

**Subject: Position in the City of Ottawa’s Extended Senior Leadership Team –
In Camera – Personal Matters About An Identifiable Individual,
Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations - Reporting Out Date:
Upon Council Approval and Execution of The Employment Contract**

File Number: ACS2025-CMO-OCM-0003

Report to Council on 30 April 2025

Contact Person: Wendy Stephanson, City Manager

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**Objet : Poste au sein de l’équipe élargie de la haute direction de la Ville
d’Ottawa – *Réunion à huis clos* – Renseignements privés concernant
une personne qui peut être identifiée, les relations de travail ou les
négociations avec les employés – Date de compte rendu : Dès
l’approbation du Conseil et la signature du contrat de travail.**

Numéro de dossier : ACS2025-CMO-OCM-0003

Rapport présenté au Conseil le 30 avril 2025

Personne-ressource : Wendy Stephanson, directrice municipale

613-580-2424, poste 13192

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That City Council approve an exception pursuant to Section R.6.3.1.(i) of the Bilingualism Policy for the successful candidate Ms. Marcia Wallace, as General Manager of Planning, Development and Building Services, as described in this report.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil municipal approuve une exception en vertu du paragraphe R.6.3.1.(i) de la Politique de bilinguisme pour la candidate retenue, Mme Marcia Wallace, pour le poste de Direction générale des services de la planification, de l’aménagement et du bâtiment, comme décrit dans le présent rapport.

BACKGROUND

The hiring of a new General Manager to oversee planning, real estate and economic development for the City of Ottawa was initiated in December 2022. This report provides an overview of the transparent and competitive hiring process as well as the organizational changes that have occurred since that time, which has led to the successful recruitment of a candidate to lead the Planning, Development and Building Services Department.

On December 21, 2022, the Mayor delegated his statutory powers with respect to the hiring of a new General Manager of Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development to City Council through a panel composed of Members of the Finance and Corporate Services Committee ([Mayoral Decision 2022-05](#)). This hiring panel met on [February 3, 2023](#), to approve its terms of reference, appoint Odgers Berndtson as the external search firm, and approve the overall timeline, job description and salary range of the position. Subsequent to that meeting, on April 21, 2023, an updated Mayoral delegation was issued to reflect updates to the hiring process, including hiring panel membership and legal matters ([Mayoral Decision 2023-11](#)).

Between May 25, 2023, until the end of August 2023, the Hiring Panel met to review applications and interview candidates. On October 17, 2023, Council was advised via a memo (Document 1) that despite a national executive search and interviews with candidates over several months, the Hiring Panel had not yet identified a recommended candidate for City Council's consideration and approval. The memo further advised that the Hiring Panel would reconvene on January 22, 2024, to consider any changes to the employment market and consider the appropriate next steps prior to recirculating the job advertisement.

Following that meeting, on January 24, 2024, a memo to Council from the Mayor and Chair of the Hiring Panel was released to advise that given City Council's recent appointment of a new City Manager and in keeping with the regular practice of General Manager appointments, the Mayor had issued an updated delegation granting the City Manager the power to appoint the General Manager of Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development ([Mayoral Decision 2024-01](#)).

On [April 17, 2024](#), the City Manager briefed Council on the organization's updated structure that was implemented to advance Council and City priorities while also taking into consideration the significant change due to ongoing retirements and leadership turnover, continuous legislative changes from upper levels of government, new and

emerging technologies, processes and ways of working, and evolving community and workforce needs. A key component of the updated structure includes establishing a new and more focused, Planning, Development and Building Services Department (PDBS). The focused PDBS is positioned to respond and adapt to new and emerging legislation from the federal and provincial governments in a timely manner and meet statutory provincial targets, while continuing to advance major city-wide transformative planning initiatives, including the Official Plan, Zoning Bylaw update, Transportation Master Plan and Lansdowne.

A new executive search with Odgers Berndtson was launched subsequent to the organizational realignment, which failed to find a successful candidate. Following a pause in the process, on November 12, 2024, the City Manager issued a [memo](#) to Council advising of the relaunch of a recruitment campaign for the General Manager of PDBS through Keynote Search.

Executive Search for the General Manager of Planning, Development and Building Services by the City Manager

The search for a General Manager, Planning, Development and Building Services began in December 2024. The firm Keynote Search was selected from the City's standing offer list to lead the recruitment and conduct an extensive, global search. Keynote was advised that the position was designated bilingual and directed to ensure that it actively recruited bilingual candidates. Keynote did acknowledge that the labour market was challenging to recruit prospective candidates with the skill sets required for this position given that several large cities across Canada were searching for senior level executives to lead planning and development initiatives.

Keynote indicated that 232 potential sources and candidates were identified. Following an initial assessment of the applicant pool, 32 candidates were reviewed for consideration by Keynote, which led Keynote to conducting initial interviews with nine of the 32 candidates. Of that group of nine, seven candidates – two of whom were bilingual – were presented to the City for consideration. All seven candidates were chosen by the City Manager, in consultation with Keynote, to be interviewed by the City's Selection Panel.

Following two rounds of interviews, the City Manager, in consultation with the Selection Panel, chose Marcia Wallace as the most qualified candidate for the position.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Wallace has a Ph.D in Planning from the University of Waterloo and Masters of Arts in Political Studies from Queen's University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Calgary. Ms. Wallace is currently the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward, which is a single tier municipality serving a community of 26,000 residents across 1,050 square kilometers. She is currently responsible for 320 staff and manages a diverse portfolio across 10 departments, delivering on a broad range of municipal services. Prior to her role as CAO, Marcia was the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing where she led the service transformation of the building code regulation to align with the National Code and streamlined development approvals to support the Housing Supply Action Plan and Ontario's Open for Business Objectives. Marcia has a deep expertise in urban planning, public administration and transformative leadership within both the municipal and provincial contexts. Marcia has also led initiatives in land use planning for housing and brownfields and over the years she has built strong relationships with community groups, the development sector, various levels of government and Indigenous communities. Marcia is also an integrative thinker, transparent and effective communicator with a focus on evidence-based decision-making and innovative solutions.

The successful candidate has indicated her commitment to take French Language Training recognizing the importance of the French language community in Ottawa, and, if Council grants this exception, her progress will be assessed as part of the annual performance review process.

Bilingualism Policy

On May 9, 2001, Council approved the continuation of the former City of Ottawa's Bilingualism Policy ("Policy"). Section R.6.3.1(i) of the Policy states as follows:

Effective immediately, all external candidates considered for Level 1 to 3 management positions be bilingual. Any exceptions, after having undertaken a comprehensive recruitment effort, shall require Council approval.

As set out above, a Council-approved exception to the Bilingualism Policy's requirement that "all external candidates considered for Level 1 to 3 management positions be bilingual" has only one express component. In effect, Council's consideration of "any exceptions" to this requirement for bilingualism can only be considered "after having

undertaken a comprehensive recruitment effort". As the Policy does not expressly define the word, "comprehensive", it is suggested that a plain language lens be used in interpreting same. In this regard, the standard dictionary definition for the word, "comprehensive" means of large scope, covering completely or inclusive and involving much. When the phrase, "a comprehensive recruitment effort" is compared to the actions undertaken by both the original hiring panel, the City Manager and Keynote, it is the opinion of the City Manager, in consultation with both the Clerk and the City Solicitor, that the selection process in this instance did constitute a "comprehensive recruitment effort" in compliance with the Bilingualism Policy.

In light of the above, and the candidate's willingness to become bilingual, the City Manager seeks Council's approval of an exception to Section R.6.3.1 (i) of the Bilingualism Policy for Ms. Wallace.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to City Council considering the recommendation in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to City Council considering the recommendation in this report.

CONSULTATION

As this report is confidential and administrative in nature, no public consultation was undertaken.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts associated with the recommendation in this report.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no delegation of authority implications associated with recommendation in this report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Ms. Marcia Wallace has public sector experience in serving rural communities in Ontario.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – October 17, 2023 memo to Mayor and Council from Chair of Hiring Panel

Document 2 – Resume of Marcia Wallace. This document is confidential as it contains information relative to personal matters about an identifiable individual.

DISPOSITION

Should the exception be granted, the City Manager will notify the candidate accordingly and complete the hiring process. A memo to Council will be issued upon execution of the contract and when the information can be made public that meets all the privacy requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.