

DRAFT

Mr. Cyril Rogers
Chief Financial Officer
Finance and Corporate Services Department
City of Ottawa

Re: Request for Sectoral Spending Trends and Visualizations in the Budget Directions Report

Dear Mr. Rogers,

As the City of Ottawa begins its 2026 Budget Directions process, the Peoples Official Plan (POP) Coalition urges the Finance and Corporate Services Department to provide Council and the public with enhanced visibility into how municipal spending has evolved over time. In particular, we are concerned that the increasing costs of infrastructure and debt servicing may be limiting the City's ability to invest adequately in social, environmental, and community priorities — including areas where Council has declared formal emergencies.

To support transparency, accountability, and better-informed decision-making, we respectfully request that the 2026 Budget Directions staff report include the following information for Council and the public :

1. Time-Series Data on Key Operating Budget Categories

Please include multi-year (preferably 10-year) historical data — both total and per-capita — for major operational categories, including:

- Police Services Board
- Debt Financing
- Fire Services
- Social Services
- Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
- Transit and Para Transpo
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Transportation Services
- Solid Waste Management Services
- Public Library Services
- Other

This data would provide Council and the public with a clearer understanding of how budgetary commitments to different sectors have evolved over time.

2. Sectoral Balance Visualizations

We also ask that the City provide accessible visualizations — such as pie charts or stacked bar graphs — that illustrate changes in the relative share of each spending category within the total operating budget over time. This would help decision-makers and residents identify long-term shifts in resource allocation and better assess trade-offs between sectors.

3. Contextual Reporting on Declared Emergencies

We further recommend that the report highlight year-over-year spending trends related to areas where City Council has declared an emergency:

- Homelessness and housing emergency
- The opioid and addictions crisis
- Climate emergency

This framing would clarify whether the urgency signaled by these declarations is reflected in actual budget allocations and trends.

4. Forward and Backward-looking Report on Debt

We lastly recommend that the report take a 10-year backward and 10-year forward projection of debt for tax, rate and strategic projects. These graphs would show us the complete picture arising out of the separately approved Long Range Financial plans and multi-year investment and capital plans. Tewin, Lansdowne, LRT and the new police campus should merit a break-out or special footnote given the size of capital outlays planned.

Other jurisdictions — including the City of Toronto and the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario — present such data in ways that are clear, comparative, and publicly accessible. We encourage the City of Ottawa to adopt a similar approach to support transparency and meaningful public engagement in budget decisions.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to engage with you further on data formats or definitions that would support this work.



Sincerely,
Angela Keller-Herzog

On behalf of the People's Official Plan Coalition

CC Mayor and Council, City Manager Wendy Stephanson, Sueling Ching ED OBOT