**TPSB Townhall Submission**

**July 9th 2019**

I am a member of Showing Up For Racial Justice Toronto. We are a grassroots community organization that is dedicated to mobilizing white communities to divest from white supremacist institutions and take action to support Black, Indigenous, and POC led movements for racial justice and decolonization. Given the deeply entrenched racism of the Toronto Police Service, and the calls from our partner organizations, policing is an issue that SURJ Toronto considers a top priority. Black people in Toronto are 20x more likely than white residents to be killed by the police. This horrific statistic is many times worse than in the United States, exposing the lie behind claims that Canada is less racist than our neighbours south of the border. Anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and racist police brutality and murder is a crisis here too.

We grieve the unnecessary deaths of Regis Korchinski Packet, of Andrew Loku, of Ian Pryce, of Michael Eligon, of so many others. We see the intersection of anti-Blackness and sanism that continues to endanger Mad Black and Indigenous folks, especially, when they encounter Toronto Police. We neither want nor need police officers harassing young people in high school hallways, or assaulting poor people on the street or the subway, or traumatizing people experiencing mental health crises, or criminalizing drug users, sex workers, non status people, and others. We know that more resources and more training and more advisory boards will not solve a crisis that is deeply historical, structural, cultural, and fundamental to the role that police serve in our society. We know that the police cannot solve problems that the police created. We at Showing Up For Racial Justice Toronto stand in solidarity with our community partners who are demanding that the police be disarmed, defunded, and dismantled.

Defunding the police is a matter of public safety; too many people have died at the hands of the Toronto cops already. Too many communities struggle under a regime of police harassment, violence, and criminalization. Toronto would be safer if the over 1.1 billion dollars currently being funnelled into surveilling, policing, and incarcerating its (Black, Indigenous, migrant, poor, criminalized) residents was instead spent on social housing, education programs, community led mental health supports, and other services that actually help people.

Enough is enough. We demand actual, systemic change.