

# STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS



Mayor Daniel F. Aussem

April 5, 2022

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The City of Ottawa has just over 18,000 residents and operates under the Commission form of Government where each of the four commissioners and the mayor have a department that they are in charge of. We operate on an annual budget from May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>.

The City is adopting a new comprehensive plan that will incorporate plans for the I-80 & Rte. 71 interchange and the Rte. 6 and Rte. 23 area along with a new Riverfront where the former Central School was located. The YMCA project will be breaking ground in June on their \$24 million project and should spur additional development in the waterfront area. We also have a Riverboat locating near the former Rescue Squad docks. The Sainte Genevieve will provide scenic cruises along the Illinois River offering cocktails and appetizers.

The City will continue efforts to preserve its historic commercial buildings and beautify the downtown. We are planning a long-range commitment to resurface the alleys downtown and, in some areas, relocate utilities underground.

We are also seeing an expansion in residential growth primarily at Heritage Harbor on the East side of town. This past year we had just under \$10 mil in residential construction and \$7.2 mil in commercial projects.

**CITY FINANCES – FY 2021 and FY 2022**

- The City of Ottawa does not have excessive surpluses, but operates in adherence to its budget, effectively deploying collected revenues and grant funding.
- The City's General Corporate Fund (the City's main operating account) is operating with a balanced budget.
- Tax revenues for the current budget ending April 30, 2022 are projected to comprise 78% of total General Fund Revenues (the City's main operating account). This is consistent with prior years.
  - Approximately 17% of tax revenues are from Property Taxes
  - Approximately 50% of tax revenues are from Sales Taxes
  - Total budgeted General Fund Revenues for FY 2022 are \$18.2 million, similar to FY 2021 which were projected at \$18.1 million
- Sales Tax Revenues continue to account for an increasing portion of the City's General Fund tax revenues.
- When considering all City Funds, Property Taxes account for a larger portion of overall revenues.

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- The Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) which forms the basis of Property Tax revenues is projected to increase this coming year for the seventh consecutive year after four prior years of successive modest declines.
- The City has effectively utilized Tax Increment Financing Districts and Enterprise Zones incentives to encourage new business development.
- The City has consistently funded each of its employee pension fund obligations the actuarially recommend amounts.
- The City consistently operates its business-type activities, primarily its water and wastewater treatment operations at a modest profit.
- The City issued two separate bond issues in calendar year 2021. An issuance of \$8.9 million was to finance various capital improvement including construction of the Long-Term Control Plan Manhole and Sewer Pipe Rehabilitation Project which has been planned over a number of years to provide further separation in the City’s wastewater and stormwater systems. The other issuance, in the amount of \$4.5 million was to finance additional capital improvements including the construction of the Route 71 watermain extension. The debt is to be serviced and repaid from incremental taxes in TIF district project areas, water and wastewater funds, and if necessary, with City general obligation potential support.
- The City of Ottawa received bond ratings for each of the 2021 bond issuances. The bond issuances were insured. Standard and Poors assigned a rating of AA (Stable Outlook), and Moody’s an underlying credit rating of A3. Each is categorized as indicating a “very strong” capacity to meet financial commitments.
- The City’s outstanding debt is significantly below the State imposed limit and all obligations have been paid as agreed.
- The City has prudently managed the resources available to it, stayed within its budgetary projections, proactively sought grant funding, and effectively utilized debt for financing necessary projects.

### Ottawa FY 2021 Grants

#### COVID

\$397,200	Downstate Small Business Stabilization
\$714,750	CURE Economic Support to businesses
\$81,232	FEMA RPA for Ottawa Food Basket

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\$2,455,560 ARPA SLFRF Allocation

\$3,648,742

**NCAT**

\$1,053,585 NCAT Bus Shelter, Cameras & Vehicles

\$307,579 Operating Funds Federal Section 5311

\$1,866,300 State Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP)

\$933,239 Federal Relief Funds through CARES Act

\$349,888 Building renovation for maintenance garage

\$4,510,591

**Miscellaneous**

\$14,687 IEMA REP Grant - Fire Department

\$18,000 Morton Arboretum Tree Inventory & Management Plan

\$250,000 IHDA Strong communities Program (Blighted homes demo)

\$18,250 Historic Preservation/IDNR – CLG – Downtown Design Guidelines

\$550,000 CSO Sanitary Separation

\$500,000 Lance Yednock water replacements (in lieu of Downtown Waterfront)

\$2,000,000 IDOT EDP for Stevenson Road

\$2,489,571 EDA for Stevenson Road

\$5,840,508 Total

**Port District**

\$9,770,750 Ottawa Port District – relocate IL Railway switchyard

**TOTAL** **\$23,770,591**

**Fire Department**

Despite facing several challenges in 2021, the Ottawa Fire Department maintained its pride and tradition and accomplished the tasks at hand. Ottawa Fire Fighter Paramedics remained on the frontline battling the COVID pandemic. In 2021 the Ottawa Fire Department responded to 4,154 emergency responses. Requests for EMS ambulance service increased to a record 3,333 calls.

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Additionally, members of the Ottawa Fire Department participated on specialty teams for MABAS 25. These specialty teams were active throughout the county responding to hazardous material, technical rescue, and water rescue calls.

The Ottawa Fire Department is composed of 18 fire fighters, 6 lieutenants, 3 captains, a records keeper, a deputy chief and chief. These dedicated professionals operate out of two stations that protect the City of Ottawa's 15.52 square miles.

**Police Department**

The Ottawa Police Department, comprised of 24 patrol officers, five sergeants, 5 corporals, 2 captains, 1 chief, 15 telecommunicators and 1 IT person, has continued to maintain its long time standing as one of the most professional and progressive law enforcement agencies in the area. This is done, among other things, through the continued support of established, successful programs such as the Peer Jury, aimed at keeping young, first-time offenders out of the juvenile court system, and programs such as the Ottawa Police Department's Child Abduction Response (CART) Team, intended to create quick, structured investigative and search process meant to bring endangered children home safely. The Ottawa Police Department has trained each member in CIT (crisis intervention) which better equips officers in dealing with the mentally ill. The Ottawa Police Department prides itself in working with and educating the community. This is done by offering private businesses A.L.I.C.E. training which is an active shooter response training as well as offering education identity theft/fraud to those who are in high-risk groups such as long term care facilities.

**Public Works Administration**

**2021 Streets**

	Approximate Cost
Resurfaced 20 blocks and the Upper Jordan Lot Parking Lot	\$ 680,000
Resurfaced 31 alleys	\$ 400,000
Reconstructed 3 blocks with concrete pavement	\$ 615,000
Reconstructed the Thornton Park parking lot	\$ 115,000
Reconstructed the Hassel Parking Lot	<u>\$ 173,000</u>
Total Street Program	\$1,983,000

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Total length = 22,800 feet (4.32 miles) (23 blocks and 31 alleys)

Total curb replacement = 5,560 feet in 23 blocks (including 3 full block replacements) with 59 sidewalk ramps

**Water**

**Illinois Route 71 Water Main Extension**

Bids were received on March 31, 2021, for an approximate 10,600 feet of 12-inch and 16-inch watermain and associated appurtenances installed using conventional open cut methods and an approximate 3,700 feet of 16-inch diameter water main using directional drilling methods at a total cost of \$4,249,814.95. Project construction is complete.

**Illinois River Crossing Lift Station**

The Work includes the construction of a new sanitary lift station, manholes, force main, demolition of the existing lift station, associated appurtenances, and restoration.

Bids were received and awarded at a cost of \$3,734,700.00.

Construction has commenced with most of the foundation walls being completed. The completion date for the project is estimated for late spring or early summer of 2022.

**2022 Water Main Replacements**

Projects selected for 2022 include:

1. East Joliet Street from Scott Street to Post Street
2. Illinois Route 23 from the Dollar General to McKinley Road
3. Fern Street from Ottawa Avenue to Cactus Street

The total construction cost has been estimated at approximately \$1,400,000.00. Engineering design has begun completed with bidding and construction expected for late spring of 2022.

**Water Treatment Plant Generator**

An emergency stand by generator has been designed for installation at the water treatment plant. The generator will provide power to the water plant during power outages from the utility company.

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The generator is currently in production and expected to be installed in the spring of 2022 at a total cost of \$85,695.00.

**Wastewater/CSO**

**Approximate Cost**

- Long Term Control Plan Element 8.1 & 8.10  
Sanitary Sewer Lining (Construction in Progress) \$8,540,000
- Long Term Control Plan Element 8.2 CSSA 004, 014 & 017  
Sewer Separation at Third & Fourth Avenue (Bidding Phase) \$1,000,000
- Long Term Control Plan Element 8.2 CSSA 002  
Sewer Separation Various Streets in CSSA 002 (Design Phase) \$1,500,000

**Fields Hill Sanitary Sewer Extension**

Engineering design has begun for an approximate 5,000 feet sanitary sewer extension to serve residence along Caton Road, Fields Place and Lincoln Road. The preliminary cost of the extension has been estimated at approximately \$1,500,000. A construction completion date is not known at this time.

**Timber Lane Sanitary Sewer Extension**

Engineering design has begun for an approximate 1,000 feet sanitary sewer extension to serve residence along Timber Lane. The preliminary cost of the extension has been estimated at approximately \$250,000. A construction completion date is not known at this time.

**Parks**

**Approximate Cost**

- East Side Park Basketball Court \$40,000
- Allen Park Sea Wall Repairs \$250,000
- Recondition Fox River Docks \$5,000
- Thornton Park Splash Pad and Upgrades (Construction) \$610,000
- Dayton Bluffs Preserve Improvements \$35,000

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**2021 SUMMARY OF PERMITS ISSUED BY BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

Residential Building Permits:

- Permits issued: 116
- Construction value: \$9,933,989.00
- Permit fees collected: \$19,916.00

Commercial Building Permits:

- Permits issued: 18
- Construction value: \$7,241,420.00
- Permits fees collected: \$15,277.00

Fence Permits:

- Permits issued: 125
- Permit fees collected: \$5,875.00

Pool/Hot Tub Permits:

- Permits issued: 35
- Permit fees collected: \$1,000.00

Demolition Permits:

- Permits issued: 16
- Permit fees collected: \$750.00

Floodplain Permits:

- Permits issued: 3

Sign Permits:

- Permits issued: 32
- Permit fees collected: \$1,064.00

Business Registration Program:

- Permits issued: 30
- Permit fees collected: \$2,900.00

General Contractor Registrations:

- Licenses issued: 282
- License fees collected: \$28,200.00



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**Ordinance Report**

Jan 2021 thru Dec 2022

Inspections:

Nuisance Inspections		594
Sewer, Water, Street, Other Utility		13
Street Permits		0
Subdivision and Jobsite		0
Street and Right of Way		52
Sidewalk program		1
Misc. Building and Zoning Inspections		49
Tree Inspections		568
Total Inspections		1296
Nuisance Notices posted or sent		257
Door Hanger Notices		181
Nuisance Citations		25
Nuisance files opened		528
Nuisance files closed		473
Building, Zoning, Misc. notices Sent		1
Tree Removal Permits Issued		37
Abatement Action		29
Tree Planting Permits issued		2
Feather Banner Permits		6
Feather Banner Fees	8	\$200.00 Fees Collected
Waste Hauler Licenses Issued		11
Waste Vehicles Registered	58	\$3650.00 = Fees Collected:

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**Events** in 2022 are in abundance.

In addition to the annual Music in the Parks on Saturdays in Washington Square from June 25 – August 27, 2022, several other events have been confirmed, with additional requests for events still being received. As you can see from the list shown below – downtown Ottawa will be a hub of activity for residents and tourists alike.

April 15, 2022 – September 16, 2022 – Third Friday Artisan Market

April 23, 2022 - March to Believe in Washington Square Park

May 5, 2022 - Regional Office of Education Open House in the Jordan Block

May 13, 2022 - Community Outdoor Movie Night

May 14, 2022 - Starved Rock Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K (Run Starved Rock Country-Robb Hasty)

May 30, 2022 - Memorial Day Ceremonies in Washington Square, preceded by the traditional Navy Mother's Wreath Ceremony at the Fox River Bridge

June 3, 4 & 5, 2022 - Ottawa 2 Rivers Wine Fest

June 15-18, 2022 – Ottawa Lions Club Carnival

June 17, 2022 – LaSalle County Cruiser's Cruise Night

August 5-7, 2022 - Craft and Vendor Show

August 6 & 7, 2022 - Art in the Park

August 6, 2022 - Car Show (LaSalle County Cruisers' Car Club)

August 7, 2022 - Touch A Truck

August 13, 2022 - Children's Business Fair

September 10, 2022 - Walk to End Alzheimer's Illinois

October 15, 2022 - Out of the Darkness Walk

November/December, 2022 - Chris Kringle Market – beginning Thanksgiving weekend and for three more weekends in December

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**North Central Area Transit (NCAT)**

NCAT provides demand-response, door-to-door public bus transportation for the County of LaSalle, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. There are no limitation or eligibility requirements for who can use NCAT. All NCAT's vehicles are lift-equipped, making the fleet of 31 buses and vans ADA accessible.

All rides must be scheduled in advance; NCAT will arrive at your pickup location at (or around) the requested time and take you to the front door of your destination, then return to take you back home (or wherever).

City of Ottawa, grantee and operator of the NCAT, partners with St. Margaret's Health – Peru (formally Illinois Valley Community Hospital) to meet the transportation needs of our large county. This partnership provides staff, vehicles, office space, and storage, allowing for more efficient use of vehicles (less empty miles/time) and better utilization of their vehicles and staff.

NCAT is proud to be LaSalle County's safest and most economical transit provider.

**Ridership**

Even though COVID-19 continued to impact our communities, NCAT saw a slow but steady increase in ridership over the past year as people began to get back to their daily activities.

By the end of fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) NCAT had provided 37,234 rides (down from 46,757 FY2020 & 51,948 FY2019). Of those 37,234 rides a majority were for medical (46%) or employment (26%) purposes.

To date (fiscal year 2022: July 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022), NCAT has provided 31,625 rides with medical trips at 40% and employment at 29%. We expect to see this increase continue.

NCAT currently provides rides to Peoria twice a month, and last summer, NCAT began providing transportation to Morris. NCAT is considering expanding services to other high demand or medically necessary destinations.

**Projects**

Last year a new parking lot was completed at the Transit Center at 1784 Chessie Lane, Ottawa and will hold up to 35 light- and medium-duty busses. Enhancements to the lot using Rebuild IL Grant funding is planned this

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year by adding a roof/shelter structure to the lot to reduce weather-related wear and tear during storage. NCAT is also updating the staff/public parking lot using local matching and TIF funds.

In January 2022, NCAT installed AngelTrax surveillance cameras on 30 buses with funds from the Rebuild Illinois Grant (2020). The remaining Rebuild IL Grant funds will be used to purchase two (2) additional transit vehicles later this year.

NCAT will be debuting the RiderPortal very soon. This program allows riders to request trips through a mobile app or computer.

You can find more information about NCAT or how to schedule a ride by visiting [www.ridencat.com](http://www.ridencat.com) or calling 833-433-6228.

**In closing**

The City's goals for next year are:

- Start construction on the new YMCA
- Riverfront development. We have applied for a grant to construct an outdoor amphitheater on the former central school site.
- In Allen Park - repair the riverfront, replace the road and construct walking and biking paths along the river.
- We need to complete the water project at the Illinois and Michigan Canal
  
- Finalize the agreement with Nells Woodlands.
- Work with the Conservation Foundation for expansion at Harpers Farm including the new Soccer fields.
- Construct a new swimming Pool estimated to cost \$5 million.
- Design a second waste water treatment plant on East side of town.
- Raise Green Street out of the Flood Plain.
- Work with the Port District and Illinois Rail to relocate the switchyard and eliminate train blockages of Columbus and Champlain Streets.