



Private Operations Partnership Assessment Advisory for New Arena & Convention Centre

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Hunden provided advisory services to the City of Saskatoon related to best practices for private operations partnership opportunities for the new arena and convention centre in Saskatoon. The City was considering whether or not to proceed to a formal Expression of Interest to gauge private interest in a partnership and long-term operations contract for the new project, including a potential real estate development partner.

Saskatoon has two major operational public assembly facilities that are owned by the City: TCU Place and SaskTel Centre. Both TCU Place, which opened in 1968 and underwent a significant expansion 40 years later, and SaskTel Centre, which opened in 1988, are aging to the point of causing the City concern about supporting the future population and visitor's needs. A 2018 report concluded that the Saskatoon Downtown core would be an ideal location for new or expanded public assembly venues.

The City hired Hunden in 2022 to determine the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding with a formal Expression of Interest to gauge private interest in a partnership and long-term operations contract for the new downtown arena and convention centre project.

Hunden assessed the proposed and existing facilities and performance interviewed numerous similar facilities and management companies, then analyzed how other similar facilities ownership/operations around Saskatchewan, Canada and North America are structured and outlined best-practices and lessons-learned. Finally, Hunden made a recommendation on whether proceeding with an Expression of Interest for a potential partner or going direct to negotiations with a specific vendor made the most sense for the City.

Hunden also advised on a number of questions from the City regarding the structures and timing of public-private partnerships for arenas and convention centers. Hunden has been a true advisor to the City throughout the process and included a comprehensive study inclusive of its research and findings, along with its advisory.

Client: City of Saskatoon

Time Period: 2022