



Christmas Is Just Around the Corner: Is Your Store Ready?

By Tom Reimer

Christmas is less than two months away, and for retailers, that means the busiest and most profitable shopping season of the year is quickly approaching. Storefronts will soon be decorated, display cases filled with high-value merchandise, and customers flooding through the doors searching for the perfect gift.

But while retailers are preparing for increased sales, criminals are preparing too. Across North America, organized flash mobs and smash-and-grab crews have become an increasing concern for businesses. These groups often strike with little warning, rushing into stores in coordinated attacks designed to overwhelm staff and security personnel. Their target is simple: valuable merchandise displayed behind glass cases. The attack usually takes less than a minute. A group enters the store, hammers are raised, display cases are smashed, and thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise disappears in seconds. By the time police arrive, the thieves are often long gone. Many shop owners assume it won't happen to them. Until it does.

The reality is that criminals are looking for easy opportunities, especially during the holiday season when display cases are stocked with expensive inventory and stores are bustling with customers. Traditional glass cases may look secure, but when faced with repeated hammer strikes, they can quickly become the weakest link in your security strategy. Fortunately, there is a proven solution. Polycarbonate security glazing is engineered to withstand the kind of impacts that would shatter ordinary glass. Instead of breaking apart under repeated strikes, polycarbonate absorbs and disperses the force, creating a powerful barrier between criminals and your merchandise. Consider a typical smash-and-grab scenario. A group of thieves enters a jewelry store expecting to smash their way into a display case within seconds. The first hammer strike lands. Nothing. A second strike follows. Still nothing. The attackers quickly realize they cannot gain access to the merchandise. Valuable seconds are lost. Employees have time to react. Security cameras capture evidence. Police response becomes a real threat. The criminals leave exactly as they arrived. Empty-handed. That's the power of delay and deterrence. Most thieves are looking for quick access and an easy escape. When confronted with a display case protected by polycarbonate, the risk increases and the reward decreases. Often, that alone is enough to stop an attack before it succeeds. The key is not waiting until after an incident occurs. The most successful retailers are taking action now, before the holiday rush begins. They understand that security is not something to think about after inventory arrives and shoppers fill the aisles. It is something that should be in place beforehand. This Christmas season, don't leave your business vulnerable to smash-and-grab thieves. Protect your merchandise, protect your employees, and protect the profits you've worked all year to earn. Christmas is coming. Criminals are preparing. The question is: are you? Call to Action

Now is the time to upgrade your display case security with polycarbonate protection. Don't wait until after a break-in to discover the weakness of ordinary glass. Contact Metalex today to learn how polycarbonate security solutions can help protect your merchandise and stop smash-and-grab attacks before they start.



Newly elected Municipal Councils : Do Your Homework on Homelessness

By Margaret Eskins
Executive Director DARS
Dedicated Advocacy Resource Support

To every newly elected mayor and councillor across Durham Region: congratulations on earning the trust of your community. Now comes the hard work; and few issues call for more careful attention, courage and cooperation than homelessness and the need for affordable, supportive housing. Before decisions are made about budgets, land, services or development, take time to understand what homelessness looks like in your municipality and across the region. Meet with people who have experienced it. Speak with outreach workers, housing providers, shelters, food programs, health professionals, Indigenous organizations, community groups and local businesses. Visit the services residents rely on. Read the plans and reports already on the table, and ask what is missing. Do not assume that homelessness is limited to one neighbourhood, one kind of person or one visible street corner. People can lose housing because of rising costs, job loss, family violence, illness, disability, addiction or a shortage of suitable homes. Some are sleeping outside or in vehicles. Others are moving between couches, temporary shelters and unsafe situations. Every person's circumstances are different, and effective responses need to reflect that. Municipal governments may not control every source of housing or homelessness funding, but local leadership still matters. Decisions about land use, planning, municipal property, community services and partnerships can help create more housing options and improve access to support. Mayors and councillors can bring partners together, raise local needs with the Region and provincial and federal governments, and press for the resources required to respond. That work requires more than approving a plan or announcing a target. Ask whether proposed homes are affordable to the people who need them. Find out what supports residents will need to remain housed. Consider options for people with different levels of need, including supportive and transitional housing. Look at whether existing buildings or underused land can serve the community. Track outcomes and listen to people receiving services so that policies can be adjusted when they are not working. There will be difficult conversations. Some residents may worry about safety, neighbourhood impacts or change. Those concerns deserve clear information and honest answers. But fear and stigma cannot be allowed to decide who gets a safe place to live. Good planning, appropriate supports, communication and accountability can address practical concerns while respecting the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness. The newly elected leaders of Durham Region have an opportunity to move beyond short-term reactions and work toward lasting solutions. That means learning the facts, working across municipal boundaries and being willing to defend sound housing initiatives when they face opposition. We need bold politicians: leaders who will stand up for vulnerable neighbours, explain why the work matters and keep going when the decisions are unpopular. Homelessness is not someone else's problem. It is a community challenge, and our response will reflect the kind of community we choose to be. Do your homework, listen closely and lead with courage.



Karmageddon

Japan, Canada and the Drug Crisis: Time For A Hard Line

By Mr. 'X' ~ John Mutton, Former Mayor of Clarington

When I travelled to Japan for the World Championships, I saw something that stayed with me long after the competition ended. Japan has people who experience homelessness, just as Canada does. But the visible street disorder and open drug use that have become familiar in too many Ontario communities were strikingly different from what I observed.

That does not mean Japan has solved homelessness. Some people there lose their housing after layoffs, financial setbacks or family breakdown. Homelessness can be less visible, and a visitor cannot judge an entire country from a short trip. Still, the contrast raises an uncomfortable question: why have we accepted the scale of public drug use and street disorder we now see at home?

Canada has two overlapping crises, and we need the courage to distinguish them. One is the affordability crisis. Housing costs, rent, groceries, fuel and economic insecurity can push working people and families to the edge. People who cannot afford a home need practical housing solutions, not criminalization.

The other is a devastating addiction and illegal-drug crisis. Families are losing loved ones. Businesses and residents are dealing with disorder. Emergency workers are repeatedly called to the same scenes. And too often, public debate treats any demand for enforcement as a lack of compassion.

Japan takes a much tougher legal and cultural stance toward illicit drugs. Canada has chosen a different mix of harm reduction, treatment and enforcement, including supervised consumption services and, in some settings, prescribed alternatives to toxic street drugs. Supporters argue these measures prevent overdoses and connect people with care. Critics question whether the overall approach has done enough to restore safety and help people recover.

My position is clear: Canada needs a hard line against the illegal drug trade and against open drug use that makes public spaces unsafe. Dealers and traffickers should face serious consequences. Police need clear authority and resources to enforce the law. Courts need meaningful options that protect the public.

I favour zero tolerance for illegal drugs in public spaces. But simply putting every person caught possessing or using drugs in jail, without assessment or treatment, is unlikely to end addiction. Where addiction drives repeated offences, the justice system should be able to mandate closely supervised treatment and recovery programs, with custody where the law and circumstances justify it. Accountability and rehabilitation must work together.

We also cannot pretend that enforcement alone will lower rents, build housing or create stable employment. Governments must tackle the affordability crisis with the same urgency they bring to public safety. A person displaced by the cost of living should not be lumped together with an organized drug dealer.

What I saw in Japan reminded me that the conditions we have come to accept in Canadian communities are not inevitable. We can insist on cleaner, safer streets. We can demand stronger action against dangerous illegal drugs. And we can help people get back on their feet instead of leaving them to deteriorate in plain sight.

Compassion without accountability is not a complete policy. Neither is punishment without a path to recovery. Canada needs both—and it needs the political will to act.



DONATE YOUR OLD COMPUTER

Help a Local Family in Need

We repair and refurbish donated technology and provide it to families who need access to computers.

We Accept:

- ✓ Computers
- ✓ Monitors
- ✓ Scanners
- ✓ Printers
- ✓ Cell Phones

Pickup Available
or Drop Off At Our Office

 **136 Simcoe St. North – Suite 4**
Oshawa, Ontario

 **Call Us Today**
905-432-2657



Your old technology can make a real difference.