

July 18, 2024

Subjects: Library, arena, auditorium, potholes, snow removal, deicing, and campaign finance reform

Saskatoon City Council:

Because of the decision of Saskatoon City Council to loan \$67.5 million to the Saskatoon Public Library, I want to draw your attention to these letters I wrote:

Ashu M. G. Solo, "Saskatoon should shelve costly plan for new downtown library," The StarPhoenix, Jan. 30, 2024, URL: <https://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/letters/letter-saskatoon-should-shelve-costly-plan-for-new-downtown-library>

Ashu M. G. Solo, "New Downtown Library Not Needed," Agenda of Saskatoon Public Library Board of Trustees for the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon, Sask., Apr. 24, 2024, p. 7, URL: <https://saskatoonlibrary.ca/isl/uploads/2024/04/2024-04-24-Board-Agenda-Pkg-PUBLIC.pdf>

Ashu M. G. Solo, "New downtown Saskatoon library a foolish waste of tax dollars," The StarPhoenix, June 11, 2024, URL: <https://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/letters/letters-new-downtown-saskatoon-library-a-foolish-waste-of-tax-dollars>

Ashu M. G. Solo, "Cut salaries of Saskatoon library managers," The StarPhoenix, July 13, 2024, URL: <https://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/letters/letters-college-wrong-to-discipline-doctor-for-anti-abortion-advice>

Replacing the excellent downtown library with a new downtown library is costing people a lot of money in library taxes, driving up housing costs, making it harder for people to afford housing, increasing homelessness, doing a lot of environmental damage due to building materials needed for construction of a new library, keeping unionized library staff from getting salaries that keep up with inflation, etc. Many homeowners will be paying over \$350/year in library taxes for decades to fund the construction of the new downtown library. The streets of Saskatoon are full of homeless people. 95% of unionized library staff recently voted in favor of job action.

Most people believe that the City of Saskatoon has its priorities all wrong. Instead of the City of Saskatoon spending money on a new downtown library, more money should be allocated for pothole repair, snow removal, and deicing. I know someone whose car tires were ruined three times due to potholes in Saskatoon. I know someone who couldn't get his car off his street for days two times in the past few years because of inadequate snow removal. One of his neighbors ended up paying for a private company to clear the street. This problem wouldn't have occurred if the City of Saskatoon had been doing snow removal on an ongoing basis instead of waiting until after large snowfalls.

Saskatoon doesn't need a new arena or new auditorium. The existing arena and auditorium are fine and can be renovated if required. Building a new arena and auditorium in downtown Saskatoon will cause a colossal amount of environmental damage due to the building materials used. Also, building a new arena will cause a parking nightmare. It's already hard enough to find parking in downtown Saskatoon.

City council candidates should stop taking campaign contributions from construction contractors so these donations don't influence their spending decisions. There needs to be campaign finance reform to limit individual contributions and prevent companies from donating to candidates.

Sincerely,

Ashu M. G. Solo