

August 19, 2020

**Public Comment for the August 19, 2020 South Pasadena City Council Meeting**

Re: Agenda Item 10

*Please read comment aloud into the meeting minutes.*

Dear City Council:

We—the 73 undersigned individuals of South Pasadena—strongly oppose the contract to purchase three fully outfitted BMW police motorcycles with \$114,338 in COPS grant funds. The request is tone deaf in this moment of reckoning regarding racist policing and the outsize share of our city’s budget consumed by law enforcement. The claim that motorcycles facilitate more direct contact with the public and are a beneficial community relations tool is absurd and insulting. Traffic enforcement often leads to too much law enforcement contact initiated against Black and Latinx people, too often with fatal consequences.

The SPPD’s request is also unjustified: it already has 32 vehicles, including three (3) motorcycles, with an annual maintenance cost of \$100,000.

SPPD’s argument that it needs to replace all three motorcycles for traffic enforcement lacks merit. Traffic—and logically, traffic enforcement—is markedly down with children home from school and COVID-19 business closures in effect for the foreseeable future.

Replacing Hondas with BMWs betrays an appetite for luxury toys and military-tactical upgrades the state and federal governments are overly eager to bankroll—a legacy of neoconservative policies enacted long before Ferguson. It is anathema to this community.

The City is facing a budget shortfall to the tune of \$3.5 million. City leaders are preparing citizens for austerity. Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud told residents that there is no money to staff a cooling center at the War Memorial Building—a relatively modest expense that would mean a lot to people struggling to pay their utility bills. Black Lives Matter activists have protested at Fair Oaks and Mission for over 70 days, asking for realignment of the city’s budget away from militaristic law enforcement in favor of human services. Yet the city is prepared to ignore the opportunity cost of purchasing brand new luxury police vehicles. Austerity for those who can least afford it, German engineering for the police. It is a thumb in the eye of South Pasadena residents fighting to make this town better. Please do not approve it.

Signed,

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Afshin Ketabi         | 7. Amy Turk                       |
| 2. Alexander Aquino      | 8. Andrew Terhune                 |
| 3. Alexandria Levitt     | 9. Ann Messana                    |
| 4. Aliza Rood            | 10. Anna McCurdy                  |
| 5. Allie Bowne Schreiner | 11. Anne Bagasao                  |
| 6. Amy Jones             | 12. Auxenia Grace Privett-Mendoza |

13. Barbara Eisenstein
14. Caitlin Lainoff
15. Carla Obert
16. Cassandra Terhune
17. Che Hurley
18. Christopher Becker
19. Daisy Mayer
20. David Carbonara
21. David Hillel
22. Ella Hushagen
23. Fahren James
24. Felicie Borrendon
25. Fiona Eddy
26. Frederick Eberhardt
27. Glen Eddy
28. Helen Tran
29. Ilai Gilbert
30. Janna Conner-Niclaes
31. John Srebalus
32. Kara Lane
33. Kate Hillel
34. Katharine Florence
35. Katie Telser
36. Kerrie Barbato
37. Kiera Atkinson
38. Laboni Hoq
39. Laurent Borredon
40. Leslie Ito
41. Levi Srebalus
42. Linda McDermott
43. London Lang
44. Lulu Talesnick
45. Madeline Di Giorgi
46. Mariana Huerta Jones
47. Matthew Barbato
48. Michelle Round
49. Nancy Jo Lane
50. Nina Rathbun
51. Norma Hernandez
52. Ohad Gilbert
53. Paige Fillion
54. Pam Privett
55. Polly Grant
56. Quinn Manzo
57. Raf Niclaes
58. Riko Enomoto
59. Robert Grant
60. Robin Becker
61. Ross McLain
62. Sandy Shannon
63. Sarah Erlich
64. Sarah Perez-Silverman
65. Sean Singleton
66. Shari Sakamoto
67. Sierra Betinis
68. Sofia Alva
69. Sofia Lopez
70. Steven Wong
71. Susan Grant
72. Tzung-lin Fu
73. Will Hoadley-Brill