



MEDIA RELEASE
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CHAMBER RESPONDS TO PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

Echoes Call for City Leadership

Kelowna: The Kelowna Chamber read with interest the October 2018 Public Safety Report from Liaison Officer Bill McKinnon, which was presented to Council November 26. Carmen Sparg, President of the Chamber, attended, and said that much of the report reiterated Chamber member business concerns, which had been brought to the Chamber Board starting in 2017.

“Overall the Chamber appreciates the work that was undertaken by the former RCMP Superintendent, and is generally supportive of the recommendations contained within the report, particularly the call for the City to take a leadership role on this issue and the renewed call for a community court, something the Chamber has long supported. In fact we drafted another letter just a few months ago that calls on the province to provide the support necessary to make it a reality in Kelowna.”

“We were glad to see where short term improvements have been identified that the city has acted: increasing efforts to keep the streets clean and providing public washrooms for those that need them. We did take note of the reference in the Report that adding more bylaw officers last summer may not have been the most cost-effective approach to dealing with the issues downtown as bylaw officers don't have the authority to deal with potential criminal code offenses. Getting legislative changes to give bylaw officers more authority is something the Chamber would likely be supportive of.”

“We’re more than willing,” continued Sparg, “to work with the city and participate in discussions that are centered on creating a positive environment for downtown. While it has neither the authority nor the expertise to deal with the issues being discussed, the Chamber can be a communications conduit for business owners, employees and customers who are impacted by the state of downtown.”

“Finally, the Chamber believes that while the City needs to take a leadership role, that the provincial and federal governments also have a role to play in ensuring local governments have the financial resources and tools to address this complicated issue.”

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