

Downtown Event and Entertainment District Public Engagement Plan

ISSUE

Planning for the development of a Downtown entertainment district, centred on a new Downtown arena and convention centre, is in the preliminary stages. The communications and engagement plan that will guide the site selection process is outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

At its November 19, 2018 Regular Business Meeting, City Council considered the report entitled “Considerations for the TCU Place and SaskTel Centre Project” and resolved:

- “1. That the Administration be directed to include a future Arena/convention centre when planning the future of Saskatoon’s Downtown;
2. That the focus of the planning work include consideration of an entertainment district, not just an arena and/or convention facility;
3. That the Administration report back on terms of reference for a process for identifying the best location for a future entertainment district and how it would fit into a wider vision for a strong downtown for the future;
4. That one of the overall principles be to seek approaches that minimize the reliance on Property taxes to pay for this arena; and
5. That the approach also recognize that while the City of Saskatoon has a leadership role, it will take collaboration with stakeholders and the community as a whole to come up with the best solution.”

At its April 29, 2019 Regular Business Meeting, City Council considered the report entitled “Downtown Event and Entertainment District – Next Steps” which outlined the proposed process with respect to planning for a future Downtown event and entertainment district.

CURRENT STATUS

Since April 2019, Administration has been undertaking additional site analysis and discussions with regards to potential privately-held sites in the Downtown that have been identified as proposed locations for the future new event and entertainment facilities. As outlined in April, this will include potential negotiations to legally secure proposed sites, as further analysis occurs. Site purchases will not be made at this time, and will require future approval of City Council.

Detailed analysis of all proposed sites has been underway and will continue.

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DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In order to guide the community consultation during the site selection process, a Communication and Engagement Plan has been developed.

At a high level, the plan includes the following components:

1. Development of a webpage for the plan that will include general information, phasing/timing and next steps. The content will address what is happening as well as background on why a new Downtown Event and Entertainment District is being pursued.
2. An engage page on the City of Saskatoon's website will be created when the engagement activities are scheduled. It will outline opportunities to participate and to provide feedback.
3. Targeted communications to the general public and stakeholders will be done to drive awareness and participation in engagement activities. This will include public service announcements, social media, posters throughout Downtown, Broadway and Riversdale, digital ads at TCU Place and SaskTel Centre, targeted communications to the Community Advisory Panel, as well as through email lists maintained by SaskTel Centre, TCU Place and other potential stakeholders.
4. A public open house will be held for the general public and stakeholders. This open house will present information on the analysis of each site, including opportunities and challenges presented by each option; feedback will be collected. An online survey will also be available to provide a similar opportunity for the general public unable to attend the open house.
5. Targeted follow up communications will be done with a survey presenting similar information to that at the Open House in order to gather feedback from those key stakeholders unable to attend.

Results of the engagement activities will be presented to Committee and Council as part of the package when the final site selection decision is brought forward.

IMPLICATIONS

At this time there are no policy, financial, privacy, environmental or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) implications. Each would be considered during future project stages as required.

NEXT STEPS

Once the preferred sites have been selected, secured and individual site analysis have been completed, the City of Saskatoon will undertake consultation with stakeholders and the community for feedback on the proposed site options, as outlined in this report.

Following the consultation, a report on site options and public engagement results will be forwarded to City Council for a decision on siting and site acquisition.

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In addition, if any issues arise from negotiations that require input or approval from Committee and City Council, Administration will bring forward a report as required.

Report Approval

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