

Millcreek City Council
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Dear Millcreek,

George Floyd's murder at the hands of police officers has again raised important questions across the nation about the use of force and systemic racism. Many residents are rightfully asking us,

- “What are you doing to prevent this from happening here?”
- “What are going to do if it does?”
- “How are you going to respond to unwarranted calls to police”
- “How can we protest safely here or get involved?”

We — Mayor Silvestrini, Millcreek city government and the Millcreek Precinct of the Unified Police Department— stand united in our commitment to UPD's mission to preserve life and protect human rights. We believe in policing where our law enforcement respects the safety of every single resident, free of fear and violence. UPD strives to develop a culture of professionalism and accountability, with appropriate discipline for unacceptable behavior. We strive to improve community policing strategies, intending to build familiarity and trust between our officers and the communities they serve.

As Mayor and a Unified Police Department board member, I am interested in improvement to our policing in Millcreek and across the jurisdictions served by UPD, particularly in the areas of:

- De-escalation training
- Appropriate levels of force
- Equal treatment of all citizens based upon behavior
- Acknowledgment of our protected classes
- Unconscious bias education

I know our department has undertaken significant steps to improve in these areas and to police based upon behavior as opposed to personal characteristics, particularly race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, among any others. We need space within the command structure for officers to call out inappropriate behavior by their peers without incurring negative consequences. This can be difficult, but it is important to prevent the kind of situation we saw in George Floyd's death, where three

officers stood by silently and failed to intervene when accepted protocols for restraining persons in custody were clearly violated.

We further need to address the issue of racism and violence in our broader societal context. It is unacceptable when a person's first instinct is to use police as a weapon when they are called out for such mundane conduct as failing to keep one's dog on-leash. We can train officers, but we must acknowledge that racism is not exclusive to police. By recounting all of this, I am not attempting to foreclose other ideas and suggestions or further dialog. I am merely trying to educate about our current thinking and past actions. I welcome dialogue and suggestions for improvement. In anything we undertake, I would want there to be opportunity for that kind of constructive input. I look forward to working in this endeavor, which is important to all of us. I admire the section SLC has on its web page on transparent policing and am hopeful we can do something similar in Millcreek.

We believe that our police officers show up to work every single shift with the goal of protecting human lives and human rights equitably among all residents. But we also acknowledge that there is systemic racism that affects our residents every day. We must all come together to intentionally address and dismantle systemic oppression, discrimination, racism, and bigotry. The fear, anger, hurt, and frustration felt by so many in our community is justified, and we cannot allow its sources to continue unaddressed.

We want to be transparent about our police department's policies and procedures. We acknowledge that, while we strive to employ progressive policies and a culture of accountability among our ranks, we can always do better and we are committed to working with the community to do that.

How we show up:

Since we incorporated in 2017, we have worked on multiple fronts to address racial and socio-economic inequities in our community through the Millcreek Promise Program. The program gathers many partners, residents, businesses, educators, and nonprofit organizations in helping refugee, immigrant, minority and underrepresented residents of Millcreek. We are engaged in all of the core elements of our Promises: tutoring kids, improving educational outcomes, providing equitable recreation and access to the outdoors, working on health, safety, and economic well-being.

Sheriff Rivera and our UPD command staff value diversity in hiring officers. We think this helps bridge racial or cultural divides within our own ranks. We strive to hire people who choose to serve for the right reasons and who have demonstrated good character. We have sought to provide comprehensive training in de-escalation techniques and alternatives to lethal force. We strive to build in our police force a culture of discipline, fairness, and accountability in respect of the use of force and treating all people with respect.

What is next from your Mayor?

I plan to support Salt Lake City's efforts to improve police transparency and make our Unified Police Department a partner in those efforts. I have supported and will continue to support UPD's significant investments in hiring a diverse police force, training in de-escalation, proper use of non-lethal force and promoting a police culture free of racism. I will redouble those efforts through Millcreek Promise. Continued support of robust community policing and positive interaction between our officers and our residents, particularly people of color, is vital to benefitting all our neighborhoods. I look forward to your ideas and contribution to these efforts.

