

Re: Bylaw No 2020-3: Carla Harris

Thank you, Chairperson

I propose that Regina commit the development of The Yard on the untapped economic potential of residents with accessibility needs and goals. Regardless of current rates of underemployment, disabled Canadians have an annual buying power of 55 billion per year. When you consider how often disabled buyers influence the purchasing decisions of their families, this aggregate comes to represent the third largest market segment in North America. (Statistics Canada 2017, Canadian Survey on Disability)

An architect's accessible design doesn't eliminate barriers on its own. An example of this lies in Regina's Mosaic Stadium; built with updated design standards, accessible enough to be approved by the Rick Hansen Foundation, but located in an inaccessible part of the city; with limited bus route access and accessible parking options. Placing community sports, trade shows and professional development located in an inaccessible area of the city perpetuates invisible barriers for single parents, single car families, Indigenous people, Canadian newcomers, students, disabled and all low socioeconomic residents.

Here is my list of 4 major accessibility design issues to consider: address these directly and we can develop an accessible city instead of a few accessible buildings.

- **Our population is aging:** With smaller families and an aging population in Canada, researchers speculate that as many as 80% of Canadians may have disabilities by 2030. As seniors live and work longer, the boomers generation demands to be more socially active with growing preference for the needs of existing disabled residents. We can expect large numbers of rural seniors to need to move to cities to access health care specialists. Together these factors will highly increase the demand for Regina's accessible housing options; 13% of people under 24 have disabilities, but 47% of people 75 and over do.
- **Increased need for emergency preparedness of accessible residences:** For years, boomers have been buying upper floor condos, but their accessibility needs may change again as they age. People in wheelchairs should only live on the ground floors of buildings since evacuation alarms disarm elevators. If a person is not well enough to walk down all the stairs of their building's escape stairwell, their lives are at higher risk. Also, the motorized chairs commonly used today are both taller and wider than manual wheelchairs, and in an emergency, the stairwell platforms are often not big enough for multiple motorized chairs to wait on while rescue staff are running up to manually assist them.
- **Make all residents 1 bus away from a pedestrian-only transit hub:** Regina still lacks a safe & accessible pedestrian transit hub. Today's 11th and 12th Avenue stops are spread from Albert to Hamilton, so people miss transfers during busy times of day. Note also that these transfer stops are located at the feet of the highest paying jobs in Regina. I say we are focusing on the wrong ridership market; let's provide transit access to jobs that do not require advanced education. This would include lower paid roles like service industries, part time work, shifts on evenings and weekends. If a transit hub is placed in the Yard a host of growing service industry and small business jobs would become instantly more accessible to Regina's transit users.
- **Make all residents 1 bus away from public service facilities and a sports centre:** Many residents in Regina live in areas that happen to be far from the sport and community centre of their Ward. The Yard could centre it's focus on providing safe and accessible public spaces that are adaptable (similar to the Mamaweyatitin Centre's design). This would make

an idea place for a pedestrian-only street for a transit hub directly in front, which would allow transit users to make transfers quicker, and have a safe and free open space alongside the hub, to protect higher risk riders at night as they wait for transfers in our winters. This could even provide safe access to washrooms at the transit hub of the city.

The long term goal for this area should not be to improve a sidewalk & add accessibility standards to a few buildings, but to make the whole city of Regina an accessible city. City Council can access this economic potential by designing for a lifestyle where residents can choose to live walking distance from their needs; including a community engagement centre, child care, parks, doctor's offices, groceries and restaurants, part time and full time jobs.

Carla Harris

For examples of higher standards visit the Facility Accessibility Design Standards developed by the City of London, focused on preventative barriers (See https://www.london.ca/city-hall/accessibility/Documents/FADS_2007_final.pdf)