Dear Ms. O’Toole:

As Chair of the Downtown Residents Council, I would like to welcome you to Seattle! This is an incredibly vibrant and exciting city and the more than 850 members of the Downtown Residents Council, representing all 12 Downtown neighborhoods, are proud to call it home. We came together as a group because we share the common goal of making Downtown the best urban area to live for us and for other families.

As you are aware, Downtown Seattle has its share of public safety issues. We witness these issues while we go about our daily lives, and oftentimes are the ones who report incidents to police as we see them while walking to and from work, taking our kids to school, and going about our days. Looking ahead to the approaching summer weather, which has historically meant a higher crime rate Downtown, we would like to bring up the following pressing issues:

- **Rampant open-air drug dealing:** We witness drug dealing on an almost daily basis and regularly report instances to 911, only to see this activity continue. Based on past summers, we unfortunately expect drug dealing to increase in the coming months. This continues to be a problem, with very little having been done to meaningfully reduce the prevalence of open drug dealing. We need a more concerted effort by SPD to crack down on this illegal and dangerous behavior. There are well documented hot spots where this takes place, and we would like to see not only an increased number of officers patrolling these hot spots, but need to see action taken by SPD when illegal activity is taking place. Extra officers on the street mean little if no action is taken to arrest those committing repeated illegal acts.

- **Safety concerns in Downtown Parks:** As residents of Downtown, we make frequent use of our parks. Great effort has been made to make these parks fun and inviting for users of all ages, however we are losing ground in our efforts to keep these parks welcoming and safe for all. Last summer, Westlake Park saw a troubling increase in illegal activities. We witnessed large groups of people taking up residence in the park (in direct opposition to park rules), incidents of physical attacks, verbal harassment of park visitors and blatant drug dealing. This type of behavior takes place in all Downtown parks. We are concerned with limited presence of SPD officers in these parks, and believe stronger collaboration between SPD and Parks Department Rangers is needed to increase safety and reduce illegal activities in Downtown parks. When we do see officers in the parks, we frequently witness them passing by those who are engaging in illegal or menacing behavior and failing to act. We need there to be a substantial increase in actual policing in these areas, before we lose them entirely from their intended function.
Our frustrations about the lack of enforcement and action were confirmed with the Community Police Commission report that came out recently and seems to prove what we have long suspected: police action taken against illegal acts has declined. The report shows that calls to dispatch have increased by 9 percent, while incidents where police have initiated action have decreased by 44 percent. We need officers to engage with those acting in an illegal or inappropriate manner. We sincerely hope that you see the figures detailed in this report as a major problem, and one of the first you intend to tackle once you become Chief of Police.

We sincerely hope that you will lead the Seattle Police Department in reviewing its policies and practices to alleviate some of the issues Downtown is currently experiencing. We appreciate that Mayor Murray put such great effort into finding the next Chief for Seattle, and we look forward to working with both you and him on these issues.

Sincerely,
Linda Mitchell
Chair, Downtown Residents Council