

A DOWNTOWN ARENA

A Perspective by YES4EDMONTON

Ahead of City Council's consideration of a zoning change for the Baccarat Casino lands on 104 Avenue, Yes4Edmonton wants to express its support for the concept.

Yes4Edmonton was created in the middle of last year as an informal network of Edmontontians of all ages, from all parts of the city and with diverse backgrounds. We share a set of core beliefs, based on our individual and collective passion for Edmonton and what we see as its growing potential to become a great city.

We believe that Edmonton can be an even better place to live, with developments being based on strong, modern and cutting edge urban planning.

Our initial activities were focused on last October's municipal election and, specifically, the heated and controversial issue of the future of the City Centre Airport lands.

Now that the municipal election and the airport debate are behind us, we believe that the next issue that needs resolution in the making of a great city is Edmonton's arena requirements.

While there are many factors remaining to be resolved before a final decision can be made, we want to make it clear that Yes4Edmonton firmly believes that our new arena should be built downtown. This would be a key addition to the continued development of our city centre. We want to encourage suitable input from all stakeholders, and for all stakeholders to be sensitive to each others' needs. A new arena should be a key catalyst in continuing the growth of our downtown population, while complementing the other major cultural, educational, recreational, business and transportation facilities, which already exist – and will continue to be developed downtown.

We feel that, at this stage, we cannot be specific on all aspects of the overall content or the operations of a downtown arena as insufficient information has been made available for effective comment or constructive criticism. We would hope that significant discussions are being held behind the scenes – as would be appropriate with such a major development – and we are committed to providing our input and comments as additional information is released. However, it is our firm belief that public funds, as part of a shared investment, are likely to be an essential factor in completing such a project - and we support that concept.

Yes4Edmonton will continue to closely monitor this project as it moves ahead in the approval process and will be prepared to provide our input for what we see as an integral part of the overall improvement of our downtown.

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