



# ***News Release***

Canadian Union of Public Employees – cupe.mb.ca

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## **New Coalition “Workers for Downtown Public Safety” Calls for Urgent Meetings with Mayor and Justice Minister**

*Coalition representing frontline workers to advance comprehensive 5-Point Plan for Safer, Stronger Downtown*

**WINNIPEG, TREATY 1** – A new coalition of unions representing tens of thousands of frontline workers has formally united under the banner **Workers for Downtown Public Safety**.

The coalition includes:

- Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Canada Employment & Immigration Union/Public Service Alliance of Canada (CEIU/PSAC)
- United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg (UFFW)
- United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

Together, these unions represent workers in transit, emergency services, retail, public services, and community programs.

“Whether you’re going to work downtown in an office, or are a paramedic responding to a call, you shouldn’t have to worry about your safety,” said MGEU President Kyle Ross. “We’re calling on the City and Province to take coordinated, meaningful action that improves worker safety downtown.”

Union leaders noted that their members work at safe consumption sites, the Millennium Library, and with community-based nonprofits providing addiction treatment and services for people experiencing homelessness.

“Our members see the challenges facing our communities every day,” said CUPE Local 500 President Gord Delbridge. “They are directly impacted by a lack of safety downtown. We believe practical, worker-first solutions must be part of the answer.”

Other members are downtown workers who simply want to arrive at and leave work without fear.

“Our members need to be able to walk to their cars after work, go for lunch, or step outside for a break without feeling unsafe,” said CEIU-SEIC Regional VP Keri D’Avignon. “We don’t think that’s too much to ask.”

“Every worker deserves to feel safe coming to work and going home at the end of the day,” said Christopher Greniuk, Prairie General Chair of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. “That’s why IAM members are proud to stand with other unions to push for practical solutions that make downtown safer for everyone.”

The coalition has formally requested meetings with both the Mayor and the Justice Minister in the coming weeks. Ahead of those meetings, the group will release a comprehensive **5-Point Plan for Downtown Safety**, developed through consultation with frontline workers across sectors.

“It’s really important to us that we are bringing our members’ voices forward,” said Jeff Traeger, UFCW President. “This isn’t a partisan issue—it’s about keeping workers safe.”

The coalition is committed to a balanced, solutions-focused approach to public safety, addressing both immediate concerns and long-term root causes.

“We too often see a band aid approach to safety,” said Nick Kasper, President of UFFW. “We need real solutions, not slogans.”

While full details of the 5-Point Plan will be released soon, the coalition confirmed that the plan prioritizes:

- Expanding mental health and addictions supports to reduce repeat crises and improve outcomes.
- Enhancing protections and supports for workers facing violence, harassment, and unsafe conditions.

“Public safety and worker safety are inseparable,” added ATU President James Van Gerwen. “When workers are protected, properly staffed, and supported, the entire community benefits.”

Workers for Downtown Public Safety emphasized that the coalition is non-partisan and committed to restoring confidence, vibrancy, and safety in the downtown core.

“Our downtown should be a place where residents, visitors, and workers feel safe,” the coalition said in a joint statement. “We are ready to work collaboratively with government leaders to turn practical solutions into immediate action.”

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