SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
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Breean Beggs
City Council President

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Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors
Delivered via email Schoolboard@spokaneschools.org

Re: Stadium Location

Dear Board Members:

The two of us are writing to support you in choosing the stadium location that best meets the needs of its students and their families, regardless of any secondary business benefits. Spokane School District voters entrusted the Board with $31 million for the sole purpose of supporting education and student lives - not for economic development. The Board is already addressing economic growth by investing in a diverse and well-trained workforce and holistic support for the needs of underserved populations. You are in the best position to evaluate the student benefit and we trust you to do what's best for students, especially those who have historically experienced barriers to participation in district sporting and special events.

From our perspective, an ***updated*** Downtown Stadium proposal will create the most equity and benefits for students and their families. The comprehensive report from ThoughtExchange at your recent meeting confirms that the students and families who invested the time in robust public engagement on this topic agree that Downtown is the best location for students.

The biggest benefit to students and families is the central location – compared to Albi, a Downtown stadium is much closer to home for the majority of students, especially those from schools that have a larger percentage of families with lower incomes. Ample free parking, frequent bus service and planned bicycle infrastructure make the Downtown location easier and cheaper to access for so many more people than the current location on the outskirts of the City. Promised free admission and parking to all Spokane Schools students and their families will also encourage greater attendance at events and better access to the ever-growing Riverfront Park and other Downtown amenities. Albi has a great history for many families, but it requires a car and a long drive through a suburban neighborhood for most attendees, which can be a barrier for those without sufficient resources. We believe a Downtown location will lower barriers and likely increase participation from a wider and more diverse student population at a lower overall cost to the District.

If the Downtown location is selected, we ask that the District insist on an updated agreement to ensure the current promises of equity and student benefit, including the prioritization of resources dedicated towards culturally responsive training to ensure high levels of inclusion of all students. This agreement should better recognize the $31 million the District is investing alongside funding from the Public Facilities District and the United Soccer League. The District should retain its percentage of ownership and any potential net revenues from all stadium events. All District events must be free to all its students and their families along with likely far more than the currently proposed 500 free parking spaces. The District must have the ability to hold a wide variety of school events beyond just football and soccer by utilizing a mutually agreeable joint scheduling system. And we can't forget the ability of school booster clubs to staff the concessions stands for fundraising at District events.

We have heard arguments for and against the Downtown location based on its benefits to adjacent land and business owners. While it's important to hear everyone's perspectives, they are secondary to the real question: What is best for the kids who are the intended beneficiaries of this $31 million stadium? We believe Downtown is best for students, but the voters gave that decision to you, no one else. If you choose Downtown, we urge you to negotiate a proposal that benefits students even more than the first offer from the stadium promoters.

Thank you for deeply engaging our community in this conversation and for keeping the needs of our students and their families top of mind. We will support your decision on the Stadium location and join you in an ongoing commitment to foster an environment of belonging, value, and hope for the future in line with the Spokane Public Schools' vision of "Excellence for Everyone."

Best,

Breean Beggs, Spokane City Council President

Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council Member, District 2