

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Subject: Police Budget
Date: Thursday, February 8, 2024 6:00:05 PM

Please consider re-examining the police budget. Every year there are increases and yet increases in police budgets have not been shown to be directly related to reduction in crime:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/police-budget-crime-rates-canada-1.7086532>

As a law enforcement service, its ability to address core causes for systemic issues is limited. Alternatively, investing in city infrastructure and social services has shown to be an effective tool. Given the rise in cost of living and social isolation during the pandemic, I am not surprised crime rates have gone up, and I think Hamilton places too much trust in gentrification solving its social problems. This town is full of working class people that cannot survive in these conditions, with limited opportunities to turn to. It needs better social programs and better wrap around care.

As someone who has worked in supportive housing in Vancouver and Toronto, I know housing first programs can become ghettos without supportive services and counselling/case management support attached to them. Services need proper funding to mitigate the lack of support from our Provincial and Federal governments for basic living needs of our community members, and compounded generational trauma/dysregulation from destabilizing conditions -- I don't think any of us would come out of living homeless and in shelters for months without some kind of trauma that then influences our survival behaviour.

For every community member that is revived from an overdose too late, is someone who is likely to have greater disabilities from brain damage. No amount of police will prevent the drug trade from getting through, or from people using. Nor will it help families to be fed that are otherwise suffering from the price gouging by our major chain grocers and food suppliers. Nor will it provide access to safe spaces for youth or adults experiencing domestic violence. Nor will it create more community and social spaces for otherwise socially isolated individuals that may find connection from wherever they can find it. Even investing in accessible and walkable shared space can reduce crime:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8055100/>.

I'm asking that this city create a city not just for the wealthier who are slowly moving here, but also its citizens who have been here for decades and did not give up on this city even when its industry left it. Creating a kinder Hamilton, focusing on prioritizing those most in need, creates a kinder environment for us all. Otherwise, I expect to see more social deterioration.

Sincerely,

Marion Roberts, [REDACTED]