



Office of the  
Auditor General  
City of Ottawa

# AUDIT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

## OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE



May 2026

**Table of Contents**

Acknowledgement ..... 1

Introduction ..... 2

Background/Context ..... 2

Audit Objective and Scope ..... 4

Conclusion ..... 5

Audit Findings and Recommendations ..... 7

Appendix 1 – About the Audit ..... 20

Appendix 2 – Rating Scale for Audit Findings ..... 21

## Acknowledgement

The audit was conducted by Atul Arora under the supervision of Joanne Gorenstein, Deputy Auditor General and my direction. My colleagues and I would like to thank those who contributed to this project.

Respectfully,



Nathalie Gougeon, CPA, CA, CIA, CRMA, B. Comm  
Auditor General

**Photo credit: Ottawa Police Service, 2026**

## Introduction

On October 23, 2023, the Ottawa Police Service Board (OPSB) approved a motion inviting the Auditor General to assess the risks and opportunities within the Ottawa Police Service (OPS or the Service) to improve efficiency. This led to the development of the Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) 2024-2027 Audit Work Plan for OPS.

The Audit of Project Management was included in the OAG's 2024-2027 Audit Work Plan for OPS, approved by the OPSB on May 27, 2024.

## Background/Context

The OPSB approved an updated Ottawa Police Service Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Strategic Plan) on July 28, 2025. The Strategic Plan sets the OPSB's strategic direction and priorities for the Service over a multi-year period, and guides how police services are planned, delivered, and overseen in Ottawa. The Strategic Plan also sets out the key initiatives the Service will undertake up to 2027, including projects which align with the four key pillars that shape the Service:

- Enhancing community safety;
- Building trust through strong partnerships;
- Strengthening commitment to human rights and inclusion; and
- Advancing and supporting a resilient, thriving membership.

The Service is currently tracking and managing 33 strategic projects/initiatives, in support of their Strategic Plan. A summary of the Service's spending on all strategic projects as at January 31, 2026, is included in **Table 1** below. Key strategic projects include the District Revitalization Program (DRP) and the South Facilities Project (SFP). These are briefly discussed below.

### District Revitalization Program

The District Revitalization Program is intended to transform the Service's deployment model by transitioning from a largely centralized structure to a district-based policing model. Under this approach, the city of Ottawa will be divided into four geographic districts — West, Central, East, and South — each with increased responsibility for the oversight and deployment of local policing resources, including frontline patrol, traffic enforcement, and neighbourhood-based policing functions. The formal launch of the district model is planned for January 2027 as Phase I of a multi-year, phased implementation, with further refinements and adjustments expected as the model matures.

### South Facilities Project

The South Facility Project is a major capital infrastructure initiative intended to modernize and consolidate OPS operations in Ottawa’s south end. The project involves the construction of a new, purpose-built police facility, which is designed to replace a number of aging and leased facilities and to support current and future operational, administrative, and service delivery requirements. Construction is ongoing, with the facility currently expected to become operational in 2027.



**Table 1 – OPS Reported Spending on Strategic Projects as at January 31, 2026**

Project Priority per OPS <sup>1</sup>	Total Project Budget	Total Spending to Date
P1 – Enhance Community Safety	\$264,910,522	\$178,732,209
P2 – Build Trust through Strong Partnerships	\$35,705,551	\$13,376,420
P3 – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Strengthen our Commitment to Human Rights	\$4,882,976	\$3,502,052
P4 – Advance and Support a Thriving Resilient Membership	\$4,676,100	\$3,899,299
New	\$11,716,700	\$3,196,999
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$321,891,849</b>	<b>\$202,706,979</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Service has identified four (4) priority areas in its Strategic Plan, which define the key strategic themes intended to guide organizational planning and decision-making. Projects and initiatives undertaken by the Service are expected to align with one or more of these priority areas to support the achievement of the Service’s strategic objectives.

## **Project Management at the Ottawa Police Service**

Effective project management is essential to ensuring that projects are delivered efficiently, align with strategic priorities, and achieve intended outcomes. As OPS's core mandate is policing rather than project delivery, strong project management practices are essential to ensure initiatives are executed efficiently and there is prudent use of public funds, particularly in an environment with limited specialized project management capacity.

In order to deliver its strategic projects, the Service has tasked three branches (Information Technology Services, Facilities, and Strategic Policy) to execute projects with their own project management approaches and resources. This decision to operate under a decentralized project management model was made under previous leadership. These branches retain ownership and accountability for their initiatives, including scope, delivery and subject-matter decision-making. Oversight of the overall portfolio is provided by the Chief and senior leadership. It is recognized that, while a baseline set of project management requirements are common to all strategic projects, there could be a need for different elements and specialized skills to execute a construction project or IT focused strategic project.

In order to manage the projects that the Service has taken on, OPS has been taking incremental steps to improve project management practices and strengthen enterprise-level oversight through the development of a Strategic Portfolio Management (SPM) function, housed within the Service's Strategy and Communications Directorate (SCD). One of the main deliverables of the SPM team was the introduction of the Strategic Project Portfolio Management Policy (the Policy) in 2025. The Policy is generally consistent with project management standards based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), issued by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

Given the financial pressures facing OPS and the need to manage costs within approved funding levels, rigorous selection and oversight of projects are critical to advancing strategic objectives.

### **Audit Objective and Scope**

The objective of this audit was to provide reasonable assurance that OPS has appropriate project management policies and practices in place in order to execute projects in the achievement of its Strategic Plan.

The scope of the audit included the following:

- Governance and decision-making framework used to oversee how projects are initiated, approved, managed, and delivered across the project life cycle.

- Effectiveness of project planning processes, including whether projects are appropriately defined, planned and managed to support successful execution and alignment with OPS strategic objectives.
- Adequacy of project reporting and monitoring, including the roles of oversight bodies and the effectiveness of project reporting in providing timely and meaningful insight into project status, risks, and progress.

The audit focused on practices, policies, and data related to the fiscal years of 2024 and 2025. As a part of the audit, five (5) strategic projects were selected for testing, representing a range of projects varying in size, scope, and disciplines. The purpose of this testing was to assess whether appropriate project management practices have been established and applied across the selected projects throughout the project lifecycle (as outlined in **Figure 1**).

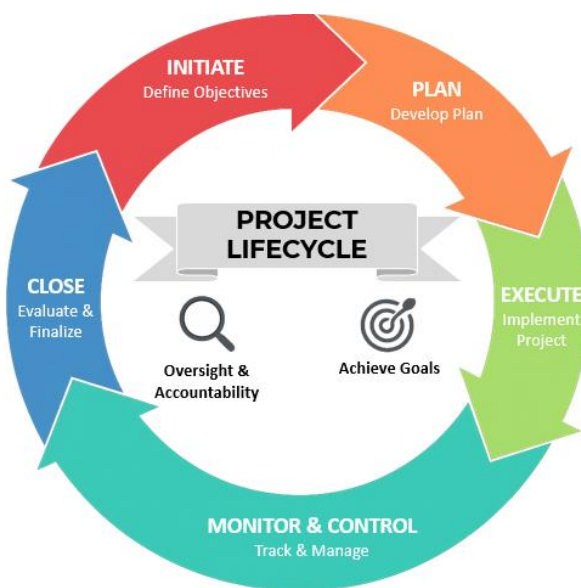
Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for additional details on the objective, criteria, and approach to the audit. This audit was conducted in conformance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' [Global Internal Audit Standards \(2024\)](#).

## Conclusion

Strong project management practices at the Service are vital to support informed decision-making, timely issue escalation, and appropriate oversight throughout the project life cycle, to reduce the risk of overruns, implementation challenges, and unintended impacts on service delivery.

Historically, there has not been a holistic project management approach for the Service and as a result, our audit confirmed variances in project management rigour across projects of differing size and complexity. Larger, strategic projects with dedicated resources are leveraging some best practices in project management, but this was not consistent across all projects selected for testing. Despite this, strategic projects are progressing and some have been completed.

**Figure 1 – Illustrative Representation of the Project Lifecycle**



Although the Policy was introduced in 2025, a supporting project management framework, including associated tools, templates, and guidance, are only in the early stages of development and are not all in place for consistent use by project teams. Currently, the Strategic Portfolio Management function is made up of one (1) permanent, civilian member; impacting the speed at which project management can mature across the Service. Despite this, recent efforts have demonstrated movement towards formalization and consistency.

With regards to potential new projects, the Service lacks a formal project intake process for evaluating and prioritizing potential strategic projects. With resource constraints, a formal process to evaluate and prioritize potential projects is crucial to ensure funds are spent efficiently and to support timely and effective implementation.

Our testing confirmed inconsistencies in the evaluation of resources needed to execute projects – both project management resources and subject matter experts. In addition, projects have not consistently had formal, approved budgets. Collectively, these gaps create risks that projects may proceed without a clear understanding of the resources and funding required to support successful delivery and may reduce accountability for ensuring projects are managed and delivered in a cost-effective manner.

To support project oversight, Strategic Portfolio Management has started to provide central reporting of key project information. However, a formal oversight function, with the authority to support, challenge and report on all strategic projects, has not been established. Further, the audit found challenges with the accuracy and completeness of the reporting to senior members of the Service and OPSB. This impacts the ability to assess the state of a project in order to make timely project decisions, and to ensure project alignment with strategic objectives and overall value-for-money.

Each finding in this report has been assigned a rating that prioritizes the associated remediation. Rating definitions are provided in [Appendix 2](#).

---

***Value of Audit: With the world of policing constantly evolving, the recommendations in this report provide the structures to establish, monitor and to support the efficient and effective delivery of strategic projects, given ongoing fiscal constraints.***

---

## Audit Findings and Recommendations

The following sections outline the audit findings and recommendations, organized by key stages within the project management lifecycle: 1) governance and decision making; 2) planning and execution; and 3) monitoring and reporting.

### 1. Governance and Decision Making

A strong project management governance framework is critically important for the Service to ensure that projects are executed properly and consistently support the achievement of its strategic objectives. A governance framework should establish consistent requirements for project delivery, including structures, roles, and processes used to provide appropriate oversight, accountability, decision-making, and the review and selection of projects.

#### 1.1 The Service does not have a centralized function to ensure consistent project management practices and oversight across projects.

Priority  
Rating: Moderate

As noted above, the Service has been operating under a decentralized project management office model. As a result, the Service has multiple oversight structures for projects and no central function in place to support and guide all projects and to ensure alignment with strategic goals.

While it is acknowledged that all strategic projects are subject to the Policy and are generally expected to follow industry standards in project management, the individual branches remain responsible for executing projects within their respective disciplines. However, none of the branches have formally documented project management frameworks in place to guide their project teams. It was noted that the Service's SCD is currently developing a central project management framework, as discussed further in Section 1.2. However, we noted that the Strategic Portfolio Management function is comprised of one (1) full-time, civilian member available to develop the framework and associated tools/templates. The lack of a holistic framework for the Service increases the risk of inconsistent application of project management practices on individual projects, which was evidenced in audit testing performed and discussed in section 1.2 below.

Additionally, there is currently no one team with the authority and accountability to support teams across the Service, setting expectations relative to project management and providing associated tools and templates. While Strategic Portfolio Management is currently responsible for reporting on the status of the portfolio of strategic projects, due to the decentralized approach, there is no one function with the visibility into all ongoing

projects to adequately challenge or validate the information submitted by project teams to ensure information being provided to oversight bodies (i.e. senior leadership within the Service and OPSB) is complete and accurate.

This decentralized approach to project management increases the risk of inconsistent project management practices, incomplete project reporting and reduced comparability between projects, which could potentially impact the success of strategic projects.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1 – ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL OVERSIGHT FUNCTION**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should establish a formal oversight function with the authority to oversee and report on all strategic projects undertaken by OPS. This function should:

- have its roles, responsibilities and authorities formalized regarding project management;
- be housed appropriately within the overall organizational structure to ensure it is well positioned to execute the established authorities; and
- be staffed appropriately to achieve the mandate of the function.

#### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 1**

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Service currently operates within a decentralized project delivery model and does not have dedicated resources assigned to project and portfolio management oversight. Oversight activities are distributed across functions and are not supported by a formalized structure or centralized capacity.

To address this, the Service will take a phased approach to strengthening oversight. Initial work will focus on clarifying roles, responsibilities, and authorities within the Strategic Project Portfolio Management (SPM) Policy and establishing minimum expectations for enterprise-wide visibility and reporting using existing resources. The Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, will lead the development of the oversight model, working in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer and operational leaders.

This foundational work will be completed by Q1 2027. The establishment of a more formalized and sustainable oversight function, including dedicated resourcing, will be advanced through the Long-Range Financial Plan and future budget processes, with full implementation dependent on approved funding and organizational design decisions.

## 1.2 A standardized project management framework has not been developed, which defines a strategic project and sets the expected level of project management rigour.

Priority  
Rating: Moderate

As noted above, the Service introduced the Policy in 2025. While the introduction of the Policy was a necessary first step, the Service's supporting project management framework and associated tools/templates remain in the early stages of development and are not all in place for consistent use by project teams. More specifically, while the Policy does provide high level expectations related to project management, a supporting framework and associated tools would provide the additional guidance on how to put the expectations into practice, depending on the size/complexity of the project. The Policy lacks detail to provide sufficient guidance to project teams in several key areas of project management, including:

- Risk management;
- Project interdependencies;
- Change control;
- Change management;
- Benefits realization;
- Project closure; and
- Lessons learned.

The lack of a consistent framework was evident through our audit testing, which noted that project teams were using varying approaches and templates for project management activities. It was noted that the two (2) larger strategic projects with a significant impact across the Service (District Revitalization and South Facility) followed a more formalized project management approach, which was in-line with project management best practices as these projects have been supported by external project management resources. From the outset, the DRP solely leveraged internal OPS resources to fulfill the project manager role. Gaps in project management discipline were recognized and, in early 2025, an external resource was engaged to support the project management function for the project. Once this individual was assigned to the project, the level of project management rigor applied to the project improved significantly. Generally, these project teams completed key elements of project deliverables in line with industry standards.

In both cases above, external resources applied their own methodologies rather than OPS-specific requirements. In comparison, project documentation reviewed for other projects indicated that project teams completed their projects with lower levels of project management discipline and without certain key elements. For example, it was noted that

for two (2) of the three (3) smaller projects selected for audit testing, the project teams did not complete key project management elements such as formal documentation of project risks, interdependencies, change control, change management, benefits realization, and project closure procedures including lessons learned. As a result, there is a risk that projects may be delivered with reduced quality and efficiency, limiting OPS's ability to achieve intended outcomes.

Although not specifically mentioned in the Policy, it is common practice that project management processes, methods and governance are tailored to fit the project's complexity and environment to help ensure that the work performed delivers value. The Service has not defined the project management requirements for projects based on predefined factors (e.g. size, complexity). The lack of formal definition of a strategic project and the extent to which project management elements are applicable has resulted in interpretation by individuals and teams as to the extent of project management discipline that should be applied to any given project.

Without a common understanding of what constitutes a strategic project and the related project management requirements, project teams may apply inconsistent levels of rigour. This increases the risk that projects may not be effectively executed to achieve intended outcomes, potentially impacting the successful delivery of strategic initiatives.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2 – DEVELOPMENT OF A PROJECT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should develop and operationalize a formal project management framework with associated templates, tools, and standardized methodologies, to support the consistent, disciplined, and successful delivery of strategic projects. This framework should formally define what constitutes a strategic project at the Service and establish formal project management expectations based on project complexity or other relevant factors.

#### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 2**

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Service has introduced elements of a project management framework, including policy direction, and reporting practices; however, there are no dedicated resources assigned to maintain, operationalize, or enforce consistent application across the organization.

The Service will implement the framework in phases, beginning with the definition of minimum project management standards and requirements that can be applied using existing capacity. This will include refining the definition of a strategic project and establishing expectations for the use of core tools and templates.

Initial framework standardization will be completed by Q2 2027. Broader operationalization, including integration into business practices and consistent application across the Service, will be advanced through 2027, aligned with available capacity and future resourcing decisions.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should require all individuals at the Service who are involved with project delivery to complete mandatory project management training to ensure that they are familiar with the Service's relevant policies and the supporting project management framework.

### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 3**

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Service does not currently have a centralized or dedicated function responsible for project management training or capacity building, and training related to project delivery has been applied inconsistently.

A phased approach will be taken to establish training requirements. Initial work will focus on defining minimum expectations for individuals leading strategic projects and aligning available training with Service-specific policies, tools, and practices.

Development of training requirements and initial delivery will begin in Q2 2027, with broader implementation and integration into standard business practices continuing through 2027. Full implementation of a structured and sustainable training program will be dependent on future capacity and resource availability.

## **2. Planning and Execution**

Effective project planning is essential to OPS's ability to initiate and deliver projects efficiently while ensuring alignment with the Service's strategic objectives. Appropriate planning establishes clear objectives, timelines, budgets, and scope, providing a defined baseline against which project progress and delivery performance can be consistently monitored and assessed.

## 2.1 A formalized and consistent project intake process to properly prioritize and deploy projects is not in place.

Priority  
Rating: High

Project management standards stress the importance for organizations to have a project intake process to solicit, evaluate, and prioritize concepts and ideas that could be

developed into projects in support of the achievement of the Service's strategic objectives and its Strategic Plan.

Project initiation at OPS has historically been driven by senior leaders of the Service without a standardized framework for how opportunities are identified, assessed, or approved. As a result, our audit noted that

project proposals reviewed through the completion of the *Business Idea Template* (which justifies the project's value and feasibility) either were not completed or had deviations from industry standards related to quality, level of detail, alignment with strategic goals, and rigour of justification. This increases the risks that anticipated benefits and outcomes of proposed projects may not be well aligned with strategic priorities.

In the absence of a formal intake process and a structured review of project proposals by senior leaders, there is limited opportunity for the Service to evaluate and prioritize projects, ensure sufficient funding is available and to determine value-for-money in approved initiatives. This lack of a formalized project intake and prioritization process reduces the Service's ability to consistently select initiatives that best support the achievement of expected outcomes from the Strategic Plan. This is especially critical for the Service given the limited available resources for projects.

### RECOMMENDATION 4 – FORMALIZATION OF THE PROJECT INTAKE PROCESS

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should establish a formal strategic project intake process to ensure project ideas are evaluated consistently before they are selected and commence. This should include establishing a formal set of evaluation criteria to prioritize projects within an available funding envelope.



**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 4**

Management agrees with this recommendation. While project intake tools and processes exist, including business idea and business case templates, there is no dedicated function responsible for managing intake or ensuring consistent application across the organization.

The Service will strengthen intake and prioritization practices by standardizing tools and establishing minimum expectations for project evaluation. This will include updating business case and project proposal templates, clarifying evaluation criteria, and improving alignment between project selection, available funding, and capacity.

Enhancements to intake processes will be completed by Q1 2027. The development of a more formalized and centralized intake function, including structured sequencing of projects, will be considered as part of future organizational design and resourcing decisions.

**2.2 Strategic projects do not consistently have appropriate resources assigned from the outset, which may impact the efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery.**

Priority  
Rating: Moderate

Project management standards note that project teams must assess, estimate, and confirm resource needs early in project planning and continue to revisit this throughout the project lifecycle. The resource assessment should include a formal assessment of the required skills and expertise to execute the required work, including project management expertise and other areas that are critical to project delivery based on the nature of the project (e.g., risk management, change management, subject matter expertise).

Our audit noted that some project teams did not thoroughly assess the resource needs at the outset of the project. This was evidenced for three (3) of five (5) projects selected for testing, where a resource management plan or a similar deliverable to assess the project's resource needs was not completed. In these instances, project teams encountered difficulties with delivery of projects with regards to both appropriate project management practices and general execution of project outcomes/deliverables, which potentially reduced the overall efficiency of project delivery. This issue creates challenges for the Service, given its limited project management resources, which are generally prioritized for assignment to larger, high-priority strategic projects.

With regards to general project execution and delivery, the Service predominantly relies on internal resources, who generally are in operational roles, and execute projects

alongside their regular duties. Project resources are allocated to project teams based on project needs and subject matter expertise. However, without a thorough assessment of project resource needs, some project teams encountered difficulties with the assignment of adequate resourcing, which required adjustments during the execution phase and may have impacted project efficiency. The DRP project team confirmed that the project was allocated resources based on availability and not necessarily based on subject matter expertise. Once challenges were recognized, project resources were assessed, and individuals were reassigned. A proper resource assessment and allocation at the onset of the project may have prevented certain challenges.

Without the formal requirement for project teams to assess the resource requirements of the project at the outset and throughout the project life cycle, there is a risk that projects will not be resourced properly, which may impact overall quality and efficiency of project delivery.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5 – FORMALIZATION OF PROJECT RESOURCE ASSESSMENTS**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should, as part of the project management framework, establish a formal requirement for the assessment of project resource needs – at the outset of the project and periodically through the project life cycle. This includes the individuals to execute the deliverables per the project, as well as project management resources and other individuals with specialized needs as required by the project team. Based on this assessment, the necessary resources should be formally assigned and backfilled (as applicable) to support successful project completion.

#### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 5**

Management agrees with this recommendation. Resource considerations are currently part of project planning; however, there is no centralized process or dedicated capacity to support consistent assessment, documentation, and monitoring of resource requirements across the project lifecycle.

The Service will establish minimum requirements for documenting resource needs at project initiation and incorporate resource considerations into ongoing project reporting processes using existing tools and practices.

These enhancements will be implemented by Q1 2027. More advanced resource planning and portfolio-level capacity management, including centralized oversight, will be developed over time as part of broader project and portfolio management maturity and will be dependent on future resourcing.

### **2.3 A formalized budget is not consistently established for strategic projects, impacting the accountability of project teams to deliver projects in a cost-effective manner.**

Priority  
Rating: High

An established project budget, aligned with the scope of the project, enables decision makers to understand the anticipated resources required to complete the project before approving it.

Once the project budget is approved, this baseline is necessary to effectively control, measure, and govern project performance.

From audit testing performed, it was noted that not all projects had a formal, approved project budget established from the outset. Specifically, for the DRP, a nominal budget was originally approved of \$600,000, although, we learned, it was generally known that this would not be sufficient to complete the project. Based on project documentation, we understand the current budget is \$2.2 million; however, no evidence of formal approval of this amendment could be provided. Despite this revised budget, as of January 2026, project documentation indicates spending to date has been \$5.2 million, \$3.0 million over the current budget.

As there has not been a standard approach to budgeting for strategic projects, the Service does not have an approval framework for project budget amounts. As a result, it is unclear what level of governance has the authority to approve a project budget and/or a budget amendment.

By not having a formally approved budget from the outset of a project, there is an increased risk of cost overruns and a weakened accountability for project spending and overall performance measurement.

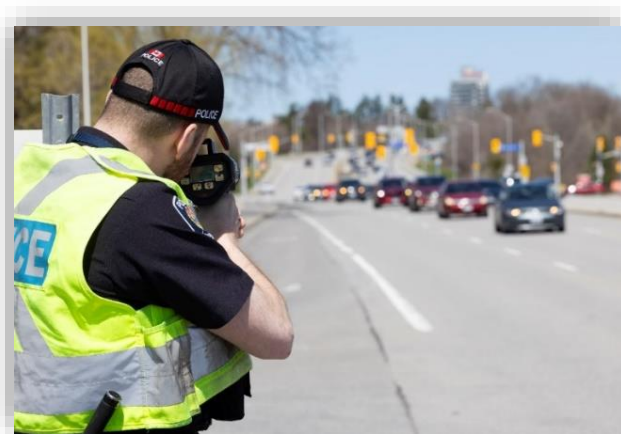
#### **Project Costing**

For many projects, there is a mix of sworn and civilian resources assigned to provide subject matter expertise and administrative support. Although not formally documented, we learned that the Service's methodology for project costing includes employee costs for civilian members assigned to a project, but this is not the same for sworn members.

OPS's rationale for this approach is that civilian resources who are temporarily assigned to a project may be backfilled; however, this is generally not feasible for sworn members due to the lengthy time required to recruit and train new police officers. Despite this, any sworn member that is assigned to a project does come at a cost to their substantive

position, which could result in overtime pay and/or an opportunity cost for there being a vacancy in another part of the Service.

Without a consistent methodology for project costing, there is a risk that project costs are not fully or consistently captured, reducing the Service’s ability to accurately assess the true cost of projects, support informed decision-making, and demonstrate accountability for the cost-effective use of resources.



**RECOMMENDATION 6 – ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL PROJECT BUDGETS**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should develop a project budgeting and costing approach, including established authorities for approval of budget/amendment levels. This should include an embedded challenge and validation of the project budget before submitting it for review and approval.

Additionally, as part of the costing approach, consideration should be given to including the cost of all dedicated resources (civilian and sworn) to provide the most accurate picture of the cost of the project.

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 6**

Management agrees with this recommendation. Financial controls and budgeting processes are in place; however, a standardized project-level costing approach is not consistently applied across all strategic initiatives.

The Service will strengthen project budgeting and costing practices by developing a standardized approach that reflects full project costs, including civilian and sworn resources where applicable, and introducing a more structured pre-approval review and challenge process.

Initial enhancements to project budgeting practices will be implemented by Q4 2026. Continued refinement and integration into project governance processes will occur through 2027, aligned with broader improvements to project and portfolio management practices and financial oversight.

### 3. Monitoring and Reporting

Effective project monitoring and reporting is critical to OPS to provide governance bodies with ongoing assurance that projects remain on track, aligned with strategic objectives, and capable of delivering intended outcomes. In a policing environment characterized by operational risk, public accountability, and resource constraints, monitoring and reporting on project status is critical to enable timely oversight and informed decision-making. This ensures that progress against approved scope, schedule, budget, and benefits is visible and that emerging risks are identified early, before they escalate into material issues.

#### 3.1 Project reporting requires improvement to ensure complete and accurate status reporting of strategic projects.

Priority  
Rating: Moderate

The Service has established a formalized reporting cadence to oversight bodies, including: i) quarterly updates to the Senior Leadership Team and Command Teams, and ii) semi-annual updates to the OPSB. This includes central reporting templates developed by Strategic Portfolio Management, which include key project information such as project updates, project budget-to-actual analysis and key performance metrics. However, Strategic Portfolio Management currently relies on individual project teams to self-report on project status. Because of the Service's current decentralized model, Strategic Portfolio Management has limited visibility into some ongoing projects and thus is unable to consistently and adequately challenge or validate the information submitted by project teams.

Our audit noted examples of project status reports that either lacked sufficient detail or included inaccurate information to oversight bodies. Examples include:

- Prior to quarterly meetings of the Senior Leadership Team and Command, a dashboard is distributed as reference material to provide a snapshot of ongoing projects to initiate more meaningful discussion. The audit noted that this dashboard does not currently provide insights into key project details, including actual project spending against budget or the status of projects compared to established timelines. The dashboard includes a colour rating to summarize, at a high-level, if projects are progressing in-line with expectations or if they should be flagged as being at risk. However, project teams/stakeholders have confirmed that these ratings are generally vague, do not



provide sufficient insight and could be applied inconsistently. For example, Phase 1 of the Body-Worn Camera project did not identify any key risks or issues related to project costing on the project dashboard in late 2025. However, the audit noted that the cost to acquire the required equipment increased by more than 25% following the receipt of a revised quote from the vendor. This cost escalation could reasonably have been identified and reported as a project risk on the dashboard but was not reflected.

- The OPSB receives semi-annual updates on projects through its regularly scheduled meetings. Historically, these updates did not include reporting on key metrics such as each project's spend to date as compared to project budget. However, this changed in December 2025, where financials accompanied the qualitative reporting to the Board. While this represents improvement, inaccuracies were found in this most recent semi-annual update to the OPSB, including inaccurate status of projects and inaccurate or outdated project budgets. For example, Phase 1 of the Body-Worn Camera project indicated a budget of \$1.0 million, however the approved budget for the project is \$456,788.
- Annually, the Service holds an annual Strategic Planning Session for its Senior Leadership Team, where the Service does a review of all ongoing projects to discuss project updates and overall status. In advance of the most recent session, Strategic Portfolio Management, in collaboration with Finance, prepared the "*Financial Reporting on the Strategic Plan – January 2026*" report. The audit noted inconsistencies in the financial information presented in this report, including the use of different methodologies to report project costs to date. Most projects reported only actual expenditures incurred and excluded committed funds, while one project included both actual expenditures and amounts fully committed through approved contracts. We further noted inconsistent treatment of project labour costs, with some projects including employee costs in total spending and others excluding these costs.

In addition to the inconsistencies noted above, the frequency of reporting of the status of the strategic portfolio on a semi-annual cycle to the OPSB may not be sufficient for their oversight of the large/complex projects. While there are other mechanisms for the Board to get updates on projects, these do not consistently provide a fulsome status of each project.

As noted above, there is no one function with the visibility into all ongoing projects to adequately challenge or validate the information submitted by project teams to ensure information being provided to oversight bodies is complete and accurate. Without a formal

reporting framework and a central challenge function, governance bodies may receive inconsistent, inaccurate, untimely or incomplete information over project status, potentially impacting their ability to make timely project decisions.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7 – PROJECT REPORTING**

The Chief, Ottawa Police Service should establish a formal project reporting framework, which includes standardized reporting requirements and a challenge function of all information received. At a minimum, this framework should establish:

- A sufficient reporting cadence to governance bodies, including what information will be provided;
- Standardized templates for project teams to support reporting on key inputs at a regular frequency;
- Defined financial information requirements, to be provided by Finance, for all strategic projects, using a consistent methodology for reporting project finances; and
- A clearly articulated role for the central oversight function to review project information to ensure consistency and completeness.

#### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 7**

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Service has introduced reporting practices for strategic projects; however, there is no permanent resourcing for project reporting, resulting in variability in reporting, limited standardization, and reliance on self-reported information without a formal validation process.

The Service will establish standardized reporting requirements and a consistent reporting cadence using existing tools and resources. This will include validating the approach with the Ottawa Police Service Board, including agreement on the key information required to support effective oversight.

Initial work will focus on defining required reporting elements. This includes enhancing the standardization of project status, risks, and financial information, and improving consistency across all strategic initiatives. These foundational reporting enhancements will be implemented by Q1 2027. The development of a more robust reporting and validation function, including enhanced data quality and oversight, will be advanced over time as part of broader improvements to project and portfolio management capability.

## Appendix 1 – About the Audit

### Audit Objective and Criteria

The objective of this audit was to provide reasonable assurance that OPS has appropriate project management policies and practices in place in order to execute projects in the achievement of its strategic plan.

The scope of the audit included the following:

- Governance and decision-making framework used to oversee how projects are initiated, approved, managed, and delivered across the project life cycle.
- Effectiveness of project planning processes, including whether projects are appropriately defined, planned and managed to support successful execution and alignment with OPS strategic objectives.
- Adequacy of project reporting and monitoring, including the roles of oversight bodies and the effectiveness of project reporting in providing timely and meaningful insight into project status, risks, and progress.

The audit focused on practices, policies, and data related to the fiscal years of 2024 and 2025. As a part of the audit, five (5) strategic projects were selected for testing, representing a range of projects varying in size, scope, and disciplines. The purpose of this testing was to assess whether appropriate project management practices were established and applied across the selected projects.

Criteria listed below were developed from our assessment of key risks related to project management processes at OPS compared to project management industry standards.

1. Governance and Decision Making	
1.1	A formal, enterprise-wide project and portfolio governance framework exists and is consistently applied, ensuring clear decision-making, defined oversight structures, and appropriate escalation and accountability at both the portfolio and project levels.
1.2	A standardized project management framework and delivery approach, with guidelines, defined project lifecycles, processes and continuous improvement mechanisms, exists to ensure successful project execution.
1.3	A centralized Project Management Office (PMO) exists to establish standards and resources for project teams.
1.4	Project interdependencies are proactively identified and managed to avoid conflicts and support efficient delivery.

<b>2. Planning and Execution</b>	
2.1	A consistent, organization-wide process exists to intake, assess, and prioritize projects based on documented criteria, including strategic alignment, with approvals made by the appropriate portfolio authority.
2.2	Appropriate and sufficient resources (e.g., expertise and budget) are allocated to project teams.
2.3	Formal change control procedures exist to evaluate and authorize changes to project components.
2.4	A formal and consistent change management approach exists to ensure successful adoption of project changes.
<b>3. Monitoring and Reporting</b>	
3.1	A formal project reporting framework exists, ensuring that relevant project information—including performance metrics, KPIs, and benefits-realization plans—is defined, monitored, and reported to support oversight, assess project value, and enable timely corrective action.
3.2	Lessons learned are captured and shared to support continuous improvement and prevent recurring project issues.

### **Audit Approach and Methodology**

Audit staff performed the following procedures to complete this audit:

- Reviewed relevant documents (e.g., policies, procedural documents, frameworks, strategic project updates);
- Interviewed and conducted walkthroughs with key OPS personnel and OPSB members;
- Participated in a tour of the Service's new South Facility, which is in development;
- Completed detailed file testing of a sample of strategic projects in progress or completed;
- Utilized subject matter expertise in the area of project management; and
- Performed other analysis and tests, as deemed necessary.

## Appendix 2 – Rating Scale for Audit Findings

The following rating definitions were used to assign priority to the findings associated with this audit.

Priority Rating	Description
<b>Critical</b>	The finding represents a severe control deficiency, non-compliance or strategic risk/opportunity and requires an immediate remedy. If left uncorrected, this could have a catastrophic impact on the achievement of OPS's strategic priorities, its ongoing business operations, including the risk of loss, asset misappropriation, data compromise or interruption, fines and penalties, increased regulatory scrutiny, or reputation damage.
<b>High</b>	The finding represents a significant control deficiency, non-compliance or strategic risk/opportunity and requires prompt attention. If left uncorrected, this could have a significant impact on the achievement of OPS's strategic priorities, its ongoing business operations, including the risk of loss, asset misappropriation, data compromise or interruption, fines and penalties, increased regulatory scrutiny, or reputation damage.
<b>Moderate</b>	The finding represents a moderate internal control deficiency, non-compliance or is a risk/opportunity to business operations that should be addressed timely. If left uncorrected, this could have a partial impact on business operations, resulting in loss or misappropriation of organizational assets, compromise of data, fines, and penalties, or increased regulatory scrutiny. Typically, these issues should be resolved after any high-priority findings.
<b>Low</b>	The finding should be addressed to meet leading practice or efficiency objectives. Remediation should occur as time and resources permit. While it is not considered to represent a significant or immediate risk, repeated oversights without corrective action or compensating controls could lead to increased exposure or scrutiny.