November 10, 2026

The Honourable Eleanor Olszewski, P.C., K.C., M.P.
Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and
Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada
Government of Canada
Via: Eleanor.Olszewski@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Olszewski,

Re: Turning Canada's Commitment to End Homelessness into Measurable Results

Thank you for our meeting during the International Downtown Association (IDA) Canada's Parliament Hill Day on October 6th. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing downtowns across Canada.

We look forward to attending the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce's Post Federal Budget Breakfast this week and hearing your highlights of the Government of Canada's priorities following Budget 2026.

On behalf of the Edmonton Downtown Business Association (EDBA), we are writing to express our support for the federal government's commitment in Budget 2026 to end homelessness in Canada within 10 years. This ambitious goal, supported by $11.2 billion over four years for housing, mental health, and addictions services, represents an important step toward addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing Canada's downtowns and main streets.

In Downtown Edmonton, businesses, property owners, residents, visitors, service providers, and community organizations experience the impacts of homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use every day. Delivering on this commitment will require more than funding. It will also require a coordinated implementation plan and strong collaboration among the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, the City of Edmonton, Indigenous governments and organizations, and community partners.

As a member of IDA Canada, EDBA supports the call for a coordinated federal plan that prioritizes treatment, supportive housing, and community-based services, with funding tied to measurable outcomes. We also support the involvement of downtown leaders and Business Improvement Areas in helping inform and implement that plan. Local downtown organizations bring practical experience, established partnerships, and firsthand knowledge of community conditions.

We also encourage support for practical, community-based initiatives that help manage the day-to-day experience on our streets while longer-term strategies are implemented. In Downtown Edmonton, programs such as Downtown Core Patrol help de-escalate situations, connect vulnerable individuals to services, and contribute to a safer and more welcoming environment for residents, visitors, employees, and businesses. Initiatives of this nature operate at the intersection of public safety, community well-being, and economic development and can play an important complementary role alongside investments in housing, treatment, support services, and recovery.

Our primary request is twofold.

First, we would welcome an opportunity to continue the conversation with you on how downtown organizations and BIAs can contribute to implementation of the federal commitment and help inform measurable outcomes at the local level.

Second, we would encourage opportunities for PrairiesCan to convene and engage downtown organizations across the portfolio. Downtown leaders throughout the region share many of the same challenges and opportunities and can provide valuable insight into how federal investments are being experienced on the ground and where they can have the greatest impact.

We also wanted to note that EDBA has a meeting scheduled with Michele Evans next week and we look forward to discussing downtown economic development and related priorities within the PrairiesCan portfolio.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to continuing the conversation and supporting the shared objective of ending homelessness while fostering safe, welcoming, and economically resilient downtowns along the way.

Sincerely,

James L. Robinson
Executive Director
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cc Michele Evans, Director General - Alberta Region, Prairies Economic Development Canada