

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Aaron Blanchette - Concerns Regarding Homeless Shelter at 140 1st Ave North - CK 5400-1 x 600-3

From: Aaron Blanchette <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2022 12:13 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Concerns Regarding Homeless Shelter at 140 1st Ave N, Saskatoon

Honourable Mayor Charlie Clark,
City of Saskatoon Councillor Cynthia Block,
Saskatoon City Councillors,
DTNYXE Executive Director Brent Penner,
Betty Nippi-Albright Saskatoon Centre NDP Caucus
Tyler Krause, 2nd Ave Lofts Condo Board
SaskParty

Good morning all,

As a long time downtown Saskatoon resident I am voicing concerns regarding the recently established *temporary* homeless shelter at 145 1st Ave N. To level set, I have lived downtown since 2014, my spouse since 2008. Historically speaking, I have found downtown to be quiet during the cold, so as summer approached I was slightly concerned. I can speak with confidence that my concerns have been validated. We are actively looking to move.

Imagine if you had a neighbour move in and within a month, that neighbour had frequent visits from emergency services, boarded up windows, people loitering out front 24/7, people sleeping overnight on their sidewalk, people setting up tents, people defecating in your alley, and 'illicit associates' travelling to and from the facility on bicycles and on foot from 9pm-8am. Frankly I give the STC a ton of credit managing their residents and operations. They have been diligent in clean up and preventing a longer term outdoor encampment and repairing damage to the building but it is obvious this facility is not equipped to handle the problem.

For the first time since 2008, my spouse does not feel safe taking our dog for a walk between 5am and 8am or after 9pm. We have a much higher amount of traffic around our building, and I can say that there are several times I felt very very vulnerable, I can't imagine how she feels. Our building has experienced two significant 'Theft over \$5000' type break in's in the last 2 weeks. We haven't had a security breach for THREE years prior. There appears to be a strong correlation between the traffic related to 'illicit associates' and property crime.

I thought it was best to list my concerns via bullet points:

- **Safety concerns:** this is my main concern. My real life interactions and experience tell me the residents of the shelter are not presenting a risk to my family's safety, the 'illicit associates' of the residents visiting the area and residents are often very threatening. My spouse has lived in the 2nd Ave lofts for longer than I, and now she does not feel safe (nor do I) walking at 5-7am downtown. When arriving home on foot I frequently have to circle the block so as to avoid people lurking near our door. Of course there's always the new syringe here and there in the back alley.
- **Frequent emergency services visits:** Since opening, there are very frequent sirens for emergency vehicles (ambulance or police) arriving. Not to mention, I've witnessed two one relatively frightening police take down in the area.
- **Nature of the approval:** with very little oversight, the Saskatoon City Council unilaterally made a decision that has a significant impact on my neighborhood. There are a number of condominiums surrounding the shelter including The Rumley, The King George and 2nd Ave lofts resulting in over 200+ households within 1-2 blocks of the shelter.
- **Damage to building:** Imagine having a new neighbour that within a month or two, started boarding up their windows. I give the STC (or whomever) credit, they have replaced 4 broken windows at my count, it usually takes 4-6 weeks, but it gets fixed so credit where credit is due.
- **Loitering, traffic and garbage:** Over winter, this was not an issue, however, for the past month, there have been a minimum of 3-5 people 'camped out' on the front sidewalk under tarps. The bicycle and foot traffic in all hours of the day are not ideal, and not what I would call work commuters, but frankly we feel safer when it's busy than we do outside the hours of 8am-9pm, we try to avoid being outside in those hours.
- **Housing non-residents:** there was a recent news story regarding residents from Moose Jaw moving from Moose Jaw to the shelter.

If you want to build a vibrant downtown I assure you, this IS NOT HELPING. I have a very acute understanding of the need for this service given my proximity to shelter and seeing how busy it is, I see people who obviously need help. FIND A WAY TO FUND THE PERMANENT SOLUTION proposed by Mr Arcand and the STC.

At minimum I'm requesting a stronger police presence in the area overnight during the hours of 9pm-8am.

I would also appeal to the Provincial Government and SaskParty to TAKE CARE OF THEIR CITIZENS, fund the permanent solution and help people. If we can afford 140 million for a new detention centre we sure as heck can stomach a few million to **prevent** people from going to jail.

Sincerely,

Aaron Blanchette

Concerned Citizen