

From: [Danielle Korby](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Divest from the St. Paul Police Department
Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020 9:10:08 PM

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Carter,

I am reaching out to urge you to reduce the SPPD budget for the upcoming year by at least \$20 million. I currently live in Eagan, but I work in St. Paul, spend a lot of my time there, and have many connections to the community. I have heard from many Black, Brown and Indigenous community members in St. Paul who are calling for the defunding of the SPPD because officers have repeatedly murdered, terrorized, brutalized, and intimidated members of their community since its inception. I demand that you prioritize the voices of BIPOC residents, because for many of them, police do not equal safety. On the contrary, police cause fear, danger and trauma to these residents. Far too many people have been unjustly killed by the SPPD, including Marcus Golden, Cordell Handy and Phillip Quinn. Their families and other BIPOC residents who have been terrorized by the police deserve justice. The SPPD has one of the worst track records in the nation for deadly use of force and disproportionate stopping and assaulting of Black residents. This needs to end, and I believe that in order to minimize harm to BIPOC residents, it is necessary to reduce the the SPPD's budget by at least \$20 million by eliminating the K-9 department, among other measures.

We have seen that police reforms do not stop the police from killing and brutalizing BIPOC residents, so instead of funding the police, I urge you to instead increase funding to youth programs, addiction services, mental health services, affordable housing, and violence prevention. These are human rights, and studies prove that fully funding these programs and moving towards a community policing model is what truly reduces crime and creates safer, thriving communities. On the other hand, data has shown that increasing money to police departments does not reduce crime. Our communities know what is best for them and know how to take care of each other, which is why community policing is a safer and necessary alternative to the current policing model. I also urge you to implement a mental-health and medical dispatch system be set up separately from police dispatch, so that these crises can be handled by professionals who are specifically trained in these areas. More than 1,200 St. Paul residents and 500 others with ties to the community signed a petition demanding this system be implemented and that \$20 million be cut from the SPPD budget.

BIPOC residents have faced serious economic, housing, education and health crises for many years due to intentional policies that have excluded these folks from receiving basic needs, and these crises have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Paul residents need increased funding to help them out of these crises, but instead, the proposed budget would give nearly a third of the city's budget to the police department. This is an absurd amount of money to give to this violent and harmful department, while other programs that could actually help people are severely underfunded and still receiving large budget cuts. It makes no sense to me that departments such as public health are receiving up to a 17% cut in funding during a pandemic, while proposing to cut the police budget by only 0.8%.

For these reasons and more, I demand that you reduce the SPPD budget by at least \$20 million and instead invest this money in programs that will help St. Paul residents live safe, healthy and trauma-free lives.

Thank you,
Danielle Korby
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