



DOWNTOWN LAWLESSNESS REDUCTION TASK FORCE

OCTOBER **2024**

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Downtown Lawlessness Reduction Task Force (DLRTF) was established in December 2023 by Lethbridge City Council to operate as a sub-committee to the Safety and Social Standing Policy Committee. The DLRTF, operating as a sub-committee to the Safety and Social Standing Policy Committee, provides a unique accountability and public engagement element through the open to public format in Council Chambers with posted agenda and minutes. The DLRTF was established with the purpose of collaboration on the development of a cross-functional task force. As such, the DLRTF has spent the last eleven months identifying the impacts of lawlessness behaviour in the downtown core, listening to community members, and strategizing with key stakeholders including Lethbridge Police Service, Opportunity Lethbridge, community members and the Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), and City Departments including Fire and EMS, Community Social Development, and Bylaw Services.

The DLRTF listened to the presentations of community groups, residents, and social service partners/providers to understand the issues impacting downtown Lethbridge, the scope of existing services and initiatives, and how to best support and enhance safety, vibrancy, and investment in our city's downtown.

[>> DLRTF Terms of Reference](#)

Defining Lawlessness

In the Canadian context, "lawlessness" generally refers to situations where there is a disregard for or violation of the law. This can manifest in various forms, ranging from minor infractions to significant criminal activities. Lawlessness might involve actions that directly break statutory laws, such as theft or assault, or it could refer to broader societal issues where there is a perceived breakdown in the social order and adherence to legal norms.

In legal and policy discussions, addressing lawlessness often involves strengthening law enforcement mechanisms, enhancing judicial processes, and ensuring that laws are applied fairly and uniformly. Public education on legal rights and responsibilities can also play a role in mitigating lawlessness by promoting a culture of lawfulness. The term "lawlessness" is also used in academic and policy literature to discuss the implications of failing to adhere to legal norms and the impact this has on society, including undermining trust in institutions and economic instability and further detrimental activity.

The Downtown

For the purposes of this document, the downtown boundary is [the same as the boundary](#) of the Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone - South of Highway 3, West of Stafford Drive, North of 6th Ave (Whoop-up Dr.) and the business area East of the Oldman River.

Phase 1: The DLRTF's Initial Focus

Current Mandate:

Members of the DLRTF are to collaborate on the development of a structure, stakeholder composition and resourcing requirement (if any) for a cross-functional task force on lawlessness with a mandate to:

- 1. Identify the symptoms and depth of lawless behaviours and their impacts in our city.*
- 2. Identify stakeholders to strategize on responses and resourcing requirements.*
- 3. Work collaboratively with stakeholders to identify solutions.*
- 4. Provide recommended solutions to the membership organizations for action.*
- 5. Develop a joint communication plan for this task force and its member stakeholders.*
- 6. Consider how any recommendations from the task force can support and/or integrate with existing encampment, shelter and housing strategies developed and being implemented by the City of Lethbridge.*

Priorities That Have Been Accomplished:

The following top priorities identified by the DLRTF have been accomplished/reviewed:

Data Collection and Analysis - Multiple key City of Lethbridge departments including LPS, Fire/EMS and CSD came forward and provided data on the various aspects of lawlessness. Further, as part of the Building Safer Communities work being completed by the City, a community wide safety survey was completed in November 2023 – January 2024. The consultants who managed that work were able to pull downtown specific findings into the Downtown Insights report, which was presented to the DLRTF, as well as to the Safety & Social SPC July 18th, 2024.

Understanding Legal Processes (Enforcement, Bylaws) – LPS and Bylaw Services have spent a considerable amount of time with the DLRTF explaining roles and responsibilities, different bylaws at play, and the different limitations to each area.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities – A summary of various LPS, Bylaw Services, CSD, and external partners services currently funded through the City (primarily through existing Downtown Clean and Safe initiatives) was prepared and shared with DLRTF. This was effective in building an understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Following nine months of meetings, the DLRTF has been successful in gathering context to understand the lawlessness issues impacting the downtown core and suggests transitioning to a strategy phase where recommendations can be advanced to the Safety and Social Standing Policy Committee, and ultimately, to Council.

Community Impact of Lawlessness

DLRTF members have heard overwhelmingly from businesses, City services, front-line agencies, and downtown residents that the resources required to respond to social disorder (vandalism, debris, violence, and other crimes) is untenable. The financial and emotional costs on businesses, particularly in terms of security, property repairs, and staff retention, are severe. Safety concerns are not only impacting businesses but also the broader community.

Impacts on Downtown Residents

People who live in the downtown feel unsafe and often unable to enter or exit their homes. The increase in downtown business safety alarms to deter lawlessness behaviors has made it difficult to sleep at night as the alarms are set off much of the evening. The mental health impact on the residents and business owners/operators was voiced at meetings and heard by the members of the DLRTF. Residents and visitors are less likely to frequent downtown, which in turn affects the economic vitality of the area. The situation is exacerbated by a piecemeal approach to public safety funding, which fails to address root causes and leaves businesses bearing the burden.

DLRTF also heard a strong sense of concern for those experiencing homelessness and other social challenges, with residents calling for timely access to services and housing to protect the dignity and safety of all.

The human and economic costs of safety-related concerns will continue to escalate if prompt and decisive action is not taken.

[>> City of Lethbridge – Building Safer Communities Fund – Community Safety Key Findings Report](#)

The City of Lethbridge conducted a survey called “Building Safer Communities” which was launched in mid-December 2023 and closed in mid-January 2024. Survey results were gathered from a total of 1,704 responses. The aim of the survey was to inform the updating of the City’s Community Wellbeing and Safety Strategy. Throughout the stakeholder and community engagement completed as part of StrategyCorp’s work with the City of Lethbridge, the safety of the downtown core and the well-being of its inhabitants consistently emerged as a central focus. For example, in the Community Safety Survey, when asked if there are any parts of Lethbridge (e.g., certain neighbourhoods) that stand out as areas of concern or need special attention, 84% of survey participants said yes. Of those who said yes, approximately 80% (i.e., 4 out of 5) of individuals singled out downtown as a particularly pressing concern. Several related themes emerged pertaining to community safety and well-being within Lethbridge’s downtown core through needs assessment research, as follows:

THEME 1: COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC SPACES

Many residents feel unsafe in downtown Lethbridge, particularly in and around Galt Gardens. Concerns were raised about drug use, criminal activity, and a general sense of

insecurity, especially after dark. There is unease in downtown public spaces for many individuals, with worries about vandalism, property theft, and overall disorderliness highlighted. Specifically, areas around the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre and the Streets Alive Mission were called out as areas of heightened concern. Some community members advocated for increased efforts from the City to address safety issues downtown, including initiatives to improve lighting and visible surveillance infrastructure. Some safety concerns reflect real crime trends in Lethbridge. For example, an analysis of CANSIM data indicated that theft rates in Lethbridge have been increasing since 2015. Theft rates are one of the most common property crime types in the City. Assault rates and theft from auto rates in Lethbridge have also been increasing significantly since 2014, while break and enter rates have increased significantly since 2018.

THEME 2: HOMELESSNESS AND ADDICTION ISSUES

Many residents in Lethbridge voiced concerns over the visibility of homelessness and individuals who are experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis, particularly in downtown areas and near shelters. These residents often connected the visibility of homelessness and mental health and / or addictions challenges with increased crime rates and safety risks. There's a strong desire amongst many residents for stricter measures against drug dealing and consumption to enhance safety, in addition to more robust support services (e.g., affordable housing and increased mental health and / or addictions supports).

THEME 3: IMPACTS ON LOCAL BUSINESSES/RESIDENTS

Safety concerns in downtown Lethbridge negatively affect local businesses, with many residents reluctant to visit Lethbridge's downtown core due to safety issues, particularly around the downtown bus terminal and shopping areas. This avoidance of downtown has contributed to the closure of some businesses. Owners cite vandalism, employee safety concerns, and declining customers as key reasons for shutting down operations. Despite a desire to support local businesses, many community members opt to avoid downtown altogether, negatively affecting local economic activity. In addition, reduced foot traffic downtown often exacerbates feelings of unease among individuals who need to visit the area, further contributing to a perceived lack of safety and further deterring potential customers from supporting local businesses.

THEME 4: COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND URBAN PLANNING

Several respondents criticized the City's investment choices, suggesting that funds could be better used to address the root causes of safety concerns rather than aesthetic improvements or certain public infrastructure initiatives they view as unnecessary (e.g., downtown bike lanes). Some community members also expressed concerns about the placement of shelters and addictions services in residential areas and noted their desire for these facilities to be moved away from homes and businesses.

THEME 5: POLICE PRESENCE AND RESPONSE

Many residents expressed dissatisfaction with policing in downtown Lethbridge, and cited concerns about “inadequate law enforcement,” slow response times, and a lack of visible police presence. However, the causes of this dissatisfaction varied. For example, while some community members advocated for an increased police presence, faster response times, and stricter law enforcement (i.e., getting tougher on crime), others advocated for an increased focus on crime prevention and the rehabilitation of individuals who have committed a crime.

THEME 6: CLEAN STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

The cleanliness of downtown streets, sidewalks, and public facilities significantly impacts many community members' sense of safety and security. Nearly 1 in 4 survey respondents identified unclean public spaces including streets, sidewalks, and parks, as one of Lethbridge's most pressing safety and well-being concerns. The BRZ Clean Sweep Program was praised by several residents for enhancing their feelings of safety. Moreover, there is a desire among some residents for the program to expand further, with suggestions such as extending the hours of operation for the Needle Debris Collection Program to provide coverage in the afternoon.

City of Lethbridge Current Action

Current City-led action around lawlessness, outside of the efforts of LPS, are represented by the initiatives of the [Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy](#) (DCSS) which was approved by City Council in 2018/19 as a City-led strategy with one-year of funding. The strategy was developed with stakeholders including Heart of Our City Committee, Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, Chamber of Commerce, Lethbridge Police Service, Diversion Outreach Team/Canadian Mental Health, and business and residents of Downtown.

The strategy highlights, coordinates and implements the initiatives, programs and tasks the City is doing to address the negative perceptions on cleanliness and safety in the Downtown (and adjacent areas). The initiatives and tasks impact some of the underlying issues of the drug crisis such as homelessness, addiction and unemployment, however it does not attempt to solve these.

In 2020, an [updated document](#) was presented to City Council to share the impacts over the first six months of implementation and secure funding for ongoing implementation 2020-2022. A summary of the status of actions identified in the implementation plan, as of July 2024, have been provided below:

[>> Clean and Safe Strategy 2021 Program Report](#)

A summary of implementation currently underway is listed below:

City of Lethbridge Downtown Clean and Safe (2020-2022) Implementation Plan Status Report (Draft V2 8.29.2024)

Immediate Term (0-6 Months)

Recommendation	City Action Status	
Redo business safety cards with updated numbers	Complete	Public safety contact information updated and available on city website, including streamlining with improvements to 311 and online report public safety tools.
Investigate reallocation of Galt Gardens private security funding	Complete	Investigation completed and desire (primarily from BRZ) was not to take social services/outreach approach and that uniformed security guards were still best option for maintaining sense of security and washroom security. Galt Gardens Security continues to be funded by the City of Lethbridge.
Advocacy letter writing campaign to Provincial/Federal governments	Complete	Advocacy plans were created and utilized by Council on: Shelter capacity, supportive housing, and clean & safe pressures.
Bolster positive engagement campaigns	Ongoing	Through the partnership with Urban Revitalization, the City, BRZ, and external partners co-funded the Downtown rebranding. Further, the BRZ Downtown Ambassadors are funded with \$XXXk per year to positively promote downtown including businesses, events, and community initiatives.
Clear internal flow charts for City staff	Complete	Improvements to internal flow charts on how to deal with and who to call with specific situations were created and continue to inform streamlined responses, where possible.
Explore necessary amendments to park bylaw	In progress	An update is currently being scoped by City Parks Department.
Expanded communications on strategy and programs	Ongoing	Improvements to 311 and Public Safety Reporting. Consistent community communications on Encampment Strategy implementation. Proactive storytelling opportunities like Galt Gardens Play Space and partnership between BRZ and Exhibition for Farmers Market.
Encourage and support CPTED improvements	Ongoing	An ongoing CPTED grant program was created with administrative support (trained in CPTED) with \$50,000/yr in base grant funding. Funded through C11.1 in 2023-2026 OB. Further, Parks has implemented CPTED reviews as part of construction projects.
Invest in hardest hit areas with public investment	Ongoing	Since approval the City with partner funders invested \$10M in 3rd Avenue Reconstruction, \$1.2M in Festival Square Construction, \$550k in Galt Gardens Playground, \$250k in Casa Rotary Square, Cycling Infrastructure, Public art, parklets, Galt Gardens SW Corner Upgrades project and other infrastructure.

Short Term (6-12 Months)

Recommendation	City Action Status	
Destination for vulnerable individuals who are not being met by existing services	Ongoing	City facilitated a temporary winter expansion in partnership with BTDH between Nov2023 and Apr2024 with 24/7 programming with funding through Federal Reaching Home. City, GoA, BTDH, and LHA partnered on shelter property transition and permanent expansion project which is now underway and opening Winter 2024/25 including space for programming.
Continue if not bolster public realm improvements including signage and wayfinding of events and where to find positive things downtown	Partially Completed	Parks Sign Strategy which has been scoped and funded.
Coordination of services - continue improving how services work together.	Ongoing	Continued implementation and improvement of the Integrated Coordinated Access (ICA), which is a system or network that helps members of the community get to the services they need through a 'no wrong door approach'. There have recently been website updates and improvements to system navigation and referral pathways.
Build capacity and resiliency in existing programs/initiatives that are demonstrating positive outcomes e.g. CSP	Complete	Downtown tree grate replacements being discussed, coordinating with OL
Improved training and awareness for internal employees dealing with related issues e.g. Parks	Complete	A number of improvements have been made to staff training and awareness via Safe Work Practices and Training for Deescalation, Blood and Bodily Fluid Training, Decontamination, Verbal Judo, etc. Parks has implemented seasonal training "Parks School" which includes bringing in Police/Watch to help navigate safety and social issues.
Increased coordination with Blood Tribe including opportunities for transportation	Partially Completed	Indigenous Relations and Transportation facilitated Spotted Eagle Transportation getting access to City properties to offer daily shuttle between Standoff and Lethbridge with Blood Tribe Council financial support. Ran for a time and ceased, likely impacted by COVID19.
Expanded financial supports for cleanup and landscaping programs to beautify hardest hit areas	Ongoing	An interdepartmental short-term operational strategy for Galt Gardens was developed and implemented including maintenance, safety, minor infrastructure, and amenity upgrades and assessments. Clean Sweep Program received additional ongoing funding and has expanded its role in Galt Gardens via one-time funding in 2023 and 2024. Public realm landscaping improvements continue to be implemented by Parks and Urban Revitalization including but not limited to 3rd Avenue Reconstruction boulevard landscaping, Galt Gardens SW corner, Galt Garden Playground, and others.
Neighbourhood CPTED Study/Strategy for City Core	Not Started	Not prioritized/resourced at this time.
Public Washroom Study/Strategy for City Core (maybe community wide)	Not Started	Not prioritized/resourced at this time.

Medium Term (12-24 Months)

Recommendation	City Action Status	
Meaningful Daily Activities - Capture existing and create new.	Ongoing	Through the distribution of City funding and Federal Reaching Home and Provincial FCSS funding there are a number of funded organizations/programs which provide meaningful daily activities to clients including but not limited to Clean Sweep Program, Blackfoot Resource Hub, Shelter Winter Temporary Expansion, and others.
Detox and Intox	Ongoing	Expanded medical detox unit located at the Chinook Regional Hospital, AHS has contracted detox capacity in Fort Macleod and Blood Tribe Health has their Bringing the Spirit Home program (provincially funded). Bigger Rehabilitation - 50 bed Fresh Start run addition ensures around 75 beds close to Lethbridge. Southern Alcare program in downtown Lethbridge. Kainai Nation / Blood Tribe Health are building a 75 bed Recovery Community on-Nation.
Supportive Housing	Ongoing	28 unit LHA SH project has started. Recent land use amendments for expansions to Streets Alive SH and Woods Homes SH.
Interventions on "normalization of drug use" through enforcement legislation	Ongoing	Lethbridge Police Service has continued to focus on the downtown through an enforcement project that partnered DPU, Crime Suppression Team, Property Crimes Unit, and community peace officers with uniformed and covert officers actively targeting offenders engaged in criminal activity.
Improve shelter operations including size, safety, and supportive services	Ongoing	City complete Shelter Development Strategy and then subsequently rezoned existing shelter site to allow for future expansion and then provided land/building as grant in lieu to partner with GoA, BTDH, and LHA to facilitate shelter property transition and permanent expansion project which is now underway and opening Winter 2024/25 including space for programming. City provided a capital grant for expansion of the YWCA Harbour House conditional on operational funding from GoA.

DLRTF Findings

This document aims to provide recommendations informed by diverse community voices and data, some of which can be implemented immediately, and some used to draft future plans. In part, these findings were informed by the themes pulled from the 2023-2024 City-wide Community Safety survey key findings.

1) There is a need for an alternative response model - utilizing resources from other agencies to respond to incidents that are not police matters

- a) Timely response by the most appropriate service provider would increase the LPS's capacity to respond to crime and incidents that require police attendance which would improve police presence.

(These findings relate to survey theme 1 and 5)

2) There is a need for enhanced presence & patrols - Strengthened activity and “on the street coverage” means an investigation of how the police patrols could be assisted by security and/or bylaw officers etc. Increased enforcement, support, and administrative coverage would provide:

- a) Immediate assistance with coverage downtown
- b) The ability to pursue alternate patrol and enforcement strategies
- c) Improved street level activity of encouraged behaviors which would in turn discourage unwanted behaviours.

(These findings relate to survey themes 1 and 5)

3) There is a need for strategy updates to support the reduction of unwanted behavior- Social supports including housing strategies, addiction recovery support, and updates to the Land Use Bylaw all impact lawless behavior in the downtown. These should be reviewed and updated considering possible unintended consequences of the strategies, duplication of work, and what can be done to ensure advocacy measures for each.

- a) Passing of Social Strategy
- b) Passing of Housing Strategy
- c) Addiction recovery support
- d) Land Use Bylaw amendments

(these findings relate to survey theme 2 and 4)

4) There is a need for collaborative engagement & unified communication - Delivering a coordinated and measured response through key service providers could inspire downtown organizations and communities to come together with a vested interest to influence better outcomes. Targeted investments and actions could be more effectively communicated and could provide:

- a) Agreement on key data points to share and report on between City teams
- b) Centralized Reporting via 311 and a web portal

c) United outbound messaging on progress, programs, and investment
(these findings relate to survey theme 3 and 4)

5) There is a need for specialized response programs & additional investments -

Strengthened investments would remove barriers to improve the delivery and outcomes of services as required, especially for initiatives such as:

- a) Graffiti & Biohazard Cleanup
- b) Strategically realigned funding for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design studies

(these findings relate to survey themes 2, 3, 4 and 6)

Phase 2:

DLRTF Recommendations

These recommendations aim to improve safety, inclusivity, and perceptions of safety for an enhanced downtown experience for all.

Note: All recommendations, including those that have already been sent to Safety and Social SPC, have been grouped under the two following categories:

Primary Focus Areas

(1 year):

These recommendations are written to be more detailed and immediately actionable as they are recommended to be implemented within a year or less.

Further Considerations

(to be actioned/discussed along with Clean and Safe Strategy Update):

These recommendations focus on the broader picture, as the more intricate details of these considerations will be delineated during the Clean and Safe Strategy Update.

Primary Focus Areas:

1) Improved collaboration, support, and acceleration of existing strategies within the City of Lethbridge, including:

- a) Accelerate the Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy update with the new timeline to begin in Q1 2025 with additional funding to facilitate this to be requested as part of budget meetings in November 2024.
- b) Work with City Administration to explore allocation of already approved funding Downtown Clean and Safe related funding to aid in this acceleration and for elements of the Clean and Safe Strategy Program to be actioned immediately. The expenditure of funds should be at the discretion of the City Manager or designate.
- c) Appointment of the Downtown Lawlessness Reduction Task Force as the Steering Committee for a review and update of the Community Clean and Safe Strategy.
- d) Update the Terms of Reference of the DLRTF to adapt the Task Force so it can better address the needs of the community and City Administration that have been heard over the last 9 months, this should include an update to the mandate as follows:
 - i) *to identify gaps within existing resources, make recommendations regarding barriers to implementation of improvements, and advise Council and community groups on proposed actions that address safety concerns in downtown Lethbridge in order to ensure that downtown revitalization continues, and the downtown is comprised of safe and vibrant spaces*
- e) Allocation of appropriate funds for primary focus areas identified in the early stages of the Clean and Safe Strategy update. The money should be released at the discretion of the City Manager, and allotted to a budget that can be used through supporting the CSD (or other applicable City departments that require additional funding to support the initiatives, for example waste management).

2) Enhance uniform presence downtown including:

- a) Assisted security patrols. For example:
 - i) implementing an alternative response model where appropriate partner agencies respond to incidents that are not police matters and do not require the attendance of a police officer;
 - ii) developing a more robust bylaw enforcement department (as is done in other municipalities);
 - iii) increasing LPS presence and response-times in the downtown core once officers currently receiving field training are able to complete the training in order to be deployed independently; and
 - iv) a review of alternate policing coverage strategies (for example, exploring and adopting best practices used in other jurisdictions that have proven to be successful).
- b) Advancing plans for a downtown presence that meets the needs of the community and allow for collaboration and coordination between enforcement services, for instance:

- i) A publicly accessible and visible security information station with representation from Lethbridge Police and other appropriate partner agencies with a service counter for all reporting;
- ii) a hybrid health and police hub that provides on-site police services and facilitates access to recovery-oriented services, housing options, cultural supports, and primary health services (which build upon the Government of Alberta and the Lethbridge Public Safety and Community Response work).
- c) Ensure uniformed presence creates positive relationships with Indigenous and BIPOC individuals.

3) Immediate support for infrastructure upkeep and community safety improvements to enhance the downtown experience, including:

- a) Approve additional funding for Clean Sweep Program expansion regarding graffiti clean-up in the amount requested by the Lethbridge Downtown BRZ to cover ongoing costs related to expanding the program to private buildings across the city.
- b) Explore and approve funding required for biohazard clean-up as needed by the Clean Sweep Program.
- c) Collaborate with community partners to determine priority areas for cleanup and create a coverage plan for the downtown core and hotspots.
- d) Create a cost-recovery model for cleanup outside of the downtown core at 75% of market rate with a weather-dependant one week response time.
- e) Encourage a community-centered approach and incentive grant program for private entities and community organizations (e.g., businesses) to undertake regular cleaning of the public realm (sidewalks, furnishings, fixtures, etc.) immediately adjacent to their owned, managed, or leased properties.
- f) Explore improvement of communication between the City and businesses, as well as any other coverage providers, to lock or relocate garbage disposal bins to mitigate unsafe behaviour.
- g) Explore a dedicated downtown maintenance team solution that provides elevated maintenance services and responds directly to increased maintenance/cleanliness concerns. This would be made up of City employees, for example, waste management employees.

4) City Core Safety & Security Evaluation and Strategy - Request that the City of Lethbridge direct administration to Advance the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) evaluation from single sites to a Full Spectrum Community Safety assessment and include recommendations that fuse best practices such as CPTED, Healthy Built Environments, Placemaking, Economics and Leadership to evaluate the urban built environment of the entire core area.

- a) Explore and approve immediate and ongoing funding required related to CPTED studies.

- b) Review recommendations from the strategy with impacted partners (e.g., downtown businesses and organizations) and identify funding for immediate improvements to mitigate current high-risk areas.
- c) Consider including the implementation of CPTED strategy recommendations as part of a more comprehensive plan to address maintenance requirements, property standards, and other improvements to further support the overall downtown experience.
- d) Recommend preferred solutions for CPTED grant funding after reviewing applications that are site specific and that align with the recommendations from the larger comprehensive plan.
- e) Make coordinated CPTED analysis available to private business at no cost.

Further Considerations for Updates to the Clean and Safe Strategy (medium to long-term goals to be evaluated in coordination with the Clean and Safe Strategy review and timeline):

5) Improve medium to long term coordination of policing and enforcement services:

- a) Consider improved security downtown through the creation of a centrally located, publicly accessible and visible security satellite location within the urban core with a service counter for all reporting (consider how this would be staffed and how to implement reasonable coverage from 8AM to 4PM as well as after-hours service).
- b) Implement alternate strategies to increase uniformed officers such as an alternative response model where appropriate partner agencies (ie – Bylaw officers, waste management personnel) respond to incidents that are not police matters and do not require the attendance of a police officer.
- c) Utilization of advanced technology to reduce duplication of services and deploy the right services to the right situation.
- d) Enable community-led initiatives to allow first responders and social serving agencies to share information and services and improve response and service coordination.
- e) Enhance communication between corporate and private security partners, Lethbridge Transit, Bylaw, and police to share safety concerns and relevant data and to coordinate responses as required.
- f) Develop a clear, comprehensive strategy to intervene with high systems users more effectively.
- g) Explore and adopt best practices used in other jurisdictions that have proven to be successful (for example: develop a more robust bylaw enforcement department and increased presence of mental health workers).

- 6) Create an easily accessible public-facing communications resource with an accompanying communications strategy, that serves as the single message for the community by consolidating resources and sharing multi-agency information on downtown safety initiatives, investments, elevated emergency responses and resources from key partners in plain language. This resource should:
- a) Include the current state of operations and actions taken by shelters, businesses, and other community partners to address ongoing concerns.
 - b) Provide frequent updates to the public to increase awareness of safety initiatives and their progress.
 - c) Help clarify misconceptions and perception challenges related to downtown safety through transparent data sharing and progress updates.
 - d) Consolidate data by streamlining incidence tracking at one source rather than multiple, often duplicated sources.
 - e) Provide a listing of available resources and sources of credible data to connect the public with up-to-date information.
 - f) Educate downtown businesses and residents about calling 311.
- 7) Audit the use and availability of the existing 311 call line to identify opportunities to improve or expand use.
- a) Explore implementation of community-facing communication channels—e.g., an app or text line—that connect individuals to downtown services and resources.
 - b) Improve 311 staff training regarding other resources in downtown (for example, the role of the BRZ, weekend supplementary resources regarding encampment response, the status of police officer training classes that cannot be fully incorporated in the field yet).
 - c) Add additional weekend resources.
- 8) Improve availability and access to downtown public washrooms:
- a) Provide appropriate levels of maintenance, management, and security.
 - b) Consider a strategy that includes capital and operational funding that would be required.
 - c) Consider safety and accessibility in the strategy.
 - d) Leverage best practices and lessons learned from other markets and other municipalities.

9) Update City of Lethbridge policies and protocols related to managing encampments and rough sleeping city-wide, with the following considerations:

- a) Consider the capacity to provide dignified and safe access to all populations in need regardless of barriers, backgrounds and/or social issues.
- b) Incorporate strategies that reduce risks for those living in encampments while addressing the needs of local businesses and residents situated near active encampments.
- c) The Lethbridge Bylaw response to criminal activity within and around encampment sites.
- d) Effectively resource coordinated support systems to strengthen access to programs and services for those living in encampments.
- e) Collaborate with community partners to address gaps in services and improve safety within encampments.
- f) Improve coordination between agencies and the orders of government to address encampments on Provincial land within City boundaries.
- g) Maintain an awareness of LPS policies and processes in order to avoid overlap and inconsistent messaging.

10) Advancing coordinated strategies through City of Lethbridge Administration:

- a) Establish a process to coordinate existing and upcoming strategies that internal and external partners will participate in, such as the Municipal Housing Strategy, Transit Strategy, Heart of our City Masterplan, BRZ, Social Strategy, and other City of Lethbridge strategies related to downtown safety. Recommendations need to be aligned and tracked in order to resolve any overlap or conflicts between documents.

11) Coordinate, fund, and incentivize frequent and sustainable event activations downtown among all partners to enhance safety and nurture vibrant, inclusive spaces:

- a) Consider adding to incentives that encourage downtown organizations, employers and/or property owners to develop and deliver programming activations (for example the Re-Imagine Downtown Activation Grant).
- b) Foster direct community participation in programming of underutilized spaces in our downtown, with the intent to make it simple and accessible for organizations to connect with the necessary parties and/or acquire the required permitting to program and activate private or public spaces.

12) Develop a coordinated and secure data compilation and sharing platform between key partners that removes silos, supports coordinated service planning, and allows for analysis of trends and emerging issues that can be used to support public communications. It should:

- a) Provide collaborative analysis of trends, issues, and situations to help shape strategies and outcomes that address current and potential concerns.
- b) Include a multi-partner data dashboard with all stakeholders to coordinate efforts in identifying needs and responses as required.
- c) Develop a privacy agreement for participating parties to ensure sensitive and private information is protected.
- d) Improve The City of Lethbridge Administration's inter-departmental understanding of downtown priorities, break down silos, and ensure every City department is working with a common goal and vision for downtown (perhaps this includes sharing 311 knowledge articles related to downtown concerns inter-departmentally).

13) Increase effective coordination through 24/7 deployment of outreach services by key community partners in Lethbridge's downtown and surrounding areas. Consider:

- a) Leveraging the varied skill sets of agency-operated outreach services with grassroots outreach teams to activate stronger collaboration and shared resources and to achieve the right balance of supplies and services.
- b) Establishing standards of practice for all outreach teams identifying outreach zones, times of service, types of services delivered, and specialization of teams for deployment.
- c) Developing a common outreach web application that allows community partners to coordinate service delivery and allocate appropriate staff.
- d) Further expanding mobile medical outreach services to ensure those experiencing homelessness can access medical services where they are.
- e) Increasing funding for organizations and partnerships working to improve coordination of outreach services.

14) Establish a permanent DLRTF, or similar, to review emergent concerns, suggest solutions, and leverage data to optimize community-led responses. This group would:

- a) Be solution-oriented while upholding the values of collaboration, nimbleness, and responsiveness, founded on dignity for all.
- b) Monitor actions taken to improve downtown safety and support, considering at-risk populations and individuals experiencing homelessness.
- c) Provide ongoing evaluation regarding the performance of ongoing initiatives.

- d) Be supported by The City and include membership from social serving agencies, business community, resident, BIPOC organizations, and Indigenous leaders and/or organizations.

15) Add DLRTF as a Land Use Bylaw Review Stakeholder.

- a) Include the Task Force as a stakeholder during the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) review for land uses specifically related to the intensity and offsite impacts of certain uses, especially those being discussed in LUB Renewal phase 2 (which includes commercial uses city wide and downtown) and phase 4 (which includes social uses).

16) Address the escalating constraints of existing funding models and service delivery capacities due to rapidly changing, increasingly complex realities to ensure adequate allocation of resources among shelters, first responders, and outreach agencies.

- a) Evaluate how resources can be better targeted and/or redistributed to more effective agencies.
- b) Evaluate the effectiveness of current funding models relative to supporting broad agency and organization mandates and scopes in the context of rapidly changing, increasingly complex community needs.
- c) Reduce organizational reliance on project and competitive funding sources and emphasize operating funding that enables operationalizing mandates, operational planning, and investing in longer-term strategic initiatives.
- d) Provide ongoing multi-year base funding for agencies and service providers that provide essential services for complex populations and individuals experiencing homelessness and shift away from single-year funding models, which strain community partners.

17) The City of Lethbridge and the Government of Alberta to work together to implement and expand resources for Lethbridge residents experiencing complex mental health and addictions.

- a) A collaborative and rapid response is required to expedite and expand availability and access of community-based addictions treatment options for acute care (medically supervised detox), inpatient treatment (including for opiate and/or methamphetamine abuse and concurrent disorders) and chronic care services (for relapse prevention and support).
- b) Service delivery must include pre- and post-treatment transitional housing options and 24/7 nursing and home care.
- c) Rapidly establish approved processes and channels for real-time information sharing between system providers and services for better coordinated responses when personal safety is at risk.

- d) With social serving agencies and enforcement organizations, develop and resource a coordinated, collaborative, and responsive assessment and case management system to address situations of community risk and safety.

18) Advocate to the Province of Alberta to develop a Community Court in Lethbridge.

- a) To address bylaw citations, breaches, and warrants related to social disorder and minor property-related crimes resulting from complex addiction and mental health.
- b) A Community Court will enhance the enforcement of court-mandated interventions for addiction and mental health stabilization that address the underlying factors and costs associated with the administration of justice.

Downtown Lawlessness Reduction Task Force Members & Acknowledgements

MEMBERS

Downtown BRZ Representatives

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Deputy Chief Communications & Strategy - Kevin McKeown

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The Downtown Lawlessness Reduction Task Force acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. We offer respect to the Metis and all who have lived on this land and made Lethbridge their home.