

ART GALLERY OF SASKATCHEWAN FACT SHEET

The Saskatoon Gallery and Conservatory Corporation and the City of Saskatoon are beginning a shared journey to bring a new art gallery to River Landing. Adjacent to Persephone Theatre, the Art Gallery of Saskatchewan would reinforce the cultural corridor which extends from Broadway, through River Landing to Riversdale.

- The Board of Directors of the Saskatoon Gallery and Conservatory Corporation has unanimously approved in principle pursuing the construction of a new art gallery at River Landing.
- Arrival of the Art Gallery of Saskatchewan at River Landing is a bold and imaginative vision capable of building an epicenter of arts and culture. This alignment symbolizes the *new* Saskatoon, bringing together a *new* place for art with a *new* destination for people. The result is a defining moment that will shape our city for the century ahead.
- The new \$55-million Art Gallery of Saskatchewan will provide River Landing with a compelling and viable destination and Saskatoon with a new and expanded purpose-built art gallery.
- Shovels can be in the ground constructing the first phase of the project – a 250-stall underground parking structure – in 2009. The parking structure was envisioned as part of the adjacent Persephone Theatre and is ready to go.
- The Conservatory will remain at its current location and the old gallery building will become available to house an organization or organizations which better fit within the existing and available space.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Q: *Why is the name changing?*

A: The history of the Mendel will be honoured within the new building with the permanent naming of a Mendel Gallery, which will likely house works from the permanent collection.

Q: *Why is the gallery willing to move to River Landing now when you dismissed the idea in the past?*

A: The planets are now aligned. The opportunity to construct a purpose-built gallery with improvements and flexibility not possible in a renovation makes this new concept highly desirable. River Landing is a reality and is clearly emerging as the heart of the downtown riverfront. A destination centre is needed to attract people on a year-round basis, and the art gallery is a natural fit for that. Availability of stimulus funding from the federal government is also a factor.

Q: *How does the AGS propose to pay for its operating costs in this larger facility?*

A: It's a matter of location, location and location. The improved location of River Landing will attract more visitors and events and, in turn, will generate more revenue for the gallery. That increased traffic will also bring more tourism and convention business to Saskatoon.

Q: *Will there be a general admission fee?*

A: The gallery has engaged a consultant to assist in identifying options and related impacts regarding introduction of a general admission fee. A report is expected in late spring of 2009.

Q: *Why was the deal to move the art gallery done behind closed doors?*

A: The City and the gallery board have been co-operatively exploring the best way of drawing federal government funding to Saskatoon, and we've been completely open about that.

Q: *What will the new Art Gallery of Saskatchewan look like?*

A: It is not yet designed, and there will be a competition to involve Saskatchewan architects. It is likely to be a multi-storey building adjacent to Persephone Theatre. There will be in the range of 120,000 square feet, which is two – three times larger than the existing building. That would allow three times the available gallery space, along with space for education programs, public programs, meetings and visitor services, including reception areas, a gift shop and services such as art rental. A bistro, restaurant and underground parking to serve all of River Landing would also be part of the mix.

Q: *How will the new Art Gallery of Saskatchewan be paid for?*

A: The City and Province have already reaffirmed their financial contributions to the project. And the Gallery's board remains committed to raising \$6 to \$8 million through a fundraising campaign. It is still early in the process and there are many financial issues to work through, notably the federal government's contribution. So we've made a start, but there is still work to do.

Q: *Wasn't money spent on expanding the existing art gallery?*

A: About \$1 million was invested in exploring renovation and expansion of the old gallery, as envisioned in a functional plan completed in 2001. But both the city and art gallery have outgrown that plan. The design work already done will help develop some aspects of a new art gallery. That homework will also be helpful in recycling and renovating the existing building for a new community use. There is also a saving of about \$3 million that flow from moving directly into a new gallery rather than moving out to a temporary gallery during the renovations.