

December 4, 2017

Dear Mayor Watson and City of Ottawa Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the City of Ottawa Budget 2018. The Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, the Orleans Chamber of Commerce and the West Ottawa Board of Trade are working closely together to strengthen the voice of business in Ottawa and ensure the interests of the business community are represented on relevant matters at all levels of government. We collaborate with economic development stakeholders across the city, with the goal of making Ottawa the best place to live, work and play... as well as to visit, study and invest.

We applaud your commitment to less than 2% increase city wide for taxes, particularly when facing many of the same challenges of our local businesses addressing the impacts of Bill 148. The combination of fiscal responsibility in spending combined with innovative investment in economic development will garner us the greatest long term results. Thank you for exploring opportunities such as better regional transit service integration, sustainable green energy initiatives, and projects like Community Improvement Plans and major City Building projects.

We wish to restate our position for the city to conduct and share **economic impact reports** for major spending projects. We believe this exercise will serve to set spending priorities, garner public support and encourage businesses and the community to identify opportunities to plan and be involved.

The key tenets of our presentation are intended to establish a basis that we build on in the future; accountability, brand, collaboration.

Be clear. We wish to see a budget that clearly delineates how much is invested in economic development activities and infrastructure; where it is spent and the expected deliverables and outcomes. We would like a whole of community framework for economic development, innovation and job growth. This framework would serve as means of achieving our shared economic development goals, measuring impact, holding each other **accountable** and identifying gaps and solutions. In addition, we would like to see consistent community reporting on economic development using key performance measures against our goals as well as against other comparable cities (Edmonton, Halifax, Calgary, etc.) to whom we aspire in some way. This report would have the dual purpose of serving as an engagement and marketing tool.

Be bold. We wish to see a budget that reflects an aspirational long term vision and strong **brand**; one that will distinguish us on the global stage similar to Ottawa 2017 and rally the community behind the city on where we are going so we can get there faster. This vision should be easy to share, leverage current global trends and local strengths and inspire. Future budgets should be aligned with and measured against this vision, values and plan. This vision will serve to; a) focus our resources and efforts, b) increase our impact through engagement and c) position Ottawa in the global marketplace. What strengths will we be known for?

Collaborate. The City of Ottawa, local economic development stakeholders and business leaders of Ottawa acknowledge the value of collaboration and have begun to work together more. We encourage continued and greater collaboration with our local partners at the NCC and Gatineau and Eastern Ontario. In addition, higher engagement of community stakeholders including the business community would result in a paradigm shift in our resources. Our approach to business as high value clients, ambassadors and promoters and idea generators would mobilize our economic development priorities.

There is much opportunity for our businesses today however they are also facing many challenges including but not limited to the impact of digitization and disruption in the global economy, rapidly changing legislation such as tax and labour reform, increased regulatory burden and talent shortages. The city has demonstrated great support of our business community however more is needed and you cannot do it alone. On behalf of our members, the Chambers would like to participate in the process of setting Ottawa's economic agenda in a meaningful way. Please continue to call on us.

In summary, the Chambers of Commerce of Ottawa offer our support for the city and its economic development priorities. We believe Ottawa has the potential to be the greatest city in the world if we aspire to do so. A clearly communicated and aspirational vision combined with a community economic development and innovation plan that leverages our strengths and partnerships would give us a competitive edge over other markets. The global economic landscape is changing quickly and the coming years promise to transform our businesses and our lives more profoundly than any prior period. There is much that is unknown and whole industries have the potential to emerge or disappear. Ottawa will either flourish with opportunity or risk being left out. The key will be how we work together; communicate and achieve our common goals.

We wish to express appreciation to you, the Mayor and City Council, along with city staff for your commitment to economic development and innovation. Thank you for your ongoing support of our business community and the members of the Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce and the West Ottawa Board of Trade. Your team often engage our associations in new initiatives, consult us on priority issues and attend and sponsor our events. We value our partnership with the City in our mission to create a prosperous Ottawa community. Stronger together.

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