

**From:** Heather and Tom Chapman

**Sent:** Saturday, February 24, 2024 4:21 PM

**To:** Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@london.ca>; Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@london.ca>

**Cc:** Mike Fitzgerald; Ferreira, David <dferreira@london.ca>; Heather D Chapman

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments on The Police Budget Ask for 2024-2027

**Importance:** High

Please accept this letter for the record prior to the City of London Feb. 27th, Public Budget Meeting.

I fully support the full London Police Services 2024-2027 Budge Ask for the following reasons:

1) The Budget **ASK** *is big* because the London Police Force has been severely UNDERFUNDED for decades leading to unacceptable response times to calls and emergencies of days, not just minutes or hours.

This has made our City the 3rd most dangerous City in Ontario.

2)**Our** *Police Officers* are *underequipped*. *Yes this **does** make a difference.*

The majority of other Canadian Cities have webcams on Officers' person and Vehicles. This shortens time to investigate crimes, incidents and arrests. Quickens Officers' returning to the field. Also saves tax payer funds, providing an equal record of call/incident accountability thereby avoiding costly bogus law suits and court time.

3) **Our** *Police Headquarters* is *underequipped* in terms of infrastructure and communications. (What Police force in Ontario is still using Carbon Paper?) This slows everything down, and the citizens have become apathetic about reporting crime on-line or even reporting it by phone. Lack of reporting gives our Police Services Board and Operations falsely reduced data of the actual rate of crime, danger and chronic nuisance behaviour.

RESULT: The City doesn't get the funding for adequate number of Police Officers or the equipment needed to keep us safe. Criminals, Chronic Offenders and Opportunists are emboldened because it is widely known that there is not enough Police Officers to prevent/catch them.

4) *Police Officers* are the *most broadly trained first line of contact with the many ill and disadvantaged persons on the streets.*

Given the intensity of the current type of drugs like Fentanyl and other opiates and the increased number of guns, shootings and stabbings, it is essential that we have a higher number Police Officers visible on the street. The Foot Patrol Police Officers know many of these persons by name and these persons know the Officers. Police are trained to assess the mental state of these persons and whether or not they pose a danger to themselves or others. They can refer these persons and take them to the right place for help. And they work with the other social agencies.

But there are not **ENOUGH** of them. And we are losing officers due to burn out, and on the job injuries due to lack of tools.

5) The *training facility ask is necessary* for Fireman Training as well as Police Officer Training. Not enough institutions training enough students. We will be in competition for new recruits with other larger Cities like Toronto who also are receiving their large Police Budget Funding transfers from the Ontario Government. The recruitment advantage London has of offering lower average home price, will be offset by the fact that ***our officers are underequipped and infrastructure is missing or ineffective.*** Would you, as a trained Police Officer candidate, move and take a job where your personal safety will be diminished?

**If WE want to compete in recruiting available trained officers, then we need to show new hire candidates that we are improving job conditions.**

6)The BIG ARMoured VEHICLE.

More London ***officers are being shot and killed.*** **More unrest and severity of events are inevitable.** Spurred on by chaotic world events, emotional angst of citizens who have familial links in other countries, disinformation on websites and social media are fuelling extremism that *can* intensify and turn more peaceful protests into riot crowds physically acting out. And would we want another riot like we had on Thurman Drive with students and out of town crashers overturning and burning Media Vehicles? Officers hit with bottles and projectiles? *Is one or more lives worth that or any price?*

What we have seen so far from this new LPS Chief's Office is a will to move forward into and engage with the community.

They have set up a visual presence at Masonville in response to merchants expressing increasing thefts, threats and behaviour that has deterred their customers.

They have gotten a \$300,000 dollar grant from the Ont. Government for the BUILDS program that supports disadvantaged, desperate youth from falling further towards a criminal path.

London has to start thinking of itself as a Big City with all the Big City challenges. A better manned and equipped LPS Operation means safety and ready help for all. The big lifting of community starts with them, empowering the social agencies, and the rest of us.

Once we feel/can see that we are safer, we can have that warm small town feeling again.

You have my permission to share this email with the full City Council and Budget Committee as a public record.

Thank you.

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Member of London Downtown Condominium Advocacy Group