

July 9, 2020

Dear Toronto Police Services Board,

Thank you for the opportunity of addressing systemic racism and brutality in policing in Toronto.

As a non-racially marginalized citizen of Toronto I cannot speak for the victims of racism. I hope you take the time to truly listen with intent to those bravely sharing their experiences with racism and oppression. I am writing to share my observation and tell the story of my Toronto.

I grew up near Bloor and Dufferin, an area once riddled with crime. My high school, Bloor Collegiate, was deemed high violence and I have never attended a high school dance because the school administration feared they would get out of control. I do remember other students bringing weapons to school, and I remember how cool I thought it was to be tough and rough around the edges. But I also remember the poverty. I remember single parents and friends helping their families with the bills or child care of younger siblings.

I watched my neighbourhood evolve as housing prices increased. I watched my friends and their families move away, one by one. Often to pursue cheaper rent or live the dream of owning their own home. I watched new, whiter, people move in. I watched my neighbourhood crime lower, I watched apartment buildings filled with low income families replaced by predominantly white young professionals.

The crime of my neighbourhood decreased because the people scrapping by were replaced by wealthy people. The crime itself did not go away, it clung to the impoverished as they were forced out of the downtown core due to rent prices they could no longer afford. The crime simply moved with the poverty. Many institutions such as the World Bank have proven that crime is directly contributed to inequality. This is not new and a global reality. This means that the way out of crime is increasing the wealth of all our fellow citizens, not further supressing them.

My ask of the board is not more policing of the Torontonians who have been victims of our capitalist economy. We do not need lethal force, we do not need military weapons, we do not need tear gas and rubber bullets. We do not need officers with guns or police presence in schools.

My ask of the board is radical change. My ask is to abolish policing and replace it with proven alternatives. We need to defund policing to invest in mental health and affordable housing. We need to strip officers on the street of guns and military weapons. We need to document and have consequences for police violence. We need the police out of poor neighbourhoods and we need capital resources into poor neighbourhoods.

Sincerely,



Emma Wildeman