

# Community Vision

June 2011

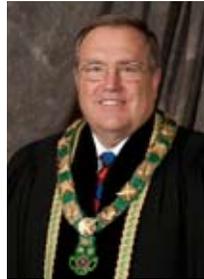
 **Saskatoon**  
**Speaks** Shape Our  
Future







## Mayor's Message



On behalf of my colleagues on Council, thank you to all the citizens who participated in Saskatoon Speaks to help shape our future. Saskatoon Speaks was the largest, broadest and most inclusive community engagement initiative undertaken in the history of the City of Saskatoon. Between 7,000 and 10,000 citizens were involved over eight months, talking about what they value and what they aspire for the city over the next 50-70 years. The time and passion citizens committed to the process truly reflects many of our community values. We are a proud city that cherishes and builds upon its people and a strong sense of community to succeed.

The Saskatoon Speaks Community Vision incorporates many of your ideas and dreams to build an even more prosperous and attractive city as we continue to grow. The next step is for Council to use the Community Vision as important input into preparing a Strategic Plan that is aligned with the community's values and goals. But the purpose of this document is not just limited to City initiatives; it is up to our entire community to shape our future. Government, businesses, community leaders, stakeholders and our citizens all need to continue to work together and share the responsibility of achieving the vision.

It is my pleasure to present the Community Vision for Saskatoon, one that sees a bright future for everyone in our city and a Saskatoon that continues to shine.

**Donald J. Atchison**  
Mayor

Ward 1  
Councillor  
**Darren Hill**

Ward 2  
Councillor  
**Pat Lorje**

Ward 3  
Councillor  
**Maurice Neault**

Ward 4  
Councillor  
**Myles Heidt**

Ward 5  
Councillor  
**Randy Donauer**

Ward 6  
Councillor  
**Charlie Clark**

Ward 7  
Councillor  
**Mairin Loewen**

Ward 8  
Councillor  
**Glen Penner**

Ward 9  
Councillor  
**Tiffany Paulsen**

Ward 10  
Councillor  
**Bev Dubois**





## City Manager's Message



Saskatoon is a thriving city, and the level of growth we have experienced over the past decade is striking. As we look forward to significant growth in the years ahead, now is a crucial time to engage our community in determining the City's future. We launched a new process to tap into the collective wisdom of Saskatonians to ensure municipal decisions are informed by public values. Our strategies and responses must reflect the shared vision of our community.

We can only create the future we envision if citizens are driving the plan, and your direction could only be gained through wide-spread community participation. Saskatoon Speaks offered a multi-faceted approach and many forums to ensure participation from a full spectrum of Saskatoon's population. Through the process, we learned that our community endorses a number of current City initiatives designed to respond to the opportunities and challenges facing Saskatoon. We are doing many of the right things, but we recognize there is room to fine-tune some initiatives and pursue new ones to support the Community Vision.

Saskatoon Speaks is not the end of the process – it is the beginning. Your views will be visible in the City's Strategic Plan along with other important documents like the Culture Plan and City Centre Plan.

On behalf of the City Administration, I want to thank citizens for your leadership and guidance. It makes a world of difference in what we set out to do. I would also like to thank our Council and the Project Team for their dedication to Saskatoon Speaks. I stand by the City's commitment to build on the powerful messages we heard and to continue engaging the community in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'M. Totland'.

**Murray Totland**  
City Manager



image courtesy of flickr - dary\_mitchell



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Parks, Recreation and Community Safety: The Community Vision for an Active, Healthy and Safe City

Arts and Culture: The Community Vision for a Culturally Vibrant City

Moving Around: The Community Vision for a City with Many Options for Moving Around

Shaping Growth: The Community Vision for Shaping Sustainable Growth

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# Introduction



image courtesy of flickr - iChris

This document is the culmination of a community visioning process that engaged between 7,000 and 10,000 citizens of Saskatoon. Developed during a pivotal time in the city's history, the Community Vision describes common values, outlines opportunities and challenges facing Saskatoon and describes the community's long-term vision for the city. It will inform the City's Strategic Plan and other planning initiatives but also is intended to assist others who have a role to play in building a great city.

## Why a Vision, Why Now

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Saskatoon is a booming city, and the level of growth it has experienced over the past decade is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Now is the time to discuss the city's future as a community and develop a shared vision to ensure that as the city grows it remains one of Canada's most attractive, livable and prosperous cities. In the absence of a clear long-term vision, a rapidly growing city risks diminishing what its citizens value most and dealing with unforeseen costs and issues. The visioning process has provided an opportunity to reflect on issues facing our contemporary city and collectively identify potential directions toward positive change that benefits everyone in Saskatoon.

As Saskatoon looks forward to significant growth and change in the years ahead, it needs to respond to global trends affecting all cities. In the information age, cities are vitally important to maintaining a diverse, innovative and competitive economy. Growing reliance on immigration to maintain a skilled workforce is making cities more socially and culturally diverse. At the same time, our population is aging, bringing new social, health care and financial challenges that directly and indirectly affect cities. Environmentally, cities have an increasingly important role to play in preventing global warming and generally protecting the health of the planet. These trends have many implications for how cities are developed and managed, but one thing is clear: Cities everywhere need to become more efficient, more innovative, more inclusive and more responsive to sustain their economic and fiscal health, their social well-being and their environment.

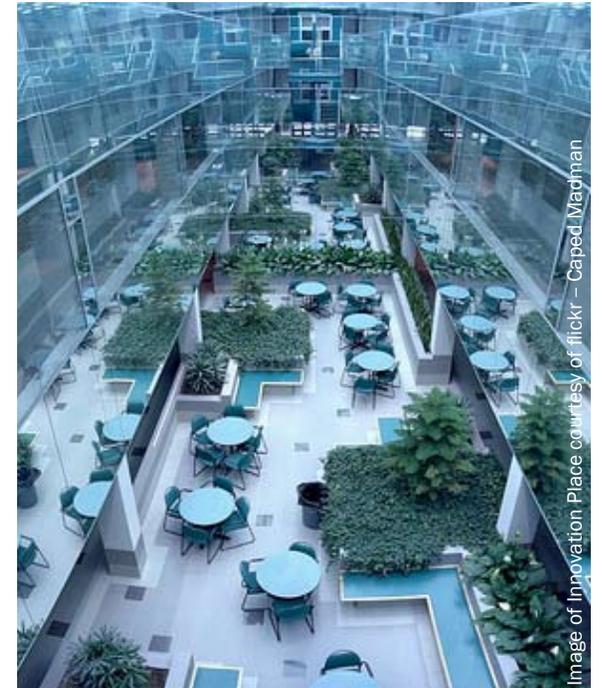
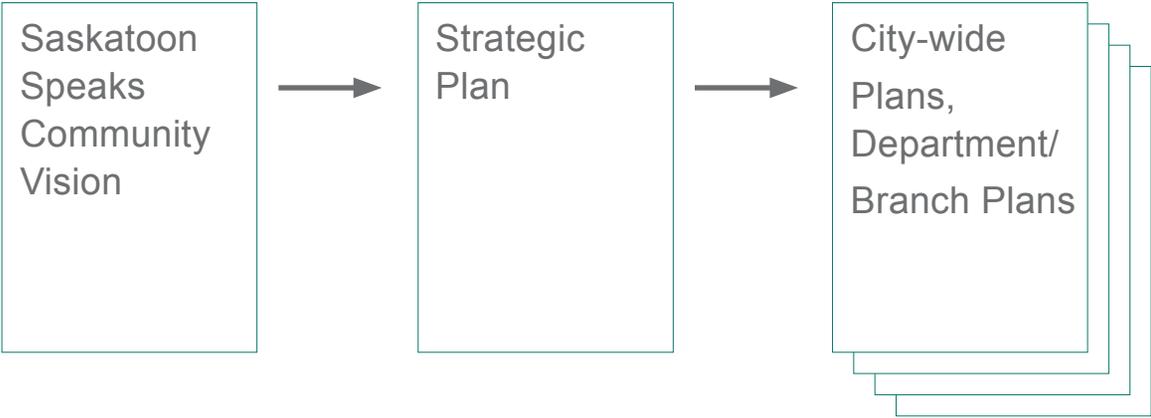


Image of Innovation Place courtesy of flickr – CapedMadman

The most successful cities anticipate and prepare for the changes that lie ahead. They envision their future city and what will make it great. They plan ahead and then act on their plans.

As the City of Saskatoon prepared to initiate a new Strategic Plan to guide City Council's priorities and decisions, as well as other comprehensive plans, it recognized the need for a long-term vision for the city—one rooted in the shared values and aspirations of its citizens. The Community Vision described in this document will provide input to the Strategic Plan and other City plans to ensure they are aligned with broad community values and goals. But its purpose is not limited to just informing City initiatives. It is hoped that other organizations and individuals with a role to play in shaping the future of Saskatoon will be inspired by the community's vision and act in ways that align with the vision.

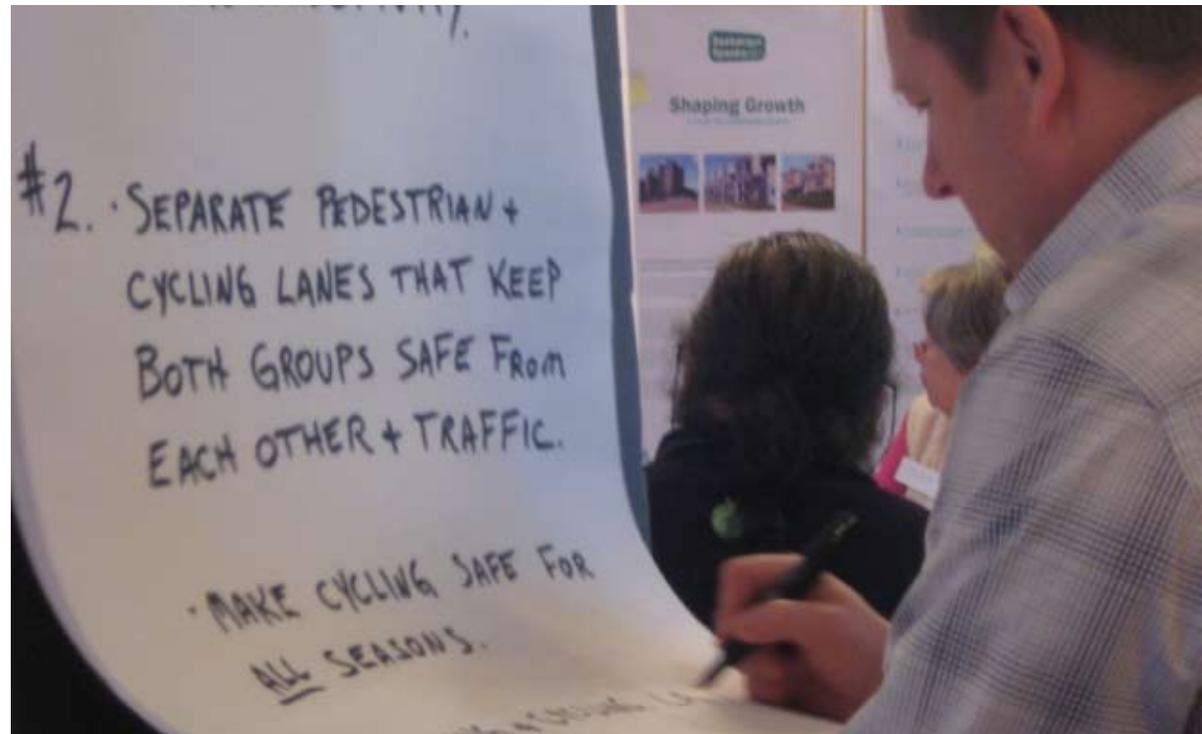


## The Visioning Process

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Future plans for Saskatoon will only be successful if they are supported by citizens. And support can only be gained through meaningful consultation and ongoing engagement. Recognizing this, City Council initiated Saskatoon Speaks—a multi-faceted community visioning process. The engagement process recognizes that people learn and communicate in different ways. It was also designed and periodically refined to ensure participation from the full spectrum of Saskatoon's diverse population.

Between 7,000 and 10,000 people participated in Saskatoon Speaks—people from all parts of the city, all backgrounds and all walks of life.



- 2 City Summit Presentations
- 18 Community Voice Session presentations
- 9 Focused Vision presentations
- 2 What You Said forum presentations

**31** Total public presentations



**6,961**

website unique visits



Community Voice Sessions total participation

**398**

**163**  
Media Launch participation

**640** People on email list



**308** Number of followers on Twitter



**500** Number of tweets

**320**  
Spring Leadership forum participation

Focused Visioning total participation **295**

**918** Participated in the City Summit

**783** Youth Voice total participation

**201**  
What You Said forum participation

**72**

Interviews with Community organization representatives

**1,000** background books distributed

**185** Website 'likes'

**200** Facebook page 'likes'

Online Questionnaires Total Participation

**610**

**5,550**

Number of video views



The visioning process began in May 2010 and included a variety of forums and engagement tools.



### Interviews with Community Leaders and Key Stakeholders

In May and June of 2010, meetings and interviews were conducted with over 70 representatives of the Saskatoon community and organizations that play a key role in the city, including business groups, institutions, community associations, Aboriginal communities, social agencies, special interest groups, City Councillors and City departments. These meetings and interviews shed light on the issues and opportunities facing Saskatoon and helped to identify the themes a long-term vision needs to address.



### Spring Leadership Forum

At the City of Saskatoon's Leadership Forum in May 2010, more than 300 senior staff and managers at the City had the opportunity to express their thoughts on Saskatoon's strengths, challenges and opportunities and begin to set the stage for the community visioning process.



## Background Review

The conversations that occurred under the umbrella of Saskatoon Speaks were informed by history, current data and trends, and a clear picture of the city today. The project team reviewed background information and analyzed how Saskatoon has grown. The team's findings and observations were summarized in a background book intended to assist the community in understanding current and future issues and opportunities.



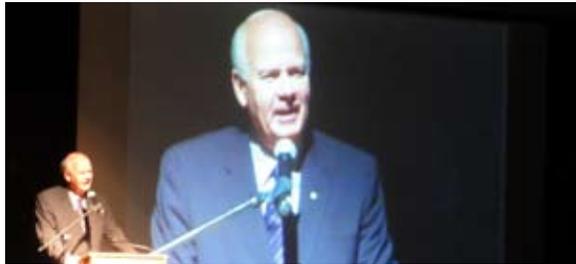
## Video, Newsletter and Media Launch

A short video was produced to raise awareness about Saskatoon Speaks, encourage participation from across the city, and introduce the opportunities and challenges facing the city. The video was presented at a media launch held at the Galaxy Theatre in September 2010, which officially kicked off the public visioning process. Over 160 people participated in the media launch. A newsletter was also prepared to promote the visioning initiative, introduce the themes for discussion and provide an overview of important background information.



## Web-Based Communications

The Saskatoon Speaks website ([saskatoonspeaks.com](http://saskatoonspeaks.com)) was launched in September 2010 to provide easy access to information about the visioning process and encourage citizen input. Background documents, presentations, questionnaires and interim reports summarizing comments from the public events were available on the site. There was also access to videos and photographs posted by the City and citizens. In addition to promoting upcoming consultation events, the site explained how to get involved via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr. During the visioning process, there were approximately 7,000 unique visitors to the website.



## City Summit

A three-day public forum was held at Prairieland Park on September 29 and October 1-2, 2010, to bring the Saskatoon community together to discuss the city's future. The forum kicked off with a keynote address by CBC anchor and journalist Peter Mansbridge and presentations by five inspiring local speakers—Al Anderson, Vera Pezer, Amulya Mohan, Jacqueline Cook and Leanne Bellegarde—with journalist and radio host Richard Brown moderating the discussion that followed. On October 1 and 2, following presentations that provided a backdrop for the vision, the public had an opportunity to share their thoughts on Saskatoon's strengths, challenges and opportunities and engage in themed roundtable discussions. In total, almost 1,000 people participated in the City Summit. Feedback from the sessions is summarized in the City Summit Interim Report.



## Community and Youth Voices Sessions

Following the City Summit, community groups and high school classes had the opportunity to hold their own sessions to gather input for the vision. Materials were provided by the City and organizers had the option to book a City facilitator. The intent was to ensure Saskatoon Speaks engaged the broader citizenry of Saskatoon by making participation in the visioning process easier for people who were not able to come to the City Summit or other events, and for those who wished to provide further input. In total, including Saskatoon high school students, almost 1,200 people participated. The Voice It Your Way reports summarize the comments and ideas conveyed at the sessions.



## Online Questionnaires

From October 2010 to February 2011 a questionnaire available on the project website encouraged people who were unable to attend the City Summit or a Community Voices session, or who did attend but had additional comments, to answer the questions posed at these events. Almost 400 people responded to the questionnaire.



## Focused Visioning Sessions

From November 30 to December 3, 2010, a series of Focused Visioning Sessions and a Public Open House were held to discuss the emerging visions and directions for seven of the vision themes, based on the community consultation to date. The eighth theme, culture, was also discussed in the context of the emerging Culture Plan. The Focused Visioning Sessions brought together people with insight into each of the themes for roundtable discussions. In total, almost 300 people participated. Feedback from the sessions, summarized in the Focused Visioning Interim Report, together with comments from the City Summit and Community and Youth Voices Sessions, provided the basis for a draft Community Vision.



## “What You Said” Forum and Online Questionnaire

On the morning of March 16, 2011, community leaders and stakeholders invited to the Focused Visioning Sessions had an opportunity to review and discuss the draft Community Vision. This session was followed in the afternoon and evening by a Public Forum, where citizens heard a presentation on the draft Community Vision and reviewed hand-out and display materials. Approximately 130 people participated in the day's events.

For those who could not attend, an online questionnaire was made available for a four-week period following the Forum. More than 200 citizens responded. Comments from the March 16 Forum and the questionnaires were used to refine the Community Vision.



## Broad and Inclusive Participation

The success of the Community Visioning Initiative relied on broad consultation that captured the diversity of voices representing Saskatoon's population. Broad participation from the beginning was important to finding consensus on core values and creating a sense of ownership of the vision. With each method of participation and following each major event, participation results were analyzed to determine if segments of Saskatoon's population were underrepresented. Special efforts were then made to engage underrepresented groups. Approximately 18 Community Voice Sessions were hosted, many targeted at specific groups, such as youth-at-risk, new immigrants, Aboriginals, seniors, and homeless and anti-poverty groups. In addition, a second Focused Visioning Session on the economy was held with representatives of the business community in January 2011, and a Saskatoon Speaks Aboriginal Gathering was held on April 7, 2011.

This document summarizes community perspectives that emerged from Saskatoon Speaks, capturing shared values and aspirations. For more information on the visioning process, including background documents and interim reports on what was heard, please visit [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca).



Seven overlapping and inter-related vision themes—the economy, the environment, social well-being, recreation and culture, moving around, shaping growth, and the city centre—were identified early in the visioning process. Following the City Summit, these were refined to form eight themes. The culture theme was addressed primarily through the parallel Culture Plan process.

# Community Values

Through Summer Sessions, citizens discussed what they considered to be the city's key strengths and assets—the qualities and features that should be protected, reinforced or enhanced. These provide the basis for the core community vision, which in turn provide a starting point for the community's vision, helping to frame the strategic opportunities that lie ahead.

The river, trees and broader natural environment

Education, recreation and entrepreneurship

Ease of getting around

Distinct places and neighbourhoods

Arts scene and cultural festivals

Home & natural spaces

Size of the city and its growth rate

## Challenges





# Setting the Stage

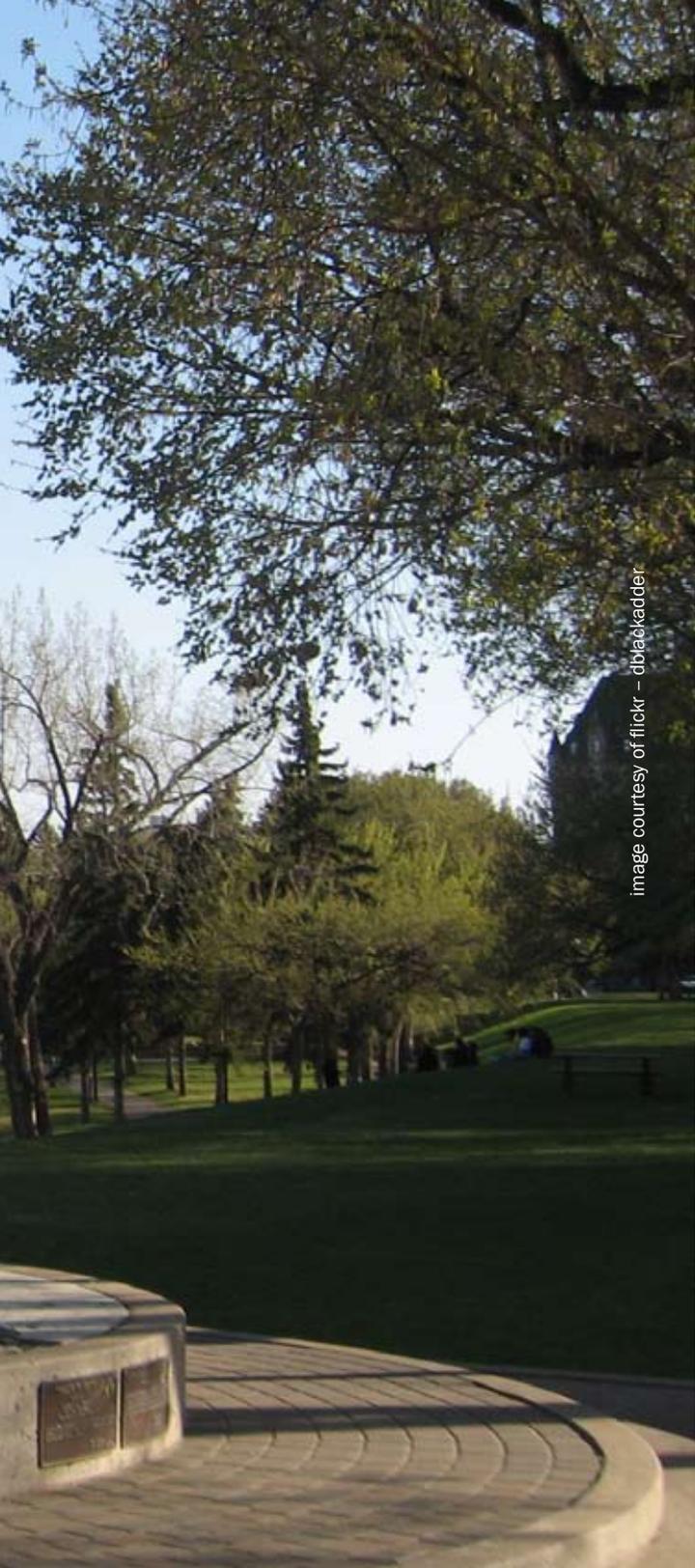


image courtesy of flickr - dblackadder

The community's vision for Saskatoon is grounded in the city's history, the values of its people, the conditions that define it today and the trends that will affect its future. This section provides a brief history of Saskatoon and synthesizes important background information with input from the Saskatoon Speaks process to highlight community values, opportunities and challenges to which the vision responds.

## Building on History

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Cities are constantly evolving. The streets, buildings, neighbourhoods and public spaces that make up the character of a city reflect the values and aspirations of the people who have lived there over time. Saskatoon owes its existence to geographical and climatic factors, 19th century political and social issues, and the sheer will and foresight of its founders. Soon after being settled, it emerged as a hub in the developing economy of Central and Western Canada.

Over the past century, Saskatoon has grown steadily outwards while remaining centred on the South Saskatchewan River. Wagon trains, locomotive trains and streetcars influenced the city's early structure of rail, roads and neighbourhoods. After World War II, as in every North American city, the automobile largely shaped the pattern of suburban development. Today, Saskatoon occupies over 200 square kilometres of land and is home to over 225,000 people from a diversity of backgrounds. Thanks again to its location and the ingenuity of its citizens, Saskatoon begins the 21st century as an important hub in the global economy.

While the physical geography and structure of Saskatoon provide a foundation for the future city, that future will be shaped by people who live here and will be born or move here. Like the men and women who have built the city thus far, newcomers will bring a pioneering spirit that could take the city in exciting directions and lead to remarkable legacies.



Plowing a trench on Avenue E North

Leonard A. Hillyard photo, ca. 1920s. — Image call no. A1.199 — Plowing a trench on Avenue E North



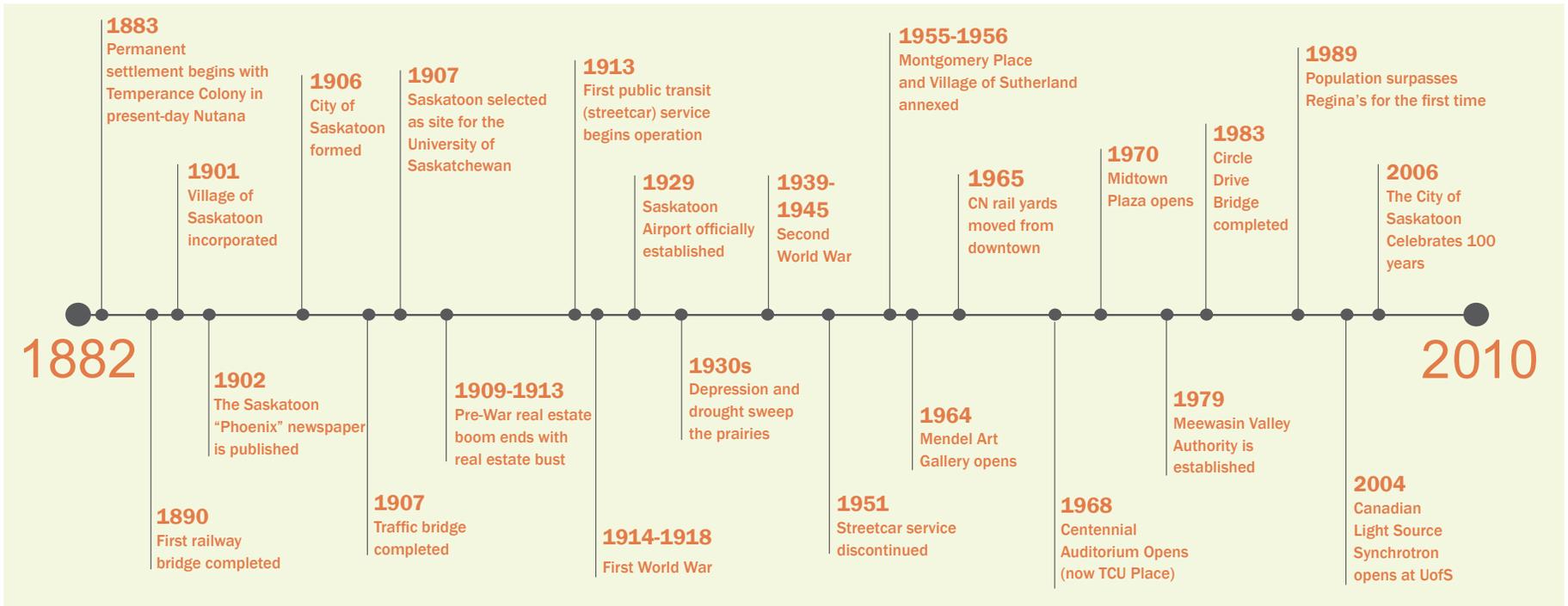
Courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library - LHR, 1925 - Image call no. LH4148  
Chinese business on 19th Street in 1925



Courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room, late 1930's - Image call no. A1475  
Kong Lee store on 2nd Avenue in the late 1930s



Courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room, 1929 - Image call no. LH3643-1  
Home and Central Bakeries on Broadway in the 1920s

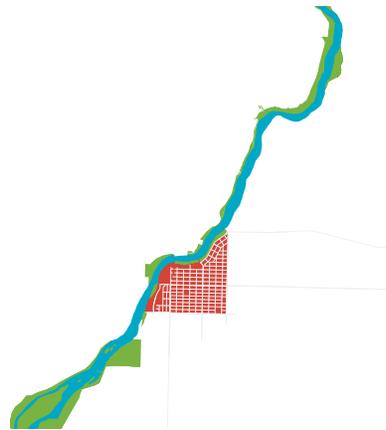




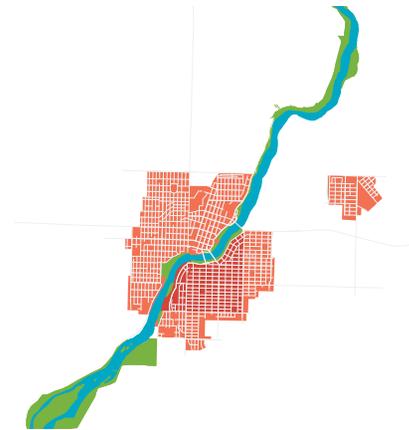
2nd Avenue in 1918 - Image call no. LH1040 courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room

In the early years of the 20th century, Saskatoon was Canada's fastest growing city and an important hub in the national economy. A century later, it once again is the country's fastest growing city and a global hub for natural resources and innovation.

■ year 1906  
population 3,000

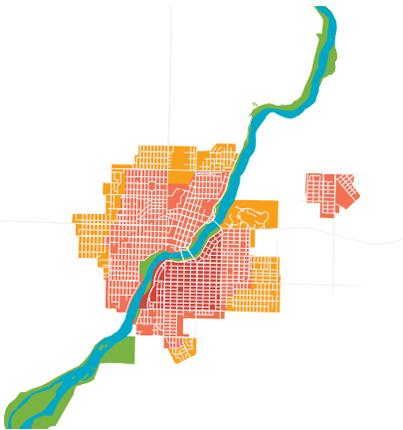


■ year 1916  
population 21,000

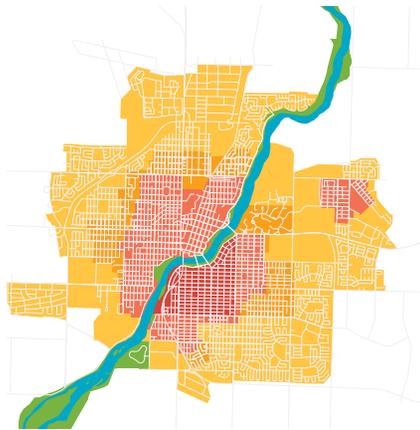




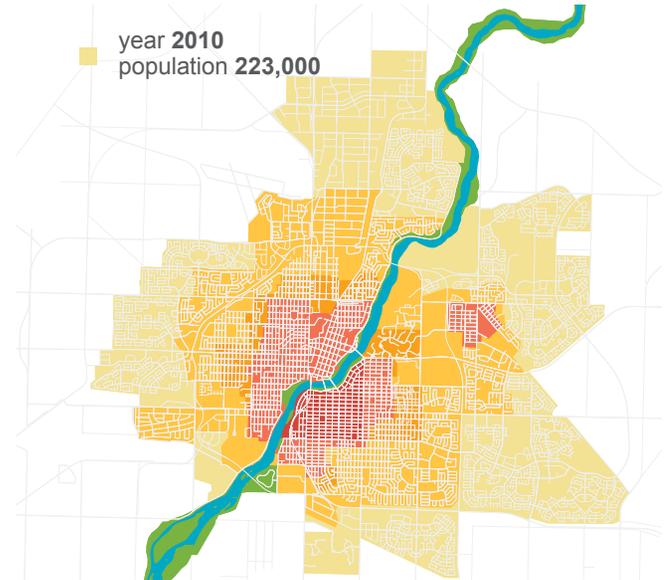
■ year 1931  
population 43,290



■ year 1971  
population 126,450



■ year 2010  
population 223,000



## Community Values, Challenges and Opportunities

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Saskatoon has natural beauty, culture, a booming economy and a high quality of life. But the city is not resting on its success. Its history is one of coming together as a community to seize opportunities and overcome challenges.

The prospect of significant economic, population and physical growth in the coming decades positions Saskatoon at a pivotal point in its history. The community visioning process provided an opportunity to reflect on how Saskatoon has evolved and consider, on the one hand, its core strengths—values and assets to build upon—and, on the other hand, the challenges and opportunities it faces as a dynamic, growing city.

The community values highlighted on the following pages were distilled from the thousands of voices heard during Saskatoon Speaks. They help frame the challenges and opportunities foremost in the minds of citizens, which provide a foundation for the community's vision.



We value a strong sense of community, sports, culture and recreation, all of which contribute to a high quality of life.



**The quality of life in Saskatoon is high for most, and the city's many assets position it well for the future. However, the city is facing social challenges, such as an aging population, disengaged youth, poverty and homelessness, that need to be addressed through concerted efforts.**

Two-thirds of Saskatoon residents rate the city's quality of life as very good or excellent. The city's clean environment, educational institutions, recreational assets, access to arts and culture, and short commute times are among the reasons Saskatoon's quality of life is high relative to most other Canadian cities. Yet there is awareness that for many in the city the quality of life is not high, and people are concerned that Saskatoon could become an even more culturally and economically divided city as it grows. Racism and prejudice contribute to a divided city. Aboriginals and low-income families are still largely concentrated in core neighbourhoods, where good quality housing, recreational amenities and healthy, affordable food are less accessible.

As the city's demographics shift over the next 15-20 years, it will face a number of challenges and opportunities. It is projected that by 2026, almost a quarter of Saskatoon's population will be 65 or older, which will put pressures on the City's services, transportation systems and affordable housing stock. The opportunity is to create an "age-friendly" city. Counterbalancing the aging population is a growing youth demographic, a large proportion

of whom will come from Aboriginal communities and newcomer families. If they find the education, recreation and employment opportunities they are seeking, it will be good for the city's economy and social fabric. This will also help to create a safer city with a lower crime rate.

Saskatoon residents have also identified affordable housing and public transit as other key factors that affect quality of life and the city's overall social well-being. People feel that all citizens should have easy access to services that help them find a place to live, appropriate work and educational opportunities. Another challenge is the lack of day-to-day amenities, including healthy food, within walking distance in many neighbourhoods and downtown. People recognize the importance of indoor and outdoor spaces that bring people of all abilities and backgrounds together to support community building and social cohesion.

Opportunities for recreation and culture are among Saskatoon's greatest strengths and vital to building a healthy city. People feel that supporting and promoting recreation and culture, providing easy and affordable access to facilities, and accommodating activities year-round across the city will be important to ensuring all residents can enjoy a high quality of life. They also see the future opportunity for one or more new major cultural or recreation attractions or facilities for both residents and visitors.

We value the natural environment.

**Saskatoon benefits from and appreciates nature's bounty. To both ensure the environment remains healthy and contribute to global sustainability, there are a variety of ways to reduce the ecological impact of the city and its citizens.**

Saskatoon is surrounded by, and serves, prime agricultural and resource-rich lands. The South Saskatchewan River runs through the city, providing habitat for wildlife, open space, recreational facilities and scenic beauty. The city's urban forest, rich with elm trees, is healthy. Residents of the city enjoy clean air and water.

Among Saskatonians there is a growing understanding and concern about how their actions impact both the city of the future and the larger world. The city's ecological footprint per capita, a measure of human demand on the earth's ecosystem, is 7.23 hectares. This is consistent with the Canadian average, which is the third largest footprint among all nations. Contributing factors include higher energy consumption and the use of more carbon-intensive fuel sources for electricity and heating. As the city continues to develop, it has the opportunity to reinforce and expand its natural features and show leadership on environmental issues, in the process enhancing its global image as a green city.

People recognize that government, businesses and all Canadians can do more to address global environmental issues; for example, use less energy and water, build more energy-efficient buildings and take advantage of renewable energy sources. The City is pursuing a waste strategy that includes more recycling and composting, and many citizens are looking to the City to play a leadership role on other environmental initiatives. People also feel that two environmental priorities should be to control outward growth and support transit use, cycling and walking.



image courtesy of flickr – daryl\_mitchell

We value Saskatoon's small-town feel, distinct places and built heritage.

**Saskatoon's geography and sense of community give it a small-town feel that people value. It also contains historic structures and distinct places, such as Broadway and River Landing, that contribute to the city's identity and quality of life. By growing the city in a way that focuses on "place-making", these values can be protected.**

People realize the city will grow but are concerned about the impacts continued outward growth may have on the character of the city and their quality of life. They also recognize the need to take a regional approach to growth and transportation. They think Saskatoon can learn lessons from cities where rapid outward growth has led to congestion, pollution, long commute times, and costly services and infrastructure.

People see an opportunity to follow the more sustainable approaches to growth taken by cities like Vancouver and Portland, Oregon, where outward growth is balanced with infill development and all growth is planned around an efficient transit network. With both kinds of growth, there is the potential to create or strengthen neighbourhoods with shops and services within walking distance and a variety of housing, including affordable housing. Sensitive infill development can also help to revitalize older areas of the city, reinforce existing "people places" and create new ones.

One area of the city people value most for its distinct places, cultural heritage and amenities is the City Centre. They feel that the downtown is gradually improving as the heart of the city and want to see more new housing, cultural attractions and neighbourhood amenities, such as a grocery store. They recognize that more people living downtown will help to make it feel safe and vibrant at all times. Developing vacant lots, transforming places like the Warehouse District, enhancing streetscapes and creating new open spaces are all seen as vital to making the City Centre and the entire city more attractive. Making it easier to get to downtown by transit, cycling, walking or wheelchair/scooter, and ensuring parking is available, will also be a key to its future success.



image courtesy of flickr – katy\_bee

We value the ability to move around the city easily.



**It is still relatively easy to get around Saskatoon by car. People appreciate the recent improvements to public transit service, bicycle facilities and trails. As the city grows and attracts more newcomers, and as its population ages, it will be important to ensure the city becomes more transit-friendly and there are attractive alternatives to the car.**

While the use of public transit has increased in recent years, Saskatoon remains one of the most car-oriented and car-dependent cities in Canada, with approximately 85% of people driving to work. Yet not everyone has access to a car, including a growing number of seniors, young people and newcomers. And with the city's recent growth, commuting times and traffic congestion have increased. People recognize that if the current pattern of growth continues and investments are not made in public transit, congestion will only get worse and the city's quality of life will suffer. They feel now is the time to begin to shift attitudes about moving around the city and ensure growth is more transit-oriented. More focus on public transit improvements, complemented by enhancements to facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and those reliant on scooters and wheelchairs, will have benefits to the economy, the environment, social well-being and public health.

Although people recognize that Saskatoon may not be large enough or dense enough to support rail-based rapid transit, they feel it is not too early to be planning such infrastructure and ensuring future growth will support it. Appropriate infill development in the City Centre, along key main streets and on vacant lands within the city will make it more transit-oriented. New communities can support transit by being walkable and clustering denser housing and commercial amenities in village-like centres. All plans for transportation should not only balance different options for moving around but also ensure the city is working toward universal accessibility in the design of its transit facilities, pedestrian networks, trails and public spaces. This will involve better snow clearance on sidewalks and other paths.

We value education, innovation and the access we have to Saskatchewan's natural resources.



**Saskatoon is economically strong. We need to continue to diversify the economy, promote innovation, remain competitive, attract investment globally and ensure everyone has opportunities to share in the prosperity.**

Despite the economic downturn in 2008-2009, the city has posted a decade of strong economic growth. Saskatoon has consistently had higher employment and lower unemployment rates than the national average. Almost every sector in the city's diverse economy has enjoyed strong gains recently, and the local housing market has rebounded faster than those in other Canadian cities. Consistent with strong economic growth and increased employment, the median income and disposable income are rising.

People are proud of the city's economic success and recognize that its major strengths are a large industrial base related to the resource sector and major institutions that support innovation and diversity. However, it is not only Saskatoon's larger corporations and institutions that are valued by citizens, but also the smaller, local businesses and the spirit of creative entrepreneurship that is rooted in the prairie pioneering tradition. Saskatoon's resource-

based economy is subject to global market fluctuations and changes in commodity demand. There is a broad understanding that continued success will depend upon a well educated, creative workforce and ongoing support for innovation and small businesses. One untapped economic opportunity lies in the green energy sector.

People feel that one of the keys to sustaining economic prosperity is ensuring the city's youth are getting the education and skills they need to find good jobs locally. This will not only be critical to maintaining a skilled workforce but also addressing issues related to poverty, crime and income disparities across the city. Attracting and retaining immigrants will continue to be a priority as well. To that end, people recognize the need for the city to be physically attractive and maintain its high quality of life. Attracting investment also relies on promoting the city as a great place to live and a competitive place for business.

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We value civic engagement and participatory governance.

**Saskatoon Speaks demonstrated the city's commitment to engaging the community in planning the city. There is a strong desire to see this commitment extended and to find more ways for people to be involved in meaningful dialogue about planning issues and proposed initiatives.**

Throughout the Saskatoon Speaks initiative, many people remarked that community dialogue is an essential element of good governance and that the process marked a turning point for the city. Although there are many effective ways for citizens to participate, people see opportunities to encourage more civic engagement and invite public input on major initiatives from the start (growth and transportation plans being two such anticipated initiatives). They recognize that not every issue can or should be discussed in a public forum, but citizens feel they should have a say on the City's priorities for the future and be informed of progress toward goals.



image courtesy of flickr – IChris





# The Community Vision



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Saskatoon Speaks engaged people from across the city in a conversation about the future, through a variety of forums and media. To structure the conversation and ensure critical aspects of the city were fully addressed, eight inter-related themes were identified. This section summarizes the community's vision for each theme and outlines potential implementation strategies identified and broadly supported by the community.



## An Inclusive and Integrated City

People make a city. Therefore, enhancing and maintaining the social well-being of Saskatoon as it grows will be critical to future success.

Access to appropriate and affordable housing, education and employment, community services and facilities, and nutritious food are all important considerations. We need to think about and plan for the needs and desires of existing residents as well as the anticipated needs of those who will move to Saskatoon. Of immediate concern are rising housing costs and neighbourhoods with concentrations of poverty. As Saskatoon's population ages and becomes more culturally diverse, it will take a concerted effort to ensure everyone shares in the city's prosperity and high quality of life.

The community's vision for social well-being builds on Saskatoon's cooperative spirit and civic pride, recognizing that the city's diverse population and many distinct neighbourhoods comprise one community.



### Community Vision

Saskatoon is welcoming, affordable and barrier-free. Doors to education and employment are always open, and services are available and accessible. Neighbourhoods are diverse, complete and safe, with a range of housing choices and amenities. Public spaces and events bring people together.

People are actively engaged in their communities and the governance of their city. Saskatoon's community spirit is strong and people's well-being comes first. By collaborating, we work as one community to address challenges and succeed. Everyone enjoys a sense of belonging and a good quality of life.



# An Inclusive and Integrated City

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- All youth find the educational and employment opportunities they are seeking in Saskatoon.
- There are growing opportunities for seniors to live, work and enjoy leisure activities in their communities, and they have easy access to services and amenities across the city.
- Aboriginal peoples have an increasingly vital presence in the workforce and the city generally.
- Persons with disabilities have access to the city's range of employment, educational, housing and recreational opportunities as well as the services they need.
- Newcomers find opportunities for living and working that meet their aspirations.
- Literacy rates are increasing.
- Appropriate, affordable and good quality housing is available across the city.
- All neighbourhoods are served by stores selling affordable and healthy food.
- Families have access to affordable daycare and parenting support services.
- Residents actively participate in civic life and voter turnout for municipal elections is increasing.
- Saskatoon continues to have a high rate of volunteerism.
- The disparity between Saskatoon's low-income neighbourhoods and higher-income neighbourhoods has diminished.
- Poverty rates in the city are declining.
- Incidences of racism are declining.
- Fewer people are homeless or at risk of being homeless.
- Crime rates are falling and all neighbourhoods feel safe.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Develop a seniors' strategy that addresses the needs of those over the age of 65 for housing, transit, recreation and services, as well as work and volunteer opportunities.
2. Work with our First Nations and Métis leadership and communities towards an Aboriginal Accord for Saskatoon that outlines a strategic plan aimed at:
  - increasing learning and sharing opportunities between our urban Aboriginal communities and willing partners;
  - closer collaboration on priorities identified by our urban Aboriginal communities; and,
  - greater Aboriginal involvement in community associations, City administration and City governance.
3. Ensure everyone has easy access to the information, support and services provided by the City and other organizations to enable them to fully participate in all aspects of civic life.
4. Promote existing forums and establish new ones that bring together the City, other service providers, corporate partners and citizens to discuss Saskatoon's social issues, identify service gaps, collaborate on programs and coordinate initiatives.
5. Expand the affordable housing strategy to promote a mix of housing in all neighbourhoods, and ensure new communities include appropriate and affordable housing to support socially diverse neighbourhoods.
6. Lobby for stronger affordable housing programs at the Provincial and Federal levels of government.
7. Continue to invest in and encourage improvements to older neighbourhoods.
8. Develop and offer "life skills" programs for communities in need.
9. Promote existing cultural education and awareness programs and establish new ones aimed at reducing racial prejudice and misunderstanding among different cultural and socio-economic groups in the city.
10. Explore and support new initiatives for educational and training opportunities for youth, Aboriginals and newcomers, and reduce financial barriers to existing training programs.
11. Encourage businesses to develop mentoring and apprenticeship programs.
12. Ensure there are opportunities to buy and grow healthy food in all communities.
13. Provide more opportunities and methods for residents to communicate with City Council, participate in planning processes and have input into decisions.



# An Active, Healthy and Safe City

The livability of a city is fundamentally tied to the parkland and recreational amenities it provides and public perceptions of safety.

Providing accessible and affordable recreational programs and facilities can be critical to preventing crime and building a healthier community. While neighbourhood parks are plentiful in Saskatoon, core neighbourhoods would benefit from more green space. Beyond the river valley, there are not many strong linkages in the open space network. The city has several top-notch leisure centres and a full range of recreational programs, though access to them in core neighbourhoods, where crime rates are higher, is not as easy as it is elsewhere in the city.

The community's vision for parks, recreation and community safety recognizes that it takes more than facilities and programs to keep a city and its citizens healthy and safe. Designing new neighbourhoods and building active transportation networks to encourage walking, cycling and social interaction are just as important.



## Community Vision

Saskatoon is a safe, fun and active city, where everyone has access to good facilities and programs for sports and recreation. Parks have multiple uses year-round and trails exist throughout the city. Engaged, active and healthy communities play a key role in improving public safety.

The river valley remains the focal point of the city's open space system, full of beauty and life. As the city has grown, the network of parks and other public spaces has expanded. Recreational facilities and programs are dispersed throughout the city, accessible by all modes of transportation and affordable to people of all incomes. Parks and leisure centres meet the needs of increasingly diverse communities. Interconnected street and trail networks encourage cycling, walking, jogging, wheeling, in-line skating and cross-country skiing. New gathering spaces bring communities together to meet, socialize and celebrate.



# An Active, Healthy and Safe City

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- The river valley contains more places for active and passive recreation while retaining and enhancing important natural qualities.
- The needs of communities for park facilities and programs are being met.
- The city's network of trails and bike lanes is steadily expanding and becoming more interconnected, and more residents are using the network.
- New neighbourhoods are connected by streets, paths and open spaces that form a cohesive network for active transportation, including walking, cycling, in-line skating, long-boarding, scooters and wheelchairs.
- Sidewalks and major trails are cleared of snow and ice.
- Recreation facilities and programs are found throughout the city and provide all residents with opportunities to participate in sport and recreation activities.
- All neighbourhoods have places indoors and outdoors for gathering and socializing.
- There are fewer transportation and financial barriers to accessing recreation facilities and programs.
- Access to recreational facilities and programs in older neighbourhoods, and levels of participation, has improved.
- Neighbourhoods, streets, parks, trails and other public spaces are attractive, well maintained and feel safe.
- Fewer youth are joining gangs and gang activity is decreasing.
- Crime rates are falling.
- The community is healthier as recreation participation rates increase.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Prepare and implement a plan for a network of interconnected parks, streetscapes, trails and bicycle routes across the city to enhance the city's open space system and promote active transportation.
2. Work with community associations, sports groups and other organizations regularly to survey, monitor and address local needs and wishes for park facilities, recreational programs and other services.
3. Continue to support community-based programs and develop a streamlined approach to funding and administering programs.
4. Coordinate City and community programs with those run by, or which could be run by, community service organizations or other institutions for efficiencies and cross-promotion, and to ensure a full range of activities is available to residents.
5. Develop more indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, activity space and programs in older neighbourhoods.
6. Improve the safety of parks with physical improvements (lighting), programming and surveillance.
7. Ensure future infill development is supported and complemented by new open spaces, improved streetscapes and other community amenities that are open, accessible and reflect principles of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design).
8. Ensure Local Area Plans identify opportunities for new public open spaces, recreational facilities, trails, bike facilities and streetscape improvements in existing neighbourhoods.
9. Ensure existing and future leisure centres and other recreational facilities meet community needs, are easy to get to by public transit, cycling, walking and wheeling, and are dispersed throughout the city.
10. Monitor financial and physical barriers to recreational facilities and programs and develop strategies that seek to eliminate them.
11. Develop and implement a multi-media marketing and communications plan to better promote existing and new programs.
12. Develop and implement community-based policing programs to engage residents and businesses in local crime prevention.
13. Collaborate with health care providers, social agencies and community-based groups to develop strategies for dealing with issues related to addictions, mental health and homelessness.



## A Culturally Vibrant City

Culture is a reflection of the values, history and way of life of a community. It manifests itself in art, architecture, heritage, festivals and day-to-day traditions.

Saskatoon's culture today is rich, complex and dynamic and will continue to evolve as the city grows and becomes more socially diverse. There are nearly 150 facilities in the city for experiencing culture in one form or another, from museums to dance studios, to theatres, to libraries. And there are 20 major festivals and other cultural events held in the city each year, from the annual jazz and folk festivals to Pioneer Days and Doors Open. As well, Saskatoon is home to a growing number of artists, writers, musicians, designers and creative entrepreneurs. This all bodes well for the city's economy, since a diversity of cultural opportunities attracts new residents, businesses and tourists.

The community's vision for culture is an integration of the visions that emerged from both the Culture Plan process and Saskatoon Speaks. A fundamental premise of the emerging Culture Plan is that culture is inextricably linked to the city's economic, environmental and social well-being and therefore vital to building a sustainable city. The Culture Plan will outline how the City can facilitate integration and collaboration across institutions, disciplines, ethnicities and generations to strengthen partnerships, build capacity, retain talent, and celebrate the mosaic of culture in Saskatoon.



### Community Vision

Culture is thriving in Saskatoon – bridging communities, enhancing places, supporting our economy. Our culture is our collective traditions, religions and languages; our founding nations, stories and histories. It is our built and natural heritage. It is our Saskatoon spirit.

Our appreciation of cultural differences and common values continues to shape Saskatoon’s collective culture. Communities work collaboratively to create dynamic, sustainable urban environments. Artists, creative entrepreneurs and arts organizations are supported and promoted; elders are respected and treasured.

Civic leaders take immense pride in Saskatoon’s cultural inclusiveness and accessibility. We nurture cultural awareness in everything we do – community development, city planning, urban design, heritage conservation, architecture, recreation programming and economic development.



# A Culturally Vibrant City

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- People are encouraged to contribute to and integrate with the collective culture of the city while finding places to practice their cultural traditions.
- We are protecting the river valley and other important natural heritage features.
- We are conserving and using significant heritage buildings and other structures.
- There are more events and places where people and cultures interact.
- There are more spaces in the City Centre and in individual neighbourhoods for cultural activities and programming.
- There is more public art and heritage interpretation across the city.
- Children and youth are growing up with a rich understanding of the province's and the city's cultural heritage.
- There is greater cultural understanding and appreciation among all people.
- Our arts and cultural organizations are stronger and collaborating with one another.
- More people are participating in cultural activities and events.
- Artists have the support they need to succeed, and the arts community is becoming more diverse and widely known.
- The cultural sector of the economy is growing.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Map the city's culture to enhance people's awareness and understanding of Saskatoon's cultural resources, communicate cultural events and inform municipal planning decisions.
2. Expand the City's Built Heritage Database and identify Heritage Conservation Districts where many heritage resources of different types, including natural landscapes, should be recognized and protected.
3. Explore financial incentives to support heritage preservation.
4. Explore and implement innovative approaches to interpreting and promoting cultural heritage resources and experiences.
5. Develop, support and promote cross-cultural initiatives to increase the awareness of and appreciation for different traditions and lifestyles. Foster from an early age greater cultural understanding and explore cross-cultural themes among all people.
6. Integrate cultural expression in civic places, public art and infrastructure projects.
7. Reinforce the City Centre as the city's cultural centre. Cluster cultural infrastructure and activities. Incorporate exhibition, event and gathering spaces in the future development of River Landing.
8. Support and enable cultural development at the neighbourhood level. Provide flexible space in community centres for cultural programs, and support the development of neighbourhood cultural hubs. Develop community-based arts, heritage and cultural programs to complement recreational programs.
9. Expand the City's Public Art Program and explore new approaches to acquiring public art.
10. Coordinate roles, responsibilities and delivery mechanisms among agencies supporting culture.
11. Build leadership capacity and organizational stability within not-for-profit cultural organizations.
12. Create and implement a cultural investment strategy intended to build long-term financial stability within the cultural sector.
13. Provide business support to artists and creative entrepreneurs.
14. Connect youth to educational and employment opportunities in the cultural sector, and assist young artists with finding suitable work space.
15. As part of a broader economic development and tourism strategy, promote Saskatoon as a cultural destination.



# A City with Many Options for Moving Around

Saskatoon, like most North American cities, has been built to accommodate private vehicles as the primary means for moving around.

But cities everywhere are realizing that car-oriented patterns of development are not sustainable in the long term. More and more people—the elderly, young people, newcomers and those with disabilities—are seeking other ways to get around. If there aren't viable alternatives to the car, as Saskatoon grows, traffic congestion and commuting times will continue to increase, and the city's environmental health and quality of life may diminish.

The City is working on making public transit more efficient and attractive (recent initiatives have increased ridership significantly in the past five years), but it will be important to complement improvements with a more transit-oriented approach to planning growth and designing development. With more trail networks and other facilities for walking, cycling and traveling by scooters and wheelchairs, these travel modes will also become more popular.

The community's vision for moving around recognizes that traveling by car or truck through the city should be easy, but that providing other options has economic and environmental benefits and will be important to achieving a high quality of life for everyone.



## Community Vision

Saskatoon's refocused investments and innovative strategies have shifted attitudes about the best ways to get around. The transportation network includes an accessible and efficient transit system and a comprehensive network of bike routes. People still use cars, but they also rely on public transit, walking, cycling and other alternative modes for moving around.

Growth has brought new roads and bridges that improve connectivity for all travel modes. Improved streetscapes, interconnected street networks and more complete neighbourhoods encourage walking and cycling. Attractive alternatives to the car alleviate congestion and ensure people and goods can move around the city easily.



# A City with Many Options for Moving Around

### Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- It remains easy to move around the city by car most of the time.
- Transit service is frequent, and travel times by public transit have been reduced significantly, competing with automobile travel times.
- Streets are more attractive and safe for pedestrians and cyclists as well as people using wheelchairs and electric scooters. Most sidewalks are cleared of snow and ice.
- Cycling is embraced as a normal way of getting around. Safe cycling routes to the river and downtown from all corners of the city have been established.
- The percentage of people traveling to work or school by public transit, walking or cycling is steadily increasing. This, along with more multiple-occupant vehicles, is significantly reducing the number of single-occupant vehicles on the road.
- The city's trail network is expanding and becoming more interconnected, and is well used in all seasons. Major trails are cleared of snow and ice.
- New neighbourhoods have highly interconnected street and path networks, well linked to the larger transportation network.
- Trucks are finding designated and less congested routes for moving goods throughout the Saskatoon region.
- The overall transportation network is more interconnected, with more opportunities to cross the river and fewer barriers for walking, cycling, transit and driving.
- Rail traffic moves through the city easily while having less of an impact on other travel modes at crossings. Rail corridors provide opportunities for trails and potentially public transit.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Improve road network connectivity to benefit pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and drivers.
2. Ensure new communities are designed with an appropriate mix of uses, interconnected street networks and open space linkages that encourage walking, cycling and transit use.
3. Maintain and expand the network of walkways and trails, and generally improve the pedestrian experience, in existing communities and throughout the city. Install more pedestrian amenities—benches, drinking fountains, garbage/recycling bins, public washrooms and street trees.
4. Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle master plan as a component of a comprehensive transportation plan to guide improvements to walkways, trails and cycling infrastructure, including on-road and off-road facilities and bike parking. Design routes and facilities for commuters and recreational cyclists.
5. Continue to promote cycling as a safe, easy way to travel for everyday trips much of the year, and provide easy access to bicycle maps and other information.
6. Improve snow clearance on local streets, at bus stops, and on key commuter paths and trails to encourage transit use, cycling, walking and wheelchair/scooter access year-round.
7. Ensure all new and re-designed streets are balanced and consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, in addition to transit vehicles and automobiles. Implement countdown timers at signalized intersections.
8. Take a ‘transit-is-for-everybody’ approach; continually seek, implement and promote improvements to the transit system. Consult with transit users and the broader public on proposed improvements. Provide up-to-date information on public transit schedules on the City’s website.
9. Encourage major employers and institutions to adopt travel demand management (TDM) plans intended to reduce the number of employees driving to work in single-occupant vehicles.
10. In planning for growth and transportation in the long term, move to a more transit-oriented approach that supports transit investments as it accommodates other travel modes. Identify and establish over time rapid transit corridors and hubs within mixed-use, walkable environments. Respond to regional growth and travel patterns.
11. Improve connections to the highway system so goods may be moved more efficiently in and out of the city.
12. Explore the feasibility and benefits of relocating existing rail facilities to outer areas of the city, reducing level crossings, and safely accommodating trails and public transit in rail corridors.
13. Encourage the Provincial and Federal governments to provide more funding for higher-order public transit infrastructure.



# Shaping Sustainable Growth

Since its earliest days, Saskatoon has generally grown outward, at low densities, separating neighbourhoods from employment areas and places to shop.

Faced with the potential to more than double its population over 50 years, Saskatoon is at a critical point in its evolution. It has the opportunity to learn from other cities where rapid outward growth has had negative consequences, such as high infrastructure and servicing costs, increase in traffic congestion and lack of investment in the core. By balancing low-impact “greenfield” development at the city’s edges with sensitive “infill” development, the city can realize many benefits, including: lower infrastructure and servicing costs, more housing diversity, more support for small businesses, the revitalization of declining areas, and more support for transit, walking and cycling.

The community’s vision for shaping growth recognizes that, despite the complexities of taking a more balanced approach to growth, it is the best way to ensure the city’s long-term livability and sustainability.



## Community Vision

Saskatoon’s growth is environmentally and economically sustainable and contributes to a high quality of life. The city has grown upward and outward, balancing ‘greenfield’ development with significant ‘infill’ development in key locations. The region has grown and prospered sustainably, a result of the City and its neighbours working together.

Existing and new communities offer people choices for housing and moving around while giving them access to a range of community services, commercial amenities and employment opportunities. Balanced growth has made the city a model of efficiency and resulted in attractive new people places that reinforce Saskatoon’s sense of community. Downtown is built up and bustling, main streets and community hubs have become urban villages, neighbourhoods are diverse and walkable, older industrial areas have been revitalized.



# Shaping Sustainable Growth

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- The percentage of growth occurring downtown and through infill development is increasing, and targets for infill development are being met.
- Infill development is occurring on underutilized land, along main streets and in commercial centres, bringing new housing, employment opportunities, streetscape improvements and public gathering places.
- Older neighbourhoods are experiencing sensitive re-development and infill supporting local employment, property values and neighbourhood pride.
- New development is generally balanced across the city— inward and outward, east and west, north and south.
- New communities are complete in terms of the mix of land uses, housing and amenities they contain. They have been designed to encourage walking, cycling and transit use.
- New communities are socially, economically and culturally diverse, and provide local employment opportunities.
- New retail stores and other commercial opportunities are a welcomed part of new communities and meet the needs of a growing population.
- Industrial growth is occurring away from the core of the city, allowing older industrial areas to transform and accommodate a mix of uses compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.
- New major office buildings are being built downtown, and Innovation Place continues to expand as a research and technology park.
- New developments and infrastructure are demonstrating best practices in urban design and environmental sustainability.
- The cost of growth, on average, is stable or declining.
- Existing communities are engaged in planning for growth and change at both the city-wide scale and the neighbourhood level.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Prepare a long range growth plan that balances outward growth with infill. Establish realistic targets for infill development, and develop strategies to achieve them. Coordinate the growth plan with a transportation master plan to align and link community hubs and main streets with a rapid transit system. Plans for enhancing cycling and pedestrian facilities should also be incorporated in the transportation plan.
2. Establish and promote additional incentives for infill development. Improve parks and streetscapes to create an attractive setting for new development.
3. Expand the role of the Land Branch in facilitating infill development and implementing infill projects in partnership with the private sector and non-profits.
4. Ensure land use and development policies for neighbourhoods and for the city as a whole, as well as zoning and urban design guidelines, support the objectives of the growth plan and the concept of complete, walkable communities. Explore flexible zoning where infill development is appropriate to encourage creative and sensitive projects.
5. Work closely with affected stakeholders on plans for growth to ensure new development contributes positively to existing neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. Incorporate urban design guidelines for infill development into Local Area Plans.
6. Encourage and focus major new office development in the downtown while accommodating smaller-scale office development in business parks like Innovation Place and community hubs.
7. Develop urban design and heritage guidelines to help ensure growth enhances the built character and beauty of Saskatoon.
8. Continue to build partnerships to support and encourage a coordinated approach to growth in the Saskatoon region.
9. Continue to work with the Province to amend the Planning and Development Act to assist the City in implementing its growth plan and urban design objectives.



# A Thriving City Centre

Saskatoon's City Centre has become more vibrant as the city's growing wealth has boosted the local retail, restaurant and entertainment industries.

As Saskatoon grows sustainably and competes globally to attract people and investments, the role of the City Centre as a cultural hub and mixed-used community, and the quality of its buildings and public spaces, will become increasingly important. There is much recent success to build upon. New developments such as Galaxy Cinemas, Remai Arts Centre, River Landing and the Farmers' Market are drawing more residents downtown, and business travelers are filling hotels. More and more people are choosing to live downtown to take advantage of the amenities it offers. The Warehouse District is gradually becoming a unique neighbourhood and a hub for the city's creative economy.

The City Centre is following the trend of other downtowns. No longer just central business districts and civic centres, downtowns are becoming real neighbourhoods, drawing people of all ages and from all walks of life.

The community's vision for the City Centre recognizes that there are abundant opportunities for more development, employment, open spaces, cultural attractions and vibrant streets in the heart of Saskatoon.



## Community Vision

The City Centre is both a vibrant hub for culture, commerce and civic life and a complete community made up of unique neighbourhoods and gathering places. Many thousands of people live downtown, and businesses fill old and new buildings. Shops, restaurants and beautiful streetscapes keep the sidewalks bustling.

Getting to the City Centre by car, bicycle and public transit is easy, and walking around is safe and enjoyable. There are no barriers for those with disabilities, and connections to surrounding neighbourhoods are seamless. River Landing is complete, there is a thriving Civic Centre and Plaza, and the Warehouse District is full of creative industries and new housing. Day-to-day activities and special events enliven parks, squares and the riverfront. Downtown is a proud symbol of the city’s success and draws people from far and wide.



# A Thriving City Centre

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- The City Centre has been enhanced as the city's civic and cultural centre with new cultural facilities, pedestrian-filled public spaces, more special events and more public art.
- A clearly defined and active civic node containing a mix of uses and vibrant open spaces has become the heart of downtown.
- The residential population in the City Centre is steadily increasing and diversifying. Singles and couples, young and old, and families with children are finding attractive, affordable housing downtown.
- More corporate head offices have located downtown. The number of businesses being started in the City Centre is also increasing, as is the number of office, retail and service jobs.
- The City Centre is more beautiful and walkable and feels safe.
- Educational institutions have expanded their presence downtown.
- River Landing is built out with a mix of cultural and commercial uses and new housing, all well designed, framing high-quality streets and open spaces.
- The larger downtown riverfront offers a range of informal recreational opportunities as well as places to dine, meet and pursue cultural experiences overlooking the river.
- There are more bike lanes, bike parking facilities and pedestrian amenities in the City Centre.
- Public transit facilities in the City Centre have been greatly improved, and more and more people are using transit to get to and around downtown.
- There is ample on-street and off-street parking in the City Centre, much of it in structures, screened with active retail frontages, and fewer surface parking lots.
- Significant downtown heritage has been protected and interpreted.
- New buildings and open spaces in the City Centre are being recognized nationally for their design excellence and environmental features.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Continue to promote and facilitate residential, commercial, institutional and mixed use development in the City Centre by: developing a clear vision of the kind of development that is desired in each part of downtown; expanding the existing program of development incentives; ensuring zoning is flexible and supports the City Centre vision; creating a municipal parking authority to better manage the supply, cost and location of parking; providing and encouraging more amenities for downtown residents and workers; promoting development opportunities to developers across Canada.
2. Reinforce downtown as the city's office employment centre and a unique, authentic retail destination that serves the whole city. Coordinate public parking facilities and policies to support more employment and retail activity.
3. Encourage more educational facilities and programs to locate in the City Centre. Improve connections between downtown and existing educational institutions.
4. Improve access to the City Centre and mobility within downtown, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit. Consider running a City Centre transit shuttle linking various destinations.
5. Building upon the riverfront and other public places, develop and implement a program of public realm improvements intended to enhance the physical qualities of the City Centre and create a linked network of existing and new places, with the civic square as a major node.
6. Reinforce the City Centre as a cultural and entertainment district by: supporting arts, cultural and other organizations wishing to hold events in the City Centre and streamline the permitting process; encouraging the development of live/work space for artists; considering establishing more permanent festival sites; developing a strategy for creating a senior-friendly and child-friendly downtown.
7. Protect significant heritage buildings in the City Centre and encourage their conservation and re-use.
8. Ensure the form and quality of future development responds appropriately to and enhances the distinct urban character of places within the City Centre. Develop urban design guidelines for downtown buildings, streetscapes and open spaces that recognize the distinct areas of downtown. Hold design competitions for key open spaces and major buildings.
9. Work closely with core neighbourhoods on planning the City Centre and its surroundings, through Local Area Planning where appropriate, to ensure that growth contributes positively to existing neighborhoods, districts and the city as a whole.
10. Enhance the perception of safety downtown, and ensure new development and public realm improvements reflect CPTED principles.
11. Establish a design review panel to support excellence in design and place-making throughout the City Centre.



# A Green City

Cities across Canada and around the world are becoming greener. They're promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, growing their urban forests, protecting wetlands, and cleaning up contaminated land and water bodies.

The history of Saskatoon is closely tied to the landscape through agriculture and natural resources. The South Saskatchewan River Valley that winds through the city is cherished for both its natural features and public open space. We depend upon and value our natural environment. However, like all Canadians, we have a big impact on the environment. We rely heavily on non-renewable energy, consume a lot of water and produce a lot of garbage. It is imperative that we take steps to reduce our ecological footprint and respond to global sustainability initiatives.

The community's vision for Saskatoon's environment recognizes that changing how we grow the city, how we travel around it, how we produce energy, how much energy and water we consume, and how we manage our waste could collectively have a significant, positive impact on the health of the environment.



## Community Vision

Saskatoon is a green city that exists in harmony with nature, conserves resources and consistently demonstrates environmental leadership.

The city's air and water are clean. We have reduced our consumption of water and energy. We rely on renewable energy sources and construct energy-efficient buildings. People routinely take transit, walk or cycle to get around, and our neighbourhoods are more compact. We produce less garbage and recycle or compost most of it. We grow more food in the city.

The South Saskatchewan River Valley remains Saskatoon's natural showpiece and supports aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity. Other natural features are protected, enhanced and linked. There is more green space per resident, and the urban forest is healthy and growing.



# A Green City

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- Significant natural features, including the river, wetlands, remnant patches of native prairie, and the river valley forest, are protected and many have been enhanced.
- We are on track to meet or exceed greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.
- Less energy is being consumed in our homes and commercial businesses.
- Businesses, residents and the City are relying more and more on renewable energy, as a substitute for non-renewable sources.
- We are producing less waste, and more of our waste is being recycled or composted.
- We are using less water in our homes and commercial businesses.
- We are using best practices in stormwater management to reduce run-off and enhance open spaces.
- There is more aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity in the South Saskatchewan River Valley.
- There is more green space for natural features, forestation, recreation and growing food.
- New green open space linkages and greener streetscapes are being established across the city, encouraging walking and cycling while beautifying the city.
- Fewer people, as a percentage, use a private automobile for daily trips as more people rely on public transit, cycling and walking.
- The density of housing has increased and we live in neighbourhoods where a mix of land-uses can be found.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Prepare an environmental master plan to promote a more sustainable Saskatoon and guide the City's environmental initiatives. Establish environmental performance measures or benchmarks and monitor progress in achieving them.
2. Develop a comprehensive open space plan to guide expansions and improvement to the city's network of parks, green spaces, streetscapes and trails.
3. Ensure existing and future development is better serviced by public transit and provides other viable alternatives to the automobile for moving around the city.
4. Develop policies and/or programs intended to:
  - Ensure new development preserves and protects significant natural features;
  - Reduce the city's per-capita consumption of energy;
  - Promote energy efficient buildings and transportation;
  - Reduce per-capita water consumption and storm water run-off;
  - Reduce the rate of garbage sent to the landfill and encourage composting and recycling;
  - Ensure future development encourages the use of public transit, sidewalks and trails;
  - Ensure new greenfield and infill development meets high standards for sustainability;
  - Protect and enhance the city's urban forest.
5. Show green leadership by the City. Demonstrate the costs and benefits of renewable energy and other green initiatives with City facilities and utilities, its fleet of vehicles and new power generation supporting the electrical grid.
6. Explore the feasibility of district energy systems to service existing and new development.
7. Collaborate with the Federal and Provincial governments on efforts, including policies, regulations and clean-up programs, to reduce the amount of toxins in the environment.
8. Collaborate with neighbouring municipalities and the Province on environmental planning for the South Saskatchewan River's watershed, and collaborate on other initiatives aimed at ensuring the Saskatoon region has a sustainable supply of clean water.
9. Work with the Meewasin Valley Authority to develop policies, guidelines and initiatives aimed at improving aquatic and terrestrial habitats and the health of the river generally.
10. Pursue the remediation and transformation of contaminated lands.
11. Encourage the Province to update the Building Code to require more eco-efficient construction materials and methods.
12. Work with schools, Community Associations and other organizations to raise awareness about sustainability, promote environmental programs and educate the public about the benefits of a greener, more sustainable city.
13. Work with Community Associations to establish community gardens in appropriate locations.



# An Innovative, Entrepreneurial and Business-Friendly City

Saskatoon's economy is booming and expected to continue to outperform most other Canadian cities in the foreseeable future.

Not only is the city a hub for natural resource and agricultural industries, but it also has one of the most diverse economies in the country and is recognized as a centre for innovation. There are a range of retail and service industries and thousands of home-based businesses throughout the city.

As the city grows, it can further diversify its economy by continuing to promote innovation and entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses. Keys to sustaining a healthy economy include ensuring young people have access to education and training, attracting immigrants, maintaining a welcoming, competitive business environment and attracting investment. The cultural and creative sector of the economy, relatively small but growing in Saskatoon, will play an increasingly important role in attracting and retaining young people.

The community's vision for the economy acknowledges Saskatoon's strengths, especially its people. It recognizes that by educating and attracting people and providing a supportive environment, the city will continue to be a place where businesses thrive.



## Community Vision

Saskatoon's regional economy continues to grow and diversify, demonstrating long-term sustainability. The city attracts investment, is recognized globally as a centre for innovation and creativity, and maintains a business-friendly environment. Strong institutions and a spirit of entrepreneurship encourage the ideas and plans of individuals and companies big and small.

The city's educational institutions are innovative and ensure local industries have the knowledgeable and trained workforce they need to thrive. More specifically, the University of Saskatchewan has expanded its research capabilities.

All sectors of the economy are doing well, and new economic pillars have emerged. People from across the province, across Canada and around the world are attracted to the city for its quality of life and opportunities, fueling economic activity.



# An Innovative, Entrepreneurial and Business-Friendly City

## Signs of Success

We will know we are achieving the vision when:

- More innovation and the commercialization of new technologies is attracting investment and yielding high-wage jobs.
- More and more companies are locating offices and industrial facilities in Saskatoon.
- More and more businesses are being started in the city.
- More youth are choosing to stay in Saskatoon for their career education.
- Immigration and migration are increasing, and newcomers are choosing to stay.
- The University and technical institutes are regularly reviewing and updating their curricula to ensure students are receiving the knowledge and skills they need to support the local and provincial economy.
- The University's national and international ranking continues to climb.
- Investments in research and new technologies are increasing.
- Innovation Place continues to grow and diversify.
- New industry sectors are emerging and growing.
- Saskatoon is internationally recognized as a centre of excellence in sustainable resource management.
- Creative industries and the service economy are thriving in Saskatoon.



## What We Can Do

The following are community perspectives on potential strategies for achieving the vision.

1. Plan and invest in infrastructure needed to attract and support businesses and skilled workers:
  - City Centre improvements;
  - Public transit;
  - Bridges and roads;
  - Industrial and research parks.
2. Encourage and support small, independent businesses:
  - Provide easy access to programs and information;
  - Maintain a stable regulatory environment;
  - Plan and promote the development of places where small businesses can thrive—downtown, main streets and mixed use centres;
  - Establish more business incubators;
  - Celebrate success stories.
3. Promote and support efforts by the University of Saskatchewan to reinforce and expand its teaching, research and economic development capabilities.
4. Support educational institutions through cooperative approaches to land use planning, transportation and infrastructure.
5. Plan for the expansion of Innovation Place over the long-term and potentially other research and technology precincts.
6. Initiate targeted national and global marketing strategies aimed at heightening Saskatoon's profile and attracting employers and innovators.
7. Promote Saskatoon as a global centre of excellence in sustainable resource management.
8. Promote and facilitate economic spin-offs from sustainable energy and environmental initiatives.
9. Nurture and promote creative industries, particularly those in the cultural, communications and information technology sectors.
10. Continue to focus on making Saskatoon an even more attractive and welcoming city that offers a high quality of life for all. Beautify key streets, revitalize core neighbourhoods and promote downtown development.
11. Ensure libraries function as community hubs for learning, research and the promotion of literacy.
12. Ensure Saskatoon's public policies are solid, clear and reasonable and its tax regime remains competitive.



# Next Steps



image courtesy of flickr – Edward Willett

The community has set out an ambitious vision for the future of Saskatoon as well as a range of potential strategies to achieve it. The next step is for the City's leaders to identify strategic priorities and actions. Future planning initiatives will build on the success of Saskatoon Speaks and be informed by the vision it produced.

## Next Steps

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The Community Vision is based on the community's understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It reflects the values and aspirations of the thousands of citizens who participated in Saskatoon Speaks.

The outcome of Saskatoon Speaks will have an important role in shaping the city's future. In addition, the community's vision lends support to a number of City initiatives that respond to opportunities and challenges facing Saskatoon. The Saskatoon Speaks process and its outcomes will inform the implementation, evaluation and potential updating or replacement of current initiatives to ensure they remain consistent with the community's vision.

### **From broad visioning to strategic planning**

In moving forward from a vision to plans and then to actions, an important next step is for the City's leaders—the Mayor and City Council—to use the Community Vision in preparing a Strategic Plan that will identify the City's strategic goals and priorities. They will review the visions for each theme and the wide range of potential strategies for achieving them and decide which goals are the most important ones to focus on and which initiatives should be pursued in the short-term. This process is underway and will conclude with adoption of a Strategic Plan in the fall of 2011.

The Strategic Plan will confirm current initiatives in progress and set the stage for a range of new initiatives, including plans, policies, programs, projects and partnerships that support the Community Vision. Among the key planning documents in progress and to be informed by the vision are the Culture Plan, integrated transportation and growth plans, and the City Centre Plan. As new initiatives are undertaken, the City will continue to engage the community and encourage public input, building on the success of Saskatoon Speaks. And the City will update the public on initiatives that contribute to achieving the Community Vision.

For the City and citizens, Saskatoon Speaks was the beginning of an ongoing process of planning collaboratively for growth and change and building an even more prosperous, attractive and sustainable Saskatoon.



image courtesy of flickr - daryl\_mitchell

## Acknowledgements

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