

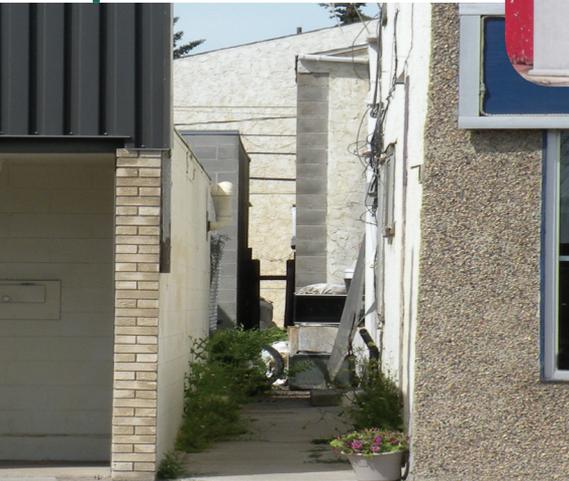


*A Guide to Improving
Recessed Doorways & Building Passageways*

What is the issue?

Historically, the use of recessed doorways and building passageways created visually pleasing streetscapes with diverse shadow lines and added interest to building facades. Recessed doorways or storefronts functioned as a transitional area that expanded a store's influence into the street, while protecting pedestrians and the store's interior from the effects of inclement weather. Building passageways, or the space between two buildings, allowed for adequate site drainage and resulted from previous land use, zoning regulations or historical fire separation requirements. Commercial corridors, such as the Downtown, Broadway, Sutherland, and 20th Street West, tend to have a greater number of recessed doorways and building passageways, though they are present across Saskatoon.

Recesses can provide a place for people to hide from view



Passageways can provide unauthorized or concealed access to buildings

While many of these historical benefits are still valid today, as a property owner, you may find yourself dealing with the misuse of recessed doorways and building passageways on or near your property. These areas are often difficult to maintain and can become a problem when a lack of natural surveillance offers illegitimate users access to the back or sides of buildings or a place to hide from view, giving them space and time to carry out unwanted or illegal activities such as:

- loitering;
- public intoxication and drinking;
- public urinating and defecating;
- smoking and drug use; or
- sleeping and other nuisance activity.

Even if illegitimate users are just hanging out, their presence may increase the risk of property-related threats, such as break and enters and vandalism, and may cause your neighbours and potential clients to assume a more ominous activity, which in turn can have a negative impact on your business.

The purpose of this booklet is to offer suggestions to prevent or decrease the illegitimate use of recessed doorways and building passageways on or near your property.

Even if illegitimate users are just hanging out, their presence may increase the risk of property-related threats and have a negative impact on your business.

What actions can you take to improve safety?

RECONFIGURE OR REMOVE RECESSED AREAS

Renovating your storefront can give your building a rejuvenated look and attract new customers. It gives you an opportunity to remove or reconfigure a problem area, add or change storefront lighting, add architectural or heritage elements, and/or update the energy efficiency of your doors and windows.

If you are reconfiguring or removing a recessed area you should pay particular attention to the architectural style of the building and the potential impact of the redevelopment on the overall look of the neighbourhood. Keep in mind the National Building Code

requires all commercial exits to swing in the direction of exit travel, and the City of Saskatoon, Infrastructure Services Department, requires that doors not open beyond the boundaries of the property. In addition, it is important to note that changes to the building's envelope or structure will require a building permit.



Unmaintained building passageways can be perceived as areas of higher risk

REDEFINE BUILDING PASSAGeways

Unmaintained building passageways can present the opportunity for nuisance, mischief, and other crimes to occur, while proper maintenance reinforces ownership and preserves the aesthetics of the area. By introducing barriers, such as fencing, that complement the existing facade or streetscape, you can prevent unauthorized access to the back or side of your building. Note that the Urban Design Section of the City of Saskatoon's Land Branch suggests that building passageways have a street-front entrance to provide access in case of emergency.



Reconfiguration of a recess can still offer an interesting building facade, which benefits the overall streetscape of an area

USE MIRRORS TO PROVIDE A CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT

Thoughtfully installed mirrors can allow people to look into a recessed area before entering, making your neighbours and clients feel safer and decreasing the area's appeal for illegitimate users. In addition, the mirror may provide you and your employees with an unobstructed view of the storefront and the recessed area. Careful placement and positioning of mirrors can ensure that they do not compromise the overall aesthetics of the facade and streetscape. Keep in mind that an encroachment agreement may be required from the City of Saskatoon, Infrastructure Services Department, for any portion of a building or mirror that extends onto city property.



There are numerous styles and types of mirrors available, which will achieve the desired results

IMPROVE YOUR STOREFRONT IMAGE

Properties and businesses that appear to be maintained and cared for suggest that inappropriate behaviour or criminal activity will not be tolerated and that care is being taken to protect the site. Tidy storefronts, building sites, and building passageways create a positive impression on clients and the general public. Timely repairs show pride of ownership, improve the image of the area, and decrease the opportunity for crime to occur.



Storefront image contributes to the aesthetics of the street and neighbourhood

USE APPROPRIATE LIGHTING

Targeted lighting can work as an affordable and effective method of deterring illegitimate use of building recesses and passageways. There are various choices available, so think carefully about creating a lighting plan that serves your needs and yet does not interfere with neighbouring businesses or land uses. As you evaluate your property, ask yourself

- What do I want to light?
- Why do I want to light this area?
- What kind of lighting would be best – continuous, timed, or motion activated?
- Where will I place the light so that it doesn't reduce legitimate users' ability to see, by casting inappropriate glare or shadows?

- Does my lighting selection interfere with neighbouring land uses?
- Should I use architectural lighting to light the space and highlight my business?
- Should dark-sky compliant, full cut-off light fixtures, pot lights, or area lighting be used?
- Is lighting the area the right decision or will it attract more unwanted behaviour by drawing attention to a vulnerable area?

MAKE USE OF ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

Security measures can include a surveillance system or a closed circuit television (CCTV) system; security personnel in and around the area; window grilles, gates, or security shutters; or a combination of these.

Part of the deterrent effect of these security measures is that they indicate that the area is protected. On the other hand, an entire block with security shutters or window grilles may have the counter effect of implying that the area is dangerous and no one wants to visit or do business in an area perceived to be unsafe. Keep in mind the impact of such measures on the community, your clientele, the streetscape, and the aesthetics of the area.

Excess security measures can give the impression that the neighbourhood is unsafe or subject to vandalism



USE A COMBINATION OF METHODS

A combination of the options provided, or other options specific to your site, may be the best solution to addressing criminal or nuisance behaviour in recessed doorways and passageways. It is important that the measures you select work with the overall aesthetics of the area, stay within the architectural characteristics of the surroundings, and increase the real and perceived security of your clients and neighbours.

What resources are available to support my business?

FAÇADE REHABILITATION AND RENOVATION GRANT PROGRAM

The Façade Rehabilitation and Renovation Grant Program assists commercial property owners within the Downtown, Riversdale, or Broadway Business Improvement Districts (BID) with the rejuvenation of their building façade. The program functions to conserve the built heritage, and to enhance the City's public profile and urban design. This program is administered through the City of Saskatoon's Planning and Development Branch with payment limited to 50% of the receipts, up to a maximum of \$15,000 per property.

Grants available

- a) Contextual Renovation – Renovation projects where materials must be of high quality, complement the existing architecture, relate to the neighbourhood context, and maintain or improve the overall street character. Replacement of original materials is preferred.
- b) Historical Rehabilitation – Restoration or rehabilitation of original elements or the high quality reconstruction of similar elements using modern material.

For more information regarding these grants contact:

Planning and Development Branch, City of Saskatoon
222 3rd Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5
Ph (306) 975-2645 • Fax (306) 975-7712
www.saskatoon.ca (look under 'H' for Heritage Conservation)



FAÇADE APPEARANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Commercial and industrial property owners in the program's boundary may be eligible for a grant (up to \$2500) for the purpose of enhancing or restoring the permanent features of any street-facing building front. Grant applications are required to provide pictures of the existing façade, drawings/renderings of proposed improvements to the building's exterior, and before and after pictures of the façade once the grant has been awarded. Please note that a building permit is required for any alterations to the building's envelope or structure.

For information regarding the program contact:

Neighbourhood Planning Section
Planning and Development Branch, City of Saskatoon
222 3rd Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5
Ph (306) 975-3340 • Fax (306) 975-3185



IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

Emergency 911

City of Saskatoon Police 975-8300

Fire and Protective Services 975-2520

Health and Safety Hotline 975-2828

Neighbourhood Safety - Crime Prevention Through
Environmental Design (CPTED) 975-3340

For more information about how to keep your
home, family and community safe, contact:

Neighbourhood Safety - Safe Growth & Crime
Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

City of Saskatoon

Planning & Development Branch

222 - 3rd Avenue North

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 0J5

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