

**1. Why are we doing this? Why would we need an event and entertainment district?**

*The people who live here deserve to have vibrant public spaces, large concerts and events, thriving businesses, and entertainment that will create special moments, enhance civic pride, and ensure a deep connection between people for generations to come.*

- The Downtown Event & Entertainment District is a place for people and community – Saskatoon’s living room! We need to aspire to a welcoming environment for the community, and to appeal to all cultures, so Saskatoon can live up to our greatest potential and have meaningful experiences for everyone. A place for people and community, a place to be proud of that is active and thriving all four seasons.
- Focusing on the heart of the city is vital for the life of the community. We need and deserve things for people to do in Saskatoon. It’s not just about people who want to attend big-ticket events, more importantly it’s about active public gathering spaces and creating an urban experience that makes people want to stay.

**2. Isn’t this just about an arena and convention centre?**

*The event centre, convention centre, public space and future Bus Rapid Transit give the Downtown Event & Entertainment District a kick start but together we’ll create a thriving four season district.*

- The Downtown Event & Entertainment District is more than just an arena or a convention centre. These public investments, including creating a welcoming public space, are projects that act as tools to attract private investment that keep downtown vibrant and active, where there is housing, continued job growth and thriving businesses.
- The larger vision is about creating animated public spaces that are a connection to other parts of the Downtown, businesses, and other amenities that are accessible to everyone. We’ll create an urban experience for those who want to live downtown, a place where visitors can come and experience something unique to Saskatoon. We’ll bring new people to the Downtown that aren’t here today and will create a Saskatoon where people want to establish roots.
- We can take advantage of the future Bus Rapid Transit routes and Active Transportation opportunities, as well as other existing transportation, utility and cultural infrastructure - whether it’s the Remai gallery, library, a wealth of heritage buildings, the river and other numerous other amenities that are in the Downtown. It’s not about individual projects, but rather the cumulative effects achieved when you unlock the potential of an entire community.
- A thriving city centre was identified in the Saskatoon Speaks project as a priority for the residents of this city. So, this isn’t about just an arena and convention centre, it’s about city building and asking ourselves what Saskatoon needs for a thriving city centre.

**3. What happens if we don’t do this?**

*It’s about the bigger picture. If we don’t take a step forward, we risk taking a step back.*

- This is a critical moment for our city. If Saskatoon is going to remain competitive nationally and internationally and be able to attract new people and businesses to continue to stay strong and grow, then change is necessary. The risk of not moving forward has potential long-term economic and social impacts for Saskatoon.

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- We are a quickly growing city with the most significant increase in employment in Canada last year. However, after decades of wear and tear, coupled with changing needs, our current flagship arena and convention centre are nearing the ends of their useful lives, and increasingly less competitive in attracting events.
  - Too often we talk about the cost of building something – but consider the cost of not doing anything. If we don't make sure we are moving forward Saskatoon risks becoming a fly over city, with major concerts events selecting other cities, and people not choosing Saskatoon as a place to live due to a perception of it being stagnant.
  - If we renovate the aging facilities, there is a cost. Both SaskTel Centre and TCU Place would need to be closed for several years incurring expensive renovations, which would also result in a loss of business and Saskatoon missing out on many opportunities. Should the City instead choose to renovate the existing facilities, there would be a greater burden to fund the work through increases in property taxes. The longer we wait, the more construction costs go up and the cost will be passed onto future generations.
  - Or we can meet our goals head on and not look back and ask why we didn't plan or strive for more. If we act now, we can build the best district that we can afford. Funding is still to be determined, but innovative models already used in other cities are being examined that can minimize any future tax burden for our community.

#### **4. Doesn't the City have other priorities?**

***A thriving city centre is a priority, but this won't take away from other priorities that every city must juggle.***

- In any given year a city must juggle hundreds of priorities. These priorities impact different residents in different ways, and what is of the most importance to some people may not even be on the radar of others. In addition, how these priorities are funded often comes from grants, other levels of government, and many other ways that do not affect the tax base.
- The City uses multi-year budgeting to try and support these competing needs that often have spending requirements from other agencies attached to them. Which is a complicated way of saying the city will always have a huge number of priorities and none of them can be completely ignored without having ripple effects down the line.
- There are significant efficiencies to be achieved through infill growth since there is already existing infrastructure invested within Downtown, and existing property taxes already account for the operation and maintenance of this infrastructure. A successful Downtown Event and Entertainment District will drive density to the core and bring businesses, jobs, events, tourism and attract more resident spaces – in short, will bring money into Saskatoon, increase the tax base and will not take away from any of the other priorities, like snow clearing or road maintenance.

#### **5. Will this process involve and inform residents along the journey?**

***The process to get there involves multiple checkpoints, expertise, and involvement from the community.***

- While there are several technical aspects that require professional advice, we will be reaching out to the public at certain junctions in the process for feedback that will have a direct impact on specific parts of the project.
- Throughout the project the City will work to be as transparent as possible through regular reporting, newsletters, news releases, social media posts and other communications tools, and as always, we will be receptive to questions and concerns from the public.