

July 26, 2022

Saskatoon City Hall  
222 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7K 0J5

**Re: Approval for New Shelter Facilities**

---

Dear Mayor Clark and City Council,

Shelter facilities are playing a vital role in supporting our most vulnerable neighbours. Without them, individuals and families would be left to live outside in often difficult conditions, exposed to the elements and the risks of living on the street.

The benefits of shelter facilities have come at a cost. Over the last 10 years, businesses and their employees have expressed real concerns over the concentration of shelter facilities in our downtown and the impact these facilities have on area properties, people who frequent downtown, and public perceptions of downtown safety.

Where shelter facilities are located, and what level of service they offer, matters. When shelter services are inserted into buildings ill-suited to support their activities, the implications can be severe for all stakeholders, least of all those who rely on the services provided.

Because the stakes are high for everyone affected, the process of reviewing applications for shelter developments should involve stakeholder consultations that are open, transparent and led by the city's elected representatives.

**We believe that any future shelter applications should involve dedicated public hearings with final approval resting with Saskatoon City Council.**

It is our understanding that the current approval process rests at the Administrative level where applications for shelter facilities are reviewed against the requirements of zoning and other bylaws. Having met these criteria, they are approved.

Given the significant impact shelter operations can have on adjacent businesses and residences, it would seem more appropriate to invite all stakeholders into any discussions about new shelter developments and give them an opportunity to share their thoughts on any new proposals brought before the City. We recognize City Council's ongoing efforts, and significant investments, to support citizen engagement in our community. This procedural change would be consistent with your commitment on this front.

To be sure, bylaw and related zoning changes are needed to ensure future shelters are developed to deliver the best possible service. For instance, we believe a requirement for future facilities to provide on-site outdoor spaces, in proportion to the number of people they shelter, would provide shelter residents with a safe and welcoming locations to gather while safeguarding their dignity and well-being.

For now, we urge you to consider making a procedural change to the way any future shelter applications are considered by routing the public consultation process, and review of applications, through to City Council for decision.

As Saskatoon's voice for business, we are a powerful network of businesses, organizations and community-minded leaders who want the best for their city.

Sincerely,



Jason Aebig, CEO  
Saskatoon Chamber



Brent Penner, Executive Director  
Downtown Saskatoon