

February 4, 2020

Dear Public Officials,

We are writing to you with great frustration, sadness and love for our downtown just days after a senseless shooting in our center city that killed one and left seven others injured, including a child.

Our frustration comes from knowing that this tragedy was not just avoidable, it was a likely outcome of a deeply rooted drug market that has existed along Third Avenue for decades. Third Avenue is the front door to downtown for commuters coming from neighborhoods across Seattle. Unfortunately, it has been taken over by criminal activity, including drug dealing, gang warfare, rampant retail theft, daily overdoses, acts of violence, sexual assaults and robberies.

Our sadness stems from hearing stories about the daily impact this criminal activity has on our friends, neighbors, employees and colleagues, including some of Seattle's most vulnerable populations. The numbers back up the personal stories: over a two-year period, crimes against people in this part of downtown have increased by over 40 percent.

We love downtown Seattle and expect the heart of our city to be safe and welcoming for all who live, work and visit here. It should be safe for the barista, the retail clerk, the downtown cleaning ambassador, the theater performer, the small business owner, the resident and the visitor.

Downtown Seattle is home to more than 328,000 jobs and 88,000 residents – nearly 5,000 of whom are children. Increasing downtown density and vibrancy is aligned with the City of Seattle's comprehensive plan, growth and economic goals, and climate strategy. But these goals are jeopardized if people don't feel safe in downtown.

We urge you to immediately develop an aggressive safety strategy for downtown. We call on you to reform current practices and policies. And we implore you to devote the resources necessary to permanently take back Third Avenue from the open drug market that has, for decades, laid claim to it.

Sincerely,

*Justin Goin, General Manager  
Yard House*

*Tom Douglas, Owner  
Tom Douglas Restaurants*

*Chuck Nelson, President & CEO  
WAC*

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Fire & Vine Hospitality*

*Colleen Echohawk (Pawnee/Athabaskan),  
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Chief Seattle Club*

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ACT Theatre*

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*Carla Murray, Chief Operations Officer  
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Edgewater Hotel*

*Steven Baral, Owner  
Melbourne Tower*

*Nora Chan, Resident & Property Owner  
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*Gyros Place Restaurant*

To:

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King County Executive

Seattle City Council

King County Council

Seattle Mayor

Seattle City Attorney

Police Chief

King County Sheriff