

February 6, 2024

**TO:** Mayor Josh Morgan, City Councillors, Budget Committee

**RE: London Police Service Budget**

Dear Mayor Morgan, City Councillors, and Members of the Budget Committee

My name is Dr. Lesley Bikos, a former London Police Service (LPS) constable with a decade of studying the institution of policing. I submit this letter to express my grave concerns regarding the proposed police budget and to offer additional facts and context for you to consider during budget deliberations. I thank you for your service to our community and hope the content of this letter assists you in making vital funding decisions that impact our whole community, but particularly communities most marginalized by systems of oppression. The LPS has requested a \$672 million increase that includes a \$33 million raise in police salaries. In total, this budget demand accounts for a 30% increase in the city's police budget over four years, a budget item already significantly higher than other city budget categories at 18%. Mayor Josh Morgan and the London Police Services Board endorsed the budget in full, prior to council deliberations, and seemingly without question or further examination.

Consistently, the LPS and Mayor Morgan has grounded the need for a budgetary increase in language that promotes fear, with statements such as London is "the third most dangerous city in Ontario," arguing that increased police spending will decrease crime rates, making our city "safer." Additionally, on January 29th the police union put out a public statement calling people who question or don't support the police budget "radical defund the police zealots," which the police chief then endorsed. These disparaging and divisive comments are outrageous and harmful. The police and city council made commitments to address anti-Black racism, including reallocating funds from the police budget to community services/supports. Further, these two institutions regularly claim to support Truth and Reconciliation and equity-based responses to ongoing oppression in our city. This budget, including the harmful rhetoric used to justify it and its impact on the increased criminalization of marginalized folx, do not support these commitments.

The LPS argues that a budget increase will permit an increased presence of policing throughout the city, reduce crime rates, lower response times, address organizational wellness, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and add a considerable amount of technology to modernize and create a more efficient police service. The budget proposal lacks detail and leaves many important questions that council must consider as part of an ethical decision-making process prior to granting the largest budget increase in the city's history.

#### *Crime Statistics and Clearance Rates*

LPS has presented the figure of 79.7 in relation to the 2022 crime severity index numbers, indicating we are the third highest city for crime rates in comparison with the big 12 cities in Ontario. Their numbers, while correct, are missing important context. The data not provided by LPS indicates that we are trending down in the overall crime severity index (down by 10%), violent crime (down by 15%), and non-violent crime (down by 7%). In two of the three categories we are performing better than the national average except for violent crime, but we are just shy of the national average. The data tables shown in Appendix 1 outline both Ontario and LPS' crime severity index and clearance rates from 2018 to 2022. The numbers reveal that LPS improved in almost all areas in 2022. What these tables tell us is that the severity and quantity of crime are actually trending down. While the numbers are better in the Ontario graph, this is an average of all the police services in Ontario, which differ in size etc. However, despite this, you will note that when we compare the percentages for 2022, we are outperforming the Ontario averages. This is not to invalidate the very real issues our city must address, but it does indicate a pattern of going in the right direction that should be included as part of the decision-making process. Improvements could be tied to some of the alternative responses and reporting programs LPS put into place over the past year or two

such as Coast, hospital handoffs, alternatives for non-emergency reporting, and some of the new officers they may have already employed. LPS was approved last year for extra funding to hire 52 new officers, to address the same reasoning of this budget ask: complex calls, higher crime rates, clearance rates and officer workload. Have they hired all 52 officers yet? If not, it seems hard to justify hiring 97 more officers without taking the time to hire all 52 first, take time to evaluate their impact, and reassess as required.

Another important area we need to better understand involving the crime severity index numbers/clearance rates/time on calls are the types of calls the police are attending and the frequency in these categories. We need a break down of what the criminal code calls are over the past 5 years. For example, how many are related to property damage, theft, assault (level 1, 2, 3) and so on. What are the circumstances around those incidents? Asking for this data by the number counts, not percentages (e.g., x number of theft under \$5000 calls) and a comparison of those numbers over the past 5 years will help us understand the larger picture of where police resources are going and how as a community, we can assist in addressing the root causes behind those criminal code offences. An audit, particularly on the code 3 calls for service would also be helpful to better understand where we can find alternatives other than armed police officers to respond. What exactly is the breakdown for calls for service in code 2 and code 3 calls? What type of calls – a categorization of calls and then number counts in each would provide a fuller picture. Not an average time on code 2 and 3 calls but an actual breakdown of all the calls for service in the past 5 years, what was the nature of the call, how long were officers on them, how many officers? Who is overseeing the time on calls? Officers on the road clear them themselves – what does accountability and supervision look like? Because code 3 calls are non-emergency calls – we need more information on what the issues are and what exactly the plans are to address them. Many of the code 3 calls can involve things such as traffic, noise complaints, cold break and enters and so on. Much like traffic calming measures, many of these calls can be handled by less expensive, non-armed special employees. This is not a new idea and could easily be piloted. Having a fulsome picture of this data is the first place to begin this process. When will we see an exact layout of the plan to revamp the response for calls for service? Will LPS provide a comparison as part of this plan? E.g., what they do now and how the new plan is different. Can they provide a test case example of policing services where this has been done with an evaluation of the results? What exactly, item by item is needed to implement this plan?

Statistics Canada (2022) includes an assessment of all criminal code offences from 2018-2022. These numbers reveal that we are, again, trending downward for 2022 (6% lower rates), meaning there were less criminal code incidents reported by the LPS in 2022. There could be many reasons for this, so asking for detailed data is important. How are clearance rates down when criminal code incident rates are also down by 6%? It could be more complex calls that take more time which is also impacting their call time. This is where a breakdown in calls for service is important. We need to assess what these calls are for, what makes them complex, and the time each is taking. If it is revealed that many of these calls involve things like mental health crisis calls, then the case for adopting something like what Toronto is doing, which is showing real promise for diverting calls from the police, is vital to explore:

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/community-safety- programs/toronto-community-crisis-service/>

Asking questions is important because there is context missing in the numbers provided by LPS to justify the 30% increase. The trend in these areas reveal improvement, LPS has newer responses that may be part of that success, and the inclusion of new systems responses such as the *Whole of Community System Response to Health and Homelessness* Hubs are being implemented at the city level (which will further reduce some calls for service). Considering these considerations, we must pause on at least some of the budget asks to allow for further evaluation – it is the socially and fiscally responsible decision. However, the city would also need to commit to continuing to invest in prevention such as the Hubs, affordable

housing, community-led and organizations programs, healthcare, food security, transit, community centres, the arts, libraries and so on to address the root causes of harm. **Let me be clear: We cannot shift resources from the police without simultaneously supporting and properly resourcing community-led responses and services.**

### *Gun violence*

The rise of gun violence in London is another area that requires a more nuanced discussion than the implication that the average citizen in London risks being killed by gun violence on our streets. In 2021, there were 28 shooting occurrences and in 2022 there were 25. Statistics reveal that we are in line with the Canadian average as of 2021, and researchers have associated higher gun violence in the past several years with Covid pressures: <https://theconversation.com/gun-violence-soared-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-new-study-finds-but-the-reasons-why-are-complex-170250>. The pressures from the pandemic have not ceased and have been exuberated by the current economy. Gun violence is a public health issue, a housing issue, an economic precarity issue, so again we must invest in people and community. It is a real and pressing issue, but the police are called after the fact – prevention is key. Often the argument is gang violence – when you invest in youth, provide opportunity, you see rates of gang membership fall – this is well documented. The police need to provide more context for their assertions regarding gun violence. For example, providing a break down on where the gun incidents occurred and the circumstances of each case. Was it between parties who knew each other? Was it street involved folks’ enacting violence against each other? Was it gang related? The point is – if LPS is going to suggest that the average citizen is at risk of being killed by gun violence they should have to provide more evidence.

There are communities having success reducing gun violence through community-led responses and investment in community services and supports. Toronto is an example where the city is investing in prevention and community-led safety through community-based programs that reduce police as the response to various social issues. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/gun-violence-trend-2023-toronto-1.7064901> Preliminary results show it is working. For example, gun violence is down year-over-year (30%), calls for service diverted from the police for folks in crisis, people getting wrap around supports that address root causes so they do not come in contact with the police. Regent Park, a neighbourhood in Toronto that has struggled with gun violence just reported no shooting deaths in 2023 due to a \$2.5 million investment over 5 years to community services <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2024/02/02/regent-park-credits-zero-gun-deaths-to-investment-in-social-programming/>.

### *Theft and Property Damage*

Crimes such as theft and property damage, which are both frequently raised concerns, are largely reactionary responses, meaning it happens and then the police attend. The police, no matter how many officers we hire, cannot be in all places at once. Again, council investing in people and communities is the way to address the roots of why theft and property crime occur as prevention. Jurisdictions such as Toronto are acknowledging the police are not the best entity to do this work through listening to people of lived/living experience, experts and community organizations who work with folks living in crisis. For example, this is the new response by Toronto City Council adopted in Feb. 2022 (began in 2021) is a “a bold and different approach to advancing community safety by working collaboratively across sectors, communities and governments. It will work to bring about a safe Toronto that promotes and celebrates the well-being and resilience of all residents by, [in part], expanding the definition of community safety beyond crime or policing to include well-being.” This preventative approach is similar to what we have begun in London with the *Whole of Community System Response to Health and Homelessness*. Now is not the time to prioritize spending on the police, we must begin the process of funding prevention

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/community-safety-programs/community-safety-well-being-plan/> Indwell is another example. St. Thomas police report a significant impact on their calls for service with having Indwell in their community. We also have Indwell in our community – have we assessed their impact on police calls? What about the new Hope House that just reported huge success for supporting 25 people in acute need, diverting them from the hospitals and police <https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/housed-and-hopeful-one-womans-path-to-londons-new-homeless-system>. If we properly funded and resourced initiatives we already have while also implementing new infrastructure for additional non-police responses to complex calls best served by community responses, we would get to root causes and prevention with less expense and most importantly, reduced harm, for people most marginalized in our community. If modernization is the goal (a key priority identified in the budget justification), then the type of example provided by Toronto is what cities are increasingly exploring. There are many examples to draw from.

### *Gender and Sexual-based Violence*

Another priority identified in the goals of the budget are human trafficking, intimate partner violence, sexual assaults, and hate crimes. These are serious harms that must be addressed, but gender and sexual-based violence are amongst the least reported harms to the police (and have been for decades). National statistics show that “the odds of sexual assault being reported to police are about 80% lower than for other violent crimes. Only six percent of sexual assaults are reported to police, making it the most underreported crime measured in the General Social Survey on Victimization (Adam Cotter, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Statistics Canada, 2019). There are alternative, community-led, survivor centered programs in various jurisdictions that offer folks who experience gender and sexual-based violence more choice and support than the criminal justice system and the police. It is important for people to have more choices than the police, acknowledging that if people wish to report to the police, they should have the best experience possible. Our city investing in initiatives that get to the root causes of this type of violence and offering support for victims and survivors outside of policing is increasingly acknowledged as vital for prevention vs mass funding to reactionary responses such as the police. There are various initiatives happening that are survivor-led and centered to explore. The LPS piloted an alternative reporting program called ‘Speak Out,’ do we have an evaluation of this program?

Overall, only about 30% of people ever call the police to report a crime in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2019). These rates are even lower for marginalized communities. A new study that looked at the 20 largest municipal police services across Canada (including London) found there is “no consistent correlation” between police spending and crime rates in Canada. The study looked at a decade of police spending and found no clear relationship between higher (and rising) police budgets and crime, and no association between more police spending and a reduction in crime rates <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/cpp.2022-050?journalCode=cpp>. The police’s response to these findings is that they are responsible for more than calls to do with crime, which is true in the current system. The main argument, as demonstrated through this letter, is that some cities and communities are moving away from this model, and we can too. In fact, it is imperative we begin that process if we are committed to a vibrant, healthy, safe, anti-racist and anti-oppressive, equitable city for all. We must invest in communities and people.

### *Hiring more officers for specific neighbourhoods*

In relation to hiring 97 more officers – was there community engagement done to see if these neighbourhoods want more officers in their community? What did that process look like? Who, exactly did it include? What community groups/organizations did they speak with? Were populations most

impacted by a greater police presence such as Indigenous, Black, racialized folks, unhoused folks, street involved folks, communities that are economically disadvantaged, and so on, consulted fully? Doing a community survey by calling a random selection of people is not a fulsome community consultation. Further, what were the questions asked? The police services board state that the main concerns around safety was identified as issues related to homelessness, drug use, mental illness, traffic and so on – was the feedback explicitly that respondents want more police? Or was that an assumption made by LPS and the Board? Indigenous, Black, racialized folx, 2SLGBTQIA+ folx, disabled folx, street involved folx, folx in poverty and their intersections are at increased risk for police violence, criminalization, and not receiving help when they do contact the police. So who, exactly, becomes more “safe” by increased police in communities? A fulsome consultation with people most impacted by police contact must be conducted.

What, exactly, is the justification for the expansion for the Emergency Response Unit? How many officers are in this unit? These are speciality trained officers that involve heavy weaponry and so on, which is a high-cost unit. What is the evidence of the need for more resourcing to this unit? What is the business case for this – where is the evidence that this will be effective and is needed? How will this benefit our community? A breakdown of the calls they have attended in the past 5 years, what their role was, how long they were on the call, how many officers in that unit attended is important information to know. Recent Canadian research found that ERU units have been increasingly responding to calls they were not intended for. A breakdown of this type of information can help us understand if and why expansion of this unit is needed. If they are attending calls not in line with their mandate, then a reduction of their calls can be applied, and more officers for that unit will not be required.

### *Organizational Wellness*

Connected to hiring more officers is organizational wellness, identified as one of LPS’ top 3 priorities, which includes mental health supports. What does the LPS have in place now? What is the funding currently allocated to wellness supports? Have they had consultation from an expert on how to best support wellness for officers and staff? What, in detail, is the plan in place for the money asked for in relation to organizational wellness. What are the expected outcomes of each of the steps they are asking for funds for. What are the evaluation mechanisms built into this plan and how will council and the public access a report on progress?

How many officers are currently not able to perform their work duties? A breakdown of how many officers are off on mental health/sick leave or suspended for misconduct of some kind is important to better understand how many officers are actively working. When are these officers anticipated to return to duty? How many officers are on administrative duties (meaning they cannot work on the road)? A breakdown of why they are on administrative leave and when they are anticipated to return to regular duties should be given as part of the report. This can be done without recognizable details included and is part of the need for much more transparency overall.

LPS also identifies diversity, equity, and inclusion as a priority. What is their detailed plan? What is a detailed, intersectional breakdown of their organization, including by levels of staff, constables, middle management, and senior leadership? Have they had an audit in this regard to look at their policies, practices, and procedures within the past several years? What is the retention rate of officers, including an intersectional analysis? What were their reasons for leaving? Did you conduct exit interviews? What steps have the organization taken to address their feedback? How many workplace complaints have they received over the past 5 years in relation to equity, diversity, inclusion matters? Workplace environment, culture, discrimination, workplace violence? Leadership complaints? Burnout and mental health? How were these resolved? What actions were taken as an organization to address these complaints? These

questions/themes are all tied into the research (including my own) of officer wellness, retention, and barriers to healthier workplaces. Often these types of complaints are minimized and handled internally, meaning we have no public data on what is happening within the organization as it relates to wellness, inclusion and so on (this is common across police services). There is also often retribution for complaints and a culture of fear around reporting mental illness, workplace harm and discrimination, systemic 'isms,' gender and sexual-based violence, race-based violence and harm, reporting officer misconduct and so on. These types of organizational problems have been correlated with lower retention rates, lower productivity, higher rates of disengagement, higher rates of mental illness and officers on leave. Again, asking what, in detail, is the plan in place for the money asked for in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion matters to ensure there is a detailed, well thought out plan in place. What are the expected outcomes of each of the steps they are asking for funds for. What are the evaluation mechanisms built into this plan and how will council and the public access reports on progress?

Asking these questions is important to establish the workplace environment, what they have concretely done to address workplace culture and organizational barriers to a healthy environment that includes diversity, equity, inclusion and employee wellbeing. If they have many officers off on leave or on administrative duties (which can include mental illness and/or investigations, misconduct etc.) that is something to consider in relation to the now yearly ask for many more hires. The cycle will continue if the work of addressing the workplace environment, policies and procedures is not completed. Why not focus resources and support for officers you already have? Ensuring you aren't recruiting into harm is vital.

#### *Wants vs Needs: Technology and Weaponry*

Body-worn cameras/dashboard cameras are a high price item that continue to cost significant funds, meaning the ask related to body cameras and dashboard cameras does not end with this budget. This is an ongoing cost for things like administrative and data management programs and operators, training, replacing equipment and so on. Asking for a breakdown of how much per year this technology will cost going forward is important. There are police services that have started to divest from them because the costs are so high, and the evidence of their effectiveness is not conclusive. Asking for a detailed plan (including the numbers) of how adding this technology will reduce their costs over time, as is implied, is important. There is extremely limited research in Canada about their effectiveness, and the research out of the U.S. and U.K. is not conclusive. It is true that more police services across Canada are investing in this technology, but here are some considerations from Eric Laming, a Ph.D. student who is one of the few in Canada doing this research:

There is little Canadian research of their effectiveness. The research that does exist globally indicate that there are ongoing concerns over privacy and policies about data collected, officer control re: turning cameras on and off (turning their bodies during incidents etc.), police control of the footage, and the significant costs associated with BWC. "To date, the research performed on police body-worn cameras is limited to the U.S., which can distort the perceived benefits and drawbacks of body cameras in Canada if research is not adequately contextualized...Given how new the technology is and its limited implementation, these benefits need to be considered in tandem with several more negative factors, including implicit biases in interpreting ambiguous video footage, privacy concerns, technical issues, and high implementation costs." <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2019/push-for-police-to-wear-body-cameras-is-premature/>

Here's some more commentary of what is happening in Calgary and Toronto who have both adopted BWCs for all of their officers in 2019 and 2021. As noted below, they continue to ask for vast funding for similar narratives of efficiency, call times, and the need for more officers. Meaning, BWC in these

services (supported by inconclusive research of their effectiveness and worth of investment) has not produced the promised results. Calgary has body-worn cameras since 2019 and it hasn't reduced crime nor reduced budget asks for expanding staff (asking for another 50 new officers this year alone) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-police-alberta-funding-hire-officers-1.7058667>. Toronto (BWC since 2021) is similar, still asking for increased money each year. This year they are asking for an extra 20 million in an already over 1.2 billion/year budget, indicating they need more officers to help with efficiency and call time. "TPS noted in their budget ask that the 2024 portion of the budget will be spent on increasing front-line resources to focus on emergency response time, augmenting investigative capacity for timely closure of cases, and improving oversight and accountability through supervision...This budget allows the Service to continue the vitally important proactive policing programs and build partnerships with other organizations with the goal of supporting safer communities," Demkiw (Toronto police chief) <https://www.cp24.com/news/toronto-police-seeking-20-million-budget-increase-for-2024-1.6694889>. These are real time examples that support the inconclusive evidence of the cost/benefit analysis of BWC. It appears in the cases of Calgary and Toronto, BWCs have not provided a significant reduction in cost via increased efficiency.

Often the justification for BWC is transparency and accountability. Here is an article of another Canadian researcher who discusses accountability and BWC (again, the research is inconclusive with mixed results). "Advocates of body cameras roundly assert that the devices will bring transparency and accountability to police practices resulting in discernible improvements to officer behaviour— notably the reduction in police use of force incidents. However, the evidence in support of such claims is mixed and currently little is known about the actual impact body-worn cameras might have on police accountability in practice." <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/police-control-of-body-camera-footage-undermines-meaningful-accountability>.

The U.S. has high rates of BWC and dashboard cameras *and* has the highest rates of use of force and citizen killings when compared with western countries (Canada is second). The rates of police killings in the U.S. and Canada continue to rise year-over-year and continue to disproportionately impact Indigenous, Black, racialized communities and/or folks in mental health crisis. Meaning, BWC as a solution to use of force and police killings is not fully supported by data and needs much more research. Use of force in London continues to disproportionately impact Indigenous, Black, racialized folks, the same with Toronto (a newly published report from the Ontario Human Rights Commission confirms this), despite BWC since 2021. A final consideration in relation to BWC is the video footage. To date police collect and manage the data, they choose what to release and when (or oversight bodies will decide this) and are the ones who provide context to the event. Here is a quote from the article link above: "Law enforcement officials assert that police narration of body camera recording is necessary because footage will never show the entire context of an incident, and that recordings will be subject to conditions of poor lighting, poor audio, and limited camera angles. What remains unclear is how the police can be held accountable by the use of body-worn cameras when the "official" narrative is manufactured and controlled by police themselves."

This budget ask includes drones, Tasers for all officers, a second armoured vehicle, increased Emergency Response unit funding, which all amount to increased weaponry and the creep of militarization of the police. What, exactly, is the business case for these items? What, exactly, warrants the increased militarization of the police in London? How do these items benefit the community? Part of the budget also asks for a state-of-the-art joint training unit with London Fire, which includes a whopping cost of \$42 million just for the first year. Again, what is the business case for this? Just in these items alone there is approximately \$50 million dollars that are clearly wants, not needs. Pushing through items such as these in a time where increasing numbers of community members don't have basic necessities, should give this council pause. In the current economy of rising inflation impacting so many, including people

who generally have economic security, reverberating pandemic impacts on small businesses, a 30% increase in rent in the past year, more folk than ever using food banks etc. Raising people's taxes by 8.6% with 5% on an unquestioned, under examined police budget is frankly harmful and irresponsible. This is an easy area to consider reallocating money to community supports and services.

Like any institution, the police are going to find ways to justify their budget ask. It's also important to note that we have failed as a city to address the crisis levels of complex social problems. by properly funding housing, food, education, healthcare, education, transit, libraries, community centres etc. The police have been tasked with too much for too long in this city, and city council has responsibility for this problem. It is time to change course and begin the process of building infrastructure that diverts calls from the police to the proper channels that support people and address root causes. This shift takes time, education, and an acknowledgement that real safety comes in community connections and the proper resourcing of community-led responses. We've begun important investments that are already building out these types of responses. Our priorities must continue to be put in these types of programs. Yes, the police need some funding, but large portions of this budget require much more assessment and appear to be more about their wants as an organization verses what they need. It is council's responsibility to sort through what the priorities are within this budget. Putting that work back on the police like Hamilton has done is a good option. Ask the LPS: If you had to reduce your budget ask, what are the top 3 things you would take out of the budget? What is the cost reduction for each of these items? Why did you choose these three items?

Overall, a consideration of the harmful impact of the extension of over-policing in oppressed communities, coupled with evidence that increased police spending has no consistent correlation with decreased crime, are vital considerations in relation to where the city prioritizes spending. At the LPS' own admission, and consistent with police calls for service across the country, much of their time is spent on complex calls that involve social problems such as people in mental health crisis, unhoused communities, and/or people who use substances. Criminalizing our community members is not the answer, nor is it effective in solving the problem. We have decades of data to support this. Crime rates need to be critically examined through the lens of preventative measures. Instead of increasing the police budget, we should reallocate money to essential services, community-and-grassroot organizations, and community-led responses that meet people's basic needs, connect them to community, and provide a sense of belonging. For example, in 2021, the City of Toronto introduced the Toronto Community Crisis Service, which works to address mental health crises in the community without police response. In the one-year outcome evaluation report, the program diverted 78% of mental health and substance use calls that came through 9-1-1. Only 4% of calls required a police presence. It's important to note that non-police-based community responses to the underlying social causes of crime (e.g. food and housing precarity, lack of access to healthcare, education, opportunities, etc.), such as the Hubs through the newly implemented *Whole of Community System Response to Health and Homelessness* in London are only just emerging. This system response has not received sufficient time to assess its impact on the types of incidents related to social causes of crime. This budget ask is harmful because it simultaneously expands police officers' powers throughout the city and perpetuates underlying social harms driving poverty and homelessness in London by demanding a huge increase that requires the defunding/underfunding of community-based supports/responses.

### **List of Demands for City Council:**

It is socially and fiscally irresponsible to approve an unquestioned, underexamined police budget. The LPS has failed to provide context on much of their assertions, the data they provide is limited, and there are many questions that must be addressed. The following list of demands is not exhaustive:



## **1. SEND BACK THE POLICE BUDGET/CUT THE BUDGET AND REALLOCATE FUNDS**

Have LPS identify areas they can reduce their budget and if they will not, then council, particularly the mayor, must lead this process. The City of Hamilton's city council just voted in favour of this action in an attempt to reduce the police budget, which makes up less of their overall budget than ours at 16% <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/police-budget-review-1.7099166> . Toronto city council just declined the police ask of an extra \$20 million to \$7.4 million. Mayor Josh Morgan has indicated that the police budget represents more than half of the 2024 budget increase, or 5.0 of the proposed 8.6% tax increase. Part of this budget is for body cameras, new SUVs and another command vehicle, drones, Tasers for all officers, a second armoured vehicle, increased members of the Emergency Response Unit, which means increased weaponry and militarization, and a \$42 million state-of-the-art training facility, totaling a minimum of \$50 million, not including training and ongoing yearly costs. This is socially and fiscally irresponsible at a time in our city where so many are struggling to access basic necessities, community services/supports, a 30% increase in rents, more people using food banks than ever, small businesses struggling after the pandemic, and general economic pressures for many in our city. Cut these items out of the budget – they are wants, not needs, and reallocate those funds to community-led services that get to prevention and root causes of crime.

**2. CONDUCT** further research and ask for more detailed data to be provided by the police. The body of the letter above outlines numerous questions, concerns, and items that require more thought and investigation by council prior to agreeing to a 30% increase.

**3. DEFER** the vote on the LPS budget to more thoroughly assess a community perspective that includes ALL community members, including those who most frequently encounter the police. What are their needs and suggestions? What non-police responses could we pilot that meet these needs in a non-criminalizing, community-based approach? Collect more public input and reflect on what the community is asking for.

a. Demand more details from the police. For example, have they hired the 52 officers they were already given extra funding for in 2023? They have also recently implemented programs such as alternative reporting, hospital hand offs for mental health calls, COAST and statistically their numbers improved in 2022 – how have these initiatives reduced their calls for service?

b. Waiting to assess the impacts of newly implemented programs such as the *Whole of Community System Response to Health and Homelessness* should be a priority before agreeing to more mass funding.

**4. FUND** more grassroots organizations and non-profits that do essential work in our London community to support individuals, especially marginalized and racialized folks, folks who are unhoused and/or folks with mental illness/addiction. SafeSpace London, Atlohsa, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, London Cares and more are examples of community-led services/supports that should be resourced appropriately. Many requests for funding of vital services such as transit, libraries, public washrooms, community services/programs, the arts and so on have been denied or given minimal funding to pay for the police budget. This is not a balanced budget. This is not prioritizing the health and wellness of our community, two pivotal requirements for a safer city for all Londoners.

**5. Create a Community-led Working Group** to assist in evaluation, innovation, and community collaboration toward shifting our priorities from a police-focused city to a city that prioritizes community-led safety, prevention, and getting to the root causes of harm. Indigenous, Black, racialized folx, 2SLGBTQIA+ folx, women, disabled folx, folx with lived/living experience of poverty, homelessness, and/or mental illness, folx who work with people most impacted by the police, and the many intersections of these community members must lead this work. Folx with knowledge about non-police responses, community-led safety, and transformative justice may also be beneficial.

I ask you to respond to the above demands and consider the voices of your constituents who deserve to be a part of the decision process of funding allocation. Please feel free to contact me for further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

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# Appendix 1: Tables 1 and 2

## Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</sup>

Frequency: Annual Help  
 Table: 35-10-0026-01 (formerly CANSIM 252-0052) Save my customizations  
 Release date: 2023-07-27  
 Geography: Canada, Province or territory,  
 Customize table  
 Geography: <sup>3, 8, 9</sup> Ontario [35]  
 Reference period  
 From: 2018 To: 2022  
 Apply

Showing 18 records Filter Reset

Geography <sup>3, 8, 9</sup>	Ontario [35] <sup>10</sup> (map)				
Statistics	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Crime severity index <sup>11, 12, 13, 14</sup>	60.40	60.99	55.54	56.17	58.47
Percent change in crime severity index <sup>15</sup>	7.19	0.98	-8.94	1.13	4.09
Violent crime severity index <sup>14, 16</sup>	74.51	75.41	69.67	72.85	77.71
Percent change in violent crime severity index <sup>15</sup>	6.70	1.21	-7.61	4.56	6.67
Non-violent crime severity index <sup>14, 17</sup>	55.18	55.66	50.33	49.97	51.28
Percent change in non-violent crime severity index <sup>15</sup>	7.42	0.87	-9.58	-0.72	2.62
Youth crime severity index <sup>14, 18, 19</sup>	51.03	48.30	37.37	31.84	41.61
Percent change in youth crime severity index <sup>20</sup>	-11.00	-5.35	-22.63	-14.80	30.68
Youth violent crime severity index <sup>14, 21</sup>	77.42	75.78	62.59	51.79	73.48
Percent change in youth violent crime severity index <sup>20</sup>	-6.96	-2.12	-17.41	-17.26	41.88
Youth non-violent crime severity index <sup>14, 22</sup>	32.55	29.12	19.82	17.92	19.39
Percent change in youth non-violent crime severity index <sup>20</sup>	-16.88	-10.54	-31.94	-9.59	8.20
Weighted clearance rate <sup>23</sup>	41.03	40.12	40.47	41.31	39.85
Percent change in weighted clearance rate <sup>20</sup>	-3.57	-2.22	0.87	2.08	-3.53
Violent weighted clearance rate	62.01	60.32	61.77	61.27	60.25
Percent change in violent weighted clearance rate <sup>20</sup>	-2.13	-2.73	2.40	-0.81	-1.66
Non-violent weighted clearance rate	30.84	30.27	29.87	29.69	27.49
Percent change in non-violent weighted clearance rate <sup>20</sup>	-4.73	-1.85	-1.32	-0.60	-7.41

## Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, police services in Ontario<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</sup>

Frequency: Annual Help  
 Table: 35-10-0188-01 (formerly CANSIM 252-0085) Save my customizations  
 Release date: 2023-07-27  
 Geography: Province or territory, Policing district/zone  
 Customize table  
 Geography: <sup>6</sup> London, Ontario, municipal [35162]  
 Reference period  
 From: 2018 To: 2022  
 Apply

Showing 18 records Filter Reset

Geography <sup>6</sup>	London, Ontario, municipal [35162] (map)				
Statistics	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Crime severity index <sup>7, 8, 9, 10</sup>	83.95	82.99	81.09	88.62	79.71
Percent change in crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	6.70	-1.14	-2.29	9.29	-10.05
Violent crime severity index <sup>14, 12</sup>	71.76	72.44	75.55	107.24	90.91
Percent change in violent crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	3.92	0.95	4.29	41.95	-15.23
Non-violent crime severity index <sup>10, 13</sup>	88.14	86.59	82.89	81.93	75.91
Percent change in non-violent crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	7.54	-1.76	-4.27	-1.16	-7.35
Youth crime severity index <sup>10, 14, 15</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Percent change in youth crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Youth violent crime severity index <sup>10, 14, 15</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Percent change in youth violent crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Youth non-violent crime severity index <sup>10, 13, 15</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Percent change in youth non-violent crime severity index <sup>11</sup>	--	--	--	--	--
Weighted clearance rate <sup>16, 17</sup>	36.19	34.37	30.68	33.46	32.15
Percent change in weighted clearance rate <sup>11</sup>	-3.29	-5.03	-10.74	9.06	-3.92
Violent weighted clearance rate	65.23	66.03	57.77	55.06	53.49
Percent change in violent weighted clearance rate <sup>11</sup>	-3.23	1.23	-12.51	-4.69	-2.85
Non-violent weighted clearance rate	27.69	24.85	21.80	22.16	21.93
Percent change in non-violent weighted clearance rate <sup>11</sup>	-2.26	-10.26	-12.27	1.65	-1.04