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# Reimagine Public Safety

Presentation to Board of Police  
Commissioners

July 9 2020

# Introduction

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- 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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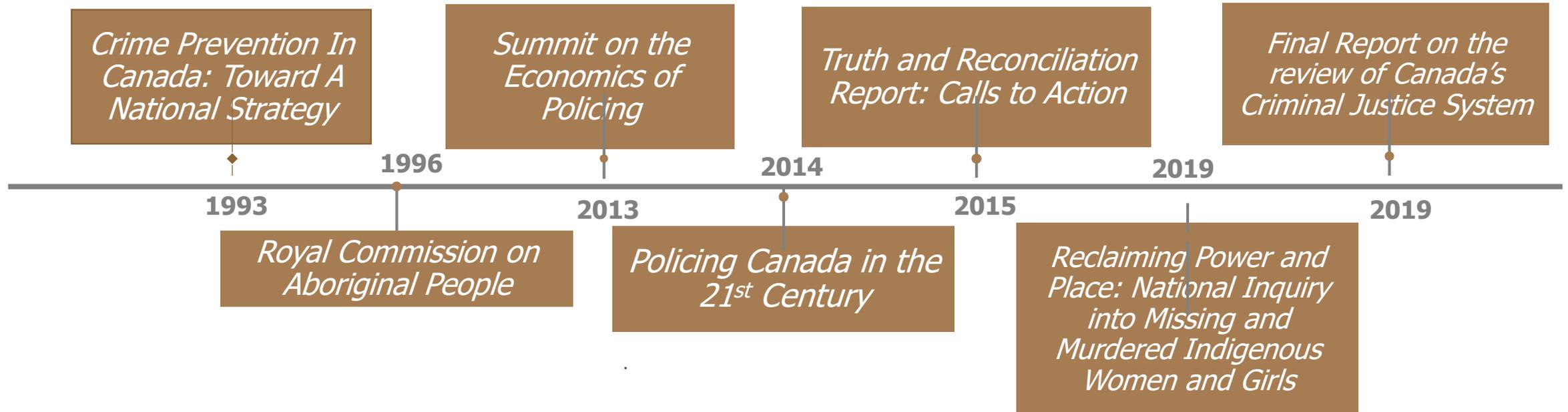
# A Broader Conversation

- **June 10<sup>th</sup>** – 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 15<sup>th</sup>** – Baltimore Council approves 22.4 million budget cut to Police
- **June 17<sup>th</sup>** – 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 18<sup>th</sup>**- Philadelphia cancelled a planned \$19 million increase for the police department and shifted \$14 million of the police budget elsewhere — including affordable housing.
- **June 26<sup>th</sup>** – Minneapolis Council move to defund police and establish a new department on Community Safety and Violence Prevention.
- **June 29<sup>th</sup>** – Toronto City Council debates a motion to defund police to 10%

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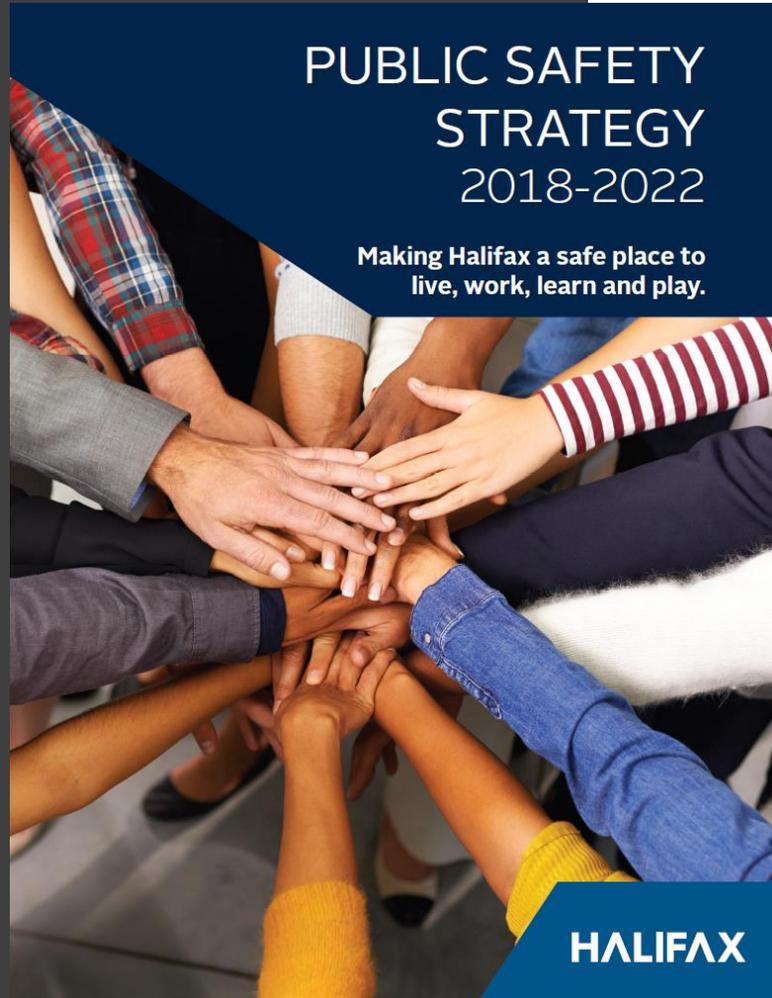
# Why now?

*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**

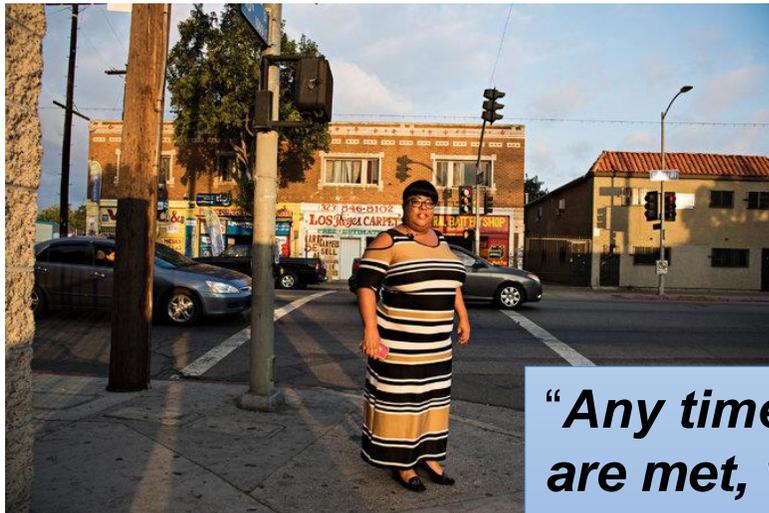
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# TheUpshot

## 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.

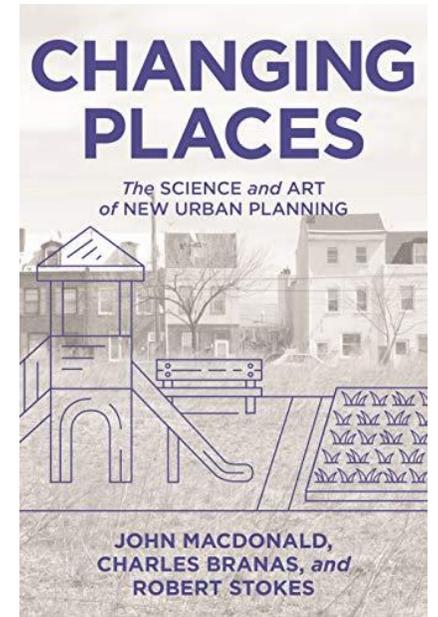
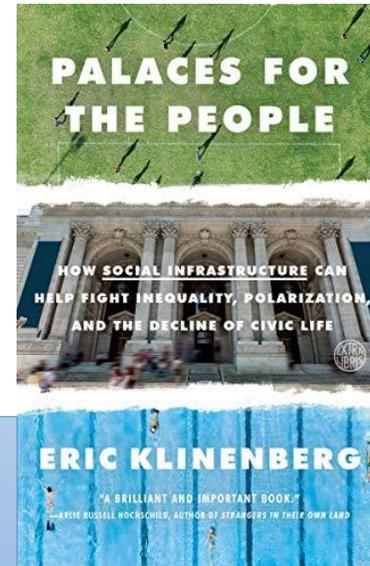
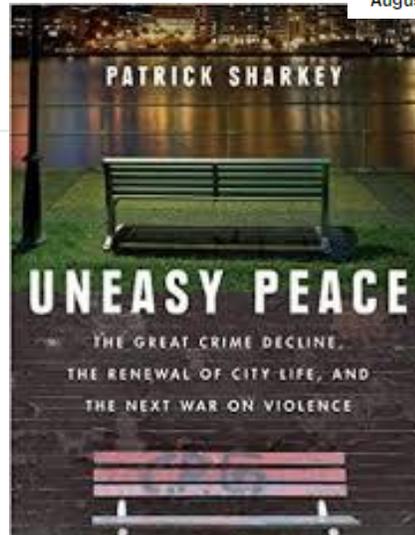
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## THE OTHER SIDE OF “BROKEN WINDOWS”

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

By Eric Klinenberg

August 23, 2018



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## Strategic Priorities

- 4 Priority Areas
- 76 Actions

[www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/public-safety](http://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