City of Saskatoon College Corridor Background Report

Version 1.2



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1. Background & Purpose

The existing or 'baseline' conditions report an initial step in the process to develop the College Corridor Plan. It provides the background and baseline data necessary to help understand the current conditions in and around the College Corridor Plan's study area (the Plan area). This document summarizes existing conditions and characteristics related to the area's history, contemporary plans, demographics, current land use, transportation and mobility, housing and neighbourhoods, parks, trails and open space, and recreation and community facilities.

1.1. Background

The City of Saskatoon's (City) Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan) sets out a target of 50 per cent infill for all new development with 15 per cent to be in the Corridor Growth Area (CGA). The CGA consists of ten segment areas (2,446 ha) spanning the entire city and situated along future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes.



To accommodate the infill development required to meet these targets, the Corridor Planning Program will be creating and implementing corridor plans for each segment area. These plans will focus redevelopment resources along these key corridors by incorporating a wide range of land uses at a density level that supports the BRT system. The College Corridor is the first in a sequence of corridor plans to be undertaken throughout the city.

1.2. Purpose

The primary purpose of the College Corridor Plan (the Plan) is to establish a clear and collective vision for accommodating growth within the Plan area, while leveraging BRT and infrastructure investment as agents for change. This vision will be supported by policy directions to guide public realm improvements and private redevelopments in response to projected market changes. The purpose of this document is to capture the baseline conditions of the Plan area and identify relevant plans, policies, studies, or social artifacts that could be relevant to the corridor planning process or could be addressed through development of the College Corridor Plan.

2. Plan Area Boundary

The Plan area incorporates several city blocks directly south of College Drive, between the University Bridge and Preston Avenue. College Drive is a major thoroughfare, bordering the neighbourhood of Varsity View and providing the main interface with the University of Saskatchewan (USask), the Royal University Hospital (RUH), and the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital (JPCH). The Plan area stretches into the northeastern portion of the Nutana neighbourhood, west of Clarence Avenue. The Plan area also includes a portion of Preston Avenue from 14th Street East in the south, to the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail line in the north.

The history contained within and around the Plan area is extensive and involves generations of Indigenous peoples occupying the area. More broadly, Saskatoon – situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis – is an area containing a rich cultural landscape of different Indigenous groups over thousands of years. To help preserve the Indigenous relationship to this area and its continuing importance to Indigenous cultural identity, recognition of this Indigenous connection will remain an ongoing concern of each corridor plan.



Figure 2. Plan area context

3. Plan Area Statistics

Plan area:	470 hectares (1,162 acres))
Pop. (plan area) ¹ :	1,290 people	
Student pop.:	25,965 ² .	
Avg. household size:	1.6 people.	
Dwelling Unit Type³:	One Unit - 34% (248) Two Unit - 9% (68) Multi Unit - 56% (406)	
Dwelling Units/Hectare:	364	
People/Hectare:	2.7	
Vacant sites:	7	
	Address	Zoning
	 919 University Drive 921 University Drive 421 Clarence Avenue N. 1006 College Drive 1017 University Drive 1025 University Drive 1422 College Drive 	R2 R2 M2 M2 R2 R2 B2

Rental Rate: 74 per cent (highest of all corridor segments). Note: Corridor Growth Area is 51% and Saskatoon city-wide is 33 per cent

Number of full-time employee's (FTE):

Area	Number of FTE
South of College Dr.	297
USask	5,290 ⁵
RUH	5,000 ⁶
JPCH	2,500 ⁷
Innovation Place	2,489 ⁸
TOTAL	15,576

¹ 2016 Statistics Canada census

² Total student headcount for 2020/2021 reporting year

⁽https://leadership.usask.ca/priorities/reports/enrolment.php#StudentHeadcount)

³ Gathered from City of Saskatoon data, 2018

⁴ Calculated using the number of total dwelling units divided by the sum of all developed land. This only includes residential land

⁵ Annualized FTE for 2020/2021 fiscal year (<u>https://leadership.usask.ca/priorities/reports/employee-reporting.php</u>)

⁶ Approximation of typical employment count gathered from correspondence with RUH.

⁷ Approximation of typical employment count gathered from correspondence with JPCH.

⁸ Gathered from City of Saskatoon data, 2018 (includes all of Innovation Place)

4. Transportation Conditions

Proximity to major employers appears to influence the transportation mode share and supply/demand for parking in the area. There is a relatively higher proportion of people who walk and bicycle to work in the area – with twice as many people biking and over five times more people walking in the Plan area than the rest of the city.

Mode Share (main mode for commute to work):

	Transit	Walk	Bicycle	Automobile
Saskatoon	5%	5%	2%	88%
Corridors (all)	8%	11%	3%	78%
College Corridor	8%	31%	4%	57%

Within the Plan area, the total percentage of developed commercial land dedicated to off-street parking is 12 per cent.

All properties in the Plan area containing single family dwellings are subject to the Varsity View Residential Parking Permit Zone. In this area, non-resident parking is limited to a maximum amount of time.



4.1. Road Network

The existing street network is comprised of a network of streets, anchored along Preston Avenue and College Drive – the main arterial corridors that bisect the Plan area. The Plan area also encompasses a portion of College Drive that transitions from *arterial* to *expressway* and continues east to become Highway #5. College Drive provides access to the downtown core by way of the University Bridge, as well as connections to neighbourhoods to the south along Clarence and Cumberland Avenues.

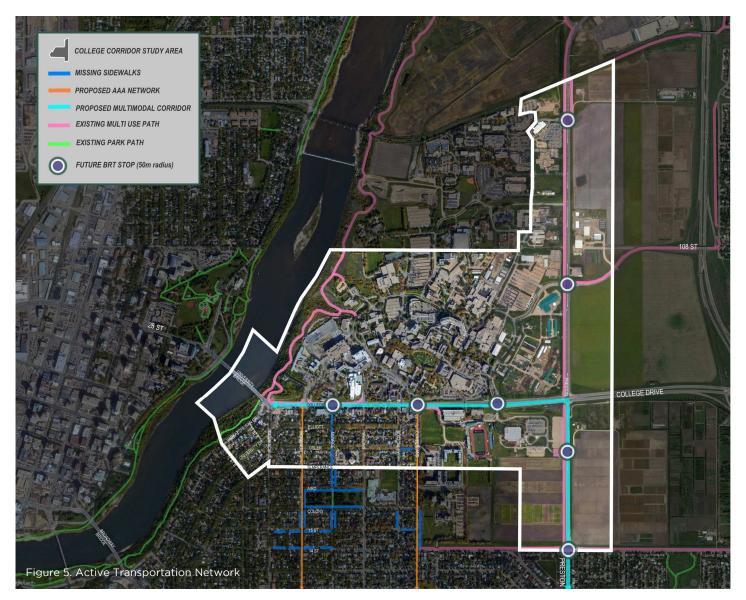


4.2. Active Transportation Network

Most of the Plan area is served by a network of sidewalks, other than those indicated on the map below in dark blue, which are street segments with missing sidewalks.

Saskatoon's bicycle network consists of both on-street and off-street facilities. Within the Plan area, the existing network is indicated on the map by the pink line - that is the paved multi-use path mainly running along the Meewasin valley, along Preston Avenue and portions of College Drive. While the City's Active Transportation Plan does not recognize the transportation network within the University Main Campus, there is a road and path system that provides vehicular and active transportation connections.

The light blue line shown along College and Preston is what the Growth Plan and the Active Transportation Plan identified as a proposed multi-modal corridor – an area with the potential to support redevelopment and Bus Rapid Transit over the next 30-40 years. The current BRT design on College Drive includes multi-use path between Clarence Avenue and Preston Avenue North.



For more information on the proposed active transportation components shown on this map, please refer to *Section 6.6. Active Transportation Plan*.

While the adjacent University of Saskatchewan-owned lands in the Plan area are currently undeveloped, the streets between these areas (especially 14th Street East and Preston Avenue North) currently offer a relatively uninterrupted stretch of multi use path.

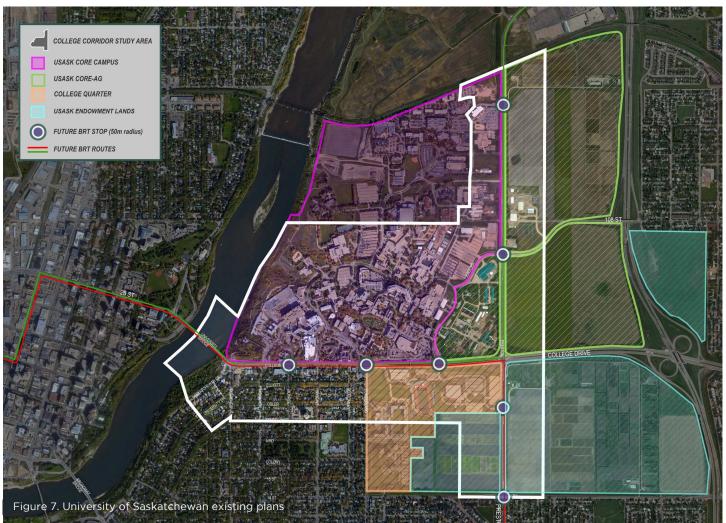


5. Area and Neighbourhood Characteristics

This section provides an overview of the physical characteristics of the Plan area, including a general description of the current built form and organization of land uses.

5.1. Adjacent Land Uses

The Plan area, in its present configuration, has a diversity of land uses. Most of the land adjacent to the BRT routes in the Plan area is owned by the University. The area to the south of College Drive between Preston Avenue north and Cumberland Avenue is guided by the College Quarter Plan. The remaining parcels south of College Drive, identified as Endowment Lands, offer an opportunity for infill redevelopment due to their proximity to bus rapid transit and concentrations of employment. The remaining University lands north of College Drive on the east side of Preston Avenue north are expected to continue serving an agricultural research function.



Patterson Garden, an arboretum operated by the University of Saskatchewan, is located at the southeast corner of the College Drive and Preston Avenue North intersection. Preston Avenue north of College Drive runs adjacent to the University Core Campus and Innovation Place on the west side, and the Animal Science Fields and Crop Science Field Laboratory on the east side.

West of Cumberland Avenue and south of College Drive is predominately residential in character – consisting of mature, tree-lined streets and single-family homes. College Drive links these established neighbourhoods with both the river valley and Saskatoon's downtown core. This role is reinforced by the proximity to USask, the hospitals, College Quarter and the nearby Broadway commercial area.

5.2. Parks, Recreation & Green Space

Within the Plan area there are a number of parks, green spaces and recreational facilities – of which the function, size and scale of each varies. The map below shows the existing network of green infrastructure within the Plan area (see Map 4 in the appendix for parks & public recreational facilities).

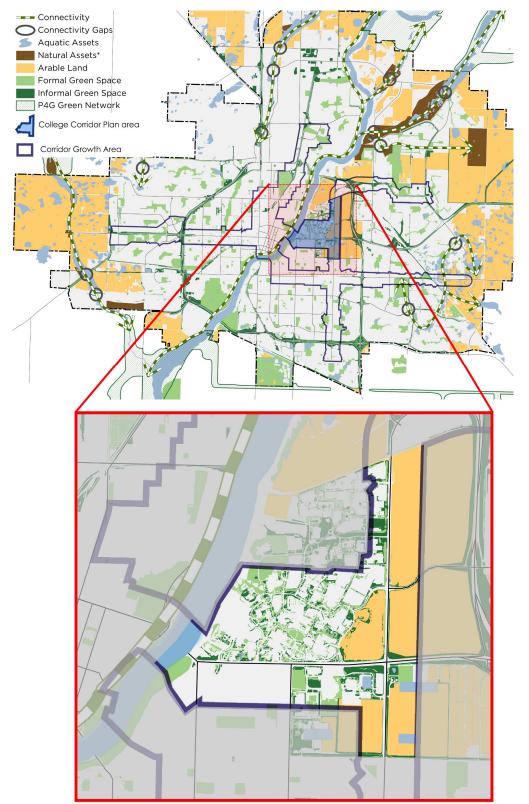
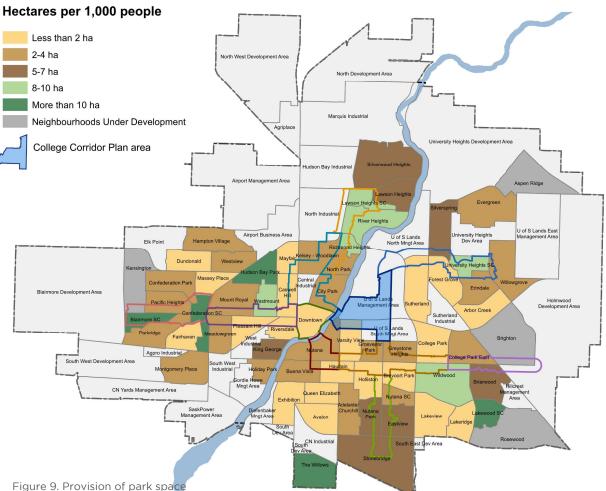
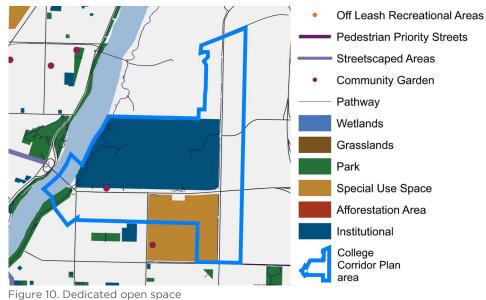


Figure 8. Existing Green Network Adapted from the COS Green Infrastructure Strategy (Map 3)

Overall, there is little space formally designated for the use of **public parks** within the Plan area. There are no children's playgrounds or play structures in the Plan area. The adjacent Varsity View neighbourhood is deficient in park space with less than 2 hectares of park space per 1,000 people.



Adapted from City of Saskatoon Green Infrastructure Strategy Baseline Inventory Report (p.28)



Adapted from City of Saskatoon Green Infrastructure Strategy Baseline Inventory Report (p.26)

The map below shows the amount of dedicated open space within the Plan area.

The Meewasin Trail runs along the western edge of the Plan area, winding through the city and for "25 kilometres in both directions beyond the city limits⁹" provides a unique environmental asset, as well as a walking/cycling connection to parks and green spaces outside the Plan area. Broad connections such as these to the larger green network are an important asset to preserve from both an ecological and social perspective¹⁰.



Public recreational facilities within the Plan area are located primarily on the University campus and include indoor Merlis Berlsher Place, USask Physical Activity Complex, COS Field House) and outdoor sports facilities (Griffith's Stadium, campus tennis courts). Some of these facilities are shown on Map 4 within the appendix.

 ⁹ The Meewasin Valley Project - The 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan. Raymond Moriyama Architects and Planners. (https://meewasin.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/THE-MEEWASIN-VALLEY-PROJECT.pdf)
 ¹⁰ See City of Saskatoon's Green Infrastructure Strategy: Towards an Interconnected Green Network. (https://www.saskatoon.ca/environmental-initiatives/climate-change/green-strategy) Cosmopolitan Park, which abuts the South Saskatchewan River, is the only City-designated public park in the Plan area. Figure 9, which represents park space per 1,000 people, does not account for the Meewasin Trail, which provides outdoor public space and runs the entire length of the Plan area along the river. McEown Park¹¹, which is located on the northeast corner of the Cumberland Avenue and 14th Street East intersection (about one block outside the Plan area), is publicly accessible open space, but is not City-owned or operated and is primarily intended to accommodate students, specifically the nearby student residences (Seager Wheeler Hall, Souris Hall).



President Murray Park - a 7.3 acre park containing several stands of mature spruce trees, a playground and walking paths - is located approximately one block outside the Plan area.

USask has three sports fields at the southeast corner of Cumberland Avenue and College Drive. While they do not offer amenities such as playgrounds or play apparatuses, they are programmable (i.e., used for intramural sports leagues) as well as provide access to open greenspace. It is also anticipated that these spaces are expected to accommodate more people in the area as more stages of the College Quarter Master Plan is developed.

The Plan area does not contain any elementary or high schools. Brunskill School (public elementary) is the nearest school, located one block south of the Plan (101 Wiggins Ave N). The Kinsmen Children's Centre is adjacent to the school.

¹¹ It is worth noting that the College Quarter Plan shows McEown Park to be redeveloped into townhouses as the College Quarter Master Plan is realized.

5.3. Heritage & Historic Sites

An initial inventory of historic properties for the Plan area was conducted and encompasses assets classified as designated heritage properties and as well as properties listed under the Saskatoon Register of Historic Places.

In addition to these properties, a supplementary report has been prepared and provided by volunteers from the Saskatoon Heritage Society. It includes an inventory of buildings, sites and views of heritage interest associated with the Plan area and illustrates the rich history of architecture and historic properties that date from the early 1900's.

Heritage Properties:

Designated heritage properties:

	W.J. English House (932 University Drive) Owen Mann House (1040 University Drive) Bottomley House (1118 College Drive) Little Stone School House (USask) Rugby Chapel (College Drive)	35 39 28 23 19
	Holding bylaw:	
	Bell House (906 Saskatchewan Crescent) Board of Trade Office (1022 Temperance Street)	43 45*
Other Properties:	Saskatoon Register of Historic Places	
	Peter MacKinnon Building (National Historic Site) R.J.D. Williams School Stone Barn The Diefenbaker Canada Centre Memorial Gates St. Andrew's College Royal University Hospital Patterson Garden Arboretum	C D* E F G H I J

* property is outside the Plan area



5.4. First Nations & Métis History

In the spring and summer of 2021, the Corridor Planning project team completed preliminary engagement to discuss considerations and recommendations for conducting engagement and creating a corridor plan. Meetings were held with several First Nations and Métis rightsholders, partners, and organizations. Through this engagement, the project team heard feedback that corridor plans must celebrate and incorporate Indigenous history and perspectives.

As part of the College Corridor Plan, the project team continues to explore opportunities to work with Indigenous partners and organizations to identify Indigenous history and perspectives. In particular, the impacts of COVID-19, the discoveries of unmarked graves at residential school sites and formalization of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation have made it challenging to coordinate these efforts with First Nations and Métis rightsholders, partners and organizations.

5.5. Brownfields or Contaminated Sites

Previous work was undertaken to identify **potential or perceived brownfield sites** along the entire CGA. As determined by this work there were no brownfield (perceived or potential) or contaminated sites identified in the Plan area.

6. Relevant Plans & Planning Context

The City has already undertaken a number of land use and transportation planning initiatives as a precursor to the College Corridor Plan. This section provides content summarized from existing plans, documents and policies that pertain to the Plan area.

The map below shows existing City-approved plans – the major ones being the <u>University Sector</u> <u>Plan</u>, the <u>City Centre Plan</u>, and the <u>Nutana</u> and <u>Varsity View Local Area Plans</u>. Each of these plans was created through extensive engagement with residents and stakeholders and is intended to inform land use and public realm decisions captured under the College Corridor Plan.

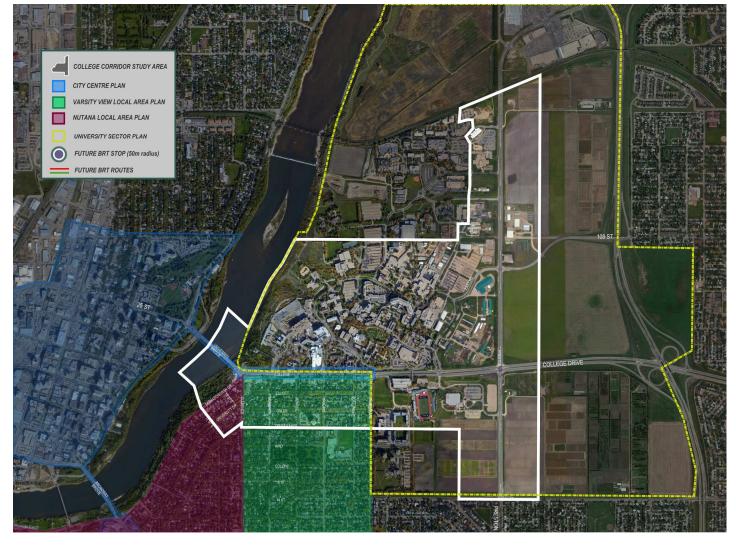


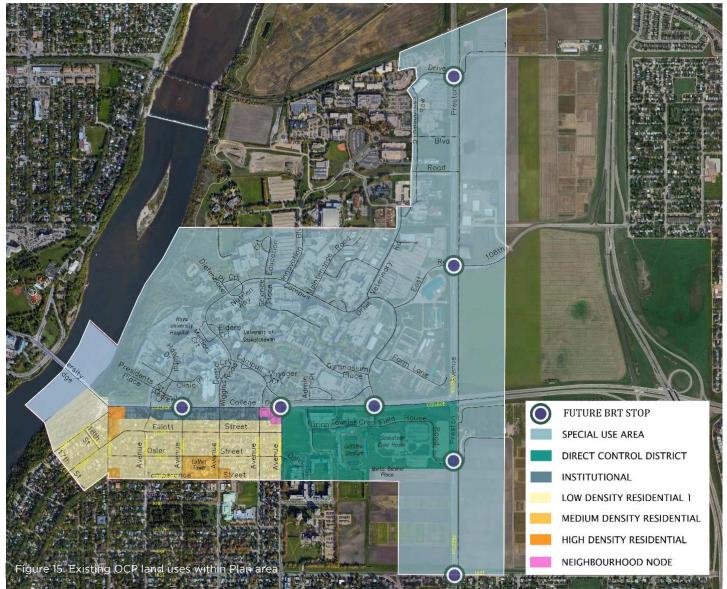
Figure 14. Existing City of Saskatoon Plans

6.1. Official Community Plan (2020)

The City of Saskatoon Official Community Plan (OCP) provides the policy framework to assist guiding Saskatoon to a population of 500,000. It contains established policies which are relevant to the College Corridor and provide a general framework for this Plan.

Objectives of the Corridor Growth Areas:

- "Support the City's goal of accommodating 15% of total growth within Corridor Growth Areas" G1.3(3)(a)
- "Enable the development of Corridor Growth Areas to support high-frequency transit and active modes of travel" G1.3(3)(b)
- "Enhance connectivity between and within neighbourhoods" G1.3(3)(c)



The OCP also contains a suite of Corridor Land Uses (listed below) intended for portions of the Corridor Growth Area (OCP Section F2.2 - Land Use Designations¹²).

Corridor Transit Village Station Mixed Use Corridor Mixed Use Corridor Main Street Corridor Residential

6.2. Growth Plan to Half a Million (2016)

The City of Saskatoon Growth Plan to Half a Million (The Growth Plan) charts a course for long-term growth and revitalization that balances and promotes quality of life, sustainability, and economic development. The Growth Plan is made up of several parts¹³ that when pieced together form a new growth model for Saskatoon.

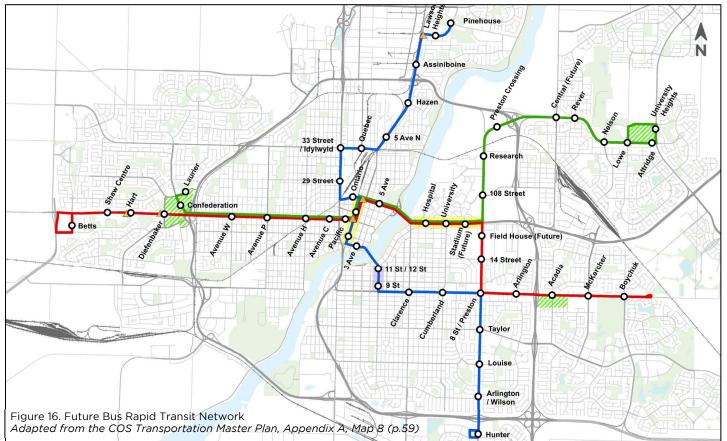
A key element of the Growth Plan is rethinking the way the City provides transportation options as the population approaches 500,000 people. Given this objective, the Growth Plan includes a specific transit plan primarily focused on building a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The BRT is intended to form the backbone of a more modern transit system and is seen to be a catalyst for the corridor growth component of the Growth Plan.



6.3. Transportation Master Plan (2021)

The City of Saskatoon Transportation Master Plan (STMP) is a long-term document that unites all existing transportation policies and plans, from the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and Growth Plan to Half a Million, while being consistent with the Zoning Bylaw and OCP. The purpose of the STMP is to guide the implementation of a transportation infrastructure plan, annual budgeting, program development, long-range financial planning, area and corridor studies, and design and practice guidelines.

The STMP outlines the approved BRT corridors and station locations, as well as principles¹⁴ to guide the planning and design of the future BRT network.



¹³ These parts are Transit, Core Bridges, Employment Areas, Active Transportation, Water & Sewer, Financing Growth, and Corridor Growth.

¹⁴ The complete Guiding Principles can be found in Sec. 6.3.1 of the *Saskatoon Transportation Master Plan*. (https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation-utilities/transportation/planning/transportationmasterplan_2021.pdf)

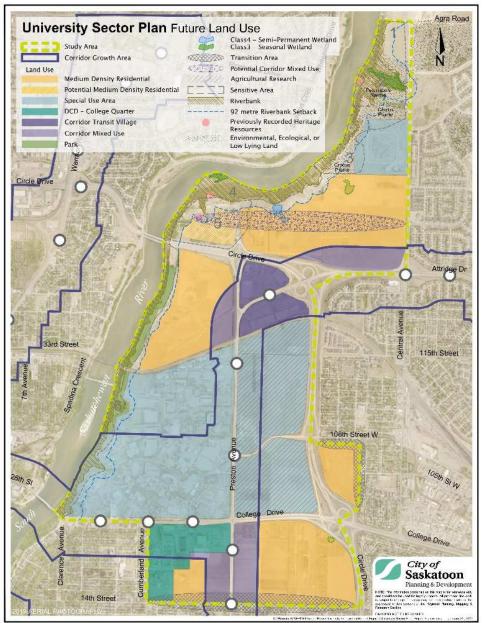
6.4. Growth Plan Technical Report (2016)

The Growth Plan Technical Report (GPTR) was prepared to provide long-term direction and prioritize the implementation of the initiatives contained in the Growth Plan. The GPTR articulates a vision for corridor growth in Saskatoon and identifies and evaluates each corridor based on their long-term potential for infill and redevelopment.

6.5. University Sector Plan (2021)

The University Sector Plan serves as the development framework for future growth within the University of Saskatchewan's endowment lands. The plan was created in alignment with the City's Growth Plan and Strategic Plan by designating these lands for strategic infill growth. It is a high-level plan containing strategies for land use, open space, servicing, mobility and phasing.

Figure 17. University Sector Plan future land use



6.6. Nutana Local Area Plan (2001)

The Nutana Local Area Plan (LAP) covers a portion of the Plan area, west of Clarence Avenue. The Nutana LAP provides a set of recommendations on land use – one of which is a proposed land use policy map¹⁵. At the time (2001), residents and stakeholders who took part in the LAP planning process expressed the preference to retain the low-density, single family character of these specific blocks.



Figure 18. Nutana LAP proposed land use

6.7. Varsity View Local Area Plan (2014)

The Varsity View LAP (VVLAP) includes considerations for infill parks and open space, heritage, parking, and transportation to name a few. The only land use change proposed by the Varsity View LAP is to recognize the potential transition along Cumberland Avenue as College Quarter develops and the desire to retain community facilities like the school and community centre. The LAP Committee "believes that as Cumberland Avenue transitions over time, it could develop a unique culture that is influenced by students and University employees coming from outside of the province and internationally."



Figure 19. Varsity View LAP proposed transition area

The LAP Committee would like to ensure the following elements are considered with any new development along Cumberland Avenue (Pg. 44, Varsity View LAP):

Land Use/Density	Design	Parking	Interface Areas
 Higher intensity uses are scaled down from College Drive to 14th Street in three zones that parallel uses in the College Quarter Master Plan, ideally they would follow the below development pattern, but are not limited to it: College Drive to Elliott Street – Mixed use Elliott Street to Aird Street – Multi-family residential Aird Street to 14th Street – Lower density residential Two-storey buildings are the most desirable; however, density may be increased with bonuses of public amenity space, underground parking, etc. Mixed use developments are desirable with small scale commercial at-grade and residential above Amenities provided by any commercial uses are aimed at the neighbourhood level services to complete the neighbourhood, not city-wide attractions, such as nightclubs or bars 	 Pedestrian-oriented and encourages a vibrant street life with active store fronts Blurs the border between the University and Varsity View in terms of design, connectivity, and flow Street symmetry is created through the use of no front yard setbacks of buildings Front yard setbacks may be accommodated for those creating patio, outdoor spaces, and/or common public gathering places only No front yard setbacks for parking Transitions from private to public space should be fluid 	 Parking meters may be desirable in the future to permit turnover of parking for commercial uses Parking should be mitigated in rear lanes as much as possible Any new residential developments should provide parking on-site 	 Soft transitions are required at the interface of medium and lower density areas (i.e. Cumberland Avenue and Bottomley Avenue) Step down buildings at the interface of lower density areas behind Encourage two-faced buildings – tiering may be used in rear of buildings to scale down density Use garage or lane houses to gradually transition between medium density uses on Cumberland Avenue to Bottomley Avenue Adding residential to the rear of properties to assist in beautifying the lanes behind Cumberland Avenue

6.8. City Centre Plan – Strategic Framework (2013)

The plan proposes a long walk (and separated bicycle lane) with dual rows of trees along the full length of the university frontage, acting as a linear park or *colonnade*. The plan recommends that any new building on College Drive have pedestrian entrances facing the new colonnade.

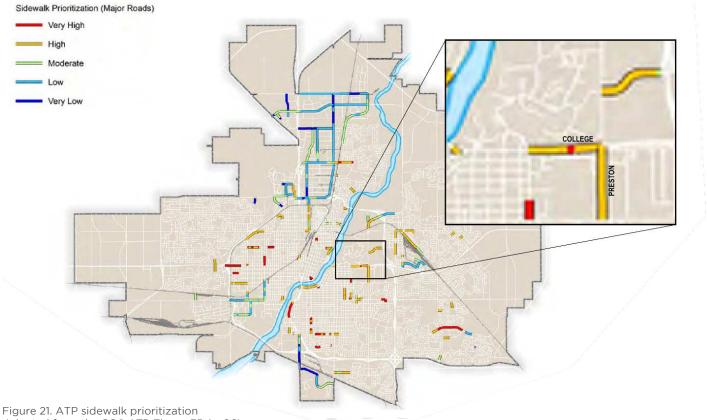


Figure 20. City Centre Plan -College Drive concept

6.9. Active Transportation Plan (2016)

The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) established a long-term vision for active transportation in Saskatoon. The ATP contains a suite of actions aimed at increasing transportation choices within the city, prioritized over the short-, medium- and long-term. Some of these actions, which are outlined below, have the potential to be captured or addressed in the College Corridor Plan.

<u>Direction 1A</u>: Expand and Enhance the Sidewalk Network – Eliminate gaps in the sidewalk network on major and local roads. For example, the south side of College Drive between Cumberland and Preston.



Adapted from the COS ATP Figure 35 (p. 96)

Preston Avenue has a separated multi-use path and bicycle lanes on both sides for the entire length of the Plan area.



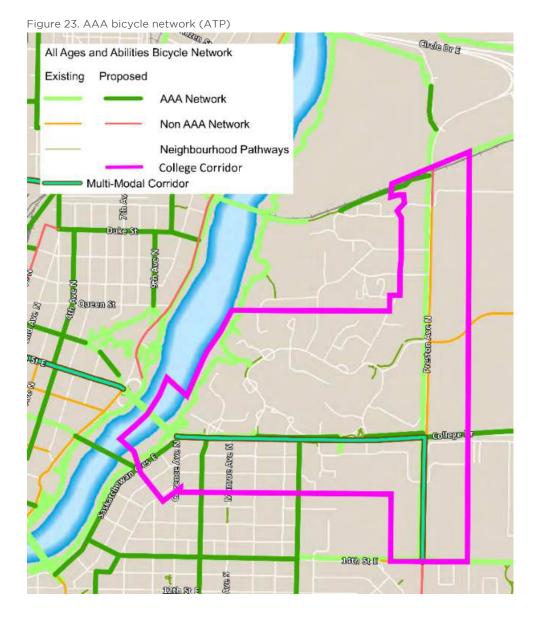
<u>Direction 1B</u>: Expand and Enhance the Bicycle Network – Develop the AAA (All Ages and Abilities) bicycle network and the identified multi-modal corridors.

Direction 3A: Provide Bicycle Parking and End-of-trip Facilities

Direction 3B: Improve Connections to Transit

Direction 4A: Enhance Streetscapes and the Public Realm

<u>Direction 4C</u>: Support Infill Development Considerations



6.10. Varsity View Neighbourhood Traffic Review (2014)

The VVNTR was created to address traffic concerns such as speeding, shortcutting, and pedestrian safety. It contains a list of recommended improvements for the Varsity View neighbourhood and a schedule for implementation¹⁶. The Traffic Review contains several recommended improvements, only a small number of which relate to the Plan area. Other items from the Traffic Review have since been completed (i.e., install 4-way stop at McKinnon Avenue and Temperance Street).

Neighbourhood concerns:

Pedestrian safety at College Drive and Bottomley Avenue:



Missing sidewalks:



¹⁶ See VVNTR Table ES-1 (https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation-utilities/transportation/neighbourhood/varsity_view_ntr_2014.pdf)

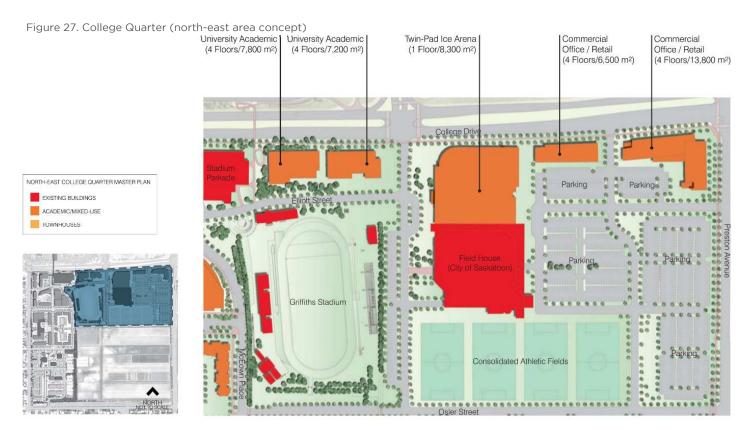
6.11. College Quarter Concept Plan (2012)

The College Quarter area is a 59 hectare (146 acre) land area owned by the University of Saskatchewan located south of the main campus. The area is bounded by College Drive, Preston Avenue, 14th Street, and Cumberland Avenue and currently contains recreational facilities (Merlis Belsher Place, Field House, Griffiths Stadium), institutional/commercial uses (Williams Building, Holiday Inn Express), and student residences (Wollaston, Assiniboine, Souris and Seager Wheeler halls).

A Concept Plan for the area was created by the University and subsequently approved in 2012 by the City of Saskatoon. It provides a strategy for the development of the University of Saskatchewan's College Quarter lands and includes a detailed block-by-block plan identifying things such as future land uses, roadway configuration, access points, phasing, and a servicing concept. A specific zoning district - Direct Control District 7 (DCD7) - was created to provide development guidelines to implement the considerations contained in the adopted College Quarter Concept Plan.



The plan for the College Quarter describes the land uses intended for the south side of College Drive (referred to as the North-East College Quarter Precinct).

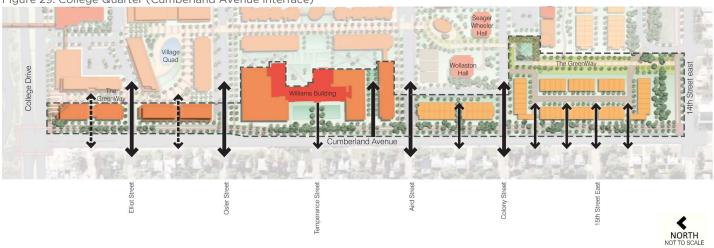


The plan proposes a series of enhanced at-grade pedestrian crossing along College Drive, along with an enclosed pedestrian bridge.



Figure 28. College Quarter (College Drive interface)

The figure below shows the concept for future pedestrian connections along the interface of Cumberland Avenue and the College Quarter.



The row of mature trees that flank the east side of Cumberland Avenue provide an attractive edge to the west side of the College Quarter. Where possible this tree canopy should be maintained.

Figure 30. Mature trees along Cumberland



Tree Canopy Plan

14th Street East



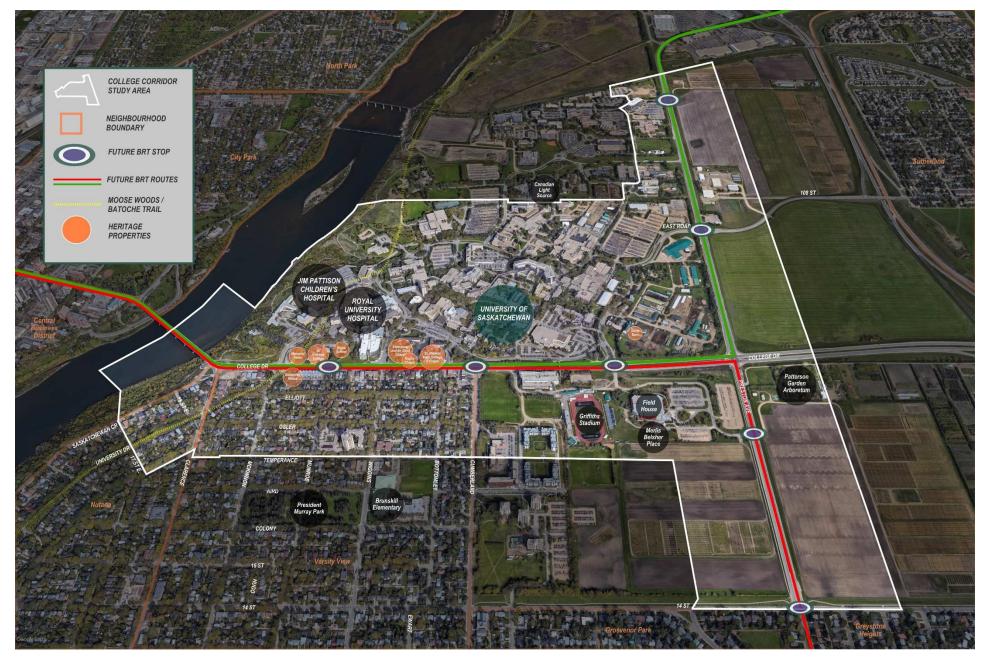
7. Conclusion

This report is intended to capture as much relevant baseline information as necessary. It is anticipated that as the College Corridor Plan is developed (and subsequent corridor plans as well), more information will be captured through further public and stakeholder engagement. This report is not intended to be a final collection of baseline conditions – however if upon reviewing this document you find errors, omissions, or would like to provide general feedback that could be helpful to the planning process, please visit <u>www.saskatoon.ca/corridor</u> to get in contact with the project team.

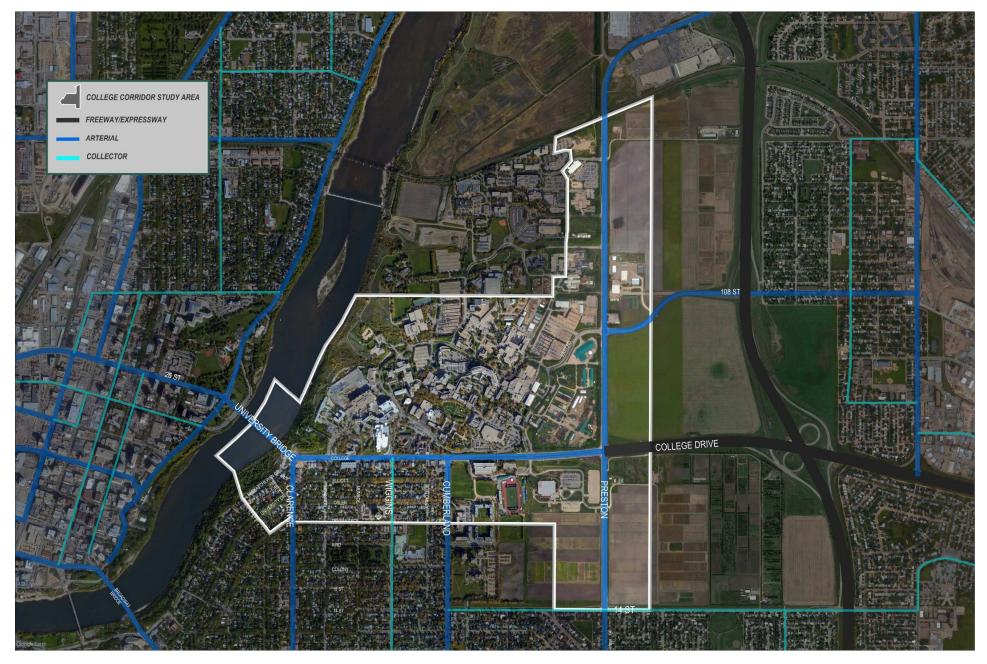
Appendix: Maps

The following maps are conceptual and include relevant information compiled for the Plan area. An interactive map that outlines the corridor area boundaries is also available at www.saskatoon.ca/corridor.

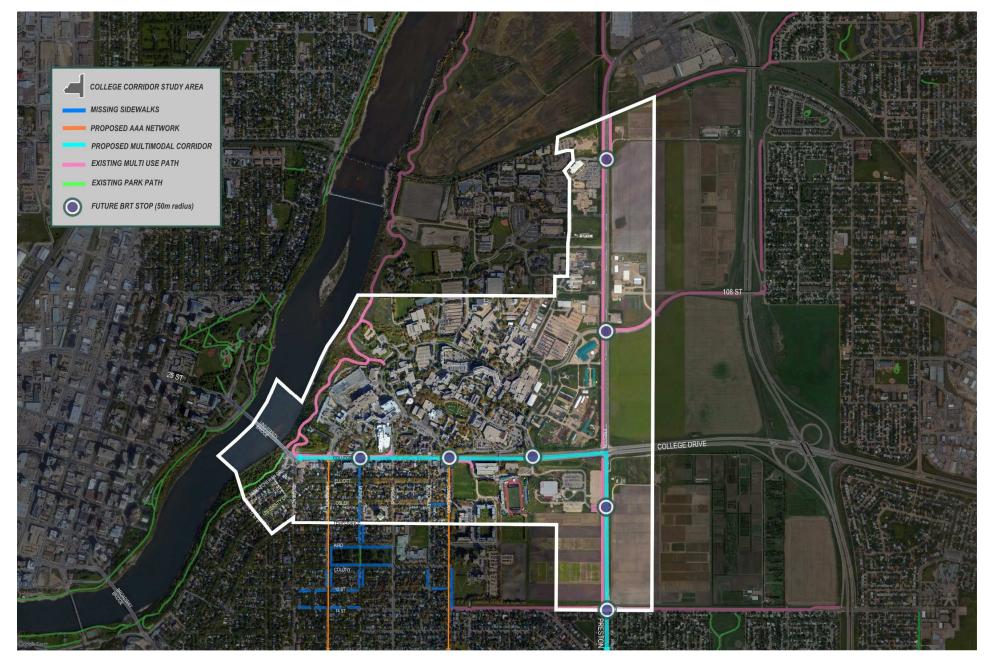
Map 1 - Overall Plan area (with selected buildings and places labeled)



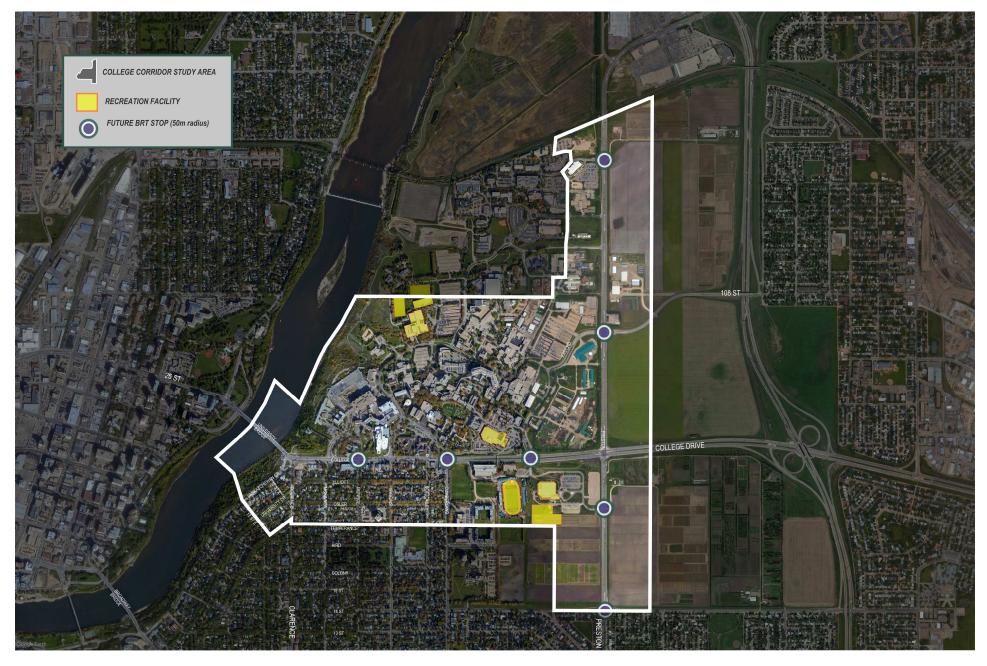
Map 2 - Major roadway network



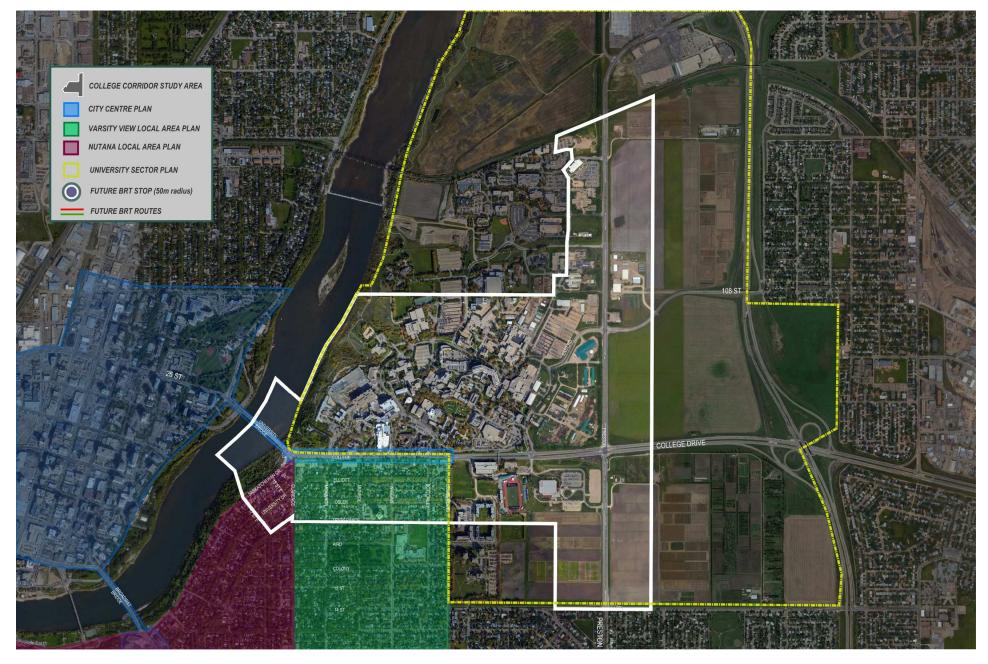
Map 3 - Active transportation network



Map 4 - Existing recreational facilities



Map 5 - Existing City of Saskatoon plans



Map 6 - Existing University of Saskatchewan plans

