

From: [Carrie Pomeroy](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Comment for Truth in Taxation and budget consideration
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 11:59:03 AM

Dear St. Paul City Councilmembers,

I am a longtime Hamline Midway resident and an active volunteer with the St. Paul Public Library system and local mutual aid efforts to feed and support people dealing with food scarcity and homelessness in our community. I'm also a member of the Root and Restore Saint Paul coalition. I'm also a mom with two teen kids who wants them to be able to live and learn safely in St. Paul.

I strongly support divesting money from policing in St. Paul and investing in affordable housing, job training and job-creation programs, youth programs, public health and mental health supports, restorative justice diversions, and violence prevention led by trusted, credible messengers rather than police.

These are a few of the facts and observations that make me feel the way I do.

- Black people comprise only 16 percent of the St. Paul population, yet in 2019, 56 percent of the 18 and 19-year-olds that police used force against were Black. Twenty-two percent were Asian and only 8 percent were white. One hundred percent of those injured by police use-of-force were Black. *A system that disproportionately hurts BIPOC in this way is not one I can in any conscience support.*
- Our criminal punishment system disproportionately targets BIPOC for surveillance and arrest, and punishes BIPOC more harshly, often for crimes of poverty, addiction, and mental illness. This sets up a system where BIPOC are funneled into jails and prisons at outrageously disproportionate rates and triggers a cascade of harmful impacts, including the expenses and stress of fines, fees, and legal costs; loss of jobs and homes; children deprived of their caregivers; exposure in jails and prisons to violence and trauma that further exacerbates existing trauma instead of healing it; and loss of voting rights and difficulties accessing affordable housing, education, and job opportunities. *A system that perpetuates and exacerbates cycles of violence and poverty instead of healing and ending those cycles is not one I can support.*
- As my Councilmember Mitra Jalali has often and appropriately said, one of the top concerns her constituents bring to her is that they wish there was someone they could call in an emergency without fearing they, their neighbors, or their loved ones might get brutalized and shot. This has been a reality for generations. *It's past time to get serious about admitting that many people do not feel safe calling police and they deserve viable, competent, and well-funded alternatives.*
- We are failing at preventing the current wave of crime in our community not because we don't have enough police, but because we are not addressing the root causes of crime in the truly substantial, sustained, well-funded ways we need to. We can continue to invest 1/3 of our general fund budget in policing and see basically the same patterns of misery continue for generations to come, or we can invest in building a community of care in St. Paul that prioritizes safe, dignified housing, opportunities for youth, healing, and violence prevention and intervention led by credible messengers. I know what path I hope we will have the courage to take, and I hope you will find your way to taking a more hopeful path, too.

Sincerely,
Carrie Pomeroy
Hamline Midway/Ward 4