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Together We Will: Coalition of Public, Private and Nonprofit Partners Announce Infusion of Resources to Address Public Health & Safety Challenges in Downtown Denver

Downtown Denver Action Partners launch coordinated strategy joining strong enforcement with compassionate, community-minded response, joined by community members collaboratively pledging support to Downtown Denver.

DENVER (Nov. 10, 2022) – Together as the Downtown Denver Action Partners, the Downtown Denver Partnership; Mayor Michael B. Hancock and the City and County of Denver; the Department of Public Safety, including Denver Police Department, Denver Fire and Denver Sheriff; the Regional Transportation District (RTD); and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Colorado today announced an infusion of resources to address both immediate health and safety concerns in the center city while targeting root problems and long-term solutions.

“Downtown Denver is the heartbeat of our city, serving as a community gathering place, a center for culture, and a hub for business, investment, and innovation,” said Kourtny Garrett, president and CEO of the Downtown Denver Partnership, “But the reality is that, like many cities across the country, we are also experiencing an increase in crime, more people in need on our streets, and significant mental health and drug misuse challenges. Though the circumstances we face in this moment are not unique, what will set us apart is how we will address the challenges before us – together – to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our community.”

The Action Partners will lead tactical strategies utilizing an approach that joins strong enforcement with compassionate, community-minded response. The goal is to address both immediate health and safety concerns while targeting root causes and identifying long-term solutions to the challenges facing the center city. The newly launched efforts will span the entirety of downtown, with a concentration of resources first deployed in areas experiencing high levels of need.

“It’s critical that our downtown’s recovery pick up the pace. The Downtown Action Team, similar to work that we implemented at Union Station, will concentrate and enhance both social service and enforcement resources to our urban core,” Mayor Hancock said. “This team will provide a rapid response to these lingering challenges – cleaning up our public spaces, connecting people with the help and support they need, and removing the criminal element that is targeting residents, visitors and the vulnerable.”

“It’s our goal to ensure the overall safety of downtown residents, workers and visitors, and through this collaborative approach, we can achieve that goal, block by city block,” said Denver Chief of Police Ron



Thomas. “We are dedicating officers to the Downtown Action Team and will continue assigning officers, in a data-driven manner, while providing resources to our neighbors in need.”

Immediate actions announced today include:

- **Mobilizing the Downtown Action Team**, a cross-agency effort to join enforcement and outreach. The Action Team joins responders from the Denver Police Department, the Department of Safety Street Enforcement Team, Denver Fire Department Medical Unit, WellPower (mental health) clinicians, and DDPHE’s Substance Abuse Navigators and public health inspectors, DOTI graffiti and trash, with support being provided by the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District Clean and Safe teams. Efforts will focus first on areas of heightened concern downtown, including the Colorado Convention Center Corridor.
- **Significantly growing response teams and incorporating multi-disciplinary models** across the Denver Police Department (hiring 180 additional officers citywide throughout 2023), the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District, RTD Police, U.S. Attorney General for the District of Colorado, and other agencies to ensure that teams are adequately staffed and equipped with a depth of resources.
- **Implementing public realm improvements** grounded in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies, including enhanced lighting, wayfinding and music, in partnership with downtown property owners utilizing \$500K in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
- **Increased coordinated advocacy for local, state and federal policies** that strengthen the critical tools needed to meaningfully address crime and provide resources to address mental health and drug misuse.

Recognizing growing concerns around rising gun violence-related crime, the United States Attorney’s Office is additionally partnering with the City and County of Denver to hire Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys to help prosecute violent crime cases involving felons in possession of weapons for additional federal penalties. Under current Colorado state law, only certain felons are prohibited from carrying weapons.

“We are bringing federal criminal charges against felons with guns and criminals using guns in crimes of violence or drug trafficking,” said U.S. Attorney Cole Finegan. “Additional special prosecutors for the U.S. Attorney’s Office, funded by the City and County of Denver, will help us take more violent criminals off our streets.”

Attorney General Phil Weiser and the Colorado Department of Law are leading state-level efforts to address the opioid crisis.

“As downtown Denver recovers from the pandemic and returns to pre-pandemic levels, it’s important that the public, private, and nonprofit sectors work together on innovative solutions to improve public safety and health. At the Department of Law, we are exploring how the state’s opioid settlement funds can be used to support innovative projects that can combat the opioid crisis and drug misuse that may be associated with crime as well as those struggling with homelessness. I look forward to working with Denver and community partners to take advantage of such opportunities,” Attorney General Phil Weiser



said.

In addition to strategies being implemented by public agencies and the Downtown Denver Partnership, downtown residents, businesses, and nonprofits are encouraged to join the coordinated effort to ensure that Downtown Denver is a safe, vibrant and welcoming environment for everyone. A broad-based coalition of Advocacy Partners representing residents, businesses and non-profits have already come together to support these efforts and commit to additional action. More information can be found at: downtowndenver.com/safety.

About the Downtown Denver Partnership

The Downtown Denver Partnership partners with public, private and non-profit entities to implement high-impact strategies, outlined in the organization’s long-term strategy the [2007 Downtown Area Plan](#), to support its vision for an economically healthy, growing and vital Downtown Denver for all. For more information, visit downtowndenver.com.

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