

SPC-Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services - March 13, 2017.

City Councillors, ladies and gentlemen,

For those that do not know me, I'm Paul Van Pul and I am a Land & Construction Surveyor. My field of research is primarily hydraulic archaeology and front-line hydrology.

Over the last eight years our city administration has spent a lot of money on its hydropower proposal. My alternative concept that is just as old, would be to eventually RETIRE the weir. That - to me a no-brainer - would open tremendous opportunities for our city.

First of all we would restore the natural river channeling environment that we have lost since 1939. With this move the river would re-open to the north - I think for instance of boat rides to Wanuskewin Heritage Park, by then perhaps a World Heritage Site.

Meanwhile we would be able to take stream improvement measures so all our fellow citizens and visitors would be able to enjoy our beautiful river to its fullest, including sitting and playing on its sandy beaches, in front of protected swimming zones. What about safe ice skating areas on the river in winter?

On top of it we can then reintroduce the historical and traditional river transit. That would mean, among others steps, that we could even, and in a unique way, alleviate road traffic congestion downtown.

My proposal is not only far more environmentally responsible, it is also financially more sustainable and in the long term, engineering-wise, certainly less risky than what is today before you.

In the years since I started to develop my concept I have had the chance to present it at various gatherings, notably in the past three years to the students of urban planning at the university. All the different aspects of my plan have always withstood the scrutiny of my audiences.

You will understand nevertheless that it is simply impossible to explain to you my concept in detail, in FIVE minutes, at such short notice and without any visual means.

In 1907 an hydraulic engineer from Niagara Falls did propose to Saskatoon City Council to build a hydro-electric scheme in scope quite similar to what is proposed now (For details, see the SHR, 2011). At the same time the man presented a similar plan to the City of Prince Albert.

Saskatoon City Council at the time was wary and turned down the offer. P.A. did not and went along with the scheme. When the concrete structure was halfway finished, the money ran out and the City of Prince Albert was broke. The result of this folly can still be visited today.

The CAUTION Saskatoon City Council exercised over a hundred years ago was the reason why Saskatoon in the following fifty years was able to pull ahead and become the economic hub of Saskatchewan ... over the City of Prince Albert.

The administration's proposal today before you is to simply build a massive concrete box - the size of the Frances Morrison Library Building - NINE meters deep into the riverbed, the result of which would mean that no more water would flow OVER the weir.

*What will we have gained then?*

I hereby ask you respectfully, City Councillors, to allow me the opportunity to give you, at your earliest convenience, a more in-depth, visual presentation of my concept. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Thank you for your attention.