

Dear City councillors,

As a business owner for the past 18 years downtown and an active member of our downtown community I have had the pleasure of working with a lot of my neighbours to make downtown the great destination that it is.

I am proud of our downtown, but also know how fragile our successful downtown can be, a short walk through many of the downtowns of cities our size (think Brantford or many others) will leave us feeling very grateful for our downtown.

While any business district will have businesses come and go, it is the ability to keep existing businesses and attract new ones that keep the area alive and successful .

This proposed by-law will help us keep our downtown businesses alive and paying taxes.

Those of us who run businesses downtown want people who are underhomed to get the help they need and deserve, many of us independently and through our business improvement association contribute to groups trying to help fund programs for the underhomed. But to allow encampments downtown is only going to cause the loss of many businesses, I hear it everyday how downtown is becoming more and more "uncomfortable, unsafe" and I see it with my own eyes.

These types of encampments have troubles no matter where they are but downtown is extra problematic, the number of businesses in a small area, the possibility of a fire in an encampment spreading to the historical buildings.

Our downtown needs this by-law, if it does not pass I'm afraid the message it will send will be downtown is open for tents and we could be overrun in very short order.

Thank you for your time.

Richard Overland
NV Kitchen Bar