

September 28, 2009

The Honorable Sam Adams  
City of Portland  
1221 SW Fourth Ave., Room 220  
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mayor Adams:

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the proposed initial concepts regarding the Sidewalk Management Plan. As you know, the Alliance and Portland Downtown Services (PDSI) have worked with the city for many years to find an effective and appropriate balance that addresses the needs of residents, employees and visitors for a safe, clean and inviting sidewalk environment while providing needed social and community services and facilities. We appreciate and applaud your efforts to carry this work forward.

The Alliance supports all of the initial concepts and believes that, in coordination, these elements can provide an integrated management framework to address both chronic and episodic issues in the central city. We offer the following comments by way of emphasizing those areas of the framework that are of particular interest to our members.

**Align City Codes:** As you know, PDSI and the Alliance have worked diligently over the past year with downtown businesses to ensure that all of the sidewalk cafés within the Business Improvement District are permitted and in compliance with city rules and that all "A" boards are permitted and stickered. We also worked with the city to find an equitable and workable fee structure that significantly increased the fees for sidewalk cafés. This significant effort reflects an acknowledgement on the part of downtown businesses that they embrace the important responsibility they have in maintaining the sidewalk environment.

**Criminal Zero Tolerance:** The Alliance believes this concept, along with periodic targeted drug enforcement activities, are an essential element of a successful strategy for downtown. Enforcement for criminal behavior such as aggressive panhandling, littering and for such issues as unlicensed animals is necessary to maintaining a safe, clean and inviting sidewalk environment. More intensive operations focused on drug activity are critical in addressing hot spots that develop during the year. We recognize that these efforts are expensive and time consuming for the city and cannot be sustained at such a high level throughout the year. However, we encourage the city to provide the necessary funding to carry out these operations at critical points during the year and at locations that are particularly troubled by criminal activity. Improve and Expand Homeless Services and

**Increase Charitable Giving:** As you know, the Alliance has been a consistent partner and supporter of efforts to expand homeless and low-income services in the central city. We continue to be enthusiastic supporters of those efforts and look forward to working under the city's leadership to promote increased giving to the many social service organizations that have a proven track record of helping homeless and low income individuals find jobs, housing, drug and alcohol treatment and become productive citizens.

**Designate Sidewalk Thoroughway Zones:** We acknowledge the need for the city to have a coherent and defensible framework for managing the travel function of our sidewalks. Sidewalks are by definition and necessity primarily transportation facilities and, like all such facilities, need to be managed in such a way that, although they are also used for other purposes, their primary function is not compromised. We remain frustrated that the city's ability to effectively regulate these facilities is as limited as it appears to be.

**Establish and Fund a Downtown Signature Retail District Strategy:** This is an essential element of the overall strategy. Designation of a Signature Retail District and the identification of resources, such as the establishment of a new urban renewal area, to carry out the Strategy will greatly enhance the attractiveness and vibrancy of the retail core. The Alliance stands ready to help in any way it can to assist in moving this component of the strategy forward.

**Increase the Number of Public Toilets:** As you know, the Alliance has worked closely with our members who manage downtown property to make additional public toilets available and expand the number of hours during the day those facilities can be accessed. We have also undertaken, in cooperation with the city, the cleaning and maintenance of the public restrooms in the downtown parks. This program, and the addition of Commissioner Leonard's Loo, have been successfully managed to provide additional services without creating problem areas for drug abuse, drug dealing or other criminal activity. We look forward to working with the city to identify additional locations for installation of the Portland Loo and ensuring that those facilities are appropriately cleaned and maintained.

Mayor Adams, thank you again for the opportunity to add our input on this important issue. We would like to again thank you and Commissioner Fish for your efforts to identify solutions and move this effort forward. We also want to recognize Commissioner Fritz for her work in facilitating additional public input, to Commissioner Leonard for his efforts with regard to the Portland Loo and Commissioner Saltzman for his support of Cmdr. Reese and his valuable efforts on behalf of Central Precinct.

Sincerely,

Sandra McDonough  
President & CEO