

March 25, 2026

Toronto Board of Health
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Item HL31.3 – Health Impacts of Homelessness and Update on the Downtown CORE Pilot

Dear Chair Moise and Members of the Board of Health,

On behalf of NAIOP Greater Toronto, the Financial District BIA, the Toronto Downtown West BIA, and the Waterfront BIA, we are writing to support the proposed extension of the Downtown Community Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) program, **and to strongly recommend that the geographic boundaries for its primary service area be expanded to include Union Station.**

The Downtown CORE model represents a practical and public health-focused approach to complex challenges related to homelessness, mental health and addictions. Early feedback suggests it is contributing to more consistent outreach, earlier intervention, and improved connection to services.

Our organizations collectively represent Toronto's downtown businesses and the hundreds of thousands of employees, residents, and visitors who rely on Union Station every day. As the region's primary transit hub and gateway to the downtown core, it is one of the most heavily trafficked and economically critical areas in the city.

At present however, conditions in and around Union Station are deteriorating:

- A visible increase in individuals experiencing acute mental health and addictions challenges
- Open drug use and related unsafe behaviours in and around the station and connecting corridors
- A growing sense of disorder and unpredictability in high-traffic pedestrian areas, including incidents of violence
- Heightened concerns from workers, tenants, and visitors regarding personal safety

Expanding the program to Union Station is a critical step in a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing these concerns.

The current staff recommendation identifies Union Station as outside the program boundary with "ad hoc" engagement only. This does not reflect the scale or intensity of the challenges in this area and leaves a clear service gap immediately adjacent to the proposed expansion area.

This need will become more acute in the months ahead. Union Station will serve as a primary gateway and transit hub for visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with thousands of additional people moving through the area daily. Ensuring that appropriate support measures are in place in advance of this period is essential to managing public health and public safety risks.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the City and Board of Health on immediate measures, such as the expansion of Downtown CORE, and longer-term solutions that address the underlying conditions at Union Station.

Sincerely,

Leona Savoie
Chair, Government
Relations Committee
NAIOP Greater Toronto

Amy Harrell
Executive Director
Financial District BIA

Tim Kocur
Executive Director
Waterfront BIA

Dana Duncanson
Managing Director
Toronto Downtown West
BIA

cc: Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, Councillor Shelley Carroll