

From: [Warmerdam, Liz](#)
To: [Hsieh, Susan](#); [Reside, Rachel](#)
Subject: Fwd: To be read at the Budget Task Force Meeting
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 9:41:22 AM

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: jacquelyn diaz [REDACTED]
Date: March 5, 2021 at 7:52:46 AM PST
To: "Miguel, Leticia" <LMiguel@sanleandro.org>
Cc: _Council <CityCouncil@sanleandro.org>
Subject: To be read at the Budget Task Force Meeting

Good morning,
I am writing to express my feelings on budget reductions and law enforcement.

I understand and accept the need to make reductions due to a deficit; this is an impact effecting local governments and public agencies throughout the state of California.

I would like to encourage a reduction plan that is service impact based, and not politically motivated.

I have heard that there is a concept to link "de-funding police" with making budget cuts. I don't think this is a wise plan. If the idea is to reduce all department budgets, that's understandable. But instead I'm hearing that there is a stronger emphasis on the police department and that it's more to make a political statement than impact measurable outcomes.

I have not been able to obtain a clear definition as to what defunding means or the goal/outcome to the community. This is sounding like it is punitive in nature and more wanting to send a message to law enforcement. If we want performance and accountability to change, then we must identify what those goals are, involve the community, and hold the police accountable. And we must agree to work together with them to make those changes. Has it been considered that it may require additional or a re-allocation of funds for training and alternative measures such as implementing a citizen's oversight committee? Changes in value and goals will often require *more* or re-allocated funds, not decreased funds. My question is - what is the goal of greater reductions to police than other departments and why?

Simply decreasing the budget to a specific department without identifying the impact nor linking the performance measures desired is not going to help the community understand the impacts of reductions. When the term "defunding" is used, it is not well understood so the good work you may be trying to convey becomes politically charged and misunderstood.

I strongly agree with the need for accountability and improved relationships within the community with law enforcement. I want change as well. I'm just not understanding how making a large budget cut to one department does that. Until I learn more information, I do not support extreme reductions to the police budget without my understanding what service reductions will mean and how they will improve public interactions.

Thank you to the task force members for the opportunity to comment, as well as your time to serve on the committee.

Thank you,
Jacqui Diaz

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From: [Jane Abelee](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Re: Our Police Department
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 9:51:59 AM

PLEASE READ AT TOWN HALL MEETING MARCH 6, 2021

To: Community Advisory Budget Task Force

Hello, and thank you for giving your time to this most important work.

Please review the letter below that I sent in January, about the issue of defunding our San Leandro Police Department.

We feel that this is a time to reimagine what our police service can be. We believe that it is most important to ensure the safety of all San Leandro citizens. Now is the time to look into retraining and re-educating our officers. Teach them strategies to identify and aid those people in our community who need mental health support. Join forces with our local mental health agencies to be available to go on calls when needed. Hire officers who have a background in social services.

Cutting our police budget will hinder progress and put our citizens at risk!!

Please consider these thoughts and concerns when making your recommendations to the City Council.

Respectfully yours,
Jane Abelee and Michael Neuwald

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jane Abelee** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tue, Jan 12, 2021 at 10:35 AM
Subject: Our Police Department
To: Miguel, Leticia <lmiguel@sanleandro.org>, <citycouncil@sanleandro.org>

Hello, I am writing to the Budget Advisory Council and the City Council. ***Please read my comments at the upcoming Budget Committee Meeting.***

I have lived in San Leandro for 40 years. I have raised my 3 sons here, now my son, his wife and son continue the family tradition. We have had several opportunities to interact with SLPD. I have found our police force to be very responsive and supportive of our family's requests. They have shown up in a reasonable amount of time, been very courteous, followed up on incidents, and been overall very professional and helpful.

In saying that, I also believe that our police department, and most across our country, need to implement system wide changes. I believe the first thing that needs to happen is a major shift in training. I think that using a gun should be an

absolutely last resort and only used in a serious life threatening situation. Retraining our police to injure and de-escalate the situation v. shooting to kill should be the priority. In the case of Steven Taylor, I think using other tactics would have saved his life. But, horribly, that is not how our police officers have been trained.

I am not a police officer, and have never been put in that situation, so I am speaking from an outsider's viewpoint. I do believe that our police officers have an extremely difficult job, and daily are faced with some of the worst situations we can imagine.

Retrain all police officers- Absolutely! New hiring procedures-Yes! Reduce our police force, No! I think that would be a mistake for our community. We live in an urban environment, and are located next door to a city with rising violence.

I recommend that our city and police department use funds to restructure hiring practices and hire individuals who have backgrounds in social work, psychology, restorative justice, etc., to work with, become and train our police. Again, I suggest reallocating funds to **retrain** our current and future police officers to use every means possible to protect the community and only use a gun when a life is gravely threatened.

Please review and remember that in several city wide surveys, our community put personal safety as a number one priority.

We have a lot of work to do, no doubt. However, reallocating funds away from our police department will not support public safety for the citizens of San Leandro.

Thank you for your consideration and time in keeping San Leandro a safe city to live.

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Jane Ann Abelee

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: [Barbara Jane Andrews](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: NO NO NO, Please!
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 8:27:16 AM

PLEASE Do Not defund our Police Department.

I am against defunding our police department. Re-training, absolutely! new hiring procedures, yes, making police officers accountable for their actions, yes, but reduce our police force, no. We think that would be a mistake for our community. We live in an urban environment, and are located next door to a city with rising violence. Rather than defunding our police department, we suggest reallocating partial funds to retrain our current and future police officers to use every means possible to protect the community before using a gun. We suggest that our police department hire individuals who have backgrounds in social work, psychology, restorative justice, etc., to work with and train our police.

Our police work hard and face danger daily to keep us safe and answer our calls for help. We must give them the tools and support they need to do the job we want them to do.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Richard De Gaetano and Barbara Andrews
27 yrs. San Leandro resident

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From: Mary Gordon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Clerk
Subject: Comments for 3/6 Budget Task Force Meeting (Please read at the meeting and also at the city council meeting)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Budget Task Force and City Council Members,

As a citizen of our city, I want to thank you for your hard work and commitment to the betterment of SanLeandro for all of our citizens. You have a very big and very important job. There are so many needs to consider.

I know that the funding of our police force has been a large topic, not only for San Leandro but for all cities in our country. My concern is that we, in our little town, may be swinging too far in the defunding debate. While new and reimagined training is absolutely necessary, we also need to have our officers on our streets for the safety of us all. Please do not use this cut as a fix all for other needs.

There are multiple and serious issues that we are facing, not the least of which is housing for our growing homeless population and mental health services for more folks facing crisis for themselves or their loved ones. AND we need a police force that is well trained and aware of how to use our services for folks that they encounter in their work.

Thank you again for your commitment to our city. Your work is much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Mary Gordon
District 5 citizen

Sent from my iPhone

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From: Kim Rios <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 11:14 AM
To: Miguel, Leticia; Clerk
Subject: San Leandro VOTERS want MORE police, NOT budget cuts!!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please read my email aloud during the Citizens Advisory Committee public comments:

Defunding the police is a horrible idea. The majority of tax-paying individuals actually prefer INCREASED funding for police public safety - as evidenced by the recent passage of measure VV this past November, ***just four months ago.*** **The voters in San Leandro have spoken loud and clear! = PLEASE listen!!!** The funds generated by measure VV are earmarked for specific budget items including 911 response and maintaining youth violence prevention programs. Clearly these are among the priorities of the MAJORITY of San Leandro citizens. Elected officials have a moral obligation to respect the will of the people.

It's a known fact, and major concern, that the number of crimes in San Leandro has skyrocketed during the past few years. Crime is STILL on the rise; if anything, the police department needs MORE funding; not less. It would be ridiculously stupid to cut funding from the police! - well, unless you are a criminal; then I suppose it is what you'd be hoping for.

It's pretty obvious that reducing the police's ability to respond to public need will result in unchecked **vigilantism**. Average (untrained) citizens will be forced to buy and use guns, in order to protect and defend themselves, their families and their neighborhoods. Rather than diffusing situations, this scenario is more likely to cause escalation.

At this point in time, any budget cuts should be applied equally, across every department in the city. Since there is another election next year, my suggestion is to put it on the ballot and allow feedback from the entire community... rather than allowing a small minority of uninformed but vocal activists to destroy our public safety.

It is your civic duty to prevent DEfunding of the police!

Thank you,

Kim Rios



ReplyReply allForward

From: carol thornberry <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 7:47 AM
To: Miguel, Leticia; Clerk
Subject: March 4 Committee Advisory Budget Town Hall

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello, I understand the Community Advisory Budget Task Force is going to be discussing the City's budget, including defunding the San Leandro Police department. I would like it on record that I have been a resident of this city for many years. I am against any defunding of our police department. The police department in this city is doing an excellent job at a time when crime is on the rise. The residents in this city have expressed safety as a number one concern. Public safety should be at the forefront of your decision, and our police officers are on the front line of keeping the residents of our city safe. Instead of putting our police department at a huge disadvantage, why don't you look at retraining the police officers, and find a way for our police department to get support from mental health experts without cutting the budget.

Please don't recommend to defund our police, figure out a way to work with the police department.

I ask you to please read this email at the public comments at the next Budget Advisory Meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol Thornberry

"People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them."
George Bernard Shaw



From: F. Kent Thornberry <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 7:55 AM
To: Miguel, Leticia; Clerk
Subject: Town Hall Budget Commiittee

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I understand the budget committee task force is holding a town hall meeting with regard to the city's budget and defunding the Police Dept. There is a vocal group that I believe do not represent the majority of the city, who want to defund the police, but are not in touch with reality. Crime everywhere is on the upswing, especially violent crime. We witnessed this not long ago when looters raided our city and caused million of dollars in theft and destruction. Who is going to help the citizens of this city when we don't have enough officers to respond when you call for help? We shouldn't have to be afraid in our own neighborhood, which could happen if we don't have enough officers to respond when needed. We've already cut the resource officers from our schools, which I think was a mistake. Over the years school resource officers were a positive experience for the students and for the officers.

Being a police officer is a very demanding and dangerous profession, they routinely run toward danger when everyone else runs the other way. Our officers are highly trained, and a lot of new training has and is taking place. Let's not look back in a couple of years and say defunding was a big mistake because crime in this city is out of control. I would like us to support our police department and the police officers that protect us and keep our city safe.

"Please Read this Email during the Public Comments at the Budget Advisory Meeting Town Hall on Saturday morning"

Thank you,
Kent Thornberry

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From: Barbara Vester <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 10:13 AM
To: Clerk
Subject: Please read at Budget mtg on March 6th and upcoming City Council Mtg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am a senior who lives in San Leandro, and I feel very strongly that we should NOT consider defunding the San Leandro Police Dept.

I do think for police departments everywhere including ours, there should be better oversight, better training. It would be great to have trained officers who can spot a mental breakdown as opposed to a criminal even though both may be exhibiting "criminal" behavior.

It would be good to have trained officers who could be called on quickly to manage a mental breakdown crisis or similar situation before lethal responses have to be used.

Defunding will only make responses LESS prompt, LESS efficient and MORE dangerous.

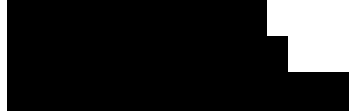
Thank you!
Barbara Vester

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From: [Warmerdam, Liz](#)
To: [Hsieh, Susan](#); [Reside, Rachel](#)
Subject: FW: Task Force Meeting & City Council Meeting
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 1:11:31 PM

Another one for Wednesday

Elizabeth D. Warmerdam
Assistant City Manager
City of San Leandro



From: PEARL JOHNSTON [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 10:57 AM
To: Miguel, Leticia <LMiguel@sanleandro.org>; _Council <CityCouncil@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Task Force Meeting & City Council Meeting

Attn: SL Budget Task Force & SL City Council

As a long time resident of San Leandro I implore you to support our Police Department with MORE funding. If you were to poll the residents of San Leandro, I know that a Safer San Leandro would be a Top Priority. "Defund the Police" is such an illogical approach since our crime rate continues to grow. "Reform Police" is certainly a better slogan. Continuous and positive training will result in better use of decisions and applications. Officer Training is the mechanism for improving policy and the best use of increased funding. Therefore I implore you to stop the notion of decreasing police services, but INCREASE the budget in support of our Police Department.

We certainly Need and Deserve a Safer San Leandro!

Pearl & Larry Johnston



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From: [Clerk](#)
To: [Reside, Rachel](#)
Subject: FW: Public comment for town hall to be read aloud
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 2:26:23 PM

Kelly
Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Debbie Town <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 05, 2021 2:15 PM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Public comment for town hall to be read aloud

To Whom it May Concern:

I have lived in San Leandro for more than 20 years and have worked in San Leandro for the last 15. I am extremely concerned about the current push to defund the police by many on the budget task force. While I believe that changes need to be made in our police department, defunding is not the way to do it. I believe that by defunding, the task force will be crippling our police department rather than making the department better. I also don't feel that the city should be spending over \$600,000.00 on a statue or memorial given the shortfall in the budget that the city is already experiencing.

Thank you
Concerned Citizen

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Warmerdam, Liz](#)
To: [Reside, Rachel](#); [Hsieh, Susan](#)
Cc: [Miguel, Leticia](#)
Subject: RE: For the Task Force Meeting dated March 6, 2021, and for the Next City Council Meeting: Re San Leandro Budget Decisions
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 6:34:37 PM



From: Faye Clements <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 5:53 PM
To: Miguel, Leticia <LMiguel@sanleandro.org>; _Council <CityCouncil@sanleandro.org>
Subject: For the Task Force Meeting dated March 6, 2021, and for the Next City Council Meeting: Re San Leandro Budget Decisions

Dear Task Force and San Leandro City Council:

Our family has been heavily invested in this community since 1991 when we purchased our home here. We have volunteered and invested our money, time and talent for the last 30 years.


As such, we go on record: No task force, committee, grass roots group, etc., should have any authority when it comes to budget decisions for this City. This responsibility goes to our City Manager, qualified staff and City Council -- **representing the electorate**. Our budget priorities should be to provide services to the citizens of San Leandro, and we who are these citizens consider any reduction in our police force unacceptable. We are proud of and grateful for our police force and the work that it does. Certainly in these times of dissent and rising crime, a reduction in our fine force is irresponsible and foolhardy.

There is no place in a civic budget process for political grandstanding. Further to this, we count on our City Council to do their jobs as our elected officials, and not pander to a vocal minority operating with a political agenda.

Please do not reduce any police services without input from the entire electorate in this City.

Thank you for your service.

Respectfully,
Robert Caruso and Faye Clements



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From: Eira Kien [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, March 5, 2021 7:37 PM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; Clerk
Subject: Please read aloud: San Leandro Town Hall

Hello,

My name is Eira Kien and I am a student at City College of San Francisco. I am in full support of defunding the San Leandro Police Department in order to prevent deaths. Such as the one that unjustly happened to Steven Taylor, that led to his own family (who should be grieving) to fight instead. I ask for you all to think of impacted families, the Taylor family alongside Addie Kitchen especially, who are battling every day for the ones that lost too soon and for BIPOC communities overall while the City of San Leandro remains disinterested. It's not enough to have a day dedicated to Steven Taylor. Make due with your positions of power and act for the ones that need justice instead. Defund San Leandro Police Department and invest in community.

- Eira Kien

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From: [Minky Lew](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Cc: [BudgetTaskForce](#)
Subject: AGENDA ITEM: COMMUNITY PRIORITIES - To Be Read Aloud
Date: Saturday, March 6, 2021 10:44:28 AM

From Minky Lew, San Leandro Resident, Tax and Property Tax Payer

The community priorities for my family and I are health, diversity, inclusivity and safety.

This does NOT include a militarized police force with a massive police budget that statistically does nothing to decrease rates in crime and does not protect Black, Indigenous and people of color.

Community Priorities should be for community building, growth and economic strengthening: free preschool, a Mental Health Emergency alternative to Police dispatch, green space, libraries, small business initiatives and youth teaching and engagement programs. These are the priorities of a community I want to continue to be a member of.

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From: [Lorin Peters](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Clerk; BudgetTaskForce](#)
Subject: Mr Tow, you forgot to specify the title for our comments - please re-title these comments and re-submit
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 11:26:36 PM

Dear City Clerk (and Budget Task Force)

Please read this letter into the record as part of the appropriate discussion.

I have lived in San Leandro since 1976, commuting three miles a day on foot. I wish to comment on the nature of our policing.

My cousin served as a police officer in the UK for 22 years. Like most British officers, he was unarmed. In all those years, he never needed a side-arm. The one time he was confronted by a mob of drunk football fans in a local pub, all the local men in the pub rose to his defense.

I have also lived five years in Thailand, and briefly in Norway. The police in both of these countries are also unarmed, even after Anders Breivik massacred 69 teenagers and 8 adults in 2011.

I submit that armed police are very rarely necessary. Our problem is that we emphasize violence in the teaching of our American history. So our culture celebrates violence, when in fact most of it has been superfluous. With respect to our City of San Leandro, we need many kinds of unarmed professional emergency services, as Mr Tow ably lists, and far fewer armed professionals.

Thank you for your attention
Lorin Peters

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From: [Lidia](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Cc: [BudgetTaskForce](#)
Subject: PLEASE READ ALOUD AT THE BUDGET TASK FORCE MEETING TODAY
Date: Saturday, March 6, 2021 8:49:36 AM

To the San Leandro Budget Task Force

This is to reiterate my concern over the police department and misuse of the city funds to support the police department as-is. Retraining, retooling and downsizing top-to-bottom is what is needed. The egregious use of violent and deadly force, misjudgement and unprofessionalism is sorely in need of overhaul. A citizen oversight committee is also urgently needed.

Our COMMUNITY PRIORITY is the safety of its citizens. The public trust has been broken again and again. The police play a critical role but not by a show of power and tools of violence, but by showing empathy and the ability to de-escalate, negotiate and ultimately serve us.

There is much to be accomplished for this goal. It is your job to restrict or redirect our monies in a way that reflects the needs of the citizens. This police reform is of the highest importance and needs your attention now!

Thank you for your work and abilities to serve.

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From: Whitney Walker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, March 6, 2021 10:25 AM
To: Clerk; _BudgetTaskForce
Cc: Whitney Walker
Subject: Comments for 3/6 town hall budget meeting--read aloud

My name is Whitney Walker and I'm a 20 year resident of district 5. Please feel free to read my comments aloud and enter them into the public record. I hope that our city leaders and everyone on the budget task force understands how important this moment is and how engaged the community is in this process. Has this ever happened before? I doubt it. I know I've never cared about budgets before. The reason we care is that this is about more than a budget, this is about equity and public safety. Many of us have been calling into city council meetings every other week to ask our elected officials to rethink many of the topics you are discussing today.

I hope that you will use the \$1.7 million dollars that was diverted from the proposed increase to the police budget to instead build the Steven Taylor navigation center that has been in the works for years. This will be a much needed resource for citizens of San Leandro who are unhoused and/or dealing with mental illness or addiction. It will also reduce crime to benefit everyone in the city. And, by taking some of the burden off of police to deal with homelessness and mental health calls, it should also reduce the need for expensive overtime and free up more funding for other important social services to support youth, seniors, BIPOC, the LGBTQ+ community, and minimum wage workers.

I don't have all the answers to the problems our city is facing and appreciate those who are putting in the time and research to address these issues head on. I hope that you will approach these topics with a priority for making the process inclusive, equitable, accountable, sustainable, and transparent. I hope that you will continue to offer real opportunities and permanent pathways for effective community participation, keeping our most marginalized communities at the forefront when making all decisions.

Thank you for the work that you do.

Sincerely,
Whitney Walker
pronouns: she/her/hers

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Reside, Rachel

From: Stephen Michael Tow <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 1:46 AM
To: _BudgetTaskForce
Cc: Cutter, Pauline; Ballew, Pete; Azevedo, Bryan; Aguilar Jr, Victor; Simon, Fred; Lopez, Corina; Richard Pio Roda; Torres, Luis; Robustelli, Fran; Clerk; mtate@slusd.us; crodriguez@slusd.us; egonzalez; lsheridan@slusd.us; dprola@slusd.us; jaguilar@slusd.us; poshinski@slusd.us; Engelbart, Eric; Liao, Thomas; Cooke, Keith; Perry, Jessica; Bowman, Katie; Sargent, Maryann; Mogensen, Andrew; Hsieh, Susan; Warmerdam, Liz; Sanftner, Paul; Batalla, Tony; McDonald, William; Sherwood, Bill; Pollart, Debbie; Dong, Jeanette; Mallon, Theresa; Gonzales, Erwin; Criswell, Susan; lrodriguez@sanleandro.org; emilyg@sanleandrochamber.com; unityinthecommunitysl@gmail.com; morgan@downtownsanleandro.com; amynrotary@gmail.com; michguil@comcast.net; Levenson, Susan; kim@bgcsd.org; akin@bgcsd.org; sanleandrotm@gmail.com; tomh@eastbayinnovations.org; info@eastbayinnovations.org; Knox, Jamie; djohnson@davisstreet.org; rjohnson@davisstreet.org; Liz Varela; Mariellen.Faria@ethd.org; Pamela.russo@ethd.org; Roxann.Lewis@ethd.org; Gordon.Galvan@ethd.org; Varsha.Chauhan@ethd.org; wilma.chan@acgov.org; rayr@dcara.org; info@dcara.org; info@starsinc.com; jlynch@starsinc.com; kwiley@starsinc.com; info@ihnapiirshowers.org; mmclaughlin@slusd.us; kcollins@slusd.us; briancopeland3@yahoo.com
Subject: Reimagining Public Safety in San Leandro: A Budget By & For The People
Attachments: 436fac84a1d315314b7ec0117c0843.jpg; 64064ab4399a4eb269ff87ee3d3e032f.jpeg

Good Evening Community Advisory Budget Task Force Members,

This email is being sent to let you know about a recent webinar that was held on February 27 on the topic of "Reimagining Public Safety in San Leandro: A Teach-in on Reallocating SLPD Funds."

You can view the recording at <https://youtu.be/hhNKnnUJyN8>. You can find all the links and materials referenced in the webinar at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1usGuNj8ynvdWSRoAslstWuBAw6oZ43k8f8RF7xLmiGs/edit?usp=sharing>. I have included the announcement flyers for your reference. There is ASL and Spanish interpretation available; the Spanish language recording of the webinar is due to be uploaded for streaming soon.

The facts, evidence, and data provided in the presentation content lead to a resounding conclusion: we are not getting a fair return on our investment in overpolicing in our city. Even worse, the cost of that has been paid in more than just millions of dollars -- it has been paid in human lives and in human suffering.

Some key takeaways from the webinar:

1. "Defund the police" does not mean no police. It means reallocating overinvestment in police towards other critical social and community services that demonstrably reduce crime, such as healthcare, education, housing, conservation, infrastructure, and jobs.
2. Police are tasked with jobs they are not qualified for and that they admit to being unqualified for. This includes being a marriage counselor, a mental health crisis professional, a conflict negotiator, a social worker, a child advocate, a traffic safety expert, a sexual assault specialist, and, every once in awhile, a public safety officer authorized to use force despite having less training than any single one of the actual professional tasked with these other jobs.

3. We are not getting enough benefit compared to the amount of money we spend on law enforcement. From abysmal clearance rates of 29% for violent crimes and 8% for property crimes to unnecessary militarized hardware that includes a BearCat tank.

4. Increased police spending has not equaled more public safety. Crime rates have been mostly stagnant over the past 10 years despite a nearly 66% increase in SLPD's budget, including spiraling overtime spending to the point of an embezzlement scheme that lasted for years because nobody even bothered to check whether policing was helping at all.

5. Police officers actually make BIPOC less safe. Whether we are talking about increased use of force incidents, officer-involved shootings, or even harassment during traffic stops, SLPD has historically and currently been a leading cause of violence and oppression against BIPOC in our community.

So what do we need to do? We need to reimagine public safety in a way that is cost effective, uses police efficiently, and is actually safe for everyone. We need to stop treating police departments differently from other departments and require data-driven decisionmaking as well as evidence-based standards. We must reinvest in our community which has been drained for decades by an overinvestment in under-effective policing that has become an almost self-fulfilling prophecy of crime and punishment.

Now, I have been watching your work closely. I have listened to the recordings of your meetings; read the supplemental materials you were given; watched the presentations you were shown by city departments; looked over the questions you have asked; and even tried to learn more about you as people rather than just names or faces on a small screen. Your mandates are both enviable in their importance and simultaneously depressing in the challenges arrayed against them. Even those of you that I have deeply-held disagreements with, I cannot help but admire your commitment to making our community better.

To that end, I believe you and those included on this email want to truly reckon with the challenges facing San Leandro. I choose to believe that you are approaching our conflicts in the same good faith that I am bringing with me.

I am a White Jewish husband to a Black Christian wife; Millennials with piles of school debt choosing to work in public service; transplants from Orange County and Chicago who ended-up in the Bay Area by chance; with two Black and Jewish daughters aged 4 and 18 months; who have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years now. We love it here, from Oyster Bay to Lake Chabot, from creek to creek, and from Old Town to The Manor. We love it here so much, warts and all, that we are moving mountains to someday afford to buy a house here, to send our kids to the schools here, to build on the relationships we've made with our neighbors who have become dear friends here.

That is what I bring with me to the discussions our community has been having since even before the murder of Steven Taylor on April 18, 2020; since even before the White supremacist cross-burnings as recently as 1989; as well as since even before the "Suburban Wall" years of the 50s, 60s, and 70s of redlining segregation. Indeed, if we're being honest with ourselves, we've been grappling with these problems since San Leandro was incorporated on March 21, 1872, nearly 150 years ago.

For those who want to push back that the necessary changes residents are advocating for are not really the "will of the people" or "do not represent the silent majority," I challenge you to prove that. Not with unscientific social media polls. Not with outdated surveys based on flawed formatting. Not with the selective voices from the richest and the Whitest residents who directly benefited from the racism that characterized San Leandro as a sundown town.

Prove it by asking the groups we've historically marginalized. Prove it by talking to the people we've systematically ignored in our governance. Prove it by digging deep into stories of the homeless, the poor, the mentally ill, the immigrants, the disabled, the seniors, the BIPOC, the so-called "special populations." Prove it by looking at our 2017 Gap Analysis

(see <https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/Human%20Services%20Gap%20Analysis%20FINAL%20004.21.17.pdf>) where we literally admit to how we failed the diverse population of our city and show us the

numbers to back-up how we've substantively, concretely done better for them.

"The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned." I believe the true measure of San Leandro's character has yet to be discerned. We have never taken a true and honest accounting of the consequences of our history or reconciled the results of our actions. But it is never too late to uncover the mirror and hold ourselves up to it. It is never too late to embrace the best and worst of us in order to move forward with integrity.

Budgets are moral documents. They reap only what we sow within them. We can no longer ignore, whether by silence or by negligence, the stark choice before us: what kind of community do we want to be? What kind of future do we want for our city? Is it one where we invest in our fears, where we let ourselves be led by them into perpetuating "the cycle of victimization and victimhood, retribution and suffering"? Or will it be one where we invest in the aspirations of our better selves, where by the power of our potential for grace we bend that arc of time again towards justice? I urge you to challenge your individual assumptions, your anecdotal feelings, your biases -- implicit and explicit -- in order to rise to this occasion with the courage and vision of leadership we need now more than ever.

One last thing, I promise. Consider your experience on this task force. In your meetings you have regularly enjoyed and decried the surge in public engagement, the speakers and letters and emails. (I can only imagine the number of emails.) When have you ever seen San Leandro so passionately involved in local government? When have you ever seen our city so active in civic education and outreach? If there will be one irrevocable lesson from this task force, it will be the universal good that arises from a participatory budget process. When the people are empowered to decide together how to spend public resources, the results are stronger communities, deeper democratic values, as well as solutions to problems that are more effective and more efficient than could have ever been envisioned by the status quo or through business as usual. Whether you agree with my praxis or not, it is clear that the way things used to be will not be the way that things are anymore.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration.

Stephen Michael Tow, (pronouns he/him)

Curriculum vitae at <https://zekjevets.wixsite.com/smtzje>

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in the oppression of any person and a denial of their humanity and their right to exist. — paraphrase of Robert James Jr.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to abandon it. — Talmud

When facts are reported, they deny the value of the evidence; when the evidence is produced they declare it inconclusive. — City of God, by Saint Augustine of Hippo

Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way. — Charles Bukowski

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