

My name is Rowan Somerville, and I am a current resident in Le Plateau Borough in Montreal.

I am writing today to express my outrage and disappointment regarding the operational budget of the SPVM, which is, according to the online 2020 Budget \$665,300,000, comprising nearly 11% of the annual budget for the City of Montreal. Considering other issues in Montreal, such as our homelessness problems, poor infrastructure, and contaminated drinking water, I find this number to be reprehensible.

Moreover, the SPVM, which is meant to protect Montrealers and maintain peace, has shown in numerous circumstances creating unsafe environment for racialized minorities, upon whom the SPVM has practiced racial profiling as well as excessive force. Like all police departments in North America, the SPVM has had an active role in over-policing and causing bodily and mental harm to unarmed black people, and it is imperative that our city leadership do their part to ensure this never happens again.

Anthony Griffin (1987), Preslie Leslie (1990), Osmond Fletcher (1991), Marcellus François (1991), Trevor Kelly (1993), Anas Bennis (2004), Fredy Villanueva (2008), Mario Hamel (2011), Patrick Limoges (2011), Alain Magloire (2013), René Gallant (2015), Bony Jean-Pierre (2016), Pierre Coriolan (2017) and Nicholas Gibbs (2018) are some names of people who have died at the hands of the SPVM (source: "Another Black Life" by Robyn Maynard).

Moreover, in the time as our city slowly begins to recover from the economic crisis this pandemic has caused, it is more important than ever that we invest sustainably, especially in areas such as Montreal Nord where there are higher numbers of racialized individuals, for it has been proven time and time again that those individuals, especially black residents of Montreal, have been disproportionately affected by this pandemic.

I demand that you, as a representative of mine and this city's interests, start advocating to never again increase the SPVM's budget, and to reallocate those funds to social organization and sustainable development goals in our city. This includes funding for police body cams, an initiative that has been shown to fall short of its goals and which ultimately legitimizes a fundamentally flawed institution.

I demand a proposed SPVM budget cut of, at the absolute minimum, \$300 million in accordance with the City of Montreal's operating budget shortfall projections due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I demand that you prioritize the expansion of community-led health and safety initiatives, community oversight committees for police officers, independently investigate and prosecute officers who violate the law and basic human rights,

and to redirect more funding toward infrastructure, affordable housing and other programs that better the quality of life for Montrealers.

In the face of cyclical violence we are seeing is so relevant in North American, both Canadian and American history, we need Montreal leadership to initiate a reform that targets both our racist policing system, and the eventual abolition of police and prisons, thereby actively making strides toward ending the cyclical violence experienced by BIPOC and LGBTQ people in our city, as well as sex workers, homeless people, and other vulnerable populations.

Thank you for taking the time to think critically about this issue. I would appreciate a response detailing what steps are being taken to change the current operational budget, and what steps are being taken towards reinvesting these funds in our community, especially in communities housing vulnerable populations.

Yours sincerely,
Rowan Somerville