



LAWSON

Ottawa deserves better.

ALEX LAWSON FOR MAYOR

Open During Construction.

When the City tears up your street, the City should help you stay open.

POLICY PAPER

OCTOBER 2026

01 / OVERVIEW

Fix the road. Keep the shop.

Roads need fixing. Pipes need replacing. Transit needs building. Nobody argues with that.

But when the City closes your street for a season, your customers go somewhere else.

Today, when Ottawa starts work on your street, you get a notice, a project contact and a lane kept open where possible. Nothing in the plan is built around keeping your doors open.

Other cities do more. Quebec City pays affected businesses up to \$30,000 a year during tram construction. Montreal pays up to \$40,000 a year. Toronto has funded business groups on streets torn up by transit work. When CFIB graded 66 Canadian cities this year, Toronto outscored Ottawa on construction support.

QUEBEC CITY

\$30,000

Yearly maximum per business during tram construction

Ville de Québec, TramCité aid, August 2026.

MONTREAL

\$40,000

Yearly maximum per business near major roadwork

Ville de Montréal, 2026.

TORONTO

Up to \$50,000

For a business group on a transit construction street

City of Toronto, Transit Construction Mitigation Fund.

ONTARIO LAW

No cheques

The Municipal Act bars cash aid for lost sales

Invest in Hamilton, 2026.

02 / WHAT ONTARIO LAW ALLOWS

Do what the City controls.

Ontario cities can't write cheques to businesses for lost sales. The Municipal Act forbids it. Hamilton says so on its own website. That is why Montreal and Quebec City can do things Ottawa can't.

So Alex Lawson's plan does what the City controls: how it plans, signs, schedules and finishes its own projects. And it asks the Province for the one tool the City doesn't have.

03 / THE PLAN

Seven commitments.

COMMITMENT 01

A business liaison on every major project.

One named person is assigned at the design stage, with the authority to fix access, deliveries, signage and scheduling problems on the spot.

COMMITMENT 02

The City pays for the signs.

Every major project's budget includes signs that say the businesses are open during construction, wayfinding to entrances, and detour signs that tell customers the businesses on the block are still open, like the detour signs the City already pays for.

COMMITMENT 03

One construction map.

Every project goes on one site, with start and end dates, detours, temporary parking and loading zones. It is updated weekly.

COMMITMENT 04

Talk before the shovel goes in.

The businesses on the block get a meeting before work starts. There are no avoidable lane closures in a street's busiest season without notice.

COMMITMENT 05

Help scaled to the impact, then evaluated.

Every major project gets a business impact check before it starts: how long, how many businesses, how much access is lost. Bigger impact gets more help, including extended signage, temporary loading and short-term parking, and promotion of affected businesses on City channels. Every project is reviewed when it ends, and the results are published.

COMMITMENT 06

Property tax deferral.

Businesses on a street under City construction for three months or more could defer their property tax and skip the penalties, then repay interest-free when the work ends. CFIB has called for this kind of relief. A Lawson council will ask the Province in year one to confirm the City's authority to do it, and have the program ready the day the Province says yes.

COMMITMENT 07

Construction that ends on time.

Cones go up no more than 24 hours before work starts. Utilities and developers that close a lane pay by the day, not a flat fee. City contracts carry end dates with penalties. The fastest relief is a finished road.

04 / WHAT IT DOESN'T DO

No grant fund. No cheques.

There is no new grant fund and no cheques. There is no new department: liaisons come from existing project staff. And there are no promises the law doesn't allow.

Nobody should lose a business because the City fixed the road out front.

05 / STRAIGHT TALK ON THE MONEY

Part of building the road.

Signs and access work are part of building the road, and they belong in the project budget. Liaisons come from staff already working on the project. A tax deferral is repaid, so it costs the City time, not money.

Pricing lane closures by the day gives everyone a reason to hurry. Today a utility or developer pays a flat fee to close a road and pays again only to change the dates. One who pays by the day has a reason to finish. On City projects, completion penalties in the contract do the same job.

06 / PART OF THE PLAN

Fix the road. Keep the shop.

Open During Construction works alongside Get Ottawa Moving (smart signals and lane-closure pricing), Free Up Parking, Report Red Tape and the Small Business Tax Cut.

Alex Lawson. Builder, not politician.

07 / SOURCES & VERIFICATION

Every figure here is sourced.

QUEBEC CITY TRAMCITÉ AID

Financial aid "pouvant atteindre 30 000 \$ par année" for businesses affected by TramCité construction; program expanded in August 2026.

<https://www.carrefourdequebec.com/2026/08/quebec-elargit-laide-aux-entreprises-touchees-par-les-travaux-de-tramcite/>

MONTREAL CONSTRUCTION AID

Aid for businesses in areas affected by major work of up to \$40,000 per fiscal year. Ville de Montréal, page updated July 10, 2026.

<https://montreal.ca/programmes/aide-financiere-commerces-des-secteurs-affectes-par-des-travaux-majeurs>



TORONTO CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION

The Transit Construction Mitigation Fund gives BIAs and non-profit business groups grants of up to \$10,000, \$25,000 or \$50,000 on streets affected by transit construction. City of Toronto.

<https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/business-operation-growth/business-incentives/transit-construction-mitigation-fund/>

CFIB CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION SCORES

CFIB's 2026 Municipal Report Card scores construction mitigation measures. Toronto scored 5 of 10, one of three municipalities to do so; Ottawa scored lower.

https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/hubfs/research/reports/2026/09-2026_CFIB_Municipal_Report.pdf

MUNICIPAL ACT AND LOST SALES

"The City cannot provide direct compensation or reimbursement for lost sales, lost revenue, or other business impacts related to construction," citing the bonusing rules in the Municipal Act, 2001. Invest in Hamilton.

<https://investinhamilton.ca/constructionbusinesssupport>

CFIB ON TAX DEFERRAL

CFIB's 2026 Ontario municipal election platform calls for deferring property taxes and waiving interest for business owners affected by lengthy road work.

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/cfib-demands-tax-relief-ahead-190302769.html>

OTTAWA ROAD CLOSURE FEES

A temporary road closure permit carries a flat fee, charged again for each extension or revision of the dates. City of Ottawa.

<https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/construction-right-way/temporary-road-closure>

Authorized by the official agent of the Alex Lawson campaign.