

December 17, 2024

CL 17- 2024, December 12, 2024
BRCOTW 7-2024, December 5, 2024

Distribution List

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Niagara Regional Police Service and Police Service Board 2025 Operating Budget

Regional Council, at its meeting held on December 12, 2024, approved the following recommendation of its Budget Review Committee of the Whole:

That Memorandum BRC-C 14-2024, dated December 5, 2024, respecting 2025 Proposed Operating Budget – Niagara Regional Police Service and Police Service Board Response to Budget Reduction Request, **BE RECEIVED** and the following **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Correspondence Item BRC-C 7-2024, dated November 5, 2024, respecting 2025 Proposed Operating Budget - Niagara Regional Police Service and Police Service Board, **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That Niagara Regional Council **DIRECT** the Regional Chair to write a letter to Premier Doug Ford and Solicitor General Michael Kerzner to request that the increase in the Niagara Regional Police Services operating budget of \$10,323,969 (5.7%) as a result of the replacement of the Police Services Act with the Community Safety and Policing Act, be funded by the province, rather than through the tax levy funded by the property taxes of Niagara residents; and
3. That this motion and the letter written by the Regional Chair **BE CIRCULATED** to all 12 local area municipalities, Niagara's four MPPs, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Ontario's Inspectorate of Policing, and the Niagara Regional Police Service Board.

A copy of the letter from the Regional Chair is attached to this letter.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio

Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2024-126

Distribution List:

Local Area Municipalities
Local MPPs
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Inspectorate of Policing
Niagara Regional Police Service Board



Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042 Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-980-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-685-6243

Email: jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca

www.niagararegion.ca

December 17, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Bldg Rm 281, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Sent by e-mail: premier@ontario.ca

Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General
George Drew Building 18th Floor
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6

Sent by e-mail: michael.kerzner@ontario.ca

**RE: Community Safety and Policing Act Impact on Property Taxpayers in
Niagara**

Dear Premier Ford and Solicitor General Kerzner,

As directed by Niagara Regional Council at its December 12 meeting, I am writing to you today to highlight the financial impact that the recently implemented *Community Safety and Policing Act* has had on property taxpayers in Niagara.

Currently the Niagara Regional Police Service budget comprises nearly 40 per cent of Regional property taxes paid by Niagara residents. As part of its 2025 budget deliberations, Regional Council learned that the changes mandated by the *Community Safety and Policing Act* has directly resulted in \$10 million in increased costs for the police service, which must be borne by property taxpayers in Niagara.

I would like to make it clear that Regional Council strongly supports the positive changes made in the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, and places great value in the important work done in our community every day by frontline police officers. However, the costs associated with these changes, and the subsequent property tax increases the Region must make to cover them, are making it even more difficult for Niagara's residents to pay their bills and are contributing to the unaffordability crisis affecting all our municipalities.

As you are aware, municipalities have limited opportunities to generate the revenue for these significant changes, and as such, are faced with the choice to either make significant sacrifices to core municipal services or make significant increases to local property tax bills.

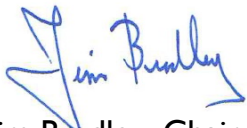
Re: Community Safety and Policing Act Impact on Property Taxpayers in Niagara

Council would like to commend the Province of Ontario for recognizing the hardships these challenges are placing on municipalities, and for wisely proposing an additional \$77 million to top up the police budgets in those municipalities serviced by the Ontario Provincial Police. However, it is important to recognize that municipalities who operate independent police services face these very same costs.

In a letter to Solicitor General Kerzner dated December 7, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) noted several concerns, including the unintended impact on municipal budgets, the difficulty navigating these service changes, local bargaining and wage increases, and a public perception of rising policing costs among the public, among others. Regional Council respectfully asks that the Province consider providing equal funding to Niagara Region and other municipalities to ensure police services across Ontario are able to fulfill the mandate of the *Community Safety and Policing Act* without placing additional financial burdens on property taxpayers. Our council also joins with the OACP in calling for more clarity from the government on equitable funding models available to all police services across the province and other long-term, sustainable solutions to address the financial challenges municipalities across our province are facing due to policing costs.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jim Bradley, Chair
Niagara Region

cc: Niagara's 12 Local Area Municipalities
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP, Niagara West
Jeff Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre
Wayne Gates, MPP, Niagara Falls
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens, MPP, St. Catharines
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario's Inspectorate of Policing
Niagara Region Police Services Board

JB:bn