

# planning + design

A CITY OF SASKATOON SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION FROM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

SPRING/SUMMER 2021



Measuring Reconciliation | Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment | South East Concept Plan  
Community-University Institute for Social Research, Research Junction, and Downtown Safety Study  
Neighbourhood Level Infill Regulations | Exhibition Local Area Plan | Parcel YY Nearing Completion  
2020 Monthly New Business License Statistics | Zoning Bylaw Review: Bicycle Parking Standards



## Message from the Director

Build Back Better. Pivot. Transform.

These stand out as some of the buzzwords from 2020. What do they mean for how we plan, design and build our city? What do they mean for us as a community? In my mind, these are some of the questions we all need to grapple with in 2021 and beyond.

To build back better means we have to listen and adapt. Building a city is a collaborative, long-term effort. It is not done by any one individual, group or organization and it is not done in a vacuum. Balancing input, requests, ideas and many other factors is all part of building a city. In 2021, and I predict for many years into the future, we will be working hard to find more and better ways to balance diverse perspectives on what should be done in Saskatoon.

To pivot can mean many things. We pivoted in 2020 to online services and operations, including public consultation. In 2021, what opportunities are there now? We're seeing many community-driven priorities come up and all are important to address. Pivoting from some previous programs might be required to meet these new priorities.

To transform is going to be first about making some important foundational moves. In 2021, one transformation will be moving into a new operating system for managing permits and approvals. This is long overdue and will benefit our customers and our staff, as well as other residents by providing better access to more consistent information. Another area to transform will be around the information, consultation and engagement activities that we use. What are the new realities and the new expectations that we have to transform to meet?

In addition to these actions, which will play a role in each area of our future activities, work continues on many existing initiatives. I hope that the rest of the articles in this edition of *Planning + Design* give you some more examples of activities and projects that have been underway to address many different types of priorities in the community.

**Lesley Anderson, RPP MCIP**  
Director of Planning and Development  
306-975-2650 | [lesley.anderson@saskatoon.ca](mailto:lesley.anderson@saskatoon.ca)

REGIONAL PLANNING

# Measuring Reconciliation

Jason Sick, RPP, MCIP, Senior Planner | 306-986-3139 | [jason.sick@saskatoon.ca](mailto:jason.sick@saskatoon.ca)

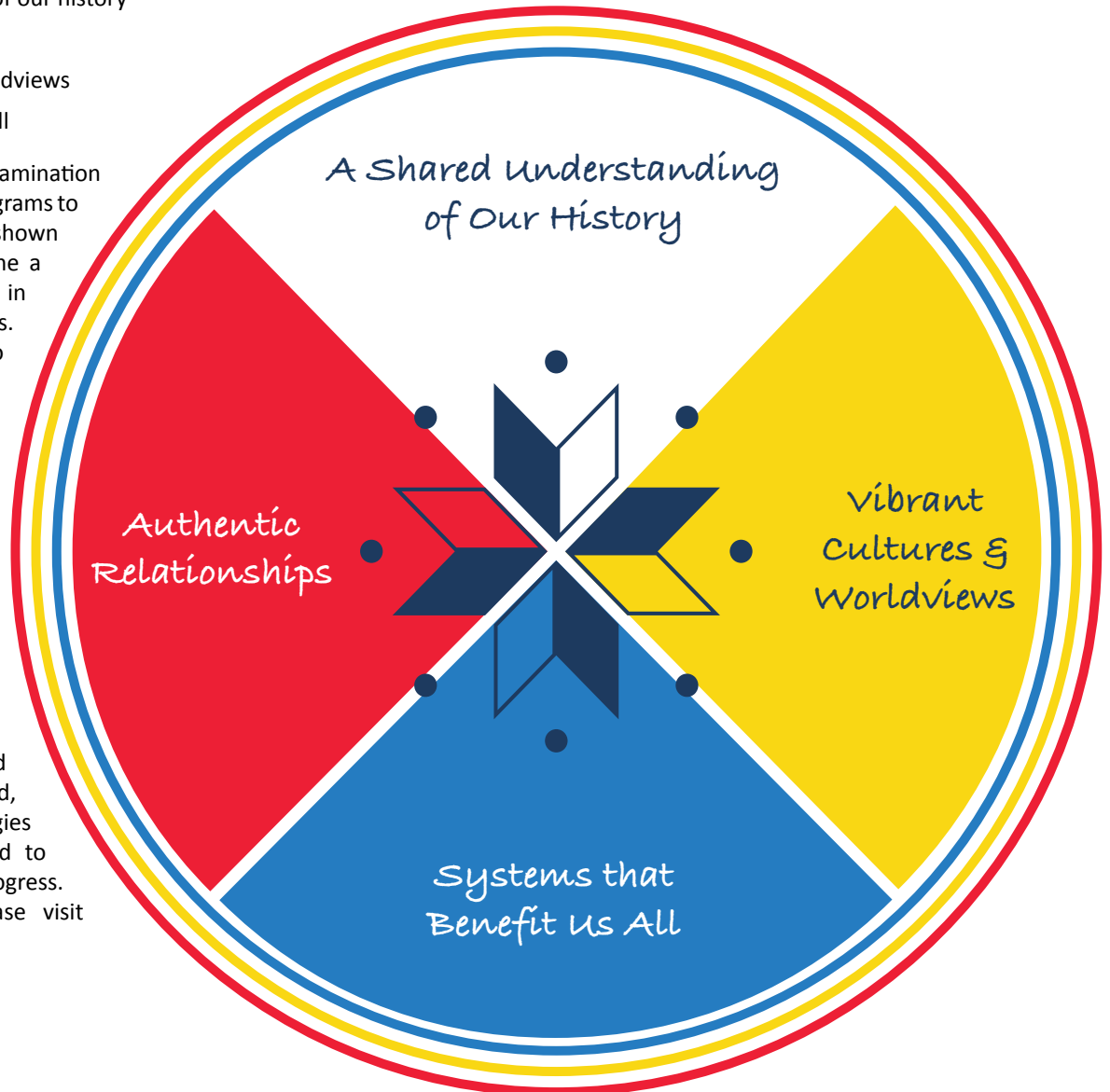
In 2015, City Council committed to responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s *Calls to Action*. In addition, City Council committed to working with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) and other community groups, leaders and institutions in Saskatchewan, to promote reconciliation in our province. Since that time, the City of Saskatoon (City) has undertaken many initiatives to begin to respond to the Calls to Action; however, until now, there has not been an established method or mechanism for measuring or assessing the progress the City is making on its journey toward reconciliation.

With the aim to begin measuring reconciliation in Saskatchewan, OTC approached the City to enter into a pilot project in order to establish methods to evaluate the City’s response to the Calls to Action, with the intent to model the project with other partnering organizations in the province if it proved to be successful. In the fall of 2020, OTC facilitated a process to establish a path forward for the City to advance truth, reconciliation and Treaty implementation. To do this, an internal City Community of Practice (CoP) was created which included representatives from diverse departments across the corporation. The CoP will be where information related to the City’s efforts for reconciliation can be collected and analyzed according to an OTC-developed methodology to measure progress (called the Growth Model) towards a *Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation*. This *vision*, created from the voices of thousands of Saskatchewan residents, states that truth and reconciliation has four pillars:

1. A shared understanding of our history
2. Authentic relationships
3. Vibrant cultures and worldviews
4. Systems that benefit us all

Using the Growth Model, examination of the City’s policies and programs to advance reconciliation has shown progress, but has also shone a light on gaps that still exist in translating words into actions. The City will continue to partner with OTC to use the Growth Model to propose a series of steps and recommendations that can be used to interpret and prioritize the City’s activities in order to meet these objectives.

Future work on this project is expected in 2021, which will outline the recommendations and articulate how they could be successfully implemented, as well as frame strategies to collect the data needed to measure and monitor progress. To stay up to date, please visit [saskatoon.ca/reconciliation](http://saskatoon.ca/reconciliation).



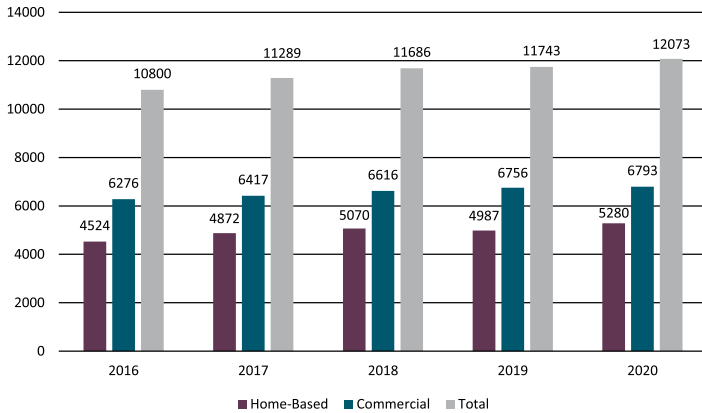
## BUSINESS LICENSE PROGRAM

The City of Saskatoon Business License Program licenses all businesses operating from a fixed address within Saskatoon. This includes all home-based businesses as well as businesses operating from commercial and industrial locations.

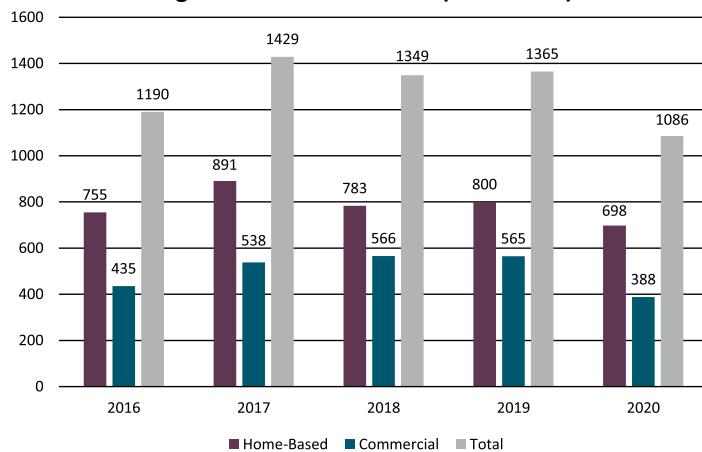
At the end of 2020, there were 12,073 businesses licensed by the Program. Figure 1 illustrates overall business growth in Saskatoon and identifies the total number of home-based and commercial/industrial businesses licensed from 2016 to 2020. Figure 2 illustrates the number of new business licenses issued for the years 2016 to 2020. The number of new home-based businesses continues to exceed the number of new commercial/industrial businesses. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a lower-than-usual number of new licensed businesses in 2020.

[Read more](#) business license statistics and/or view the Business Profile Annual Reports.

**Figure 1: Total Businesses (2016-2020)**



**Figure 2: New Businesses (2016-2020)**



### Community Standards

222–3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Tel: 306-975-2760

Fax: 306-975-7712

Email: [business.license@saskatoon.ca](mailto:business.license@saskatoon.ca)

## LONG RANGE PLANNING

# Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment

Kellie Grant, RPP MCIP, Senior Planner  
306-986-1673 | [kellie.grant@saskatoon.ca](mailto:kellie.grant@saskatoon.ca)

Sector plans are used by the City to provide a development framework for future growth and are based on policies contained within Bylaw No. 9700, the *Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020 (OCP)*. They outline the location and size of future neighbourhoods, employment areas, parks and significant natural areas, as well as providing high-level servicing, transportation, and utility plans.

The Blairmore Sector Plan, which encompasses many of the new neighbourhoods on the west side of Saskatoon, was initially approved by City Council on March 7, 2011. Since that time, new development and new development pressures have been experienced in the area. In addition, a variety of City policies, bylaws and plans have been created or amended. As a result, work has begun on an amendment to the Blairmore Sector Plan to align it with the City’s current direction.

The amendment will include a study of appropriate uses and management strategies for the natural areas within the sector. It will include a review and potential updates to the sector’s planned land uses to ensure that they align with the City’s guiding policies and plans, respond to market changes and other factors, and ensure that land uses adjacent to existing neighbourhoods are compatible and buffered appropriately.

Since the current Blairmore Sector Plan was approved, the P4G District Official Community Plan (District OCP) was created and endorsed. The District OCP will guide development adjacent to Saskatoon. The amendment provides the opportunity to align the sector plan boundary with the current city boundary and the District OCP. It will also allow for the incorporation of the southwest area into the sector.

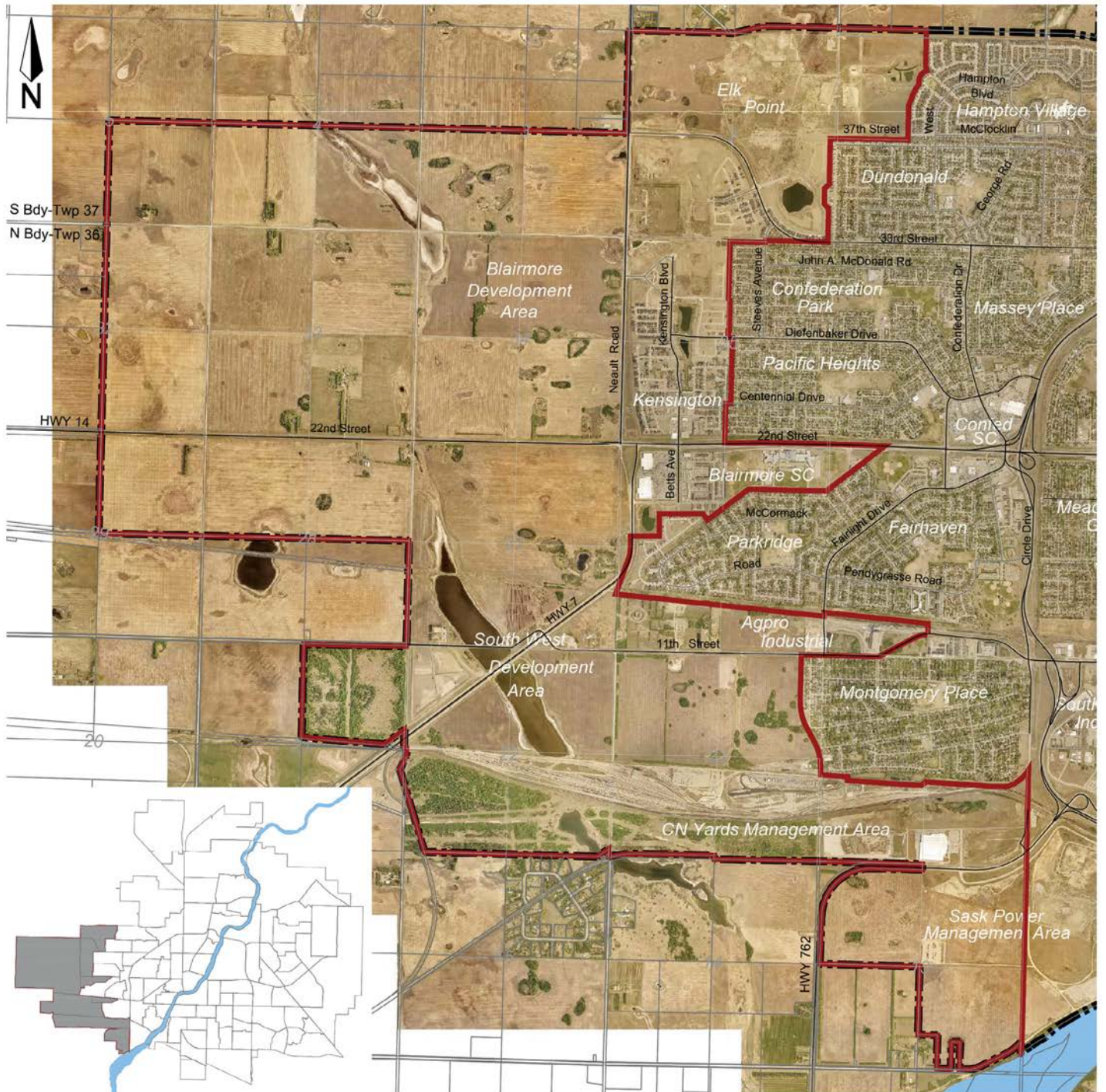
Several natural areas exist in the Blairmore Sector Plan area, including two afforestation areas and a swale. Amending the Blairmore Sector Plan can facilitate incorporating the direction provided by the Green Infrastructure Strategy and addressing concerns raised by community members regarding management and future use of these areas.

### NEXT STEPS



Next steps include conducting background studies, preliminary transportation and servicing design, review of market demands, and development of the draft land use plan. An engagement plan is currently being prepared to ensure the public and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and comment on any proposed changes.

The amended sector plan is expected to be completed and brought forward to City Council for adoption in early 2022.

**BLAIRMORE SECTOR PLAN STUDY AREA**



2019 Aerial Photography

-  City Limits
-  Sector Boundary



# South East Concept Plan

Dana Kripki, RPP, MCIP, Senior Planner | 306-975-1432 | [dana.kripki@saskatoon.ca](mailto:dana.kripki@saskatoon.ca)

The RM of Corman Park (RM) and the City have recently partnered to kick off the South East Concept Plan (SECP) project. The SECP will identify land uses, servicing, financing, and phasing strategies that will enable compatible, efficient, and cost-effective development in a key area of the future Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth (P4G) Planning District southeast of Saskatoon.

The study area includes lands outside City limits that are identified as a Future Urban Growth Area on the P4G Official Community Plan District Land Use Map. The study area is located south of the City between Highways 16 and 11 South, encompassing the Grasswood area. The SECP presents a unique opportunity to work closely with two First Nations: English River First Nation, who has reserve lands in the study area, and Cowessess First Nation, who has land holdings in the study area that are not yet designated as reserve.

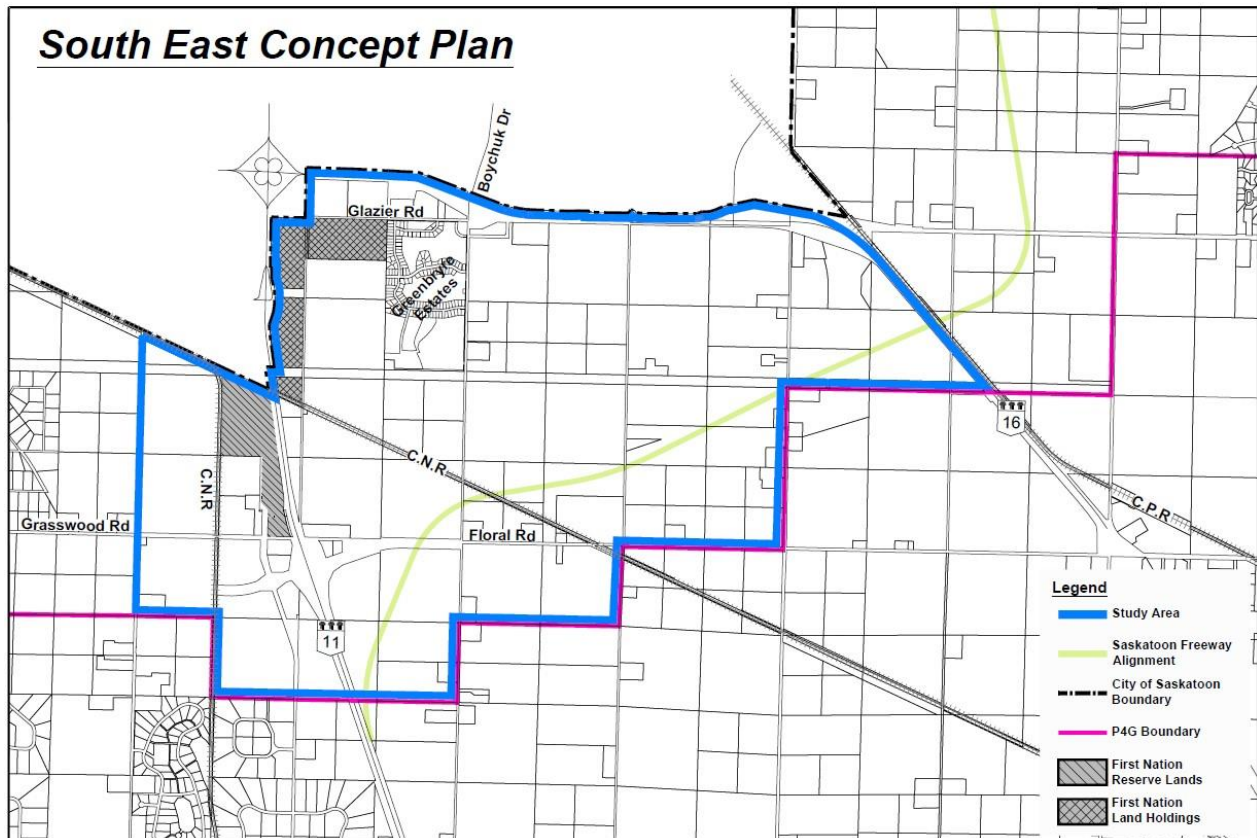
A steering committee has been established to oversee the completion of the SECP and includes representatives from English River First Nation and Cowessess First Nation, as well as representatives from the two municipalities, the Water Security Agency, Ministry of Highways, P4G, and other relevant provincial groups. Urban Systems has been hired to prepare the SECP.

A successfully completed SECP will do the following:

- Facilitate rural development that enables a compatible, efficient, and cost-effective transition to future urban development in a key area of the P4G region
- Create workable strategies to transition rural servicing to future urban servicing
- Create workable financing strategies to ensure servicing cost recovery
- Ensure that development in Future Urban Growth Areas will have minimal impact to future urban development and servicing
- Provide servicing and financing predictability for the City and RM
- Strengthen government-to-government relationships between the municipalities and with First Nations

The SECP is anticipated to be completed early in the new year. As a project located within the P4G Planning District, the SECP will require approval of the five partnering P4G municipalities through an amendment to the P4G Official Community Plan (once approved by the province).

To follow the SECP progress, please visit the P4G website at [partnershipforgrowth.ca](http://partnershipforgrowth.ca).





## MAPPING & RESEARCH

# Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), Research Junction, and Downtown Safety Study

Michael Kowalchuk, RPP MCIP, Senior Planner | 306-986-3024 | [michael.kowalchuk@saskatoon.ca](mailto:michael.kowalchuk@saskatoon.ca)

In 1999, the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) was created to facilitate partnerships between the University of Saskatchewan and the wider community. The Institute engages in social research that fosters deeper understanding of the surrounding community and cultivates opportunities for improving the city's quality of life. This is done through collaborative research with various community partners with a commitment to accurate, objective reporting of research results, published into the public domain, while considering the needs for confidentiality in gathering, disseminating, and storing information.

CUISR focuses on developing knowledge that helps to improve the local quality of life through studies in the following areas:

- Community sustainability
- Social economy
- Rural-urban community links
- Cross-cultural and Indigenous community development
- Community-University partnerships

The City's participation as a partner in CUIISR dates back to the original application grant in 1999. Bill Holden, recently retired Senior Research Planner at the City, was a founding CUIISR board member and a long-term Community Co-Director for the Institute.

Along with the City's research partnership with CUIISR, Research Junction has also been established between the City and the University of Saskatchewan (USASK) to support the development of

joint research projects addressing contemporary urban issues for the benefit of Saskatoon residents. These projects are intended to partner City of Saskatoon staff and USASK faculty and researchers in the following forms:

- Research projects supported by in-kind contributions
- Externally funded grants and projects in which the City and USASK partner
- City-driven research with earmarked funding for research purposes
- City data for research purposes
- Research Junction development grants

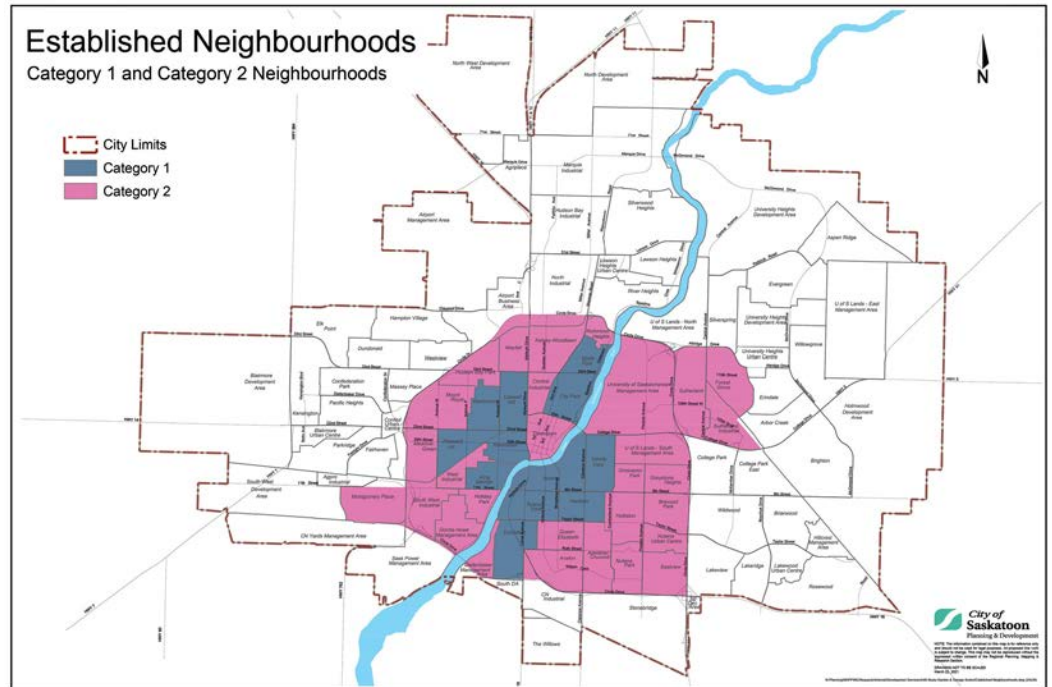
Four new research projects were recently awarded a combined \$100,000 through the City of Saskatoon and USASK's Research Junction collaboration. This includes the CUIISR-led Downtown Safety Study (recently approved for a \$25,000 grant), which will look at the public perception of safety using an evidenced-based, collaborative approach. The research team will engage with stakeholders to identify the systemic and structural factors shaping public safety and quality of life for residents of Saskatoon, with an aim to better understand the barriers to equitable access to community services and supports. Research data, combined with City administrative data, will help inform City and partner policy and community-based programs so that resource allocation is optimized, and community safety and well-being is enhanced. The study is expected to be completed by the summer of 2021.

# Neighbourhood Level Infill Regulations

Daniel McLaren, RPP, MCIP | 306-975-7641 | [daniel.mclaren@saskatoon.ca](mailto:daniel.mclaren@saskatoon.ca)

As part of the Zoning Bylaw Review Project, the City is undertaking broad engagement activities related to neighbourhood level infill regulations. Engagement activities are useful in gauging the success and potential for improvement of regulations that were initially included in *No. 8770 - Zoning Bylaw, 2009* in 2015.

The City released the Neighbourhood Level Infill Development Strategy in 2014, a document that proposed regulatory amendments to manage massing of new developments and included measures to maintain the character of existing neighbourhoods, while providing opportunities for gradual renewal of the housing stock. This document led to regulations being implemented in the Zoning Bylaw in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Those regulations, particularly those pertaining to single-family dwellings, are being reviewed as part of the project.



The Zoning Bylaw Review Project team undertook preliminary consultation with developers, builders, designers, and architects (those who use the Zoning Bylaw regularly) to build out which regulations to address. With regard to neighbourhood level infill, these items included the following:

- The Established Neighbourhood Map to ensure neighbourhoods in Category 1 and 2 are in the appropriate category
- Options for regulating massing of new development with special consideration for corner sites
- Minimum front yard setbacks in historic areas where the existing housing pattern does not match the current regulations to accommodate a consistent pattern of development
- Options to include verandas or similar structures to encroach into required front yards in Category 1 neighbourhoods
- Regulations pertaining to height-from-grade of the front door in Category 1 neighbourhoods to ensure the regulation is practical for construction practices
- Minimum site width requirements for one-unit dwellings in Category 2 neighbourhoods to maintain a consistent development pattern while accommodating a gradual increase in residential density

Over the course of the spring and summer of 2021, the City will undertake a series of engagement activities on these items. These will include forming a neighbourhood level infill focus group composed of industry and resident representatives. This group will meet over several weeks to provide feedback on proposed changes, feedback on educational and engagement approaches with the general public, and other opportunities specific to infill regulations. There will also be one-to-one meetings with select interest groups including industry representatives, heritage stakeholders, residential realtors, and affordable housing providers. General community engagement will proceed online due to COVID-19 restrictions and will include a City of Saskatoon Engage page, the project website, and social media.

Engagement is set to wrap up in the fall of 2021. The feedback from engagement and analysis of potential regulations will be reviewed and potential Zoning Bylaw amendments are anticipated to be completed in 2021. Further information on the Zoning Bylaw Review is available at [saskatoon.ca/engage/neighbourhood-level-infill](https://saskatoon.ca/engage/neighbourhood-level-infill).



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

# Exhibition Local Area Plan

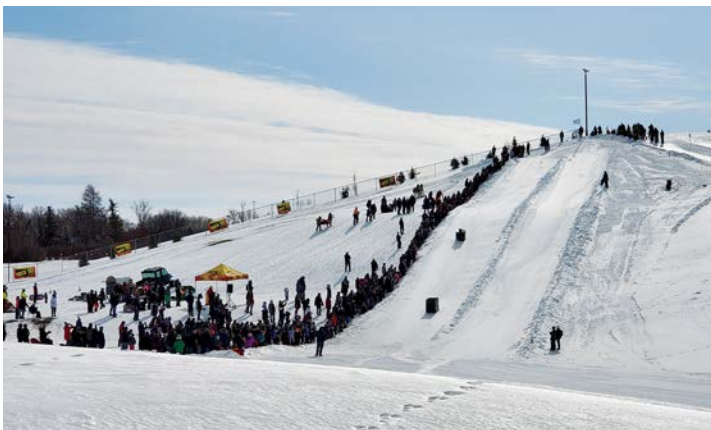
Mark Emmons, RPP MCIP, Senior Planner | 306-975-3464 | [mark.emmons@saskatoon.ca](mailto:mark.emmons@saskatoon.ca)

Local Area Planning is a community-based approach to developing comprehensive neighbourhood plans. It allows residents, business owners, property owners, community groups, and other stakeholders to influence the future of their community. During the development of a Local Area Plan (LAP), participants work together to create a vision, identify issues, develop goals, and outline strategies to ensure the long-term success of their neighbourhood. Once completed, a LAP sets out objectives and policies that guide the growth and development of a neighbourhood or selected area.



The Exhibition LAP was adopted by City Council in September 2020, becoming the 16th LAP completed since the program began in 1997. It was created with input from more than 190 neighbourhood residents and stakeholders, along with contributions from about 70 members of City administration.

The boundaries of the Exhibition LAP study area are: Taylor Street to the north, Broadway Avenue to the east, Ruth Street (east of Lorne Avenue) and Circle Drive (west of Lorne Avenue) to the south, and the riverfront to the west. This includes the entire Exhibition neighbourhood, the western half of the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood, and a portion of the Diefenbaker Management Area.



The Exhibition LAP contains short-, medium- and long-term recommendations that will result in neighbourhood improvements. There are 36 recommendations related to the following areas:

- Land use & infill development
- Parks, open spaces & riverfront
- Municipal infrastructure & services
- Property maintenance regulations & standards
- Traffic & transit
- Community capacity
- Impacts of major events
- Neighbourhood safety

The Neighbourhood Planning Section is responsible for coordinating the implementation of recommendations through partnership with other civic departments; this process also involves working with community stakeholders.

Key Exhibition LAP recommendations will result in the following:

- Steps to address the impacts major events have on the area
- Assistance for the local community association to help them with their unique challenges so they can better serve the area
- Investigations into how best to protect and support the urban forest in the area
- Steps to address safety concerns related to the commercial area at the intersection of Ruth Street and Lorne Avenue

The Exhibition LAP is located online at [saskatoon.ca/lap](http://saskatoon.ca/lap).

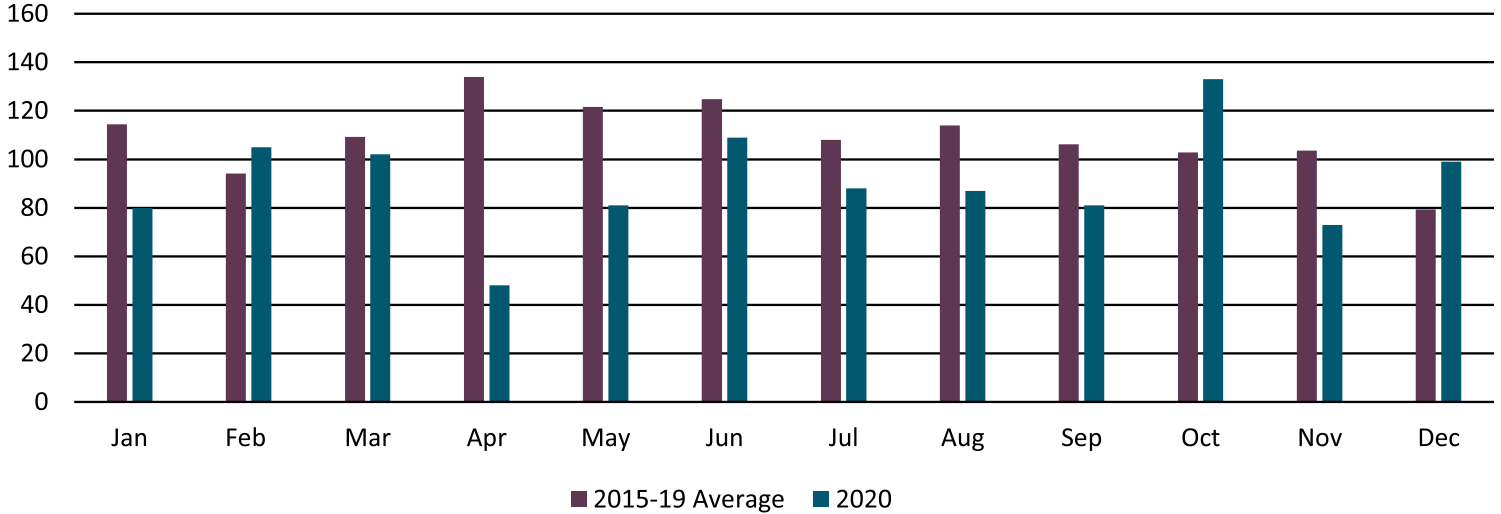


COMMUNITY STANDARDS

# 2020 Monthly New Business License Statistics

Mike Ewen, Planner | 306-975-3470 | [mike.ewen@saskatoon.ca](mailto:mike.ewen@saskatoon.ca)

New Business Licenses by Month



“  
**The new business numbers for April had not been this low since 1999.**  
 ”

There was a modest uptick in May and further growth during June that brought new business numbers closer to normal, albeit still below average. This trend continued through much of the remainder of 2020, largely bolstered by home-based business start-ups with pandemic-adapted business models like online sales and delivery services.

The Business License Program has seen steady growth in new licensed businesses over the past several years. In fact, the three years prior to 2020 ranked as the three highest years for new business license issuances. Upon the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that 2020 would be a very different year in the business world.

The pandemic began disrupting business activities across Saskatchewan in mid-March 2020. Despite this, new business numbers remained fairly consistent during March, compared to recent years. Looking more closely, there were signs that the coming months would be different. Of the 102 new business licenses approved in March, only 11 were issued during the final nine days of the month.

In April, the full impact of the pandemic on the business community was measurably obvious in the monthly new business numbers. The 48 new licenses issued in April represented the lowest monthly total since December 2007. April is typically the busiest month for new license applications, which makes these numbers even more jarring. The new business numbers for April had not been this low since 1999.





## URBAN DESIGN

# Parcel YY Nearing Completion

Ellen Wardell, RPP MCIP, SAA, LEED AP BD+C, Urban Design Manager | 306-986-3686 | [ellen.wardell@saskatoon.ca](mailto:ellen.wardell@saskatoon.ca)

After nearly four years of planning, collaboration, and hard work, the development of Parcel YY in River Landing is nearing completion. The East Tower, and the streetscaping of Spadina Crescent and the remainder of 3rd Avenue, were completed in 2020. In 2021, we will see the North Tower and W.K. Nasser Plaza completed and 2nd Avenue's streetscaping installed, which will better connect River Landing and the Downtown. The construction of this project has been accomplished through a partnership with the developers managing the site, allowing the streetscaping to be completed concurrently with the private developments. Through this process, the City was able to mitigate its risk in terms of schedule, site coordination, contractor continuity, and site safety, as well as decrease costs and increase efficiencies. The City team worked closely with the developer, their contractor, sub-trades, engineers, and architects to do a lot of creative problem solving to make this complex project a success.





## PLANNING PROJECT SERVICES

# Zoning Bylaw Review: Bicycle Parking Standards

Lee Smith, RPP, MCIP | 306-986-3668 | [lee.smith@saskatoon.ca](mailto:lee.smith@saskatoon.ca)

As part of the Zoning Bylaw Review Project, the City identified an opportunity to address bicycle parking standards within the Zoning Bylaw. The new bike parking regulations implement an action from the Active Transportation Plan, address the need for bike parking requirements that we've heard from stakeholders, encourage more people to choose cycling as a viable form of transportation, and support other sustainability initiatives.

The Zoning Bylaw amendment includes minimum numbers of bicycle parking spaces that must be provided by certain land uses in certain zoning districts, definitions to clarify terms, and regulations for bicycle parking spaces. The regulations apply only to new developments, or to any changes in intensity/use of existing development, and are calculated in the same way as vehicle parking requirements (i.e., per square metre of floor area or per dwelling unit). The standards do not apply to bicycle parking facilities in public areas (i.e., within the sidewalk space or utility strip along streets) or to land uses that are not appropriate for bicycle parking requirements, such as heavy industrial uses or one-unit dwellings.

The new regulations also differentiate between “short-term” and “long-term” bicycle parking. Short-term bicycle parking refers to a typical bike rack or racks open to the elements and publicly accessible. Long-term bicycle parking refers to a secured or enclosed bicycle parking area such as a locked cage or room within a building or a parkade.

The following general standards apply to bicycle parking:

- Bicycle parking spaces must be located on the same site as the associated land use.

- Bicycle parking spaces must be visible, illuminated, and located near primary building entrances.
- At least one rack or device used exclusively for parking and locking bicycles must be available for all bicycle parking spaces.
- Racks must be anchored to a hard surfaced area and be separated from any obstructions.
- Bicycle parking spaces may be located in a required yard when close to the principle building.

The new standards and regulations for bicycle parking were developed based on the latest industry best practice, the standards found in other Canadian cities, and on the extensive background research conducted by the City in previous years. Stakeholder and public engagement was conducted in late 2020 and into the spring of 2021. Two detailed surveys were sent to developers and builders, business groups, cycling groups, government institutions, school boards, and other community/advocacy groups. Social media and the City's Engage page were used to solicit public feedback. A Bicycle Parking Guidelines companion document intended to assist in the interpretation of the new regulations and offer guidance on bicycle parking installation is currently being developed.

The amendment was presented as part of amendment package #2 for the Zoning Bylaw Review to the Municipal Planning Commission on March 30, 2021, and to City Council for public hearing on April 26, 2021. A summary of engagement activities was included in this reporting package. Following some discussion at the meeting of City Council, the bylaw amendment was unanimously approved.

The current issue of *Planning + Design* is available for download at [saskatoon.ca](http://saskatoon.ca)

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City of Saskatoon  
Planning & Development  
222 – 3rd Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5  
306-975-2645  
[city.planning@saskatoon.ca](mailto:city.planning@saskatoon.ca)