

Uneven Development: The Politics of the Edmonton Arena Community Benefits Agreement

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SCRI Conference 2019



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FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY,
SPORT, AND RECREATION

Presentation Objectives

- Political Context: CAD\$613.7 million publicly-financed arena (Rogers Place) and entertainment district in downtown Edmonton (Ice District)
- Community Benefits Agreements (CBA)
- The Edmonton Arena CBA: Lessons from Edmonton



Edmonton Arena Agreement

- The City of Edmonton debt-financed the \$613.7 million arena (Rogers Place)
- Edmonton Oilers will operate the city-owned arena: will pay \$5.5 million/year in rent*
- Oilers will receive all revenue from the facility for 35 years
- Included in the extensive agreement: a one-page CBA attachment (Schedule D)



Edmonton

Portion of Ice District tower sold to German company for half a billion dollars



Ice District Properties sold commercial portion of Stantec Tower to Deka Immobilien

CBC News · Posted: Sep 25, 2019 7:56 AM MT | Last Updated: September 25



Ice District Properties sells Edmonton Tower to Alberta pension manager

GORDON KENT Updated: July 5, 2018





Standard CBA Definition

- Legally enforceable standalone contract *between community groups and a private developer* (Gross, 2008)
- Pro-actively negotiated with *community groups* To minimize harmful impacts of sport-related urban developments
- Regularly monitored, evaluated, and amended



LA Live: The Gold Standard CBA

- Legally-binding CBA between AEG and a community coalition of well-resourced unions, community groups, and over 300 residents:
 - Affordable housing (120 units built)
 - Child care facilities for 130 children
 - \$1 million contribution to park and recreation centre
 - Development of targeted local hiring program
 - Compliance with City of Los Angeles Living Wage ordinance



Edmonton Arena CBA

- Schedule D is non-binding, unenforceable, and marginal
 - NO affordable housing provision for community; NO contributions to social service agencies; NO commitment to living wage/binding job-creation strategy for community members; NO contributions for parks and recreation facilities; NO provision of daycare facilities; NO revenue sharing with community
- Mandates: creation of local advisory committee to address parking and noise; “best efforts” by Oilers for jobs and training; continued work by Oilers community foundation



Lessons From Edmonton

- No community involvement
- No political will by City of Edmonton: “just a parking lot”
- No consideration given to broader impacts of gentrification and prospect of displacement
 - Private development and resulting increases in municipal property tax revenue considered to be community benefit



Katz Group Buys MacDonald Lofts



Evicts all 66 residents on fixed income/social assistance from building just across from Rogers Place

