
Downtown Event and Entertainment District – Next Steps

Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated April 29, 2019, be received as information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to describe the City's next steps with respect to planning for a future Downtown event and entertainment district.

Report Highlights

1. To ensure the best chance of realizing the most advantageous vision of a Downtown entertainment district, centered around a Downtown arena and convention center, work is underway with the goal of making a site selection for these facilities in 2019.
2. Next steps include confirming viable sites for consideration, completing detailed analysis to determine the preferred sites, and undertaking stakeholder and public engagement for feedback on the preferred sites. These inputs will then be brought to City Council to inform their decision on site selection.

Strategic Goal

This report supports City Council's priority of Downtown Development, along with the Strategic Goals of Economic Diversity and Prosperity and Sustainable Growth.

Background

At its April 18, 2016 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee received a presentation from Mr. Will Lofdahl, CEO, SaskTel Centre, regarding the state of the facility and the entertainment industry. Mr. Lofdahl advised that a market analysis would be conducted to assist in determining the future of the arena. TCU Place was added to the market analysis following the meeting.

At its March 19, 2018 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee received a presentation of the completed analysis on behalf of SaskTel Centre and TCU Place. The report was prepared by the consulting team of HLT Advisory, Conventional Wisdom and Convergence Design. One of the primary focuses of the study was to consider suburban versus a Downtown location for a future arena and convention centre. For a variety of reasons, a Downtown location was recommended.

At its November 19, 2018 regular business meeting, City Council considered the report entitled "Considerations for the TCU Place and SaskTel Centre Project" and resolved:

- "1. That the Administration be directed to include a future Arena/convention centre when planning the future of Saskatoon's Downtown;

2. That the focus of the planning work include consideration of an entertainment district, not just an arena and/or convention facility;
3. That the Administration 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 downtown for the future;

That this process include strategic stakeholder engagement with community partners including consideration of:

- Demands on Infrastructure
 - Transit
 - Parking
 - Future residential growth
 - Optimal location in relation to other key destination in the downtown including River Landing, Midtown Plaza, North Downtown, All Business Improvement Districts, Adjacent residential neighbourhoods, Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, and NSBA;
4. That one of the overall principles be to seek approaches that minimize the reliance on Property taxes to pay for this arena; and
 5. That the approach also 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.”

This report is addressing the path forward in regards to resolution #3.

Report

Even though development of a Downtown entertainment district, centered around a new Downtown arena and convention centre, is not expected to occur in the short term, planning for this development must begin in the very near future.

Next Steps

In consideration of City Council’s resolutions, specific to planning for the future Downtown entertainment district that revolves around a Downtown arena and convention centre, the following next steps are planned:

1. Confirm possible site options for locating a separate or combined arena and convention centre and the implications of each site in relation to an overall entertainment district and the broader Downtown. This will be led by the Administration with input from representatives from both SaskTel Centre and TCUPlace Boards and Administration.

2. For potential sites that are not City-owned, the Administration will initiate discussions and negotiate terms with private property owners to legally secure the sites. This will require purchase terms to be negotiated, although no formal site purchases will be made. Site purchase will require future approval of City Council (See Step 5).
3. Once the site(s) are secured, the Administration will conduct extensive detailed analysis of each site in consideration of all relevant factors such as serviceability of site, environmental analysis, transportation impacts, urban design issues, existing adjacent entertainment district amenities, potential economic impact, parking requirements and impacts, total cost implications, and other factors. Key stakeholders and industry experts will be consulted during this phase.
4. Once preferred sites have been selected, the City will undertake consultation with stakeholders and the community for feedback on the proposed options.
5. Report to City Council on site options and public engagement results for a decision on siting and site acquisition.

Future Reports

Future reporting on the engagement and communications planning for this effort will be forthcoming in June or August 2019, prior to undertaking engagement activities.

In addition, if any issues arise from the negotiations that require input or approval from Committee and City Council, the Administration will bring forward a report as required.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Details about the public and stakeholder involvement in future phases will be the subject of a future report, expected mid-2019.

Other Considerations/Implications

At this time there are no policy, financial, privacy, environmental or CPTED implications. Each would be considered during future project stages as required.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Future reporting on the engagement and communications planning, the summary of the analysis of the criteria for each site in consideration, and financial implications will be forthcoming in mid-2019. If any issues arise during the negotiations that require input or approval from Committee and City Council, the Administration will bring forward a report as required.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Report Approval

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