



August 15, 2019
City of Lethbridge
City Hall
910 4 Ave S
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

Attention: Your Worship, Mayor Spearman and Members of Council

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

RE: Council Agenda August 19, 2019: Official Business 6.2 Lethbridge Supervised Consumption Site.

On behalf of the Heart of Our City Committee, we are writing to ask you to **postpone** the Notice of Motion scheduled for Monday, August 19, 2019 under Official Business 6.2 Lethbridge Supervised Consumption Site.

The Heart of our City Committee (HOC) was established in 2007 to champion the revitalization of Downtown Lethbridge through the implementation of the Heart of our City Master Plan and provide strategic leadership through the implementation of said plan. The Committee also makes recommendations to City Council on issues that affect the downtown. Heart of our City is composed of stakeholders including Lethbridge Historical Society, Economic Development Lethbridge, Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Lethbridge BRZ, Allied Arts Council, Southern Alberta Ethnic Association, Indigenous community, the development industry, and three citizens at large.

The HOC has been an active member of tasks forces and committees related to social issues in the Downtown, including Downtown Social Issues Task Force, Joint Action Team and most recently, Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy. As champions of downtown revitalization, we are acutely aware of issues within our community. We recognize and acknowledge our community is broken, hurting and suffering from a drug crisis. We see the many people affected by homelessness, trauma, mental health and addictions in our community, and we sympathize with them. We also see the businesses, families and individuals who are experiencing fear and suffering from the impacts of the drug crisis and we feel their pain and loss. We are feeling the pain, loss, anger and frustrations along with our community.

The HOC would like to remind the Mayor and members of Council that a research study was supported with funding to evaluate the impacts of the Supervised Consumption Site. The Lethbridge Downtown Business Neighbourhood Experience Study also referred to as the 'Urban Social Issues Study', conducted by Dr. Em Pijl from the University of Lethbridge, aims to provide

"objective and trustworthy evidence to support [SCS in communities] and their relative value to the local community and community at large. Objective, standardized metrics do not exist for quantitative evidence of reduced public injection use, publicly discarded syringes, and discarded drug paraphernalia. Several existing studies have political bias and/or methodological issues, such as lack of a control group, lack of metrics and several unaccounted for confounding variables due to the multiple interventions being implemented at the same time.

Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions and experience of business owner/supervisors/managers whose business is in the downtown area, over a period of 2 years, a period during which a supervised consumption service will be implemented in the study area."

This will be the most comprehensive study on the impacts of the site on the community done to date and will hold critical information for the community. We ask that you postpone your Notice of Motion until the study has been completed and the findings have been presented. Hastily cancelling programs without metrics or evaluation is shortsighted and will not solve any problems.

The HOC fully supports the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce recent policy "The Economics of Addiction (2019)", which will be presented to Council on Monday, August 19, 2019. Increased funding for additional services, including supportive housing, detox and intox programs and centres and mental health programs are necessary to provide those who are suffering from homelessness and substance addictions the supports they require. We ask Council to continue their efforts in advocating the Provincial and Federal governments for funding for these programs, and we offer any of our resources as a committee of Council representing the interests of the Downtown, one of the hardest hit areas in the community, to do the same. We are here to support you and to support the community in doing the same.

We thank you for taking the time to read our letter in advance of Monday's meeting. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners to ensure downtown Lethbridge is safe and vibrant for all citizens to enjoy.

Best Regards;

Dawn Leite
Chair, Heart of our City Committee

Mark Campbell
Vice-chair, Heart of our City Committee