

Canadian Football League Stadium Location: A Comparative Analysis of the Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility and Winnipeg Stadium

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This report offers a comparison of the planning for two professional football stadia in Canada. The development of a new stadium has long-term consequences on a city's land use pattern and economic activity. Although professional sporting venues rarely create positive direct economic impacts, urban planners can play a large role in locating such a facility to inspire civic pride, instil a sense of community and create a vibrant and dynamic urban environment near the venue. Since the direct economic benefits for these stadia rarely cover the large government subsidies involved the justification for public sector assistance sometimes depends on the facility's ability to support the non-financial objectives such as community revitalization.

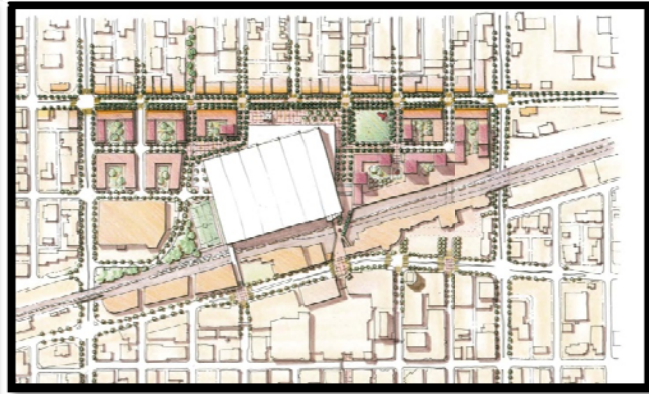
The purpose of this study is to compare the planning for new professional football stadia in Regina and Winnipeg in terms of the specific site, transportation and accessibility issues, and surrounding land uses and to examine how each facility will likely function with respect to their local urban environment. Recommendations formulated following the analysis of the evaluation criteria are specific to each facility and may not be applicable to all cities. Rather, these recommendations may serve as best practice guidelines when considering the functional impact of future professional football stadia.

Case Descriptions

Regina proposed building the Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility immediately adjacent to its downtown, while Winnipeg is currently building Winnipeg Stadium on the University of Manitoba campus in a more suburban location. Contrasting sites allowed the study to compare the planning of new stadia and make recommendations with regards to the specific site,

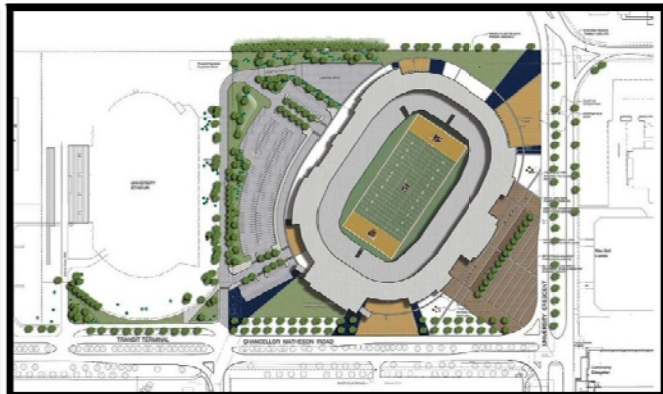
Executive Summary

transportation and accessibility, and surrounding land uses for both a downtown and suburban location. Aside from their contrasting sites, Regina and Winnipeg were chosen as cases because they are both provincial capitals that function as regional centres, are located in a western Canadian prairie environment with similar climates, and each facility has a comparable seating capacity with similar tenant compositions.



Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility: Current and Proposed

Source: Google Earth (2011) and Office for Urbanism (2009)



Winnipeg Stadium: Current and Proposed

Source: Source: Google Earth (2011b) and Source: City of Winnipeg (2010)

Research Method and Evaluation Criteria




































In order to understand how professional football stadia function in their respective locations, a comparative case method approach was used. Each facility was evaluated according to eleven criteria in three categories:

- **Site Analysis**
 - Proximity to City Centre
 - Proximity to Client Base
 - Building Positioning
 - Policy Integration
- **Transportation and Accessibility Analysis**
 - Vehicular Accessibility
 - Parking Requirements
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian Accessibility
- **Land Use Analysis**
 - Proximity to Ancillary uses
 - Current Integration to the Surrounding Area
 - Future Integration to the Surrounding Area

Analysis

Each stadium was evaluated according to how well it responded to each criterion. Using academic journals and books, planning reports and documents, newspaper articles and online sources, and site visits each criterion was given a qualitative ranking; either ‘poses a significant constraint’, ‘meets the criteria’, or ‘is a positive factor’. The table on the following page is used to compare and contrast each criterion and the levels of attainment.

Professional Football Stadia Evaluation Criteria

CRITERIA	Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility	Winnipeg Stadium
SITE ANALYSIS		
Proximity to City Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia are most successful in the city-centre. 		
Proximity to the Client Base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia should be located where they provide the greatest opportunity for attendance. 		
Building Positioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia should be set on a prominent visible spot, while blending into its surroundings. 		
Policy Integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official policy documents should support the location of a professional sporting venue. 		
TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS		
Vehicular Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access is most efficient in a downtown location with multiple points of entry. 		
Parking Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking should be located at a convenient walking distance from the stadium. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking spaces provided 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of parking spaces 		
Public Transit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit should serve a large region, and be in close proximity to a transit station, with limited vehicle parking. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route structure that serves a large region 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to a transit station 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited parking 		
Pedestrian Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is necessary that pedestrians can easily access the stadium and surrounding amenities. 		
LAND USE ANALYSIS		
Proximity to Ancillary Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia should be located within walking distance of hotels, restaurants, retail stores, and entertainment facilities. 		
Current Integration to the Surrounding Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadia should be located on an interesting street network to allow users the greatest opportunity for choice. 		
Future Integration to the Surrounding Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The neighbourhood should offer a mix of old and new buildings or the opportunity to develop vacant lots. 		
 Is a positive factor  Meets the Criteria  Poses a significant constraint		

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility and Winnipeg Stadium are two professional CFL stadia of relatively the same size. However, their location, surrounding elements, and linkages within their respective neighbourhoods make them fundamentally different.

Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility

The proposed Saskatchewan Entertainment Facility's central location and its overall plan would allow the stadium, the city, and the patrons of the facility to experience a number of benefits that could lead to a vibrant and dynamic urban environment, and ultimately a more successful stadium. As demonstrated in the analysis, a central location reduces travel times and offers the most efficient access to the greatest number of spectators. Additionally, potential economic benefits could be maximized as restaurants, bars, shops, hotels, and other entertainment uses are located within the short block pattern giving visitors to the stadium the ability to extend their entertainment experience in the immediate area. Finally, new development combined with the continued rehabilitation of older buildings could continue to cultivate cultural, population, and business diversity in the immediate area.

Short-term Recommendations:

- Develop a broader community mandate for the redevelopment of the CP yards.
- Construct pedestrian boulevards before any other public realm improvements.
- Design the stadium in such a way that spectators can view the downtown skyline when the roof is open.
- Rezone rail yard from RR-railway to D-Downtown or WH-Dewdney Avenue Warehouse.
- Implement traffic management techniques during, before, and after major events.
- Construct a transit station on Dewdney Avenue.

Medium-term Recommendations:

- Update secondary plan for the Warehouse District.

Long-term Recommendations:

- Develop vacant land with ancillary uses that would reinforce the stadium location.
- Encourage rehabilitation and prevent demolition of older buildings.

Winnipeg Stadium

Due to its suburban location there are a number of obstacles and constraints that Winnipeg Stadium must overcome in order to have a successful stadium coupled with a vibrant and dynamic urban environment. For instance, Winnipeg Stadium does not offer efficient access to the greatest number of residents potentially leading to congestion and high clearance times. Furthermore, Winnipeg Stadium's distance from the downtown and lack of ancillary uses contributes to a rather bland urban environment surrounding the stadium. In addition, an analysis of the block and street pattern revealed that few blocks and intersections decrease the opportunity for a diverse and vibrant neighbourhood as users are channelled through a restricted number of pathways. The ability of this area to have an interesting, vibrant, and diverse neighbourhood relies on the stadium's future integration to the surrounding area.

Short-term Recommendations:

- Promote and encourage tailgating activities to reduce peak traffic congestion.
- Landscape existing parking lots, and provide appropriate lighting and signage.
- Create a public transit route structure serving a larger population.
- Include a reserved bus land on Chancellor Matheson Road and University Crescent.

Medium-term Recommendations:

- Update the campus plan for the University of Manitoba to build on the stadium activities.
- Update official policies regarding entertainment facilities.
- Encourage short blocks and more intersections.

Long-term Recommendations:

- Develop parking structures on the surface parking lots on Chancellor Matheson Road with supporting uses at grade.