

To: Karen Redman, Jan Liggett, Doug Craig, Pam Wolf, Berry Vrbanovic, Colleen James, Michael Harris, Kari Williams, Robert Deutschmann, Dorothy McCabe, Jim Erb, Chantal Huinink, Sue Foxtton, Joe Nowak, Natasha Salonen, Sandy Shantz

Re: Unsheltered Campaign Response to Proposed Region of Waterloo Police Budget

On Wednesday February 8th, Waterloo Regional Council will be hearing public delegations on the 2023 Budget. The Region notes that “municipalities across the province face significant budget challenges.”¹ Despite these challenges, the Region is entertaining a request from the Police Services Board for an \$18 million operating budget increase. This is on top of a budget that currently sits at almost \$200 million dollars and represents 32% of each dollar residents pay in regional property taxes.² **The Region of Waterloo spends almost twice as much on policing as it does on all forms of housing services.**³

The Unsheltered Campaign stands with other community groups, including anti-racist and Indigenous initiatives, that have called on the Waterloo Regional Council to reject this police budget. Increased policing does not keep people safe, does not decrease crime rates, and does not invest in the community. Police budgets do not address pressing social problems, like unsheltered homelessness. Instead, communities need upstream investments in programs that reduce the need for police responses.

We commend those councillors who are thinking differently about the police budget and looking at ways the proposed increase could better be spent in the community. We call on the Waterloo Regional Council to reallocate the police budget to desperately needed areas of social services, services that better support all residents of the Region, including those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Signed: The Community Members of the Unsheltered Campaign



¹ <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/budget-and-finance-archives.aspx>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/wrps-region-of-waterloo-mark-crowell-sue-foxtton-rob-deutschmann-1.6733842>

³ <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/resources/Region-of-Waterloo---2022-Final-Budget-Book.pdf>