

November 15, 2022

His Worship Mayor Clark and City Council
City of Saskatoon, City Hall
222 Third Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Mayor Clark and City Councillors,

Not surprisingly there is much debate about the potential location for the Event Centre / Arena. I am not sure there is any topic in the city that brings out such conversation, with so many people believing they have all the answers.

It does not require much expertise to identify that these facilities are in downtown areas all over the continent. Thankfully, the conversation in our city has shifted beyond this debate and the decision today is about two potential sites and which one is preferred. You have ample information in front of you about which site is best and I am confident you will make the right decision today.

The purpose of my letter is to talk about the danger of thinking that a few letters of opposition should lead you to pause and let the current facilities continue to deteriorate and the need for boldness in the face of what some will try to make out to be a polarizing decision. This is about ensuring that Saskatoon has the right type of facilities in the future – and being mindful of what happens if we do not.

Most of you were not even alive when important decisions were made in the 1960's that led to significant development opportunities for downtown. These development opportunities were the result of bold civic leadership, people doing what was right and not succumbing to a bit of "public pressure." I speak about the leadership to move the CN main line out of downtown, and the construction of the Idylwyld (now Sid Buckwold) Bridge. This led to the development of Midtown Plaza – what became one of the largest entities in our city paying a hefty property tax bill now for 50 years! It also led to the building of the Centennial Auditorium – and believe it or not, there were people opposed to that. Can you imagine our city over the last fifty plus years had the Auditorium not been constructed?

There are some people my age who seem to be opposed to this project because they will not attend events there. What people need to realize is that they can and should support this project despite it not being for them. It might be for their children or grandchildren and help provide reasons for them to stay in Saskatoon and continue to make this city the best city to live in. Do you think the younger generations should forego entertainment opportunities because you will not be there to enjoy them?

How about the important role of visitors coming to our city and how this impacts hotels, businesses, and transportation related businesses. All these business types employ thousands

of people and pay millions in taxes. This money contributes to all the other programs needed in our city and province. This is not an "either-or" conversation as some of the naysayers will try to position it. It is about building a quality of life, continuing to have amenities that make our city a place people want to call home, a place that can attract events and conferences, and part of that is having the right type of facilities that give our city the chance to compete against many other places in Canada and the world.

I urge all of you to look to support this project going forward – be bold in your pursuit of provincial and federal support – and innovative ways to finance the project. Know that there is much support out there and as is the case with most things, those opposed often will be louder and try to be divisive in the media. Thank goodness the naysayers did not rule the day in the 60's. Ask yourself where you want to see Saskatoon in 50 years. Consider the challenging times those elected leaders faced when they worked to move the railway out of downtown, build a performing arts theatre, and pave the way for Midtown many years ago. They persevered and all of us benefitted from their steadfastness.

Sincerely,



Glen H. Penner
Saskatoon, SK

cc: Mr. Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager