



ROSSDALE REGENERATION

Mayor Iveson
All Members of City Council
April 8, 2015

Following is a letter from the Rossdale ReGeneration Group with recommendations to inform the upcoming Council discussion on April 14th on the River Crossing (Rossdale).

Rosssdale ReGeneration Group is comprised of Edmontonians with a shared respect for history and a shared belief in possibility. We are architects, urban planners, historians, artists, politicians and members of both the broader community and the River Crossing district. Not only are the buildings a fundamentally important part of Edmonton's—and Canada's—past and an iconic, aesthetically pleasing part of our city's skyline, they also carry immense opportunity. Giving the Rosssdale power plant new life will make it an important part of a historic neighbourhood that can connect Edmontonians to a unique and essential part of our story—including aboriginal and Hudson's Bay trader history, industry and city-building.

Historically and architecturally, the Rosssdale power plant is unique. Designed by Maxwell Dewar, an award-winning architect and a president of the Alberta Architects Association, the power plant reflects the elegant style of early-twentieth-century American industrial design, as well as the art deco style popular in that period. Reminiscent of a steamship, the power plant is a sophisticated structure and iconic element in our city's skyline and river valley.

City Council and administration's decision to commit resources for the stability and security of the Rosssdale Power Plant was much applauded and appreciated by our group.

Currently a community initiated plan with EPCOR and the City is underway to light the outside of the building (west and south walls) in the near future.

The Rosssdale ReGeneration Group has consistently promoted revitalization of the generating plant. What, specifically, might a revitalized Rosssdale power plant look like? Many ideas have been suggested by and to our group. We envision some combination of the following kinds of repurposing:

- Aboriginal cultural centre and history museum with an aboriginal crafts market (perhaps as part of the Spirit of Edmonton indigenous cultures and natural history trail)
- An aboriginal gathering place—round dances, pow-wows, and ceremonies.
- Non-profit river learning centre, connecting people with the North Saskatchewan River by educating them on the river's natural ecosystem and cultural and historical significance
- Cooperative craft brewery, drawing water directly from the river to underscore the importance of clean water
- Local fine-food shops, cafes and restaurants plus a weekly farmers market (similar to the Ferry Building Marketplace in San Francisco). This repurposing could include an information centre on

Edmonton farms and food security; the river valley trails could also be extended out to the northeast farmland area, linking farm and city

- Arts and music performance area and rehearsal spaces
- Educational energy playground, explaining the development of twentieth-century power (achieving LEED designation, including solar panels on the roof, could also speak to the future of energy)
- University of Alberta biological sciences labs and interactive public museum detailing the river's ecology
- Local-food restaurant on the top floor of the boiler house or turbine house, taking advantage of the 365-degree view
- Satellite of the Royal Alberta Museum, highlighting the history of the site and of the city
- Cafe in one of the pump houses, serving visitors to the site and people walking, cycling, and rollerblading along the river valley trails
- Native-species natural area in the cleared area to the west of the buildings, representing healing of the land and of the past; this would be a peaceful space for learning, relaxing and reflecting
- Residential space

On April 14th, City Council will be studying administration's report on the River Crossing (Rosssdale). Our group is convinced that the reimagining of the power plant requires a process that draws on and aligns with the visioning and plans of the entire River Crossing District.

We make the following recommendations:

- **A Transformative Project.** Much like Blatchford Field and the Quarters, the River Crossing District will need a unique and different transformative process that recognizes the history on both sides of the river of its First Peoples, early traders and settlers, railroads, industry and vehicles. The River Crossing is the most significant entrance to Edmonton's downtown, government centre and business district.
- **Resources/Support/Time for the River Crossing Project.** A comprehensive and unique, coordinated transformative plan needs careful consideration, time, and financial support to bring it to fruition.
- **Community Advice and Oversight.** As a city-making initiative that is transparent and inclusive, the River Crossing project will benefit from support and advice from the Rosssdale ReGeneration Group and others (Rosssdale Community League, First Nations, Heritage Council, sports and athletics). We are interested in working with city administration in transforming the River Crossing District, an opportunity that will become a special Edmonton place.

Sincerely,

Michael Phair

For Rosssdale ReGeneration Group