

Janzen, Heather

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Kathleen Alexander - Recommendations for New Downtown Arena - CK 4130-14
Attachments: recommendations_for_new_downtown_arena_-_copy.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Friday, September 30, 2022 2:21 PM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

Subject: Email - Communication - Kathleen Alexander - Recommendations for New Downtown Arena - CK 4130-14

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Friday, September 30, 2022 - 14:20

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

Date Friday, September 30, 2022

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Kathleen

Last Name Alexander

Phone Number [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED] McWillie Ave

City Saskatoon

Province Saskatchewan

Postal Code [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)

Subject Recommendations for New Downtown Arena

Meeting (if known)

Comments

I am not requesting to speak. The letter has enough information and outlines many issues that the City of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan people are requesting to initiate discussion, see the doubt in the need, promote further research, discovery of illegal aspects of Rapid Bus system for especially children, bylaws that have to be followed, and many more conflicts that are not in the best interest of the City of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan and Canada and beyond to the world of people who will visit our city and use our facility and existing facilities. We are the users and it is not one size that fits all. An artists drawing placed in a location is not reality. There is so much more to consider. Open your minds and realize that the safety and comfort of all citizens should be considered before just 'thinking' it's a good idea for all.

Attachments

[recommendations for new downtown arena - copy.pdf](#)

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting? No

September 29, 2022

To the Mayor and City Council, Saskatoon

Reasons Saskatoon DOES NOT NEED A NEW ARENA ESPECIALLY DOWNTOWN

When making decisions about anything, you have to decide if it is a NEED or a WANT. So far what I see with this new Arena concept, is a WANT. It does not serve the needs of the residents of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, the world, nor all the patrons that will try to use it, the location will cause more harm than help.

New 'Downtown' Arena: Too Expensive, put us in irreversible debt. We don't have professional hockey nor would we ever have the population to sustain one, Winnipeg struggled keeping a team. And their population exceeds ours. Rush numbers were high at the beginning, but crowds have dwindled. Blades average about 3,000 to 5,000 per game, Rush average about 9,000 to 12,000 per game, Rattlers average about 1,000 to 3,000 per game.

Existing Arena: Garth Brooks proved that if you find, book only one location in Canada, you can fill the arena 6 times. Regina has done this for years having 2 concerts per group due to the fact they only have 7,000 seat capacity, REGINA needs a new arena or a revision, not us. Ours has a great capacity for the size of our city and community. It would be more beneficial to renovate and try to expand rather than the expense of a new build.

*Please do not use the reasoning that Saskatchewan has One Million people. We also have a two major city province, so people utilize Regina and other smaller cities for their sports and entertainment, and many people are in isolation in the north, or in poverty or immigrants who will not support most events in an Arena, they spend their money out of Canada. *

Existing Arena site: Renovations would be more feasible, lots of space to customize what you want it could be conference rooms, meeting rooms, room for seating and space for the concessions, lounge, enclosure for line ups, mezzanine area could be expanded, more washrooms. Lots of potential, lots of land, I looked at a google aerial map and there are lots of land available in the area.

New 'Downtown' Arena location(s): PAY PARKING No parking/limited due to no space, already an issue so this will compound it. People don't like going downtown because it is already difficult to park let alone squish a 17,000+ capacity facility. Businesses are open need to function, have customers to get to their businesses and thousands more needing parking will disrupt that. It appears that there is no on site parking included in the concept picture.

Existing Arena Site: FREE PARKING YES, FREE Parking!!!! Abundant Accessible parking spots, Ramp for drop off, parking around and close to the building, Space for over sized vehicles, Room for bus/limo/taxi area, with events people coming and going are driving slow allowing people walking to get to their vehicles safely, everyone is in the same 'boat'. Easy to start your vehicle with a remote starter in winter you aren't blocks away in a paid parking lot. If you forgot something, your vehicle is close, especially with children, strollers, their needs.

Current Accessibility: There are two MAJOR highways 11/12 & 16 goes right to Circle Drive connecting other highways like 5, 219, these four highway lanes going 80 kph to 90 kph, lanes allowing people from all over the province accessibility and highways 7 & 14 take Dalmeny/Neault Road to 60th or 71st Street, Mistawasis Bridge new takes relief of everyone coming from east side and beyond. Most Surrounding businesses closed allowing ease of additional parking on roadways not interrupting businesses by blocking them or their customers. Space for the 20 to 30 semis that

bring in shows. They can unload, turn around, manover and go to many parking lots for semis and have space to do so. Plenty of space for deliveries, caterers, taxis, limos, taxi limos, buses, Transit & ACCESS Transit, emergency vehicles, fire trucks, ambulances, out of town tour buses, room for Motor-Homes, Utility trailers, animal trailers etc.

Downtown Location: NONE of this space nor routes are available downtown. These concerts don't just appear, it takes many volunteers, staff, deliveries, equipment, security companies, then if an emergency police, fire, ambulances all need to get in and out easily. Downtown will be a nightmare. It will not work.

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TAKEN FROM SGI WEBSITE:

Effective Dec. 16, 2020, parents and legal guardians will be responsible for ensuring that children under the age of 16 are properly restrained while riding in taxis, rideshare vehicles, or any other form of transport/vehicle-for-hire service where passenger restraints are required. This includes the requirement to use an appropriate car seat or booster seat when applicable. The child's parent or legal guardian would be the recipient of the fine. \$175.00

In Saskatchewan, booster seats are mandatory for children:

- under 7 years of age,
- less than 145 cm (4'9") in height, and
- under 36 kg (80 lb.) in weight.

The law applies to all children in Saskatchewan and any children travelling through Saskatchewan too.

Downtown Site: Saskatoon - Already has existing TCU Place, Coors Event Centre, Persephone Theatre, Remai Arts Centre, Army & Navy Hall, Churches, Two Funeral Homes, Hotels, Saskatoon Business College, Malls, Bars/pubs, Businesses, Hospitals, clinics, Movie Theatre, that need all the parking spaces. There are also the Police Station and Fire Halls, Ambulance that wouldn't be able to do their job. Currently all these exist without conflict, this will stop, disrupt and cripple all of these businesses as well as summer river bank events that we've all grown to love. Train tracks block traffic in the area but with the smaller events, this is not a deal breaker for them to exist.

Current Arena Location – Works for many of the reasons already mentioned. Most of the businesses are closed in the evenings and weekends so there is no disruption of business and emergency vehicles won't be in gridlock and highways are on both sides for easy access at all times. Stars Ambulance and Airport are also close. No rail lines close to the Arena blocking traffic.

Time it takes to Access Current Location: For example, I go from 60 kph to 70 kph to 60 kph then last couple blocks, 50 kph to get to Sasktel Centre. Most patrons go from 50 kph to 60kph to 90 kph then last couple blocks, 50 kph. I go through ONLY 5 sets of lights. Most others would go through ONLY about 5 to 8 sets of lights from all corners of Saskatoon, using Circle Drive which is also 4 lanes.

Time it takes to go DOWNTOWN: 60 kph to 50 kph, then MUCH LESS in the downtown core, because there are lights on EVERY corner or STOP signs and there is slower traffic, all trying to find parking as there is so many businesses, events, and shopping, rail lines etc. I go through 15 to 20 lights to get to the locations you are considering. This would be the same for everyone else and including 30 kph NEW School Zones slowing commutes even more.

This leads to ask, what do you mean by 'Rapid Transit?': What does Rapid Transit mean when as stated above, you drive to the Center CORE of the City where speeds are 50 kph or less. Narrow,

streets, then the bus empties and goes back only to be stuck in the traffic again. Then, when you park and ride at these malls or parking lots, there's no organization, young people rush the lines to get on the buses, outside has no protection from the elements, are extremely cold in winter and extremely hot in summer. (+30 this summer for buses at Regina this year was horribly hot) There is nothing 'Rapid' about it. Call it Slow Transit. It just won't work.

One size does not fit all. Buses do not fit all capabilities, Buses does not suit all people and their plans coming in from all areas of our city or province, or country. Big men or women, the seats don't fit, same with small children, no booster seats or seat belts and it is the law to wear them. Currently- there is choices at some of our cities large concerts they assign buses so it is a choice if it works for you, but with this new 'Rapid Transit' and downtown arena, it will be mandatory because there is NO Parking!

New System: Would have to return to pick up your car prior to driving to other locations, so it takes more time and is inconvenient. Out of town would have to follow these rules too so it is inconvenient to conform to the 'Rapid Bus' plan. This will take more time, they will stop going. Currently: Freedom of choice of transportation, most prefer their own vehicle. People choose to eat out or visit businesses of their choices and stay at hotels of their choice. Some may chose to stay, eat and shop at businesses close to Sasktel Centre. Then some may choose to stay and eat, shop, attend businesses close to TCU Place when they have events to go to in that area. Both currently exist without conflict. Having no or little choices, it will deter people and they will not go.

New System: People still have their own choices, but with two major event centers in the same area New Arena/TCU PLACE, restaurants and hotels MAY be abnormally full in the downtown area, the events will clash. You are affecting those who have lively hoods in the North end who will now be affected by this decision. Why are you deciding that the downtown restaurants and bars are in some way suffering because of the location? Why would the city build another facility that will clash with one of their own facilities? It does not make sense, and it won't work.

Current site: Many new hotels have been built near the airport, a fantastic plus to the area. The airport is close to Sasktel Centre for artists and patrons coming in to Sasktel Centre. Businesses and neighborhoods are growing in the north end, the city neighborhoods in the east side of the river have grown and still growing, and are accessed conveniently with the brand new Mistawasis Bridge. What a potential waste of these fantastic additions to our city traffic flow, infrastructure, and new businesses. Have you considered how you will affect those places of business to our city?

Bus: diesel, are noisy, produce a lot of pollution, run for many hours to stay warm. Remember when City Bus Mall location was in a residential neighborhood? There was a lot of complaints, when they would run at all hours in the winter to stay warm. No seat belts, if they do no one uses or they are only lap belts, small uncomfortable seats, crowded, cold or hot, not dependable, they don't go when you want have to wait until they fill, noisy, not suitable for all ages or abilities. And, according to SGI, they are illegal for children 16 and under. Remember bus crash, April 6, 2018!

Your own vehicle: Personal vehicles can start it and leave immediately, they don't run for hours. You can come and leave when you want, especially if you don't want to stay until the end you aren't confined to the schedule of the bus. Parents/grandparents with children that I've observe leave early, I think if they had to follow the schedule of a bus with kids falling asleep in their arms it won't work. (as I witnessed at a recent Blades game) They just won't bother to go. Dis-abilities: I am partly disabled, getting in and out of buses is difficult, many people have some form of impairment either temporary breaking a leg or permanent, a bad knee etc. I prefer the comfort of my own vehicle, listen to the radio of tips, alerts or closures on the way to concerts, I feel safe in my seat belt, I can use heated seats and air conditioning. I can leave my coat, umbrella, etc. Currently to get into Sasktel Centre at the current location as it is so close to your own vehicle. A win win!

Some more observations and concern with just having a Bus System:

Buses makes me nauseous, they rattle around, jerk, bounce. I will no longer go if it is just buses and not enough wheel chair accessible parking. I've waited in Regina in extreme heat +30. The buses would fill by the young people and we'd stand in the heat, no shelter from elements in the winter, rain. Then it's inconvenient you have to drive to these parking places. Not all people live by malls or industrial parking lots. Don't be like Regina and make the same mistakes. The last time we went to a Rider game, the bus was cancelled/not scheduled at the mall near our hotel, it has always been there but not this time? We had to scramble as our time was tight from coming after work and just allowed enough time to check in and immediately had to get a taxi because all the paid parking was taken around Mosaic Stadium. (we only got our tickets a week before). It was a nightmare being in the gridlock. We also had the taxi drop us off about 2 blocks away rather than pay for the taxi crawling to the building with all the traffic, saved some time and money. It was \$30 both ways for these taxis, that adds \$60 to our expenses for just one game. Then afterwards, we walked from Mosaic stadium to the street where we were dropped off to catch a taxi again. We could walk very slow because the taxi had said he had another fare and would be 20 minutes. So we stood on the sidewalk waiting and waiting. I don't like to go, but make the effort to go once per year. Its a lot of money and hassle. That's why we don't go very much.

There is a Fire Hall near Mosaic Stadium. We stood near there, and as I looked at it, I wondered what it would be like if an emergency occurred while there is a football game. Well, my fear was answered when the alarms went off and fire trucks started coming out into the gridlock, I saw vehicles trying to pull over and give them space, it was uncomfortable to watch and sirens blaring. This is preventable, don't build a huge stadium downtown. It won't work.

Current Food and Beverage, Souvenirs: When I went to a Blades game recently, I saw people with food and drinks from the arena. Parents, grandparents spent lots of money on children, food, toys, shirts it was crazy. You have the monopoly, you have the choice of what to serve, you currently make money, if this moves downtown, it will change drastically.

New Location Food and Beverage: You want people to be able to go to other restaurants, stores, and pubs prior to going to an event, as you say in your promotion right!

THIS IS A HUGE LOSS OF REVENUE, WHY WOULD YOU BUILD AN EXPENSIVE ARENA AND THEN NOT CAPITALIZE ON THE FACT THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY FOOD AND BEVERAGE SOURCE PEOPLE CAN USE? I'm speechless. How would you pay for the building. I know I wouldn't buy the food there if I had other choices a few steps away from the door prior to going to an event. Greasy food isn't my go to meal, but because convenient foods and snack foods are sold there, then I am forced to buy from the concessions there. If I was in Marketing, I would NOT recommend moving from the current location. This is absurd.

I also see from the drawing that the streets surrounding the New Arena would be 'closed'. When the bike lanes were built, it was extremely difficult to maneuver downtown driving, parking spaces were eliminated or complicated with permanent stakes that marked the bike lanes. It was such a relief when they were removed. The current bus mall, closing of a portion of 23rd Street causes confusion and disruption to driving. As well as on 21st Street where there are directional boulevards and you can only turn one way. **SASKATOON HAS WINTER, REMEMBER.** Snow is also piled up in the middle of the streets blocking turning lanes or middle lanes. Downtown has a river bank, dead ends, few bridges, one ways, bus stops, bus mall, train rails etc. It is constricted already, please do not build downtown.

City Bylaws do not allow certain classes of weights in the downtown core. See City Website.

Bylaw 7200. Part VII – Permitted Vehicles, Vehicle Weights and Dimensions on Streets Damage to Streets 39. A person shall not use a vehicle on a street if the vehicle would cause damage to the street surface. *

Even if a semi MAY be qualified to drive in the downtown core, they will compound that by 20 to 30 semis per event. Buses MAY be qualified to drive in the downtown core, but compound that on event days coming from all areas of the city, plus limos, taxis, utility trailers, Food deliveries, Motor Homes, Boats, Car shows, Monster Trucks, Animals for Rodeos, personal vehicles and on and on. That is a lot of weight in the downtown core on the downtown streets.

Besides vehicle weight, when a show or event is on, thousands of people will be walking in and out of the building, blocking walkways, sidewalks, jay walking causing disruption to the downtown core and beyond by walking out when traffic is going because they feel they will have the right of way before or after a concert or hockey game or lacrosse game. And finally, Saskatoon has a number of homeless people, vagrants, beggars, muggings, looking for vulnerable people who are going to and from their cars and businesses. I have been asked for money by a man, in what I thought was a safe place in the movie theater downtown. He was in the hallway, past the ticket taking podium in the inner outside of a movie I just attended. I alerted the staff as he quickly walked past them and out the door, and I followed up by calling the Manager and left several messages and I never had my call returned. If this is downtown and events are at night, I will no longer attend. When we attend Sasktel Centre, there are gates, vested traffic volunteers, police assistance, security and I feel safe leaving the building to get to my car. I will never feel safe in the downtown core going to some parking lot, in and around buildings, alleys, streets that can be hiding spots for criminals. This will not change with 'added police presence' as you may stay longer then security or police will be out. They can't be everywhere at once. So it is insecure.

In conclusion, I speak for those who don't have time, don't want to speak up, who forget all the inconveniences until they try to attend this facility and realize too late that it will not work. I have experience, I use other cities amenities and facilities and when I heard that Mosaic Stadium in Regina was being built a few blocks over from the existing one, I was shocked. I wish I had a say in the location of that facility. They do have some surrounding parking at least, but your proposals don't have any land at all. Don't be a Regina, it will not work downtown. You will loose revenue, ruin street surfaces, prevent emergency vehicles, clash with existing venues, make pollution, increase noise, fuel unimaginable stress and frustration, block streets, no traffic flow, no parking, no accessible parking, unsafe, increase crime, gridlock, break the seat belt laws, conflict with existing venues and it will do the opposite of what you are trying to create. I feel that Saskatoon has a very viable downtown where people can live and work and move around with ease and sustain it's businesses and services. We have uniqueness with our Bess Gardens Venue, Theaters, River Landing, Farmers Market, restaurants, pubs, businesses, hotels, Meewasin skating rink and more.

Don't ruin a good thing in our city by plopping a giant, ill fitting, overly expensive venue on it.

Do one of 3 things:
Renovate existing/add conference buildings to suit with accessibility
Rebuild on similar/same site with current highways and new bridge
Rebuild on a large, accessible site with land for future growth

Everyone on the City website, on social media and in conversation with DO NOT WANT A NEW ARENA AND ESPECIALLY DO NOT WANT IT DOWNTOWN. Be leaders and not dictators and listen to the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

Thank you for your time,

Kathleen Alexander [REDACTED] McWillie Ave. Saskatoon, Sk. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

