



Experience 104 Street.

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January 7, 2011

Re: Letter of Support for the Proposed Arena Entertainment District

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council,

I am writing this letter of support as a member of the Edmonton downtown business community and Chair of the 104th-Street Steering Committee. The stakeholders we represent would support moving the proposed project forward if the following concerns are adequately addressed by the City and project developer.

Tax Burden: The yet to be determined funding model for the project has been a central and often divisive issue. We believe that a solution will be found, and would support paying our fair share of the cost in whatever form they will take. However, we believe that the completion of this legacy project will be beneficial to all Edmontonians, not just the downtown. Therefore, we recognize that the cost of doing business in proximity to the project may increase, but the increase should be seen as reasonable, equitable in relation to the benefitting spinoffs, but shared with the greater community at large.

Downtown Revitalization: If done properly, the proposed development of the arena entertainment district is a once in a generation opportunity to positively change the face of downtown Edmonton and bring about revitalization in the city centre core. The Katz Group has suggested that retail development would not compete with Edmonton City Centre. The 104th-St. Steering Committee supports this stance, and would hope that the retail and licensed premises that would locate in the arena district would complement, rather than compete with 104th-St., Jasper Avenue and Edmonton City Centre. Offering the consumer greater choices in shopping and entertainment are of paramount importance to developing the critical mass necessary to attracting more people to the downtown.



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At a November 29, 2010 presentation to the 104th-St. Steering Committee, Mr. Bob Black made reference to how arena events would bring people to the downtown core, thus creating an opportunity to “capture” visitors to stay and explore the city centre. The committee agrees, and would support the project if a plan is developed to engaging visitors to the downtown. We hope the developers implement a robust wayfinding plan to direct visitors to the various world class attractions in the core. Demonstrating collaboration with the various downtown stakeholders to educate citizens and out of town guests about entertainment options would solidify support of this proposal. The committee envisions 104th-St. as a “gateway” into the arena entertainment district, and would support the developer’s initiatives to direct and encourage visitors to explore our special street and all it has to offer.

Safety: More people on the street will lead to a greater sense of safety. The committee supports bringing more people onto the downtown streets to improve the perception of safety in the downtown and 104th-St. However, with any large gathering of people, there will be a small minority who will disrupt the peace and cause disorder. The Katz Group indicated on their website they have been working with EPS to use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to reduce the probability of crime in the proposed district. The 104th-St. Committee applauds these efforts, and would support the project if they demonstrate their desire to work closely with EPS, Responsible Hospitality Edmonton and other groups working in the interest of public safety.

Cleanliness: The 104th-St. Steering Committee has worked closely with Capital City Cleanup and the City of Edmonton to keep our neighborhood clean. With the projected increase in traffic on 104th-St. and the surrounding downtown core, more litter will be deposited on our streets. We hope the City and the developers can work together to tackle this problem in the future. Our support of the proposed development would be enhanced if the developers can put forth a plan that leads by example in setting the highest standards in litter control. We hope the developers, working in conjunction with the City, will keep one of the future crown jewels of Edmonton sparkling.

Thank you all for taking the time to consider the 104th-St. Steering Committee’s support for the proposed development. The opportunity to take a bold step forward to making Edmonton a world class city should not be lost.

Yours sincerely,

Edmund Fong
Chair, 104th-Street Steering Committee