



ATTORNEY GENERAL
MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Room 104
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA
R3C 0V8

FEB 20 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Email: bill.blair@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister:

As you are aware, Manitoba had the highest violent Crime Severity Index (CSI) and rates of violent crime, homicide, cocaine offences, robbery, sexual assault and major assault rates in 2018. Manitoba also had the highest robbery rate in Canada for the 25th straight year, more than double second place Saskatchewan.

Winnipeg, specifically, is experiencing significant challenges, including the highest number of homicides in its history in 2019. The most recent Monthly Statistical Report released by the Winnipeg Police Service (July 2019), shows year-over-year (Aug/17 – Jul/18 vs. Aug/18 – Jul/19) increases in its rates of homicide (89.5%), robbery (7.1%) firearms offences (28.9%), and property crimes (24.8%). Furthermore, total violent crimes (7.2%) and property crimes (38.5%) are significantly higher than the 5-year average.

Our government recognizes that Manitoba's crime rates are too high and we are committed to improving public safety in our province including in downtown Winnipeg. We are facing a significant rise in drug use (methamphetamine) and property crimes linked to addictions and organized crime.

There have been a number of reviews and proposals in relation to the current state of public safety, mental health and addictions including the Virgo Report and Illicit Drug Task Force (IDTF) Recommendations. Most recently, I tasked the Manitoba Police Commission with consulting with stakeholders and providing recommendations to address public safety in Winnipeg's downtown. The Commission issued a report containing a comprehensive list of activities and initiatives that will enhance both safety and, equally important, perception of safety in downtown Winnipeg. I am enclosing a copy of that report for your information.

Winnipeg's downtown safety issues require all levels of government to work in a concerted and collaborative manner and I urge the federal government to commit additional funding to support Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg in addressing these serious public safety issues. Specifically, we propose that the federal government commit \$10 million to a fund, which will be made available to the City, private sector and other stakeholders, which support the cross-sectoral work that is necessary and underway to make the Winnipeg downtown safe. This framework could be similar to the \$7.5 million in commitments made by the federal government to support the Surrey Anti-Gang Family Empowerment (SAFE) program in Surrey, British Columbia. By way of example, eligible projects in the Winnipeg context might include:

- Development of the key best practice components of the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) model.
- Creation of a state-of-the-art Communications Centre.
- Expansion of CCTV camera systems and video analytic software.
- Creation of a coordinated foot patrol program including ambassadors and mobile outreach units.
- Enhanced lighting systems and programs.
- Support for tiered policing resources, such as Community Safety Officers, to increase "boots on the ground" in downtown Winnipeg.
- Support for additional community safety and well-being resources with a focus on tactical interventions for chronic and prolific offenders.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Cliff Cullen
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

Enclosure

c: Mayor Brian Bowman
The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
Honourable Rochelle Squires, Minister of Municipal Relation



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JUN 03 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Email: bill.blair@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister:

I am writing as follow-up to my February 20, 2020, letter regarding the importance of a federal government funding contribution toward a downtown safety initiative in Winnipeg.

We continue to believe that Winnipeg's downtown safety issues require all levels of government to work in a concerted and collaborative manner. To that end, Manitoba is preparing to announce a contribution of \$5 million to support this important initiative in the coming weeks.

I again urge the federal government to commit additional funding to support Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg in addressing these serious public safety issues. Specifically, we propose that the federal government commit \$10 million to a fund, which will be managed, along with Manitoba's contribution and any future private sector contributions, by the Downtown Safety Partnership (DSP) Inc. The DSP Inc. is led by retired Winnipeg Police Services Superintendent, Greg Burnett and is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of business and community leaders.

I look forward to hearing from you to discuss this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Cullen".

Cliff Cullen
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

- c The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
 Mayor Brian Bowman
 Honourable Rochelle Squires, Minister of Municipal Relations