\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your street address

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your city, province Your postal code

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your email and/or phone number (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Today’s date

Councillor \_\_\_\_\_\_ [insert their full name]

110 Laurier Avenue West

Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

**Re: Updating the city’s procurement policies to achieve better outcomes**

Dear Councillor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [insert their last name],

Ottawa’s procurement policies define our city. Municipal procurement influences the design of buildings like our community centres, our parks, and our libraries; it determines the quality and effectiveness of critical infrastructure like our transit systems, roads, and sidewalks. When the people of Ottawa interact with our city’s buildings and infrastructure, they are interacting with the city’s procurement processes.

*[Optional - insert an example of a building or city infrastructure you cherish in the city]*

The city of Ottawa spends approximately $1 billion annually on goods, services and construction. However, I am concerned that this money is not always spent as effectively as possible. Today’s procurement processes prioritize proposals by cost. The City of Ottawa assumes that a low-price tag on a project will mean cost savings for the taxpayer and a better deal for the city. In reality, this results in lower-quality infrastructure with greater repair and maintenance needs over time.

I am one of many Ottawa citizens who knows that the procurement process is broken, with projects like the O-Train LRT highlighting the gaps and failures in the existing system. But beyond this, people are tired of the bland architecture and uninspiring infrastructure that has become increasingly common in our city. Citizens want a world class city with beautiful buildings, parks, and pathways. They deserve world class procurement processes that will make this vision a reality.

It's time for the city of Ottawa to follow the examples of Edmonton, Calgary, and Montreal on how procurement reform can lead to healthier, vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive cities. Many of the measures outlined below have already been implemented by cities across Canada. It’s not too late for Ottawa to join them:

**The City of Ottawa must adopt a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process** that bases procurement decision-making criteria on qualifications such as knowledge, skill, previous experience on similar projects, the overall quality of the approach, and ideas being presented for the project.

**The City of Ottawa should adopt a two-phased submission and evaluation process** like the process adopted by the City of Edmonton. Phase one, or the qualifying phase, is used to identify a shortlist of architects capable of completing the project. Phase two is a more focused procurement process for shortlisted architects. The process has proven to limit the upfront work associated with proposal writing, creating a more accessible procurement process for smaller firms. This process may also involve design competitions to foster creative approaches to projects and encourage firms of all sizes to participate in the procurement process.

**The City of Ottawa should hire a city architect** capable of bringing adequate architectural training and experience to the city’s decision-making and procurement processes. City staff lack the architectural training required to offer meaningful input on designs, however, they often influence the design elements of city infrastructure and buildings. A city architect can complement the work of the general manager of Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Development by facilitating dialogue on architectural designs between city staff.

**The City of Ottawa should adopt an overarching policy on municipal architecture**. The policy should function as a guide for politicians, city staff, design firms, and the public. It should outline how municipal buildings can be designed to enhance social, cultural, and economic well-being. A municipal architecture policy is distinct from building codes and regulations. Codes function as minimum enforceable technical standards. An architecture policy is aspirational in nature, setting out ambitious goals and visions that should be considered when municipal infrastructure is being designed.

The people of Ottawa deserve a world class City: one that is a G7 capital on par with other global cities, and filled with beautiful buildings, parks and public places. Ottawa deserves to have a city that is famous for equitable, inclusive and uplifting places. A reformed procurement model can make this aspiration a reality.

*[Optional - Provide an example of what you would like to see changed in the City and how the adoption of these recommendations could help achieve that change]*

Yours sincerely,

*[Sign and type your name]*

cc. Mayor Mark Sutcliffe

Planning and Housing Committee Chair Councillor Jeff Leiper