

Report to / Rapport au:

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
COMITÉ DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES**

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Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: UPDATE: STAFF STABILIZATION STRATEGY

OBJET: MISE A JOUR: STRATEGIE DE STABILISATION DES EFFECTIFS

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Human Resources Committee receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des ressources humaines de la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance de présent rapport à titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) continues to face staffing challenges that are affecting its operational capacity. Despite an expanding population, historical increases in OPS staff numbers have not kept pace, resulting in one of the lowest staffing levels among comparable Canadian police services. The complexity of crime is escalating, calls for service are rising, and Federal-related work is increasingly disruptive, straining the OPS's ability to meet current demands. Furthermore, there has been a consistent rise in the number of members taking leave for health recovery, although this trend has stabilized. Attrition due to retirements and resignations is also increasing, adding further pressure to the service.

The implementation of the Staff Stabilization Strategy will help address these longstanding staffing challenges. The plan is crucial for enhancing the Service's

capacity to deliver adequate and effective policing within the community and serves as the foundation for achieving all OPS strategic priorities. The plan emphasizes hiring in for four critical pillars: attrition, stabilization, growth, and federal-related work. To ensure that costs and hiring are manageable, the Service is hiring over a three-year period (2024-2026).

In late 2023, at the time of the strategy creation, it was projected that ~145 sworn members would be hired in each year of the strategy. This estimate encompassed new recruits, experienced officers, as well as just-in-time positions. Additionally, it was anticipated that 40 civilian positions would be hired per year based on projections. It is crucial to recognize that these projections fluctuate as attrition rates can vary from year to year. Moreover, the projections did not consider additional funding from provincial and federal partners that could necessitate and facilitate additional hiring.

The staggered hiring approach enables the Service to allocate sufficient time and resources to responsibly and effectively recruit and onboard new members. This method ensures the process is achievable and aligns with organizational standards.

Successful execution of the plan involves input and assistance from staff in Human Resources, Operations, Strategy and Communications, IT Services, Finance, Fleet, Quarter Master, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Facilities. Identified risks and issues that may impact the outcomes of this project include challenges in obtaining the necessary number of seats at the Ontario Police College, ensuring that the diversity and number of candidates are in line with expectations, and ensuring that the needed space and trainers are available to facilitate training. These items are monitored and reported upon on a bi-weekly basis at the project team level, every two months at the senior leadership level, and quarterly at the Board level.

DISCUSSION

In Q4 of 2024 and Q1 of 2025 implementation of the Staff Stabilization Strategy continued. The Project Working Group, a group that includes representatives from all areas of the organization and representing Sworn and Civilian Staff at all ranks, were successful in meeting and exceeding sworn staffing targets in year one of the three year strategy (2024). Fulfilling civilian staffing requirements was more challenging as civilian attrition rates were above expectations, though civilian hire numbers were above and beyond what was initially projected. The Civilian Staffing Team continues to work aggressively to address the gap between civilian hires and organizational requirements.

Sworn and civilian recruiting, hiring, and onboarding activities have continued through Q1 of 2025 as the Project Working Group works towards achieving the hiring targets set for 2025, year two of the strategy.

Activities of note completed in Q4 of 2024 and Q1 of 2025 include, but are not limited to:

- New Recruit Class 2024-01: Transitioning of 32 officers, hired in Q1 of 2024, to independent duty;
- New Recruit Class 2024-02: Transitioning of 30 officers, hired in Q2 of 2024, to independent duty;
- New Recruit Class 2024-03: 36 officers were sworn in and continue with their Field Training Officers, scheduled to transition to independent duty in June;
- New Recruit Class 2024-04: 31 candidates completed their time at the Ontario Police College in March and will soon be sworn in;
- New Recruit Class 2025-01: 34 candidates have been hired and have started at the Ontario Police College;
- Direct Entry Class 2025-01: Working towards hiring additional direct entry officers and the intention of them beginning with the OPS in April or May.

As noted, the Project Working Group ensures that risks and issues are identified early and mitigated as much as possible. It also ensures that efforts across many different Commands and Directorates are coordinated to maximize likelihood of implementation effectiveness and efficiency. Current risks and issues being monitored and managed include: OPC seat availability, trainer and space capacity, diversity of sworn recruit candidates, and interest of qualified sworn candidates (new recruit and direct entry).

CONSULTATION

Prior to proceeding with the Staff Stabilization Strategy, the OPS provided awareness of the Strategy to the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) on September 7, 2023. The OPS subsequently brought the planned Staff Stabilization Strategy, adjusted based on feedback from the FAC and for awareness, to the Police Services Board (the Board) on September 25, 2023. Approval to proceed with the Strategy as a primary 2024 budgetary ask was received in both instances.

Based on these approvals, the OPS built the Staff Stabilization Strategy into the 2024 Budget. The Strategy was one of the Service's major requests of the 2024 Budget. Approval of the budget needed to implement the Strategy was received through the budgeting process with approvals coming from the FAC, the Board, and City Council in late 2023. Similar budget requests and approvals were part of the 2025 Budget cycle;

approval was received from the FAC, the Board, and City Council in late 2024 to proceed with the strategy in 2025, year two of the strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Staffing Stabilization Strategy has four pillars. Two of the four pillars (attrition and event response) don't have budgetary pressures as they are either for positions that are already budgeted or for new positions that are funded from upper levels of government. The two pillars that do create budgetary pressures are stabilization and growth. Those pressures are outlined below in the table by year and pillar. Pressures noted include salary and benefit costs incurred when filling positions vacated to WSIB, long-term disability, and paternity leave (stabilization), as well as salary and benefit costs associated with filling growth positions (growth).

	2024	2025	2026	2027
Growth	\$1.5M	\$3.0M	\$3.4M	\$2.4M
Stabilization	\$0.8M	\$1.8M	\$2.7M	\$2.2M
Total	\$2.3M	\$4.8M	\$6.1M	\$4.6M

Note: Pressures in the table do not include costs of salaries and benefits for personnel allocated to supporting implementation of the Staff Stabilization Strategy. \$1.6M has been budgeted in 2025 to address such costs of which \$155k has been spent at end of Q1 2025. Usage of this budget is expected to increase through the remainder of 2025 and into 2026 as additional personnel resources are hired to assist with implementation of the Staff Stabilization Strategy.

The three-year strategy includes costs into year four (2027) as that represents the full year cost of the staffing actions from year three (2026). The costs in 2027 do not include any growth costs related to additional positions added that year.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of the Staff Stabilization Strategy from 2024 through until the end of 2026 is a significant effort for the OPS. The Strategy is linked to the Board's Strategic Plan and its success is important to the operations of the Service, the well-being of members, and the safety and security of citizens of the City of Ottawa.

Given the magnitude of this initiative, a project management approach will continue to be applied until the end of 2026. Regular reporting to the OPS Senior Leadership Team

will continue to occur every two months, with regular reporting to the Board, through the Human Resources Committee, on a quarterly basis.