

From: Miranda Thiessen

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 10:20 PM

To: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@london.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Budget Committee Deliberations for February 13th

Dear whoever this reaches,

I am writing to you today regarding the proposed City of London 'Multi-Year Budget 2024-2027,' and to state on the record that I am against Business Cases P-28: - Public Safety and Infrastructure Modernization, P-29: Police Vehicle and Equipment Requirements, and especially P-57: LPS Facilities Masterplan and Protective Services Training Campus. Further, I urge you, as my representative at City Council, to vote against the above stated Business Cases.

To be clear, I am not asking to "defund the police," I am asking that the City of London does not vote to increase tax payer dollars to fund the militarization of this city instead of the resources that our communities desperately need. I support Business Case P-L8: Next Generation 911 Centre. I also question the democratic integrity of the London Police Association and its sitting members with regards to its slanderous judgment of taxpayers asking questions about the proposed \$672M budget.

In the newspaper, Police Chief Truong explains that the London Police Services (LPS) did a "comprehensive" study of Londoners which found that no one feels safe in this city. He also hears that mental health, addiction and homelessness are the biggest challenges we believe our city faces - then, why are we not spending most of our tax dollars on those services? Why is the LPS demanding for the biggest line item in the proposed City budget at 17.4%? Which is more than eight times the proposed spend on London & Middlesex Community Housing (at 2.1%), for example. For the safety of the whole community - Indigenous, First Nations and Metis Peoples, elders, the disabled, youth, our children, and those of us who are blessed to be housed, as well as those who have been unhoused - we need housing, not guns, surveillance, or armoured vehicles.

Online, I have read research results which concluded that an increase in police budget does not correlate to a decrease in crime; as well as research that shows how it is cheaper for us to care for people, rather than to criminalize and hospitalize them (over and over again). All of this data concludes that it costs taxpayers less to provide people with healthcare, food and safe, accessible and affordable housing than to police our communities. The data concludes that if the basic needs of everyone in our communities are met - if we improve people's material conditions - that is when crime decreases. We need public resources, not armed police.

I also understand that LPS proposes to build a new police training centre with this Multi-Year Budget, and I want to specifically implore you to vote against this Business Case (P-57). I am aware of the ongoing, mass protests against the building of a police training facility in Atlanta, GA and I do not want that in the London area. As a citizen, as a taxpayer, as your constituent, and as a human being, please know that building a new compound for practicing militarization tactics against protestors and unhoused people does NOT make me feel safer.

To make London safe, we need community care not militarization.

Sincerely,

Miranda Thiessen

London ON