



Mohamed Lachemi
President and Vice-Chancellor

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**Attention: Ms. Carol Kaustinen
Committee Secretariat
Community Development and Recreation Committee**

June 12, 2018

Dear members of the Community Development and Recreation Committee,

On behalf of Ryerson University, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the staff report going to committee on July 13th regarding revitalization plans for downtown east. We are pleased the City of Toronto is taking steps to address the increased rates of poverty, violence, homelessness, and mental health in the area. However, this report does not go far enough to address the immediate needs to preserve safety in the area, including Ryerson and the surrounding community.

As a community-engaged campus, Ryerson students, staff and faculty are involved in many different ways to advance the needs of our neighbours and partners. We have worked on over 30 different projects for the City of Toronto in recent years and five for Toronto Police Services, including a recent hackathon to develop alternative technologies to address the overload on the 911 line. We have a representative on the Community Consultation Committee for The Works at Dundas and Victoria Streets and we work with many different community agencies in the area.

From our community experience, we believe that more needs to be done through the Downtown East plan to support those with mental health and drug treatment issues as well as to support the wider community. To that end, Ryerson recommends that the city:

1. Create a fast-response team to address the needs of street-involved individuals, which includes expanded access for the street-involved population to daytime services, showers, washrooms, etc.
2. Allocate emergency funding to immediately hire 10 or more harm-reduction workers to do outreach work in the area, until such a time as LHIN requests from SDFA, Toronto Public Health, and the Mayor's Office are processed

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3. Provide more frequent maintenance of public areas including streets, sidewalks, laneways and parks, specifically for the recovery of needles and other solid waste
4. Expand and coordinate both city and community-based services to meet the needs of the Downtown East, including with Toronto Police, Municipal Licensing and Standards, St. Mike's and other front-line organizations involved.

We appreciate the spirit of the Staff report on revitalization of Downtown East but hope that appropriate amendments can be made to do more to address the critical need for more immediate and more comprehensive actions.

Sincerely,



Mohamed Lachemi
President and Vice-Chancellor
Ryerson University

- c. **John Tory, Mayor of Toronto**
James Pasternak, Chair, Community Development and Recreation Committee
Kristin Wong-Tam, Local Councillor, Community Development and Recreation Committee member