

Friday December 11, 2020

His Worship Mayor Lyn Hall
Members of Prince George City Council

CC: Acting City Manager Mr. Walter Babicz
Interim Deputy City Manager Mr. Ian Wells
Corporate Officer

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Good day Mayor Hall and Council:

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community, particularly as we have all been challenged and impacted to varying degrees by the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going economic uncertainty. The value of collaboration is now more evident than any other point.

Additionally, we want to recognize the commitment and diligence of the members of the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean and Inclusive Community. There are a great number of individuals and organizations who have committed their time and efforts to see real progress on one of the most significant long term impacts to our entire community.

As representative organizations for more than 1000 businesses in the City of Prince George, the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Prince George and Gateway Business Association are requesting official response from City Council on the issues raised during the December 16, 2019 Delegation to Council which presented a series of suggested policy avenues and a response matrix provided by business owners and operators in Prince George. We want Council to be aware that these issues have not been considered by the aforementioned Select Committee. We have raised concerns with the process and narrow scope of recommendations that the committee has been allowed to discuss so far. We respectfully request that the City provide responses to each of our original proposals of December 16, 2019 and re-attached to this letter.

Thank you for your commitment to developing a safe, clean and inclusive community for all residents.

Sincerely,



Delegation to Council

Monday December 16, 2019

Presentation Prepared & Delivered by:



Introduction

As representatives on behalf of more than 1,200 business and property owners in the City of Prince George, the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Prince George and Gateway BIA have been at the forefront of discussions with business and property owners, team members and stakeholders throughout our city on the changing face of our community.

On November 12, 2019, the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, along with our partners at Downtown PG and the Gateway BIA, hosted a business consultation, gaining a clearer understanding of the issues, impacts and desired outcomes of our representative members and stakeholders.

During the November 12, 2019 discussions, we collected feedback on some initial concepts, enquired about additional thoughts and worked in a collaborative manner to re-engage with those in attendance. Through this process, we have developed a list of recommendations for Government to consider.

We understand that this is not just a Prince George issue. Social and economic impacts are being experienced throughout BC and Canada. However, we believe in working collaboratively to invoke positive change in our community – building a better Prince George for everyone.

The included recommendations to Council and the Province represent the first steps in what will be a long process, requiring multiple engagements with Government, stakeholders and community organizations.

The Chamber, Downtown Prince George and Gateway BIA stand committed to being leading partners in this process, ensuring public input and transparent dialogue and processes are driving factors.

Thank you for your consideration of the ideas developed in consultation and collaboration with Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Prince George and Gateway BIA members.

2020 Policy and Enforcement Requests – City of Prince George

- 1) That the City of Prince George provide an additional 6 officers and 2 support staff to the Prince George RCMP and that these new members are assigned to uniformed patrols of the Downtown and Gateway areas. The new members and support staff are estimated to create an expenditure of \$1.8M per annum. Out of an abundance of caution, we are requesting that Mayor and Council for the City of Prince George consider this allocation necessary to enhance public safety and defer other spending to create a net zero budget impact

During 2020, we are requesting that the City of Prince George work with their internal teams, community stakeholders and the RCMP to develop an Integrated Public Safety and Enforcement Team with specific focus on creating vibrant and safe spaces for all residents, business owners/operators and patrons

AND;

- 2) That the City of Prince George enforce Bylaw 8425, 2012 – Amendment Bylaw 8819, 2017 being the Property Maintenance Bylaw. Owners and operators of harm reduction locations must be accountable for the debris, waste and paraphernalia left in the area of their operations. Where property owners and business operators throughout the Prince George are required to maintain safe and clean properties, any establishment found not adhering to the rules and regulations set forth by Council, and regulated by Bylaw, shall be subject to additional fines and/or penalties as enforceable by the City of Prince George

AND;

- 3) That the City of Prince George engage BC Hydro and Clean BC on opportunities to enhance lighting solutions in defined areas of the City. Particular focus should be placed upon alleyways and alcoves, walking routes, surface parking locations and parkades

AND;

- 4) That the City of Prince George petition the Government of British Columbia and Northern Health to develop treatment facilities/sobering centres - ensuring at risk persons can secure localized treatment assistance without the need to travel to the Lower Mainland

AND;

- 5) That the City of Prince George continue working with BC Housing and the Government of British Columbia to develop housing and employment solutions for those at risk on our streets

AND;

- 6) That the City of Prince George engage with Downtown Prince George the Gateway BIA and the Prince George Chamber of Commerce to advocate on their behalf to the Provincial and Federal Governments, providing the greatest level of transparency and continued asks on behalf of business and property owners as well as residents.

2020 Policy and Enforcement Requests – Province of British Columbia/Northern Health

Harm Reduction:

- 1) That the Province of British Columbia direct Northern Health to develop and implement sobering and treatment facilities within the City of Prince George - ensuring at risk users are able to receive the treatment required to live fulfilling lives

AND;

That the Province of British Columbia develop enhanced, street level mental health assistance for those at risk, creating a better understanding of the at risk community and what treatment assistance can be made available

AND;

That the Ministry and Children and Family Development be compelled to release unused, or under-utilized property at the Prince George Youth Custody Centre to BC Housing and the Health Ministry to create additional beds, short term sobering centres and long term addictions counselling and recovery services

AND;

That the Province of British Columbia allocate \$3.00 to mental health, addictions and homelessness solutions for every \$1.00 allocated to harm reduction strategies

Accountability:

- 1) That the Province of BC direct each Health Authority be required to mark paraphernalia used in harm reduction strategies with identifiable markings, ensuring all agencies are accountable for the recovery and disposal of the materials provided to users

Justice:

- 1) That the Attorney General for the Province of BC review and provide recommendations for modernizing the sentencing practice for prolific offenders

AND;

That the Attorney General for the Province of BC look at alternative systems and sentencing structures, taking into account rural and remote populations. And that restorative justice is strongly considered, providing a layer of accountability in the recovery process.

Results – November 12, 2019 Consultation

Opportunity	Immediate Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action
Create Social Services Zoning	15	9	36
Review Crowns Charging Process	17	25	13
Establish a Long Term Working Group of Business & Government	14	21	22
Develop a Long Term Funding Model for Mental Health & Drug Addiction	18	25	31
Review Prolific Offenders Act	39	11	15
Addressing Downtown as a Health Emergency	60	10	9
Ownership of Discarded Needles	52	14	4
Enhanced Lighting Projects	20	27	26
Examine Downtown CCTV	25	13	16
Open Community Policing Outlets	20	11	31
Uniformed Patrols (Bylaw/RCMP)	65	13	16