

**From:** Kevin Kaiser  
**Sent:** Monday, February 12, 2024 10:08 PM  
**To:** Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@london.ca>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Multi-Year Budget Feedback

Hello City of London Budget Committee,

I'm writing to provide my input on the tabled multi-year budget and share my thoughts as a long-time resident of this city. I am writing this email for the public participation meeting, and give consent for this letter to be part of the public agenda.

I'm sorry to say that I find it supremely frustrating that the only one organization (i.e. London Police) accounts for around 5%, more than half of the 8.6% increase in property taxes over our next budget period. When we have community members who are struggling to access even basic necessities, and many others who are significantly impacted by the current economy and inflation, attempting to approve a 30% increase to any budget without proper examination and questioning is harmful and irresponsible, no matter what department the money is going to.

Speaking about the budget itself, the proposed LPS budget promises to address high call times, workload, and increased crime rates, etc. These are the exact SAME things they promised to address with the last budget increase they received an increase in 2023 - and now they are asking for more? Who is questioning what LPS did with last time's increase, and why aren't we requiring proof that the money was actually used to deliver on their promises before giving them more money than we ever have before?

That aside, while it is possible that throwing money at the police department MIGHT allow for faster response times and alleviate the **symptoms** (the keyword here is might, as noted above we have no proof or track record that this will actually work), so how about we address the **problem** instead of slapping a band-aid onto it? It is a known fact that police react to crimes after they occur. They do not prevent crime from occurring in the first place. There are so many studies out there which show that increased spending on police does NOT correlate with lower crime rates. Instead, funding social and community programs is what helps address these issues, because guess what? The average person isn't committing crimes when their basic needs are met.

We've seen this in action too - Toronto, Ottawa, and Edmonton all have non-police response programs for mental-health, housing, and/or substance-use related called AND these response programs are working! Police calls are down, people aren't being killed due to excessive force, or criminalized. Instead people are getting the support they need. The system can and should be reimagined and the fact that most of Council does not even seem to be considering the non-policing option is frankly disappointing and shameful.

The London I want to live in is one where we fund transit growth and improvement so that those who can't afford a car can still get to and from work and around the city easily. The London I want to live in is one where we have Library funding so low-income community members and new immigrants can have free access to books, education, the internet, and more. The London I want to live in is one where people having a mental health crisis and need help can actually receive it, instead of being arrested and charged with a crime, or worse, seriously injured or killed due to police violence.

As a 10-year resident of this city, I cannot stand to see our other public services underfunded in favour of a Police Service budget that is being pushed through without being properly questioned and examined. Raising people's taxes by over 8%, with 5% of that accounting towards the LPS is incredibly short-sighted, harmful, and irresponsible - especially during a time when so many people in our communities don't have basic necessities. It's also a sure-fire way to marginalize these communities even more.

The library, transit, community programs and services are being significantly underfunded to pay for this police budget. Reallocating money from the police budget to community supports/

services to address root causes through prevention is vital. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope to see productive budget meeting discussions in the upcoming weeks with some progressive amendments being made for our budget increases to be allocated more evenly across public services.

Fund community. Fund care.

**Kevin Kaiser**

Ward 3 Resident and Londoner since 2013