

WHAT WILL
MAKE US SAFE?



In Surrey, the political field on “crime” is nearly indistinguishable between the new progressive Proudly Surrey Party, which is promising more spending on more police officers and the creation of a new municipal police force, and the ruling Surrey First Party, which is promising more spending on more police officers and a referendum on a new municipal police force. The City of Surrey is already home to the largest RCMP detachment in the country; this overwhelming police presence does nothing to address the real causes of our fear and insecurity. Instead of turning to the police to solve problems of “crime” and violence in Surrey, we need to divest from the police and invest in real community solutions. It is up to us to decide what form those solutions take. What will make us truly safe?

ABOUT ANTI- POLICE POWER SURREY

Anti Police Power Surrey (APPS) is a campaign to build collective resistance to police power in Surrey. APPS is a campaign of Alliance Against Displacement, an anti-capitalist/anti-colonial organization that supports community struggles for survival and power.

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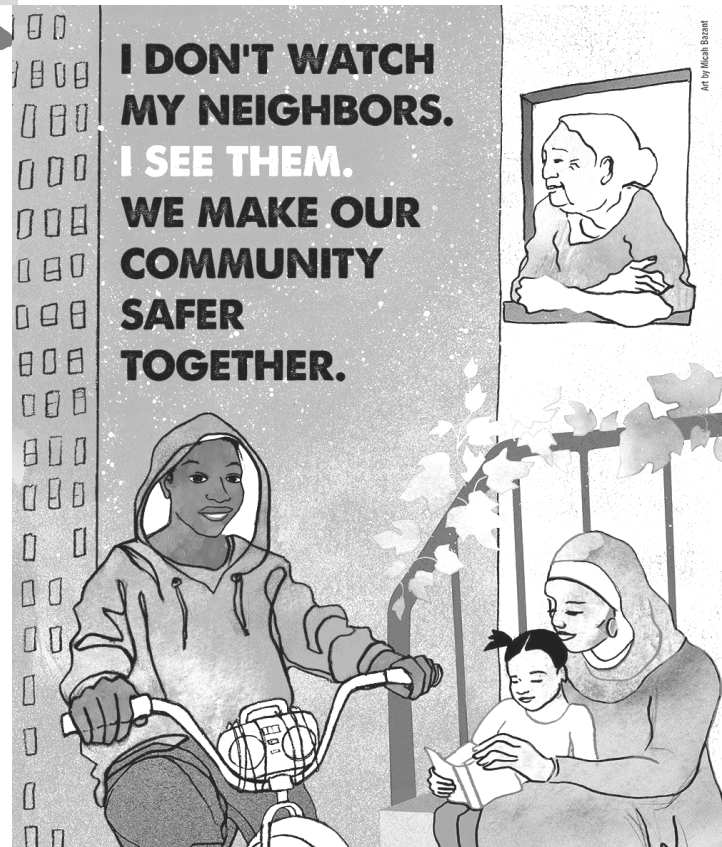
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DIVEST FROM POLICE

INVEST IN
COMMUNITY

I DON'T WATCH
MY NEIGHBORS.
I SEE THEM.
WE MAKE OUR
COMMUNITY
SAFER
TOGETHER.



Art by Michael Brown

THE PANIC AROUND GANG VIOLENCE

Front and centre in the discourse around crime is the issue of gang violence. Surrey parents are concerned for their children's futures – not only because there is a small chance their children will experience the violence and uncertainty associated with gang involvement, but also because of a deeper crisis of racism, poverty, alienation, and violence. Parents – particularly racialized, first-generation immigrant parents – are afraid their children will be the first generation in a century to be worse off than the previous generation. The panic and desperation for somebody to do something about gang violence have manifested in calls for more police on the ground. But police cannot possibly address the crisis of material security and social belonging that underlie the panic about crime and gangs. Divesting from the RCMP would free up City funds that could then be re-invested in community-led projects aimed at actually addressing the crisis underlying the growth of gangs.

CRIME AND COPS IN SURREY'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION

According to polls, crime is the number one issue in the 2018 Surrey election. But "crime" is an ambiguous term – it is both a catch-all for various illegal activities and a symbol for all sorts of fears and anxieties. It conjures up images of murder, sexual assault, and gang shootings, but also refers to the strategies of poor and homeless people who are just trying to survive. Crime rates are falling in Surrey and across the country, but the mainstream media and the RCMP contribute to a sense of escalating danger, and reinforce the message that the best way to address "crime" is through policing and prisons.

In response to the swirling panic about crime, all candidates running in the Surrey municipal election are proposing different versions of the same thing: they promise to enlarge police presence and budgets, increase surveillance, and expand police programs in schools and communities. Rather than seek to understand the anxieties underlying Surrey residents' concerns about "crime," politicians play on our fears in order to win our votes. And instead of trying to address the roots of violence – like racism, alienation, and inequality – they opt to increase the power of police over our lives and communities.

POLICING POOR AND HOMELESS PEOPLE

In this election, the moral panic around crime and homelessness are connected, with homelessness subsumed into the discussions of crime as a "social problem," not an economic or political problem. Similar to racist anti-gang policies, poor bashing anti-homeless policies tend to give rise to pro-cop responses, like the so-called RCMP "Outreach Team" of 12 cops and four bylaw officers, which was established to patrol the hundreds of tents set up on the 135A Street "Strip." The Outreach Team subjected homeless residents of the Strip to surveillance, harassment, and criminalization 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This strategy continues, even now that the Strip has been cleared of tents – in fact, homeless people say that police and bylaw harassment has escalated. Homelessness continues to rise as incomes fall behind skyrocketing rents, governments refuse to build permanent social housing, and vacancy rates plummet – but candidates running for election propose to funnel more money into policing and criminalizing poor and homeless people, rather than directing those resources at the root causes of poverty.