

## Submission to City Council Re: RPS Headquarters Re-zoning and Street Closure Proposal

by Shayna Stock, on behalf of the Heritage Community Association

May 21, 2020

Mayor Fougere and City Councillors,

The Heritage Community Association has been in conversation with City and RPS staff about this project over the past year. After discussion with the project team, we are comfortable with the street closure or re-zoning proposal, and have some recommendations for the development of this facility that we wish to bring to Council's attention.

The expanded RPS HQ is a huge infrastructure project that will have a significant impact on our community. We believe that it presents exciting opportunities to think about how this new development can contribute to the vibrancy and character of our neighbourhood.

The following are our recommendations:

1. Before designs are finalized for the expanded Headquarters, we would like RPS and the City to conduct a comprehensive consultation with our neighbourhood, including an open house where members of our community have an opportunity to see and provide input on detailed draft facility designs. We ask that this happen at a stage in the design process when there is still room for changes to be made in response to community feedback.

We believe that our community and RPS have many mutual interests for our neighbourhood, and that a thorough consultation process will help to best meet our mutual interests and also illuminate and prevent any unintended harmful impacts.

As owners of a large portion of our neighbourhood's land, and as one of our biggest institutional neighbours, we feel it is the responsibility of RPS and the City to meaningfully engage our community on this development.

We recognize that there have been unavoidable interruptions to community engagement due to the pandemic, but we feel it is still a necessary step before finalizing the designs. Although the delay of a project is never ideal, we would prefer for the project to be delayed if it means our community can be properly consulted.

2. If the re-zoning to Institutional goes forward, we would like to be reassured that existing DCD-D zone requirements remain in place, and that the development is aligned with the Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan.

This corner of our neighbourhood is identified in both the Downtown Plan and the Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan as a vital gateway between our neighbourhood and Downtown Regina.

Existing DCD-D requirements – such as max building height, setback range, active use frontage, hidden parking, etc. – will help to ensure a friendlier exterior and more positive interactions with the rest of the neighbourhood.

The Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan calls for Sask Drive to be a "green boulevard, with pedestrian priority." In addition to being a major arterial, providing commuters with easy access to downtown, the Plan calls for the streetscapes of Sask Drive and other arterials to be enhanced for pedestrian and cyclist use. This includes things like: pocket parks, benches, landscaping, bike parking, and public art.

If there's any way to use landscaping or bike parking to provide a physical barrier between the sidewalk and the street, that will help pedestrians feel safer. Similar barriers between sidewalks and any remaining surface parking lots would help to make those lots slightly nicer to walk by.

3. We request that the City and RPS prioritize the preservation of the Municipal Justice Building and the re-vitalization of the corner of Halifax and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue as part of this project.

The Municipal Justice Building sits on an important corner in our neighbourhood. Today, that stretch of 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. is home to many small, family-run businesses. The Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan calls for 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be re-vitalized as a commercial and creative destination. The corner is also the historical site of the Regina Riot, which has national historic significance, contributing to the heritage value of that property.

It has been less than ideal for our community that the building has remained vacant for the past many years; we look forward to the possibility of its preservation and re-purposing, so that this corner can again contribute to the cultural vibrancy of our neighbourhood.

These recommendations all align with the Official Community Plan, the Downtown Plan, and the Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan.

By embracing these recommendations, we believe that this facility can contribute to the City's vision by helping Regina to be the "most vibrant, inclusive, attractive, sustainable community, where people live in harmony and thrive in opportunity."

Thank you.