Green Strategy
KEY FINDINGS

Biodiverse • Accessible • Sustainable • Integrated • Connected

Governance

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK
The Strategy provides an opportunity to review the City's organizational framework to ensure mandates, tools and processes align with community values and best practices.

REGULATORY TOOLS
Existing regulatory tools are not always enforceable/ compatible with one another or reflective of industry best practices. Using enforceable bylaws and policies, the Green Strategy will strive to ensure the ecological integrity of significant natural areas is conserved and enhanced wherever possible, and that these areas are integrated seamlessly into the urban fabric.

CENTRALIZED DATA MANAGEMENT
Centralizing the current data sets in the corporation will create more consistency, reduce confusion, and reduce the amount of work done by the project team.

DEFINING SERVICE LEVELS OF NON-PARK GREEN SPACES
Service Levels for non-Municipal Reserve open spaces (utility parcels, corridors, buffers, roadway greens) are not clearly defined, leading to inconsistent expectations for the maintenance and operating funds for these spaces.

Land Allocation

NATURAL, WALKABLE AND CONNECTED
Getting more people outdoors to interpret nature and connect with the natural environment has benefits for individuals and communities.

OPEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS
Current open space designations and categories prioritize active recreation and human use, but lack ecological or heritage focus. This create challenges for protecting natural assets and defining appropriate space usage.

IDENTIFYING AND PROTECTING NATURAL ASSETS
A City strategy needs to be developed in order to protect the natural areas. Currently there are no set criteria for assessing the value of natural assets and, similarly, no criteria for compensating for their loss, leading to inconsistencies from project to project.

OPEN SPACE PER CAPITA
Saskatoon rates low in open space per capita when compared with other Canadian cities. By reviewing our open space classifications, we have an opportunity to align with what others are doing and to incorporate best practices into how we designate, use, and budget for all of our open spaces.

DISTRIBUTION
Through the Recreation and Parks Master Plan and other city planning, open space is distribution and categorization needs to lead to consistencies across the city to improve levels of service, budgeting and land-use expectations.

BOUNDARIES
Natural areas do not align with regional, city or parcel boundaries. As a result communications and policy alignment issues can exist when attempting to coordinate across jurisdictional boundaries to conserve natural areas and their connections throughout the region.

TARGETS
Setting and monitoring targets to become a biodiverse community can help direct and prioritize work, show progress over time and lead to deliberate actions and rational budgeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVE
The 2007 Planning and Development Act allows the dedication of ecologically sensitive land as Environmental Reserve. This is a tool that could be adopted by the City of Saskatoon.

Green Network

CONNECTIVITY AND FRAGMENTATION
The degree of movement between open spaces can connect or fragment how well species are distributed throughout an area.

ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL AREA
Broadening the criteria for natural area assessment screening creates an opportunity to gain knowledge from community partners and develop a comprehensive assessment strategy to make informed decisions to adequately protect natural areas and produce high quality green spaces.

SITE SPECIFIC PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT
Proper protection management is necessary to look for site-specific sensitivities, such as light, noise and subsurface soil composition and layering to more accurately identify appropriate levels of disturbance and mitigation.

MONITORING AND MEASURING STRESSES
Stressors include the locations of common dumping sites, the spread of tree diseases, the impact of sound and light on natural areas and the impact of urban infrastructure—street lights, utility substations. As the City continues to expand, identifying the risks and challenges of mitigating stressors will help the define the desired state of integrated green spaces.

UNDOCUMENTED NATURAL ASSETS AND PARK FEATURES
Irrigated park areas, skating rinks, bookable/ rentable facilities wildlife crossings, remnant aspen stands and areas where rare species, species at risk, and indicator species of ecological health have not yet been inventoried or mapped

HISTORICAL RECORDS
Historical records access, such as aerial photographs, can help determine what changes have already occurred and potentially understand current issues, such as flood-prone areas.

DEVELOPMENT NEAR TREES
Trees provide great benefits to the community, including carbon sequestration, shelter, shade, air quality, heritage and water vapour; without proper policies and protection trees from nearby development may deteriorate within 5–7 years.

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
Urban infrastructure can support the green network and biodiversity with utility corridors, utility easements and green bridges to connect natural features.

Storm Water Servicing

USE OF RAW AND GREY WATER
Current regulations limit the use of raw water (river, ground or rain) and grey water (household waste water that could be reused without purification), but there are many options for using these water types that would reduce the demand on potable water without comprising human health and safety.

WETLANDS POLICY
Incorporating natural features into a project's site design and layout can minimize its overall impact and create opportunities to make planning, design and layout decisions and overcome site limitations.

INTEGRATED STORM WATER MANAGEMENT
(Design, Inspection, Enforcement)

Storm water is often released into the natural environment without pollution management, however with the use of green infrastructure along with policies, standards and guidelines nature can be imitated to filter and improve the quality of water entering the river.

INNOVATIVE SITE DESIGN THROUGH LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT
(Encourage, Enforce, Prioritize)

Low Impact Development guidelines incorporate current, innovative design solutions that mimic naturalized water balances to restore processes often lost in a built up urban environment.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY AND EVALUATION
Many of the Low Impact Development installations are pilot projects or the result of adopting new technologies/ innovations needing proper post-construction evaluations to share experiences and knowledge.

Heritage and Culture

HERITAGE PROPERTIES
Heritage properties can be made up of buildings, monuments and sites with historical value. Protecting heritage resources provides residents with links to the historical occupants of the area and establishes Saskatoon's unique identity.

WANUSKEWIN HERITAGE PARK
Wanuskewin has been nominated for a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. In order for Wanuskewin to be selected, the City needs to ensure that views from the park are protected and that the site is protected from impacts of adjacent development through buffers.

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Compilation of historical facts, events, routes, sites and intangible cultural heritage need to be completed in a comprehensive way that speaks to our community identity.

TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS SITES
Developing new policy and land use designations for sites identified as having traditional significance is achievable by partnering with those who have the needed expertise.

INTERPRETIVE SITES
Interpretive features are used to develop awareness and appreciation of the elements they represent.

VIEWS, VISTAS AND VIEWSHEDS
Key views, vistas and viewsheds are not protected by policy. Viewshed protection policies are used to buffer significant natural areas and maintain access to important sites and features for public view.