

Letter to the Editor, Saskatoon Express, published in the June 17-23, 2013 edition:

In Mayor Don Atchinson's column ([Let's turn the sod for new gallery, June 3 - 9](#)), the numbers cited for the Rемаi Gallery compared to the Mendel gallery expansion are different from those previously cited.

In the interests of clarity, following are the actual numbers, easily found in newspaper and City Hall documents online:

According to the City of Saskatoon's budget for 2009, the city's financial commitment to the 45,000 square-foot \$24-million Mendel renovation/expansion was officially \$4.6 million, not \$26.6 million as stated in Mayor Atchison's Express column. The Mendel expansion plan would create a state-of-the-art facility that would serve a city of 500,000 and accommodate large "A-list" exhibitions previously unavailable here. It would be almost double its existing size, store the entire collection, and have a river-view restaurant,. No parkade would be required.

This \$4.6 million is a mere fraction of the city's commitment for the Rемаi gallery/event centre. The civic taxpayer is by far the largest investor in the Rемаi project, contributing (as noted in the mayor's column) \$42 million towards the gallery and parkade when combined.

Add to this figure the \$16 million in related "outside costs" as cited by the city planning department, reported in the local media and mentioned in Elaine Hnatyshyn's recent Express column and one realizes that the civic taxpayer is on the hook for \$59 million of the total project cost of \$110 million. So far.

That's enough to replace the Traffic Bridge twice over.

Mayor Atchison refers to unanticipated rising costs of certain renovation projects (like the proposed Mendel plan), but fails to mention the wildly expanding capital construction costs of the Rемаi gallery/parkade project. Before a shovel even hit the ground, the cost went from its

original estimate of \$55 million to almost \$93.8 million.

David Geary