

From: Norah Fraser

Subject: The police budget

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To: budgetcommittee@london.ca, Mayor Josh Morgan <mayor@london.ca>, hmcaldister@london.ca, "Lewis, Shawn" <slewis@london.ca>, pcuddy@london.ca, "Stevenson, Susan" <sstevenson@london.ca>, jpribil@london.ca, Sam Trosow <strosow@london.ca>, corahman@london.ca, Steve Lehman <slehman@london.ca>, Anna Hopkins <ahopkins@london.ca>, Paul Van Meerbergen <pvanmeerbergen@london.ca>, Skylar Franke <sfranke@london.ca>, Elizabeth Pelozo <epeloz@london.ca>, dferreira@london.ca, Steven Hillier <shillier@london.ca>

Dear Mayor Morgan and City Councillors:

I am a white senior property owner on a low income. I strongly object to my tax dollars going to an increase in the police budget. Meanwhile, public transit, the library system and important components of the Climate Emergency Action Plan are seriously underfunded or not funded at all.

A number of studies have shown that increased spending on the police does not correlate with decreased crime. (<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/cpp.2022-050?journalCode=cpp>) Moreover, according to Statistics Canada, London is on a downward trend in overall crime (10%), violent crime (15%), and non-violent crime (7%) in 2023.

We know that a significant proportion of the calls that police respond to do not require a police response and should not involve police. Sometimes the police response is harmful - even lethal - rather than helpful. Funding would be better allocated to non-police responses.

We also know that policing disproportionately negatively impacts Indigenous and Black racialized communities, homeless and under-housed people, lower income neighbourhoods and other oppressed groups. Criminalizing oppressed communities, peaceful protesters and critics of the police budget is not the answer.

Especially offensive is the proposed funding of a second light armoured vehicle, a state-of-the-art training facility, and body cameras — high ticket items for which there is no conclusive evidence for lowering crime rates but that will further militarize the city police force.

Investing in people and communities and getting to the roots of the social determinants of crime is the way forward. We should be funding more grassroots organizations and non-profits that work to support disadvantage communities, especially marginalized and racialized people, people who are unhoused and people with mental illness or addiction. We should fully fund P-8, P-9 and P-10. Fully fund P-3, P-51 and P-52 (public transit). Fully fund the Climate Emergency Action Plan. That is where our money should go.

Sincerely,

Norah Fraser
London, Ontario