

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Subject: Policing in Hamilton
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 11:51:27 AM

Good morning, Kirsten. I've sent this letter to my councillor as well as to the mayor's office. I would like you to ensure it's delivered also to the Police Services Board.

I'm writing because recent events in Minneapolis as well as Toronto cause me concern about policing and community health services within our city. What is Hamilton doing to ensure its Black and Indigenous citizens aren't victimized by police? What about Hamiltonians with disabilities or those experiencing poverty or homelessness? What are we doing to make sure we're helping, not harming, those vulnerable neighbours?

Roughly a fifth of the city's tax supported operating budget goes to policing — about \$172 million this year. That is a significant portion of our tax dollars, and sadly, more than Hamilton spends in total on social services. The imbalance is, frankly, inhumane. I would like to see these allocations reversed, so that some of that police money is directed instead at mental health services, housing initiatives, education, income security, harm reduction services, accessible rehabilitation, and social workers. So many horrid situations can be prevented if met by community-based supports upstream, rather than later by an officer with a gun and a badge.

Furthermore, I would like to see Hamilton Police Service's future budgets dedicated more intensely to harm reduction, including the mandatory use of body cameras for officers (which are only useful, it must be noted, when accompanied by rules to prevent impingements on civil liberties, [as outlined here by the ACLU](#)).

It is evident our current strategies about how a city is served and protected are misconceived and dysfunctional. We are due a more compassionate approach.

Best,
Chris