



CITIZENS FOR A GREATER DOWNTOWN ST. LOUIS

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September 8, 2020

Hon. Lyda Krewson, Mayor
City of St. Louis
City Hall, Room 200
1200 Market Street
Saint Louis, MO 63103

Dear Mayor Krewson:

Thank you for calling the meeting on August 25 to discuss public safety issues downtown. It was long overdue and a good opportunity to share our experiences and views. However, I was very disappointed that the agenda for the meeting was almost entirely focused on cruising. While cruising and the related disruption and criminal behavior is indeed a serious issue, it is only part of a complex and multidimensional safety problem downtown. The meeting resulted in no actionable items other than a suggestion that another meeting be held in a month or so.

I strongly disagree with the opinion voiced by some at the meeting that downtown is safe and will return to normal once the pandemic is over. Many of the problems that we are experiencing today have been building for years and will not go away when sporting events and conventions return. Solving this problem will require vigorous and sustained intervention across city government and civic organizations.

As I indicated in my letter to you of July 7 and stated again at the meeting, we need a comprehensive safety and security plan for downtown. Yes, we need more police visible on our streets, but that alone will not make downtown attractive and safe. As I urged in my letter to you of July 7, we need a collaborative approach among civic leaders, property owners, government agencies, law enforcement and others to address our issues. This requires leadership to motivate and mobilize the various parties to work together. We need city government to provide that leadership.

Our organization is making two requests to you:

1. Establish a task force made up of a range of affected parties to coordinate safety and security measures in downtown. The charge to the task force would be to produce a comprehensive interim plan within one month. The plan would include meaningful accountability measures to measure progress and determine the most effective strategies. The crime statistics often presented by law enforcement and others simply do not accurately reflect the conditions downtown. The task force should use meaningful performance measures to communicate frequently and honestly with downtown residents, businesses, and property owners.
2. Create a team of city employees to inspect properties for excise code violations, Covid executive order violations, and other violations of city ordinances. The city is currently relying largely on

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Mayor Lyda Krewson

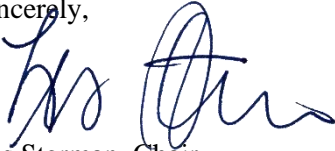
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citizens to report violations or on social media reports. This is haphazard at best, and it doesn't produce strong evidence that can be used in court to enforce city ordinances. The end result is widespread flouting of city ordinances that contributes to a growing number of problem properties that have become focal points for criminal behavior. When ordinances are not routinely enforced, it reinforces the sense of lawlessness that we all experience downtown.

While bringing us together was an important gesture, we need to do more than meet. We need to work together continuously to develop and implement plans to save our downtown before it is too late. Thank you for considering our requests.

Sincerely,



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cc: Chief John Hayden
Hon. Jack Coatar
Hon. Marlene Davis

Hon. Jimmie Edwards
Hon. Tammika Hubbard
Hon. Lewis Reed

Hon. Christine Ingrassia