

# Meeting Summary

## 76 Church Street Site Online/Telephone Community Feedback Session

May 3, 2021

7:00pm to 9:00pm, WebEx (Online + telephone call-in)

## Overview

On Monday May 3, 2021, the City's Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA) Division hosted a Community Feedback Session to share information and respond to questions about the shelter site at 76 Church Street. The Community Feedback Session was held online and by phone, in keeping with current public health regulations to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and to protect the health and safety of Toronto residents and City staff.

The session was advertised by the City through a flyer, which was mailed out to over 27,000 residents and businesses within an approximate 500 metre radius of 76 Church Street. The session was also promoted on the project website ([www.toronto.ca/ShelterExpansionSites](http://www.toronto.ca/ShelterExpansionSites)), through the project Community Updates, and through the local Councillor's office. During the course of the event, 60 people logged in online and/or called in to the public information session using the WebEx platform.

The meeting was led by Violetta Ilkiw of Barnes Management Group, a 3<sup>rd</sup> party Community Engagement Facilitator. The meeting included:

- Opening remarks from Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam
- Presentations from:
  - Loretta Ramadhin, Project Director, Infrastructure Planning & Development, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration

- o Monica Waldman, Manager, Seaton House, Junction Place, Traveller's Services, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
- o Maria Crawford, 3<sup>rd</sup> party Community Engagement Facilitator, Barnes Management Group
- A question and answer period was facilitated by Violetta Ilkiw, a 3<sup>rd</sup> party Community Engagement Facilitator with Barnes Management Group. Responses were provided by presenters Loretta Ramadhin, Monica Waldman, Kamalesh Visavadia (Supervisor, Streets to Homes, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration), Councillor Wong-Tam, and Sergeant Henry Dyck, 51 Division, Toronto Police Services.

A summary of remarks provided by Councillor Wong-Tam is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Details on how the questions were selected are attached to this summary as Appendix B.

Barnes Management Group facilitated the Information Session and prepared this summary. This report is not intended to be a verbatim transcript of the session. It provides information on some of the main areas of interest and concern raised by community participants.

The slide presentation for this information session can be found on the [76 Church Street website](#).

The full presentation can also be viewed via the presentation recording. The recording is closed captioned. It can also be found on the [76 Church Street project website](#).

# Comments & Questions from Information Session

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Following the opening remarks and presentation, participants asked questions and shared comments during the Question and Answer (Q&A) portion of the Community Feedback Session. During the course of the Q&A session, 43 comments and questions were received live via phone and online, typed into the Q&A box and received via email prior to the session.

The summary below includes responses to the questions and comments articulated during the information session. Responses to questions that could not be answered during the session will be included in upcoming Community Bulletins. Some responses have been edited for clarity and conciseness. Responses from the presenters are noted in *italics*.

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## General Shelter Planning + Issues

**Is there a way to get the number of shelters permanent and temporary, not just by ward, but by neighbourhood? Can we get percentages, not just numbers?**

*Our mapping department is not able to breakdown the number of permanent and temporary shelter details into neighbourhoods. We can request for the numbers to be converted into percentages based on ward. We can follow up with these percentages at a later date through our engagement team. (Loretta Ramadhin)*

**Can you please clarify what right-of-access-use locations in City bylaws means?**

*This refers to the Municipal Shelter Bylaw and Zoning By-law 569-2013, which allows for shelters to be in most zones in the City of Toronto, with the exception being they cannot be placed in employment or industrial land use zoned areas.*

*If any building or facility meets the zoning by-law, it doesn't require any type of community or City Council approval or consultation in order to develop the building as a shelter. City Council has also delegated authority to staff to select new locations for shelters, provided they meet this criteria.*

*This process helps to speed up the shelter development process, and it allows the City to be consistent and provide a human rights-based approach to housing and services for our vulnerable residents. (Loretta Ramadhin)*

**Beyond the immediate shelter and the project that you're working on, how does the downtown area fit into the City's priorities for affordable housing as a bigger picture issue? What are some other ways we can hopefully alleviate some of the stresses and pressures caused by the lack of affordable housing?**

*Long term, the City wants to prioritize housing as a solution to homelessness. All of the City's shelters work from a Housing First model, with the priority being to assist clients to secure permanent housing.*

*In 2019, City Council adopted the HousingTO 2020 to 2030 Action Plan, which provides a comprehensive blueprint to assist over 340,000 people, with a focus on creating permanent housing solutions. This would also include 18,000 units that would be specific to supportive housing.*

*Additionally, the City's COVID-19 interim shelter recovery strategy, adopted by City Council last year, identifies priority actions over the next 12 months which include investing in housing and supports to decrease the volume, duration, and need for emergency shelter.*

*Affordable housing is absolutely a priority of the City, and our Housing Secretariat Division is working on this. There are a lot of initiatives with the Rapid Housing Initiative, and funding from the province and the federal government has been provided to support this so that we can start to move our clients from shelters into housing.*  
(Loretta Ramadhin)

*I think that it's important for the residents here to know that the City of Toronto is very committed to building housing and ensuring that we can actually move people out of homelessness and into a pathway of permanent housing.*  
(Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam)

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## **Community Safety + Cleanliness**

**Many residences and businesses in the area have experienced vandalism, littering, loitering, defecation, etc., on our property, which may or may not be caused by residents of 76 Church. What recourse do residents, property owners, and businesses have for repair, compensation, clean-up, etc.?**

*If there is illegal activity occurring in the community, then that is a police matter. Vandalism would be considered criminal activity, and that should be directed to police.*

*We want to be a good neighbour, and the shelter takes responsibility for the immediate surrounding of 76 Church Street. Shelter staff and clients have come out and helped us clean up any garbage that's in the immediate area.*

*In terms of using public spaces as a washroom, we have many washrooms inside of our building. Our clients have 24/7 access to the facility.* (Monica Waldman)

*In terms of the public washrooms, the City has been diligent in trying to find and place public washrooms and porta-potties in various encampments, especially in large encampments, to ensure that people have access to sanitation and hand-washing facilities. For example, there is access to washrooms and portables in Moss Park and at Trinity-Bellwoods Park. The City is looking at alternatives at other sites. We've tried to find appropriate places to put these portable washrooms.* (Kamalesh Visavadia)

*We're hearing everything that you're saying and getting these questions so that we have a better understanding of your concerns. One of Toronto Police Services' neighbourhood community officers for your area, PC Jason Lee - and his partner in 52*

*Division, PC Mark Kennedy - are available to address concerns. We can be reached at [ynco@TorontoPolice.on.ca](mailto:ynco@TorontoPolice.on.ca).*

*When it comes to damage or mischief, for example, if your storefront window has been smashed by somebody, the best thing that you can do is to make a phone call to the police because, if we are able to successfully find the suspect and arrest them, then the courts do have a mechanism for compensation to the business owner. If the person doesn't have any money, then it can be ordered, but you can't make somebody pay what they don't have. There is also a special fund for which victims can apply for compensation as well.*

*I've had a long-standing relationship with Monica and her staff at Seaton House. I have no doubt that if there was something that required police presence more greatly, Monica would pick up the phone and call. Likewise, if the police needed to, they also know that they can call Monica and things will get sorted out. (Sergeant Henry Dyck)*

**In instances where urine or feces are left in front of stores or on the streets, who should be contacted for clean-up?**

*If excrement is left on public property, call 311 to be directed to Solid Waste Management to come and clean it up. (Monica Waldman)*

*Within this catchment area, businesses can also connect with the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Association (BIA), and they will handle clean-up of that nature as well. (Sergeant Henry Dyck)*

**Recently, three residents without masks were blocking the sidewalk towards the Church and Adelaide intersection. As I walked to the other side of the street to provide space, they said, "Don't worry, we're vaccinated." What education is provided to residents around the requirement to follow safety protocols when out and about in the neighbourhood? Specifically, what are the continuing requirements to wear masks and maintain physical distancing from other community residents?**

*Firstly, we don't want our residents to be blocking the sidewalk. We have an outdoor patio for our residents several floors up, and there is also a smoking area that people can go to without congregating in front of the building. We have a rule about keeping the front of the building clear, and we encourage residents to use the patio and to not block the sidewalk.*

*Furthermore, there is constant education of residents. We have a steady group of clients who have been with us for a while, but then we also have a portion of beds that are for new clients that have been referred in, and so this is a good reminder for us that we need to constantly have those conversations with our residents.*

*We've certainly had a lot of educational discussions with clients and give constant prompting and reminders throughout the day around wearing masks in public and in the congregate areas of the shelter.*

*This is a good reminder to talk to staff about continuing that engagement on an ongoing basis. (Monica Waldman)*

**Is there a community safety team? If so, how many members are there? What are the hours of service? What are the boundaries? What is the contact protocol?**

*There is not a community safety team aligned with the shelter program at 76 Church Street.*

*There are a few community safety teams in the surrounding area, focused on some of the larger physical distancing shelter programs and respite centres. As part of the Downtown East strategy, there is a community safety team out and about in the boundaries of the Downtown East.*

*Seaton House has never relied on security guards as a component of our programming. Our shelter program is small. We've got a really great staff team, and we are just building up some really great resources. I'm certainly open to seeing what is available through the resources that are already out there in the community. We've got lots more in store for the kind of programming we want to offer. (Monica Waldman)*

**With the high number of shelters in this particular neighbourhood and community, is there a thought to having one dedicated resource or point of contact that could then triage or direct people to the right place for information?**

*An excellent info-graphic has just been produced that answers a lot of residents' and businesses' questions and outlines who to contact for specific inquiries. This resource is available in both hard copy and an electronic version. To request a copy, contact Sergeant Henry Dyck at 416-804-1095. (Sergeant Henry Dyck)*

*The info-graphic will be sent out via e-mail to the community distribution list, and attached to this report. See Appendix C. (Violetta Ilkiw)*

*In addition to the info-graphic, as a one-point option for information, inquiries can be sent to the general email account, [SSHA.homeless@toronto.ca](mailto:SSHA.homeless@toronto.ca), which is monitored daily. Questions sent to this email are directed to the appropriate individual. (Loretta Ramadhin)*

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## **Health and Safety in Shelters**

**I am a health and safety specialist, and I've addressed some concerns regarding the health and safety, particularly gaps in the shelter standards. Will you consider getting an automated external defibrillator (AED) as part of the mandatory requirements — bag, valve, masks, full PPE? Were you able to change the standard from having one certified person per shift to two?**

*There is an AED on site at 76 Church Street, and Seaton House has staff that are trained to use that. The company that we use makes sure that we are trained and that parts are replaced when it has been used.*

*All Seaton House staff currently wear goggles and masks. Depending on the tasks, we have gowns and gloves available for staff. We also distribute a minimum of three Level 2 surgical masks per day to shelter residents and constantly reinforce that masks should be worn.*

*Also, in our intake, we continue to remind shelter residents about physical distancing. We have visual cues or big circles on the ground to indicate where people can stand or sit. Staff and shelter residents are constantly reminded to wash their hands.*

*Seaton House does screening every day for symptoms of COVID. The moment somebody doesn't pass that screening, or if someone has been exposed to a high risk close contact, we send them to one of the COVID assessment centres to get a test done.*

*We are starting to pilot the rapid antigen testing, which is a 15-minute, quick, on the spot testing for COVID. It will probably be a little while before it is launched at 76 Church Street, but it's certainly something we are looking at in the shelter system. (Monica Waldman)*

**Are you considering changing your requirement for Standard First Aid Level C to Standard First Aid Basic Life Support, which would incorporate a lot of the critical**



**skills that are very important for opioid overdose poisoning? Are you still running or operating from the same shelter standards (version 4)?**

*The City of Toronto has an overall corporate policy on Naloxone administration and has identified that staff need to be trained as part of their First Aid CPR through that realm.*

*Seaton House was one of the first shelters to have Naloxone administration on site. Most, if not all, shelters in the City of Toronto, now have staff that are trained on Naloxone administration.*

*Shelter, Support and Housing Administration is committed to this response and works closely with Toronto Public Health to ensure that we have access as part of our toolkit for medical emergencies.*

*We also give out Naloxone kits and have the training available from Toronto Public Health for clients themselves or folks who might have friends that are using.*  
(Monica Waldman)

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## **Shelter Programming + Rules**

### **What rules must be followed by residents of 76 Church Street?**

*Staff at 76 Church Street review with clients our three-page document that outlines specific rules and some reminders. Some examples include:*

- COVID protocols, including wearing masks and physical distancing.*
- No weapons. If someone had construction tools, they would be asked to hand those into staff upon entering the building.*
- Anyone who has alcohol must hand it in, and we would safe-keep that for them.*
- No violence.*
- We're trying to be an anti-oppression shelter, so we discourage people from using discriminatory language.*

*76 Church Street has some rules around how long a bed can be saved before we have to release it for somebody else. If a resident wants an overnight pass, that's something they need to work out with their counsellor.*

*All shelter residents at 76 Church Street are required to meet with their case manager within 48 hours of coming into the shelter because we really want to start working together on their goals and toward a housing plan right away.*

*Some rules are around when meals are served, and the process is if you want a meal saved for you, it is because you won't be there. There are rules outlining how to access different spaces or programs in the building.*

*76 Church Street has a Good Neighbour Policy. To put it simply, any kind of violence, mischief, or disturbance of the community is not welcome.*

*Staff at 76 Church Street also try to secure supports for people that we know are struggling. For instance, in a situation where someone is defecating in non-washroom spaces, there might be some mental health aspects to that. We would connect with our community partners to see if there is a way to support the person so that they actually get the things that they need instead of just pushing them out. (Monica Waldman)*

**What are your strategies for making sure clients transition to 76 Church Street safely and smoothly? What can neighbours do to help out?**

*The shelter is already open, and the beds are full. Although challenging during COVID-19, our dream is to be able to have support and encouragement from community members.*

*After over 20 years of working with people experiencing homelessness, the number one thing I have heard people say is they just want to be treated like everybody else. They don't want to be stigmatized. Nobody was born thinking that they would end up living at Seaton House.*

*We want to have that connection to people who are in the community, who want to see people thrive and succeed, and who have ideas for positive engagement. We are open to listening and want people to bring forward creative ideas about how we can make the folks staying in the shelter feel like a part of the community. We can certainly also go back to clients and ask them if they want to brainstorm some things as well.*

*We encourage anyone who is interested, to join the Community Liaison Committee (CLC), or at least have some kind of channel into it. The CLC could be a real vehicle for us to get together and start thinking about how we can bridge the shelter to really be a part of the community. (Monica Waldman)*

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## Seaton House Plans + 76 Church

**When Seaton House returns in about five years, there's about 25% less capacity. It would appear that 76 Church might become permanent. Can the City make assurances that 76 Church Street will not be permanent?**

*The City is currently leasing the 76 Church Street site; it is not a purchased facility. Currently, the intent is for it to be a temporary shelter site.*

*As part of the Seaton House Transition Plan, City Council approved replicating 400 of the 581 shelter beds which were at Seaton House. The remaining shelter beds (181) were to be closed and transitioned into permanent housing opportunities. To assist with this, new partnerships were developed with several housing providers such as Habitat Services, Fife House, Regeneration Community Services, St. Michael's Homes and Saint Clare's Multi-Faith Housing Society. These new partnership were exclusive to the George Street Revitalization project and enabled individuals who had been long-term shelter users to leave Seaton House and access permanent housing.*

## NEXT STEPS

The project team thanked participants for their continued participation in the Community Engagement process. Attendees were invited to keep up to date on the site via the [76 Church Street website](#) or to sign up for updates, and continue to connect with the project team by sending emails to [clc.76church@gmail.com](mailto:clc.76church@gmail.com). The team will also continue to send out Community updates to individuals that have signed up for email updates. Any updates to the project will be made available on the project website, listed above.

# Appendix A

## Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam's Remarks

*The information below is a summary of opening remarks provided by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam during the May 3, 2021 Online/Telephone Information Session. Please note this summary is intended to capture key points, and is not a verbatim transcript.*

### Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

It's certainly very good to be here with all of you and I wish we were here under different circumstances. It is important that you have taken some time to join the City staff to learn more about what's happening at 76 Church Street, and in your neighbourhood. Many of you have already been in touch with my office. And, through my staff person Edward LaRusic, we have been fielding phone calls and replying to your inquiries. As information is becoming available to us, our job is to relay it to you.

Tonight, we're all going to get a fuller briefing on what will be largely transpiring on the site and some of the service changes and who's going to be here.

I think it's important for us to recognize that the global pandemic has changed just about everything as we know it. We would normally be meeting in a community centre or a hotel ballroom. That is just not possible at this point in time. At this time also, 76 Church Street is a place of refuge.

76 Church was a long established building that welcomed weary travellers, economic-minded visitors to our city, and from there we were able to showcase the very best that we can from our neighbourhood, and the downtown urban centre.

The pandemic has shut down the international borders. We recognize that things are not going back to normal tomorrow. And hotels, motels, hostels, as well as student

residences quickly hollowed out when those borders were shut. We found ourselves in a situation at the City of Toronto where we had basically a recession that was induced by a lockdown by way of the tourism sector basically coming to a grinding halt.

We found ourselves with empty hotel buildings all over the city and people struggling, especially the operators, to make ends meet. And then layering on top of that, we saw the social inequities of the pandemic reveal itself. More people growing hungry, more people finding themselves without adequate hours for work, finding themselves falling into further hardship, including new homelessness.

The City has been responding over the past year, and this has been very difficult work. I suspect that you have all, each and every single one of you, endured your own hardships, lots of personal sacrifices. One of those needs the City responded to was to try to manage the homelessness crisis that just seems to keep growing. And this is on top of work that we were already doing.

We're here tonight to largely understand and to share information with you about two things: the shelter at 76 Church Street, and George Street Revitalization, and the efforts underway to actually tear down and to rebuild in a modern contemporary fashion, one of Canada's largest men's shelter.

Seaton House is in an adjacent neighbourhood, and located at 339 George Street. I wish that we had lots of good news coming out of Seaton House, but sometimes when we do hear about Seaton House, it's not always great, and that's largely because it's a failed model. It's a shelter of 581 beds. That's 581 men, many of whom have been long-time street involved, who have not been able to find a pathway to independent housing. We know that warehousing people in that fashion just doesn't work, and so that has to change. Part of the mandate in the Province of Ontario is to rebuild and diversify the portfolio with respect to programming, to build the type of programming that will enable healthier living.

I won't go into all those programmatic changes because I know staff will discuss these, but I can tell you that Seaton House will no longer be a 581 shelter bed. We will never do that again in the City of Toronto. Although I was not part of the group that did that and you were not part of the group that made those decisions, we are living with the consequences, so we need to now address that and fix that as quickly as possible.

It is a very large, significant capital investment going into the Garden District, which will, have ripple effects across every neighbourhood with respect to jobs, as well as better community health, better social integration. That brings us to how 76 Church

Street has been converted from a hostel to a temporary shelter for 55 of those men from Seaton House (67 beds at full capacity post-COVID-19), with wraparound and other ancillary supports for the men while they're here in the neighbourhood.

I want to acknowledge that COVID-19 has also brought to us the type of social inequities that we often hear about and sometimes read about, but now it's right on our doorsteps in ways that cannot be ignored. Some of it is manifest in the encampments at St. James Park. The City of Toronto, of course, is working 24/7 to try to address that issue. There are over 400 different types of structures and encampment tents across 75 parks in the city.

St. James Park is one of them, and the City is working to rapidly house those individuals so that they have a pathway to recovery and a life filled with dignity. When the staff first brought the issue of relocating some of our residents from George Street and Seaton House to this neighbourhood, I raised a few things for them to consider, and I know that you'll probably share in some of those concerns.

I wanted to make sure that we could, first, coordinate any type of future shelter operations that are going to take place around the corner at 67 Adelaide Street East. The Adelaide location will open sometime in 2024/25. We want to make sure that those facilities do not cause any harm and disruption, but become welcome additions to the neighbourhood.

We want to make sure, and I raised this with staff and staff fully agreed I'm happy to report, that the new facility here at 76 Church Street was also going to have wraparound supports. Therefore, people who are staying in the shelter will have support so that they can actually try to find a way to stabilize their lives. And, once again, it's all about building a pathway out of homelessness, out of the shelter system and into permanent housing.

Finally, I want to say that I am listening. I know that City staff are going to work hard, and are very committed to making sure that the service is going to be successful. It's not just the success of the shelter, but it's actually the success of the community that I am deeply interested in.

# Appendix B

## How Questions Were Selected by the Facilitator

Following the May 3, 2021 Community Feedback Session, some participants shared feedback about the session by email and voicemail. Some participants raised concerns that it seemed more difficult questions were not selected. Others shared feedback that the meeting was well organized, informative and shared appreciation for the work being done to engage with and listen to the community.

Please see below for a detailed explanation of how participants were selected to ask questions and additional ways to continue to share comments, concerns, and questions.

Over the course of the public information session, 60 people logged on online and/or called in to learn about and ask questions about the shelter project at 76 Church Street.

The Community Engagement Facilitators outlined the process for the Q&A Period. They outlined that they, as the hosts, and the panelists do their best to receive as many questions as possible between the various methods of participation, and will rotate between live phone-in questions, questions received in advance, and those typed in the Q&A box. They also shared that if there are a lot of questions, it may not be possible to answer all questions during the session.

During the session, City staff monitored a list of participants that virtually raised their hand, which was indicated by a small icon next to the masked phone numbers or beside the participant's names on the WebEx platform. Participants who joined online were also able to pose questions in written form in the Q&A section of the WebEx platform. The Community Engagement Facilitator rotated between written questions/comments, previously sent in questions, and live questions from participants. Questions were prioritized by when they were received, with an attempt to respond to

more frequently asked general questions. Participants were randomly selected on the phone and were unmuted one-at-a-time, allowing them to ask their questions and/or share feedback.

WebEx Events, the software used to host the session, does not allow any pre-screening of the comments or identification of comments by a particular topic. The participants and their questions/feedback were not screened in advance and participants were free to share any question or feedback they wished. No participant or phone number was unmuted more than once. At the beginning of the meeting, the Community Engagement Facilitator asked all participants to be succinct when asking their questions/feedback, to be considerate, and to refrain from using any hurtful language.

Not every question posed in the Q&A box was able to be addressed in the time allowed for the Community Feedback Session. Those who did share their thoughts/questions represented themselves, and not all voices in the community.

The Community Engagement Facilitators continue to note questions and comments raised through email and phone. Unanswered questions will be responded to in the coming Community Bulletins for the site, and will continue to inform the content in the Final Report for the Community Engagement activities at this site.



# Appendix C

## Info-graphic - How to Report a Crime



# How to Report a Crime

## Is it an emergency?

Situations where the safety of people or property are at risk

Fire

Crime in progress

Medical Emergency

**Call 9-1-1**

## If it's not an emergency

Theft

Fraud

Driving complaint

Property damage

Damage to vehicle

Theft from a vehicle

Graffiti to private property (not hate-crime related)

Theft of gas (from a gas station)

Visit

[www.torontopolice.on.ca/core/](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/core/)

**Call (416)-808-2222**

## Have an ongoing issue?

Trespassing

Nuisance issues

etc...

Telephone: 51 Division (416) 808-5119

or fill out a Community Complaint Form

[www.torontopolice.on.ca/community-complaints/](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/community-complaints/)

## Non-Police related Concerns?

Waste issues

Noise complaints

Property concerns

Animal complaints

Graffiti on road or sidewalk

Needle pickup on public property

**Call 3-1-1**

## Want to remain anonymous?

If you have ANY information on a crime you want to report

Crime Stoppers  
[www.222tips.com](http://www.222tips.com)  
OR  
1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

OR  
Text TOR+message to  
**CRIMES (274637)**



# Contact Your Local Police Station:



**51 Division**  
**51 Parliament St**  
**Community Response Office:**  
**(416) 808-5119**  
**Twitter: @TPS51Div**  
**Facebook: 51 Division- Toronto Police**



**A Safe & Inclusive Streets initiative by**  **DOWNTOWN**