

From: Anthony Yuen [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:15 PM

To: Mayor <Mayor@burnaby.ca>; Calendino, Attilio Pietro <AttilioPietro.Calendino@burnaby.ca>; Dhaliwal, Satvinder <Satvinder.Dhaliwal@burnaby.ca>; Johnston, Dan <Dan.Johnston@burnaby.ca>; Keithley, Joe <Joe.Keithley@burnaby.ca>; McDonell, Paul <Paul.McDonell@burnaby.ca>; Wang, James <James.Wang@burnaby.ca>; Clerks <Clerks@burnaby.ca>

Subject: Call to action for the City of Burnaby

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To Mayor Mike Hurley, Councillor Pietro Calendino, Councillor Sav Dhaliwal, Councillor Dan Johnston, Councillor Colleen Jordan, Councillor Joe Keithley, Councillor Paul McDonell, and Councillor James Wang

I am writing to you today to call on you and members of the Public Safety Committee to start divesting from the violent institution that is the Burnaby RCMP.

I am a first-generation Asian Canadian. My parents immigrated to Canada and to Burnaby to give me and my brother a better life because they believed that Burnaby would be a safe place to raise their two sons. They believed that Burnaby would be an accepting and inclusive place to start their new lives. They put their trust in the City of Burnaby to provide what Hong Kong could not provide.

I have grown up and lived in Burnaby all of my life. I have had the privilege to travel outside of BC and of Canada and each time I take such pride to talk about my home. However, in light of recent events, I can no longer in good conscience speak about Burnaby with pride while ignoring the systemic racism that plagues our city.

I have seen, over the course of the past month, the long overdue calls for justice for Black and Indigenous lives lost to police brutality and white supremacy. Burnaby is not an exception to this ongoing violence. In fact, many residents, especially [Black](#) and [Indigenous](#) residents have and continue to [come forward to share their violent and unsafe experiences](#) with the Burnaby and [BC](#) RCMP. While many cities (e.g. Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, City of Minneapolis) have responded with much needed proposals to defund the police and invest in public services such as harm reduction, homeless shelters and safer injection sites, **the City of Burnaby has been silent.**

In a moment where multiple uprisings across North America are calling attention to police violence and inaction from decision makers, there is no better time for our municipality to commit to change. What we need in Burnaby is leadership that can initiate reform with the eventual goal of abolition of police and prisons.

The Burnaby RCMP detachment makes up **\$62,499,100, or 12.05%** of the City's total operating budget. It is even more jarring to learn that the Burnaby RCMP detachment makes up **48.3% of the city's total Public Safety & Community Services budget**. That's almost half of a budget that can be better invested into more meaningful forms of community support.

The police budget has been increasing steadily over the past few years. In 2018, the City of Burnaby allocated approximately \$60 million. Just two years later, the budget sits at \$67 million. This represents a 10% increase in just two years.

In the City's most recent budget, a safe community was listed as a priority. Under this goal, the report identified Drug Initiatives and Crime Reduction Strategy as priority areas moving forward. Many jurisdictions have non-police approaches to realizing these goals as they recognize that police have not been able to ensure safety for those of us who are Black, Indigenous, or racialized.

Increased police presence does not keep a community safe. Instead of continuing to invest in an institution that criminalizes and further marginalizes community members who need support, I urge you to invest in initiatives that support long-term community safety, such as harm reduction services, child care support, education, comprehensive mental health intervention and social support, peer-based programming, housing initiatives, access to recreational facilities and other community-based support systems.

I am asking that you, as an elected official, to commit to do the following:

- 1.
2. To
3. **never again**
4. vote to increase the Burnaby RCMP Detachment budget.
- 5.
- 6.
7. To prioritize the expansion of
8. **community-led health and safety initiatives**
9. over future financial investment into the Burnaby RCMP Detachment.
- 10.
- 11.
12. To take direction from communities with
13. lived experience of harm caused by policing.
- 14.

We must eradicate the notion that police are necessary for safety and order, when in fact the opposite is true. We must create a better future for all, and there is a surplus of evidence and experience telling us that policing is not the answer and only causes

further harm. **Defunding the Burnaby RCMP Detachment will save lives and increase the overall health of many intersecting communities in Burnaby.**

As a resident here, this is a top priority for me. I'm urging you to take this concern seriously and do everything in your power to address it. Please let me know what you are doing and what the City of Burnaby will do to address this issue, a concern shared by many residents of Burnaby.

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Yuen

