



DOWNTOWN SPOKANE PARTNERSHIP

December 31, 2024

Honorable City Council President & Council Members
City of Spokane
ATTN: Public Safety Committee Chair
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd
Spokane, WA 99201

RE: Letter of Support: Alcohol Impact Area | Community Health Impact Area

Dear Chair Dillion,

On behalf of the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) representing employers, small businesses, nonprofits, and residents in Spokane's urban core, I am writing to express our strong support for the re-establishment of an alcohol impact area (AIA) and new regulations on the sale of drug paraphernalia in downtown Spokane.

Re-establishing the AIA is an important step to ensure a safer, more welcoming downtown environment. For more than a decade, we saw first-hand how the AIA could directly impact public intoxication and litter. Since expiring in 2022, the sale of certain single use alcohol products for off-premises consumption has directly correlated with public intoxication and increasing litter as well as drug violations within the downtown area, necessitating the urgent need to once again establish an AIA to regulate these activities.

The DSP's Clean & Safe teams have closely monitored and tracked the consumption of single serve, high-octane alcoholic beverages in the 80-block Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) area. We have seen a consistent pattern of activity around locations that sell these products, underscoring the need for targeted intervention. Notably in just the last 30 days, from November 29th to December 29th, we recorded over 50 single serve containers littering our streets and landscaping. *(see accompanying photos below)*

Off-premises alcohol outlets in downtown Spokane are also places where drug activities often take place, including too often, drug overdoses. At a time when the challenges confronting downtown Spokane are significant, the importance of taking proactive steps is urgent. Re-establishing an AIA with limits on single serve/ready-to-drink alcohol and restrictions on off-premises retail sales hours can impact alcohol consumption in downtown's high-traffic areas that should be enjoyed by our residents, our employees and visitors.



Based on the guidelines provided by the State of Washington of the comprehensive list of products covered, we also appreciate the consideration in ensuring that our local breweries and wineries can continue to sell complying products for responsible off-premises consumption.

With the re-establishment of the AIA, it's crucial that the city also regulate retail sales of drug paraphernalia. There are multiple businesses in downtown Spokane selling products used to consume illegal drugs and creating unsafe conditions for the surrounding neighborhood. Like the AIA, identifying and regulating products that directly correlate with increased crime and litter is an important proactive step to improving conditions. While we believe that the best option is a full prohibition on the sale of "legal" consumables that are used for illegal uses downtown, we understand from the city that the state limits its ability to outright ban these items. The next best step is establishing a requirement to prohibit the sale of smoking paraphernalia within downtown unless it provides naloxone for free during every transaction. As this new regulation is implemented, it will be crucial to monitor how it impacts use and how it is effectively enforced. We encourage the city to also advocate for the state to provide flexibility to entirely prohibit these sales in designated areas.

Ensuring a cleaner and safer downtown area that benefits all who call this area home is the top priority of the DSP. We hear regularly from businesses and their employees, visitors and residents that illegal drug use, public intoxication, growing litter and associated crime make them feel unsafe. By re-establishing the AIA and regulating retail sales of dangerous items, the city can take proactive steps to reduce ongoing issues and restore our downtown. Coupled with ongoing, permanent increases in police presence downtown and enforcement of ordinances designed to keep our public spaces clean and clear, Spokane can foster a safer environment for all.

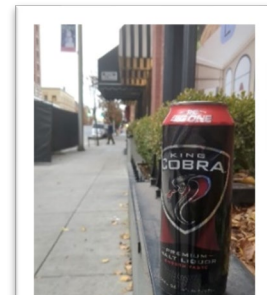
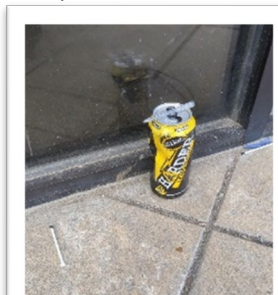
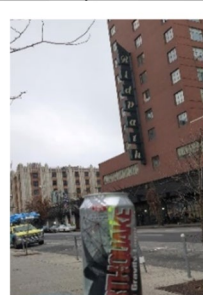
We also welcome the opportunity to partner with the Spokane Fire Department to offer quarterly naloxone training courses for downtown businesses, education resources for downtown users and continue to participate in efforts to address the opioid crisis in Spokane.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your ongoing commitment to improving our community.

Sincerely,



Emilie Cameron
President & CEO, Downtown Spokane Partnership



Left to Right: #1 Lincoln Viaduct, #2 Across from the Ridpath Apartments on W. Sprague, #3 Corner of Monroe & 2nd at the 'Used Superstore,' #4 Outside the Hotel Lusso at Sprague & Post