

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM22.5	ACTION			Ward: All
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The Toronto Police Budget: Defund, Rebalance and Invest in a New Approach - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Kristen Wong-Tam, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Province of Ontario to amend the Police Services Act, 1990 to allow for the City of Toronto to have direct oversight over the Toronto Police Services Budget by creating a clause in sec 39(4) that removes the word "not" as it pertains to the City of Toronto as follows:

In establishing an overall budget for the board, the Toronto City council does ~~not~~ have the authority to approve or disapprove specific items in the estimates.

2. City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to provide a 2021 Budget request that is a minimum of 10 percent lower than the 2020 approved Budget.

3. City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to provide a line-by-line accounting of their 2021 Budget request.

4. City Council direct the City Manager to consult with the People and Equity Division, Social Development, Finance, and Administration, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and the Anti-Black Racism Partnership and Accountability Circle and to report to the Budget Committee in the fourth quarter of 2020 on recommended investments that enhance resiliency in marginalized communities, to be provided with the savings that would be realized by reallocating the funds from the 10 percent reduction in the Toronto Police Services Budget as described in Recommendation 2 above, potentially including:

- a. Community-led alternatives to policing and the criminal justice system;
- b. Anti-racism education;
- c. Programs identified in the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy;
- d. Childcare;
- e. Affordable housing;

- f. Tenants' Defence Fund;
- g. Skills training and Employment counselling; and
- h. Food security.

5. City Council direct the City Manager to work with Black, Indigenous and People of Colour community-led organizations, mental health, restorative justice and legal experts to identify alternative 911 and other emergency responses to replace armed police officers with mobile, community-based crisis programs as first responders to de-escalate and triage non-criminal incidents of crisis involving mental health and addictions, the homeless, school discipline and neighbour disputes and to report back to the September 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee with the findings and recommendations, along with costing, source of funding and all other pertinent information.

6. City Council request the Toronto Police Service Board to establish an explicit policy to immediately ban the use of deadly force and military-style weapons against unarmed civilians, including but not limited to firearms, chemical weapons, including tear gas or armoured vehicles, and to dispose of all such weapons by no later than one year by June 30, 2021.

7. City Council request the Government of Ontario to eliminate any and all appeal powers for the Toronto Police Services Board as set out in the Police Services Act, 1990 for the Ontario Civilian Police Commission to overturn Toronto City Council decisions pertaining to Police Budget matters including requests for reduction, abolition, creation or amalgamation of Police services.

8. City Council direct the City Manager to establish an Accountability Table, similar to that established for the Toronto Seniors Strategy, by September 2020, composed of representatives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, mental health and addictions experts, homeless advocates, and other equity-seeking groups to monitor the implementation of Recommendations 1 to 7 above.

Summary

We watched the video of George Floyd being murdered by a Minneapolis police officer with horror, sadness and anger. We watched the video of Amy Cooper in New York weaponizing white privilege by calling the police on a Black person who was birding in Central Park. We've seen citizens peacefully protesting police brutality met with grievous and indefensible displays of police brutality in cities across America.

These disturbing and unacceptable exhibits of police misconduct and systemic anti-Black racism have rightly captured our attention, but it is critical that we recognize that they are not new, isolated, or confined to the United States.

Black, Indigenous and People of Colour too often have lower incomes, poorer health outcomes and are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

That's because Black, Indigenous and People of Colour face systemic racism here in Toronto every single day.

That's because systemic racism in the Toronto Police Service has deep impacts on Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

That's because systemic racism in the City of Toronto's Budget, and society at large, has deep impacts on Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

We recognize that many of the impediments to community safety will not be solved by the police. Too many people are unable to access the life-saving resources they need to thrive, while growing affordability, mental health and addictions crises are having massive health and safety impacts.

In 2016, in response to growing pressure from community members and activists, the Province of Ontario established the Anti-Racism Directorate. The Directorate is tasked with applying an anti-racism lens to government policies, programs, and services. Shortly after the formation of the Directorate, Toronto City Council called on the province to conduct a full review of the mandate, procedures and outcomes of the Special Investigations Unit with respect to the treatment of cases that involve Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Since then, Premier Doug Ford has demoted the position of Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism to associate Minister, cut the budget of the Anti-Racism Directorate and eliminated the four sub-committee working groups.

If we are committed to eradicating anti-Black racism, this commitment needs to be demonstrated across the Province and funding for anti-racism work must be restored and expanded. The Province must also commit to a full review of the mandate, procedures and outcomes of the Special Investigations Unit.

In 2013, we listened to the experts, including Dr. Alvin Curling, who wrote the provincial Roots of Youth Violence Report. The report, and many other studies, have concluded that police enforcement is less effective than community supports at curbing violent crime. Experts cite inequality, poverty, mental health, systemic racism, and a lack of opportunity as primary factors influencing the path a teen chooses in life.

Toronto City Council has already started to recognize the importance of community investments through the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy. However, there is much more work needed to provide equity for marginalized Torontonians.

Despite advocacy from organizations representing racialized Torontonians and other vulnerable communities, many of the recommendations in the strategies have not been funded or acted upon.

The path forward to supporting Black, and Indigenous and People of Colour has been made clear by those voices: defund the police and reallocate those funds toward community supports. Defunding does not mean a lack of support for the police services we rely on – it's about a necessary rebalancing to ensure that we fund alternatives to policing.

There are actual barriers to this way forward at the municipal level in Toronto, unlike cities in other jurisdictions. Under Ontario provincial statute, Toronto City Council does not have any direct control of the Police Budget. While City Councillors have the ability to set the overall Police Budget, we cannot legally decide how the money is spent. The Toronto Police Service, for example, could unilaterally cut road safety enforcement or community and neighbourhood policing initiatives if their budget is reduced.

This Motion seeks to wrest control of the Police Budget through an amendment in the provincial Police Services Act. As the principal funding body, we assert that Toronto City Council should have much greater oversight of how local tax dollars are spent and an understanding of the funded services.

It is incumbent upon decision-makers to ensure that necessary resources and supports are provided to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. The Police Budget is the single largest item in our City's Operating Budget.

Therefore, this Motion seeks to reduce the Police Budget by 10 percent and direct the savings towards community investments at the recommendations of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and Social Development, Finance, and Administration Division.

If approved, the actions contained in this Motion would be a significant step towards providing equity for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM22.5