



Rural Summit 2024

Breakout Session

Community & Social Services

Councillor Catherine Kitts – Ward 19 Orléans South-Navan & Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health



Your Feedback

- ❑ Concerns about delayed paramedic response times in rural Ottawa, emphasizing the need for faster, more accessible emergency care
- ❑ Rural youth face unique challenges accessing mental health services due to lack of transit
- ❑ More French-language programs are needed in rural areas, ensuring French is prioritized equally
- ❑ Isolated seniors struggle with access to social services



Your Feedback Cont'd

- ❑ **Implement mobile services, such as food banks and health clinics, to serve rural communities effectively and efficiently**
- ❑ **Expanded youth programs, especially after-school options are in high demand and foster development**
- ❑ **Compared to urban Ottawa, rural Ottawa has limited physical bricks and mortar space for social service delivery**
- ❑ **Affordable housing, especially for seniors, continues to be a critical need in rural areas, with long waitlists for rental units**



Open Discussion on Key Topics



Improving Response Times & Resources

- ❑ Addressing offload delays by working with the province to mitigate hospital offload delays impacting paramedic availability
- ❑ Expanding resources by hiring an additional 23 new paramedics in both 2025 and 2026 to strengthen capacity
- ❑ Improving response times with a new dispatch system for positive impacts to response efficiency and effectiveness



Ongoing Efforts & Initiatives

- ❑ Efforts are being made to secure additional, dedicated funding for social services to at-risk rural residents, much like those available to equity-deserving groups
- ❑ Ongoing discussions continue about bringing more services, such as home care and social supports, directly to senior communities
- ❑ The City is working with local organizations to extend services in rural areas, including partnerships with local service providers like the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre



Supporting Rural Public Health

- ❑ Ottawa Public Health will develop a Rural Resident Wellness Toolkit in 2025 to centralize rural-specific mental health resources
- ❑ Introduction of a new online Rural Wellness Resource page to help rural residents and youth in particular find and access supports both online and, in their communities
- ❑ The OPH Toolkit will feature accessible, free resources from OPH and partners, including mental health training, tailored youth supports, and agricultural wellness programs
- ❑ Agriculture Wellness Ontario resources will be added to the existing Business Support Toolkit to support agricultural workers in the interim



Service Delivery

- ❑ Establish a mobile foodbank service to address rural access issues and collaborate with community associations to support food security, with rural needs prioritized in the 2025 Community Funding Framework review
- ❑ Develop a French Hub model in city facilities to expand culturally relevant programs for Francophone youth, ensuring geographic accessibility
- ❑ Securing an investment of over \$300K to adjust hours of operation at Ottawa Public Library branches in rural communities and ensure staff can offer additional programs for all ages
- ❑ Strengthen accountability for rural-funded programs with annual reporting, client impact surveys, and enhancements to transparency measures before the 2025 Budget



Strengthening our Communities

- ❑ Promote affordable senior housing in rural areas, with new projects like Rideau Non-Profit Housing in Ward 21, alongside ongoing funding initiatives
- ❑ The City is exploring pop-up services, such as immunization and health clinics, to meet community needs
- ❑ Expand rural programming using data insights and support community engagement through facilities like the Corkery Community Building Expansion, already underway



Working Together for Change

- ❑ **The City is committed to listening to rural residents and finding solutions to improve access to social and community services, regardless of the very geography that defines us**
- ❑ **Continued collaboration with local organizations and residents will be essential to positive service delivery outcomes**
- ❑ **Your Mayor and Rural Councillors will continue to fiercely advocate for more funding and resources to support rural communities and ensure they have the services they need – whether it be for mental, physical or social wellbeing**



Thank You!

