



September 28, 2020

Dear Jennifer,

I am writing on behalf of the Downtown Oshawa Business Improvement Association members and Board of Directors to identify a significant and growing issue brought forth by our membership. For the second consecutive year, the safety and security in Oshawa's downtown core has been identified in our annual survey as the top priority.

Our members have clearly expressed their concerns in our regular discussions and have made their feelings well known, identifying safety and security in the downtown area as a top priority issue needing immediate attention. The impact of Covid-19 has only served to amplify the situation as the frequency and extent of incidents have escalated considerably. Our members have seen increased acts of vandalism, crime, and social disrespect, to the point that it is creating a growing tension in our community as businesses are trying to recover from Covid-19.

Our organization has been involved in many initiatives to help alleviate this struggle and to better understand the situation facing our community. In order to accomplish this, we have:

- Kept members informed with status updates of mitigating activities and actions;
- Worked with local law enforcement to enforce the law and stem criminal activity;
- Participated in various taskforces to direct effort and solutions at emerging issues;
- Initiated and co-sponsored the Welcoming Streets Initiative – a program aimed at bridging the gap between business owners and community members who are vulnerable in our downtown area;
- Conducted several town hall style meetings to better inform the membership about the situation; and
- Will continue to work and advocate on behalf of our members that form part of the community.

The situation in our community has continued to escalate and has become untenable. One of the main areas that is lacking is the availability of mental health and addiction supports. Data collected has identified a growing demand and increased wait times for mental health and addiction programming for the unsheltered population. Mental health and addiction are a recognized provincial accountability that is instrumental to the health and well-being of our province and our request is that you advocate for more resource effort to be focused in downtown Oshawa. As our Member of Provincial Parliament we need our Provincial Health Agency to be more accountable and step up for Oshawa. We are seeking intervention from you to improve this area for your constituency as the current resource and programming levels are inadequate with the growing demand.



This has now escalated to crisis proportions even with the increased individual effort being applied by the Region, Municipality, businesses, volunteers, current service providers and community at large. We need the level of mental health and addiction programming to improve so that it will match the increasing needs of our local situation. We know you care deeply about this community, and those who live here, and appeal to you to bring Oshawa the mental health and addiction programs that are desperately needed by raising the need and strongly advocating at the government level as our Member of Provincial Parliament. We would be pleased to meet with you or support your request for this service in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ivano Labricciosa", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ivano Labricciosa  
Chair, Oshawa Downtown BIA Board

Cc:  
Mayor, Dan Carter  
Regional Chair, John Henry