



**2023 JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY
ACTION COMMITTEE**

PEOPLE'S BUDGET





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SECTION 1

PEOPLE'S BUDGET

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY AND WHAT REINVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY COULD LOOK LIKE

The JCAC believes the best way to tackle public safety in our city is by prioritizing our most historically neglected areas through direct investment along with prioritizing legislation that will address the root causes of crime. We know that increased policing does not keep our community safe, however, increased opportunity, development, livable wages, and increased public services provide the stability needed for Jacksonville to flourish and address the root causes of most crime.

Currently JSO Sheriff TK Waters is asking for additional funding, asking for a budget increase which would bring their total budget share to \$597,719,652 according to Jacksonville City Council's auditor. Over the last decade, JSO's budget has increased every year except one. In fact, since 2013 the Sheriff's Office budget increased by \$200 million and next year's budget request calls for over \$35 million more. JSO is asking for the creation of a new jail with reported costs of well over 250 million dollars. What would it look like if those dollars went to our communities instead?

A real People's Budget prioritizes underserved communities, not failed strategies. The continental increase in JSO's budget for years has made it clear that we cannot police our way to a better Jacksonville. Better funding to these services stand to improve the lives of everyday citizens more than just new police officers and police military equipment.

Increased spending on JSO means more divestment from our communities. We must assure that the 2023-2024 City of Jacksonville budget prioritizes the community first.

REALLOCATION AND REINVESTMENT

The average cost of police academy training is \$6,500, but according to the National Police Foundation, the real cost is a minimum of \$100,000 in supervised on-the-job training and 18 months of probationary duty before an officer is ready for the job. In larger cities, it may take two or three years before an officer is considered fully trained. Some estimates put the total cost as high as \$240,000 according to the Florida Public Pension Trustees Association website.

Hiring 80 new officers could have a severe financial cost without the proper return on investment for Duval taxpayers. JSO, according to Times Union reports, had a reported 10 million dollar budget surplus in the 2022–2023 budget due to a high amount of unfilled positions. Instead of spending new money on JSO officers, that funding should be allocated to solving the systemic issues that cause crime.

JSO’S PROPOSED BUDGET IS LARGER THAN THE MILITARY EXPENDITURES OF 43 COUNTRIES.



Source: World Population Review;
Jacksonville City Council Auditor Budget Analysis 2023



SECTION 2

PEOPLE'S LEGISLATION

People's Legislation are possible laws, policy and ordinances suggestions that the City of Jacksonville, Mayor's office and City Council should consider taking up, recommended by the JCAC.

CREATION OF A PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Jacksonville remains the largest city in Florida without any form of civilian review with police. 11 cities in Florida have some form of civilian review, even conservative-run municipalities such as Sarasota and Fort Myers. Studies show there is a drop in the arrest of black residents in cities with civilian review. The people of Jacksonville must have a seat at the table in regards to how our city is policed.

NEIGHBORHOOD BILL OF RIGHTS

The Neighborhood Bill of Rights for Jacksonville, Florida, established by the Jax City Council in 1995, has not been formally codified into law. Activist groups have been advocating for its codification to ensure participatory budgeting and better communication with local representatives. Codifying the Bill of Rights would empower citizens to influence budget allocation and resource distribution in their neighborhoods, as well as enhance communication channels between residents and elected officials, promoting transparency and accountability. Efforts to codify the Bill of Rights reflect the ongoing campaign to strengthen community engagement and ensure equitable treatment of neighborhoods in Jacksonville.

DECRIMINALIZE MARIJUANA AND OTHER VICTIMLESS OFFENSES THROUGH CIVIL CITATIONS

Doing so will save taxpayer money and insure that JSO's focus is on solving homicides and sexual assaults - not petty drug busts. Civil Citations would also decrease the amount of incarcerated individuals, saving millions in taxpayer money along with solving the overcrowded issues with the Duval County jail. We stand with the demands of community orgs like ICARE who have called for the issuing of civil citations for low level, non violent offenses, as a means of reducing mass incarceration.

CREATION OF THE URBAN CORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND EMPOWERING BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES

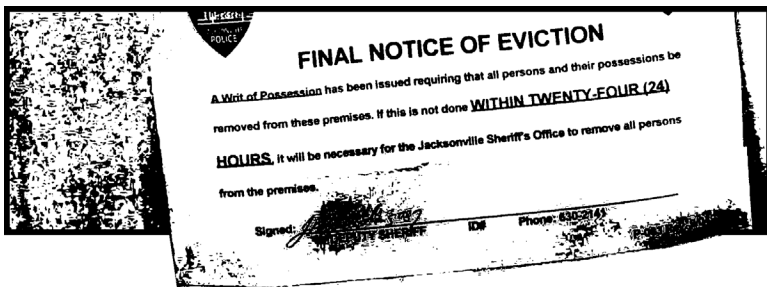
From the recommendation of the last Jacksonville Charter Revision Commission, we support the creation of an Urban Core Development Authority to implement a master plan and coordinate public and private resources to address poverty, socioeconomic issues, and other disparities within the designated area. This Authority board would be chosen by the District representatives of that area operating with a budget created from the reallocation of proposed JSO funding.

The City of Jacksonville should support black entrepreneurship, black owned small businesses, non-profits, contractors as a means to address the racial wealth gap as well . The amount of city contracts going to black owned non-profits and vendors should reflect the city demographics. More should be done by the COJ to support black entrepreneurs.

SUPPORTING LABOR AND WORKING FAMILIES

Only through strong labor unions can Jacksonville working families flourish. The City of Jacksonville should support stronger unions by supporting new organizing by workers who work for private contractors that receive COJ contracts along with mandating that any contractor that gets COJ contracts must pay their employees a living wage.





DEAL WITH THE HOUSING CRISIS

We are calling for increased rental and utility assistance, going after predatory developers who hike up housing costs, and continuing the calls for legislation pushed by housing advocates, such as investing in public works projects, public transportation, infrastructure, mental health resources, food security programs, and safe alternatives to crime reduction.

We recommend the City fully fund repairs, maintenance, and proper staffing for all Duval County owned pools. 16 of 34 Jax pools have been closed during a record hot summer.

We recommend the creation of a Homelessness Elimination Initiative Program—something other cities have done successfully—rather than the criminalization and banning of homeless people asking for money as our City Council has done. Funding should be reallocated to the construction and maintenance of new homeless shelters in order to reduce overcrowding in existing shelters, as well as raise wages for existing case managers and recruit more shelter employees.

Additional funding should be reallocated to the Division of Mental Health Services to improve access to quality mental health services for the people of Jacksonville. This includes investment in affordable behavioral health services through alternative governmental or non-governmental agencies.

According to research conducted in 2019, 40 of 173 census tracts as food deserts in the City of Jacksonville, where 23% of the population had low access to a grocery store or supermarket in 2015, based on the 1-mile definition. Of these low access areas, 15 tracts or 38% of the food desert tracts are in the Northwest Area. CoJ should do more to address food insecurity, particular in low access areas.

Further legislation reallocating increased JSO funding to clergy and non profit organizations that are tackling crime reduction efforts should be proposed and passed.

EQUITABLE METHODS TO RAISE REVENUE

As a means of raising total revenue, such as for investment in the renovation of a new city owned stadium, instead of an increased gas tax, sales tax or other regressive taxes on community members, we're proposing a targeted millage rate increase on commercial properties valued at \$1.5 million or higher. Additionally, historically neglected neighborhoods designated as economic opportunity zones would qualify for a millage rate freeze to incentivize development in those areas. Programs such as the creation of a new JAX JOURNEY or other programming requires a dedicated funding source. New methods to raise revenue in a non regressive manner is of vital importance to our city's future.

TAKE CARE OF THE HOME TEAM FIRST

Any new investment into the city owned stadium must be accompanied by massive to equal investment in black and working class neighborhoods. Giving a billion dollars to build a new or renovated stadium while neighborhoods suffer from crumbling infrastructure is unconscionable. The COJ must fight to make sure neighborhoods get intentional investment along with making sure the contractors who get work on a renovated stadium are local and unionized. Too many times when new developments occur, contractors getting those contracts are not local and not unionized. Black owned firms along with other local firms should have the ability to compete for work when millions of taxpayer dollars are concerned, which would lead to more money staying in the city and our communities.



STAND UP FOR HOME RULE

The COJ must stand up to the Florida Legislature that continues to pass legislation threatening the home rule of Jacksonville. The city must not fear the Governor and must fight for the right of Jacksonville to determine Jacksonville' affairs, not Tallahassee.

REINSTATEMENT OF THE SAFER TOGETHER COMMITTEE

We are calling for the reinstatement of the Safer Together or a similar committee bringing together political leaders, community leaders and all stakeholders as a means to have a much needed conversation in regards to policing in Jacksonville. The previous Safer Together Committee was disbanded amidst JSO pressure under previous Council President Sam Newby.

STUDY REPARATIONS

Cities such as Detroit and Evanston, Illinois have shown the path forward in regards to their city commissions and councils, forming reparation research committees to study the question of reparations, how to overcome historical wealth gaps along with collecting data to understand the potential impact of overcoming years of historical oppression caused by racism and discrimination of black residents. The COJ should take seriously its obligation to right the wrongs of the past.



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