

28 January 2025

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
Ottawa City Hall
110 Laurier Street W
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

RE: Mid-Term Governance Review

Dear Mayor Sutcliffe:

We write to you with several concerns about the 2025 Mid-Term Governance Review.

To begin with, we are concerned about the Review's process. The reports surrounding the review—totaling 39 separate documents—were tabled on January 22, and they will be voted on on January 29. This allows a mere five business days for their analysis.

Moreover, these documents do not come to a committee for consideration. This eliminates the possibility for members of the public to address Council on the Review, since delegations are only permitted at committee meetings.

We understand that the City considers the Mid-term Governance Review as exclusively an internal process. Many of the changes under consideration, such as those listed below, have considerable public impact, and we believe it is undemocratic to consider an issue of such wide application without adequate opportunity for the public to share their perspectives.

We are also concerned about the Review's substance. First, we are concerned about the reduced number of meetings for certain committees: Community Services Committee, Emergency Preparedness and Protective Services Committee, Environment and Climate Change Committee, Finance and Corporate Services Committee, Transit Committee, Transportation Committee. This reduction will limit the public's ability to weigh in on issues of concern to them: the time between the publication of committee agendas and associated documents and their meetings is already too short—amounting to less than two business days, in some cases—and now more items will be added to meeting agendas.

The Review also proposes striking a working group to “consider and oversee direct targeted reviews.” This working group consists of “the Mayor, Councillor Kitts, Councillor Brown and Councillor Hubley, and relevant City staff”—that is, of no councillors within the Greenbelt. Elsewhere, the Review acknowledges “the need to ensure a City-wide balance and perspective”; the constitution of this working group does not respect this acknowledged need.

We urge you to address these inconsistencies by establishing a governance review process that ensures transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful public input. Specifically, we respectfully

request that the City restore the opportunity for committee-level reviews and public delegations, as well as ensure that working groups reflect a balanced, city-wide perspective. Your leadership is essential to upholding the democratic principles our city has committed to and ensuring public trust in its decision-making processes.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. We respectfully ask for a reply to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Duncan Bury, Co-Founder
Waste Watch Ottawa

Aïda Warah, Ph. D., Executive Director
GentleWays for OurPlanet

Donna DuBreuil, President and Kate MacNeil, Executive Director
Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre

Sam Hersh, Coordinator
Horizon Ottawa

Angela Keller-Herzog, Executive Director
Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES)

Joan Freeman and Peter Croal, Co-founders
Citizen Climate Council (C3)

Kassidy Ransom, Civic Engagement Coordinator
City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)

Paul Johanis, Chair
Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital

William van Geest, Executive Director
Ecology Ottawa

CC: Ottawa City Council Members