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The Honorable Royce West
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July 9, 2015

Chief David Brown
Dallas Police Department
1400 S. Lamar Street
Dallas, Texas 75215

Dear Chief Brown:

The attention to quality of life and public safety issues in Downtown Dallas has become an urgent concern among our residents, businesses, investors and visitors. On behalf of the stakeholders in the city's largest employment and tax base, Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI) submits the following formal request which outlines our concerns and recommended solutions. Specifically, we are asking for four immediate actions:

1. Increase staffing levels within the Dallas Police Department's Central Business District unit.

Staffing levels in the Central Business District are based on 1989 conditions. In the last twenty years, the transformation Downtown is obvious, as it is now a 24/7 neighborhood with thousands of residents, employees, businesses, parks, and nightlife destinations. Though 75 officers are assigned to the CBD unit – the same number as more than 25 years ago - only 55 are available on duty after vacation, sick leave, training and special assignments are considered. Additionally, the CBD unit is the only unit where officers work 10 hour shifts, forcing the CBD to rely on Central Patrol to respond to 911 calls between the hours of 2:30 – 6:30 a.m.

Furthermore, the reduction in officers under the current sunset review should **NOT** be considered, as this would place the core of our city well below the national accepted average. In fact, Downtown needs demand increase coverage for the safety of our citizens. We also request that DPD continue to hire at, or above, the attrition rate.

2. Create a First Watch to address the urgent need for a staffing increase between midnight and 7:00 a.m.

Dallas is the only major city in the state of Texas without 24/7 dedicated coverage in its Central Business District. In Downtown Dallas in 2014, 42% of CBD violent crime and 28% of Part I crime occurred during First Watch. 35 of 106 burglaries in 2014 occurred during what would be First Watch hours. Year to date in 2015, violent crime is up 65% and 50% of the violent offenses occurred on first watch.

3. Reinstate the camera system to the quality and monitoring levels at which it was created.

Due to neglect of the camera system, its effectiveness has been severely compromised. In 2014, the number of arrests decreased by almost 800, and only 46 camera-assisted arrests have been made year to date in 2015. Zero on-view offenses, compared to 174 last year, have been made to-date in 2015, most likely due to the decrease in monitoring.

4. Adjust 10-hour shifts to 8-hour shifts.


Downtown is the only area in Dallas that is staffed in 10-hour shifts. This has not proved effective in terms of consistency and efficiency with staffing. This policy should be changed to 8-hour shifts consistent with other staffing in the City.

DDI has had a long-standing partnership with the Dallas Police Department, and we are appreciative of the dedication to our mission of revitalizing the core of our city. We look forward to your action plan to address these critical public safety issues that will allow the continued growth of the fastest growing tax base in our City and drive forward momentum.

Thank you,



John F. Crawford
President & CEO
Downtown Dallas, Inc.



Ted Hamilton
Chair Public Safety Committee
Downtown Dallas, Inc.

CC: A C Gonzales, City of Dallas
Downtown Dallas, Inc. Executive Committee
Ryan Evans, City of Dallas
Eric Campbell, City of Dallas
Mayor Mike Rawlings
Council Member Philip Kingston
Council Member Adam Medrano

**Downtown Dallas, Inc. 2015 Public Safety Review:
A Formal Request to the Dallas Police Department**

The Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI) Public Safety Committee, comprised of major Downtown stakeholders, has compiled the following report which calls for an urgent and **aggressive solution to quality of life and public safety issues in Downtown**. It is based on staff, committee and professional task force evaluation of both the Downtown Safety Patrol and Dallas Police Department Central Patrol.

From the evaluation, four immediate calls to action emerged:

- (1) Increase staffing levels within the Dallas Police Department's Central Business District unit and increase the visibility of DPD officers on foot and bicycle.*
- (2) Create a First Watch to address the urgent need for a staffing increase between midnight and 7:00 a.m.*
- (3) Reinstate the camera system to the quality and monitoring levels at which it was created.*
- (4) Change current 10-hour shifts to 8-hour shifts.*

THE TIME IS NOW

While the City of Dallas and our Downtown are recognized among the safest of large cities across the country, DDI and Downtown stakeholders recognize a pressing need to increase bike and foot patrol staffing in Downtown. Officers in patrol cars do not have the impact in an urban area like having the physical presence of officer on the street. We base this position on several key factors:

- Increased opportunity for crime due to the significant growth in the past 10 years
- Increasing violent and quality of life crime trends
- The fact that police resources for Downtown have been flat despite significant growth and increasing crime

The statistics supporting this position are as follows:

- The CBD Residential population increased from approximately 1,000 people 10 years ago to almost 10,000 today. We anticipate reaching 13,000 in the next 24 to 36 months. The greater Downtown area will be over 50,000 in 2017.
- The commercial population is over 130,000 and growing; occupancy has increased to 80% from less than 70% just over a decade ago.
- The number of hotels is increasing, adding over 1,200 rooms because of increased convention and tourism.
- Large scale special events held Downtown, with national and international attendance and media coverage, continue to grow in frequency and attendance.
- Downtown has grown its number of bars, restaurants and night clubs. Growth in this business sector impacts already thin police resources at the times they are most needed to address crime.

As a result, the opportunity for crime Downtown has significantly increased. DPD special initiative have proven to be effective at addressing "hot spots" but do not serve to address public safety Downtown long term. It is our desire to keep Downtown a safe and welcoming place for people to live, work, host a meeting or convention, and enjoy a special event, to dine and entertain or to just have fun. We recognize, however, that the growth and prosperity we have enjoyed in recent years can quickly reverse in the wake of a single catastrophic event and/or based on our continued growth trends.

Significant investment in the last decade has been made by both the private and public sectors in the revitalization of Downtown Dallas. Over \$367 million in public funds have contributed to economic development projects in the two tax increment finance districts in the CBD, resulting in taxable property values increasing over \$2.2 billion. Taxable value in the CBD increased 9.3% between 2013 and 2014 alone. Already the largest employment center in North Texas, Downtown Dallas added over 830,000 square feet of office space in 2014, more than any other real estate submarket, and employers announced over 5,000 new jobs. **Now is the time when we must protect this tax base.**

National and international attention is now on Dallas. From monumental events such as the Super Bowl, Final Four and All Star game, to a remarkable increase in conventions, Dallas is becoming a top tier destination for leisure and business travel – in fact, Dallas is the number one leisure destination in Texas with 22.6 million annual visitors. In 2014, we hosted the prestigious international New Cities Summit, as well as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, both headquartered in Downtown; in 2015, among a long list of convention and events, T.D. Jakes will bring the nation's largest inspirational festival, MegaFest, back to Dallas. According to the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, ten years ago Dallas was booking 500,000 room nights and 10 city-wide conventions. That has grown to an astounding 1.5 million room nights and 32 city-wide conventions, most of which are headquartered in Downtown. **Now is the time when we must protect our convention and visitor growth.**

Landmark projects continue to add diversity, excitement and vision to the city's core. Unprecedented public and private investment has been made in world-renowned projects such as Klyde Warren Park, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, and the entire Dallas Arts District. The Dallas Farmers Market is undergoing a significant redevelopment, and infill is spreading throughout the area, changing what was once a one-dimensional commercial office center into a center city that is ripe with residents, visitors, employees, recreation, retail and lifestyle amenities. **Now is the time when we must protect these major investments.**

Downtown is a dramatically different place than ten years ago. In the Central Business District (CBD) alone, the residential population and number of bars and restaurants have increased by 200%. Over 9,000 residents now live in the CBD, with the population expected to reach 10,000 by the end of 2015, and that population is projected to continue to grow at an aggressive pace. More than 40,000 live within a 2 mile radius. With the increase in residents, restaurants, retail and entertainment, downtown is no longer a "Central Business District." **Downtown is a mixed-use neighborhood, demanding attention to the balance between quality of life needs for residents and visitors, to those that contribute to the economic prosperity of a business and entertainment district. Now is the time when we must protect the people who are living, working, and visiting the heart of our city.**

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Vagrancy

According to the 2014 Dallas Police Department Part I crime report, 42% of CBD violent crime and 28% of Part I crime occurred during First Watch. Operational changes at the Bridge and Austin Street Shelter implemented in October 2013 resulted in a significant increase of illegal sleeping downtown and around the perimeter of the Bridge. Overnight guest capacity at the Bridge was reduced by 30% (from 225 to 149 guests) due to construction and a change in the DPD sign in policy. Despite discussion of increasing overnight capacity, this has yet to be implemented, and still will not provide the holistic response needed. In addition, the curfew was changed from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., resulting in more people being left on the streets at an earlier hour. And though ordinances are in place to deter issues related to vagrancy, those ordinances are either not enforced, or even when citations are issued, they are often forgiven due to the indigent status of the offender. **4,649 quality of life citations were issued in 2014, while the Downtown Safety Patrol reports observing 19,234 offenses that year.**

Lack of Coverage

CBD unit DPD officers work 10 hour shifts that need to be changed to three eight-hour shifts, 2nd Watch 6:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., and 3rd Watch 4:30 p.m. – 2:30 a.m. After 2:30 am there is not a *dedicated police presence Downtown*. Central Patrol Division Officers respond to Downtown 911 calls between 2:30 - 6:30 a.m. Response time to Downtown 911 calls vary greatly based on call activity in a division that stretches north to Mockingbird Lane, east to Dolphin Road, south to Fitzhugh Ave, west to Riverfront Blvd.

In 2014, CBD Part One crime statistics show that 42% of Violent and 28% of Nonviolent Offenses occurred during First Watch.

Furthermore, discussion related to a sunset review that could decrease the number of officers in the CBD is unacceptable to our stakeholders. We do not agree with a headcount dropping below the 3:1,000 national standards, particularly in the urban core of our city. Although Part One crime is statistically down, quality of life misdemeanor offenses are on the rise. DPD reported 4,649 QOL offenses in 2014, and the Downtown Safety Patrol reported 19,234 QOL offenses in the same year. Additionally, DPD officers must continue to respond to QOL offenses while on patrol. We are concerned about recommendations being considered in the current sunset review process that the Marshal's office as currently staffed does not have the capacity to handle such a call load.

Finally, there is a discrepancy in the reported number of officers covering the CBD and the actual number. Though 75 officers are assigned to the CBD unit, only 55 are available on duty after vacation, sick leave, training and special assignments are considered. This exacerbates instability in coverage, also caused by high levels of turnover – 30% annually – due to the yearly bid process.

The Downtown Camera System is also of concern when weighing coverage in the CBD. Inadequate staffing levels to monitor the cameras, as well as delayed maintenance have caused a drastic decrease in arrests since 2011. In 2011, 1,809 arrests were attributed to the assistance of the cameras, a point at which the system was 100 percent operational and had adequate number of qualified professionals monitoring. In 2014, the number of arrests decreased by almost 800, and only 62 camera-assisted arrests have been made year to date in 2015. **Zero on-view offenses, compared to 174 last year have been made to-date in 2015, most likely due to the decrease in monitoring.** Downtown Dallas, Inc. was a key partner in the launch of this system, investing our own dollars as well as fundraising from the private sector. This decrease in effectiveness due to lack of maintenance and decrease in quality monitoring causes significant concern about our investment and the safety of Downtown residents, employees and visitors.

Resident and Business Protection

DDI is receiving an increased amount of feedback concerned with response times and crime between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. One testimony from a Farmers Market resident recently documented an 11-minute response time to a suspected in-progress home invasion just after 3:00 a.m. One of the responding officers commented that the delay was due to travel time from Mockingbird Lane. In addition, late night club activity is clashing with the neighborhood, for which there is no dedicated coverage, leaving residents at risk.

Downtown businesses are also experiencing late night/early morning issues:

35 of 106 burglaries in 2014 occurred during First Watch.
38 of 66 burglaries so far in 2015 have occurred during First Watch.

Stakeholder Response

Representing property owners, corporations, residents and employees, Downtown Dallas, Inc. receives daily feedback on the Downtown environment. Said Jon Ruff, Senior Vice President of Spire Realty:

“In a 24-7 neighborhood, safety and security is no less Important at 3:00 a.m. than it is at 3:00 p.m.”

Jim Truitt, Vice President, Forest City recently expressed concern on behalf of the residents within their four Downtown residential towers:

“Our residents would like to see a greater presence of officers on the street, especially in the park [Main Street Garden] and on Commerce and Jackson. Our residents do not like to visit the park after dark due to the number of vagrants.”

Tanya Ragan, a Farmers Market stakeholder outlines some concern for her investments due to loitering and vagrancy:

“I would encourage you to spend a Sunday walking the area and see firsthand the trash, congregating and gathering. How would you feel if this was your business, property or residence that you were working so hard to maintain and revitalize? Especially when someone else destroys it and tells you that you can’t do anything to stop it.”

A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The success of our public safety initiatives to date has been greatly due to public private partnerships, examples include the Farmers Market Initiative, Panhandling Ordinance, West End Initiative, and High Alcohol Content/Single Serve liquor store agreements. The solution to our challenge today is no different. Working together with DPD, our Downtown Safety Patrol, DART police and homeless outreach organizations will be the key to a holistic solution.

As such, the following revised policies and procedures are being implemented this year by Downtown Dallas, Inc. with the Downtown Safety Patrol:

- 1 – Efforts will continue to focus on the top 50 service-resistant homeless individuals. Last year, DDI partnered with DPD and the Dallas County Assistant DA Rachel Jones to implement the top 25 impact offender initiative. DPD updates the top 25 list on a regular basis to keep the focus on active criminals that are not incarcerated. When an impact offender is released from custody the DA alerts DPD and DSP to be-on-the-look-out (BOLO) for the offender to show up back on the street. As a result approximately 20% of the top 25 have been incarcerated long-term.
- 2 – The Downtown Safety Patrol uniform has been updated to a high visibility yellow/blue color scheme.
- 3 – Downtown Safety Patrol officers go through quarterly training “refreshers”.
- 4 – Downtown Safety Patrol hours will be extended by half an hour to begin at 5:30 a.m. with the intent to supplement DPD efforts to sweep and arrest those violating the no sleeping in public ordinance.
- 5 – Visiting establishments with a community mindset will occur regularly, getting to know business owners and understanding their issues. In the same manner, Downtown Safety Patrol officers have increased attendance at community meeting such as the Downtown Residents Council and neighborhood HOAs.

6 – Public education about the Downtown Safety Patrol, manners in which to appropriately address panhandling and other safety initiatives will continue, with outreach to residential buildings, office towers, retailers, restaurants and hotels.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

As a major driver of Dallas' tax base, hub of employment, and a 24/7 neighborhood filled with residents, visitors, public space and entertainment, Downtown's needs have shifted significantly over the last ten years. It is an area with a mix of daytime and nighttime economies, where residents, employees, tourists and business travelers are mixed with special events, social service providers, bars, restaurants, recreation and public space. And such a mix requires a dedicated, diligent approach to maintain a balanced, safe environment. **We must protect billions of dollars of public and private investment in the revitalization of the core of the city, and first and foremost offer the highest levels of public safety to our constituents.**

Therefore, of the Dallas Police Department, Downtown Dallas, Inc., on behalf of residents, businesses, property owners, and tenants of Downtown, respectfully requests:

(1) Increase staffing levels within the Dallas Police Department's Central Business District unit and increase the visibility of DPD officers on foot and bicycle.

(2) Create a First Watch to address an urgent need for staffing increase between midnight and 7:00 a.m.

(3) Reinstate the camera system to the quality and monitoring levels at which it was created.

(4) Change current 10-hour shifts to 8-hour shifts.

At a Downtown Dallas, Inc. Board Meeting in October 2014, Chief Brown indicated the addition of a First Watch would be considered in 2015. We hope this is a first step toward readdressing all of the needs outlined above, and ensuring Downtown's economic and social sustainability, with consistent and stable coverage that is critical and responsive to the needs of a 24/7 urban environment.