SAMPLE LETTER TO TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD #1

Jim Hart Chair,

Toronto Police Services Board

40 College Street,

Toronto, Ontario

M5G 2J3

 (Jim.Hart@tpsb.ca)

Cc: Mayor John Tory, Your City Councillor\*

I am writing to share my views about the kind of police chief who needs to be hired to ensure a better future for our city. As numerous government reports have revealed, including the recent Ontario Human Rights Commission Report, Toronto police culture is problematic. Specifically, the police need to do a better job addressing the needs of local communities, racialized individuals, and people experiencing mental health crises.

• There needs to be a focus on de-escalation, rather than resorting to the use of force;

• The recruitment and promotion of police officers should resemble the diversity of Toronto’s population, both in terms of race, gender and sexuality. The Toronto Police should look and feel like *our* police force, not an occupying force from elsewhere.

As a person of faith, I am appalled at the prejudicial treatment of Blacks and racialized individuals by the police. Everyone here should feel safe walking down the streets, regardless of the colour of their skin. The Toronto Police’s own recent report found that Blacks are strip-searched more and dealt with more violently than other racial groups. This is unacceptable.

I encourage the Toronto Police Services Board to be bold in its choice of a new chief. Since Toronto’s Police culture has been shown to be a problem, please consider hiring someone from outside of the city. We need a CEO who can think outside of the box, try new approaches, collaborate with community agencies, and achieve safety for all in this city.

The city is watching who is chosen as new chief. We need someone who has a bold vision, and the skills to make it a reality.

Sincerely,

Member of Lawrence Park Community Church