



September 22, 2021

To: The Ottawa Police Services Board

I am writing to you today on behalf of Run Ottawa, Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend and as an engaged Ottawa resident.

From a Run Ottawa and Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend perspective we watch OPS budget debates keenly from year to year. Our operations rely on OPS' Paid Duty program to safely and professionally execute Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend and a number of other community events Run Ottawa produces throughout the year.

We have concerns that budget decisions resulting in a reduction to overall staffing levels might have an important effect on our ability to do our work.

Run Ottawa is a Not for Profit organization that prides itself on diversity, inclusion and community engagement. In addition to these pillars we facilitate over a million dollars annually in charitable giving that has a huge local impact. Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend is also a major economic driver by generating over 34 million dollars in annual economic activity. Our work is solely focused on programs and events that benefit our City.

There is little doubt that policing in our communities has profoundly changed over the last few decades as services across the country are asked to deal with increasingly complex issues in their day to day work. I think it's also safe to say municipal governments need to carefully consider how they invest in and empower their police services to truly serve the needs of citizens generally.

Personally, I am keenly aware of the heated debate around defunding police organizations everywhere including those voices that would also like to see policing, as we know it, abolished. I don't share that blanket approach for addressing systemic change. Without a "what comes next" solution neither concept makes much sense. Too many positives, including the work Run Ottawa does, would be impacted translating into a net negative result on our community.

Ofentimes fixing things requires far more work than starting from scratch and building something new. We would ask the Ottawa Police Services Board, the Mayor, City Council and our community at large to roll up their collective sleeves and do the hard work required to make the OPS a shining example of what community policing should look like. This solution, in our view, does not include budget decisions that might lead to staffing cuts.

Best regards,

Ian Fraser
Executive Director
Run Ottawa