



OSHAWA
ONTARIO, CANADA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF OSHAWA
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MAYOR DAN CARTER

September 1, 2020

Ivano Labricciosa
Chair
Downtown Oshawa BIA
21 Simcoe Street South
Oshawa, Ontario

Dear Ivano,

As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has created heightened challenges and issues in our downtown. We have all seen an increase in complex issues related to mental health, addictions and unsheltered individuals, along with a rise in unlawful and disrespectful behaviour.

The City of Oshawa is committed to supporting individuals in need of shelter and those struggling with mental health and addiction, but at no time do we support individuals breaking the law / by-laws or disrespectful behaviour.

The safety of all our community members is of the utmost importance and addressing the crisis in the downtown is a top priority. It is imperative that downtown streets, parks and trails are safe for all and that we have a welcoming downtown in which community members and visitors feel safe and comfortable to learn, work, shop and dine.

First and foremost, for years, the City has made it a priority to provide security and by-law enforcement in the downtown and to work with the Durham Region Police Service (DRPS) to ensure increased police presence, programs and patrols. As a result of COVID-19 and the rise in challenges and issues in the downtown, the City took action and augmented security patrols by contracting services with CDN Protection Ltd.

As your Mayor, I have been urging the regional, provincial and federal governments to develop and fund initiatives to address issues related to the opioid crisis and other challenges such as addictions, mental health and homelessness.

To raise awareness of the crisis, I recently led a walk-through of downtown Oshawa with Regional Chair John Henry, Regional Chair of Health and Social Services Councillor Bob Chapman, senior leaders of the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS), members of the DRPS Board and Oshawa B.I.A. members.

We stopped at Memorial Park where I talked about the calls we are receiving from residents who no longer feel safe visiting the park due to unlawful and disrespectful behaviour of certain park users. I highlighted that the Point-in-Time Count estimates that Oshawa is home to 77% of the unsheltered individuals in Durham Region.

I will be following up with a presentation before the DRPS Board on September 14 to ask for their full and continued support and commitment to enforce unlawful behaviour in Oshawa's downtown.

For those who are unsheltered and want assistance, we will continue to help connect individuals in need with services and shelter through the Welcoming Streets Initiative and the Back Door Mission, which offer access to washrooms and showers, onsite health support, mental health and addictions support, medical screening and testing, food boxes and housing outreach support. In addition, we will continue to clean up our parks and green space through initiatives such as On Point.

The downtown is truly the heart of our city. Addressing the needs and challenges in the downtown is paramount. I will continue to make it my priority to advocate for resources to fund initiatives and ensure the enforcement of laws and by-laws.

If you would like to discuss further the actions we are taking or if you have suggestions, I would love to hear from you. I can be reached at 905-436-5611 or by emailing mayor@oshawa.ca.

In closing, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our downtown businesses for your investment in the downtown and to community partners for offering programs and services that help to create a vibrant and cultural downtown.

I encourage you to share this letter with your organization's membership and governing boards.

Sincerely,



Dan Carter,
Mayor

cc: Nancy Shaw, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce
Frances Newman, Oshawa Public Library
Sandra Black, OSCC 55+

Vince Vella, Tribute Communities Centre
Alex Page, Canadian Automotive Museum
Lauren Gould, RMG
William Holmes, Durham Region Transit
Durham College
Ontario Tech University
DRPS