



JOURNEY to the **DISTRICT**

EVENT CENTRE/ARENA • CONVENTION CENTRE • BRT



This image is an artistic representation of a possible concept. No aspect of this should be considered to be predetermined.

DOWNTOWN EVENT & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

The City of Saskatoon is embarking on an exciting journey to transform our Downtown, our community, our region and our province. This once in a generation revitalization project aims to build on our successes as a young, thriving, and growing city to strategically place us as a premiere destination for events and entertainment.

The Downtown Event & Entertainment District is a transformative project that will reshape the fundamental core of Saskatchewan's largest city.

An event and entertainment district is a shared public space where every resident feels welcome and has a sense of belonging.

Journey to the District

The Journey to the District is not a new concept — it already has a story. The journey began in 2016 with a report on the aging state of SaskTelCentre. In March 2018, a *TCU Place/SaskTel Centre Market Analysis* conducted by HLT Advisory, Conventional Wisdom and Convergence Design was presented to Governance and Priorities Committee. The report concluded that both SaskTel Centre and TCU Place were nearing the end of their useful life and recommended considering Downtown for a replacement event centre/arena in November 2018. As a result of the report, City Council directed Administration to:

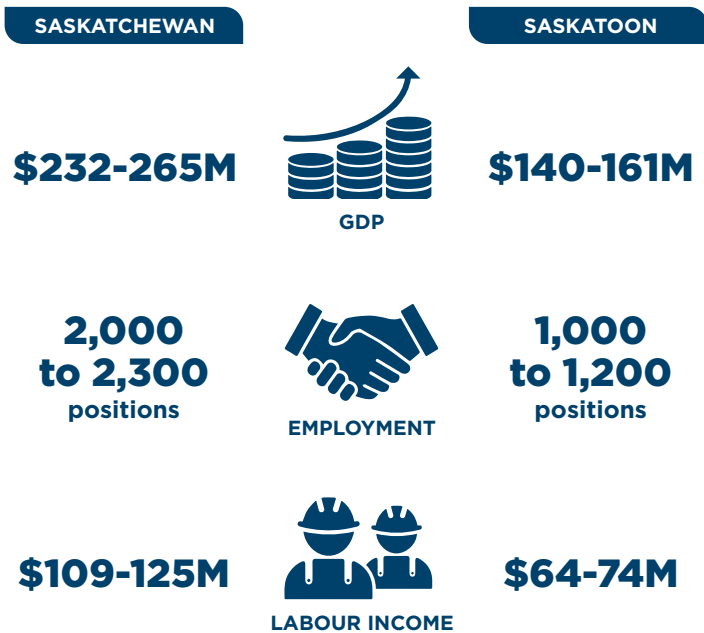
- Include a future event centre/arena and convention centre when planning the future of Saskatoon's Downtown;
- Ensure the focus of the planning work include consideration of an entertainment district, not just an event centre/arena and/or convention facility;
- Report back on Terms of Reference for a wider vision for a strong future Downtown;
- Seek approaches that minimize the reliance on Property Taxes; and,
- Recognize that while the City of Saskatoon has a leadership role, collaboration with stakeholders and the community is key.

As we work together on this city-building project, we acknowledge our ancestors and future generations. We honour Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis, by sharing this land under Treaty with the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, Métis, Dene and Non-Indigenous peoples. We are all Treaty People.

The Need

Let's face it, our current flagship arena and convention centre, SaskTel Centre and TCU Place, have both served our city and province very well over the last several decades. But they are nearing the ends of their useful lives. The City faced a choice: renovate what we have or be bold, ambitious and transformative injecting new vibrancy into our downtown. For a number of reasons a Downtown event centre/arena makes sense.

As part of our due diligence, an analysis of a new event centre/arena and new or expanded convention centre in Saskatoon was completed in March 2018. The final report provided information on the facility condition assessments, market potential, location options and a financial analysis. It also included an economic impact analysis to calculate the potential economic benefits in the Downtown of constructing a new event centre/arena and revived convention centre. The analysis estimated that the construction phase of the project alone could generate the following economic benefits in Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon:



Once operational, the economic benefits that accrue to the city and province are substantially more than what is generated today. The economic return alone makes this project a worthwhile investment.

Designing Reasons to Come

In Saskatoon, the vision for a Downtown Event & Entertainment District is anchored around a new event centre/arena and a new/expanded convention centre made more accessible through the future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The area will be developed sustainably and with a focus on Indigenous placemaking. By offering residents and visitors a gathering place for entertainment and events, with a variety of restaurants, venues, shopping and nightlife, Saskatoon's Downtown will become an economic driver for the city and the province. Downtown BRT stations will encourage redevelopment of adjacent areas, supporting a variety of businesses and housing opportunities.

A vibrant and busy Downtown provides an attractive place for shopping, entertainment, dining and more and will support small business and act as an incentive for corporate investment.

Downtown Event Centre/Arena

A new Downtown event centre/arena will create excitement and economic growth for Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and will showcase us internationally. Developed to replace the aging SaskTel Centre, the event centre/arena will bring a modern entertainment and sports venue to the heart of Saskatoon. With a generous seating area, the newest in staging and sports surfaces, and a variety of in-house food and beverage services and merchandising opportunities, the Downtown event centre/arena will attract top touring entertainment, sports and community events for decades to come.

Convention Centre

A new or expanded convention centre will complement the Downtown event centre/arena by providing a modern facility for business and community to meet, problem-solve and develop local solutions for international opportunities. It will also provide a home for the arts and special events well into the future.



The Two Sites

A number of important factors — including the costs for land assembly, opportunity to influence redevelopment and infill development in adjacent areas, permanent road closures and demolition costs — had important influence on the selection of the five initial site options that were further analyzed for feasibility.

These site options were studied to see if they were of suitable size for a modern event facility, with a capacity comparable to the existing SaskTel Centre (15,000 bowl seating capacity). Sites were ranked in accordance with nine evaluation criteria, covering everything from land area, to proximity to parking and existing hospitality offerings, to development costs and closeness to the future Bus Rapid Transit. Some sites, like River Landing, the southwest corner of Idylwyld Drive/22nd Street and the Toys “R” Us parking lot, were dismissed for being too small to accommodate an event centre/arena of this size, or due to scoring poorly in too many of the evaluation criteria to be considered viable. This left two sites, the Midtown Shopping Centre North Parking Lot and the North Downtown/City Yards as viable options.

Site A – Midtown Shopping Centre North Parking Lot

Note: The image below represents artistic illustrations one of many possible concepts for a new event centre/arena and Downtown Event & Entertainment District at each of the potential site locations.



SITE B - North Downtown/City Yards

Note: The image below represents artistic illustrations one of many possible concepts for a new event centre/arena and Downtown Event & Entertainment District at each of the potential site locations.



Based on the approved evaluation criteria, the Midtown Shopping Centre North Parking Lot is the highest scoring site. It is large enough to support a modern event centre/arena, is close to TCU Place, has excellent transportation connections and will be close to the future BRT network. It is also near existing hotel, restaurant, shopping and entertainment venues with an opportunity for future development in the surrounding area.

The North Downtown/City Yards site is the other viable option. Adjacent to the Saskatoon Police Service Headquarters, it provides excellent opportunity for future infill development within the North Downtown. It isn't as well linked to existing transportation options due to the CP railway line but does have fair proximity to the future BRT stations. The site is distant from existing hotel, restaurant, shopping and entertainment venues. Development of the site would require the relocation of the City Yards, incurring extra costs in the range of \$150-300 million.

Designing Connections to Get There

Along with designing reasons to come to the Downtown Event & Entertainment District, of equal importance is creating the connections to get there. Parking availability has been a strong consideration when looking at the two sites. By having adequate parking spaces and good access for traffic – and adding that connectivity to the upcoming BRT routes and ways to walk, bike and otherwise roll to the area – a Downtown Event & Entertainment District will be easily accessible to everyone whether they drive, take transit or utilize active transportation.

Parking

SaskTel Centre currently has 4,000 exposed surface parking spots. Using Site A (Midtown Shopping Centre North Parking Lot) as an example, the following figure shows the current SaskTel Centre overlaid in the blue dotted line and an equivalent comparison in the Downtown is shown in the pink dotted line.



Within comparable distance to SaskTel Centre:

- 3,600 existing off-street paid parking stalls
- 900 private stalls that could be converted
- 450 off-street paid parking stalls within another ½ block
- Total of 4,950 existing parking stalls
- Replacing 500 stalls as required and potentially adding more parking with the project.

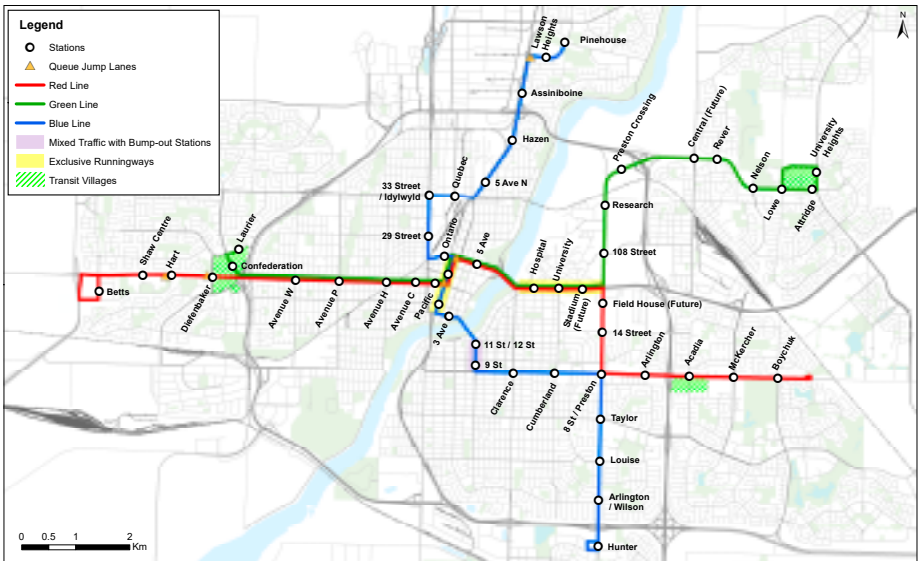
Furthermore, using Site A again as an example, there is a variety of options for underground parking, sheltered parking and surface parking.

	SaskTel Centre	SITE A: Midtown Shopping Centre North Parking Lot		
	Existing Lots	Existing Public Parking		Available to Convert
Description	4 Lots	Similar distance as SaskTel Centre	An additional 1/2 block	6 Employers
Underground	-	1,044	-	-
Sheltered	-	1,040	-	468
Exposed Surface	4,000	1,878	455	404
Total	4,000	3,962	455	872

The Downtown event centre/arena site locations identified will provide distributed parking – making it easier for everyone to enter Downtown and leave with multiple ways to enter and exit in all four directions. It is anticipated that there will be ample parking for everyone.

Bus Rapid Transit

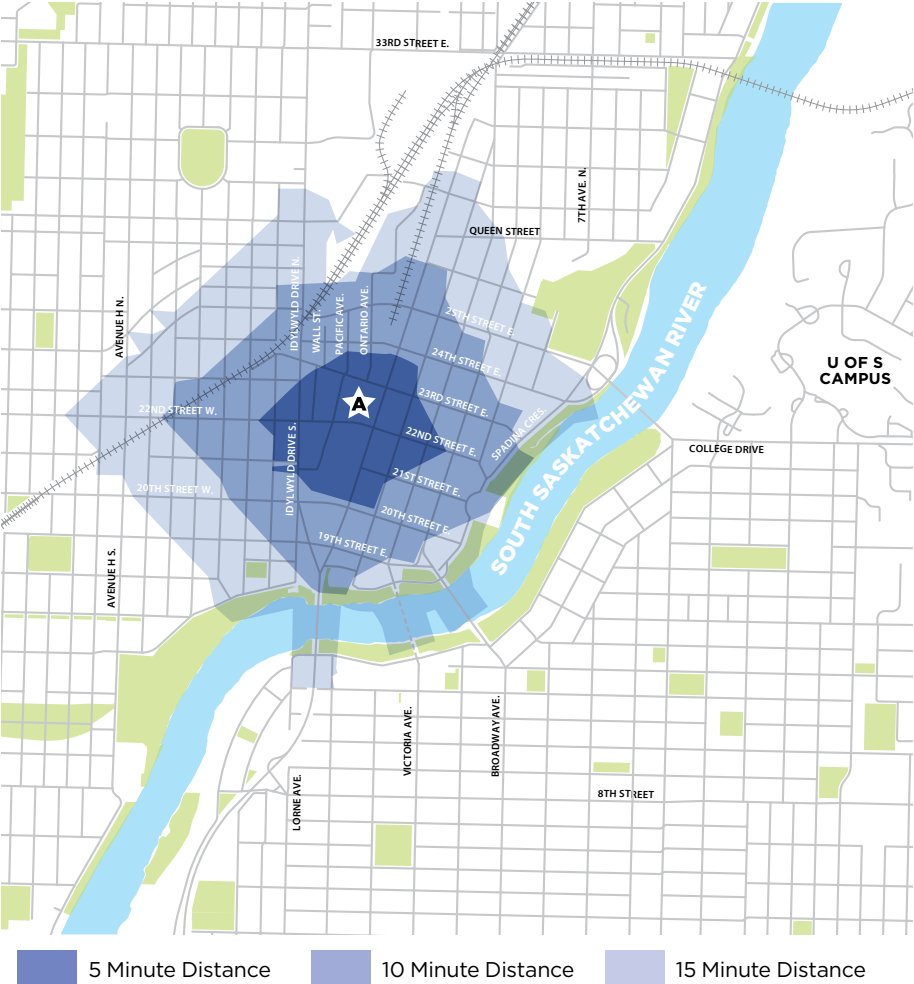
Future BRT routes will connect the District to the entire city and will be able to move a large number of people in and out of the area - the infrastructure needed will also improve roadways and sidewalks, and benefit first responders. The BRT provides improved accessibility to the corridors which means upwards of 53,000 residents live within walking distance to the BRT and an additional 44,000 workers are within walking distance. The BRT may further reduce the required parking stalls and reduce traffic congestion.



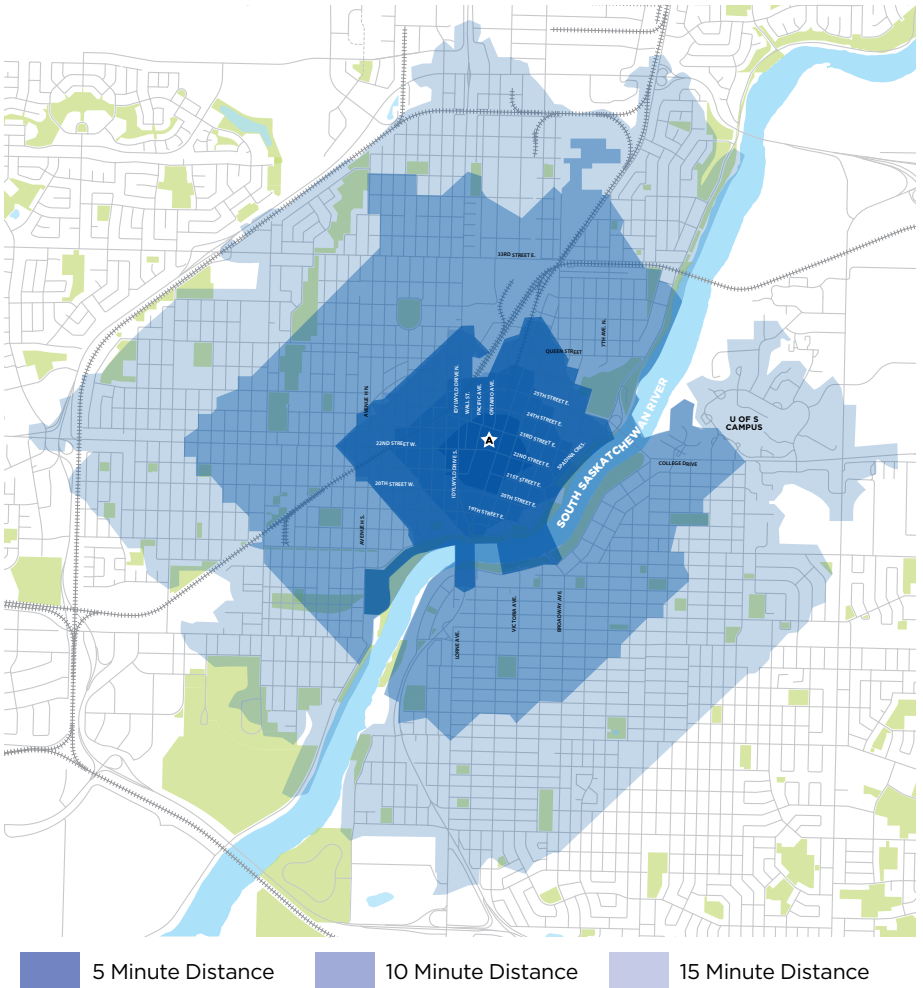
Walking and Cycling

Given the proximity of the Downtown location for an event centre/ arena, not everyone will need to park a vehicle — people may choose to walk or cycle. Approximately 6,000 people live within a 15 minute walk of the area with nearly 60,000 people living within a 15 minute bike ride radius.

SITE A: 5, 10 and 15 Minute Walking Time Service Areas



SITE A: 5, 10 and 15 Minute Cycling Time Service Areas



In addition, there are approximately 18,000 to 20,000 people who work Downtown, and an additional 1,668 hotel rooms within a five to 15 minute walking distance to Site A. This may further reduce the amount of parking stalls required.

Innovative Funding Plan

The Downtown Event & Entertainment District is a large, transformational project that will develop over many years and will have a positive impact on the economic future of Saskatoon. It will be largely funded through investment other than taxation.

While the exact funding plan is yet to be determined, a key overarching goal is that this project require little or no increase to property taxes.

A funding strategy could include a combination of sources, including but not limited to private partner capital contributions, tax increment financing, parking revenues, and provincial and federal transfers. The City is currently working with a consultant to develop funding scenarios and options for City Council's consideration. These recommendations will be based on a review of models used in similar sized North American cities/projects.

Public Engagement on Site Options

1. Representative sample survey

- 800 Saskatoon residents (720 online panel and 80 random telephone responses)
- Opens August 30 to September 5

2. Opt-in Online Public Survey

- Opens September 13 to October 3
- Visit saskatoon.ca/engage

3. Online Survey for Local Business and Organization

- Opens September 13 to October 3
- Visit saskatoon.ca/engage

4. In-person surveys

- 400 in-person surveys conducted to hear from residents across the city, including the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, other areas of the city, and those attending a range of events.



saskatoon.ca/eventdistrict

September 2022