



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 10.2.1
Board of Police Commissioners
March 8, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Police Commissioners

SUBMITTED BY: - Original Signed -

Carole McDougall, Vice Chair Board of Police Commissioners

DATE: March 4, 2021

SUBJECT: **Board of Police Commissioners Committee to Define Defunding Police Terms of Reference**

ORIGIN

At its meeting of January 18, 2021 Board of Police Commissioners put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners:

1. Direct the Working Group, formed on November 16, 2020 to determine the composition of the Committee on Defunding, to draft Terms of Reference for the Committee on Defunding based upon the report supplied to the Board of Police Commissioners at the Board's December 14, 2020 meeting; and
2. Submit these draft Terms of Reference to the Board of Police Commissioners for consideration and ratification by the Board of Police Commissioners at a future meeting.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Police Act, 2004, c. 31, section 55(3)(c), (d) and (e), states:

55 (3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), a board shall...

- (c) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities, objectives, goals, programs and strategies;
- (d) ensure that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community values, needs and expectations;
- (e) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers;

Section 8 (h), (j) and (k) of By-law P-100, which provides:

- (h) carry out any studies or investigations respecting its civilian governance responsibilities;
- (j) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing goals and methods;
- (k) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Police Commissioners:

1. Approve the Terms of Reference, as outlined in Attachment 3, for the Committee to Define Defunding Police.
2. Approve the formation of the Committee to Define Defunding Police, directing the Committee to follow the Terms of Reference in completion of the Committee's role to review relevant research and conduct community engagements to allow citizens to express their view regarding the definition of Defunding Police.
3. The Committee to Define Defunding Police shall submit a written report to the Board of Police Commissioners.

BACKGROUND

On July 7, 2020 the Board of Police Commissioners received a staff presentation entitled "Reimagine Public Safety", see Attachment 1. The Board requested this presentation to gain a better understanding of the calls from citizens of HRM to defund the police as a result of public engagement and protests that followed the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis. During the Board's discussion of the staff presentation it was noted that defunding the police needs to be adequately defined in order to provide a basis for the Board to make decisions relating to policing functions and the reallocation of resources for community supports. The Board put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners appoint a Community Advisory Committee to assist in adopting a definition of defunding the police and that the Committee present this definition at a future meeting of the Board for further discussion and debate. Further, the definition of defunding the police should be based on the following:

- Police performing policing functions;
- Allocating appropriate resources to perform non-police functions; and,
- Investing in resources that have been proven to support community risks and promote crime prevention.

On August 17, 2020 the Board of Police Commissioners engaged in discussion regarding the motion passed at its July 7, 2020 meeting that included the merits of creating a subcommittee to develop a definition of defunding the police and the process to be used to form a subcommittee. The Board put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners appoint a Community Advisory Committee to assist in adopting a definition of defunding the police and that the Committee present this definition at a future meeting of the Board for further discussion and debate. Further, the definition of defunding the police should be based on the following:

- Police performing core policing functions;
- Allocating appropriate resources to perform non-police functions; and,
- Investing in resources that have been proven to support community risks and promote crime prevention.

On September 21, 2021 the Board of Police Commissioners put and passed the following motion regarding the development of a proposal for a Committee to define defunding police:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners appoint El Jones to develop a proposal, for the Board's review and approval, on the composition of a Committee to recommend a definition of defunding the police and investments to support communities and public safety.

On November 16, 2020 the Board received a presentation from El Jones entitled “Halifax Board of Police Commissioners ‘Defunding Committee’ – Terms of Reference”, see Attachment 2. This presentation outlined the background of the defunding the police movement, the composition of the proposed Committee, the Committee’s proposed public engagement goals, a summary of the Committee’s proposed research project and a rough timeline for the completion of the Committee’s report to the Board. The Board identified the need for the Committee to consider a definition of defunding the police for all of HRM policing as Halifax is jointly policed by both the Halifax Regional Police Department and the Halifax District Detachment of the RCMP. The Board put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners:

1. Adopt the proposal in principle from the Committee on Defunding, as defined in the presentation dated November 16, 2020;
2. Strike a working group of the Board with the Chair to determine its composition and for this working group to address specific issues such as budget to bring back for consideration by the Board of Police Commissioners; and,
3. Allow El Jones to begin planning the work for the Committee on Defunding.

On December 14, 2020 the working group provided the Board of Police Commissioners an update regarding the key supports, including budgetary considerations, which the Board of Police Commissioners should consider supplying the Committee. The Board put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners allocate up to \$9,000 from the Board of Police Commissioners Budget to fund the formation of the Committee on Defund the Police pending confirmation of the Board’s jurisdiction to do so.

On January 18, 2021 after a supplemental update from the working group regarding the Committee the Board of Police Commissioners put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners:

1. Direct the Working Group, formed on November 16, 2020 to determine the composition of the Committee on Defunding, to draft Terms of Reference for the Committee on Defunding based upon the report supplied to the Board of Police Commissioners at the Board’s December 14, 2020 meeting; and
2. Submit these draft Terms of Reference to the Board of Police Commissioners for consideration and ratification by the Board of Police Commissioners at a future meeting.

DISCUSSION

The working group consulted with the Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners, Lindell Smith, in the development of the Committee to Define Defunding Police’s draft Terms of Reference, as outlined in Attachment 3. The draft Terms of Reference outline background, purpose, term, membership, role, budget and requirements for the final report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The Committee to Define Defunding Police is a committee of the Board of Police Commissioners and will be funded through the Board of Police Commissioners budget. The Board of Police Commissioners is administered by Halifax Regional Police.

There will be financial implications on the Municipal Clerk’s Office as the Committee’s draft Terms of Reference identify that office as a support for the Committee. According to the proposed Terms of Reference these supports may include assistance with messaging to invite the community to participate in

the Committee's virtual public engagement meetings, coordination of technical support for virtual public engagement meetings, an email address for the Committee to receive written submissions from the public, social media support as required and reimbursement for non-waged participants to cover child care and/or transportation if required to attend Committee meetings. However, the full extent of these financial implications to staffing and other costs cannot be determined until the number of public engagement sessions are determined by the Board.

As well, the Board needs to provide direction as to whether staff from Halifax Regional Police and the Halifax Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will be asked to attend the Committee's public engagement sessions as this will result in staffing and other costs for each organization.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Should the Board approve the recommendation contained in this report, then staff will work with the Committee to Define Defunding Police to assist with the administration of community engagement. This will include the scheduling of virtual public engagement meetings, the coordination of technical support for virtual public engagement meetings, an email address for the Committee to receive written submissions from the public, social media support as required and the recording of minutes of the public engagement sessions.

The agenda and reports of the Committee will be posted on Halifax.ca, and draft minutes of the public engagement meetings will be made available on Halifax.ca within three business days.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board may wish make changes to the recommendation, including modifications to the Committee to Define Defunding Police Terms of Reference and changing the date for submission of the Committee's final report to the Board.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: "Reimagine Public Safety" presentation dated July 7, 2020

Attachment 2: "Halifax Board of Police Commissioners 'Defunding Committee' – Terms of Reference" presentation November 16, 2020

Attachment 3: Halifax Board of Police Commissioners Terms of Reference - Committee to Define Defunding Police

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Andrea Lovasi-Wood, Legislative Assistant, 902.490.6732

HALIFAX

Reimagine Public Safety

Presentation to Board of Police
Commissioners

July 9 2020

Introduction

- Dr Amy Siciliano – HRM Public Safety Advisor, Office of the CAO, Government Relations and External Affairs Division
- DeRico Symonds – Manager, Youth Advocate Program, Parks and Recreation, Youth Division

Reimagine Public Safety

Defunding the Police

Defunding the police has been a popular term that has been at the forefront of public thought in recent months. These terms are not new, but have garnered local and global attention after the tragic death of an African American man name George Floyd who was killed by Minneapolis Police.

Defunding has taken root in the tragedy of George Floyd but also has a local context. The Halifax community has raised questions around responses to recent issues involving police and marginalized groups.

We've heard community asks for public safety to be reimaged, reevaluated and reinvested.

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“Defunding”

“What does it mean to Defund the Police?”: Reallocating money from Police and reinvesting into: Mental health supports, education, social services, housing, prevention programming, anti-racist education, food security and alternatives to policing.

Calls for investment that address the root causes of crime and victimization.

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Individuals in precarious, challenging and uncertain living situations do not have the same *protective factors* as someone who does not encounter those same challenges.



Protective factors

- Two parents in the home
- Food secure family
- Stable income and living environment



Risk Factors

- One parent in the home
- Food insecure family
- Unstable income and living environment

Prevention

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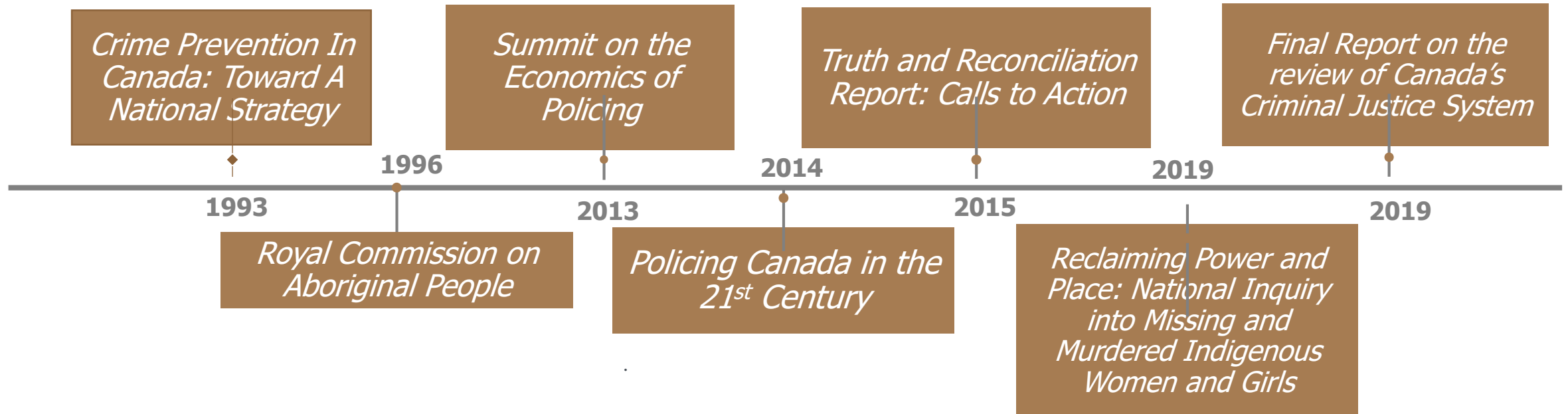
A Broader Conversation

- **June 10th** – HRM Council votes to cancel police armored vehicle. \$36,000 to Public Safety Office, \$53,000 to DNI and \$300,000 to fight Black Anti-Racism
- **June 15th** – Baltimore Council approves 22.4 million budget cut to Police
- **June 17th** – The Portland City Council 15 million from its police budget. \$5 million of that would be put toward a new program that sends unarmed first responders to answer homelessness calls.
- **June 18th**- Philadelphia cancelled a planned \$19 million increase for the police department and shifted \$14 million of the police budget elsewhere — including affordable housing.
- **June 26th** – Minneapolis Council move to defund police and establish a new department on Community Safety and Violence Prevention.
- **June 29th** – Toronto City Council debates a motion to defund police to 10%

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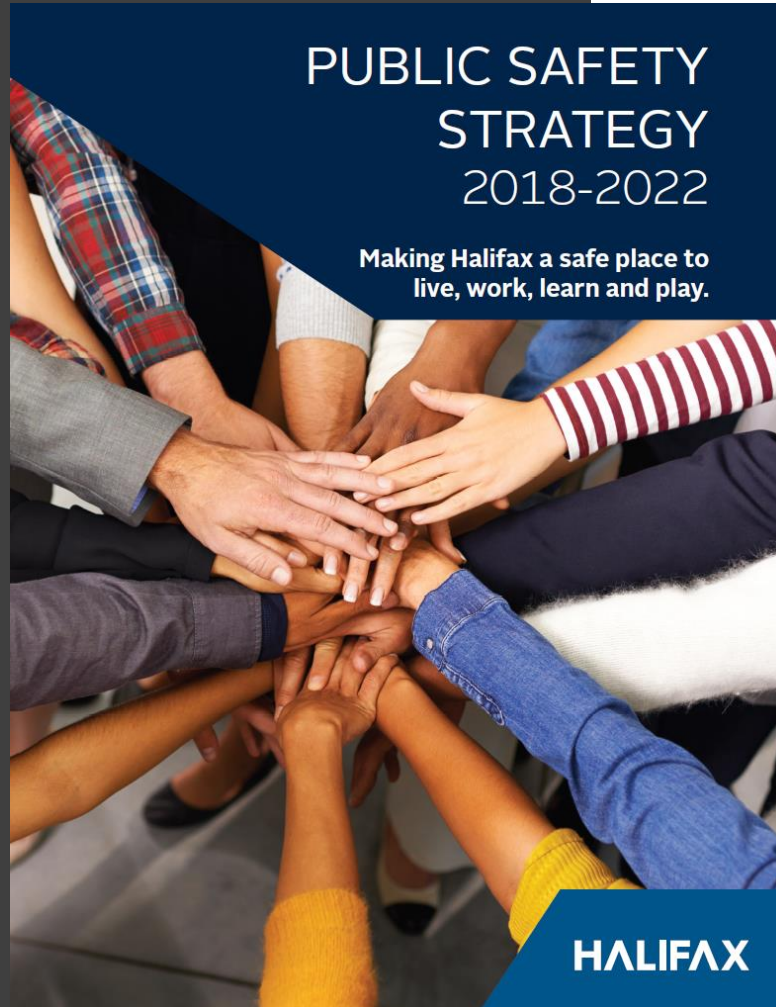
Why now?

A timeline of calls for prevention, reallocation, and culture shifts



*"Governments must...take into consideration how the criminal justice system relates to other critical support systems in our society, such as housing, health care, education, employment, training and child protection. They must strive to better understand the root causes of crime – and ensure that Canada is not using instruments of criminal justice to address social problems".
Department of Justice, 2019.*

PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY



- Unanimously adopted by Regional Council: Fall 2017
- Grounded in research from Clairemont's Roundtable Report and Review
- Promotes 'upstream' intervention: focus on a proactive approach to addressing community safety & wellbeing
- Focus on enhancing our **social infrastructure**

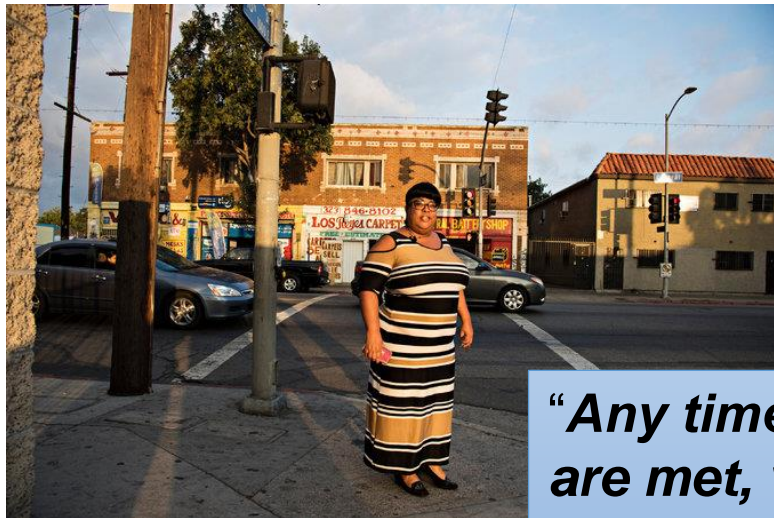
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TheUpshot

The Unsung Role That Ordinary Citizens Played in the Great Crime Decline



Emily Badger @emilymbadger NOV. 9, 2017



“Any time people’s basic needs are met, violence goes down ...” Noreen McClendon, Executive Director of Concerned Citizens of South Central LA.

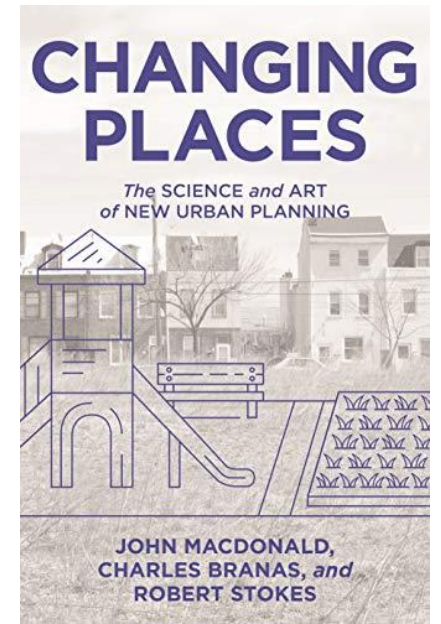
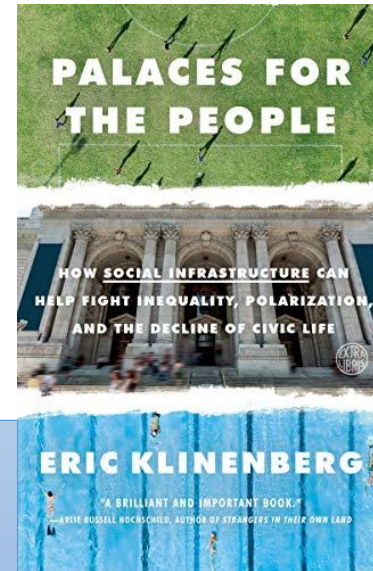
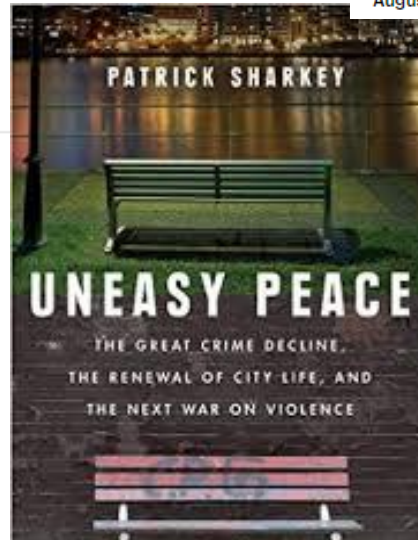
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THE OTHER SIDE OF “BROKEN WINDOWS”

What if vacant property received the attention that, for decades, has been showered on petty crime?

By Eric Klinenberg

August 23, 2018



HALIFAX

Strategic Priorities

- 4 Priority Areas
- 76 Actions

www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/public-safety



BUILD RESIDENT RESILIENCE: Help people to reduce their sense of isolation, build resilience and improve their quality of life.



ENSURE SAFE PLACES: Reduce the opportunities for crime and social disorder at places where people live, work and play.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES: Increase local participation and social interaction, and develop ways to deal with conflict in non-violent ways.



PREVENT AND REDUCE CRIME: Protect citizens, organizations, and institutions against threats to their well-being and prosperity.

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Our Programs

Youth Advocate Program – Community Based crime prevention program, operating in 14 communities in HRM. Serving youth ages 9-15 years old as well as working with their families. We operate with 45 youth in our program at any given time. This is an evidenced based program and has been evaluated by Dalhousie Resiliency Research Centre.

Youth Live -- for youth, aged 16-24, facing significant employment barriers. It provides employment and life skills training.

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Our Programs

Girls United – Girls United is a community based crime prevention program for young women ages 12-15. Girls United is peer centered, and peer led with a focus on building strong positive relationships.

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Our Programs

Multi-service youth centers (MSYC)

- offer a safe space to hangout, receive mental health supports, and access to food and housing support.
- provide resources and supports to youth that normally don't have access to and often directly correlate to reducing youth crime rates.
- Currently, the pilot project was completed in Sackville, with the MSYC named "The Den".
- **2018-2019:** 161 unique regular participants at the center; average drop in rate per day of 35.
- Currently, no funding is available to help staff this project, or to expand the project beyond the Sackville location. Annual casual staff wages for each multi-service youth center is approx \$75,000.

UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls programme

Theory of Change:

- Take a locally informed approach: undertake a scoping study to understand the nature of the issues and what works to address them.
- Develop and implement laws and policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence
- Develop an expanded view of safety by supporting a gender approach across all municipal departments.
- Be a leader in supporting the conditions for social norms change to promote women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from violence.

Piloting the
Women's
Safety Audit
tool



Participants
plan their
audit



Participants of
the Train the
Trainer
Women's
Safety Audit
workshop

Halifax Board of Police Commissioners “Defunding” Committee

Terms of Reference

Background

- Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, a global movement re-ignited demanding the rethinking and reconstitution of policing and punishment.
- Black communities and Indigenous communities across Canada addressed the role of colonization, racism, and criminalization upon Indigenous people as experienced through policing and incarceration.
- Ideas of defunding and abolition which had previously been consigned to the margins became the topic of widespread discussion. For many people in Halifax and across Nova Scotia, as for people across the world, these concepts are new and are the site of much questioning and conversation.

Examples of Defunding

- At the January 20, 2020 Board of Police Commissioners meeting, presentations by Harry Critchley (Co-Chair, East Coast Prison Justice Society) and Dr. Leah Genge proposed that the city institute “sobering centres” staffed by health workers rather than arresting and detaining intoxicated people.
- This is a clear example of what defunding looks like: the disinvestment from reliance on police to deal with social and health issues for which they are not equipped, and instead shifting resources to community services.
- In one example, Yellowknife opened a new sobering centre in April and is developing Indigenous-led healing programs as part of a new alcohol strategy.

What is defunding?

“We can and should have an emergency service that people can call if they are experiencing mental distress.

We can and should disarm police, like the United Kingdom does, and like Oakland has just committed to do.

We can and should invest in shelters for people who are experiencing gender-based violence, so that the 300 women who are turned away from shelters each night in Canada have a place to go.

We can and should create an emergency service for survivors and victims of sexual assault that will actually support them, instead of relying on the police forces in this country who have been routinely accused of sexual misconduct.” – blacklivesmatter.ca/defund-the-police

- We can and should provide nurturing educational environments, free of police interacting with our children without parental supervision.
- We can and should decriminalize drug use, and take a public health approach to providing support for those who need it.
- We can and should stop policing poverty, and reinvest funding into social housing, free transit, and food security.
- We can and should create a world where we all feel safe, and we all get what we need to live a life of dignity. And we can start that process by taking the funding that we currently waste on policing, and reinvest it in creating the safety and security we all need.

A definition

On July 9, 2020, a staff motion at the Board of Police Commissioners proposed the following definition of defunding the police:

That the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners adopt a definition of defunding the police that supports a role for policing in HRM that includes:

- Police performing policing functions
- Appropriate resources to perform non-police functions
- Investment in resources that have been proven to support community risks and promote crime prevention.

Some examples of definitions

Robyn Maynard, author of the bestselling book *Policing Black Lives* (Fernwood Press, 2017), Vanier Scholar, and PhD candidate at the University of Toronto defines defunding as:

“Removing funds, services, scope and equipment from police departments and investing in real and non-carceral alternatives to provide community safety.”

Dr. OmiSoore Dryden, the James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies at the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University, whose work examines the impact of anti-Black racism on health, defines defunding as:

“Defunding the police means acknowledging that police do not in fact keep us safe. And for this reason, the money put towards the systems of policing needs to cease. Money must no longer be provided to fund police or policing systems.” (Personal communication)

But what does that look like?

- Questions around why we turn to punishment, why we believe our safety depends on policing, misconceptions around crime rates, disproportionate media coverage of violent crime, historical racial ideologies of criminalization persisting from enslavement and colonization, etc. all influence cultural and social ideas around policing. Furthermore, we are not always aware of the resources that already exist within our communities.
- For example, early in the COVID-19 pandemic Nova Scotia was able to release 41% of provincially incarcerated people and provide supportive housing in community at around half the cost of incarceration.
- These releases point towards the possibility of divesting from punishment. Defunding/divestment is already taking place in our communities where (under-resourced) structures already exist.

Committee

- In accordance with the [Halifax Regional Municipality Community and Race Relations Policy](#), this work will operate within the context of understanding the impacts of Anti-Black racism and colonization. It is crucial to centre the voices, knowledge, and experience of the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians in this process.
- A definition is only meaningful if it is accompanied by a process that explains and explores how defunding can be put into practice, both at the level of the Police Board (and other government authorities) and in terms of community understanding of and engagement with the idea.

Role of the committee

- The role of the committee will be to collaborate on research and reporting, and to facilitate the process of convening community hearings. The committee will also be comprised of experts (including those with lived experience) from groups impacted by policing, with an emphasis on organizations that provide community-based services.
- I envision the role of the committee as:
 - connecting to impacted communities and facilitating communication with and participation from communities and organizations;
 - collaboratively reviewing and presenting research relevant to policing and Board policy, other municipal precedents, and current literature on the topic; and
 - designing and facilitating public hearings.

Proposed Committee Composition

Dr. OmiSoore Dryden: as the JRJ Chair in Black Canadian Studies, her position is a national chair in Black Studies. She also provides a lens of the histories of anti-Blackness and the intersections of policing with race, queerness, and gender.

Dr. Leah Genge: her practice as a doctor in areas of mental health, addiction, incarceration, etc. provides a valuable lens for understanding the health impacts of policing, and a strong expertise in the impact of policing on marginalized communities.

Decade of People of African Descent Coalition: A representative to be chosen by DPAD. This coalition has long experience working on issues of justice and has proposed the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute and African Nova Scotian Policing Strategy, both of which engage key ideas.

Nova Scotia Policing Policy Working Group: One representative to be chosen by the NS PPWG's constituent organizations (East Coast Prison Justice Society; Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia; Women's Wellness Within).

Representatives chosen by members of their community from organizations/individuals with experience working and thinking about justice and policing:

Mi'kmaw community

LGBTQ2S+ community

Disability advocacy community

Housing and Homelessness

Youth

Gender-based and intimate partner violence.

Newcomer/refugee community

Additional Supports

- The research work of the committee will be supported by students from Dr. Rachel Zellars' class on Community Organizing at Saint Mary's University who can perform background research and other crucial tasks to facilitate the research being completed in a timely manner.
- Research support will also be provided by law students at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University through Pro Bono Students Canada.
- This participation also builds the capacity of young people to engage in policy work and community engagement.

Public Hearings

- Following models accomplished in Edmonton and Toronto among other cities, the Board of Police Commissioners in concert with the Defunding Committee, should convene public hearings focused on presentations by those in community who provide services. The purpose of these hearings is to:
 - Learn about what resources exist in our communities and what kind of services provide alternatives to police.
 - Build public understanding of what defunding entails and what it looks like in practice.
 - Involve community collaboration in engagement with the Board and in the process of defunding.
 - Contribute to the Board's 2020 [workplan deliverable](#) of increasing public participation in meetings.

Public Input

- We propose that the Committee proactively reach out to community groups to request presentations of 10-15 minutes, and that we create a call for public submissions. Written submissions would also be acceptable. Based on the responses from community organizations and members, we would then set aside the required time for hearings, likely online.
- These hearings will be open and accessible to the public. I request that resources be provided for captions/ASL translation in order to facilitate this engagement for all community members.

Report

- Following the conclusion of public hearings, the committee will submit a report to the Board:
 - Providing a definition of defunding
 - Providing an overview of the major research, history of discourse on defunding, and current debate around defunding and abolition
 - Reviewing practices in other municipalities
 - Addressing relevant Board/municipal policies or policy proposals that could facilitate defunding
 - Summarizing and drawing from the community hearings
 - Articulating what defunding would look like in policy and practice in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Timeline

- The originally proposed timeline suggested a November start date for public hearings.
- While research work can be done by the committee immediately upon its formation, it is unlikely that public hearings will take place before the new year.
- I propose hearings take place in early January.
- The report will be completed by Spring (March/April.)
- Before the final report is accepted by the Board, I propose a community presentation and period of engagement where community can read, listen to, engage with and comment on the report.

Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

Terms of Reference - Committee to Define Defunding Police

Background

Following the death of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020 in Minneapolis, a global movement calling for rethinking and reconstituting police and their role in public safety, resulted in protests and demonstrations with a rallying cry to defund police. In Halifax, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) sought to define defunding and on September 21st, 2020 voted to commission El Jones, poet, professor and activist, to develop a proposal and recruit a committee to recommend a definition that the BoPC could consider.

Purpose

The role of the committee will be to review relevant research and conduct community engagements to allow citizens to express their view regarding the definition of Defunding Police. Given the current pandemic it is anticipated that the community meetings will be virtual.

Term

The start date for the work was originally September 2020. Due to the municipal election held in October 2020, the BoPC did not meet in October, delaying approval. November 16th, 2020, the BoPC unanimously passed a Motion to begin the process of recruiting members for the committee while a sub-committee of the BoPC examined the administrative support needed. It is anticipated that a final report will be submitted in May 2021.

Membership

- El Jones,
- Chair of JRJ Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie
- Physician with expertise in mental health, addiction, incarceration and an understanding of the impact of policing on marginalized communities
- Representative from the Decade of People of African Descent Coalition (DPAD)
- Representative from the Nova Scotia Policing Policy Working Group (NS PPWG)
- A member from each of the following organizations will be invited to add a member to the committee:
 - Mi'kmaw Community
 - LGBTQ2S+ community
 - Disability Advocacy Community
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Youth
 - Gender-based and intimate partner violence
 - Newcomer/refugee community

Role

The Committee will

- Collaboratively review research relevant to policing, board policy, municipal precedents and current literature
- Conduct virtual public meetings to invite citizen submissions and to gather feedback that will inform the final recommendations
- Provide a report with recommendations for the BoPC to consider how to define defunding police
- Follow HRM's practice of making meeting minutes and agenda's available to the public.

Budget

The work of the committee will be supported by the Municipal Clerk's office. This includes but is not limited to:

- Assistance with messaging to invite the community to participate
- Coordination of technical support for virtual meetings
- Email address to receive written submissions from the public
- Social media support as required
- Reimbursement for non-waged participants to cover child care and/or transportation if required

Report

The final report will include:

- A definition of defunding
- Overview of the current research and debate around defunding
- Practices from other municipalities
- Summary of community presentations
- Summary of what defunding could look like in HRM

Discussion items for the Board:

- Considering the items that may be out of scope

DRAFT