Green Infrastructure Strategy Update – December 2018

Recommendation
That the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated December 4, 2018, be forwarded to City Council for information.

Topic and Purpose
The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with an update on the progress of the Green Infrastructure Strategy (Green Strategy) and related initiatives.

Report Highlights
1. Work has begun on Natural Area Standards and the Urban Forest Management Plan, two initiatives that address key findings identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy Baseline Inventory Report.
2. The Green Strategy has identified sites that could be designated as natural areas, including the Small Swale.
3. The Natural Area Standards will provide policies and guidelines for development occurring in, and adjacent to, natural areas.
4. The Urban Forest Management Plan has identified the various types of tree populations that exist in Saskatoon. This information will be used to develop strategies that maximize the benefits provided by trees.
5. Amendments to the Official Community Plan will support the Green Strategy.

Strategic Goals
This report supports the strategic goals of: Environmental Leadership, by striving to ensure that Green Infrastructure is identified and managed for the benefit of current and future generations by adopting a Natural Areas Plan and Urban Forestry Strategy; Quality of Life, by striving to meet community recreational and cultural needs in park space; and Sustainable Growth through a balanced approach to land use.

Background
City Council, at its meeting held on May 28, 2018, considered the Green Infrastructure Update – May 2018; and resolved:

"1. That the Green Infrastructure Baseline Inventory Report be received as information;
2. That the draft guiding principles be endorsed;
3. That community engagement on amendments to the Official Community Plan to reflect the Green Infrastructure Strategy be planned and a report be brought to the Municipal Planning Commission with a recommendation to City Council for approval in the fall;
4. That $150,000 be approved from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures (RCE) for this initiative as outlined in this report; and
5. That the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance, dated May 14, 2018 be forwarded to the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee for information."

City Council, at its meeting held on September 24, 2018, considered Proposed Amendments to Bylaw No. 7200, The Traffic Bylaw – Speed Limit Change and Proposed Amendments to Bylaw No. 7200, The Traffic Bylaw – Speed Limit Changes – Proposed Bylaw No. 9531; and resolved:

> "That Administration report back with information on the Small Swale related to but not limited to its ecological integrity, future plans and policies related to this natural area. This report should provide a basis for background information on the Small Swale."

Report

Green Strategy

The Green Strategy balances considerations for many facets of good city building – such as access to green spaces; climate change mitigation and adaptation; conservation; recreation; storm water and other servicing; Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action; and urban development – in a systematic way that weaves green infrastructure into Saskatoon's urban fabric. Attachment 1, Saskatoon's Green Strategy - Background, provides further background on the Green Strategy, the Natural Area Standards and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Two initiatives that aim to address key findings identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy Baseline Inventory Report are the Natural Area Standards and the Urban Forest Management Plan. These initiatives are being developed in partnership with numerous City divisions and the Meewasin Valley Authority to ensure that the results are appropriately integrated into work plans across the City. Attachment 2, Saskatoon's Green Strategy - Related Initiatives Diagram, illustrates how various projects and initiatives relate to the Green Strategy.

Natural Area Standards

In preparation for the Natural Area Standards project, the Green Strategy identified sites that are considered natural areas within the city that the Natural Area Standards could be applied to. Attachment 3, Saskatoon's Natural Areas, identifies this preliminary inventory. Subject matter experts were provided with the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the natural areas identified in the inventory at the Green Strategy Workshop #2, October 29, 2018. Additionally, workshop participants were asked to comment on proposed indicators used to identify natural areas, and what levels of management and types of compatible uses would be appropriate for these particular natural areas. Feedback from the workshop will be reviewed by the project team, and where appropriate, the list of natural areas will be revised. Participant comments on indicators, levels of management and compatible uses will be considered as the Natural Area Standards are drafted.

The next steps for the project include drafting the Natural Area Standards document, followed by a review by key stakeholders. The standards will provide a predictable process for determining how to address or integrate natural areas into development.

This could include categories to designate different types of natural areas, and standards for developers to follow during the design and development process.

Small Swale

The Small Swale has been included in the Preliminary Natural Areas Inventory. In addition, City Council requested that Administration report back with information on the Small Swale. A response to this is included as Attachment 4, Saskatoon's Green Strategy - The Small Swale. This attachment provides a summary of known ecological features, future plans and policies related to this natural area.

The Urban Forest Management Plan

The initial steps of the Urban Forest Management Plan included identification of the various tree populations that make up Saskatoon's urban forest. Urban Forest Unique Tree Populations were reviewed with key technical experts at the workshop held on October 29, 2018. Attachment 5, Urban Forest, summarizes the City's tree population. Feedback from the workshop is being reviewed by the project team and the list of unique tree populations may be adjusted to reflect this feedback when the review is complete.

The next steps in the project include review of Saskatoon's existing policies, investigation of best practices across the country, and completion of a tree canopy assessment. The Management Plan will help minimize impacts on the changing urban forest due to urban growth; redevelopment in established areas; invasive pests and diseases, weather events; and aging trees. Future planting maximizes the benefits trees provide by identifying strategic planting areas, aiming for species diversity and ensuring that the right trees are planted in the right place. The canopy assessment will inform decisions related to the City's urban forest.

Official Community Plan

As part of the development and implementation of the Green Strategy, future changes to management documents are expected. This will include changes to the City of Saskatoon's Official Community Plan (OCP). Engagement activities for the Green Strategy are being used to help shape changes to the OCP. New and updated policy reflecting the principles of the Green Strategy and the initiatives that support it, are currently being drafted as part of the redesign and update to the OCP. The fully updated OCP is expected to be brought forward for approval in 2019. Attachment 6, Highlight of Planned Official Community Plan Updates, provides highlights.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

The Green Strategy engagement program was launched in September 2018. Engagement activities completed to date were designed to seek input from participants to inform specific project decisions related to the Green Strategy, Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Management Plan initiatives. Attachment 7, Green Strategy Engagement Update - November 2018, provides details of these engagement events, as well as plans for future engagement. Analysis of the result from 2018 engagement activities will be completed in 2019.

Community input from engagement activities will be used to inform development of Saskatoon's Natural Area Standards, Urban Forestry Management Plan, related policies, management documents and updates to the City of Saskatoon's OCP.

Communication Plan

A communication strategy further promoting education and engagement for Phase 2 of the Green Strategy has been developed and will be updated to reflect 2019 goals and objectives. The strategy will be community-focused, educational, share successes and gain feedback. As part of the Communications Plan, a brand has been developed, and further engagement events, social media messaging, radio advertisements, and media releases may follow. In addition, communications will be combined with other relevant civic projects, such as Bird Strike Mitigation and Climate Change. Attachment 8, Social Media Messaging, shows preliminary results of engagement on-line feedback.

Policy Implications

There are no immediate policy implications. The Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Management Plan will develop new management documents and propose updates to related policies and guidelines, including the City of Saskatoon's Official Community Plan. When these documents have been drafted, they will be brought forward for approval individually.

Financial Implications

The 2019 Green Strategy business plan was submitted with the 2019 Business Plan and Budget for deliberation.

Environmental Implications

As the project progresses, management tools for natural areas, living assets and other green spaces will be developed and updated to support Saskatoon's resilience to climate change.

Future Green Strategy work will include identifying other green assets that are part of the City's green network and the ecological benefits they provide.

The Green Strategy also includes the Natural Capital Asset Valuation project that will quantify the greenhouse gas implications associated with living assets.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no options, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Administration will report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services in 2019.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachments

1. Saskatoon's Green Strategy - Background
2. Saskatoon's Green Strategy - Related Initiatives Diagram
3. Saskatoon's Natural Areas
4. Saskatoon's Green Strategy - The Small Swale
5. Urban Forest
6. Highlight of Planned Official Community Plan Updates
7. Green Strategy Engagement Update - November 2018
8. Saskatoon's Green Strategy - Social Media Messaging

Report Approval

Written by:	Genevieve Russell, Green Strategy Special Project Manager
Reviewed by:	Twyla Yobb, Manager of Environmental Protection Brenda Wallace, Director of Environment and Corporate Initiatives Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development Darren Crilly, Director of Parks
Approved by:	Dan Willems, Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Dept.

Admin Report - Green Infrastructure Strategy Update – December 2018.docx

SASKATOON'S GREEN STRATEGY - Background

Biodiverse • Accessible • Sustainable • Integrated • Connected

WHAT IS THE GREEN STRATEGY?

- A City-wide approach to transition Saskatoon into a sustainable, biodiverse community in which natural areas, assets and other green spaces are considered important infrastructure.
- By weaving this green infrastructure into the urban fabric, the City will be in a position to provide essential municipal services in a way that respects nature, heritage and culture.

WHY DO WE NEED A GREEN STRATEGY?

- As Saskatoon continues to grow, new infrastructure will be needed and aging infrastructure will be required in a way that respects and complements our valued natural areas and living assets.
- This Strategy will address servicing needs through green infrastructure for water retention, flood control, carbon reduction, and air and water purification.
- Protecting natural areas and assets requires managing our impacts appropriately.
  As a strategic tool for climate change adaptation and mitigation, the strategy will help the City be more
- resilient and prevent damaging impacts to natural areas and assets.
  Two initiatives, currently under development, that aim to address the key findings of the Green Strategy are
- the Natural Area Standards and Urban Forestry Management Plan.

WHAT ARE THE NATURAL AREA STANDARDS?

- A management document that will provide policies and guidelines for developers to use during the design process and for the City to use during the concept plan review process.
- A consistent, predictable process for determining how to integrate or address natural areas in our development plans.

WHY DO WE NEED THE NATURAL AREA STANDARDS?

- To guide development decisions in places containing natural areas through consistent standards and procedures for the approval of development in, and adjacent to, natural areas.
- To minimize negative impacts from development on our significant natural areas.
- To provide designation categories for natural areas within City boundaries and identify levels of management

WHAT IS THE URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN?

- A management document to guide development adjacent to trees in a consistent and predictable way.
- A process to determine whether to protect or remove trees.
- A plan for strategic planting in the future to maximize the benefits trees provide

WHY DO WE NEED AN URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN?

- To minimize impacts on our changing urban forest due to urban growth, redevelopment in established areas, invasive pests and diseases, weather events, and aging trees.
- To ensure future planting maximizes the benefits trees provide, we need to classify strategic planting areas, identify appropriate planting requirements, aim for species diversity and ensure the right tree is planted in the right place.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT APPLY TO THE GREEN STRATEGY, NATURAL AREA STANDARDS AND URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN:

- **Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation** - Our contributions to climate change are mitigated and our ability to adapt to local change is enhanced.
- **Ecological Integrity** - Biodiversity and connectivity of the urban green network is conserved and supported
- **Education & Awareness** - Educational opportunities incorporate ecological, cultural and traditional knowledge. The community is aware of appropriate uses of green spaces
- **Equitable & Accountable** - Green infrastructure is distributed throughout the city to provide access to all residents.
- **High Quality** - Green spaces are evaluated and used for their best purposes, taking into consideration the types of infrastructure and amenities they have, the value of the functions they provide and community needs.
- **Integrated & Multifunctional** - Green spaces are integrated into the city fabric to form a network that serves multiple uses and needs.
- **Public Safety** - The green network is safe, accessible and inclusive for all.
- **Recognizable & Unique Places** - A range of green space types and functions reflect heritage, traditional land uses and community identity and needs.
- **Sustainable** - The green network responds to operational requirements, flood resiliency, community capacity and environmental and local needs.
- **Wellness: Physical & Mental** - The green network meets community needs, recognizing that access to green space is strongly related to residents' physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing.

City of Saskatoon

Green STRATEGY

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Attachment 1

SASKATOON'S GREEN STRATEGY - Related Initiatives Diagram

Biodiverse • Accessible • Sustainable • Integrated • Connected

City of Saskatoon

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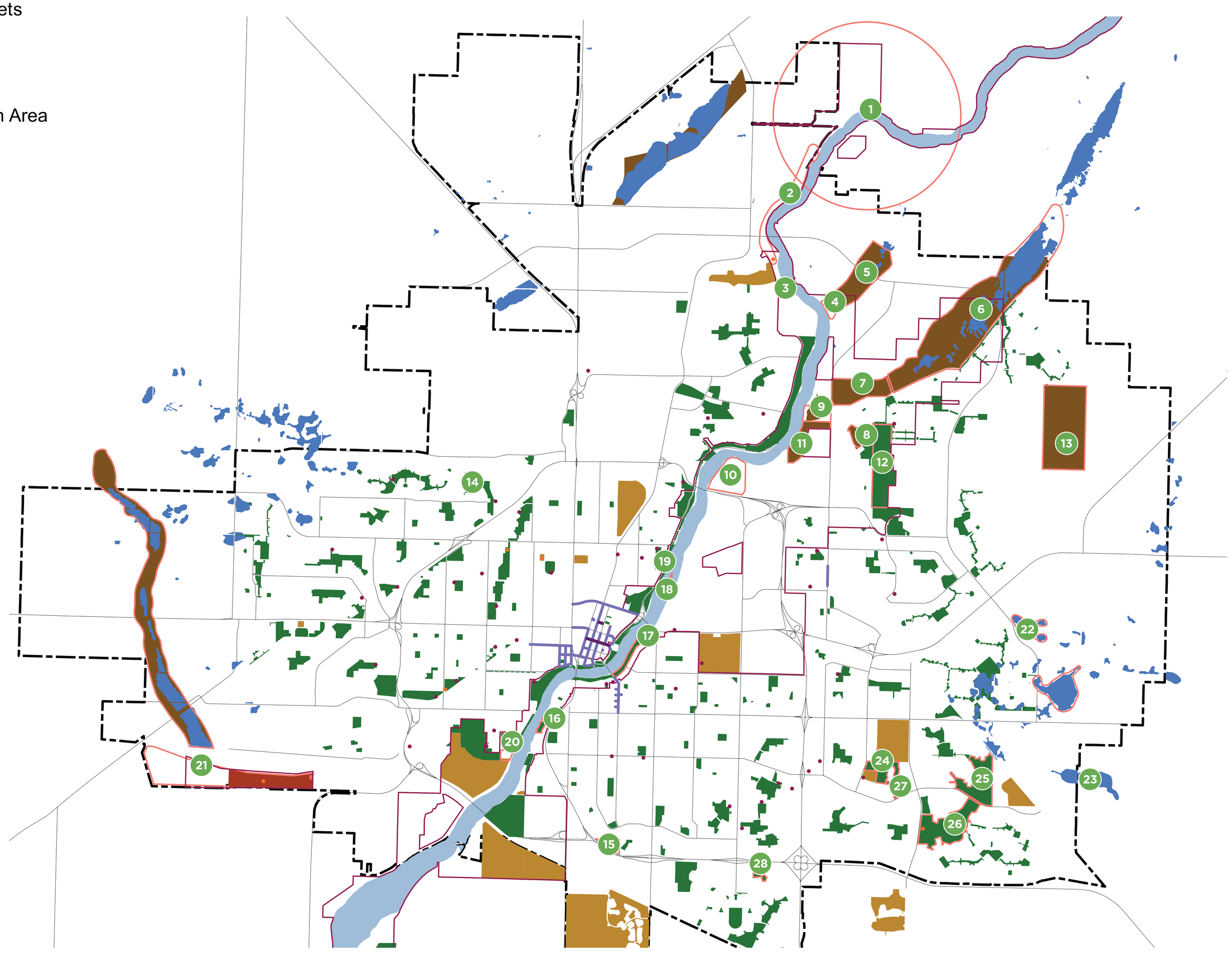
Green STRATEGY

SASKATOON'S NATURAL AREAS

- Off Leash Recreational Areas
- Pedestrian Priority Streets
- Streetscaped Areas
- Community Garden
- Meewasin Conservation Area
- Natural_Areas
- Wetlands
- Grasslands
- Park
- Special Use Space
- Afforestation Area
- City_Limit_Area



NORTH-EAST SASKATOON

1. Wanuskewin Buffer Lands and Bison Fields
2. Unnamed Riparian Forest
3. Factoria
4. Peggy McKercher Conservation Area
5. Small Swale
6. Meewasin Northeast Swale – Ecological Core
7. Meewasin Northeast Swale – Recreation Zone
8. Saskatoon Natural Grasslands
9. Peturrson's Ravine
10. Sutherland Dog Park
11. Crocus Prairie
12. Forestry Farm Park and Zoo
13. Kernen Prairie

SOUTH-WEST SASKATOON

14. Paul Mostoway Dog Park
15. Avalon Dog Park
16. Gabriel Dumont Park
17. Cosmopolitan Park (Naturalized)
18. Goose Island
19. Meewasin Trail System and Riverbank
20. Sanitorium
21. Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area

SOUTH-EAST SASKATOON

22. North Holmwood Wetlands
23. South Holmwood Wetland
24. Lakewood Park (Naturalized)
25. Donna Birkmaier Park (Naturalized)
26. Hyde Park (Naturalized)
27. Heritage Park (Naturalized)
28. Mark Thompson and Patricia Roe Parks (Naturalized)

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Green STRATEGY

Attachment 3

SASKATOONS NATURAL AREAS

NORTH-EAST

1. Wanuskewin Buffer Lands and Bison Fields

- important cultural heritage site of the Plains Cree People
- Wanuskewin has recently been identified as a candidate to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- adjacent farmland, within city limits, is to be restored for future bison reintroduction

2. Riparian Forest

- this ecosystem was identified as unique by Meewasin
- includes several plant species at risk
- has not been inventoried

3. Factoria

- the location of Saskatoon's early industrial dreams
- the remains of Factoria are some crumbling concrete foundations along the river bank

4. Peggy McKercher Conservation Area

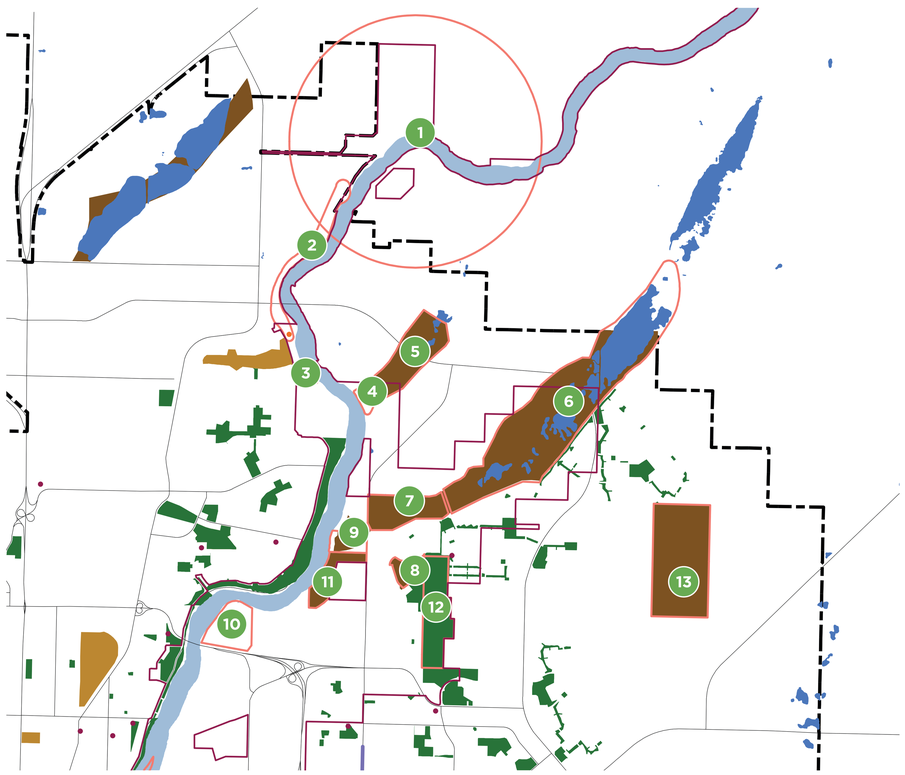
- ownership history spans several owners from early 1900s
- Meewasin purchased it in 2007 with plans to restore and connect to the Meewasin trail network

5. Small Swale

- a glacial channel scar
- grassland and wetland areas have been disturbed
- still has a diversity of plant, animal & bird species

6. Meewasin Northeast Swale – Ecological Core

- a portion of the Northeast Swale encompassing 300ha within city limits
- contains a variety of environments including steep rocky ridges, rolling prairie, lush valleys, treed areas, and ephemeral wetlands
- a diversity of biological activity including over 200 documented plant species, 103 avian species, and a variety of mammals
- less impacted by human activity than the recreation zone
- receives storm water from surrounding area and neighbourhood via a forebay pond



13. Kernen Prairie

- at 130 hectares, it is one of the largest remaining patches of fescue Praire in Saskatchewan
- donated to the University with the stipulation that it be preserved

Q. In your experience, is our description of each location accurate?

Q. Do you think the boundary of the natural areas are correct?

7. Meewasin Northeast Swale – Recreation Zone

- a portion of the Northeast Swale approximately 49 hectares in size
- an area that is ecologically sensitive and intended to be utilized for passive recreation and self-guided tours
- receives storm water from surrounding area and neighbourhood via a forebay pond

8. Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

- 13 hectares of fescue grassland
- ecosystem consists of a complex association of grasses, flowering and non-flowering plants providing habitat for birds, animals and insects

9. Peturrson's Ravine

- a restored landscape that includes a unique bog and other ecological features

10. Sutherland Dog Park

- a naturalized dog park
- Caragana is being managed by Meewasin

11. Crocus Prairie

- an ecological site containing native crocuses

12. Forestry Farm Park and Zoo

- features a zoo, local history, towering trees, gardens and ponds
- National Historic Site
- contains a migratory bird sanctuary
- formerly served as the Sutherland Forest Nursery Station

City of Saskatoon

Green STRATEGY

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SASKATOONS NATURAL AREAS

SOUTH-WEST

14. Paul Mostoway Dog Park

- semi-naturalized off leash dog park with mowed grass and remnant aspen stands

15. Avalon Dog Park

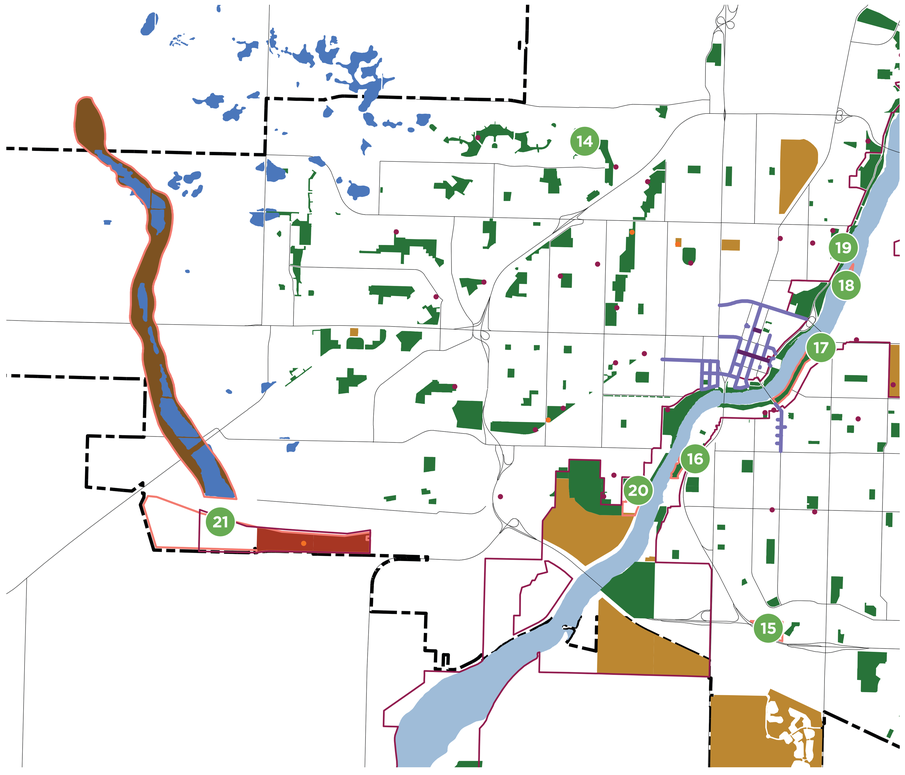
- naturalized dry storm pond surrounded by an off leash dog park
  - features an open grassy area for dog walkers, and an interior naturalized area and dry storm pond with restricted access
    - the dry storm pond receive storm water from surrounding neighbourhoods
- the design storm is 2 years, lower than today's standard of 100 years
  - the pond area is planted to prevent erosion

16. Gabriel Dumont Park

- a naturalized park with prairie and riparian wood land and passive recreation amenities

17. Cosmopolitan Park (Naturalized)

- considered one of the best bird watching sites in Saskatoon it features songbirds, waterfowl, beavers, muskrats, shrubs such as willows, dogwood and chokecherries and passive recreation amenities



18. Goose Island

- supports sandbar willow and other plant species that can tolerate annual flooding
- it is used as a nesting site for water fowl, and a congregating site for migrating birds
- it is undisturbed due to its proximity to the weir

19. Meewasin Trail System and Riverbank

- includes riparian forest and trail system for active and passive recreation, wildlife observation and nature appreciation

20. Sanitorium

- former site of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium, it is both an historic site and restored conservation area
- the building was demolished and only the grass bowl remains from the Sanatorium
- includes a wooded section

21. Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area

- planted to honour Richard St. Barbe Baker
- provides a semi-natural area and wildlife habitat
- includes a forested area, dog park, wetland, bike and walking trails

Q. In your experience, is our description of each location accurate?

Q. Do you think the boundary of the natural areas are correct?

SASKATOONS NATURAL AREAS

SOUTH-EAST

22. North Holmwood Wetlands

- contains permanent wetlands that collect year-round surface water, as well as ephemeral wetlands that have been cultivated during dry years
- being integrated into future urban development

23. South Holmwood Wetland

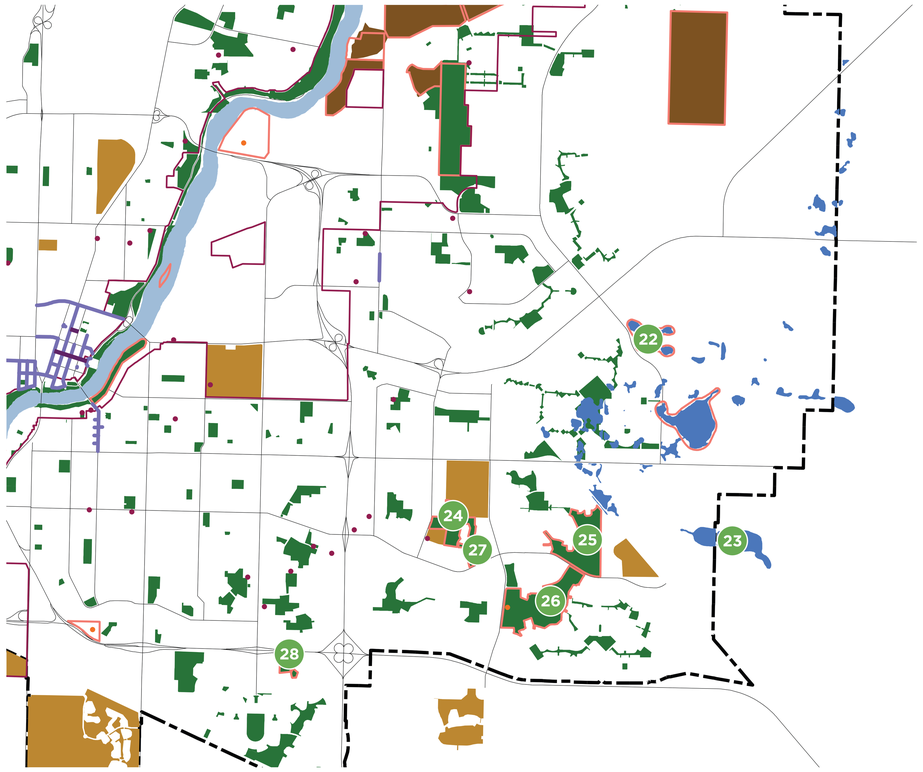
- contains permanent wetlands that collect year-round surface water, as well as ephemeral wetlands that have been cultivated during dry years
- outside of current development plans

24. Lakewood Park (Naturalized)

- a naturalized park that includes wetlands, wildflower beds, bird species (waterfowl), and interpretive signage
- contains the Wildwood Ponds that receive storm water from surrounding neighbourhoods
- the shoreline is planted to prevent erosion

25. Donna Birkmaier Park (Naturalized)

- a district park with sports fields and naturalized elements including wetlands, wildflower beds, wildlife and bird species (waterfowl)
- contains Rosewood Ponds that receive storm water from surrounding neighbourhoods
- storm water features include a planted shoreline to prevent erosion



26. Hyde Park (Naturalized)

- a district/multi-district park developed in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited
- includes sports fields and an off-leash dog park
- naturalized areas include wetlands and riparian areas, wildflower beds, native prairie grasses, interpretive signage and bird species
- contains Rosewood Ponds that receive storm water from surrounding neighbourhoods
- storm water features include a settling pond to mitigate sediment buildup, a weir to control water level and riprap at the outlet to prevent erosion

27. Heritage Park (Naturalized)

- a naturalized park including aspen forest, birds (songbirds, hawk, falcon, and woodpeckers), and wildflower beds

28. Mark Thompson and Patricia Roe Parks (Naturalized)

- heritage site includes remnants of the Moose Jaw Trail
- naturalized areas include wooded areas, walking paths, public art and bird species
- shrubs and aspen are encroaching on the Trail remnants

Q. In your experience, is our description of each location accurate?

Q. Do you think the boundary of the natural areas are correct?

SASKATOON'S GREEN STRATEGY

The Small Swale

City of Saskatoon

Green STRATEGY

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SUMMARY

Over the last 26 years, four ecological assessments of the Small Swale have occurred, one of which did not include any field assessments.

Currently, the NW 13-37-05 W3M portion of the Small Swale is used as the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site (the Site), where snow storage occurs in winter and materials storage and handling occurs in summer. Materials such as street sweepings, recycled asphalt product (RAP), and asphalt are currently stored at the Site. Furthermore, it is understood that the P3 Contract associated with the North Commuter Parkway and Chief Mistawasis Bridge allows the P3 partners to utilize the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site for the next 30 years.

In 2013, Stantec observed the Northern leopard frog, a federally and provincially protected species, in the Small Swale. Based on the habitat within the Small Swale, over 28 listed wildlife and plant species have potential to occur in the area.

Leks or breeding grounds of Saskatchewan's provincial bird, the sharp-tailed grouse have been observed in the northern extent of the Small Swale and in the Northeast Swale. Sharp-tailed grouse leks are protected by a Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guideline buffer of 400 m from March 15 to May 15 (Government of Saskatchewan 2017).

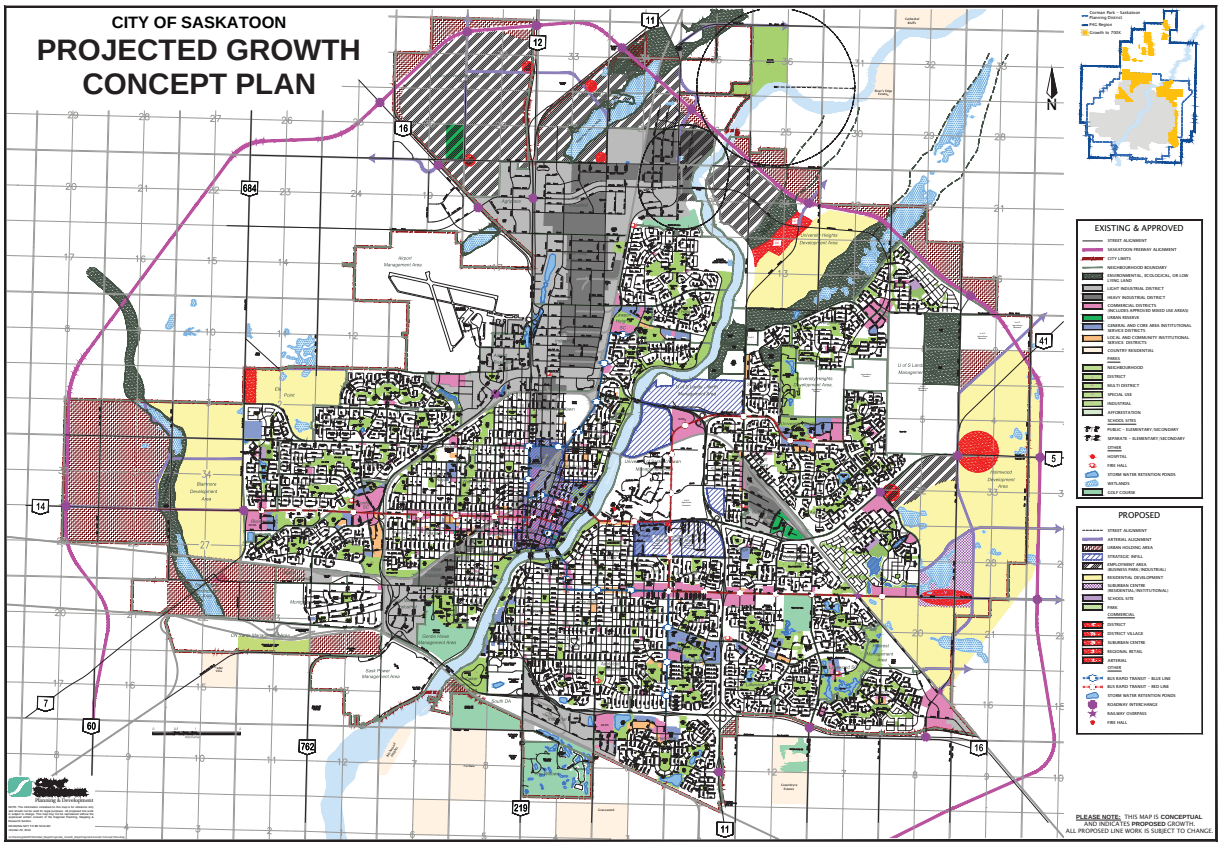
The Small Swale is a major wetland complex encompassing approximately 28 wetlands. In 2013, nine individual wetlands within the Small Swale were assessed based on functionality and subsequently received a management status of "Preserve" (Stantec 2013). According to the City of Saskatoon's Wetland Policy, wetland complexes are considered significant and have the highest priority for protection and preservation.

A land location inquiry using the Government of Saskatchewan's Developers' Online Screening Tool (2018) states that the majority of the Small Swale is heritage-sensitive (NE 14 and NW 13-37-05 W3M, Section 24 and E ½ 25-37-04 W3M, W ½ 30-37-04 W3M) and will require further screening by the Heritage Conservation Branch prior to development.

INTRODUCTION:

The Small Swale is a glacial channel scar, similar to but smaller than the Northeast Swale. The Small Swale contains several wetlands with a diversity of species and wetland permanency classes. The Small Swale is connected to the South Saskatchewan River (the River). The area is a natural drainage channel, approximately 4 kilometres (km) in length, between a meander of the River. The Small Swale is 162.6 hectares in area when the north and south connections to the South Saskatchewan River are included. The Small Swale is characterized by patches of natural trees, wetlands, and open grassland.

The Small Swale is located on the east side of Central Avenue, north of Agra Road and across from the Peggy McKercher Conservation Area, in the University Heights Development Area. Peggy McKercher Conservation Area located on the west side of Central Avenue. The Small Swale is located primarily within NE 14 and NW 13-37-05 W3M (where it connects to the River at its southwest extent) portions of Section 24 and the E ½ 25-37-04 W3M, and in the W ½ 30-37-04 W3M, where the swale connects to the River at its northeast extent. The Peggy McKercher Conservation Area is located in the NE 14-37-05 W3M. The majority of the Small Swale is owned by the City of Saskatoon and is outside of the Meewasin Valley Authority's current jurisdiction.


CITY OF SASKATOON
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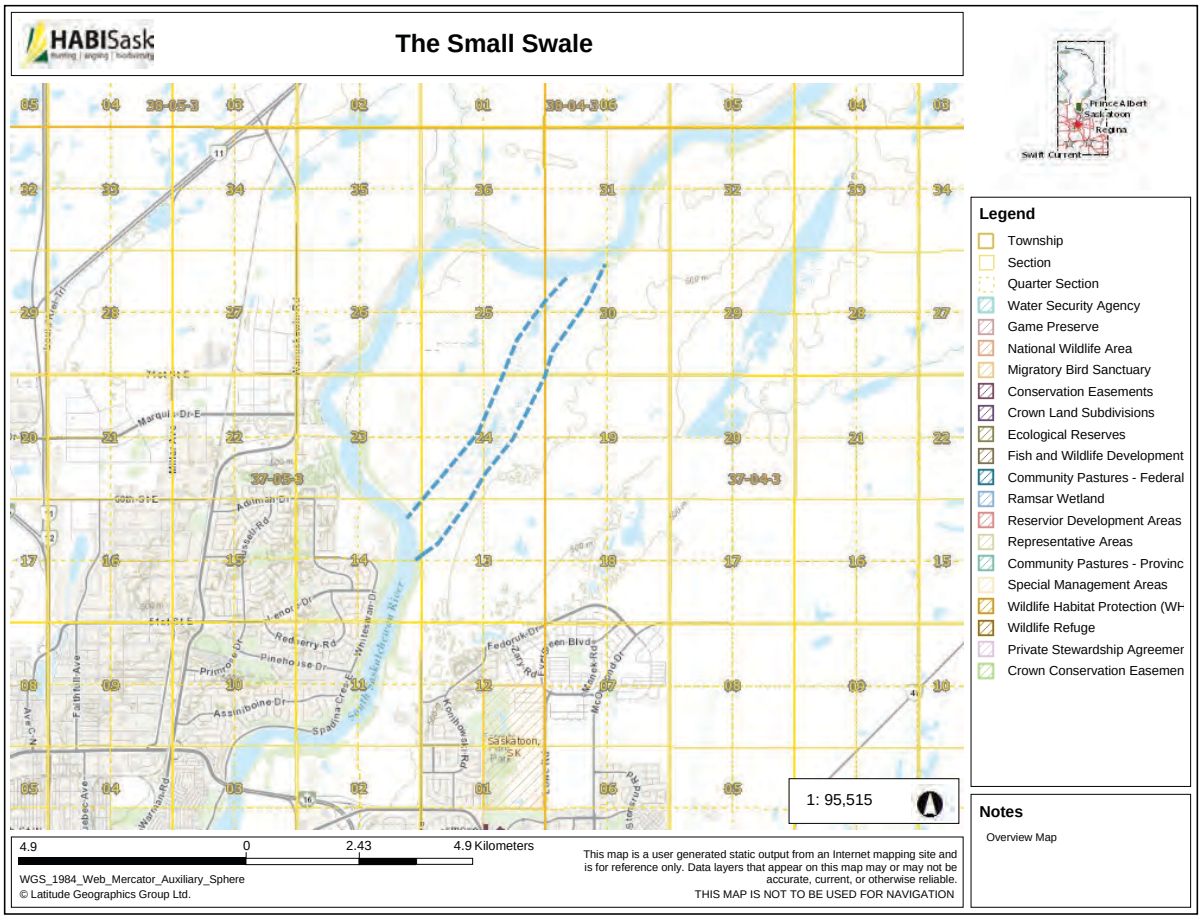
PLEASE NOTE: THIS MAP IS CONCEPTUAL AND INDICATES PROPOSED GROWTH. ALL PROPOSED LINE WORK IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.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The Small Swale
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National Wildlife Area
Migratory Bird Sanctuary
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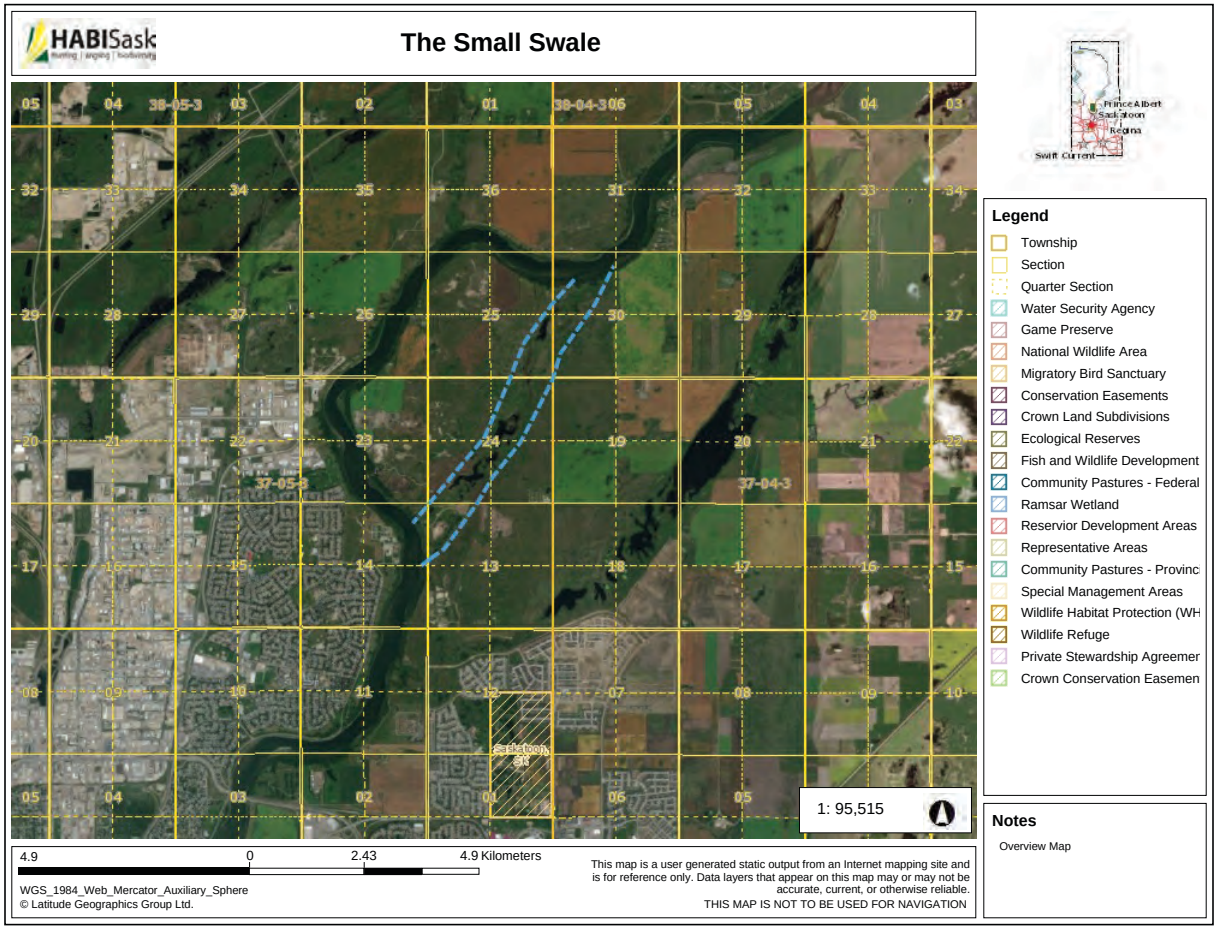
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Conservation Easements
Crown Land Subdivisions
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Notes
Overview Map
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Central Ave
Lenore Dr
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PREVIOUS REPORTS:

In 1992, Weichel was commissioned by the Saskatoon Natural History Society to complete a report titled, *An Inventory of Natural Areas Remaining in the Vicinity of Saskatoon*, which included portions of the Small Swale.

In 1992 and 1993, John Hudson, a provincially renowned botanist, was commissioned by the Saskatoon Natural History Society to complete vegetation surveys in the Small Swale and noted a wide variety of grass, shrub and forb species.

In 2003, Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) completed *The "Small Swale" Resource Overview* for the City of Saskatoon and found that the current land use was a combination of gravel extraction, pasture, idle lands, and residential. However, no field assessments supported this report and the Small Swale was delineated without including the south connection to the River and the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site.

In 2013, Stantec completed the *North Central/North East Natural Area Screening Study* for the City of Saskatoon. The main focus areas of the this screening study were Opimihaw Creek, the South Saskatchewan River, the Northeast Swale, the Small Swale, and a portion of the Hudson Bay Slough (Stantec 2013). These areas were targeted due to their hydrologic function, vegetation, and wildlife habitat (Stantec 2013). In this study, field assessments were completed and the Small Swale was delineated with the south connection to the River and the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site. However, these areas were not included in the study area and therefore not assessed in 2013.

CURRENT AND PAST USES:

Currently, the NW 13-37-05 W3M portion of the Small Swale is used as the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site (the Site), where snow storage occurs in winter and materials storage and handling occurs in summer. Materials such as street sweepings, recycled asphalt product (RAP), and asphalt are currently stored at the Site. Furthermore, it is understood that the P3 Contract associated with the North Commuter Parkway and Chief Mistawasis Bridge allows the P3 partners to utilize the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site for the next 30 years.

Snow storage at the Site began around 1997 and street sweepings have been handled there since 2006 or 2007 (Hippe 2018). The Site has been used as a handling site for RAP and gravel since 2012, when Roadways and Operations was told to move from the Nicholson Yard (Hippe 2018). The intention of Roadways and Operations is to phase out materials handling at the Site, with materials being moved to the West Materials Handling Site. Additionally, the North Commuter Parkway crosses the Small Swale in Section 24-37-05 W3M.

HERITAGE RESOURCES:

In 2003, a search of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Resource Record database for the region was completed and no known heritage resources have been recorded for the Small Swale site (Stantec 2003). Stantec also completed a high-level review of the study area, concluding that the heritage resource potential for the majority of the Small Swale region is low. The exception to this, is the area near the River, particularly within Section 30-37-04 W3M at the northeast extent of the Small Swale. However, a land location inquiry using the Government of Saskatchewan's Developers' Online Screening Tool (2018) states that the majority of the Small Swale is heritage-sensitive (NE 14 and NW 13-37-05 W3M, Section 24 and E ½ 25-37-04 W3M, W ½ 30-37-04 W3M) and will require further screening by the Heritage Conservation Branch prior to development.

VEGETATION:

Although some areas of the Small Swale are more disturbed than others, Stantec (2013) described all of the Small Swale that was assessed at the time (the north 2/3^{rds} of the swale) as native grassland and wetlands. The remaining area was not assessed in 2013. Based on a review of aerial imagery, combined with a field reconnaissance in October 2018, the unassessed portions of the Small Swale include seasonal wetlands, natural aspen-dominated tree stands, open grassland with high percentages of non-native species including crested wheatgrass, and disturbed areas associated with the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site (see attached Photos).

WILDLIFE AND PLANT HABITAT:

Several species of wildlife and plants have been recorded in the Northeast Swale. The landscape that includes the Northeast Swale and Small Swale has been highly fragmented; however, the Small Swale adds further wildlife and plant habitat and connectivity to the River. Together with the Northeast Swale, South Saskatchewan River, Peggy McKercher Conservation Area, Peturrson's Ravine, Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, Crocus Prairie, Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo, and other remnant patches of permanent vegetation cover, the Small Swale adds to the wildlife and plant habitat of the region.

LISTED WILDLIFE AND PLANT SPECIES:

For the purposes of this site management plan, listed species are considered those listed under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) (Government of Canada 2018). Listed wildlife species also include those ranked as S1 to S2 species by the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre (SKCDC), while listed plant species include those ranked as S1 to S3 species by the SKCDC (SKCDC 2018).

The Hunting, Angling, and Biodiversity of Saskatchewan (HABISask) database was reviewed for listed wildlife species that have been observed within 1 km of the Small Swale. Based on a desktop assessment (Saskatchewan Ministry of the Environment 2018) and 2013 field survey results (Stantec 2013), 22 listed species have been recorded as occurring within 1 km of the Small Swale. Within the boundaries of the Small Swale alone, 14 listed species have been recorded (Saskatchewan Ministry of the Environment 2018; Stantec 2013). In 2013, Stantec observed the Northern leopard frog, a federally and provincially protected species, in the Small Swale. Based on the habitat within the Small Swale, other listed species may also occur in the area. Over 28 listed wildlife and plant species have potential to occur in the area, including:

- Barn swallow;
- Blueflag;
- Bobolink;
- Bristle-leaved sedge;
- Common nighthawk;
- Crawe's sedge;
- Crowfoot violet;
- Early cinquefoil;
- Few-flowered aster;
- Hooker's bugseed;
- Horned grebe;
- Loggerhead shrike;
- Menzies' catchfly;
- Monarch butterfly;
- Narrow-leaved water plantain;
- Northern leopard frog;
- Pale moonwort;
- Plains rough fescue;
- Prairie dunewort;
- Pursh's milk-vetch;
- Red bulrush;
- Rocky Mountain sedge;
- Rusty blackbird;
- Short-eared owl;
- Smooth hawk's-beard;
- Striped coral-root;
- Wood lily; and
- Yellow rail.

Additionally, leks or breeding grounds of Saskatchewan's provincial bird, the sharp-tailed grouse have been observed in the northern extent of the Small Swale and in the Northeast Swale. Sharp-tailed grouse leks are protected by a Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guideline buffer of 400 m from March 15 to May 15 (Government of Saskatchewan 2017).

Meewasin

Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guideline Buffers:

Crowfoot violet (S3)
Year Round - 30 m

Loggerhead shrike (threatened)
May 1 to Aug. 15 - 400 m

Narrow-leaved water plantain (S3)
Year Round - 30 m

Northern leopard frog
(special concern) - Year Round for breeding ponds - 500 m

Sharp-tailed grouse lek
Mar. 15 to May 15 - 400 m

Short-eared owl (special concern)
Mar. 25 to Aug. 1 - 500 m

Yellow rail (special concern)
May 1 to July 15 - 350 m

Northeast Saskatoon

Species at risk:
SK Activity Restriction Guidelines buffers

0 100200 400 Meters

N W E S

Key to Features

- Meewasin Northeast Swale
- North Commuter Parkway
- Saskatoon Freeway
- Crowfoot violet
- Loggerhead shrike
- Narrow-leaved water-plantain
- Northern leopard frog occurrences
- Sharp-tailed grouse lek
- Short-eared owl
- Yellow rail

Disclaimer:
This map is for illustrative purposes only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of land-ownership, feature location, nor as a guide to navigation. This map may contain omissions or errors.

Data Sources:
Meewasin Valley Authority, 2017

Projection: NAD 1983 CSRS UTM Zone 13N

29-OCTOBER-2018

WETLANDS:

The Small Swale is a major wetland complex encompassing approximately 28 wetlands (Stantec 2013). In 2013, nine individual wetlands within the Small Swale were assessed based on functionality and subsequently received a management status of "Preserve". The Preserve category is for the highest- functioning wetlands. The majority of the wetland area classified based on permanency was categorized as Class III - Seasonal wetlands and Class IV - Semi-permanent wetlands (Stantec 2013).

The City of Saskatoon's Wetland Policy (C09-041) states that a Wetland Mitigation Plan is required when an Area Concept Plan or Amendment has the potential to impact wetlands identified as "Preserve", "Manage 1" or "Manage 2". A Wetland Mitigation Plan may also be required at the discretion of the Planning and Development Branch during any other development proposal that requires City approval, including the development of civic facilities and infrastructure and private or public utilities. According to the Policy, wetland complexes are considered significant and have the highest priority for protection and preservation. The Wetland Policy also states that significant wetland resources should be the primary focus of preservation efforts, while unavoidable impacts to significant wetland resources will require compensatory mitigation.

WEEDS:

During the 2013 vegetation surveys, nine weeds designated as noxious or nuisance species under the *Saskatchewan Weed Control Act* were recorded in the area (Stantec 2013). Noxious weeds observed in the area included absinthe, nodding thistle, Canada thistle, prickly lettuce, and perennial sow thistle. Nuisance weeds observed in the area included quack grass, foxtail barley, common blue lettuce, and common dandelion (Stantec 2013).

STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS:

Although the Roadways and Operations division in the City of Saskatoon is phasing out the use of the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site for materials handling, a snow storage site in the area is very much required, especially with the North Commuter Parkway now open. The P3 Contract associated with the North Commuter Parkway and Chief Mistawasis Bridge allows the P3 partners to utilize the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site for the next 30 years.

The Northeast Swale Watchers believe that the conservation zone of the Northeast Swale should be expanded to include the Small Swale (Northeast Swale Watchers 2015).

The Meewasin Valley Authority has shown interest in managing the Small Swale including completing rare plant surveys and managing invasive species such as European buckthorn.

PAST REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Stantec (2003) recommended the following in *The "Small Swale" Resource Overview* Report:

- Disturbance within Section 30, particularly near the River, should be avoided. This area remains in the most natural state and could serve as a potential environmental reserve, although small in size.

In 2012, Stantec made these general recommendations in regards to the Northeast Swale, and these are applicable to the Small Swale as well:

- Maintain existing terrain. Natural drainage patterns and topography are important components of the natural system and should be restored or rehabilitated should they be modified during development activities.
- Preserve streams, floodplains and wetlands.
- Minimize the creation of hard/impervious surfaces.
- Build in the least sensitive areas.
- Provide buffers or setbacks between the natural area and the adjacent proposed development.
- Direct runoff onto vegetated areas.
- Use appropriate vegetation for reseeding, erosion control, etc.
- Reduce vehicle traffic and speeds through the swale.
- Incorporate stormwater management controls: e.g., retention ponds and infiltration basins prior to release into natural streams, wetlands or lakes.
- Control litter (during and after development).

Stantec (2013) provided several recommendations in the *North Central/North East Natural Area Screening Study* for the City of Saskatoon:

- A specific recommendation of this report was that the hydrological connectivity in the Small Swale and the Northeast Swale should be retained to allow for wetland ecosystem services and other functions. Stantec (2013) included in their recommendation, augment this connectivity through development planning and reclamation of key areas.
- The Small Swale may be suitable for use in stormwater management. However, development of surrounding lands into urban development, despite the use of setbacks and development buffers, may change the hydrology and ultimately the structure and function of these features. If these features are used for stormwater management purposes, additional hydrological and engineering studies should be completed to better understand the functions of these wetlands and creeks so they are able to retain similar levels of function and structure.
- The overall guidance and intent outlined in the *Northeast Swale Development Guidelines* (Stantec 2012) should be used as a starting point for stormwater management planning principles for the Small Swale.
- Additional investigations are needed to better understand the opportunities to use these features and to develop specific recommendations for retaining a natural setting for vegetation and wildlife.
- Range and weed management plans should be developed within the ecological boundaries.
- Consultation with appropriate regulatory authorities over the management of listed wildlife and plant species, such as the northern leopard frog, should occur to develop site-specific recommendations and their integration into the development planning process.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SMALL SWALE – OCTOBER 2018

Photo 1: Looking at the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site signage with the access road, power line, and street sweepings and recycled asphalt product stored in the background.

Photo 2: Looking at the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site where street sweepings and recycled asphalt product are stored in the background before an area of natural trees

Photo 3: Semi-permanent wetland and natural trees adjacent to the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site. Stored material visible in the background.

Photo 4: Looking southwest at native tree stands on the east side of the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site.

Photo 5: Looking southwest at open grassland along the east extent of the Small Swale and Central Avenue Snow Storage Site.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SMALL SWALE – 2004 TO 2018

Aerial Photo 1: 2004 – Looking at the southwest extent of the Small Swale, which later became the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 2: 2007 - Looking southwest at the Small Swale from the South Saskatchewan River. Note the gravel extraction activities in the middle of the Small Swale.

Aerial Photo 3: 2007 – Looking southeast at the Small Swale. A road and storage area at the Central Ave Snow Storage Site are present in this photo. Note the Northeast Swale in the background.

Aerial Photo 4: 2011 – Looking southwest at a portion of the Small Swale. Note the increased disturbance in the Central Ave Snow Storage Site closest to the River.

Aerial Photo 5: 2012 – Looking southwest at the Small Swale. A portion of the Northeast Swale is located in the background to the left.

Aerial Photo 6: March 2013 – Looking southwest at the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 7: April 2013 – Looking west at the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 8: July 2013 – Looking north at the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 9: July 2013 – Looking south at a portion of the Small Swale including the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 10: June 2014 – Looking southwest at a portion of the Small Swale including the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 11: October 2015 – Looking southeast at the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 12: October 2015 – Looking south at a portion of the Small Swale including the Central Ave Snow Storage Site.

Aerial Photo 13: September 2017 – Looking northwest at a portion of the Small Swale including the Central Ave Snow Storage Site and the North Commuter Parkway crossing.

Aerial Photo 14: September 2018 – Looking southwest at the North Commuter Parkway crossing of the Small Swale.

Aerial Photo 15: October 2018 – Looking northwest at the Central Avenue Snow Storage Site and the North Commuter Parkway crossing.

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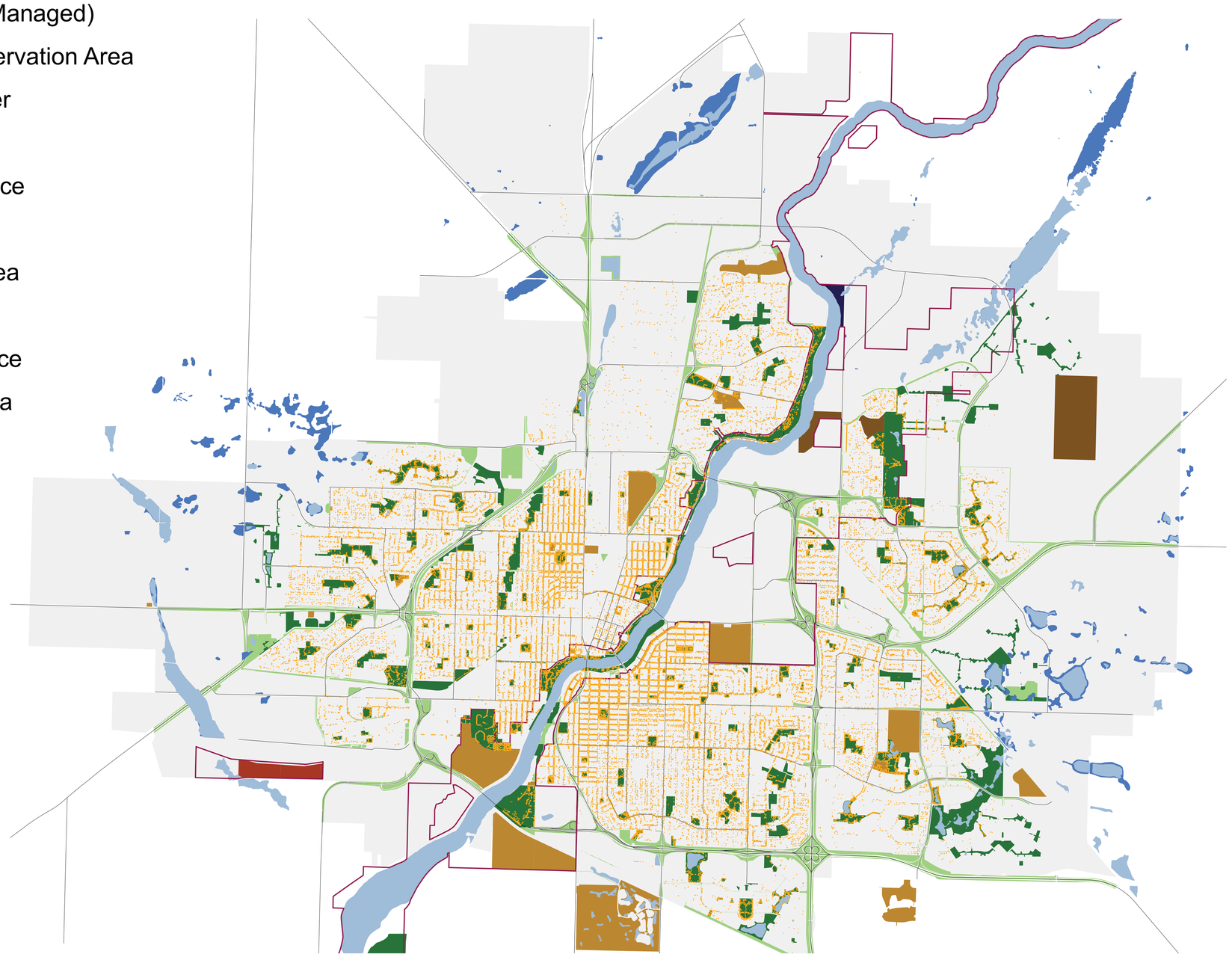
URBAN FOREST

- Trees (Publicly Managed)
- Meewasin Conservation Area
- Water/Pond/River
- Wetlands
- Special Use Space
- Grasslands
- Conservation Area
- Park
- Other Open Space
- Afforestation Area



RIPARIAN FOREST TREES

- Trees in the South Saskatchewan River Valley
- Unique benefits: conserve existing natural features, habitat, ecological services, erosion control and slope stability
- Unique challenges: large area to manage, presence of invasive species such as European Buckthorn, beaver cutting trees, development pressure, unsightly disease such as black knot

ROADWAY SHELTERBELT TREES

- Trees planted along major roadways, such as Circle Drive, and in inter-change greens.
- Unique benefits:
- Unique challenges:

SCHOOL GROUND TREES

- Trees on school property. May have been planted by the former Schools Plant Legacies in Trees (SPLIT) program.
- Unique benefits: Teaching opportunities, creative play, shade, reduce stress
- Unique challenges: limited space, knowledge and cost of maintenance

PUBLIC TREES IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

- Trees in the right-of-way including median trees, boulevard trees adjacent to the curb, boulevard trees along the back-of-sidewalk, trees in buffers.
- Unique benefits: regulate temperature of streets, reduce wind and dust, traffic calming, street character
- Unique challenges: pests and disease, lack of age diversity leading to simultaneous die-off, soil conditions are often too compact or nutrient/water deficient to support proper growth

CIVIC FACILITY TREES

- Trees that are on civic facility sites such as Leisure Centres, Cemeteries, Golf Courses, Libraries, Fire Halls, etc.
- Unique benefits: facility character, shade
- Unique challenges: pests and disease

PARK TREES

- Trees located in City parks (municipal reserve)
- Unique benefits: habitat, park character, creative play, shade, block unsightly views
- Unique challenges: conflict with adjacent land use, rough play, risk to people and trees in high use parks (e.g. festivals), lack of age diversity leading to simultaneous die-off

PUBLIC TREES IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

- Trees planted on public property in squares and plazas or in amenity strips of the right-of-way in business improvement districts, industrial areas and other commercial areas. These areas have a concentration of business, offices, and cultural venues. High pedestrian traffic in these areas.
- Unique benefits: regulate temperature of streets, reduce wind and dust, traffic calming, street character, increase business traffic
- Unique challenges: pests and disease, limited space, soil conditions are often too compact or nutrient/water deficient to support proper growth

FRUITING/ORCHARDS/ FOOD FOREST TREES

- Trees that produce edible fruit or other food crops and are accessible to the public to harvest and support wildlife.
- Unique benefits: provide fresh local food for the community, support wildlife
- Unique challenges: fallen fruit on sidewalks or other nuisance spots; public eating fruit before ripening, territoriality

REMNANT TREE STANDS

- Natural stands of aspen and other species, shelter belts that have been kept and incorporated in to open spaces.
- Unique benefits: conserve existing natural features, habitat, ecological services
- Unique challenges: tend to accumulate wind-blown garbage, can be a site for unlawful activities, presence of invasive species such as European Buckthorn

TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

- Trees on residential, commercial, industrial or institutional property.
- Unique benefits: increase property values, shade buildings, conserve energy, block unsightly views
- Unique challenges: limited regulatory tools for managing or protecting private trees, limited knowledge of inventory and cost of maintenance

City of Saskatoon

saskatoon.ca/greenstrategy

Green STRATEGY

Attachment 5

Highlight of Planned Official Community Plan Updates

The City of Saskatoon Official Community Plan (OCP) is currently undergoing a redesign and update to align it with the direction of a number of recent initiatives and policies that the City has adopted over the last eight years. This initiatives include the Plan for Growth, Saskatoon Speaks, as well as priorities and directions outlined in the Strategic Plan, among others.

A number of planned updates to the OCP are directly related to the Green Strategy. These include wording to ensure alignment with recent policies, initiatives, and commitments adopted or endorsed by the City of Saskatoon, including the following:

City of Saskatoon Policies or Initiatives

- C02-036 - Environmental Policy;
- City of Saskatoon Energy & Greenhouse Gas Management Plan;
- City of Saskatoon Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021;
- Saskatoon Waste & Recycling Plan;
- Principles of a High Performance Civic Building Policy;
- City of Saskatoon Recreation & Parks Master Plan;
- City of Saskatoon - Integrated Waste Management Annual Report; and
- The Green Strategy Guiding Principles.

Regional Initiatives

- South Saskatchewan River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan; and
- Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth Regional Plan (P4G).

City of Saskatoon Memberships and Commitments

- Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (Committed to the Compact of Mayors agreement on Climate Change in November 2015);
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection Program (members since 2004); and
- The National Zero Waste Council (City Council approved membership in February 2015).

In order to reflect the direction from these items, wording updates or additions regarding the following topics are being considered:

- Environmental Leadership
- Environmental Stewardship
- Watershed Stewardship
- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Soil Quality
- Integration with Urban Environment
- Asset Management
- Integrated Storm Water Management
- Wetland & Conservation Management

- Conservation of Natural Areas
- Riverbank Stewardship
- Urban Forestry
- Energy Conservation & Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Buildings
- Waste Diversion
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Community Involvement

Specific wording to align with the Green Strategy and its principles include policy or direction regarding:

- Environmental stewardship, including watershed stewardship;
- Regional partnerships and collaboration on environmental issues;
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Integration of natural areas into the urban environment and limiting impact of development on natural areas;
- Definition and use of natural assets;
- Definition and use of green infrastructure;
- Management of natural areas and assets as a key strategy;
- Conservation as a strategy, instead of preservation;
- Integration of natural areas into the storm water management and active transportation systems; and
- Environmental Reserve as a tools that could be used to conserve natural areas.

City of Saskatoon

ENGAGE

GREEN STRATEGY

Engagement Update – November 2018

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Engagement Purpose

Engagement Objectives

- To **Inform** the public (including all stakeholders) about the benefits and implications of a Green Network.
- To **Consult** the public (including all stakeholders) to obtain feedback on information included and recommendations made in the Implementation and Action Plans.
- To **Involve** internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and key technical experts in identification of options for consideration in development of the Implementation and Action plans.
- To **Collaborate** with the technical and indigenous advisory groups to identify options and select preferred priorities to include in the Implementation and Action Plans.

What We Asked

Engagement Techniques

The following engagement activities were offered during fall of 2018:

Education Campaign – What does #yxegreenstrategy mean to you?

- Stakeholder Group: Residents, Subject Matter Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Acknowledge and Understand Green Strategy and Guiding Principles
- Date: September to December 2018 (in progress)
- Location: Social media campaign
- Total Comments Received to Date: in progress

Pop-up Events

Saskatchewan Institute of Professional Planners Conference - Northeast Swale Tour

- Stakeholder Group: Subject Matter Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Application of Levels of Protection for Natural Areas
- Date: September 17, 2018
- Location: Northeast Swale
- Feedback Sheets Received: 4

World Rivers Day – Presentation and Activity

- Stakeholder Group: Residents, Subject Matter Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Acknowledge and Understand Green Strategy and Guiding Principles
- Date: September 23, 2018
- Location: Beaver Creek Conservation Area
- Feedback Sheets Received: 4

Planning 442.3 Regional Planning Class - Presentation and Activity

- Stakeholder Group: Students
- Topic of Discussion: Application of Levels of Protection for Natural Areas

- Date: September 26, 2018
- Location: University of Saskatchewan
- Participation Rates: approximately 20

Wicihitowin Aboriginal Engagement Conference – Green Strategy Information Table

- Stakeholder Group: Residents, Subject Matter Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Acknowledge and Understand Green Strategy and Guiding Principles
- Date: October 17-18, 2018
- Location: TCU Place, Saskatoon
- Participation Rates: unknown

Northeast Swale – More than an Urban Park - Panel Presentation

- Stakeholder Group: Residents, Subject Matter Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Acknowledge and Understand Green Strategy and Guiding Principles, Natural Area Standards
- Date: October 30, 2018
- Location: Saskatoon Wildlife Federation, Saskatoon
- Participation Rates: 90 audience members

Green Strategy Workshop #2

- Stakeholder Group: Subject Matter Experts, Internal Technical Experts
- Topic of Discussion: Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Management
- Date: October 29, 2018
- Location: Francis Morrison Library
- Participation Rates: Afternoon session – 44 participants. Evening session – 14 participants.

How we will use the information

The engagement activities completed to date were designed to seek feedback from participants to inform specific project decisions related to the Green Strategy, Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Management Plan initiatives. Feedback received from participants to date will help to inform the following decisions:

Green Strategy Decisions:

- Identify opportunities to generate public awareness and facilitate understanding of the Green Strategy and Guiding Principles
- Develop a Vision for the desired state of Green Infrastructure in the City for Implementation and Action Plans
- Establish Baseline Conditions
- Identify and select preferred options to address each Key Finding or group of key findings for inclusion in the Implementation and Action Plans
- Identify and decide which policies and projects to align with Key Principles for inclusion in Implementation and Action Plans.

Natural Area Standards Decisions:

- Develop a definition of natural area
- Determine appropriate criteria for identifying a green space as a natural area.
- Develop a process for determining appropriate boundaries and buffers for natural areas.
- Develop a process to guide how to apply requirements for avoidance, mitigation and compensation where it is anticipated that development will impact natural areas.
- Development of natural area categories and standards for development in and adjacent to natural areas.
- Develop criteria for compatible uses in Natural Areas.

Urban Forest Management Plan Decisions:

- How the community values and interacts (both positively and negatively) with different categories of trees in different situations.
- How the current processes and policies for urban forest management align with community values and interactions.
- Explore opportunities to align Urban Forest Management with community values.

Next Steps

Formal engagement strategies for the Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Management Plan will be developed in December 2018 to guide engagement activities for these initiatives.

Analysis of the feedback received from each activity is still in progress.

The following engagement activities are proposed for 2019 to inform Green Strategy decisions:

Acknowledge and Understand Strategy and Guiding Principles

- Pop-up Events

Options Identification and Selection

- Internal Technical Advisory Group Meetings
- Internal Stakeholder Small Group Meetings
- Working Group Events

Priority Setting

- Green Strategy Workshop #3
- Nature City Green Strategy Open House Event
- Online Survey
- Technical Advisory Group Meetings