

To Ithaca-area residents, Mayor Svante Myrick, and Members of the Ithaca Common Council:

We are members and supporters of a broad coalition of racial and economic justice advocates from Ithaca, including Democratic Socialists of America, Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition, Tompkins County Showing up for Racial Justice, Ithaca Tenants Union, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Decarcerate Tompkins County, and other local groups echoing [the calls to defund the police now resounding across the country](#). The murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and George Floyd have fueled a global uprising in response to racist police violence. Here at home, the need to divest from policing and invest in human need can no longer be denied.

In a city with a population of roughly 30,000 people, the Ithaca Police Department (IPD) has 64 officers and a budget of \$12.7 million dollars. Meanwhile, vital community programs have been slashed, rent and housing throughout the city remain unaffordable, and many residents face a deepening economic crisis exacerbated by COVID-19. Rather than a bloated police budget, our community needs support, investment, and healing. This is not the time for mild reforms.

We see the results of racist policing across the country and here in Ithaca. We cannot forget the killing of Shawn Greenwood and Keith Shumway by IPD officers in 2010 and 2011, nor the four teenagers of color held at gunpoint by an IPD sergeant in 2014, nor the brutality experienced by Rose DeGroat and Cadji Ferguson on the Commons last year, nor the police misconduct in the Nagee Green trial, nor the SWAT raids in West Village, nor the countless other accounts of daily dehumanization and punishment at the hands of police. We recognize that the system of policing criminalizes black and brown, poor, and working class people everywhere. Our city is not exempt. We join the nationwide call to defund this racist system and invest in resources that actually keep us safe, including youth programs, affordable housing, childcare, and alternatives to policing.

We urge residents of Ithaca and the immediate area as well as local organizations and businesses to sign this letter and commit to working to fund and rebuild our community. Of course, signing is just a beginning. The demands below do not fully capture our aspirations for a more just society. We need a larger vision of democracy in which all have what they need to survive and thrive, and in which all can determine their destiny. We know mass mobilization and diverse tactics will be necessary to achieve the basic goals outlined below. We know we must build a grassroots movement. To connect with us, please contact tompkinscoalition@gmail.com. We will not stop until our human needs are met and IPD no longer has the power to drain our resources and abuse black and brown communities. [OVER FOR DEMANDS]

JOIN US!

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We demand that the Ithaca city government:

A. DEFUND AND SHRINK POLICING

1. Immediately cut the IPD budget by 80%—from ~\$12.7 million to \$2.5 million.
2. Commit to continuing significant cuts to IPD budget each year for the next 5 years.
3. Enact an immediate IPD hiring freeze and end spending on overtime & public relations.
4. Terminate and not rehire officers with misconduct records or who have harmed community members. Withhold pensions for officers involved in excessive-force cases.
5. Suspend paid administrative leave for police officers under investigation.

B. DEMILITARIZE and RESTRAIN POLICE

1. Immediately dissolve and disband the SWAT program.
2. Remove the SWAT truck from IPD and allow its future use to be determined by an assembly of poor and working class people so that it actually keeps our community safe. (It could become a mobile health clinic, a COVID testing facility, etc).
3. Eliminate semi-automatic and fully-automatic rifles, and tasers.
4. Prohibit IPD participation in police militarization programs.
5. End harassment and displacement of homeless people.
6. Prohibit police and other law enforcement agent participation in eviction proceedings.
7. End corporate contracts that support the operations of ICE, CBP and other federal agencies involved in targeting immigrant and refugee populations.

C. RE-FUND, REBUILD and HEAL COMMUNITY

1. Reallocate \$2.8 Million to GIAC (Greater Ithaca Activities Center) and \$5.06 Million to IYB (Ithaca Youth Bureau) to ensure the continuation of existing youth programs.
2. Prioritize spending for black, brown, working class, and poor led self-determination projects that increase community safety, such as Black Hands Universal and the Unbroken Promise Initiative. Create structures to ensure that those most impacted by racism and gentrification in Ithaca decide democratically how the money is spent.
3. Pay monetary reparations to the targets of police attacks, and the families of the victims of lethal police violence in Ithaca. Start with paying Rose DeGroat and Cadji Ferguson for the ongoing trauma they experience due to the brutal police attack they suffered on the Ithaca Commons in April 2019.
4. Adequately fund choices of sustainable and affordable: housing, transitional housing for those in recovery, healthcare (including mental healthcare), and childcare.
5. Ensure that all essential and frontline workers and service industry employees are afforded full COVID-19 protections, including PPE, distancing and other appropriate safety measures.
6. Provide financial and other support to the Multicultural Resource Center, Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition, and other groups that are developing, or have developed, models for community-based alternatives to policing.
7. Suspend rent payments for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.
8. Initiate an immediate, official review of the Nagee Green case to provide real justice for the community.