

# Broadway future discussed

BY JANET FRENCH, THE STARPHOENIX JANUARY 21, 2010

The residents, business and property owners and shoppers who share the Broadway area could co-exist more harmoniously by applying a few simple rules to development in the area, a Toronto urban planner and consultant says.

Hired nearly two years ago by the city, Nutana Community Association and Broadway Business Improvement District to negotiate stumbling blocks, The Planning

Partnership unveiled some of the details Wednesday of its "Broadway 360" vision for one of Saskatoon's most vital areas.

While developers and residents are at odds over how tall new buildings should be, project director Harold Madi says the shape of buildings also makes a difference. To avoid casting shadows and blocking views, he suggests future buildings be stepped-up, starting on one side at a couple of storeys, and getting gradually taller, farther away from adjacent properties.

He pointed to the 12-storey building at the head of the Broadway Bridge as "too bulky" for the area. "(It) occupies the site quite confidently," Madi said, to laughter from about 80 people gathered in the Broadway Theatre. "I'm trying to be polite."

Although the report recommends a maximum building height of nine storeys, Madi says the size of the building needs to be proportional to the width of the lot.

The report also cautions against buildings on Broadway being too short, saying street-front developments should be two or three storeys, because one storey is "not tall enough for framing a street."

Madi also suggests the addition of a narrow, glass-walled gallery to the side of Oskayak High School to eliminate the "deadening effect" the blank gym wall has on the street. A slender gallery on the outside of the gym could showcase First Nations art and create a "remarkable transformation" to that block of Broadway.

Parking may be one of the most divisive issues for the area. A parking study by Poulos and Chung consultants suggests a few changes could improve the situation for residents, shoppers and workers.

Parking in alleys and behind businesses is under-used and signs are poorly posted, Madi said, suggesting if adjacent businesses got together, they could create small, metered lots that cross property lines, but make more efficient parking. Alleys should also be better maintained and cleared of

snow by the city, the recommendations say.

The study found that street parking was used inefficiently and could be improved by painting lines on the streets and that much of the street parking is used by commuters to downtown and the university -- not Broadway patrons.

Other recommendations include opening a new community garden on public property, using alleys for shops, cafes and patios and adding grocery and drug stores in a "village" area between 10th and Eighth streets.

Alan Wallace, the city's manager of neighbourhood planning, said city staff are now faced with putting the recommendations into an action plan. He told residents to identify their top five recommendations and to show their support when a plan goes before city council.

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