

March 6, 2023

Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Premier Smith,

RE: Unions Call for Provincial Support for Edmonton

On behalf of the more than 10,000 members that our five member unions represent, we are calling on the Government of Alberta to work collaboratively with Mayor Sohi and Edmonton City Council and fund solutions for the critical issues that are facing the City of Edmonton and our members directly.

The Coalition of Edmonton Civic Unions is made up of five unions, representing members at the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Libraries, EPCOR, Capital Power, as well as other employers. Our members – whether they are transit operators, librarians, fire fighters, utility workers, waste collectors, rec centre staff, or peace officers – are on the frontlines of municipal services and see the critical need for support that too many Edmontonians are experiencing.

Drug poisoning incidents in Edmonton are double that of Calgary (in 2022, AHS reported 3479 opioid-related EMS calls in Edmonton, versus 1761 in Calgary). Not only does this put strain on our first responders (notably Edmonton Fire Rescue Services), but these incidents frequently occur in City facilities, like transit centres and libraries. The Province must directly invest in more harm reduction services for Edmonton, as well as treatment and recovery programs.

Connected to that is the need for specific and targeted funding for affordable housing initiatives. During the pandemic, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton doubled, putting incredible strain on limited resources, particularly in the downtown core. Much of the disorder that has been so visible downtown is directly related to a lack of 24/7 shelter spaces, bridge housing, and supportive housing.



Our members are seeing the effects of this, with increased security concerns in LRT stations and libraries, rec centres and public parks. The City has committed more funding to hire more Peace Officers and increase resources to the Edmonton Police Service, but property taxes are not sufficient to meet all the needs of the community. While the City can invest in solutions to the housing crisis or drug poisoning, this effectively robs other parts of the city of the essential services that citizens depend on every day, meaning it takes longer to clear the snow from roads and pathways, buses don't run as often as they should, and new neighbourhoods wait longer for fire stations to be built.

The Alberta Government must come to the table with significant funding to support the citizens of Edmonton because, after all, housing and healthcare are the responsibility of the provincial government. Our members are working every day to provide Edmontonians with the essential services they rely on, but the City needs the province at the table to truly solve the root causes that are creating so many of these issues. We urge you act immediately to work with City Council to address these critical needs which will increase the health and safety of our members and all Edmontonians.

Sincerely,

Steve Bradshaw
President
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 569

Eric Lewis
President
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 30

Lanny Chudyk
President
Civic Service Union 52

Greg Rehman
President
Edmonton Fire Fighters' Union Local 209

Steve Southwood
Business Manager
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1007