

From: [Vincent Strickland](#)
To: [Vincent Strickland](#)
Subject: Our community is in crisis, what are you doing about it?
Date: November 26, 2023 7:42:51 AM

****EXTERNAL ALERT** This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Hello,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. As a life-long resident of Kitchener-Waterloo I am appalled at the overfunding of police and the underfunding of social services. We, you as our elected voice, have to do better for the residents of our beloved community. Police and criminalization of poverty is not the answer!

Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

There are numerous opportunities for Council to use these surpluses to improve quality of life in the Region by increasing housing, mental health supports, access to harm reduction services, public health and preventative healthcare strategies, gender-based and sexual assault support services, transit, and food subsidies. Because services are more cost-effective than the police, this is the only fiscally responsible approach.

On November 7, Regional Council defeated Councillor Huinink's motion to refund half of future police budget surpluses to fund community services. Without a mechanism to reclaim future police budget surpluses, Council's only way to prevent overfunding the police is to avoid surpluses by proactively reducing the size of future police budgets. I call on you to reduce the size of the 2024 police budget to retroactively recoup the past \$9.3M in overfunding, and to prevent further overfunding in 2024, and to redirect those funds toward preventive services.

There are many wonderful nonprofit organizations in KW that are doing real work to care for and support those in our community in crisis. I donate to these organizations every year (ACCKWA, Food Bank Cambridge, Food Bank WR, Grand River Hospital, United Way, Working Center) and I want my tax dollars to go to them, as well as so many others providing front line service to those struggling with housing, mental health, addiction, cost of living, partner violence, etc. The police services do nothing to prevent or alleviate the crises our community is facing, they merely serve as an intervention when it's too late, when violence and crime are the end of a line, to criminalize and traumatize already vulnerable members of our community. **STOP OVERFUNDING THE POLICE AND GIVE THAT MONEY TO EFFECT ACTUAL CHANGE!**

Sincerely,
Vincent Strickland
Waterloo