and office building dense environment but also to efforts to open up certain areas, remove sources of industrial pollution and provide access to green spaces. It led to shaping Downtown and the City for over fifty years. Many of these ideas no longer are relevant to today's and tomorrow's realities. We are now ready for the next big idea.

Fifty years ago was also when a famous commentator of all things urban, Jane Jacobs, concluded that "You can't rely on bringing people Downtown, you have to put them there." This is true today as well. The value of cities is in people which is why a sustainable Downtown equates people with value.

Successful cities are sustainable cities, places where people's economic, cultural, and social needs are met and where they nurture a healthy relationship with the environment. Sustainable cities are ones that prioritize people. It's also one that does not attempt to regulate everything, enjoying and supporting instead the organic nature of people interacting with each other and their environment.

By focusing policies and decisions on people, we ensure that the gamut of tools that nurture a strong economy, are good for the environment, provide the needed social services, and support a sense of pride in the neighbourhood. These policies need to be integrated to successfully be sustainable.

Our next big idea needs to aim for shaping a great Downtown and that aim needs to be guided by sustainability. We should come to expect a high-quality built environment, the rehabilitation of our heritage structures, the possibility of spontaneous expressions of culture, the ability for our elders to age in place, for our youth to play and enjoy their neighbourhood, and the opportunity for entrepreneurs to open a new business. All of these define the identity of Downtown and the city.

We are beyond tactical interventions to make a difference in tackling Downtown's many ills. We need a vision and a narrative. If the federal government is stepping away from much of its presence, it leaves the field open for the city's citizens to reclaim that space and build a neighbourhood that serves the city. A city first narrative does not exclude the federal capital identity: it showcases to the world the strength and purpose of the city beyond that capital identity. Ottawa is a forward looking, innovative, city of entrepreneurs, civil servants, artists, scientists, researchers, and creators of all sorts and Downtown is the heart of it all.



PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENT

Downtown Ottawa is the area of the City of Ottawa that includes south of Parliament, west of the Rideau Canal, East of Bronson Avenue, and north of Somerset Street. In recognition of the importance of main streets, it includes Bank Street extending south to Gladstone Street. Downtown Ottawa is economically, culturally, and socially connected to Centretown, the Byward Market, the Glebe, and LeBreton Flats.

CONTEXT FOR PRINCIPLES

Whereas Downtown Ottawa has been the centre of economic, cultural, social, activity for the City of Ottawa for over a century;

Whereas, over that time, Downtown has gone through many changes that has shaped its identity and infrastructure;

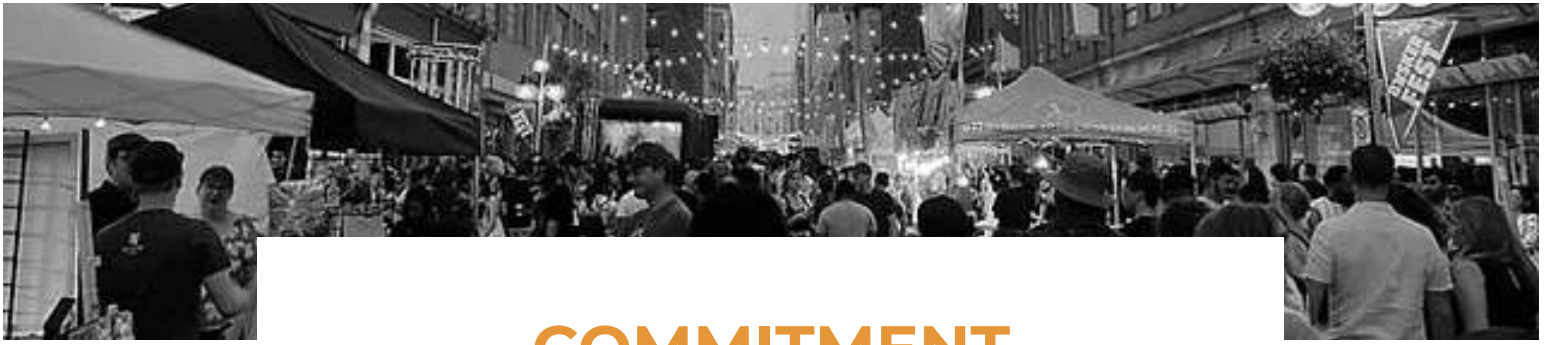
Whereas a number of recent significant events have had a long term detrimental impact on the economy of Downtown and the well-being of its citizens, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the hybrid workplan policies, and the Freedom Convoy Occupation;

Recognizing that the impact of the pandemic and other events has put a spotlight on the vulnerabilities of Downtown, including its infrastructure, economy, housing, social services, and needs of the population;

Acknowledging that Downtown Ottawa is a major and critical contributor to the city's economy and services to its citizens through social services, cultural assets, transportation infrastructure, development revenue, property taxes, tourism attractions, and as such is a benefit to the City of Ottawa as a whole;

Recognizing that as Canada's National Capital and the second largest city in Ontario, the future of a vibrant Downtown benefits and requires the support of both the federal and provincial governments;

Recognizing that the revitalization of Downtown Ottawa requires its transformation to adapt to a changing population, economy, and environment;



COMMITMENT

We, the signatories, commit to the following:

Working together to develop and implement immediate and long-term solutions to transform Downtown for the benefit of the citizens of Ottawa;

Focusing on **solving** long-standing economic and social issues that are hampered by political and policy conflicts;

Imagining a different Downtown that prioritizes economic, social, cultural, and environmental change for the benefit of its citizens;

Investing resources and expertise in line with priorities included in municipal and joint action plans;

Being a citizen, a leader, an agency, a department, a government that **contributes to the well-being** of the citizens of the City of Ottawa;

Guiding decisions and taking action based on the seven principles of this declaration.

The principles are to guide decisions and offer a shared understanding of the values guiding these decisions by various stakeholders. They are intended to be applied consistently and as a whole.



PRINCIPLES

PRIORITIZING PEOPLE

The future of Downtown relies on people. Prioritizing people means that we seek and create opportunities to increase the resident population of Downtown through housing, economic opportunities, services, and infrastructure that promote a sense of well being and a serves a neighbourhood.

It also means that through this lens, policies will favour activities, services and infrastructure that serve the needs of people, such as promoting street level activities, a safe living and working environment, and ensuring unencumbered and universal access to City streets and services.

People-centred decisions support growth, investment, well-being, public fiscal responsibility, and a strong sense of community.

MAKING IT THE PRIDE OF THE CITY

Downtown is the pride of the City. Making Downtown a place that Ottawans can be proud of means that we nurture, enhance, maintain, and invest in infrastructure, activities and services that are interesting, distinctive and of high quality.

Downtown is clean, exciting, and attractive making it a place that residents care about and are proud to share, businesses are motivated to invest in and visitors are keen to discover.

Ottawans have a Downtown that speaks to their identity, celebrates their heritage, and tells the story of the City, beyond the one that speaks to the Capital of our country. A Downtown that Ottawans can be proud of supports well-being, a strong sense of community, and greater economic opportunities.

SHAPING THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

Downtown needs to change to be assertively people-centred and the pride of our City. This principle requires that activities and infrastructure demonstrate a social, cultural, economic, and environmental impact that advances the required change.

New projects are innovative in adapting the existing assets to leverage their full potential or converting for new uses, offering new opportunities, and addressing the priorities. New projects are also creative in introducing new infrastructure to shape the future.



New activities aim to take advantage of the current assets by enhancing their cultural, social, and economic value. They build the reputation of Downtown as a destination for trying new things, entertainment, and discovery. It attracts new residents and workers, Ottawans, and visitors to participate in and witness the excitement.

Transformative action requires boldness, vision, dedication, and a sense of purpose for the City and its people. Transformative action supports growth, creativity, innovation, public fiscal responsibility, and investment.

ADAPTING FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Ottawa is equitable and diverse, nowhere more than Downtown. As the home of critical spaces and services for cultural, LGBTQIA+, and marginalized communities, for individuals experiencing homelessness and refugees, as well as for families and professionals, Downtown must continue to feel like home for these and new residents.

By adapting for equity and diversity, Downtown is focused on affordable housing as much as market housing, a public built environment that is universally accessible year-round, public spaces that are safe for all, and supporting services that cater to the resident population's needs.

New projects are encouraged to consider the needs of a diverse population that welcomes young professionals, families, elderly people, students, and emerging artists. Housing, services, and activities are adapted and leverage the strength of our Downtown's diversity.

An equitable and diverse Downtown supports growth, innovation, well-being, and a strong sense of community.

GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown is a place of opportunities for builders, creators, entrepreneurs, and innovators. As a place in transformation, Downtown offers opportunities for new ideas, services and products to launch and grow. For Downtown to support these opportunities, decisions, policies, activities, the economics and spaces need to be nimble, flexible, and promote a 'yes' culture.

Downtown is also a place that, because of its diversity, offers the opportunity to pilot new initiatives in response to resident and entrepreneurs' needs. The objective is to provide an environment that favours exploring ideas and bringing new solutions to standing social and environmental issues.

A Downtown that generates opportunities supports growth, innovation, well-being and investments.



ENTICING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Downtown has a role to play in Ottawa's pursuit of innovation and creativity. As the most visible location in Ottawa in relation to its political, business, and tourism-related activities, Downtown showcases the opportunities, innovation, and creations of artists, entrepreneurs, businesses, and universities.

Through spaces, technology, and interactions, Downtown is able to generate opportunities for a range of individuals and businesses to test, display, and use new services, activities, and products. It is a place of excellence that attracts cutting edge thinkers, that launches careers and ideas, and that attracts visitors to discover them.

Both the buildings and the spaces in between offer a window into innovation and creativity through labs, public art and performances.

A Downtown that is dedicated to innovation and creativity supports growth, investments, and well-being.

RESULTING IN POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Downtown is transformed with a commitment to the current and future health of our environment. Much of the current Downtown infrastructure is designed for vehicles, concentrated work spaces, past climatic conditions, and with materials that have finite life span producing environmental impacts.

Transforming our Downtown is the opportunity to adapt and innovate through repurposing, converting, and adapting the existing infrastructure as much as creating new infrastructure that aims for the highest standards in green building and design. These efforts are supported by policies that incentivize waste reduction, energy efficiency, quality materials, collective solutions, adaptive designs, green engineering, and any innovation with an aim to reduce carbon emissions.

A Downtown that contributes to reducing emissions and adapts to a changing climate supports growth, investments, public fiscal responsibility, and well-being.

APPENDIX

A



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL LANDLORDS

- Michael Swan, Assistant Vice President, Property Management and Leasing Office & Industrial, Morguard
- Mike Shore, Vice President, Leasing, Metcalfe Realty
- Erin Nagy, Property Director, Jones Lang Lasalle
- Michael Panetta, Senior Property Manager, Crown Property Management
- Hugh Gorman, CEO, Colonnade BridgePort
- Sean O’Sullivan, General Manager, Sun Life Financial Centre, BentallGreenOak
- Shawn Hamilton, Vice-President, Business Development, National Capital Region, Canderel
- Paula Partner, Director Office East, Operational Excellence, QuadReal Property
- Tracey Laroque, General Manager, QuadReal Property

SMALL AND MID-SIZED BUSINESSES

- Scott May, Bar Robo, Queen Street Fare
- Lucas Nault, Lucas Nault Hair Salon
- Devinder Chaudhary, Aiana Restaurant Collective
- Michelle Groulx, Ocobia, Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas
- Jessica Carpinone, The Better Way Alliance
- Karla Briones, Karla Briones Consulting
- Dr. Melissa Baird, Curavita
- Ashley Lawrie, Freeform Fitness
- Stefanie Siska, C’est Bon Ottawa
- Heather Bakken, Pendulum group
- Sueling Ching, President and CEO (Ottawa Board of Trade)
- Lynn Ladd, Board of Trade

HOUSING AND IMMIGRATION

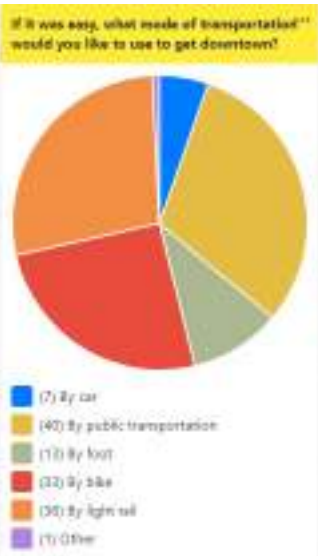
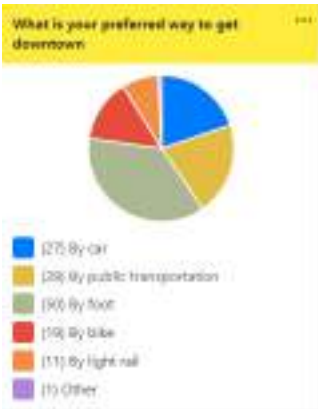
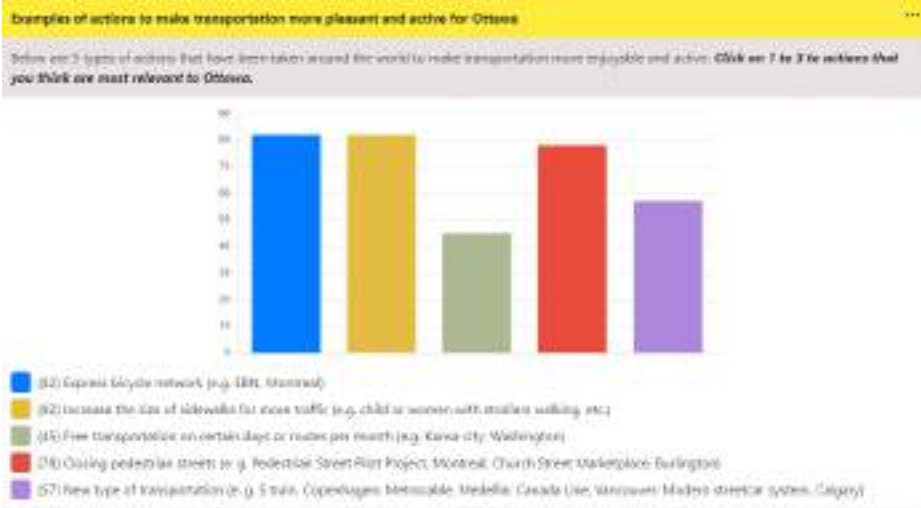
- Graeme Hussey, CCADCO Housing
- Brian Ray, University of Ottawa, Geography Department and Vice Dean of Research for Urban Sustainability
- Allan Reesor-McDowell, Executive Director, Matthew House Ottawa
- Mary Huang, Advocate for Housing, CCA President
- Peter Tilley, Ottawa Mission
- Kaite Burkholder Harris, Executive Director, End Homelessness Ottawa
- Suzanne Le, Executive Director, Multifaith Housing Initiative
- Luisa Veronis, University of Ottawa, Geography Department

ARTS AND CULTURE

- Mathieu Fleury, former councillor, City of Ottawa
- John Brooman, CEO, Dragon Boat
- Alexandra Badzak, CEO Ottawa Art Gallery
- Michael Crockatt, Ottawa Tourism
- Carole Saad, Director, Chic and Swell
- Steve Ball, President, Ottawa Gatineau Hotel Association
- Victoria Steele, CMC consultant arts and culture strategies
- Mark Monahan, Executive Director Ottawa Blues Fest-CityFolk music festival
- Alex Van Dieren, Orkestra
- Eric Bercier, Associate VP, University of Ottawa
- Nathalie Carrier, arts and culture event strategies
- John Swettenham, CMO, The Ottawa Hospital Foundation
- Stephen Willis, planner

HOWSPACE SAMPLE PAGES

TRANSPORTATION



What could we do to provide a safe and efficient active transportation (cycling, walking, etc.) in the city?

Showing only your own comments.

LE [Comment]

MS [Comment] 3 months ago
 Please PLEASE make more streets car free. More and safer bike lanes would be good too.
 Like Reply

7 [Comment] 3 months ago
 Remove the tracks and provide adequate sidewalk clearing.
 Like Reply

BE [Comment] 3 months ago
 For cycling, we need the infrastructure to be safe so that people will actually want to use it. The generally accepted standard of safe is segregated above grade or segregated at grade with barrier concrete. Ask someone who bikes and walks, we don't want to have shared bike and walking lanes, as it isn't safe for the slower walkers. For walkers, we want to have raised crosswalks which by design force drivers to slow down. It should be well understood that signage DOES NOT slow down drivers. Signage is an example of passive infrastructure that only "helps" a driver will abide, but in reality, they mostly don't. Designed & built infrastructure like speed bumps, raised crosswalks, separated bike lanes are active infrastructure as they don't allow the driver an option to not follow them, atleast not without grave consequences.
 Like Reply

Y [Comment] 3 months ago
 There has been a lot of improvements on both cycling and walking, proving as an demand pedestrian crossing like the one installed in the corner of St Andrew/Dufferin street is great, so it is possible even when there is stop signs on the ground. Low call on the pedestrian walks will encourage me more to walk, I use to walk a lot in Oslo, Norway where I lived before and they do not use walk.
 Like Reply

SMALL AND MID-SIZED BUSINESSES

What would you like to see downtown to keep it a going after 5:00pm and on weekends? (opportunities in art, business and entertainment, etc)

Showing only your own comments.

- 11 months ago

The entire University of Ottawa is a stone throw from the downtown core. My question is to ask whether a campus in Centretown could be beneficial. The Spad Ferry should instead think of how Ottawa given its proximity to its location in Centretown can be more community engaged with established businesses, not for-profit organizations, and a better approach would be to learn from Carleton University's acquisition of the former Dominion Chalmers United Church with the support of council and transfered the space into a vibrant cultural space.
- 2 months ago

I think that we need to ensure a mix of residential, commercial and recreational that ensures that the population downtown doesn't flee in from the suburbs in the morning and built right back out again in the evening. We need to ensure a 15-minute walk without add a mix of these types economic classes and neighbourhoods evening commercial and we need to ensure at least 20% affordable housing and we need to ensure that we have a transit system that doesn't fall away from there are too. Bikes or power on the ground.
- 1 month ago

Larger, more for businesses, a reliable transit network to people can come downtown more pedestrian friendly downtown areas, more housing alternatives.
- 1 month ago

Like my goodness and also art and festivals. I love the way Montreal always has an event/festival/patio outside.

In your opinion, is downtown Ottawa lacking some businesses?

If yes, which ones?

Showing only your own comments.

- 11 months ago

Hotels and tourist oriented shops.
- 11 months ago

Specialty doctors/medical clinics, farmers' stores and grocery stores.
- 1 month ago

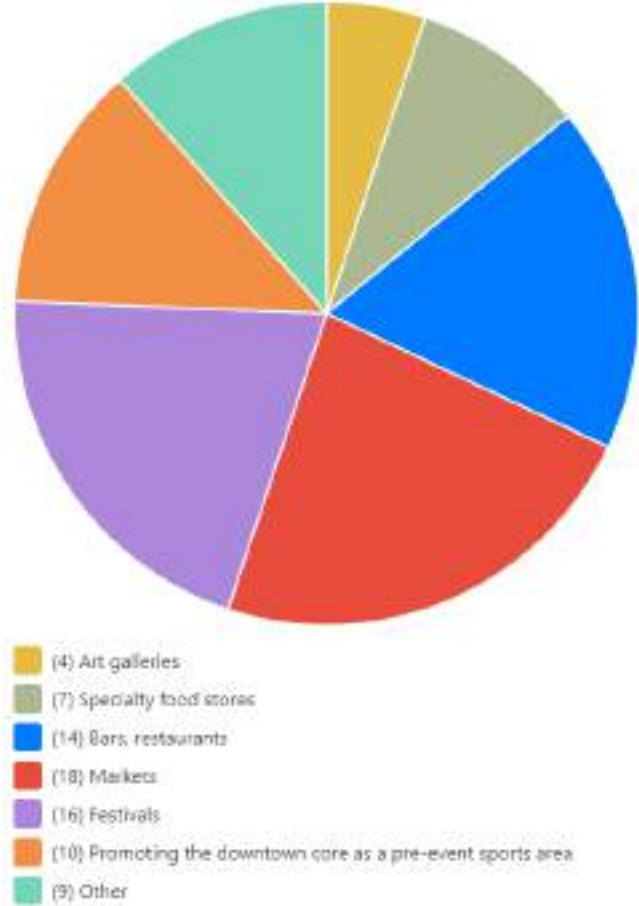
Grocery stores and farmers stores, also family doctors.
- 1 month ago

Handmade stores, grocers, clothing boutiques, specialty and hobby stores.
- 2 months ago

Full service grocery stores (not just fresh produce), well-qualified shoemakers, specialty ("niche") food stores, cheese stores, toy stores and chairs, independent book stores, etc.

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Yes | 94% |
| No | 6% |

If we diversify the range of services and products found downtown* and in the larger areas, what would you like to see?**



ARTS & CULTURE

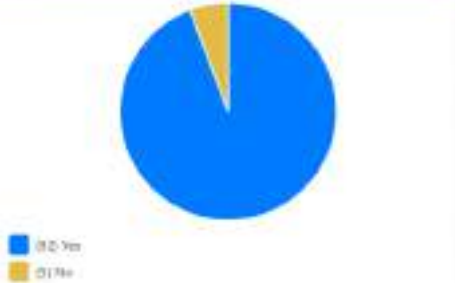
In your opinion, which practices should be strengthened or implemented in Ottawa to promote tourism?

- Showing only your own comments.**
- 1** 2 months ago posted
The NCC should strictly and actively oversee and regulate the activities of the Tulip Festival, which is run with - it appears - no NCC supervision in Commissioner's Park (owned property by the Canadian Tulip Legacy) in a manner which damages the park and the reputation of the festival (big, no-destination booths, much illegal parking, garbage)
- 1** 1 month ago posted
Adventure attractions that are unique to Ottawa (OCTAWANL, the Bytown and Mayfair streets, Dominion Chimes concert hall, spectacle), the Ottawa Int'l Animation Festival, the War Museum.
- 1** 3 months ago posted
Improved safety, but cameras on the street and develop a network to respond to crimes in progress instead of after the fact.
- 1** 3 months ago posted
Arenas where people can purchase things for their stay
Spa facilities
Having safe places for those without... would make tourists feel much safer in the Greenboro core and at the market

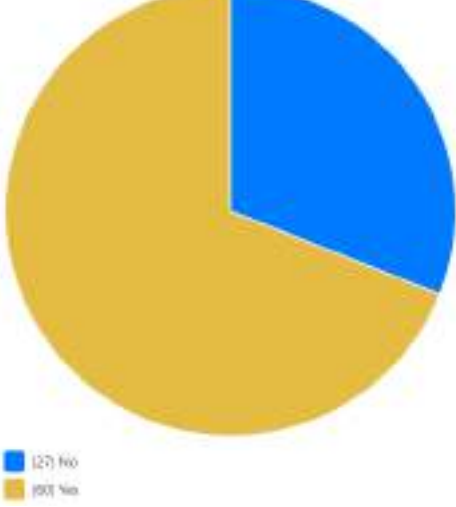
What are the events that motivate you to go downtown?

- Showing only your own comments.**
- 1** 3 months ago posted
Events at the Bytown, Heritage Festival, Ottawa International Animation Festival, the Bytown and the OAC, NAC Orchestra, Concerts of Dominion Chimes
- 1** 1 month ago posted
Festivals, festivals
- 1** 1 month ago posted
Live downtown.
- 1** 3 months ago posted
When there are more active activities for kids of all ages, outdoor concerts, outdoor food events. The streets are closed for walking and public transportation is offered by a person.
- 1** 3 months ago posted
Live theater and art galleries

Would you be willing to come downtown if there were more events??



Does downtown Ottawa lack entertainment facilities?



HOUSING, SETTLEMENT AND IMMIGRATION

What could governments and home builders do, in your opinion, to increase the supply of housing in the downtown?

Showing only your own comments.

L

P 2 months ago
Create more affordable housing outside of the downtown and by Ward Market/Landy Hill - not in it!

E 2 months ago
1) Government (at all levels) should limit the number of accessibility of buildings (e.g. condos, a lot building company/developers, etc.) can build (not the party in the one building theory!) like allowing lots to add another than one more additional building on top of one's primary residence (other than a vacation dwelling given that the latter too should be limited the number as well one can own. It's not just a single issue. Take a look at the status of number of tenements (owned by permanent residents), how many are empty (environmental properties)? 2) Home builders should set aside their greed, build more affordable housing not more expensive dwellings.

B 2 months ago
Make it a priority to help in providing affordable housing, making rental units a priority. Everyone has access for why this goal cannot be achieved and there is always solutions. There are developers who refuse to include affordable units in their towers and this should be mandatory. It makes no sense to have a whole tower of assisted, for-rentals... many examples in Europe and in the States that show mixed housing is much more acceptable and reduce the negative to providing homes just for those in real need.
There should also be more focus given to the conversion of empty office towers to housing.
There is no need for the "fancy" units that are being built... provide what is safe, has enough room for a family, has access to nearby schools etc. Why is it that other countries have pretty much resolved affordable housing and Canada has fallen so far behind?
It is because the federal government withdrew funding to help with the problem?
If builders want to continue to increase the supply of housing in the core, they must be more neighbourly, realize that housing is two (renting, buying) and construction noise all day and for a couple of years (not joyful). There should be discussion between the business and labour nearby to discuss how the two parties can somehow understand what will be happening, when and respect what each party needs...

What do you think of the housing situation in Ottawa?

Showing only your own comments.

L

B 2 months ago
An approach such as Calgary is taking would require the city to be committed to truly affordable housing, which it demonstrably is not committed to.

C 2 months ago
More affordable rental required out of the downtown and less suburban housing in the downtown. Subsidized housing should be in every ward of the city so that marginalized people are not forced to leave their neighbours/friends of family in order to obtain affordable housing.

A 2 months ago
It is deplorable that only do we have people without safe shelter we also have a serious situation where people are paying for food for both work that they are unable to afford to purchase food for their family. We have people who work for the government visiting food banks. Priority needs to be given for mental health and food. Focus on condos and homes.
We must get everyone off the street into a safe they can afford and we must also make sure to provide apartments for families (e.g. 3 bedrooms). The other major problem is the lack of amenities in downtown Ottawa (no hardware stores, not enough grocery stores, need more medical clinics, board clinics, and places for kids to play).
Subsidies aren't safe I get rid of the ones on a street, need for better accessibility at intersections, all these things taking take away what might be attractive for someone to live downtown.
As for COVID - major evaluation is needed for those residents who are objecting to "redirection" especially where it is new (eg the school in Ottawa and the one in the Valley area). Both community groups are objecting because they think someone will park on the streets... why not inform the local residents that this is the home these days, it's not expected that everyone will own a car that takes parking spots are needed. We also need to allocated someone that there is parking and running will remain the same. We don't want to have housing take over the

What practices or service offerings for immigrant populations do you think should be strengthened or implemented in Ottawa?

Showing only your own comments.

L

P 2 months ago
There should be population caps on major cities for immigrant populations to avoid over-crowding cities and better disperse immigrants to other cities and towns across the country, which in turn would assist those other communities acquire better and more services for their populations, such as doctors, hospitals, etc. Currently, anyone not living in a major centre is hard pressed to attract health care providers or obtain medical services without having to travel several hours to a major city.

B 2 months ago
Similar to what I stated above for our Indigenous people. Obviously, we haven't learned much from Covid... have we? What changes have been implemented to help those in marginalized communities with what we and social agencies know? Once again, service support must be available 24/7. There is the opening clause of House to Home... are we to accept that someone doesn't have empty spaces to keep this fabulous resource for those in need, especially for those who have just moved to Ottawa.
There needs to be ongoing training that not help immigrants understand how all the various systems work. With too many of them closed by the province, we still need to provide the support and help our newcomers need.
Immigrants now make up around 23% of our population yet we don't have the services, resources needed for these immigrants. Once again, service or agencies have lost their funding and then folks are left with no support and a serious lack of information.

WY 2 months ago
More cultural centres for each culture, as well as maybe skills training for immigrants to transfer their training to a Canadian context. More opportunities to celebrate different cultures of people living in the area - maybe festival!

APPENDIX

B



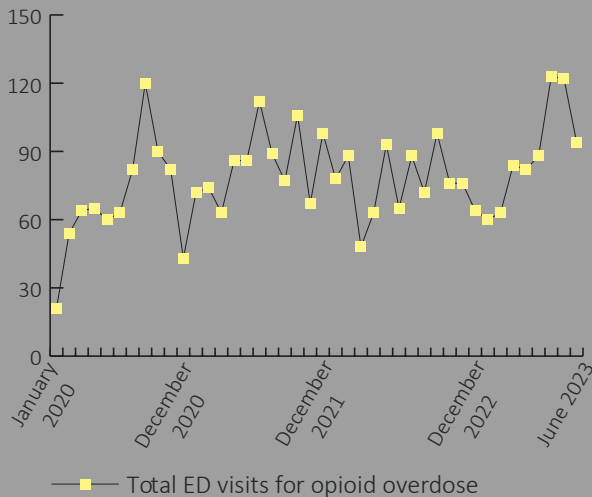
Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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DRUG USE AND OVERDOSE CRISIS

Downtown Ottawa has experienced a significant increase in drug related activities and overdoses. This has a social and economic impact that requires urgent attention to care for our most vulnerable and provide a safe and healthy environment for all. The following are examples from other jurisdictions. Providing the resources to specialized organizations and a multipronged approach to addressing the crisis are a priority.



TYPES OF RESPONSE APPROACHES

- Early Intervention
- Educational
- Medications for Opioid Use Disorder
- Overdose prevention
- Post-overdose response
- Syringe service program / Needle exchange

SPECIFIC APPROACHES:

Heroin assisted treatment (HAT)

HAT consists of prescribing low doses of heroin to addiction patients and, in most cases, administering the treatment in a controlled environment with medical supervision. Many benefits result from HAT such as reducing overdoses, infections or street injections.

Source: Powell, 2017

Data collection to increase awareness

Arizona's (US) Opioid data Dashbord led to the adoption of the Opioid Epidemic Act

Source: Brooks, 2018

COMMUNITY RESPONSE:

Huntington, West Virginia

Started in 2017, the **Huntington Quick Response Team (QRT)** is a collaborative effort of the Cabell County EMS, the city of Huntington, Huntington Police Department, Marshall University, behavioral health agencies, and faith leaders to reduce the number of overdoses in the community.

In 2020, **30%** of contacted individuals sought treatment

Source: Brandeis Opioid Resource Connector



65- Huntington Quick Response Team (QRT). source: QRT Facebook page

POLICY RESPONSE:

As a solution to **Portugal's** drug crisis, Portugal decriminalized all personal possession of illicit drugs in 2001. As part of the new policy, Portugal created the "**Commission for the Dissuasion of Drug Addiction**". This commission, made up of a social worker, a psychologist and an attorney, follows the principle of "**rather treat than punish**". They encourage people found with possession of drugs to pursue adequate treatment for their situation and have the power to inflict or suspend a sanction, such as a fine.

Results are showing positive outcomes, such as a **drastic drop in drug-related deaths in the first 5 years** or even the decrease in criminal offences related to drug trafficking.

Their policy reform was also combined with a different educational approach, expansion of treatment services and harm reduction.

Source: Slade, 2021

SWITZERLAND CASE STUDY, A 20-YEAR POLICY SHIFT

- The open drug scene known as "**needle parks**" where, in certain parks, drug use was informally tolerated after years of criminalizing and chasing drug addicts and users;
- the Increasing number of **HIV infections** prevalent in people using injectable drugs;
- the presence of **initiatives** led by city officials, advocacy groups, medical professionals, non-for profits



Led to the creation of the **1991 Federal Policy** based on the 4 pillars: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and law enforcement.

Between 1991 and 2010

Overdose related deaths **↘50%**

HIV infections **↘65%**

Heroin users **↘80%**

Documented and evidence-based policy

- Education
- Awareness
- Public debate

PREVENTION

- **Heroin assisted treatment (HAT)** experimentation, after a 2008 referendum, the program was made permanent

TREATMENT

- executed in collaboration with cities & community organisations

HARM REDUCTION

- decriminalisation of drug possession and consumption

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In Canada, between 2005 and 2008, **HAT program** named the North American Opiate Medication Initiative (NAOMI) was opened in Vancouver and Montreal.

The results showed:

- High retention rates in the treatment program
- Illegal heroin decrease of 70%
- The proportion of participants involved in illegal activities fell by half from over 70% to 36%
- Illegal activity among participants decreased significantly as did the amount of money spent monthly on illegal drugs.
- Marked improvements in participants' medical and health status

The NAOMI trial ended in 2008 when the federal elected government changed

LESSONS FROM SWITZERLAND

- **Public awareness** about the issues and potential solutions can support large-scale change
- **Experimentation** and **flexibility** are crucial for innovative problem-solving as well as the ability to adapt to uncertain or negative outcomes
- Rigorous **research** as well as systematic **documentation** of outcomes allows to inform an evidence-based policy

INTERIM HOUSING, A TEMPORARY SOLUTION

With the increasing demand for housing for the homeless, interim housing can make a significant difference while waiting for a permanent solution. Such an initiative can provide, in addition to shelter, various supports for physical and mental health, relationships and finances of residents. Interim housing can be quickly prefabricated and installed on underutilized land.

TO SATISFY DEMAND
OTTAWA NEEDS

100,100 new homes
BY 2031

Source: Whitzman and Goldstein, 2023

COMING SOON...

DASH Project

A **billboard of various existing databases** in relation to people in need of housing and available stock is being developed for Ottawa by the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa. Its goal is to support informed decisions by addressing specific needs in Ottawa's neighbourhoods.

Source: Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa

LAND ASSESSMENT TOOL

Based on various open data sources and ten social inclusion proximity services, the Housing Assessment Resource Tools project, **maps well-located public land** that could be **suitable for affordable housing** in Ottawa and other Canadian Cities.

Source: Housing Assessment Tools

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE

San-Fransisco

interim housing community project

DignityMoves, a US organisation, builds

temporary communities of modular prefabricated houses on underutilised land

such as private, Government-owned, faith-based organisations or hospital lands.



66- DignityMoves San Francisco project. source : DignityMoves

LOCAL INITIATIVE

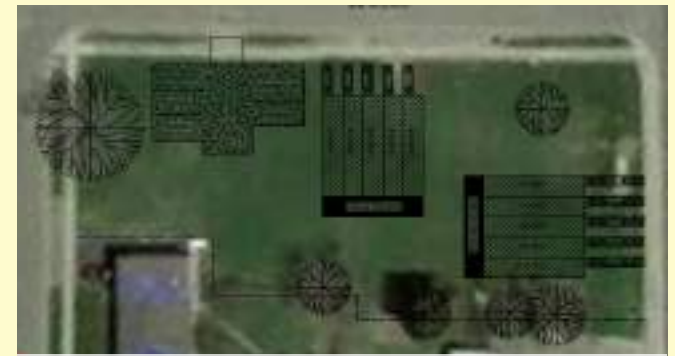
Durham Region, Ontario Oshawa micro-homes pilot project

A pilot project in Oshawa offers 10 prefabricated micro-homes located on public land. These houses are used as transitional housing and include support from local agencies.

Source: Durham Region



67- Oshawa micro-homes pilot project



68- Oshawa micro-homes pilot project plan

FINLAND CASE STUDY, HOUSING FIRST STRATEGY

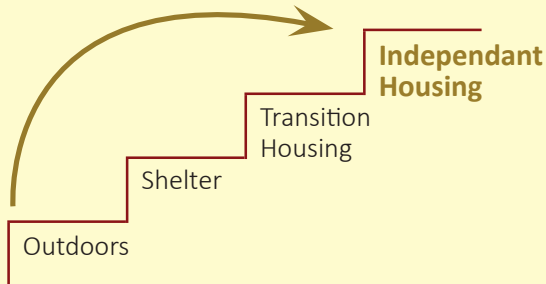
Before 2008, Finland had a staircase model as a response to homelessness. It was found ineffective because:

- People stayed in the system due to the **difficulty of achieving** the goal of **independent housing**
- It was **costly to maintain**.

In 2008, the **Housing First** model was introduced; its main objective is providing access to a permanent home to anyone experiencing homelessness.

The implementation of this policy was possible thank to :

- **Political consensus** on the problematic and importance of addressing it
- **Collaboration** and partnership between different levels of governments and community organisations
- Access to **affordable housing**



Guiding principles

- 1. Housing enables independent lives.** Health and social issues can be better addressed once a person gained their independence.
- 2. Respect of choice.** Residents have the opportunity to choose their path regarding services and treatment options.
- 3. Rehabilitation and empowerment of the resident.** Residents are to be treated as equals by staff members and services providers for a better rehabilitation and empowerment.
- 4. Integration into the community and society.** Being able to make their own home and organise their own life allows residents to be able to get involved in their environment and feel part of a community.

Housing under this policy has been found in supported housing developments (built new or converted shelters) or scattered and mixed with market housing. In all cases, the resident needs to pay rent like anyone else, but can apply for housing grants. This could give the residents the opportunity of choice, the feeling of being an equal in their community and a preserved sense of dignity.

OUTCOMES:

From 2008 to 2019,
↘35%
 long-term homeless people in Finland

Only 50 beds remain in a shelter in Helsinki,
rough sleeping has been eradicated

€15,000 saved
 /year/homeless person

APPENDIX

C

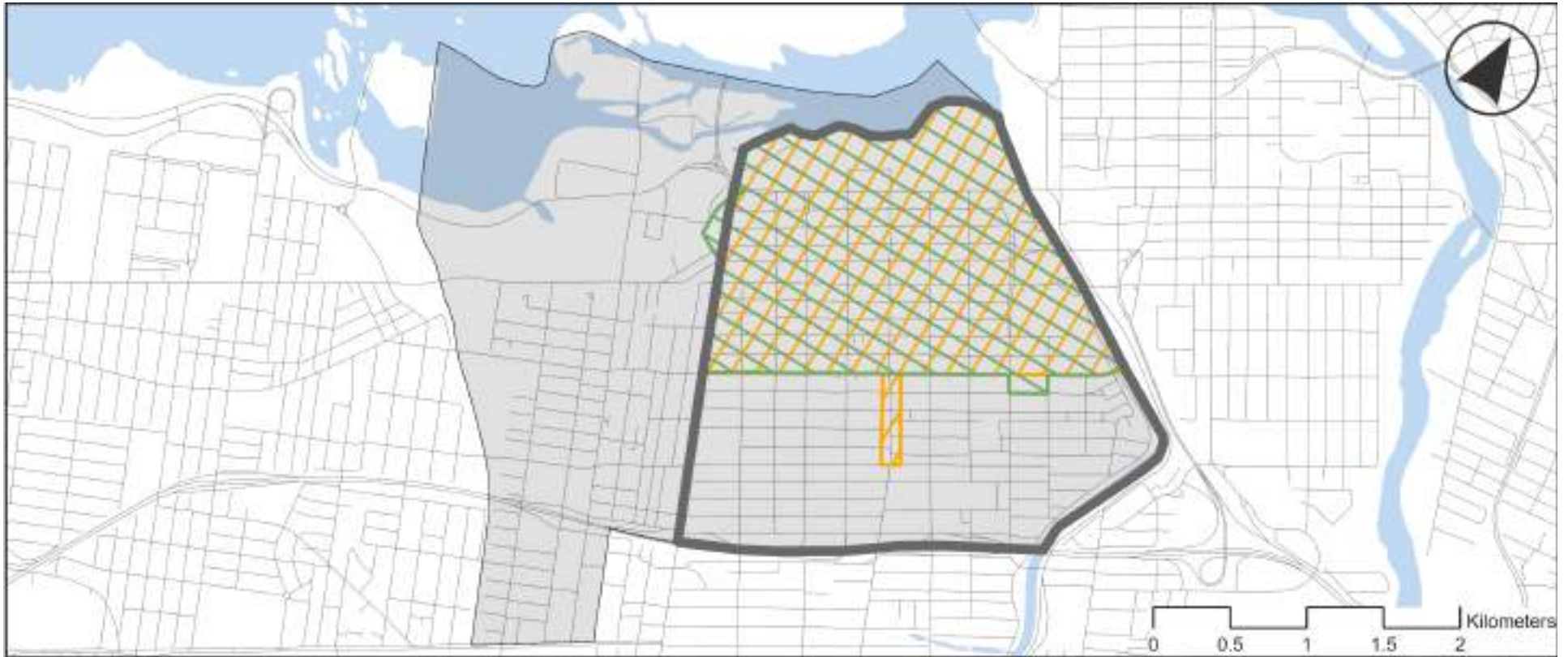


Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada





Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS MAP

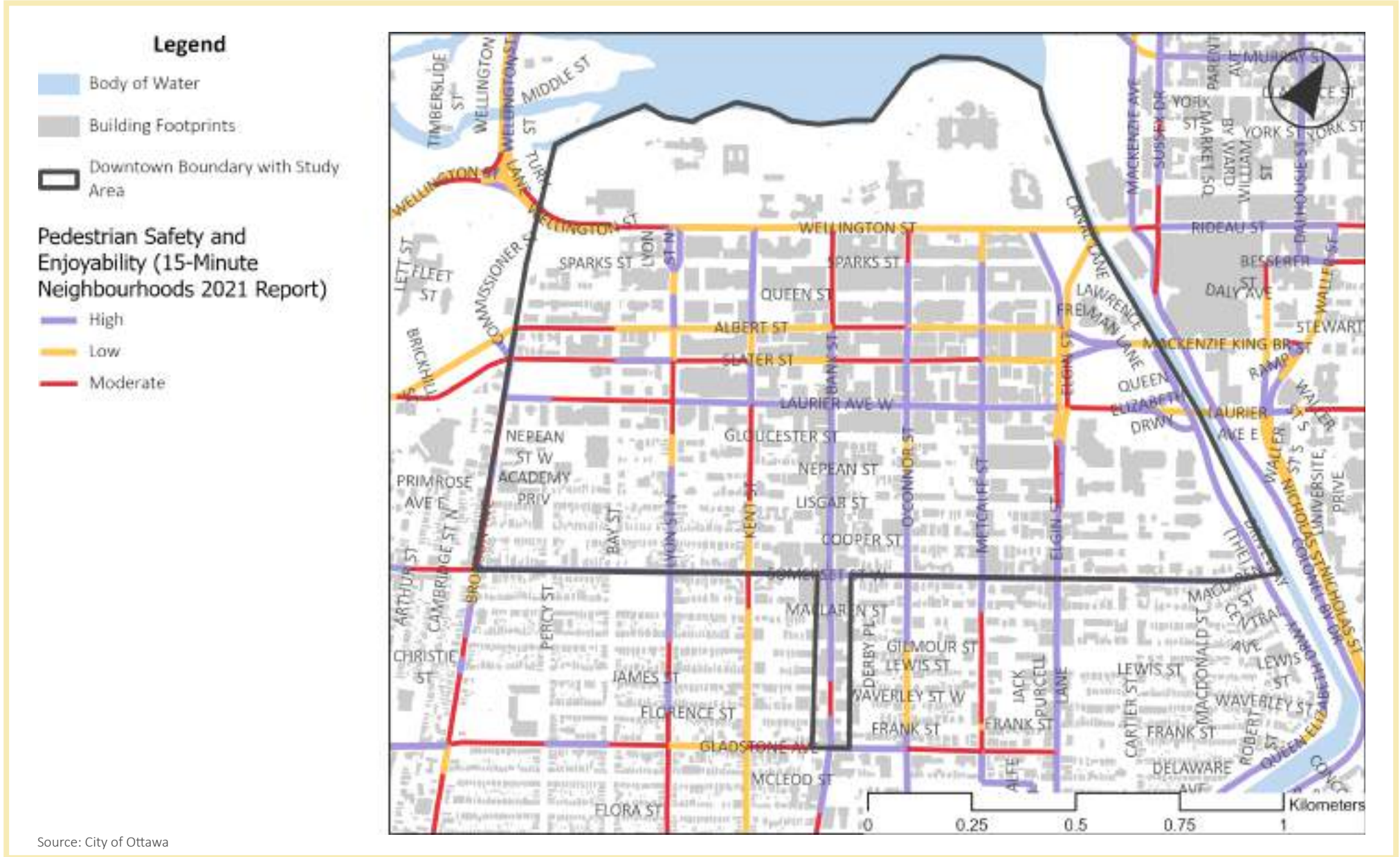


Boundary Definitions

-  **Downtown Boundary with Study Area** The study area defined by the Task Force.
-  **Modified Study Area** Modified study area for statistical purposes. The boundary is defined by 20 dissemination areas of the 2021 Canadian Census.
-  **Centretown** Neighbourhood defined in the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. This area corresponds to 7 census tracts of the 2021 Canadian Census.
-  **Somerset Ward**

Source: EVOQ Strategies, 2023

PEDESTRIAN ENJOYABILITY IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA



GREEN/OPEN SPACE COMPARISON : DOWNTOWN MONTREAL AND DOWNTOWN OTTAWA

Green/Open Space in Montreal and Ottawa Downtowns

Legend

- Roads
 - Building Footprints
 - ▭ Ottawa Downtown Boundary with Study Area
 - Tree Canopy 2019
- #### Open Spaces
- Neighborhood Parks and Parkettes
 - Dog Park
 - Parks and Squares
 - Plazas
 - Streetscape for Pedestrian Activity
 - Institutional Open Space

Montreal Downtown



Ottawa Downtown

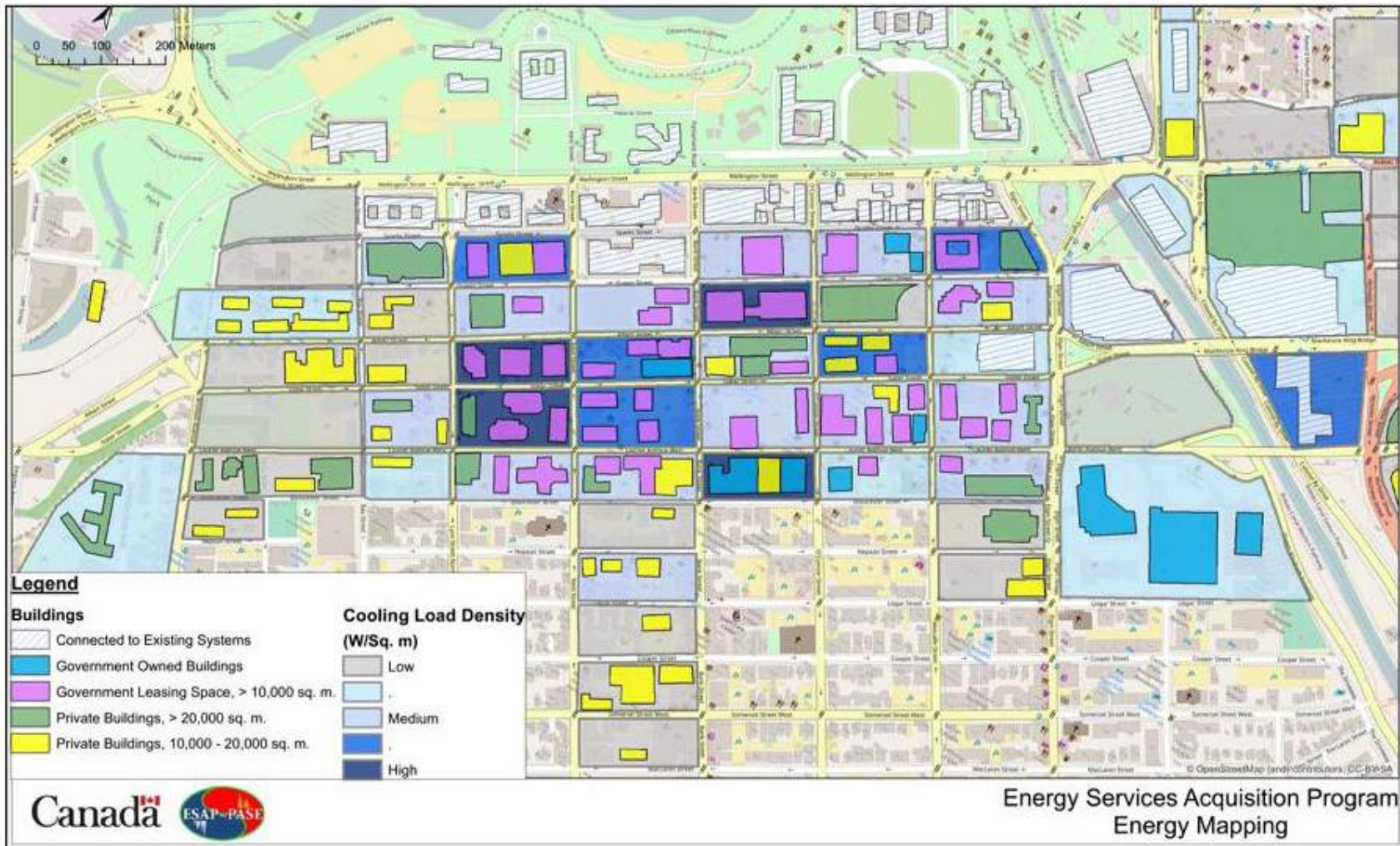


Source: Ville de Montréal, City of Ottawa

COOLING LOAD DENSITY IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA

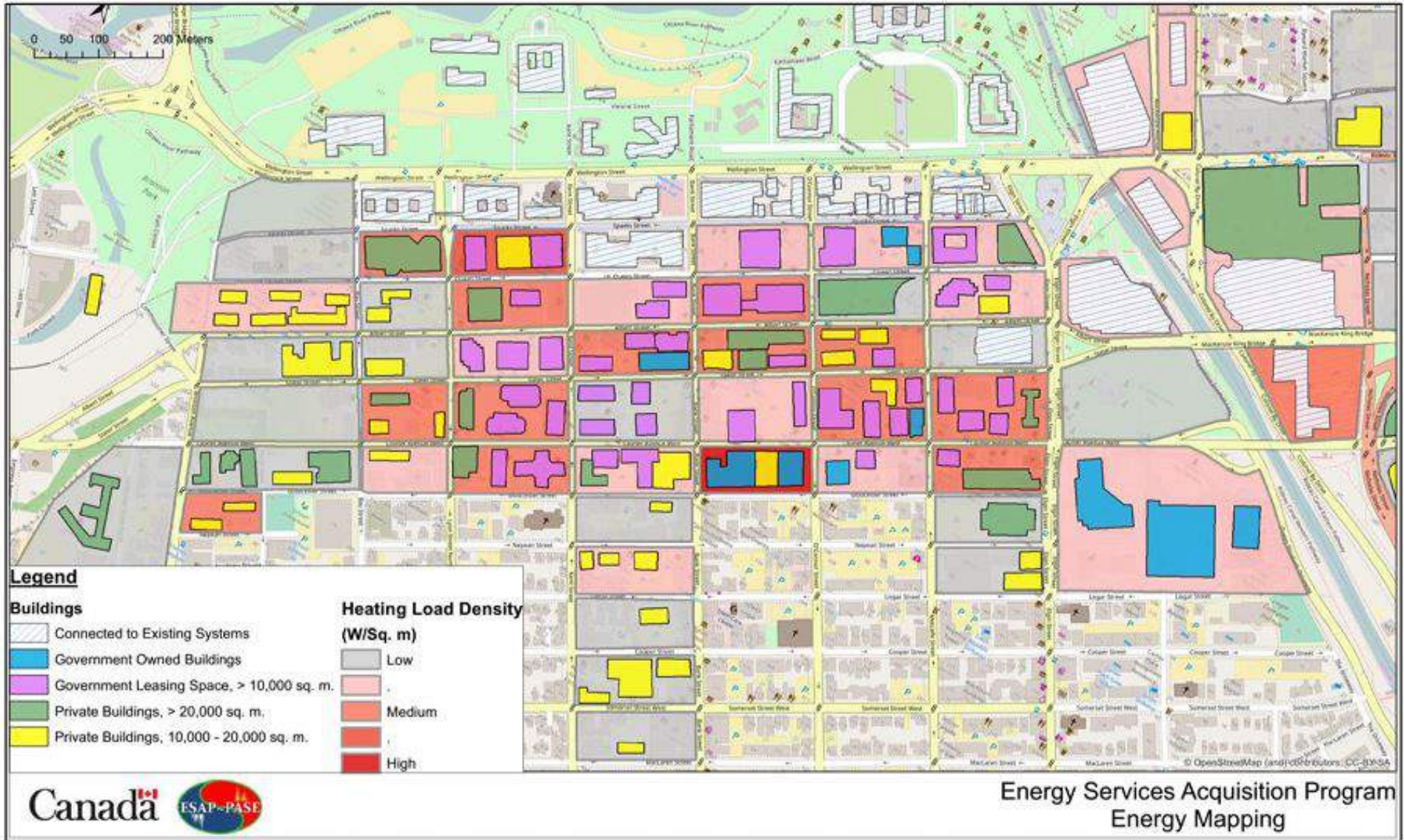
Eighty buildings in Ottawa, including the Parliament Buildings, are served by the Energy Services Acquisition Program (ESAP) district energy system. The current heating and cooling system was built between 50 and 100 years ago and is being modernised. The system connects to 5 central plants using more than 14 kilometers of underground piping. The system provides heating by steam and hot water and cooling by chilled water.

The following two maps show estimation of cooling/heating loads in the district energy system as part of the system growth projections.



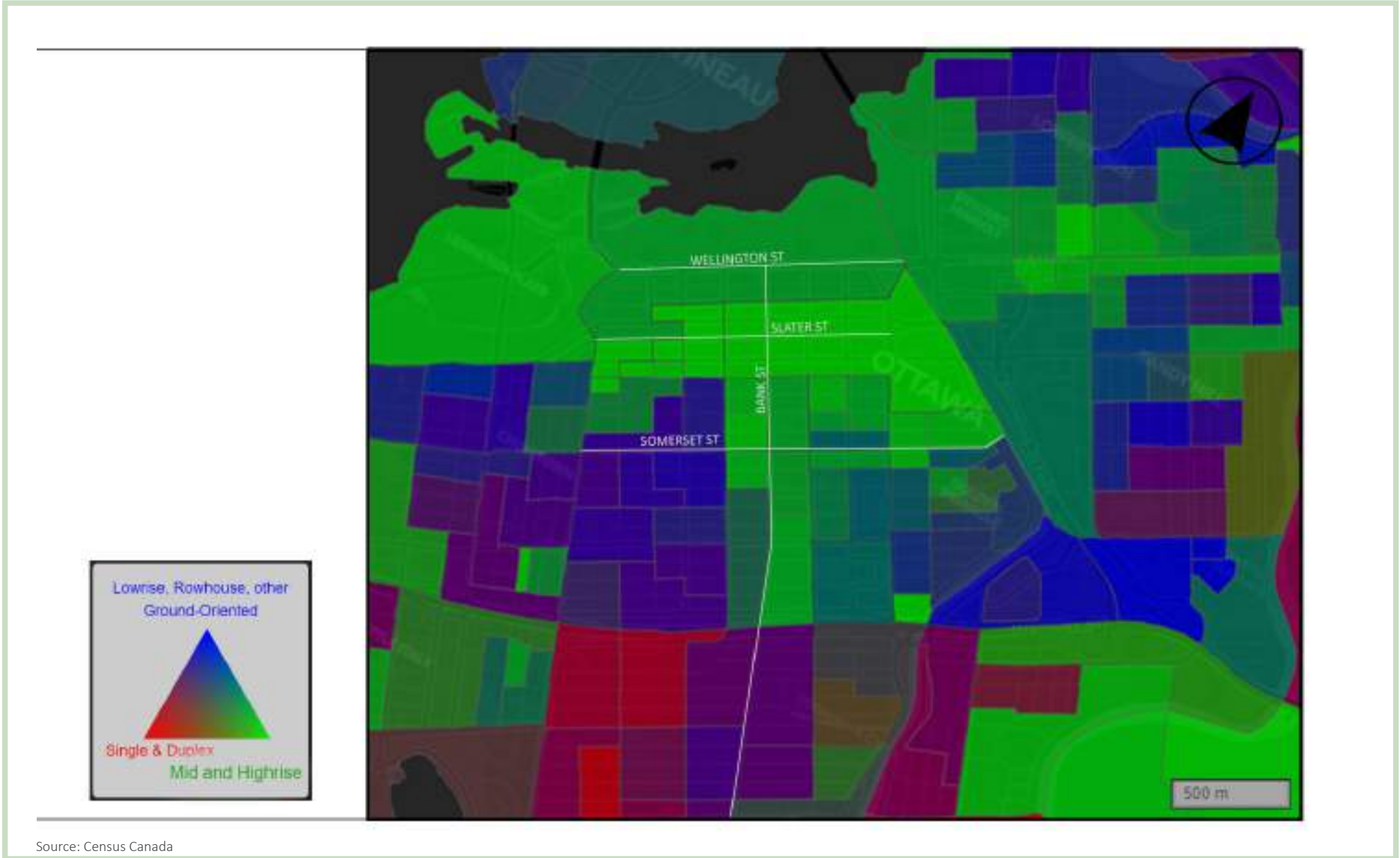
Source: Government of Canada

HEATING LOAD DENSITY IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA STUDY AREA



Source: Government of Canada

DWELLING TYPES PROPORTIONS IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA



Source: Census Canada

APPENDIX

D



Cover illustration :
Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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MUNICIPAL POLICIES

Below is a list of Municipal Policies (City of Ottawa) that could be affected through the recommendations outlined in this report:

- Accessibility Policy (2012; revised 2022)
- Accountability and Transparency Policy (2007; revised 2014, 2022)
- Community, Fundraising and Special Events Policy (2013; revised 2021, 2022)
- Comprehensive Asset Management Policy (2012)
- Equity and Diversity Policy (2002; revised 2017)
- Ethical Purchasing Policy (2007, revised 2019)
- Green Building Policy for the Construction of Corporate Buildings (2005; revised 2015)
- Parkland Acquisition and Funding Through Property Disposal Policy (2022)
- Parkland First Policy (2022)
- Retention of Municipal Parkland Policy (2022)
- Public Art Policy (2015)

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Cover illustration :

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 1941

Source: Library and Archives Canada

Downtown Ottawa aerial, 2022

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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