



Lethbridge
Life is here.

DOWNTOWN LETHBRIDGE BUSINESS REVITALIZATION ZONE
309 – 6 Street South, Lethbridge, Alberta
T1J2C7

July 23, 2019

City of Lethbridge
City Hall
910 - 4 Avenue S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

Attention: Your Worship, Mayor Spearman, and Members of Council

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

Re: Supporting the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce's "Economics of Addiction"

As you are aware, the Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone ("BRZ") has for some time been following developments concerning the drug crisis in Lethbridge, particularly as it affects downtown businesses. You will recall that we presented to Council through the Community Issues Committee on a couple of occasions in the past year – in particular, to support a request for funding by the Lethbridge Police Service in support of the Ambassador Watch Program, and to lend our support and recognition to Council and City administration for their efforts in this area.

The BRZ will always advocate for bettering our business climate in Lethbridge as a whole, and for the downtown in particular. While that has unfortunately required us to grapple with the impact of the drug crisis in the downtown, we are determined to continue looking for positive solutions that will help the downtown business climate and our community as a whole. A thriving downtown is a critical component of any successful municipality, and small and medium sized businesses make up a crucial component of that success.

In that regard, the BRZ was pleased to see the policy recently put forward by the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, entitled "The Economics of Addiction". One can be assured that no policy ever contains all of the answers, and the Chamber's policy is no exception. By focusing, however, on positive outcomes and particularly by highlighting the beneficial role businesses can play in addressing aspects of the addictions cycle, the Chamber policy is in our estimation constructive and a step in the right direction for Lethbridge.

The Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce's policy is well researched and seeks to balance the interests of business owners with the well-being of those caught up in the addiction cycle. It promotes a broad-based approach to improving how we address the addiction cycle, and necessarily provides general recommendations. The BRZ feels strongly that the Chamber's recommendations are in line with the realities we see in the downtown daily.

As the BRZ, we constantly talk to business owners who are at the epicenter of the drug crisis, and in many cases the members of our board are business owners who are at the epicenter. We hear the concerns of our business members, and we advocate for – and help to provide –

solutions to address those concerns. We maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Lethbridge Police Service and monitor closely the community policing initiatives the LPS and our City have been pursuing. As such, the BRZ understands and echoes the Chamber's call for the urgent need for additional services to address this crisis – namely, intox and detox resources, stable and accessible housing, meaningful employment supports, and continued backing for our dedicated law enforcement professionals.

At the BRZ, we encounter daily the difficulties that the Chamber – as well as Council – are trying to address. We see, in stark terms, the effects wrought by the lack of services available to address the difficult cycle that is addiction. We see how employment transforms the lives of those who are vulnerable and marginalized, and how crucial it is to have adequate housing and daily activity to help break the cycle of addiction.

At the end of the day, the BRZ exists to make conditions better for business in our downtown. We will continue to promote and market the downtown, to be a first resource for our business members, and to provide a calm and balanced voice in our community's dialogue around the drug problem. We very sincerely believe that the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce's policy is a beneficial step forward and support it wholeheartedly.

We thank you for taking the time to hear the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce regarding their policy, and to recognize our support in this matter. We continue to look forward to being a part of this discussion and to continue working with Council and administration, and our other community partners, for a better downtown and a better Lethbridge.

Yours very truly,

SHERI KAIN, Board Chair, 2019-2020
Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone

The VISION
Building a vibrant, safe and economically viable downtown ...
a downtown that our community can take pride in.