

Precis: Orléans Calls for Fair Distribution of Federal Government Jobs

A new task force called 'Balance Orléans' wants to see a federal government campus located in the eastern Ottawa suburb of Or­léans. Over the last decade, every part of the National Capital Region has sustained growth in population, employment and diversity except for the east end community of Or­léans.

“While Or­léans has the highest concentration of bilingual and educated citizens in Ottawa, there are less than 50 federal jobs here compared to 13,100 in Kanata,” said Jasmine Brown, executive director of the Heart of Or­léans Business Improvement Area, and co-chair of the Balance Or­léans Task Force. “Orléans is virtually absent on the map of federal employment campuses in Ottawa and Gatineau.”

There are 134,000 federal government jobs in Ottawa and Gatineau, the largest employer in the region, all located in central and west Ottawa. In Kanata and Bayshore alone, the western communities comparable to Or­léans, there are approximately 13,110 federal jobs.

Members of the Balance Or­léans Task Force, local business owners and private sector employees, are concerned that the new light rail transit scheduled for completion in 2022 will be empty coming in to Or­léans except at rush hour in the early evening. Currently, Or­léans exports most of its workforce. During peak hours, Or­léans sees a surging outflux of their residents, an estimated 80 per cent exiting versus 20 per cent entering Or­léans, to travel to work.

“As a long time, community builder, I have seen Or­léans excluded from every federal government growth plan in the City’s history,” said Doug Feltmate, Task Force member and restaurant business owner. “The time has come for the Government of Canada to act now and resolve the disparity of economic development in its Capital city.”

“A federal employment node is viewed by the Task Force as a significant catalyst for complementary development, job creation, economic growth, and the ability for Or­léans residents to work and live in their own community,” said City of Ottawa Councillor Bob Monette. “There is good feasibility for retail, office and residential development with potential growth of the La Cite campus, a hotel and conference centre, designated park land, and Petrie’s Landing – if the federal government ends the seeming bias against Or­léans as a campus location.”

“Over the last several years, Or­léans has been overlooked as a federal employment node which brings complementary development in the area to support the public service,” said Pascale Bazinet, co-chair of the Task Force, and Manager, Desjardins Caisse Populaire Trillium. “The community of Or­léans, however, has one of the highest numbers of federal employees as residents. The Balance Or­léans Task Force wants to work on changing this discrimination so that federal employees from Or­léans can work, live and play closer to their own community.”

Balance Or­léans: Questions and Answers

Q: What is Balance Orléans?

A: Balance Orléans is a Task Force comprised of local leaders in the Orléans business community.

Balance Orléans has come together to raise awareness of the disparity in major employers in Orléans, with the goal of ending the disproportionate lack of federal government jobs in Orleans and realizing a new redevelopment plan for Orléans.

The Task Force is coordinated by the Heart of Orléans Business Improvement Area, and has widespread support and representation from City Councillor and Deputy Mayor Bob Monette, local business owners, the banking community, members of both the BIA and two Chambers of Commerce.

Q: What is Balance Orléans trying to achieve?

A: Balance Orléans is calling on all levels of government to support the establishment of a federal employment campus in Orleans, and to balance this employment across the National Capital Region.

Balance Orléans also wants to engage with all levels of government, and bring the public and private sectors together to plan for redevelopment.

Q: What are the actions Balance Orléans is taking?

A: The Balance Orléans Task Force is highlighting the lack of federal employment in Orléans, and the opportunities for redevelopment that Orléans can offer.

Balance Orléans is a grassroots movement with support for this issue. The community will be speaking out to our political leaders that Orleans need to thrive as a dynamic, economically strong community as the rest of the national capital region is doing.

Q: Why is Balance Orléans doing this now?

A: There are many factors that together make now the time to consider Orléans as the preferred choice for redevelopment.

Orléans has one of the most educated and bilingual workforces in Ottawa; however, most of these people work elsewhere.

At the same time, of Ottawa's 134,000 federal jobs, less than 50 - that's less than one-half of one percent - are in Orléans.

Stage 2 of light rail will be up and running in 2023, including the east portion to Trim Road. With light rail comes the opportunity to make Orléans a work destination.

Orléans' proximity to downtown, available lands, stunning waterfront, parks and recreation, and exceptional quality of life, all make our community an excellent choice for more federal jobs.

Q: Where can people go for more information?

A: The best source for information is the Balance Orléans Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/BalanceOrleans

The co-chairs of the Balance Orléans Task Force are Pascale Bazinet (pascale.f.bazinet@desjardins.com, 613.859.0255), and Jasmine Brown (jasmine@heartforleans.ca, 613.898.4063)

Q: What sources of information is Balance Orléans using?

A: Balance Orléans has used data from several sources, including Statistics Canada data from the 2016 Census, City of Ottawa traffic count data from 2016, and the Ottawa Employment Survey 2012.

Q: Who are the members of the Balance Orléans Task Force?

A: The Task Force has representation from City Council, local business owners, the banking community, members of the BIA and two Chambers of Commerce, and is comprised of:

Pascale Bazinet, Co-Chair. Manager, General Management and Operation Support - Desjardins Caisse Populaire Trillium
Jasmine Brown, Co-Chair. Executive Director, Heart of Orléans BIA
Bob Monette, Deputy Mayor and Councillor, Orléans Ward, City of Ottawa
Ian Faris, President and CEO, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce
Doug Feltmate, Owner, St Martha's Brasserie and Chair, Economic Development Working Group, Heart of Orléans BIA
Kim Ziebell, Chair, Heart of Orleans BIA

Q: What is the Heart of Orléans BIA?

A: The Heart of Orléans Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a not-for-profit organization that represents 350+ businesses in Orléans. It aims to promote the BIA area as a district, advocate on behalf of members, and work to make improvements to the streetscape - all with a view to strengthening economic development in Orléans.

Contact: Jasmine Brown, jasmine@heartforleans.ca, 613.898.4063
<https://www.facebook.com/BalanceOrleans/>