

The journey to a Downtown Event & Entertainment District isn't something that suddenly appeared, but is rather a thoughtful approach to creating a vibrant future for Saskatoon's Downtown. The journey started in 2016 and has taken us to where we are today:

April 2016

The City's Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) received a presentation from the CEO of SaskTel Centre on the state of the facility and the industry. It was decided that a market analysis would be conducted to assist in determining the future of the arena and TCU Place.

March 2018

A TCU Place/SaskTel Centre Market Analysis conducted by HLT Advisory, Conventional Wisdom and Convergence Design was presented to GPC. The report concluded that both SaskTel Centre and TCU Place were nearing the end of their useful life. The report also recommended that the arena replacement would best be situated Downtown.

November 2018

City Council received a report from Administration on the Considerations for TCU Place and SaskTel Centre. The report concluded that after taking into consideration a number of factors including proximity to the future Bus Rapid Transit system and the focus on Downtown development, that a Downtown location for new arena and convention facilities would be of great benefit to the city. As a result of this report City Council directed Administration to:

- Include a future arena/convention centre when planning the future of Saskatoon's Downtown;
- Ensure the focus of the planning work include consideration of an entertainment district, not just an arena and/or convention facility;
- Report back on Terms of Reference for a process for identifying the best location for a future entertainment district and how it would fit into a wider vision for a strong future Downtown;
- Seek approaches that minimize the reliance on Property Taxes to pay for an arena; and,
- Recognize that while the City of Saskatoon has a leadership role, it will take collaboration with stakeholders and the community as a whole to come up with the best solution.

April 2019

City Council received a report from Administration about the next steps for a future Downtown Event & Entertainment District. This work would include confirming viable sites for consideration and completing detailed analysis to determine the preferred sites.

September 2019

City Council received an information report from Administration outlining a communications and engagement plan to guide the site selection process.

January 2020

City Council received a project update report from Administration that included researching best practices and reviewing the experiences of other cities including the Ice District and Rogers Centre in Edmonton, as well as four cities in the United States (Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Iowa; and Kansas City, Missouri).

Two external advisory firms (Oak View Group and Katz Group/Shugarman Architecture) were engaged to gain insight with recent experience in siting and developing similar facilities. These two firms visited Saskatoon in December 2019 and provided technical reports outlining their advice on sites.

Negotiations with owners of potential private sites were begun although final agreements remain works in progress.

April 2021

An information report was presented to GPC about potential funding opportunities. In addition to traditional financing approaches, the City will explore new revenue sources to pay for the majority of the project. These sources are used in other jurisdictions with similar facilities such as a ticket surcharge/amusement tax, accommodations tax, motor vehicle rental fee and tax increment financing.

June 2021

GPC received an information report outlining the sequencing of upcoming reports and milestones for the Downtown Event & Entertainment District and Bus Rapid Transit projects.

August 2021

A project governance model, including the implementation of a Downtown Event & Entertainment District Advisory Group, was presented to GPC.

December 2021

GPC received a report outlining the Advisory Group Composition and Terms of Reference.

January 2022

GPC approved Mayor Charlie Clark, Councillor Troy Davies and Councillor Cynthia Block to be appointed to the Downtown Event & Entertainment District Advisory Group to the end of 2023; and that Councillors Davies and Block act as alternating Chair.

March 2022

GPC approved an amendment to the Downtown Event & Entertainment District Advisory Group composition and Terms of Reference to include one voting member from the Province of Saskatchewan.

March 2022

GPC appointed additional members to the Advisory group including Ali Abukar, Bertrand Bartake, Alisha Esmail, Geri Fernet, Shawna Nelson, Stephen Yee, Ken Cheveldayoff, Tribal Chief Mark Arcand, Brent Penner, Randy Pshebylo, Stephanie Clovechok, Keith Moen and Jason Aebig.

April 2022

City Administration releases a Request for Proposal for Owner Representatives for Potential Arena Partnership to research and come back with a recommendation on whether or not to proceed to a formal Expression of Interest to gauge private interest in a partnership or long-term operations contract for the new arena and convention centre.

May 2022

City Council approves technical criteria for evaluating Downtown event centre/arena site options.

August 2022

Negotiations with the private owner are completed. City Council approves a report outlining the two proposed site options and the public engagement plan. Randomized surveys begin August 30th looking for feedback on opportunities and challenges of both sites, with larger public engagement scheduled to start mid-September 2022.