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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOWNTOWN BIA LAUNCHES NEW NIGHTLIFE PLACEMAKING PROJECT

Ottawa, ON – July 30, 2025 – The Downtown Business Improvement Area (Downtown BIA) announces a new placemaking partnership with leading urban activation company Aire commune to transform an empty lot at 151 Metcalfe Street into a vibrant cultural destination.

This collaborative six-week pilot project will reimagine the lot as Metcalfe Plaza, a dynamic gathering place for residents and visitors to experience live music, local culture, and community in the heart of downtown.

Programming will run August 14 to September 20, 2025, with live events every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening, supporting the City's nightlife economy initiative.

"This joint project is a strategic investment into building community, cultural and commercial vibrancy — our key priorities as we work to revitalize downtown Ottawa," said Kevin McHale, Executive Director of Downtown BIA. "By reimagining underused spaces like 151 Metcalfe, we're creating new cultural assets and more reasons for people to come downtown, support local businesses, and discover local artists."

"This is exactly the kind of partnership we want to see as we build a more vibrant nightlife economy for Ottawa," said Mathieu Grondin, Nightlife Commissioner for the City of Ottawa. "Projects like this show how creative placemaking and diverse programming can help strengthen Ottawa's nightlife sector and bring dynamic energy to the downtown core."

Aire commune, known for its award-winning urban spaces in Montreal and Calgary, brings its production and placemaking expertise to Ottawa, delivering an inclusive, accessible, and inviting experience for all. Recently, the group was also involved with development and execution of the vibrant Street Seats programme taking place along Bank Street in downtown Ottawa.

“We’re excited to bring Aire commune’s unique brand of urban placemaking to Ottawa,” said Emilie Wake, Co-Founder of Aire commune. “After launching successful projects in other cities, we know how meaningful these spaces are for communities to gather, connect, and celebrate local culture.”

Programming at Metcalfe Plaza will feature local DJs and curated nightlife experiences in partnership with local production company AMASHOWZA, shining a spotlight on Ottawa’s musical talent, DJ scene, and vibrant nightlife community.

For more details on the Metcalfe Plaza placemaking project, visit www.hellodowntown.ca.

About Downtown BIA

The Downtown BIA is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the community, cultural and commercial prosperity of Ottawa's downtown core. Serving as the collective voice of the downtown business improvement area, the BIA works to support businesses, property owners, and partners. Its mandate is to steward economic and community development, destination development and member advocacy efforts. To learn more visit: www.hellodowntown.ca