



September 18, 2024

Mayor Charlie Clark and City Councillors
City Council, City of Saskatoon
222 Third Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK

Re: Proposed Emergency Shelter Downtown

Dear Mayor Clark and City Councillors,

On behalf of the approximately 1,200 businesses that operate in this district, Downtown Saskatoon's Board of Directors would like to express our disappointment in the lack of consultation and collaboration regarding the proposed Emergency Shelter to be located on Pacific Avenue.

Downtown Saskatoon is a neighbourhood like any other and our residents and businesses owners should have been afforded an opportunity to raise concerns about another Emergency Shelter being dropped at our doorstep.

Previous emergency shelters that were operated in our neighbourhood in recent years created numerous challenges for the district and stifled operations and growth for many businesses and created an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere at times for staff, patrons, and community members. We have residents, hotels, businesses, and places of worship that were adversely affected by these previous facilities and undoubtedly, without proper preventative measures, will be affected by this new facility in a similar fashion.

We know these facilities that house large numbers of individuals with diverse needs do not always function well and the spill over of problems into the community are intense. Challenges relating to broken windows, petty theft, graffiti, biowaste, open drug use and abandoned paraphernalia, encampments, and the like, have been plentiful.

So, while we acknowledge that Council has declared the site location is not open to discussion, we would like to express a few thoughts on how we can co-exist in a meaningful and productive manner.

First and foremost, we would request that Council take a more strategic approach in outlining suitable operating procedures that include a clearly defined plan to ensure excellence in the following areas:

- Safety & Security
- Cleanliness & Garbage Management
- Loitering & Resident Overflow Management
- Graffiti & Vandalism Issues

This plan for excellence will need the operator, the landlord and the property management firm to be fully engaged in implementing proper proactive procedures inside and outside the facility and staying invested in owning the results.

Secondly, in addition to a strong operating plan, we would also request Council look into the following recommendations to help lessen the impact on the district:

- Restrict number of occupants to 40, and not permit expansion during term.
- Restrict the operating timeline to a 6-month term for the winter months only, as true emergency measure.
- Require exterior security personnel to be on site 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Establish a strict code of conduct for residents to ensure neighbourly behaviour.

And finally, we would ask Council to make additional funds available for the following:

- Help business owners with the costs of vandalism related repairs.
- Help business owners with the costs of security improvements.
- Expand pedestrian garbage bin emptying program into the late afternoon throughout the district and provide additional funding for litter removal.

We envision a Downtown Saskatoon that is not only a vital part of our city's fabric but also a beacon of cultural and economic vitality—a place where people come together, businesses thrive, and the future of our city is shaped. A place that is safe, clean, friendly, and welcoming. Without a strong Downtown, our city's progress and growth will be stifled. We should all be working together to achieve this great vision.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. We would be more than happy to sit down with you and discuss these concepts in more depth and explore ways where we can collaborate on further solutions.

Sincerely,

Blair Chapman, Vice Chair
Downtown Saskatoon Board of Directors