
June 6th, 2022

Office of the Mayor and City Councillors
2nd Floor, City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor Sohi, Edmonton City Councilors,

The Downtown Recovery Coalition is a group of both for-profit and not-for-profit business and community leaders dedicated to ensuring our downtown sees sustained economic recovery post-pandemic. We're focused on advocating for: safety and security, infrastructure and cleanliness, and transformative projects that impact our downtown positively and create vibrancy.

It is with this in mind that we write to you today in support of City Administration's amendment to Bylaw 19983 - Conduct of Transit Passengers.

In a six week period, transit security guards used Naloxone 52 times in response to overdoses, which is a community tragedy and a taxing use of these transit resources. The businesses and community organizations we represent are struggling to get their staff and clientele back downtown, oftentimes resorting to supplementing parking costs for staff, as the open drug use and safety concerns within transit stations has deterred employees from accessing the service.

The current community safety challenges facing Downtown residents, workers, and small business owners are very real, and reports have grown alarmingly more severe and damaging in recent months. Our Downtown business and community leaders are aligned with Administration in our understanding of the long-term, systemic and structural changes that are required to build a city that is safe, prosperous, and welcoming for all Edmontonians. This is reflected in our ongoing advocacy to the Provincial and Federal governments for investments in long-term solutions like permanent supportive housing, harm reduction, mental health supports for all, and equitable pathways out of poverty.

However, these long-term solutions do not address the immediate and devastating public safety crisis that we as the Downtown community currently find ourselves in. We need clear and concise leadership from Edmonton City Council: our transit stations and buses are not places for public consumption of drugs. Period.

Sincerely,

Alex Hryciw
Chair, Downtown Recovery Coalition
Director of Strategy
Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

Anand Pye
Vice Chair, Downtown Recovery Coalition
Executive Director
NAIOP, Commercial Real Estate Development
Association

Pilar Martinez
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Executive Director
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Kevin McKee
Chief Executive Officer
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Chris Buyze
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Robert Black
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Devin Pope
Property Manager
The Gather Co.

Hon Leong
Chair
Chinatown Transformation Collaborative Society

Jim Brown
Sherrick Management

Sharleen Oborowsky
Board, Edmonton Police Foundation &
Director, Obcorp Holdings

Sean Kirk
General Manager
Edmonton City Centre

Dave Young
Executive Vice President
CBRE Edmonton

Henry Edgar
Partner
EDGAR

Cheryll Watson
Chief Connector
STEM Collegiate

Puneeta McBryan
Executive Director
Downtown Business Association

Claire MacDonald
Project Development Manager
Prairie Sky Gondola

Jan Fox
Executive Director
REACH Edmonton

Ashif Mawji
Chair, Edmonton Police Foundation and Venture
Capitalist

Chad Helm
Founder
The Helm