



Dear Chief Ford:

As I've said publicly and privately to you, as the city of Antioch continues to grapple with the reality that its police department is plagued with deep institutional racism, I will continue to focus on ensuring that this issue is not conveniently swept under the rug. Under my watch that will not happen.

As I traverse the city and meet with residents, I am reminded daily that actionable steps must be taken to correct past mistakes. We will not be able to talk this issue away as it strikes at the very essence of who we are as a city— inclusive and open for all. I strongly believe that Antioch residents deserve a police department that every segment of Antioch's racially diverse community can trust.

In order for us to get there, as well as beginning the healing process, the immediate termination of officers who violated the public's trust by displaying racism (as established by the FBI and District Attorney and upheld by a superior court judge) is required. Anything less makes all of our efforts, including your community conversations, appear like nothing more than a public relations campaign.

As a result, at next Tuesday's Antioch City Council meeting, I will be seeking the support of my colleagues to formally direct the Antioch Police Department to immediately decommission the tank, also known as the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. The MRAP was designed specifically for the War in Iraq so that U.S. soldiers could withstand improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and ambushes. To date, there have been no such reported attacks or threats in the city of Antioch.



As evidenced in a photo on the Antioch Police Department's website, the tank sends the wrong message to the community and absolutely sends the wrong message to prospective police office candidates.

I will also be advancing a measure that bars board members of the police union, in our case, the Antioch Police Officers Association, from serving as members of the internal affairs team. If the community is to trust you and established processes, there must be a clear line of delineation between union leaders elected to represent police officers who may have committed misconduct and those charged with investigating those officers.

To move our city forward, tough decisions must be made now. In that spirit, the decommissioning of the tank and the separation of union board leaders from internal affairs will send the very clear message that the city of Antioch is genuinely committed to reforming the culture of the Antioch Police Department.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L.A.T.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lamar A. Thorpe
Mayor