

I am writing in advance of the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Police Services Board budget and finance meeting on November 9th, 2020 to share that I want to see a smaller police budget and a redirection of these financial resources to other community resources and supports.

We need funding to strengthen our communities, not more money to police them. Community centres, libraries, outdoor spaces, the arts, youth programming, recreation facilities and programs, mental health supports, mentorship, language programs, education spaces, etc. These are where we build strong, safe and resilient communities. Police continue to divide our communities and make them less safe and healthy.

I am a white woman, a worker, a tax-paying citizen and a mother with young kids and I do not trust the police to make me and my family safer. Until the police show themselves to be non-violent, anti-racist and community-minded, there is a need to redirect funding to support our communities directly and build trust with law enforcement.

I believe we have a long way to go in terms of racial justice and building trust in all our diverse communities in Ottawa. There has been so much pain, racism and violence and trust with the police in Ottawa is completely broken. This budget can be a first step and could be a humble decision for Ottawa to reinvest in prevention and mental health response supports, to reduce the police budget and begin to rebuild trust in our justice systems.

Thank you for bringing my concerns and the concerns of Ottawa's citizens forward.

Sincerely,

Sophia Lowe