

Report to:

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**3 April 2025**

Submitted by:

**Executive Director, Ottawa Police Service Board / Directeur Exécutif, Commission  
de service de police d'Ottawa**

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**SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF A DIVERSITY PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION  
37(1)(E) OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING ACT, 2019**

**OBJET: DEVELOPPEMENT D'UN PLAN DE DIVERSITE CONFORMÉMENT À  
L'ARTICLE 37(1)(E) DE LA LOI DE 2019 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ  
COMMUNAUTAIRE ET LES SERVICES POLICIERS**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Human Resources Committee direct the Executive Director to:

- 1. In collaboration with the Service, initiate the development of a Board-level diversity plan pursuant to section 37(1)(e) of the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019, complementing the Service's existing DRIVE2 Strategy. The Diversity plan shall include clear direction and measurable objectives across the areas of recruitment, selection, hiring, promotion, retention, professional development, training, transfers and other employee movements, with the aim of increasing the extent to which the Service reflects the diversity of the community it serves.**
- 2. Coordinate with relevant Service leads to plan a member census and a member engagement survey and other required actions.**
- 3. Report back to the Committee at its next meeting with an action plan outlining the proposed methodology, timeline, and any associated**

**resource requirements for the development and implementation of the diversity plan.**

## **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Comité des ressources humaines donne pour directive au directeur exécutif de :**

- 1. En collaboration avec le Service, entreprendre l'élaboration d'un plan de diversité à l'échelle du Conseil, conformément à l'article 37(1)(e) de la *Loi de 2019 sur la sécurité communautaire et les services policiers*, et en complément de la Stratégie DRIVE2 déjà en place au sein du Service. Le plan de diversité devra inclure des orientations claires et des objectifs mesurables dans les domaines du recrutement, de la sélection, de l'embauche, de la promotion, de la rétention, du perfectionnement professionnel, de la formation, des mutations et autres mouvements, dans le but d'accroître la mesure dans laquelle le Service reflète la diversité de la communauté qu'il dessert.**
- 2. Coordonner avec les responsables pertinents du Service la planification d'un recensement des membres et d'un sondage sur l'engagement des membres et autres actions nécessaires.**
- 3. Faire rapport au Comité à sa prochaine réunion au moyen d'un plan d'action présentant la méthodologie proposée, l'échéancier et les ressources nécessaires au développement et à la mise en œuvre du plan de diversité.**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Human Resources Committee of the statutory requirement under section 37(1)(e) of the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019 (CSPA), which establishes a duty for police services boards to prepare and adopt a diversity plan. This report outlines the scope of such a plan, proposes an approach for its development, and identifies key stakeholders and resources required to support its creation.

## **BACKGROUND**

Section 37(1)(e) of the CSPA requires that a police service board “prepare and adopt a diversity plan to ensure that the members of the police service reflect the diversity of the area for which the board has policing responsibility.” This requirement supports employer obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code and reflects a broader legislative and policy shift toward ensuring that police services are inclusive and representative of the communities they serve.

The diversity plan mandated in section 37(1)(e) would strengthen – directly or indirectly – the Ottawa Police Service Board’s (Board) commitment to some of the principles of policing outlined in Section 1 of the CSPA, notably:

- The need to ensure that police services and police service boards are representative of the communities they serve;
- The need for sensitivity to the pluralistic, multiracial and multicultural character of Ontario society;
- The need to be responsive to the unique histories and cultures of First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities;
- The need for co-operation between policing providers and the communities they serve;
- The importance of respect for victims of crime and understanding of their needs.

Fulfilling this requirement would also advance the objectives set by the Board in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan under the “EDI – Strengthen our Commitment to Human Rights” Pillar, by promoting greater diversity within OPS membership. By fostering a more equitable, inclusive and supportive workplace culture and enhancing the Service’s reflection of the community it serves, the diversity plan would also contribute to the Board’s strategic goals of “Advance & Support a Resilient Thriving Membership” and “Build Trust through Strong Partnerships.”

The Ottawa Police Service (Service) has adopted a Diversity, Respect, Inclusion, Values, Equity, and Engagement (DRIVE2) Strategy 2023-2027 that may partially overlap with the diversity plan mandated under section 37(1)(e). The DRIVE2 Strategy notably includes a goal for “A Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Internal Culture” which involves removing barriers to improve employment opportunities in all areas.

## DISCUSSION

### Approaches to Compliance and Implementation Options

A scan of approaches adopted by other police service boards in Ontario's Big 12 group reveals significant variation in how boards are choosing to meet the requirement under section 37(1)(e). The variation spans both the structure of the plans – ranging from endorsements of existing strategies to the development of standalone board-level documents – and their substantive focus, from general principles to detailed targets.

In terms of structure, Big 12 practices generally fall into three categories:

#### Option 1: Endorse an Existing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Under this approach, the Board would fulfill its legislative duty by formally endorsing an existing EDI strategy that has been developed by the service. This may be appropriate in cases where a comprehensive, current, and robust plan is already in place. While this option would minimize duplication and reinforce a shared vision for diversity, it may also be seen as limiting the Board's capacity to independently exercise its statutory responsibilities.

Under this option, the Board would formally endorse the Service's existing *DRIVE2 Strategy 2023-2027* as fulfilling the statutory obligation. This would recognize the Service's internal efforts while avoiding duplication.

#### Option 2: Adopt a Board-Level Diversity Plan that Builds on Existing Initiatives

This approach would involve preparing and adopting a distinct diversity plan at the Board level that aligns with and complements broader EDI strategies that are already in place. This would allow the Board to establish clear expectations regarding recruitment, hiring, retention, development, and advancement outcomes, while also defining how it will monitor progress over time. This option affirms the Board's leadership role as the employer of members of the Service and enables the setting of measurable objectives that reflect the Board's priorities. However, it requires careful coordination to avoid duplication of effort and would be more resource-intensive to develop.

#### Option 3: Adopt a High-Level, Principles-Based Diversity Plan

The Board may choose to adopt a concise document outlining its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, framed in terms of principles and long-term aspirations. This could serve as a foundational statement of intent and a reference point for future planning or reporting. While easier to implement, this approach offers limited ability to set targets or track progress and may fall short of meeting community or stakeholder expectations for measurable action. Moreover, given that the Board's 2024–2027 Strategic Plan already articulates a strong commitment to EDI and the need for increased reflection of the community within the Service, this option would provide little added value beyond what is already in place.

### **Substantive Focus and Scope**

Across the province, boards have adopted a wide range of substantive approaches. Some diversity plans include specific objectives and targets such as:

- the percentage of applicants or successful candidates who are racialized, Indigenous or women;
- the proportion of racialized, Indigenous and women in leadership roles such as supervisors, senior officers, managers, and executives.

While some boards have focused their diversity plans narrowly on recruitment, others have adopted a more comprehensive approach, addressing not only the entry point into the organization, but also retention, attrition, and pathways for career advancement.

Recent findings from a Case Control Study of Police Resignations at the London Police Service reinforce the importance of adopting a broad and systemic approach to equity and inclusion – one that aligns with the DRIVE2 objective of “removing barriers to improve employment opportunities and benefits in all areas, including but not limited to recruitment, selection, hiring, promotion, retention, professional development, transfers, and training.”

The study identified multiple, interconnected drivers of attrition, particularly among visible minority officers, including limited access to professional development and barriers to advancement. Officers without opportunities for growth, autonomy, or specialized duties were significantly more likely to resign, especially those working in frontline positions.

These findings suggest that recruitment alone is insufficient to ensure diversity within a police service. Retention, advancement, and equitable access to training, specialization, and other employment opportunities are equally vital. Importantly, the study also highlights how unequal access to sought-after development opportunities can erode an officer's sense of belonging and reinforce systemic barriers.

A diversity plan that focuses on entry-level recruitment risks overlooking key structural and cultural factors that influence long-term representation and inclusion. A comprehensive plan – one that spans hiring, development, training, and employee movements – is likely to be significantly more effective in fostering a police service that sustainably reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

### **Recommended Approach**

It is recommended that the Ottawa Police Service Board adopt a distinct diversity plan at the Board level that supplements and aligns with the second focus area of the Service's DRIVE2 Strategy (*Members – Work Environment*).

While DRIVE2 outlines a broad vision for removing barriers and advancing equity within the workplace, its associated actions under the relevant focus area are not specifically framed around the Board's statutory duty to ensure that the police service reflects the diversity of the community. Furthermore, the strategy does not establish measurable targets conducive to achieving and monitoring progress in representation or inclusivity outcomes, nor does it involve renewing the outdated baseline data on workforce diversity in a manner sufficient to support the development of diversity targets. A Board-level plan would serve to bridge this gap by articulating clear priorities, expectations, and performance indicators specifically aligned with the Board's oversight role and statutory mandate.

This plan would build upon existing initiatives, not duplicate them. It would provide direction in key areas such as recruitment, selection, hiring, retention, advancement, and training. It would also support the operationalization of relevant commitments within the Board's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, particularly under the "EDI – Strengthen our Commitment to Human Rights" pillar.

It is further recommended that the development of this plan proceed in close coordination with the Service's Respect, Values, and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate, the Human Resources Directorate, and the Directorate of Strategy and Communications.

### **Data Requirements and Methodological Considerations**

The development of a meaningful and effective diversity plan should be grounded in accurate, current, and relevant data. Establishing a reliable baseline is critical to identifying existing gaps in representation, setting realistic and measurable objectives, and tracking progress over time.

A priority in this regard is the administration of a member census to collect up-to-date demographic information on the OPS workforce. Without this foundational dataset, it is not possible to determine the degree to which the Service currently reflects the diversity of the community, nor to establish appropriate targets for improvement. The most recent OPS member census data is from 2017 and does not capture changes in workforce composition that may have occurred since.

Equally important is the use of a member engagement survey to gather qualitative insights into members' experiences and perceptions of the workplace. While demographic data can reveal representation gaps, it cannot on its own illuminate the barriers that may affect retention, career progression or overall inclusion. The engagement survey could provide rich contextual information about the factors that support or undermine a sense of belonging and professional growth within the organization.

The diversity plan – or its review, depending on timelines – should also be informed by the outcomes of the Employment Systems Review (ESR) planned by OPS as part of the DRIVE2 Strategy. Led by the RVI Directorate, in collaboration with the Human Resources Directorate, the ESR aims to identify and address systemic barriers and is expected to yield critical information.

Fulsome data collection on Human Rights related complaints (internal and external, including those brought to the Commission for resolution) would also serve to inform equity plans and initiatives.

Best practices emerging in Ontario support the recommended approach. For example, the York Region Police Service Board's diversity plan includes a multi-year strategy to assess equity and inclusion through the administration of a census and inclusion survey, an equity audit of policies, practices, and process, and an Organizational Culture Inventory to assess cultural dynamics.

## **CONSULTATION**

Preliminary consultations were conducted with the Respect, Values and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate, and the next steps in developing the diversity plan will involve continued collaboration with RVI, as well as the Human Resources Directorate and the Directorate of Strategy and Communications.

Consultations with several Big 12 police service boards were undertaken to identify best practices and emerging standards across the province.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications associated with the development and implementation of the diversity plan, including costs related to data collection, stakeholder engagement, and potential resource needs, will be assessed as part of the next phase of work. An overview of anticipated resource requirements will be included in the action plan to be brought forward at the Committee's next meeting.

## **CONCLUSION**

The development of a Board-level diversity plan represents a key opportunity for the Ottawa Police Service Board to advance its statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities in a meaningful and measurable way. By complementing existing initiatives such as the DRIVE2 Strategy, the plan will help ensure a more representative, inclusive, and equitable police service. A data-informed, collaborative, and phased approach will be essential to the plan's success.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 – DRIVE2 Strategy