City of Saskatoon
ENGAGE

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY

Engagement Summary and Report

April 30, 2026

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ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In 2024 and 2025 the City of Saskatoon (City) engaged the community and various organizations in the development of the Climate Action Strategy to determine how we can further reduce carbon pollution and better prepare for the impacts of a changing climate in Saskatoon.

Saskatoon's changing climate

Saskatoon is already experiencing the impacts of climate change. As Saskatoon's climate continues to change, we can expect:

- More **very hot days in summer**, with projections showing a move from 7 days above 30°C every year (historically) to 21 days above 30°C by 2050 and 45 days by 2080
- More days with **poor air quality** as wildfires increase
- More **severe and frequent storms**, as well as **unpredictable rainfall**
- More **freeze-thaw cycles** in winter and fewer in spring and fall
- Increased **sudden changes between hot and cold days**

Why Are We Doing This Work?

The City created *The Low Emissions Community Plan* and *Local Actions: Saskatoon's Adaptation Strategy* which outline how the City plans to reduce emissions and prepare Saskatoon for a changing climate. By updating and combining the plans, the City can create a single plan to support community wellbeing and resilience and environmental leadership for climate action.

Even with significant reductions in emissions, our climate will continue to change; therefore, a more comprehensive approach to climate readiness is needed. The proposed actions within the Climate Action Plan include those reducing emissions (i.e., mitigation) and those that prepare the city for a changing climate (i.e., adaptation).

What We Learned

We thank all participants who provided their feedback for this project. Based on what we learned from participants, in addition to best practice research from other cities and internal considerations, City Administration has developed the proposed actions within the Climate Action Strategy which will be presented to City Council in 2026.

This summary outlines the feedback from all activities that informed the engagement goals for the project. For more information and detailed results please see the Engagement Report.

The Low Emissions Community Plan

Established in 2019, *The Low Emissions Community Plan* is a toolkit and long-term roadmap for achieving the City's greenhouse gas reduction targets for the next 30 years.

WHAT WE DID

Public engagement aimed to be inclusive and accessible, encouraging participation from residents with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives in Saskatoon.

Who We Engaged With:

- Advocacy groups
- Businesses and associations
- Building and property owners
- Community & non-profit organizations
- Community members
- Health and well-being organizations
- Housing providers
- Indigenous community members
- Property managers
- Subject matter experts
- Utility providers

How We Gathered Input:

- Meetings with various organizations and subject matter experts
- Workshop with various organizations and subject matter experts
- Community survey
- Information sessions

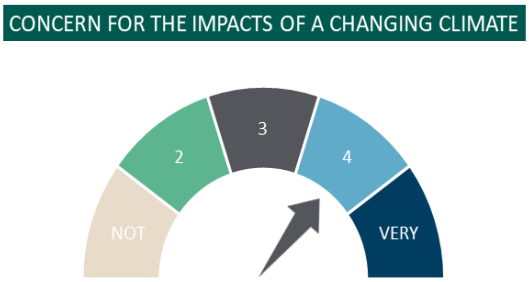
Questions we asked participants:

- How has a changing climate **impacted** our community?
- What can the City do to **prepare** for a changing climate?
- How can the City **lead** carbon pollution reduction efforts?
- How should the City **prioritize** the proposed climate actions?

WHAT WE LEARNED

Climate Impacts

- On average, community members are concerned about the expected impacts of a changing climate in Saskatoon (average rating of 4 out of 5).
- Participants consistently described the impacts as already affecting daily life in Saskatoon, rather than a future concern.
- Impacts were described as compounding, unevenly distributed, and closely tied to health, housing, and cost of living.



- Many participants identified that climate impacts are not felt equally, with Indigenous communities, low-income households, renters, seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness seen as either facing greater exposure and/or having fewer resources to adapt.

Common Impacts

Throughout the engagement activities, the most frequently identified impacts were:

- **Wildfire smoke and poor air quality**, affecting physical health, mental wellbeing, work, school, and outdoor life.
- **Extreme heat**, including overheating in homes, sleep disruption, and limits to mobility.
- **Winter hazards**, such as freeze–thaw cycles, ice, and mobility challenges.
- **Flooding and drought stress**, particularly basement flooding and outdoor watering.
- **Rising costs**, including utilities, insurance, food, and home repairs.
- **Mental health impacts**, including anxiety, stress, grief, and polarization.

City's Role in Climate Action

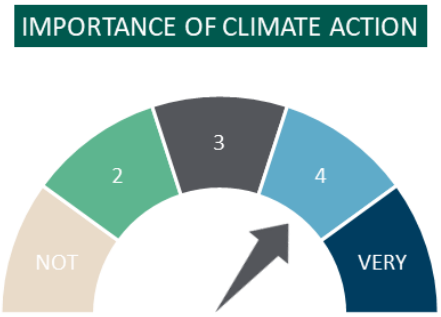
Participants emphasized that the City's role in climate action should be to:

- **Lead by example** (average 3.5 out of 5) through its own buildings, fleet, and infrastructure.
- **Deliver system-level changes** in transportation (e.g., redesigning streets to prioritize active transportation), buildings (e.g., require building energy benchmarking), land use (e.g., require green space and trees in new neighbourhoods), and green infrastructure.
- **Use regulation and planning tools**, paired with incentives.
- **Advocate** to other orders of government where municipal authority is limited.

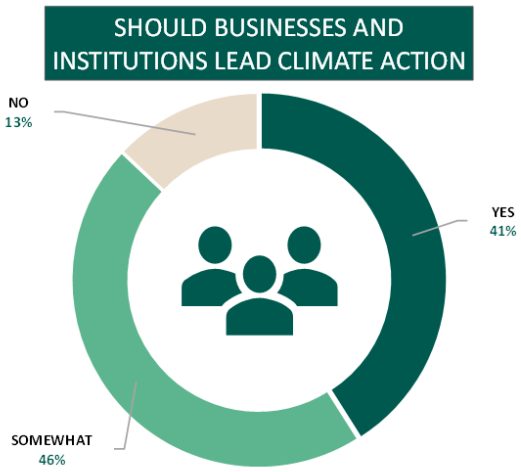
When asked what types of approaches the City should use to support climate action, participants more strongly supported the City investing in infrastructure (14%) and civic services (13%) that support community action, providing loans and financial incentives (12%) and supporting community-led efforts (11%).

Climate Action

- Most participants agreed climate action is important (average 4 out 5).



- Majority of respondents felt that investing in climate action today will have long term benefits (71%), but opinions differed on the pace, scope, and responsibility of climate action.
- When asked why climate action matters, participants stated that it is about protecting future generations, health and safety, making preventative investments and having an opportunity to build a better city.
- Many stressed that individual changes alone are insufficient and called on businesses/institutions (41%) and the City to lead system-level action, particularly where municipal authority is strongest.



Barriers to Climate Action

When asked which of the following barriers impact their ability to take climate action, participants provided the following ranking:

1. The costs are too high (29%)
2. They can be inconvenient (16%)
3. I don't feel like my actions will have an impact (12%)
4. I am hesitant to adopt new technologies (11%)
5. I am not sure what to do and/or lack information (8%)

Overall, participants expressed the following key takeaways regarding barriers to climate action:

- Most climate action **barriers are structural (**e.g., transit reliability, programs that favour property owners, etc.).
- Upfront costs, rising cost of living and not recovering investments are the largest barriers, since **high costs greatly impact action**.
- Without **system changes**, many residents are unable to participate even when willing.
- The design of climate action programs can **unintentionally deepen existing inequities**, even when the overall intent is positive, especially when they assume that all residents have similar financial capacity, housing, time, health, and access to information.
- Programs need to be **designed for specific community groups** to ensure their involvement, such as low-income residents and seniors.

Climate Adaptation - Prioritized Risks and Actions

Feedback consistently highlighted that climate impacts are unevenly distributed, therefore participants prioritized actions that reduce harm, protect those most vulnerable, strengthen essential services, and build resilience into housing, infrastructure, and public spaces. The following lists of risks and actions were prioritized by participants:

Category	Prioritized Risks	Favoured Actions
Green Network and City Design	1. Vulnerabilities of natural areas – conserve what we have 2. Biodiversity and species loss 3. Increasing invasive and problematic species 4. Damage to trees (i.e., storms, wind, drought, heat stress) 5. Quality and quantity of water/health of the river 6. Damage to other natural infrastructure (i.e., storms, wind, drought, heat stress)	• Increase tree planting for shade to reduce cooling costs • Support green infrastructure adoption in industrial, commercial, and institutional areas to manage climate risks • Require climate resilience in all City planning • Conserve more natural areas in new development • Review and update standards to include climate resilience • Update building code and zoning • Naturalize and restore non-park green spaces • Include climate benefits in natural infrastructure valuations • Identify and address gaps in the green network
Health and Safety	1. Health risks from wildlife smoke (indoors and outdoors) 2. Health risks from unsafe indoor air temperatures 3. Temporary closures of service organizations from weather 4. Increased barriers to getting around 5. Health risks from extreme heat on people outdoors	• Increase shading in public spaces • Improve pedestrian environments along major corridors • Increase water access in indoor & outdoor public spaces • Increase opportunities for outdoor cooling
Quality of Life	1. Access to housing and affordability 2. Increased barriers to getting around (e.g., interrupted transit services) 3. Impacts to ecosystem services and benefits they provide 4. Risks to food security 5. Increasing costs (cooling/electricity use, flood/storm damage, insurance) 6. Loss of access to important outdoor spaces 7. Increased isolation, barriers to people leaving their homes	• Develop guidelines for climate resilient affordable housing • Add resilience measures to Home Energy Loan Program • Embed climate resilience and efficiency into all City work on housing • Keep working with partners on extreme weather responses • Include lived experience of climate impacts into climate progress reporting • Provide opportunities to share lived experiences of climate change

Reducing Carbon Emissions

- Participants broadly emphasized that mitigation efforts must be practical, equitable, and focused on the systems that drive the largest emissions.
- Engagement feedback showed strong support for the City leading by example and making impacts where municipal action is greatest.
- Many participants cautioned against relying primarily on individual behaviour change, noting that cost, housing type, and access to infrastructure limit people's ability to act.

Supporting Community Action

Overall, participants prioritized mitigation actions that addressed high-emission sources/systems rather than just personal behaviours, brought co-benefits and were fairly distributed to avoid shifting costs or burdens onto those least able to absorb them. The following themes and priorities were provided by participants for how the City can support community action:

Better homes and buildings: participants strongly supported the City using regulation and partnerships to reduce building-related emissions, with the highest support for advancing higher building energy standard tiers for new residential and commercial buildings as a cost-effective path towards net-zero; participants also noted the value of industry-led knowledge sharing on net-zero design and construction, helping builders and owners build capacity, adopt new practices, and prepare for higher standards; participants emphasized phasing requirements over time, starting with large buildings, and pairing regulation with incentives to manage costs and support implementation.

Energy generation: participants believe the City should expand renewable energy generation by installing solar and other low-carbon energy systems on civic, commercial, and industrial buildings, while advocating for broader grid decarbonization; participants supported local energy generation as a visible way for the City to lead, reduce emissions, and increase energy resiliency, while also advocating other governments to support utility-scale energy development.; participants favoured enabling measures before introducing new requirements to combat costs as a barrier.

Zero-emission transportation: participants identified that the City should reduce transportation-related emissions by investing in reliable public transit, accelerating the transition to zero-emission City fleets and buses, and building safe, connected active transportation networks; some participants stressed that system-level transportation changes are necessary to reduce reliance on private vehicles, particularly given safety, affordability, and accessibility barriers to individual travel choices.

Waste reduction: participants supported the City enabling waste reduction primarily through system-level changes that reduce waste upstream, with the highest support for exploring updates to the Waste Bylaw that encourage reuse, repair, and circular-economy approaches rather than placing additional requirements on end users; participants also supported expanding services, including accepting more materials at the Material Recovery Centre and using tools such as construction and demolition waste audits to better target diversion efforts.

Water conservation: participants most strongly supported the City enabling water conservation through expanded use of non-potable and raw water, particularly for community-scale and outdoor applications; participants also supported expanding incentives that help residents reduce outdoor

water use through practical, low-cost measures (e.g., water-smart landscaping, rain gardens, etc.); participants emphasized targeting incentives to outdoor water use, where the greatest conservation and peak-demand reductions can be achieved.

Green network: participants supported the City enabling community action on the Green Network through a balance of incentives, partnerships, regulation and supporting community-led stewardship; some stressed the importance of grants and rebates that encourage tree planting, native plant and pollinator-friendly landscaping, protection of existing trees, and community gardens on both public and private land; formal partnerships and stronger planning policies for important to ensure natural areas and sensitive habitats are identified, protected, and integrated into development decisions as the city grows.

Carbon removal: participants supported the City exploring carbon removal through partnerships with research institutions and industry, emphasizing an evidence-based, exploratory approach rather than immediate large-scale investment; some emphasized the importance of piloting actions and a smaller scale and integrate the findings into future process.

Key Takeaways

Across all engagement activities, participants emphasized the following themes:

- Climate action is inseparable from affordability, housing, health, and infrastructure.
- The City is expected to lead visibly and target programs towards the biggest sources of emissions rather than expecting too much from individual behaviours.
- How actions are designed and communicated matters as much as what is chosen.
- Equity, transparency, and system-level thinking are essential for public trust.
- Overall, participants did support the City undertaking this work through the Climate Action Strategy and valued being engaged in the process.

Suggestions for implementation:

- **Lead with systems-level action** and clear City leadership.
- **Phase in actions** thoughtfully and **pair requirements with support**.
- Design programs with **equity and affordability at the forefront**.
- Enable community action through **incentives, partnerships and flexibility.**
- **Be transparent, adaptive and accountable** when implementing the actions.

Thank you to all participants who provided their feedback on this project!

City of Saskatoon
ENGAGE

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY

Engagement Report

1 BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon (City) is updating our climate action strategies by exploring how we can further reduce carbon pollution and better prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. Saskatoon is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with these impacts being outlined in the Preliminary Climate Risk Assessment and the future projections in the Climate Change Projections, Hazards, and Impact Report. In response, the City committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. *The Low Emissions Community Plan* and *Local Actions: Saskatoon's Adaptation Strategy* outline how the City plans to reduce emissions and prepare Saskatoon for a changing climate by:

- Helping transition homes and buildings to net-zero
- Supporting a variety of zero-emission transportation options
- Expanding zero-emission electricity generation
- Enhancing the carbon stored in our green network

Climate action is a comprehensive approach to climate readiness that incorporates both adaptation and mitigation. By updating and combining both *The Low Emissions Community Plan* and *Local Actions: Saskatoon's Adaptation Strategy*, the City can create a single plan to support community wellbeing and resilience and environmental leadership for climate action. The Climate Action Strategy will assess the impacts of climate change across the broader community and lay out actions to support community well-being as our climate changes.

From the summer of 2024 to fall 2025 the City engaged with the community and various organizations in the development of the Climate Action Strategy. Through surveys, workshops and information sessions we asked:

- How has a changing climate impacted our community?
- How can the City lead carbon pollution reduction efforts?
- How should the City prioritize the proposed climate actions?

Based on what we learned, in addition to best practices from other cities and internal considerations, City Administration will present the Climate Action Strategy to City Council in 2026.

1.1 Strategic Goals

The program aligns with the *City of Saskatoon 2026-2029 Strategic Plan*; in particular, its Environmental goal which includes the *outcome: "Greenhouse gases are reduced and actions to manage the impacts of the climate crisis have been implemented in a way that maximizes co-benefits for all."* Renewing and combining and *Local Actions: Saskatoon's Adaptation Strategy* will ensure they include:

- Updated information
- New commitments to a greenhouse gas reduction target of net-zero by 2050
- The inclusion of community resilience within climate adaptation planning.

The City signed on to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy in November 2015. This international pact commits the City to act on both the causes and effects of climate change by reducing emissions and building resiliency plans for Saskatoon's infrastructure and services.

1.2 Summary of Engagement

A summary of the participants, level of influence, engagement objectives, goals and activities are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of engagement goals

Participants	Influence	Phase	Objective(s)	Engagement Activities
All	Ask/ Involve	Phase 1: Understand	• Identify current state and impacts of the changing climate in Saskatoon. • Identify opportunities and barriers for climate action in Saskatoon.	Meetings Workshop
All	Involve	Phase 2: Refine	• Present and seek feedback on our findings and proposed actions for climate adaptation. • Identify missing opportunities, barriers and/or actions.	Survey
All	Ask/ Involve	Phase 3: Refine	• Present and seek feedback on our findings and proposed options for climate mitigations. • Identify missing opportunities, barriers and/or actions.	Information Sessions

A summary of engagement activities, activity dates, intended audience, and number of participants engaged is provided in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of engagement activities

Participants	Activity	Timeframe	Participants
Phase 1: Understand			
Select participants	Meetings	Summer 2024	82
Select participants	Workshop	Spring 2025	29
Phase 2: Refine Adaptation			
All participants	Survey	Summer 2025	1,150
Phase 3: Refine Mitigation			
Select participants	Information Sessions	Fall 2025	61
		Total Participants:	**1,322**

**Representatives from numerous internal departments were engaged throughout the lifetime of the project.*

1.3 Participants

The participants outlined below were identified due to their knowledge, interest in or their potential to be impacted by the program. These groups included:

1.3.1 Impacted Groups

Those who may be impacted or disproportionately impacted by the program and its outcomes, including the following groups:

- Community members who are impacted by climate change, such as residents, newcomers, students/youth, seniors, homeowners, etc.
- Businesses, organizations and associations within the following sectors:
    - Agriculture
    - Entertainment
    - Financial institutions
    - Food sales and service
    - Healthcare
    - Home builders, housing providers and multi-unit housing providers
    - Landlords and property managers
    - Manufacturing
    - Non-profit/community
    - Office
    - Public services
    - Realtors
    - Renewable and building efficiency
    - Research
    - Retail
    - Service/hospitality
    - Technology/science
    - Trades
- Educational institutions
- Indigenous organizations
- Utility providers

- SaskEnergy
- SaskPower

1.3.2 Subject Matter Experts

Those with experience or knowledge related to climate action and best practises, including:

- Climate advocacy groups
- Healthcare
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Environmental, climate and special interest groups
- Meewasin
- Ministry of the Environment
- University of Saskatchewan

2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Participants provided their feedback through meetings, a workshop, survey, information sessions and/or by contacting the project team directly. All engagement activities are described in detail below.

2.1 Meetings

The City conducted numerous meetings with various community organizations from July to September 2024, with a focus on climate adaptation and impacts.

2.1.1 Intended Audience

Meetings were held with select stakeholders and community groups. A total of 82 representatives from fifteen organizations participated in the meetings, including:

- City of Saskatoon Indigenous Technical Advisory Group
- Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City
- Energy Management Task Force
- Global Gathering Place
- Global Institute for Water Security
- North Saskatoon Business Association
- Salvation Army
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Intercultural Association
- Saskatchewan Lung Association
- Saskatoon Food Bank
- Saskatoon Heat Response Member Organizations
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Council
- Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority
- Wild About Saskatoon

2.1.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences.

1. Email
    a. Personalized emails were sent to select participants asking for their participation.

2.1.3 Analysis

The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Opportunities and barriers related to climate action in Saskatoon
- Thematic analysis of considerations related to climate adaptation and impacts.

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.1.4 What We Learned

Funding, Economic Development, and Green Opportunities

Participants emphasized the importance of leveraging provincial, federal, and international funding to support climate-related projects that also drive local economic development. Climate action was framed as an opportunity to stimulate entrepreneurship, job creation, and investment in renewable energy, green infrastructure, and resilient business models. There was interest in positioning climate initiatives as economic enablers rather than costs.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Position climate action as an economic development strategy rather than a cost
- Attract provincial, federal, and international funding for climate initiatives
- Support local entrepreneurship, workforce development, and green jobs
- Develop ready-made climate and resilience projects for when funding becomes available
- Support community-scale renewable energy and green infrastructure
- Embed climate goals into economic development and business support programs.

Indigenous Knowledge, Equity, and Reconciliation

Indigenous perspectives identify the importance of living sustainably with the land, taking only what is needed, and giving back to natural systems. Participants highlighted the value of integrating Indigenous knowledge into climate planning as a foundational worldview, not an add-on. Respect for Indigenous rights, cultural practices, and land-based livelihoods (e.g., hunting, fishing, and ceremonies) was emphasized, alongside the need for meaningful engagement, storytelling, and youth involvement grounded in reconciliation and equity.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Ground climate action in Indigenous principles of stewardship and reciprocity
- Advance reconciliation through meaningful integration of Indigenous knowledge
- Support Indigenous youth leadership and cultural expression
- Co-design climate initiatives with Indigenous communities and knowledge keepers
- Use Indigenous worldviews as a guiding framework, not a symbolic add-on
- Protect culturally significant lands and support Indigenous-led climate projects
- Use storytelling, art, and education to respectfully share Indigenous knowledge.

Climate Impacts on Healthcare, Infrastructure, and Daily Life

Climate impacts discussed included extreme heat, wildfire smoke, storms, flooding, extended summers, and fluctuating air quality. These changes affect agriculture, water supply, infrastructure performance, and local economies. Healthcare professionals noted that combined hazards, such as heat waves alongside smoke, are becoming more common and harder to manage, complicating public guidance and emergency response.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Connect climate action to lived experiences from heat, smoke, flooding, and storms
- Reduce long-term infrastructure damage and emergency costs
- Update infrastructure standards using future climate projections
- Integrate climate risk into asset management and capital planning

- Expand urban cooling, shading, drainage, and flood-mitigation measures.

Disproportionate Impacts on Vulnerable Populations

A strong theme was the unequal burden of climate impacts, particularly on Indigenous communities, low-income households, renters, seniors, newcomers, and people experiencing homelessness. Challenges include lack of air-conditioning, high-energy costs, poor housing quality, limited transportation options, and poverty. These factors increase exposure to heat, smoke, and extreme weather while limiting the ability to adapt or recover.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Reduce inequality by prioritizing those most exposed to climate risks
- Build trust by centering lived experience in planning
- Prioritize low-income households for climate resilience supports
- Ensure access to cooling, clean air, and safe shelter during extreme events
- Design programs that work for renters, seniors, newcomers, and people with disabilities.

Housing Quality, Energy Poverty, and Building Standards

Participants highlighted housing as a critical leverage point for climate resilience. Issues included inefficient buildings, lack of insulation, poor ventilation, and limited access to cooling—especially in rental housing. Suggested responses included stronger building codes, mandatory climate-resilient features in new construction, retrofits for existing buildings, and careful consideration of costs so that improvements do not disproportionately burden tenants or low-income households.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Improve housing as a foundation of climate resilience and public health
- Reduce energy poverty while improving comfort and safety
- Strengthen building codes for insulation, ventilation, and cooling
- Require climate-resilient features in new construction
- Support retrofits in older and rental housing with tenant protections.

Public Health Risks and System Pressures

Health-related impacts discussed included respiratory illness, asthma, COPD, long COVID, and increased emergency room visits linked to wildfire smoke, heat, humidity, and weather variability. Emerging concerns included vector-borne diseases and compounded mental health stress. Participants emphasized that climate change increases demand on healthcare systems and complicates service delivery during emergencies.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Prevent climate-related illness and reduce strain on healthcare systems
- Align climate planning with public health preparedness
- Expand public messaging on heat, smoke, and air-quality risks
- Improve access to air filtration and clean-air indoor spaces
- Integrate climate risk into public health emergency planning.

Emergency Preparedness, Evacuation, and Coordination

Participants raised concerns about evacuations caused by floods and wildfires, including sheltering displaced populations, maintaining continuity of care, and preventing family separation. Emergency response is challenged by funding uncertainty, coordination across agencies, and the growing frequency and scale of events. Preparedness, prevention, and clarity of roles were seen as critical.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Shift from reactive response to proactive preparedness
- Reduce harm and disruption during evacuations and disasters
- Strengthen evacuation, sheltering, and continuity-of-care plans
- Improve coordination across emergency and social services
- Track climate-related disruptions to improve future response.

Mental Health, Social Isolation, and Community Wellbeing

Climate impacts were linked to anxiety, stress, and social isolation, particularly among youth, newcomers, and those already facing hardship. Harsh winters, smoke events, and extreme heat reduce opportunities for outdoor activity and social connection. Participants emphasized the need for accessible indoor spaces, community programs, and culturally appropriate supports to maintain wellbeing during extreme conditions.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Address climate anxiety and isolation as real health concerns
- Use adaptation strategies to strengthen social connection
- Expand accessible indoor community spaces during extreme weather
- Integrate mental health supports into climate and emergency planning
- Support youth-focused and culturally appropriate wellbeing programs.

Communication, Education, and Accessibility

Clear, understandable communication was identified as essential. Participants noted gaps in awareness about heat illness, wildfire smoke risks, and available supports, especially among newcomers and those facing language barriers. Suggestions included multilingual resources, improved use of social media and print materials, and proactive public health messaging tied to extreme weather events.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Build understanding and trust through clear, inclusive communication
- Reduce misinformation and increase preparedness
- Develop multilingual, plain-language climate and health resources
- Use diverse communication channels (digital, print, in-person)
- Pair warnings with clear actions and available supports.

Collaboration, Partnerships, and Integrated Action

Participants stressed the need for strong coordination across sectors, including social services, health, emergency management, housing, and community organizations. Climate action was framed as inherently cross-cutting, requiring shared responsibility, clearer mandates, and aligned funding to avoid duplication and gaps in service.

Participants proposed the City explore the following actions related to this theme:

- Break down silos across climate, health, housing, and social services
- Maximize impact through shared expertise and resources
- Formalize cross-sector collaboration for climate implementation
- Align funding, planning, and delivery across departments
- Support community-led initiatives through coordinated City action.

2.2 Survey

The City conducted an online survey from July to August 2025. The survey included 12 closed- and open-ended questions to determine the impacts of a changing climate on our community and how the City should prioritize our climate actions. Respondents were able to write-in an "other" preference for numerous questions and provide explanations for their preferences.

Participants who were unable to complete the survey online were offered paper copies, and their responses were included in the results.

Figure 1: Survey poster

2.2.1 Intended Audience

The survey was intended for the public, identified participants and community members.

2.2.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences.

1. City Website
    a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation in the online survey.
2. Posters
    a. Posters (Figure 1) were displayed at City facilities, including Leisure Centres
3. Email
    a. Personalized emails were sent asking for participation and to share the information with their members.
    b. Numerous associations and organizations shared the e-invite to their members.
    c. Paid advertising promoting the event via the North Saskatoon Business Association and the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce e-newsletters.
4. Social Media
    a. A social media campaign ran for the length of the survey, which included Facebook and Twitter ads and posts to promote the survey.
5. Prize
    a. Promotions advertised a prize draw which was awarded to one of the participants in the form of a $50 gift card to a retail store in Saskatoon.

2.2.3 Analysis

The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most common opportunities and barriers
- Most popular options/actions and their associated level of support
- Thematic analysis of considerations related to climate impacts and the proposed options.

Mixed methods were used to analyze the survey data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.2.4 What We Learned

A total of 1,150 community members participated in the survey with 98% living or working in Saskatoon. The largest group of respondents were residents (61%), followed by renters (17%), business owners (9%), those participating on behalf of a Community Association (3%) and those participating on behalf of an organization or community group (3%).

Climate Impacts

Most participants were concerned about the expected impacts of a changing climate in Saskatoon (Figure 2).

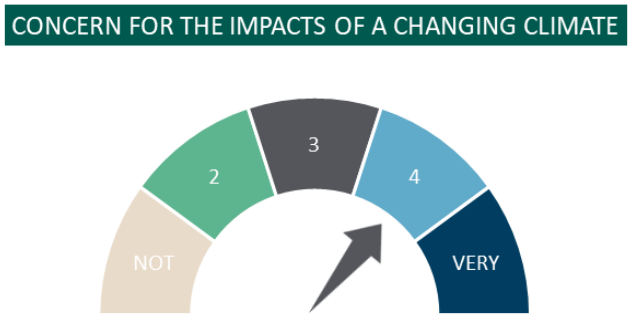


Figure 2: Concern for the impacts of a changing climate

When asked which of the following impacts of a changing climate have they noticed or experienced, participants provided the following ranking:

Importance

1. Health impacts from wildfire smoke (e.g. headaches, cough, throat irritation) (14%)
1. Wildfire smoke limiting or changing your activities outside (14%)
2. Difficulty getting around the city after heavy snowfalls (10%)
3. Extreme heat limiting or changing your activities outside (9%)
4. Increased slips and falls, or worry about slips and falls, on ice in the winter (8%)
4. More days with uncomfortably hot indoor temperatures at home (8%)
5. Storm damage or heat stress to trees, gardens, shrubs, or other plants (7%)
5. Health impacts from extreme heat (7%)
6. Mental health impacts (6%)
7. Increased insurance costs and/or more claims (5%)
8. Loss of or reduced access to parks and outdoor spaces (4%)
9. Storm damage to your home, car or other property (e.g. from wind, hail, or fallen trees) (3%)
10. Flood damage to your home (2%)
10. None or I do not feel that there are impacts (2%)

Other impacts that were provided by participants included the following themes:

Nature and biodiversity: the most popular theme; respondents were concerned about the loss of biodiversity, resulting in fewer birds, pollinators and trees/plants dying or becoming stressed.

Disbelief: some respondents felt that climate change was not a realistic issue and expressed their distrust of government and the information being provided; some felt that humans were not the cause of the changing climate and/or that our climate was not changing.

Water: respondents repeatedly mentioned drought, low river levels/flow, drying wetlands/ponds, and concerns about water security, including water quality and river health; some expressed their concern for the South Saskatchewan River running low enough to affect recreation (i.e., canoeing, boating, etc.); some participants are worried about sustainable drinking water and the long-term supply.

Winter hazards: some participants described ice, snow, freezing rain, and freeze–thaw cycles leading to secondary impacts, such as ice ruts, slippery sidewalks, and unsafe mobility.

Costs & affordability: a few participants expressed their concerns for the potential financial impacts caused by the changing climate, such as higher property taxes to pay for various programs, higher utility bills, and grocery costs.

Heat & humidity: a few respondents noted hotter conditions, humidity, overheating indoors, and heat stress on vegetation, including increased pollen/allergy impacts.

Pests and diseases: some participants brought up the increase in the populations of ticks and mosquitoes, expressing their concern for disease (e.g., Lyme disease) risk and increases over time.

Equity and accessibility: respondents emphasized the potential impacts to those with disabilities and accessibility needs, including transit/active transportation limits, reduced mobility (e.g., snow/ice, shade/water access, etc.), and difficulty for emergency response in extreme weather.

When asked how the impacts of a changing climate have affected them, participants provided comments that were summarized into the following themes:

Table 3: Impacts of a changing climate on the community

Theme	Impacts of a Changing Climate
Wildfire smoke and poor air quality	• Breathing (i.e., asthma flare-ups, coughing, throat/eye irritation, headaches) • Staying indoors more, closing windows, indoor air quality issues • Cancelling plans, events, camping trips, and outdoor sports • Needing masks/respirators for outdoor work • Kids' outdoor time, such as recess and outdoor events, getting cancelled • Trouble sleeping because windows stay closed due to smoke • Becoming a "regular" occurrence in the summer now • Increased indoor air contamination in older buildings where smoke seeps in even with windows closed • Radon exposure concerns from keeping homes sealed for long periods • Respondents in caregiving roles (childcare, elder care) reporting longer, more exhausting days when kids or seniors can't go outside • Smoke disrupting work schedules, including shifts cancelled or moved to work-from-home

Extreme heat	• Difficulty being outside for many people (e.g., walks, exercise, work, etc.) • Overheating in older homes/apartments, especially those without air conditioning • Trouble sleeping because nights don't cool down • Heat-related illness (e.g., heat stroke, exhaustion, difficulty breathing, etc.) • Pressure to buy/install air conditioning and trouble affording it • Not enough shade, cooling structures/places or reliable relief from sun • Heat worsening neurological conditions (e.g., multiple sclerosis, seizures) • Heat making food preparation more difficult in small or poorly ventilated units • Heat increasing dependency on others for errands, childcare, or transport
Mental health and anxiety	• Emotional load is a major issue, sometimes even bigger than physical impacts • Climate anxiety is becoming more of an issue for all ages and constant rather than episodic • Feelings associated with hopelessness, anger, burnout, and frustration • Worry for kids and future generations is a commonly held concern • Feeling overwhelmed by "business as usual", lack of action and the uncertainty of how to address the impacts • Conflicting views and polarization regarding climate issues • Climate grief tied to specific losses (e.g., trees removed, disappearing species, river visibly lower) • Emotional exhaustion from being "stuck between denial and inaction"
Restricted way of life	• Less time outside (e.g., walking, biking, gardening, sports) and limited activity • Cancelled trips and social plans • Switching from walking/biking to driving • Losing the "best months of the year" due to smoke and heat • Losing access to gardens as a coping and food source, not just a hobby • Inability to socialize outside with friends or neighbours, reducing informal social connection
Physical health	• Asthma getting worse, returning after years, increased medication use • Allergies, sinus problems, migraines, nausea developing or amplifying • Heart/lung concerns and other high-risk conditions • Heat triggering relapses in chronic conditions, such as multiple sclerosis • Increased sick days and missed work • Pets experiencing burned paws, heat stress, and reduced outdoor time
Winter impacts	• Greater dependance on snow clearing frequency and quality • Slippery sidewalks and fall risk, with some reporting injuries • Freeze–thaw creating black ice and uneven surfaces • Heavy snow making streets/sidewalks hard to use for days • Accessibility issues for wheelchair users, seniors, walkers, and transit users • Ice and extreme weather cause fear-driven behavioural changes

Higher costs	• Higher electricity bills from air conditioning/fans and cooling equipment • Higher water use/costs for gardens and yards in dry periods • Home insurance increases, with some saying their insurance premiums have doubled or jumped sharply with no claims history • Property damage costs (e.g., storms, flooding, hail) • Taxes/cost-of-living increases due to the costs of various action programs • Increased vehicle damage and insurance claims from ruts and ice • Increased medication costs due to smoke-related health flare-ups • Costs of retrofitting older homes (e.g., heat pumps, air conditioning, insulation) • Small businesses absorbing produce loss and spoilage during heat events • Respondents delaying life plans (e.g., renovations, retirement, moving) due to financial uncertainty
Outdoor water use	• Less predictable growing seasons for gardens and trees • Need to conserve water, use rain barrels, drought-tolerant planting • Crops and cattle affected outside Saskatoon (e.g., low rainfall impacting yields) • Concern about river water levels and future water supply
Water damage	• Basement/backyard flooding and drainage issues, sometimes repeated events • Hail damage to trees, roofs, gardens • Heavy rain events and intense storms • Mold/mildew concerns after water damage • Worry about future damage and insurability • More residents choosing not to invest in finished basements due to risks • Increased reliance on temporary fixes (e.g., tarps, pumps, barriers)
Polarizing views	• Frustration at governments and loss of trust for not acting fast enough • Some respondents calling the topic “fear mongering,” or a “hoax” • Breakdown of social relationships over disagreements with people who deny or dismiss the issue • Some felt that the City has more important spending priorities than climate change (e.g., crime, homelessness, potholes, etc.)
Equity	• The impacts are greater for some more than others • Unhoused people facing a lack of safe relief from heat/cold/smoke and needing cooling/warming centres with greater supports • Seniors and associated health risks (e.g., fall risk, transit reliance, etc.) • Accessibility infrastructure and services needs to change • Autistic family members needing predictable environments and calm spaces • Kids’ health and lost outdoor time
Infrastructure and Services	• Infrastructure upgrades perceived as lagging behind lived reality • Smoke/heat makes walking/biking harder; winter ice makes it unsafe • Transit reliability issues during extreme weather • Buses without air conditioning, late service, poor stops/curb access • Desire for better/more bike lanes, rapid transit, EV charging, and shade • Improved snow removal • Bus stops without shade or snow clearance creating accessibility barriers

Environmental and Natural Areas	• Loss of public trees reducing shade, cooling, and mental comfort • Loss of specific species, such as pollinators, songbirds and native plants • Wetlands drying and grassland ecosystems stressed • Increased invasive species pressure on gardens and natural areas • Gardeners actively changing what they grow, not just how they water

Climate Action

Participants expressed that climate action is important (Figure 3, average 4 out of 5) and that Saskatoon should be exploring innovative solutions to address climate issues (Figure 4, 66% in support). Most respondents also agreed that investing in climate action today will have long term benefits (Figure 5, 71% in support).

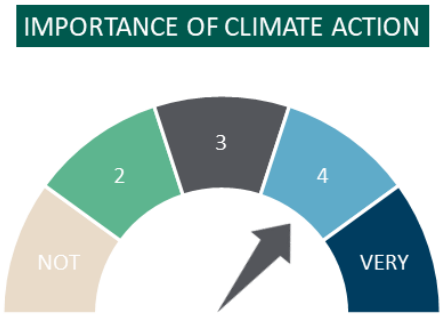


Figure 3: Importance of climate action

When provided the opportunity to explain why climate action matters respondents most commonly mentioned that it is about protecting future generations, ensuring survival and health, and acting responsibly. However, there was some division over costs, fairness, the effectiveness of actions, and who should act. Comments were summarized into the following themes:

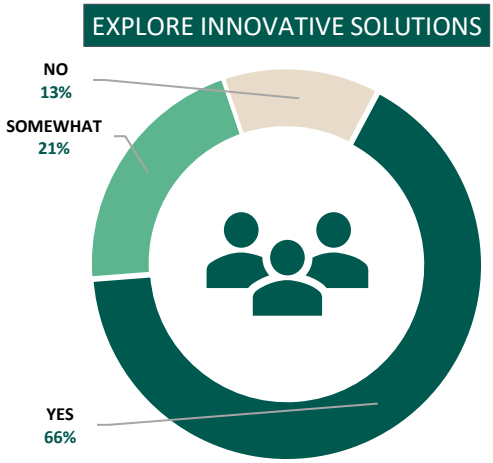


Figure 4: Should the City explore innovation solutions for climate issues

Protecting the future: the most common theme; many respondents stressed that they want their children and grandchildren to inherit a liveable world; many worried about leaving behind unsafe conditions, fewer choices, and permanent environmental damage.

"If we don't act now, there won't be a liveable earth for generations to come. I have nieces and nephews who are under 10 years old and I think about how horrible their lives would be in a future where the earth is no longer liveable."

Ensuring survival: respondents often framed climate action as essential for human survival; some described a stable climate as the foundation for food, water, health, and the economy; many participants expressed that without action there could be irreversible harm and the loss of basic living conditions.

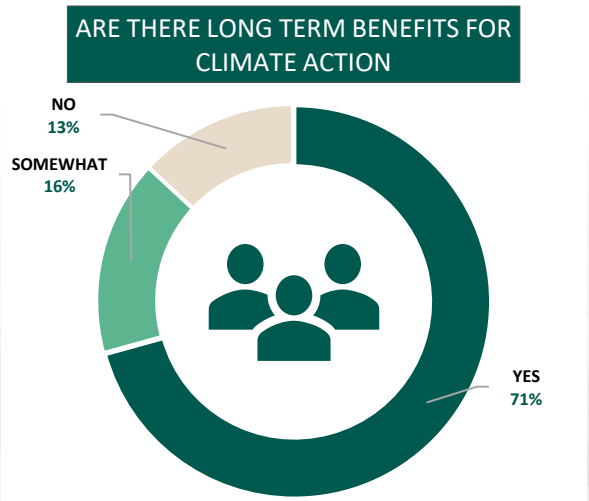


Figure 5: Are there long-term benefits in investing in climate action

Health: many felt that climate action protects physical and mental health; respondents felt that clean air, consistent temperatures, and fewer

extreme events were linked to everyday wellbeing and the ability to live active lives; many see climate action as preventative health care at a community scale.

"Climate action is very important to me because the impacts of climate change are already affecting health, safety, and daily life."

Responsibility: many participants viewed climate action as an ethical obligation; some expressed that humans have a responsibility to care for the land, water, and ecosystems, and not leave the planet worse than they found it; some of the comments reflected the participant's personal values, upbringing, or cultural teachings.

Protecting nature: respondents emphasized the need for climate action to protect the wildlife, forests, rivers, and biodiversity; fears associated with ecosystem collapse, species loss, and long-term damage to natural systems were commonly shared; for many respondents, protecting nature also meany protecting human life.

Avoiding higher costs: a common reason participants shared was that acting now could cost less than dealing with the potential future impacts; respondents pointed to insurance claims, repairs, health costs, and emergency responses as examples of inaction; for some, climate action is seen as long-term financial benefit.

"Any action we don't take now is going to cost more in the long run whether that is cleaning up after climate disasters or impacted health."

Lead by example: many respondents felt that individuals cannot solve the problem alone and that governments/institutions must lead, set rules, and invest in climate actions; many respondents expressed their frustration with the lack of political motivation, delayed action and/or performative action; some felt that municipalities provide services that are closest to daily life and are able to act on buildings, trees, transit, land use, and emergency preparedness.

Equity and protecting vulnerable populations: respondents stressed that climate impacts fall hardest on low-income residents, unhoused people, seniors, disabled residents, and children; participants called for climate actions that do not place unfair burdens on those with the fewest resources, with equity being central and not optional.

"The people most affected by climate change are the ones most powerless to stop it."

Urgency: respondents feel that time for action is running out and that further delays could increase risks and close off future opportunities; some participants felt that warnings have existed for decades without enough action.

Adaptation: a more common theme with respondents who questioned human-caused climate change; these participants connected climate action with risk management, emphasizing the need for resilient infrastructure, emergency planning, water and power security, and safer winter and storm responses.

Opportunity to build better cities: some respondents see climate action as a chance to improve the quality of life and modernize Saskatoon; examples provided included cleaner energy, better transit, green jobs, walkable neighbourhoods, and more efficient buildings.

Competing priorities: some respondents said that climate action is low on their list compared to other priorities, such as housing, crime, and/or affordability; a few expressed their fatigue or distrust for climate change in general, which has caused them not to adopt personal actions.

Opposition: a few participants expressed that climate action not important to them or only matters under certain conditions, since climate change is natural, Canada's impact is too small, costs are too high, or governments misuse the issue.

Barriers to Climate Action

When asked which of the following barriers impact their ability to take climate action, participants provided the following ranking:

1. The costs are too high (e.g. upfront costs, maintenance, etc.) (29%)
2. They can be inconvenient (e.g. taking the bus, sorting waste, or evaluating products before purchasing them) (16%)
3. I don't feel like my actions will have an impact (12%)
4. I am hesitant to adopt new technologies (e.g. solar panels, electric vehicles, heat pumps, etc.) (11%)
5. I am not sure what to do and/or lack information (8%)
6. I do not have the time or it's not a priority for me (7%)
7. I have not experienced any barriers (6%)

Costs emerged as the most important barrier, with participants noting that it intersects with affordability, housing type, and perceived financial risks. When asked whether they agree that climate action must not increase costs to residents, most respondents either agreed (40%) or somewhat agree (40%) with the statement (Figure 6). Participants repeatedly pointed to high up-front costs for building efficiency improvements and renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, heat pumps, geothermal systems, EVs, insulation, and retrofits, noting that these investments are often unrealistic amid rising living expenses and economic uncertainty.

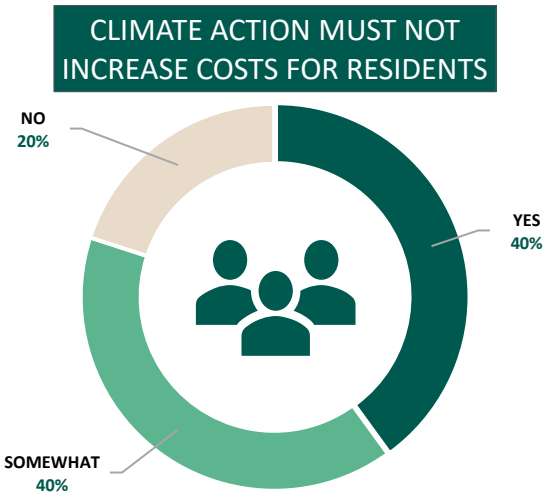


Figure 6: Climate action must not increase costs to residents

Many respondents, especially renters, seniors, and lower-income households, said they lack access to capital or worry that they will not recover the costs, making even well-designed programs inaccessible without stronger financial support. As a result, many participants frame climate action not as opposition to change, but as a risk-management decision, prioritizing immediate affordability over long-term savings. Many called for simpler, equity-focused incentives and systemic investments that reduce household costs rather than shift them onto residents who are unable to afford them.

Other barriers provided by respondents included the following which were grouped into themes:

Table 4: Suggested barriers to climate action

Theme	Barriers to Climate Action
Cost and affordability	• High costs for solar panels, heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric vehicles, home insulation, and retrofits • Rising cost of living makes climate upgrades feel out of reach • Rebates and incentive programs are unclear, insufficient, or hard to access • Seniors, low-income households, and people nearing retirement cannot justify large capital investments • Fear of not recouping costs before moving or downsizing
Renting and multi-unit housing	• Renters have no authority to install solar, EV chargers, insulation, heat pumps, or control heating/cooling • Condo boards and strata corporations block or delay climate upgrades • No EV charging access in apartment buildings • No green bins, composting, or recycling options in many multi-unit buildings • Townhouses and co-ops face collective decision-making barriers that stall action
Lack of supporting infrastructure	• Poor, infrequent, unreliable public transit; long commute times • Safety concerns on buses and at bus stops • Lack of shelters, lighting, and driver safety supports • Unsafe or disconnected cycling infrastructure; bike lanes limited to Meewasin • Car-centric land use and dispersed services make driving unavoidable • No grocery stores or essential services within walking distance
Disability, age, and health-related barriers	• Some limitations may restrict transit, cycling, or walking • Accessible transit is limited or unavailable • Heat, smoke, and cold make active transportation unsafe for some • Aging reduces ability to adopt new systems or change routines • Climate expectations often ignore medical realities (e.g., need for AC, single-use medical products)
Misinformation and confusion	• Conflicting messages from political leaders about EVs, heat pumps, coal, and clean energy • Claims that climate change is a hoax, fraud, scam, or “just weather” • Confusion about what information is credible or evidence-based • Distrust of government, science, and “green technology” • Fear that climate action is performative or politically motivated
Government and political barriers	• Perceived opposition to renewable energy and homeowner generation by the provincial government • Removal or cancellation of incentive programs • Continued investment in coal and fossil fuels • Regulations blocking grey water systems and alternative housing types • Short political cycles discourage long-term climate investment
Systemic vs. individual action	• Belief that individual actions are insignificant compared to corporate emissions • Frustration that responsibility is shifted onto households instead of governments and industry • Perception that framing climate action as “personal choice” obscures systemic solutions • Fatigue from being a “role model” while large emitters do nothing

Time and capacity constraints	• Lack of time due to work, caregiving, or young families • Emotional exhaustion, discouragement, and burnout • Mental health barriers reduce capacity to plan, research, and act • Feeling overwhelmed by complexity and scale of the problem
Safety and environmental	• Environmental impacts often prevent climate-friendly choices • Poor air quality (i.e., smoke) forces driving instead of walking or cycling • Extreme cold and heat make transit and active transport unsafe • Long winter exposure while waiting for buses • Fear of crime or harassment on transit route
Technology	• Concern heat pumps don't work in Saskatchewan winters • EV range anxiety and cold-weather performance • Battery safety, disposal, and mining impacts • Solar feasibility issues (i.e., tree cover, roof orientation, smoke) • Fear of investing in technologies that may soon be replaced
Energy limitations	• Coal- and gas-powered electricity undermines confidence in electrification • Lack of provincial action to clean the grid • Concern that EVs and heat pumps simply shift emissions upstream
Policy and regulatory	• City bylaws prevent greening, solar, or alternative uses of land • Recycling systems designed for profit rather than environmental outcome • Composting and waste rules inconsistent or punitive • Fees for compost/recycling seen as discouraging participation
Lack of leadership	• No clear, tangible actions presented to residents • Climate plans seen as vague, confusing, or inaccessible • Poor communication about what others are already doing • Feeling that the City does not support or match resident efforts
Social resistance	• Climate denial embedded in family, community, and political culture • Pushback from peers discourages action • Lack of shared norms around waste reduction, transit use, or energy conservation • Perception that climate action is "not normal" or "not valued"

When asked what actions or behaviours have they adopted or considered adopting in their daily lives, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Sorting and diverting all recyclable and compostable materials (16%)
2. Using thermostat settings or smart thermostats to reduce heating and air conditioning while away or at night (15%)
3. Purchasing goods with less packaging or from local suppliers (11%)
3. Using window coverings to cool your home (11%)
3. Signing up for emergency weather alerts (e.g. City's Notify Now) (11%)
3. Reducing outdoor water use or using a rain barrel for watering (11%)
4. Checking on family members and/or neighbours during major weather events (9%)
4. Regularly using active transportation, such as biking or walking for daily commuting (9%)
5. Increasing use of public transportation (3%)

Participants described a wide range of actions they are already taking or have considered taking to reduce environmental impact, improve efficiency, and build everyday resilience. These actions span home energy use, transportation, food, waste, water, yard care, and community involvement. Many respondents noted they take these steps because they "make sense," save money, or improve quality of life, even when they do not label them explicitly as climate action.

Table 5: Suggested actions to reduce environmental impacts, improve efficiency and build resilience

Theme	Actions to Reduce Impacts
Energy efficiency	• Installing solar panels (e.g., rooftop systems; joining solar co-ops; applying for solar) • Deep insulation upgrades (e.g., attic, walls, basements, triple-pane windows, insulated blinds, cellular blinds) • Installing efficient furnaces, heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters • Building or living in passive houses or net-zero-ready homes • Switching to LED lighting, efficient showerheads, Energy Star appliances • Managing indoor heat without AC (e.g., blinds closed during day, windows open at night, fans instead of AC) • Drying clothes outdoors or on racks instead of using dryers • Unplugging appliances and minimizing standby power use
Renewable and low-carbon energy	• Electric vehicles (EVs) • Hybrid or plug-in hybrid vehicles • E-bikes and electric car-share services • Geothermal heating/cooling • Wind generation (i.e., small personal windmill) • Supporting renewable energy financially (e.g., solar co-ops, offsets) • Advocating for renewables on public and institutional buildings
Transportation	• Carpooling with partners, coworkers, family • Reducing driving by bundling errands into one trip per week • Walking or biking when possible • Using public transit where feasible with safety/reliability limits • Working from home to reduce commuting • Keeping older gas vehicles but driving them less • Reducing or eliminating air travel • Choosing local destinations for vacations and activities
Consumption	• Buying less overall and reducing consumerism • Purchasing second-hand clothing and household goods • Repairing, mending, and reusing items • Avoiding new electronics; buying refurbished instead • Choosing products with less packaging • Using refill services and reusable household containers • Running errands together to reduce trips
Food security	• Growing food at home (i.e., gardens, community gardens) • Preserving food (e.g., canning, storing) • Eating less meat, especially red meat • Purchasing local food (e.g., produce, meat) to reduce transport emissions • Supporting local food co-ops and farmers • Reducing food waste by shopping less frequently • Stockpiling food for resilience during disruptions

Waste reduction	• Composting (i.e., backyard, green bins where available) • Using personal compost barrels • Recycling scrap paper, organics, and household waste • Asking neighbours to share recycling access when unavailable • Reducing garbage pickup frequency • Declining straws and single-use items • Using reusable bags, mugs, containers • Picking up litter and participating in neighbourhood clean-ups
Water conservation	• Using rain barrels • Capturing grey water for irrigation or flushing toilets • Reusing bath or vegetable water for gardens • Reducing indoor and outdoor water use • Landscaping to reduce runoff (e.g., swales, soil improvement) • Installing backflow protectors and sump pumps • Improving soil with compost and leaf mulch to retain moisture
Outdoors and yard	• Replacing lawns with native plants, pollinator gardens, shrubs, trees, clover lawns, or xeriscaping • Cutting grass taller or removing lawns entirely • Re-wilding yards • Planting trees for shade and cooling • Avoiding herbicides and pesticides • Using leaves as mulch • Advocating for more tree planting and urban forest protection
Behavioural	• Turning off lights when not needed • Reducing device ownership • Refusing decorative lighting (e.g., Christmas lights) • Being “energy-conscious” day-to-day • Managing heat through passive strategies instead of mechanical cooling • Choosing reusable personal care products (e.g., shampoo bars)
Advocacy and leadership	• Volunteering for environmental or climate groups • Participating in tree planting and afforestation events • Organizing or joining local climate groups • Teaching climate and sustainability concepts (formally and informally) • Acting as a role model in their community • Lobbying City Council and other governments • Writing letters, signing petitions, voting for climate-friendly candidates • Donating to or financially supporting environmental organizations • Advocating for better transit, cycling infrastructure, and city policies
Emergency preparedness	• Keeping extra food and water on hand • Planning for power outages (e.g., wood stoves, generators, fuel storage) • Improving home flood protection • Considering community shelter networks • Asking about City plans for extended outages and emergencies
Financial	• Paying for carbon offsets • Supporting climate-aligned businesses and financial institutions • Choosing local businesses over large/online retailers • Investing time or money in collective solutions (e.g., co-ops, shared systems)

Improvements and Investments

When asked what improvements or investments have they made or considered making, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Upgrading fixtures and appliances to conserve energy and water (17%)
2. Reducing your outdoor watering needs (16%)
3. Improving indoor air quality during periods of heavy wildfire smoke (15%)
3. Increasing shading around your property (12%)
5. Reducing the risk of flooding on your property (10%)
6. Installing a heat pump and/or high efficiency furnace (8%)
6. Installing solar panels (8%)
7. Purchasing an electric vehicle (7%)
8. None of the above (4%)

Participants were asked to identify any other improvements or investments they have made or considered making. Overall, participants who were able to make improvements or investments demonstrated strong commitment through practical, often long-term actions focused on efficiency, cost savings, and resilience. Common investments included home energy upgrades (insulation, windows, furnaces, heat pumps), renewable energy (solar panels or solar co-ops), lower-emission vehicles (EVs, hybrids), and yard and water-management changes such as xeriscaping, native planting, and rain barrels. Many participants emphasized that these decisions were motivated by comfort, affordability, and “common sense” to improve our environment.

Numerous participants expressed that the building characteristics and design of a home (i.e., year built, materials, bungalow vs. two story, etc.), costs, and the associated regulations determine who can invest in improvements and does not necessarily reflect a lack of motivation or interest by the owner. Cost remains one of the most important factors, especially for larger upgrades such as solar, geothermal, heat pumps, and deep retrofits. Some participants felt that even if a property owner wanted to make efficiency upgrades, their decision is heavily influenced by whether City regulations and processes allow, encourage, or complicate those improvements. For an example, one participant suggested that if efficiency upgrades require complex permits, long approval times, or costly compliance steps, property owners may delay or abandon improvements. Also, current building codes and zoning regulations may limit what types of upgrades are allowed, especially for older buildings, heritage properties, or multi-unit housing, resulting in some owners finding the improvements to be technically or financially impractical.

Although homeowners described having already completed many upgrades, renters, condo owners, and townhouse residents repeatedly stated that they were largely unable to act despite strong interest. Many renters, condo owners, and townhouse residents said they were unable to install solar panels, heat pumps, EV chargers, insulation, or water-saving systems because they lack decision-making authority, face condo board restrictions, or cannot secure landlord approval. Several participants noted they had made these same upgrades in the past when they owned a home, or would do so immediately if ownership, bylaws, and finances allowed, highlighting that structural constraints, not lack of motivation, are the primary barrier.

Other improvements or investments provided by participants included the following themes:

Table 6: Other suggestions for building efficiency improvements and investments.

Theme	Actions for Building Efficiency
Home efficiency and building upgrades	• Triple-pane or high-efficiency window replacements (including patio doors, glazing, solar coatings) • Additional insulation (e.g., attics, basements, walls, cellulose insulation) • High-efficiency furnaces • Heat pumps and heat-pump water heaters • Solar air-heating systems • LED lighting upgrades • Energy-efficient appliances • Cellular or thermal blinds/curtains to manage heat and cooling • Designing or building new energy-efficient or net-zero-ready homes • Installing low-flow fixtures (e.g., showers, toilets)
Renewable and low-carbon energy	• Installing rooftop solar panels • Investing in or purchasing shares in solar co-operatives • Exploring or installing geothermal heating/cooling • Installing or considering small-scale wind systems – (*Out of scope*) • Supporting renewable electricity providers • Installing air purifiers and HEPA filtration for indoor air quality
Transportation	• Electric vehicles • Hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles • Fuel-efficient vehicles to replace older models • E-bikes and bicycles for daily transportation • Bikes and equipment for year-round cycling • Participation in solar-powered or electric car-share programs • Transitioning to bike-only or bike-primary households • Purchasing cargo bikes or bikes for hauling • Investing in cycling gear for winter and all-season use
Outdoors and yard	• Xeriscaping and drought-tolerant landscaping • Replacing lawns with native plants, clover, and/or pollinator gardens • Re-wilding yards and eliminating grass entirely • Planting fruit trees and native species • Installing rain barrels • Installing underground irrigation systems for targeted water use • Improving soil health for bioretention and water absorption
Water management	• Installing sump pumps and backflow protectors • Regrading properties to reduce flooding • Removing paved driveways and replacing them with permeable surfaces • Considering or planning grey-water reuse systems, where regulations allow • Reducing indoor and outdoor water use through infrastructure changes
Waste reduction	• Composting systems (including personal compost barrels) • Switching to reusable products (e.g., beeswax wraps, reusable containers) • Reducing bin pickup frequency through waste reduction • Purchasing recycling and waste-sorting equipment • Removing lawns to reduce green-waste output

Lifestyle and Consumption	• Buying fewer goods overall and shifting away from consumerism • Purchasing second-hand items instead of new • Investing in durable goods to avoid repeat purchases • Prioritizing local products and services • Reducing travel and discretionary spending tied to fuel use • Purchasing wool and thermal clothing to allow lower indoor temperatures
Emergency preparedness	• Wood-burning stoves or fireplaces to reduce gas use • Natural gas backup generators • Extra fuel storage for winter resilience • Emergency preparedness measures tied to power outages and extreme weather
Financial	• Using the City's Home Energy Loan Program for insulation/energy upgrades • Applying for incentive programs • Investing personal funds in upgrades primarily to reduce long-term costs • Supporting environmental organizations through donations and memberships

City Supporting Actions

Participants slightly favored (average 3.5 out of 5) the City prioritizing leading by example by making changes to City infrastructure and operations over supporting the community to make changes. When asked what types of approaches the City should use to support community climate action, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Investing in infrastructure that supports community action (e.g. solar farms, multi-use paths, electric vehicle chargers) (14%)
2. Investing in civic services that support community action (e.g. improved transit, expanded waste diversion options) (13%)
3. Providing loans and financial incentives (e.g. Home Energy Loan Program, rebates for rain barrels and tree planting) (12%)
4. Supporting community-led efforts (e.g. grants for organizations to act) (11%)
5. Using regulations or bylaws to require certain actions (e.g. trees planted, energy efficiency, organic composting by businesses) (10%)
5. Utility fee structures that deter waste of resources (e.g. rates that increase with consumption for water, electricity and waste disposal) (10%)
5. Delivering educational programs (e.g. water/energy efficiency in homes) (10%)
6. Supporting business/industry-led efforts and partnerships (e.g. support industry-led knowledge exchange) (9%)
7. Using bans to prohibit activities (e.g. landfill bans, EV zones) (7%)
8. None, there is no need to support climate action in the community (2%)

When asked what other ways the City can support community climate action, many participants want the City to focus on systemic, structural changes (i.e., transportation, efficiency of public buildings, sustainable land use, business accountability, etc.) rather than relying primarily on individuals to change. Many participants felt that large systematic and city-wide changes would have a greater impact. Most participants either agreed (41%) or somewhat agreed (46%) that businesses and institutions should be leading climate initiatives, and not individuals (Figure 7).

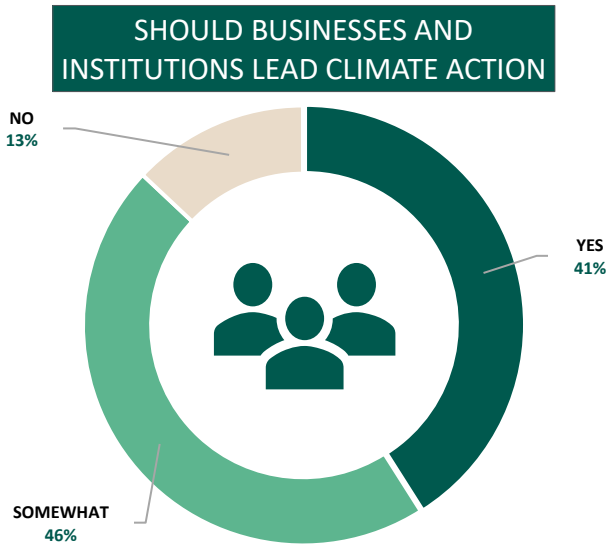


Figure 7: Should businesses and institutions lead climate action

Overall participants supported safe alternatives to driving, equitable program design, higher standards for development, and incentives that make climate-friendly choices more affordable and fairer. Some participants were apprehensive towards punitive measures, since they could increase cost-of-living pressures for property owners and thereby tenants.

Suggestions for how the City can support community climate action included the following themes:

Table 7: How the City can support community climate action

Theme	How the City Can Support Climate Action
Influence	• Advocate more forcefully to the provincial and federal governments for emissions reduction, renewable energy, and grid decarbonization • Challenge provincial inaction, including legal or regulatory action where appropriate • Advocate for SaskPower and utilities to accelerate renewable energy build-out • Coordinate climate action across all three levels of government to avoid misalignment
Improve public transit	• Invest in reliable, safe and frequent city-wide public transit • More frequent and reliable bus service across the city, especially outside the downtown and university corridors, such as north of 33rd Street • Improved safety for transit users and drivers • Lower fares and better shelters • Bus Rapid Transit system, electrified buses, and long-term planning for light rail or tram systems • Transit routes designed for trips beyond downtown

Improve active transportation	• Build protected, physically separated bike lanes city-wide • Clear bike lanes quickly after snow events • Lower residential speed limits (30–40 km/h) and implement traffic calming • Create pedestrian-only streets, car-free days, and shared spaces in summer • Remove cars from shared pathways and improve crossings • Enforce no-idling bylaws, including for City vehicles • Synchronize traffic lights to reduce congestion and idling • Congestion pricing, tolls, or parking levies • Higher fees or restrictions on oversized and heavy vehicles • Make driving less convenient while improving alternatives
Improve land use and neighbourhood design	• Reduce urban sprawl and increasing inner-city density • Limit new pavement and surface parking lots • Design new neighbourhoods with transit grids rather than cul-de-sacs • Charging for impervious surfaces to address runoff and heat islands • Rethink driveway size and front-yard paving
Strengthen building codes and requirements	• Adopt higher energy-efficiency standards regardless of provincial minimums • Require solar-ready roofs for new builds • Mandate higher flood, runoff, and heat-resilience standards • Encourage or require heat pumps and high-efficiency systems in new construction • Introduce a right-to-cool bylaw to protect tenants
Equity focus	• Climate programs that do not just incentivize property owners • Composting, recycling, and EV-charging options for apartments and multi-unit buildings • Stronger tenant protections for unsafe heat, air quality, and housing conditions • Utility and fee structures that account for income, disability, and household size • Accessible sidewalks, crossings, facilities, and indoor recreation spaces
Focus on incentives	• Rebates, grants, tax credits, and vouchers (e.g., trees, solar, EV chargers) Reduced fees for low users and households taking action • Net-metering support and property-tax reductions for solar installations • Recognition or reward programs for households/businesses reducing their consumption • Avoid flat rate increases that disproportionately affect vulnerable residents
Accountability for industry	• Tiered utility rates that increase with industrial and commercial consumption • Requirements for large users to reduce water, energy, and waste • Mandate trees, shade, and energy efficiency for parking lots and properties • Regulate oversized trucks and commercial vehicles
Environmental	• Plant more trees city-wide and providing free or subsidized trees • Protect the Northeast Swale and other natural areas • Use native plants, wildflowers, and grasses instead of turf in public spaces • Encourage lawn-free yards and fruit-bearing trees for food security • Green roofs and lighter-coloured roofing to reduce heat
Waste reduction	• Composting for apartments, businesses, and institutions • Ban non-recyclable or non-compostable materials (e.g., black plastics) • Divert more waste from landfills and reopening compost depots • Local recycling and upcycling manufacturing • Food-waste diversion from grocery stores • Better communication about what can be recycled or composted • Enforce proper waste sorting

Renewable energy	• Solar installations on civic, commercial, and industrial flat roofs • Community wind and solar projects • Geothermal district or neighbourhood systems • Electrify the City fleet and transit system • Support nuclear exploration and carbon-capture concrete • Ensure fair electricity pricing for solar producers
Improve transparency and public awareness	• Provide clear, practical, non-judgmental information • Share data on program outcomes (e.g., waste diversion, transit efficiency) • Better promote existing programs and rebates • Offer youth education and neighbourhood-level engagement • Avoid moralizing or shaming language
Lead by example	• Electrify its fleet and reduce idling • Install renewables on City buildings • Reduce paper use and energy waste • Support remote work for City staff • Ensure major spending decisions align with climate goals

Final Considerations

Overall, most participants called for the City to move faster, focus on system-level changes, prioritize equity and affordability, and lead visibly through infrastructure, regulation, and planning. While there were differences in opinions on costs, urgency, and scope, there was broad agreement that transportation, buildings, land use, and urban greening are where the City's should focus its efforts. Participants stressed that how climate action is framed and delivered matters as much as the actions themselves. Final comments provided by respondents included the following themes:

Act faster: many participants expressed frustration with slow progress and delayed implementation of climate actions; participants called for accelerated timelines for climate mitigation and adaptation projects and to stop deferring action due to provincial or federal government inaction; participants suggested that the City should treat climate change as an emergency requiring urgency to ensure commitments are delivered on time

Focus on high-impact actions: participants urged the City to prioritize actions with the largest emissions and resilience benefits, such as transportation, land use and building standards actions over voluntary household incentives; focus on infrastructure and regulatory change rather than relying on individual behaviours that do not necessarily scale to high results

Nature-based solutions: many respondents strongly support exploring nature-based climate actions, such as planting more trees on public land, requiring vegetated surfaces in new land development projects and conserving natural areas (i.e., wetlands, swales, grasslands, etc.) within our city; a few participants suggested using more native plants, reducing turf and avoiding pesticides

Inclusive and equitable: equity and affordability were central concerns for many participants; waiving, reducing or removing costs for low-income residents and designing specific incentives that benefit renters, seniors and people with disabilities were suggested by participants

Incentives vs. penalties: participants were divided over incentives versus negative reinforcements, however more preferred positive reinforcement and encouraging behaviour by showcasing savings and convenience; punitive approaches that increase the cost of living for residents should be

avoided; suggestions included incentives for composting, tree planting and installing renewable energy; supporting community energy projects that are open to renters and non-property owners

Accountability: participants stressed the importance of holding businesses and large industrial emitters accountable so that the burden does not fall mainly on households; participants suggested providing stronger regulations, reducing packaging waste at the source, and requiring green infrastructure in commercial developments

Plan ahead: participants emphasized the importance of thinking of adaptation alongside mitigation actions when planning future City initiatives, programs and projects; examples where this could occur included emergency shelters, flood mitigation through storm ponds and fire preparedness

Clear communication: participants asked for better public communication of the City's goals and targets, including providing clear plans with timelines, targets and evaluation metrics; some participants would like the City to share their successes and promote the co-benefits of climate action (i.e., health, cost savings, safety, etc.) to reach wider and different audiences; a few participants suggested that the City should avoid polarizing language and address misinformation proactively in future communications

Balancing priorities: many participants suggested that the City should balance climate action with core services and fiscal responsibility, such as ensuring climate investments do not undermine basic services and demonstrating return on investments and/or long-term savings; a common example provided was improving maintenance alongside climate actions/improvements, such as road maintenance, snow clearing and drainage.

2.3 Climate Adaptation Workshop

A workshop was held in April 2025 to explore the impacts of climate change in Saskatoon, how the City can support the community, and the climate actions the City is proposing.

The half-day, afternoon workshop included a presentation by City staff followed by numerous table discussions where participants could select the topic they wanted to provide feedback on (i.e., Green Network, Health and Safety, and Quality of Life). Following the discussions, participants could vote on the climate actions that were most important by adding sticky notes and dots onto themed posters throughout the event space.

2.3.1 Intended Audience

Over 50 businesses, institutions and organizations were invited to participate in the workshops. These included representatives from the following sectors/organizations:

- Commercial, industrial and local businesses
- Business associations
- Health and wellness
- Housing and land developers
- Environmental and Climate advocates
- Food security
- Indigenous supporting organizations
- Low-income and unhoused supporting organizations
- Newcomer and international supporting organizations

- Property owners and managers
- Research institutions and subject matter experts

2.3.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences.

1. City Website
    a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation.
2. Email
    a. Personalized e-invites were sent to the various organizations asking for their participation.

2.3.3 Analysis

The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Impacts to the community and organizations
- Risks, their prioritization and how the City should support the community
- Prioritized actions and their associated considerations.

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.3.4 What We Learned

A total of 29 representatives from various organizations participated in the workshop.

Impacts to Organizations and the Community

Participants described climate impacts as immediate, compounding, and unevenly distributed across organizations and the communities they support. Across sectors, participants described their frustration with siloed systems, the lack of information sharing, the over reliance on individual actions rather than commitments from larger industries. Others noted that advocacy or engagement on climate change from their students and staff is down as people juggle work, study, and their basic needs. Several respondents said climate anxiety, political polarization, and a lack of provincial leadership are slowing action, leaving cities like Saskatoon to carry more of the responsibility.

At the same time, some participants acknowledged positive steps, such as new storm ponds and flood mitigation in existing neighbourhoods, as visible steps towards addressing climate impacts.

Environmental

Environmental organizations and advocacy groups identified growing impacts to their field work (i.e., resource management, conservation, etc.), educational programming, and stewardship activities. Some participants said heat, wildfire smoke, and increased storms are changing the impact of their efforts and how they work, such as limiting how long staff can safely be outdoors. Various conservation practices, such as using prescribed burns to manage invasive species, are increasingly restricted.

Impacts to local biodiversity and natural areas in Saskatoon are significant, with participants describing increasing threats from invasive species, pests (e.g., Emerald Ash Borer), and disease (e.g., Dutch Elm disease), resulting in the decline of our urban forest. Changes in the abundance of

pollinators, flowering cycles, and wildlife behaviours were linked to warming temperatures, drought and smoke. Several respondents described climate change as breaking ecological relationships, through using Indigenous understandings of kinship to explain the depth of loss. Others noted that our warmer climate is affecting soil health/ microorganisms, and carbon sequestration, reducing what the land can support and how they can mitigate rising GHG emissions.

Quality of Life

Community-serving organizations identified that food insecurity, the housing crisis, and the exposure to extreme heat, cold, and smoke are increasing the demand for services in Saskatoon. Some described closing or scaling back their services because of the increased heat and smoke.

Organizations serving the unhoused and low-income populations described growing strain. They described that long lineups for food during −30°C or +30°C conditions are creating safety risks and concerns for dignity. Some participants said people are seeking food banks, libraries, and community buildings simply to warm up, cool down, or rest. Some participants called for warming centres in winter and cooling centres in summer, noting that both are costly and inefficient to operate. Library closures were raised as reducing access to safe cooling spaces. Several respondents said there are currently no spaces designed specifically to protect people from poor air quality. Overnight cooling centres were described as something that currently does not exist but will be needed as the impacts of our changing climate increase.

Housing quality was a major concern for participants, stating that lower-standard housing is leaving people more vulnerable to heat, flooding, poor air quality, mould, and rising energy costs. Respondents raised concerns that moving back to lower energy-efficiency standards will result in long-term health impacts and increased costs, especially for people who do not own their homes or do not have the capital to retrofit them.

Institutional impacts were also highlighted, as some respondents raised concerns about indoor air quality and lack of cooling in some buildings, particularly during the spring. Years of frozen budgets and cuts were described as limiting their ability to mitigate these impacts.

Health

Public health impacts were described as overlapping and compounding. Participants felt that climate anxiety is resulting in worsening mental health for many community members, resulting in secondary and often compounding health implications (e.g., substance use). Respondents emphasized that many of the issues caused by climate change intersect with transportation, access to services, and community safety. Several noted that warming conditions also increase disease risks for humans, with implications for the healthcare system, food security, and public costs.

Key Takeaways:

- Climate impacts are already disrupting work, education, operations, and service delivery.
- Biodiversity loss, invasive species, and ecosystem stress are escalating.
- Community organizations are facing rising demands tied to heat, cold, smoke, food costs, and housing quality.
- People experiencing homelessness and poor housing are more susceptible to climate risks.
- Mental health, substance use, and climate anxiety are increasing, particularly among youth.
- Lower housing standards are creating long-term risks to health and costs.
- Organizational silos and capacity limits continue to slow climate action.

- Federal and provincial government inaction is shifting expectations toward municipal leadership.
- Some City adaptation measures, such as flood mitigation, are being noticed and valued.

Current Efforts

Participants described a wide range of efforts, shaped by mandate, capacity, and resources. Many emphasized that action is happening, but often reactively and under strain. Across sectors, participants described the burden of coordination. Collective impact models were seen as useful, but respondents said it is unrealistic to expect individual organizations or non-profits to lead systems-level coordination without City support.

Advocacy-focused organizations described work centred on climate justice, litigation related to climate action, protests, and public awareness. These respondents said their mandate is not adaptation but rather political pressure and community awareness, and they valued opportunities to better understand practical opportunities.

Environmental

Environmental organizations described hands-on stewardship and education opportunities, such as the Pollinator Paradise program, which encourages residents to replace lawns with native plants to reduce water use and improve biodiversity. Respondents also described promoting xeriscaping, monitoring wildlife through a research network, and actively engaging with the City to advocate for stronger environmental protections.

Those in conservation and resource management described ongoing restoration and monitoring work, including native seed banking, using native plants to reduce erosion, protecting the urban tree canopy while co-existing with beavers, and monitoring environmental indicators in areas of new or intensified development. Respondents also described the need to collaborate on long-term river modelling to understand the impacts on water resources, erosion, public access, and infrastructure.

Health

Public health and social service organizations described the need for adaptive responses to extreme weather. Some agencies have developed short-notice protocols to respond to sudden cold or heat events. Participants described coordination between Saskatchewan Health Authority, City of Saskatoon's Emergency Management Operations and community agencies to ensure people can access shelters and food during extreme snow events. Individual adaptations were also described, such as limiting outdoor work during smoke or heat events and creating improvised air filtration systems to protect children indoors.

Quality of Life

Business representatives described early conversations about resilience, supply chains, and workforce impacts, but emphasized that thin margins limit action. Without incentives, tax credits, or funding, climate-aligned decisions are difficult to justify financially. However, several participants emphasized that institutional (e.g., gonverment, educational, etc.) action often follows regulation. Composting on campus was cited as moving forward only after the City introduced their industrial, commercial and institutional organics requirements. Many felt that providing clear expectations, trusted delivery agents, and enforcement in supporting climate actions in this space.

Transit advocates described ongoing advocacy in support of public transportation but expressed frustration with the City's current efforts. Respondents said the City has not adequately evaluated

electric buses, has not expanded the bus fleet in line with our population growth, and does not clearly explain transit decisions or route prioritization to residents.

Key Takeaways:

- Organizations are acting within their mandates, often reactively due to constraints.
- Stewardship, restoration, and education efforts are active but resource-limited.
- Emergency coordination is improving but remains costly and inefficient.
- Regulation continues to be a key driver of institutional change.
- Businesses want to act but face financial constraints.
- Participants want the City to play stronger roles in coordinating climate action.

Goals for the Climate Action Strategy

When asked what they would like to see addressed by the new Climate Action Strategy, participants were clear that the Climate Action Strategy needs to show leadership, be practical, and address real local risks. Other suggestions were summarized into the following themes:

City's role: several participants want Saskatoon to take a whole-City approach rather than isolating the responsibility of climate action within one department; participants emphasized that climate action requires long-term investment, even when returns are not immediate, and warned that without broad buy-in, the risks become unmanageable.

Communication and education: participants felt that people will not act until they understand why action is needed, what Saskatoon-specific risks look like, and what benefits could result from immediate climate action; suggestions included frequent, plain-language explanations of City spending decisions, using local media and repeated awareness campaigns that reach a diversity of community members.

Protecting and restoring natural areas: participants called for robust protection for natural areas (e.g., swales, grasslands, and habitat corridors), and for limiting development in sensitive areas; they emphasized the importance of native plants, buffering biodiverse hot spots, and better integration of biodiversity into development and landscaping guidelines; several raised concerns about urban sprawl, heat islands, and loss of carbon sinks.

Building priorities: participants described the importance of building energy codes, resilience standards for new housing, flood prevention, heat management, and air quality; some warned that short-term affordability decisions could create long-term costs and risks; concerns for energy and water management were raised, alongside concerns about future power outages and water advisories.

Public health and equity: participants stressed that the strategy must consider impacts to people without stable housing, renters, and low-income residents; specific needs included public water access, safe shower facilities, cooling and warming spaces, and attention to substance use.

Tools to support action: localized carbon/emissions calculators for businesses and residents, paired with clear recommendations and incentives were supported by participants; others referenced past community-based social marketing programs that showed how people were doing and what actions to take.

Key Takeaways:

- Participants want visible, whole-City leadership.
- Long-term investment is needed, even without immediate payback.
- Clear, repeated communication about local risks, benefits, and costs is essential.
- Protection and restoration of natural systems are high priorities.
- Housing, building standards, and infrastructure resilience matter for health and equity.
- Public access to water, cooling, warming, and hygiene is critical.
- Practical tools and incentives can help translate awareness into action.

Risks

Participants were provided with a list of topic-specific risks related to our changing climate. For each of the topics (i.e., Green Network, Health and Safety, and Quality of Life) participants were asked to prioritize the topic-specific risks. The summary of the findings can be found in the tables below:

Table 8: Prioritized risks related to our changing climate

Topic	Importance	Risks
Green Network	**High**	• Vulnerabilities of natural areas – conserve what we have • Biodiversity and species loss • Increasing invasive and problematic species
	Medium	• Damage to trees (i.e., storms, wind, drought, heat stress, etc.) • Quality and quantity of water/health of the river • Damage to other natural infrastructure (i.e., storms, wind, drought, heat stress, shifting ecosystems, disease, etc.)
	Low	• None
Health and Safety	**High**	• Health risks from wildfire smoke (indoors and outdoors) • Mental health impacts from added stress of climate change • Health and safety risks from storms and flooding • Health and safety risks from increased ice and impairing physical mobility challenges • Health risks from unsafe indoor air temperatures • Health risks from increased and new vector borne diseases • Temporary closures of service organizations from extreme weather
	Medium	• Health and safety risks from severe winter weather • Increased barriers to getting around • Loss of utilities (power or water outages)
	Low	• Reduced outdoor recreation and exercise (i.e., heat, smoke) • Health risks from extreme heat on people outdoors • Safety eroded for staff working with community • Physical damage to homes • Food insecurity • Response to disasters changes operational budgets

Quality of Life	**High**	• Accessing housing and affordability • Physical and mental health impacts • Increasing food insecurity • Increasing costs (e.g., cooling/electricity use, insurance, etc.) • Increased barriers to getting around (e.g., interrupted transit) • Loss of access to important outdoor spaces • Impacts to ecosystem services • Decreasing outdoor recreation/socializing opportunities
	Medium	• Loss of utilities (e.g., power and water outages) • Increased isolation, barriers to people leaving their homes • Physical damage to homes reducing access to housing
	Low	• Damage to businesses (e.g., buildings, assets) • Net immigration to Saskatoon increasing pressure on housing • Increased costs on some businesses

Green Network

When asked which risks the City should prioritize acting on, participants provided the following ranking regarding the City acting as a regulator:

1. Improved landscaping guidelines that prioritize native plants and includes a minimum vegetated area or amount (i.e., % of property) that has to be vegetated
2. Guidelines for water catchment, harvesting and conservation for both residents and businesses
3. Design standards for new neighbourhoods that protect natural areas and require trees on properties
4. Green street requirements that protect natural areas and require trees
5. Include natural areas trees into infill/densification planning (e.g., Housing Accelerator Fund)
6. Implement the City's Pathways for a Green Network with resources and create links to bylaws, regulations and requirements (e.g., bylaw protection for natural areas).
7. Invasive species regulations (e.g., prevent retailers from selling noxious species) and weed inspector training

Participants also felt that the City should have an important role in supporting education efforts that are raising awareness of climate risks in Saskatoon. Suggestions for how the City could support this work included:

- Partner with childcare, schools, and youth programs to teach about local climate risks in age-appropriate ways (e.g., daycare and school programming, outdoor classrooms).
- Address climate anxiety by pairing education about risks with practical actions that children and families can support (e.g., stewardship activities, tree planting, and pollinator projects).
- Provide simple, ready-to-use public education tools that community groups can easily share without creating their own materials (e.g., social media kits, posters, and short videos).
- Teach about cascading climate impacts so people understand how one change affects another over time (e.g., drought → tree stress → invasive species → loss of shade and habitat).

- Support outdoor and public education programs so children can continue building relationships with nature despite climate impacts.
- Support gardens, citizen science projects, and site-based learning opportunities (e.g., community gardens, learning gardens, and invasive species workshops).
- Offer “nature audits” that help residents, schools, and organizations understand climate risks and practical improvements on their sites.
- Use an equity and reconciliation lens by co-designing education with Indigenous partners and engaging newcomers through place-based learning (e.g., land-based learning, guided walks, newcomer nature programs).
- Play a strong coordination role by connecting organizations and supporting efforts relying on community groups to lead alone (e.g., City-hosted networks and coordinated campaigns).
- Provide funding and incentives to support education and action by community groups and businesses, with simple and flexible eligibility (e.g., grants for outreach, business incentives for green spaces or nature-based improvements).
- Create training opportunities so educators, community leaders, and businesses can talk about climate risks.

Participants were invited to identify other risks to Saskatoon’s green network and provided suggestions that were grouped into the following themes:

Habitat fragmentation: participants raised concerns that shifting ecosystems are becoming trapped in fragmented “islands” of habitat, limiting species’ ability to move, adapt, or reach the riverbank; without these connections, natural areas are less resilient and less able to recover from climate stress.

Escalating management: some participants identified a growing need for plant and animal management as habitats become more stressed, noting that climate impacts will increase costs, staffing needs, and difficult decisions about where limited resources are directed.

Land use: some questioned whether current land-use and development decisions are worsening climate impacts on ecosystems, and stressed the need to consider how human development and climate change interact to accelerate harm; participants felt that voluntary guidelines are not enough, suggesting clearer regulations (e.g., minimum green space requirements for businesses) are needed to reduce long-term risk.

Housing needs: participants recognized the complex relationship between the need for housing and the loss of green space as the city grows; participants cautioned against reactive decisions and urban sprawl, emphasizing the need to consider the long-term impacts.

Encampments: respondents noted the presence of increased encampments in green spaces as a challenge, emphasizing the importance of humanizing this issue while also recognizing the impacts on sensitive ecosystems.

Biodiversity loss and food security: participants noted that one in five pollinator species in North America are at risk, which has direct implications for local food security.

How natural infrastructure is considered: respondents felt that climate risks vary widely across grasslands, wetlands, riparian areas, urban trees, gardens, and parks, and that treating all green spaces the same potentially weakens policies and action.

Unclear baseline: some questioned what level of ecosystem damage or changes are considered normal versus new or climate-driven, noting that without clarity it is difficult to prioritize actions or measure their progress.

Water: a few participants stressed that water should be treated as its own category, stating that the risks to water tables, water quality, and long-term availability from climate change should be considered independently.

Risks to pets: respondents noted that while wildlife impacts are often discussed, risks to pets may be more immediate and relatable for residents, and can help increase public understanding and buy-in.

Economic impacts: respondents noted that damage to trees can affect the enjoyability of business areas, while commercial zones experience less pressure to protect green assets.

Health and Safety

When asked which health and safety risks the City should prioritize acting on, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Health risks from wildlife smoke (indoors and outdoors)
2. Health risks from unsafe indoor air temperatures
3. Temporary closures of service organizations from extreme weather – take on a facilitator role by creating a standard contingency plan
4. Increased barriers to getting around
5. Health risks from extreme heat on people outdoors

When asked to identify any other risks to community health and safety in Saskatoon, participants provided suggestions that were grouped into themes:

Food insecurity: many emphasized that food security needs to be treated as a core health and safety issue, noting that climate impacts, rising costs, and service pressures are increasing the risk of hunger and therefore the related health outcomes.

Population growth: some identified that as Saskatoon's population increases, including potential climate refugees, it becomes a growing risk for civic services, housing, healthcare, and infrastructure to provide services.

Climate despair and loss of agency: participants described despair and hopelessness as a health and safety risk, noting that when people feel nothing can be done, they disengage, which worsens both mental health outcomes and community resilience.

Disproportionate risk to vulnerable populations: respondents emphasized the need for an equity lens, identifying older adults, people with disabilities, low-income households, unhoused people, youth, newcomers, students, women, and people with mobility challenges as requiring additional consideration.

Indigenous rights: some suggested there could be risks to water-sharing treaties and agreements with Indigenous people, noting that the erosion of trust and historic relationships can create long-term relationship challenges.

Insufficient monitoring and communication: participants stressed the need for better surveillance of health risks paired with clear, actionable guidance for the public; this included targeted messaging for specific populations; some felt that there were weaknesses in communicating emergencies, calling for more alerts and clearer information pathways to ensure people know what to do and where to go.

Health risks to pets: it was suggested that the impacts on pets should be considered, noting that concerns about animals often increase interest and compliance with safety guidance.

Increasing homelessness: participants identified rising homelessness as a growing health and safety concern, with direct implications for exposure, illness, and emergency response capacity; increasing addictions was identified as a compounding risk that intersects with climate stress, homelessness, mental health, and public safety.

Awareness: some participants suggested that the City should create public awareness campaigns centered around extreme weather conditions and what to do in emergencies (e.g., Red Cross programming for 72 hours without help) to build public resiliency.

Quality of Life

When asked which risks to quality of life the City should prioritize acting on, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Access to housing and affordability
2. Increased barriers to getting around (e.g., interrupted transit services)
3. Impacts on ecosystem services
4. Risks to food security
5. Increasing costs (cooling/electricity use, flood/storm damage, insurance)
6. Loss of access to important outdoor spaces
7. Increased isolation, barriers to people leaving their homes

Participants were asked to identify any other risks to quality of life in Saskatoon, to which they provided the following suggestions that were grouped into themes:

Rising cost of living: participants felt that the increasing utility costs and general cost-of-living pressures will directly reduce the quality of life for many in Saskatoon; some noted that while higher costs may encourage efficiency and sustainability, they disproportionately harm low-income residents and those already struggling to meet basic needs.

Housing affordability: participants raised concerns that affordable homes are being gutted, flipped, or left unrepaired, reducing livability and pushing housing further out of reach; this is particularly true as climate impacts increase repair costs and material prices; some noted that when utility costs become unaffordable, people may fall behind on payments and face eviction, worsening housing instability and downstream social impacts.

Increasing food insecurity: respondents warned that food insecurity will continue to rise as people divert their limited income to housing, utilities, and transportation, reducing access to adequate nutrition and affecting both physical and mental health.

Loss of community: many participants said that smoke, heat, and extreme weather threaten festivals and public gatherings, which support local businesses and social networks; some felt that this could weaken community resilience and quality of life.

Reduced access to transit: participants identified isolation as a high risk when people cannot safely wait outdoors for transit during extreme cold, heat, or ice conditions, limiting access to services, employment, and social connections.

Disproportionate impacts: a few participants cautioned against focusing on the "average" resident since it potentially masks severe impacts experienced by vulnerable populations; it was suggested that quality-of-life risks should be assessed based on who is most affected, not overall averages; some felt that climate impacts will widen disparities in who can access safe housing, cooling, green space, transportation, and public infrastructure, reducing overall community wellbeing.

Gardening: some participants felt that gardening could become more expensive due to water costs, increased heat, and climate stress, reducing both food access and the social and mental health benefits of growing food.

Compounding crises and short-term fixes: some participants warned that relying on "band-aid solutions" to address multiple impacts could increase the long-term costs and further degrade our quality of life over time.

Conflicting priorities: participants emphasized the need to follow a hierarchy of needs, prioritizing personal and community wellbeing before business and economic interests when managing quality-of-life risks.; participants suggested creating resilience to multiple climate risks through common actions.

Suggestions for how the City can address the risks to quality of life included the following themes:

Invest in community spaces: participants emphasized that City-led investments in inclusive, accessible community spaces (e.g., libraries, civic facilities, public gathering spaces) play an important role in improving mental health, social connections, and overall quality of life; these projects should be approached systematically rather than as one-off projects.

Affordability through policy: participants would like the City to address housing affordability through policies and regulations as climate risks grow, while also pressing other levels of government to act where municipal authority is limited.

Advance inclusive and affordable housing: participants noted the City has an important role in securing funding, setting requirements, and coordinating resources to ensure housing is affordable and inclusive (e.g., attaching conditions to funding, supporting mixed-income and community-based housing models).

Support food security: many participants emphasized the growing importance of food programs for children and vulnerable populations under climate stress, suggesting the City's role should be to enable, coordinate, and strengthen community-led food initiatives (e.g., supporting organizations like CHEP, aligning community development resources, addressing equity for underhoused residents, older adults, and newcomers) rather than directly operating food programs.

Address equity and vulnerability: participants stressed that climate impacts disproportionately affect key populations and that the City should embed equity considerations into climate actions.

Protect workers and public users in City spaces: participants noted that climate change is already increasing operational pressures on public amenities and natural areas, and the City should plan for these impacts (e.g., increased staffing costs for heat-adjusted schedules, added security where warming spaces are limited, etc.).

Prioritizing Actions

Businesses

From the proposed actions on how the City can support businesses, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Increase tree planting for shade to reduce cooling costs to businesses (6 votes)
2. Support green infrastructure adoption in industrial, commercial, and institutional areas to manage climate risks like heat and flooding (5)
3. Maintain reliable city infrastructure and services to support and attract businesses (3)
4. Improve incentives offered under the storm water credit program to manage stormwater on private sites (2)
5. Add resilience measures to the upcoming Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program (0)
5. Support an industry-led knowledge exchange on climate resilience (0)

Figure 8: Business actions

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- To better manage stormwater on private sites, focus on sites that are mostly hard surfaces (e.g., duplex, pavement, garages)
- In supporting industry-led knowledge exchange, foster connections between industry and community organizations as well
- Do not solely focus on trees, but rather other vegetation for cooling and water absorption
- Add green components to infrastructure and development whenever possible
- Support a reliable transit network

Housing

From the proposed actions on how the City can support businesses in climate action, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Develop guidelines for climate resilient affordable housing (6)
2. Add resilience measures (e.g. for cooling, flooding) to the Home Energy Loan Program (4)
2. Embed climate resilience and energy efficiency into all City work on housing (4)
3. Expand the Home Energy Loan Program to include multi-unit residential buildings (3)
3. Continue implementing the Flood Management Strategy (drainage improvement and storm pond projects) to protect existing homes (3)

Figure 9: Housing actions

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Create participation options for renters by expanding climate and energy programs beyond homeowners so tenants can benefit from efficiency, cooling, and resilience upgrades without bearing undue costs or relying solely on landlords.
- Increase the current building code policy from Tier 2 to Tier 3 to improve the efficiency and resilience of new buildings.
- Include green space in all new housing developments, including higher-density and infill projects.
- Develop clear guidelines to integrate green space, natural areas, and native plants into new neighbourhoods.
- Expand the Home Energy Loan Program to commercial buildings.
- Continue and expand stormwater retention pond programs to manage increased flood risks.
- Protect wetlands as natural climate infrastructure.
- Integrate rainwater collection and harvesting into building and neighbourhood design, treating rainwater as a resource rather than waste.

Quality of Life

From the proposed actions on how the City can support the quality of life in the community, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Include lived experience of climate impacts into climate progress reporting (5)
2. Provide opportunities to share lived experiences of climate change to increase our & community understanding and encourage collective action (4)
2. Keep working with partners on extreme weather responses and prepare to meet increasing need as extreme weather gets more frequent (4)
3. Develop a food action plan and advance food security projects (currently under Green Infrastructure Strategy) (2)
3. Expand indoor recreation options (2)
4. Develop a community and household climate change readiness program (1)

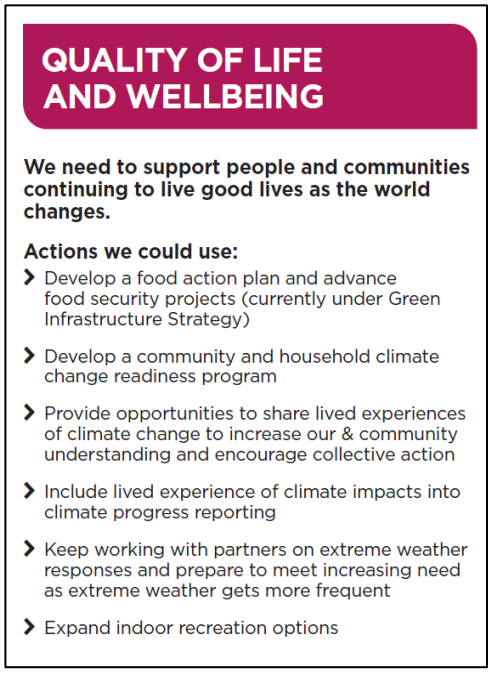


Figure 10: Quality of life and wellbeing

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Expand and support community garden initiatives to improve food security, strengthen social connections, and support physical and mental wellbeing.
- Learn from and adapt best practices from other cities by exploring models such as Edmonton's neighbourhood-based climate initiatives that link local action, community wellbeing, and climate resilience.
- Use climate action as a pathway to reconciliation with people and nature by supporting approaches that rebuild relationships between communities, the land, and natural systems.
- Ensure equity-deserving populations are meaningfully included in climate actions by designing programs and spaces that address the needs of unhoused residents, low-income households, seniors, newcomers, and people living with disabilities.
- Embed wellbeing outcomes into climate decision-making by evaluating how actions improve mental health, social connection, access to nature, and overall quality of life alongside environmental benefits.

City Design

From the proposed actions for how the City can plan for a growing city with future climate conditions in mind, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Require climate resilience in all City planning tools, including sector plans (10)
2. Conserve more natural areas in new developments to keep space for retention ponds and other natural infrastructure that builds resilience (7)
3. Review and update standards to ensure climate resilience is incorporated (6)
4. Update building code and zoning (5)
5. Provide incentives for climate-ready buildings and development (3)
6. Provide education and guidelines on measures to increase resilience in new development (2)

Figure 11: City design actions

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Apply a “health in all policies” approach so the City designs decisions consistently that support physical, mental, and social wellbeing.
- Design active transportation networks that are simple, connected, and intuitive to increase everyday walking, cycling, and transit use.
- Strengthen erosion management standards to address changing river and groundwater conditions, including required revegetation after development.
- Include green restoration standards in development approvals so landscapes are restored in ways that support long-term climate resilience.
- Align and leverage existing City plans (e.g., Active Transportation Plan) to maximize climate, mobility, and wellbeing co-benefits.
- Protect intact natural areas and green spaces by prioritizing preservation over future restoration or replacement.
- Keep stormwater retention ponds out of natural areas and design them as separate infrastructure that does not compromise existing ecosystems.
- Design neighbourhoods for water harvesting, conservation, and infiltration rather than rapid runoff (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales, permeable landscapes).
- Adopt a “sponge city” approach by expanding trees, native plants, wetlands, and green infrastructure to absorb, filter, and retain water.
- Require adequate space for large trees in residential areas to support long-term canopy growth and urban cooling.
- Expand residential opportunities across zoning districts to support inclusive, compact, and climate-ready neighbourhoods.
- Stop subsidizing parking lots and redirect land and investment toward more climate-resilient and people-focused uses.

- Encourage affordable, climate-ready development through zoning and design that supports efficiency, resilience, and livability.

Green Network and Urban Forest

From the proposed actions for how the City can expand the green network and urban forest to help both thrive under new climate conditions, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Naturalize and restore non-park green spaces (7)
2. Expand natural infrastructure valuations to include climate resilience benefits, such as cooling and stormwater management (5)
3. Reach city-wide canopy cover of 15-20% by 2060 (4)
3. Develop an equitable tree planting approach to ensure canopy cover and quality are equitably distributed throughout the city (4)
3. Diversify tree plantings and reduce reliance on ash and elm (4)
3. Include climate change projections in asset management planning (4)
3. Pilot and monitor survival of different tree species under hot/dry conditions (4)
3. Create partnerships to support Indigenous land management (4)
4. Expand the naturalized park program (3)
4. Integrate low impact development practices into City projects (3)
4. Integrate the active transportation network and green network (3)
5. Identify actions that reduce tree mortality (2)
5. Develop an urban forest invasive species management strategy in collaboration with local and regional partners (2)
5. Support green infrastructure adoption in the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector (2)
6. Assess irrigation requirements for tree survival under new climate conditions (0)

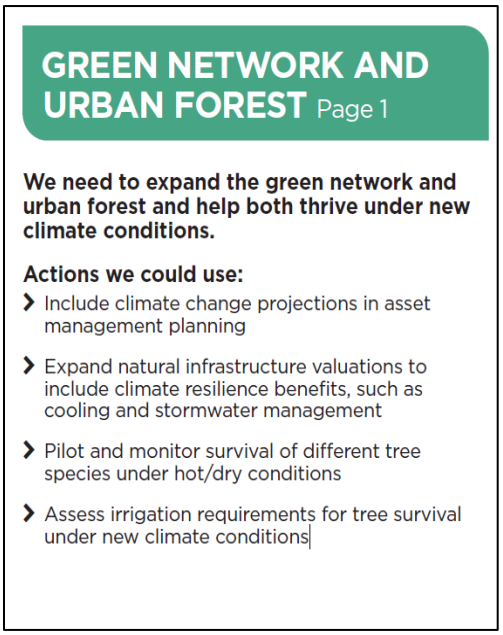


Figure 12: Green network and urban forest actions

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Provide information to property owners on where tree planting is most effective to help them understand the cooling and environmental benefits of well-placed trees.
- Use strategic tree planting to advance multiple goals at once, such as urban cooling, wildlife corridors, and neighbourhood livability.
- Expand planting beyond trees (e.g., shrubs, grasses, groundcover) to create healthier, more resilient urban ecosystems.

- Prioritize species diversity and climate-resilient trees and plants to reduce vulnerability to pests, disease, and changing climate conditions.
- Include food-producing trees and plants where appropriate to support food security.
- Plan for coexistence with urban wildlife, including beavers, through proactive strategies such as planting preferred species, protecting key trees, and educating the public about their role.
- Champion low-impact development approaches that move away from business-as-usual (e.g., urban sprawl) and excessive hard surfaces, and towards greener development.
- Reduce reliance on concrete and asphalt by using alternatives to hardscaping, such as cobbles and permeable materials, to support water infiltration and healthier urban landscapes.

Cooling the City

From the proposed actions for how the City can help to reduce extreme heat, grow/maintain the tree canopy, and expand/protect green spaces, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

Support

1. Increase shading in public spaces (6)
1. Improve pedestrian environments along major corridors (e.g., street tree plantings 8th Street and Idylwyld) (6)
2. Identify and address gaps in the green network (5)
3. Map heat in the city and overlay with socioeconomic indicators to prioritize areas for cooling projects (4)
3. Conserve wetlands in new development (4)
3. Reach city-wide canopy cover of 15-20% by 2060 (4)
4. Create networks of shaded, pedestrian-oriented streets (3)
4. Add more natural areas in neighbourhoods with limited green space (3)
4. Enhance ecosystem services of underutilized urban sites (3)
4. Manage and restore natural areas (3)
4. Integrate natural assets into the City's asset management system (3)
4. Develop an equitable tree planting approach to ensure canopy cover and quality are equitably distributed throughout the city (3)
5. Upgrade and restore parks (2)
5. Protect prioritized natural areas (2)
5. Support green infrastructure adoption in Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional sectors (2)
6. Identify actions that reduce tree mortality: e.g. adapting irrigation, planting in suitable locations, improving soil quality (1)
6. Diversify tree plantings and reduce reliance on ash and elm (1)

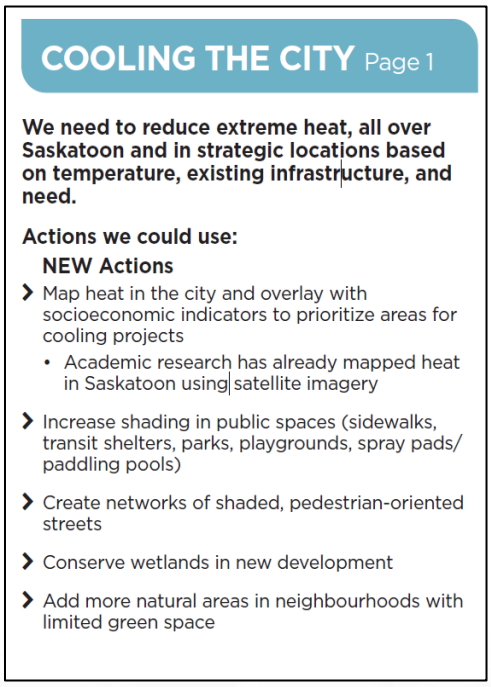


Figure 13: Cooling the city actions

7. Develop an urban forest invasive species management strategy in collaboration with local and regional partners (0)

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Expand free, accessible indoor cooling spaces across the city, ensuring they are available in the city core and lower-income neighbourhoods, not just more affluent areas.
- Design cooling spaces for year-round use so they can serve dual purposes during cold and hot weather (e.g., warming spaces).
- Broaden cooling strategies beyond trees (e.g., shrubs, native plants, etc.) by recognizing that all vegetation contributes to cooling and should be part of City design.
- Provide leadership and incentives for green roofs and cool roofs, including white or reflective rooftop.
- Protect and maintain existing natural areas and habitat as a high-priority cooling strategy rather than relying solely on new planting.
- Expand and connect the green network and urban forest canopy to increase shade, cooling, and airflow through connected natural corridors.
- Set more ambitious long-term canopy and green cover targets, aiming higher than current goals (e.g., 30–40%) to meaningfully reduce urban heat.
- Accelerate implementation of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure by fully delivering the City's Active Transportation Plan.
- Design neighbourhoods to support active, outdoor, and social life, with shaded streets, comfortable public spaces, and cooling features that encourage people to gather safely outdoors.
- Strengthen environmental education and partnerships.
- Demonstrate alternatives by piloting a high-visibility demonstration site that maximizes green cover, shade, and cooling through design.

Responding to Extreme Heat

From the proposed actions for how the City can help to reduce the health risks of extreme heat, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Increase water access in indoor & outdoor public spaces (5)
1. Increase opportunities for outdoor cooling (misting, shade) (5)
2. Partner with other organizations (e.g. Health Authority) to understand local impacts and prevalence of extreme heat (2)
2. Expand education and communication about extreme heat (2)
2. Cool the city overall: see "Cooling the City" sheet (2)
3. Regulate maximum safe indoor air temperatures, beginning with research and consultation (0)

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Introduce a maximum indoor temperature standard by exploring a health and safety-based bylaw that sets maximum indoor temperatures.
- Improve access to free, safe indoor cooling spaces during extreme heat events, with a focus on equitable distribution across neighbourhoods and unhoused populations.
- Expand access to drinking water during heat events by increasing permanent and temporary water stations in public spaces and along key corridors.
- Increase access to public washrooms, especially outdoors and in high-use areas, to reduce health risks, strain on hospitals, and vandalism.

Figure 14: Responding to extreme heat actions

Responding to Wildfire Smoke

From the proposed actions for how the City better understand and support residents in reducing their risk to wildfire smoke, participants provided the following ranking based on their importance:

1. Expand education and communication about wildfire smoke impacts and how to reduce risk (3)
2. Partner with external experts (e.g. Lung Sask, Health Authority) to understand the impacts of wildfire smoke (2)
2. Provide incentives or rebates for reducing smoke risk at home, such as including smoke mitigation measures in the Home Energy Loan Program (e.g., HVAC upgrades, filters, air sealing) and/or providing rebates for air purifiers (2)
2. Determine if any civic buildings require (2)
3. Provide increased indoor recreation opportunities (1)
3. Measure air quality in civic buildings during periods of heavy wildfire smoke (1)

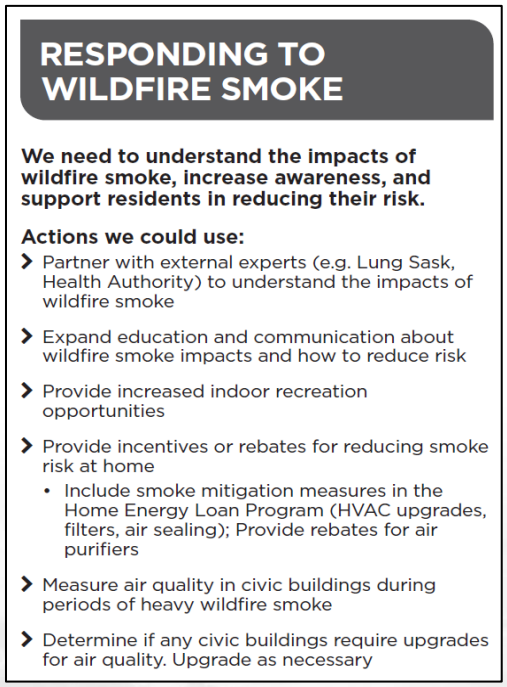


Figure 15: Responding to wildfire smoke actions

Suggestions for how to improve and/or implement these actions included the following:

- Target support programs to homes that are poorly sealed by prioritizing measures that reduce smoke infiltration, such as air sealing, filtration, and ventilation upgrades.

- Ensure affordability and accessibility of smoke-mitigation programs, particularly for low-income households and renters, so protections are not limited to those who can pay upfront.
- Expand the Home Energy Loan Program to include indoor air-quality upgrades such as filters, ventilation, and sealing.
- Expand access to safe-air public facilities, with a focus on Leisure Centres.
- Strengthen public awareness and education about wildfire smoke risks and practical actions residents can take to protect indoor air quality.

Partnerships

Some participants provided suggestions for potential community partners in climate action, including organizations that participated in the workshop. The following organizations were identified by the participants:

- Chokecherry Studios
- City of Edmonton and their Neighbouring for Climate program
- Discover Saskatoon
- Prairie Harm Reduction to determine programs for most vulnerable populations and climate anxiety
- Meewasin since this strategy is part of their resource management plan actions
- North Saskatoon Business Association for economic opportunities in transition
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society
- Saskatchewan Health Authority to determine how they can support the strategy
- Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
- University of Saskatchewan to collaborate on similar experiences with building efficiencies
- Wild About Saskatoon to encourage native plantings and create connections/corridors through their Pollinator Paradise program.

2.4 Carbon Reduction Information Sessions

On September 18 and 19, 2025 the City held two information sessions to present the proposed carbon reduction actions within the Climate Action Strategy to various businesses and organizations within Saskatoon. The come-and-go events were held at various dates and locations to make the events more accessible; therefore, an afternoon event was held at the Alice Turner Library and an evening event was held at the Rusty Macdonald Library.

Figure 16: Photo of the information session

The various climate actions were grouped into respective themes, such as Green Network, Better Homes & Buildings, and Energy Generation, and presented through a series of posters displayed throughout the event space. Participants were able to provide their feedback directly to various project team members specializing in the theme or via sticky notes. Along with the various climate actions, each series of posters presented background information about the theme, current and

upcoming community initiatives the City is implementing and options for how the City can support community action based on the theme.

2.4.1 Intended Audience

Over 200 businesses, institutions and organizations were invited to attend the events. Invitees were not exclusive to those involved in climate action, but rather a variety of organizations (i.e., businesses associations, home builders, organizations supporting low-income residents, Indigenous organizations, etc.) to gain a diversity of perspectives. These included representatives from the following sectors:

- Commercial, industrial and local businesses
- Businesses and business associations
- Health and wellness
- Housing, multi-unit housing providers and land developers
- Environmental and climate advocates
- Food security
- Indigenous organizations
- Low-income and unhoused supporting organizations
- Newcomer and international supporting organizations
- Non-profit and community organizations
- Realtors
- Renewable and building efficiency
- Research and educational institutions
- Utility providers

A total of 61 individuals from twelve of the above sectors participated in the information sessions.

2.4.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences:

1. City Website
    a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation.
2. Email
    a. Personalized e-invites were sent asking for their participation and to share the information with their members.
    b. Numerous associations and organizations shared the e-invite with their members.

2.4.3 Analysis

The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most popular actions and their associated level of support
- Thematic analysis of considerations related to climate actions and the associated impacts.

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.4.4 What We Learned

Better Homes and Buildings

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking of their importance:

Support

1. Deep retrofits to existing City buildings (8 votes)
2. High Performance Civic Building Policy for new construction (3)
2. Civic Building Energy Management System (3)
2. Feasibility study of district energy system (3)
3. Capture and use wastewater biogas for building heating (1)
3. Upgrading City buildings and street lighting to energy efficient LEDs (1)
4. BOMA Best Building Certification (0)

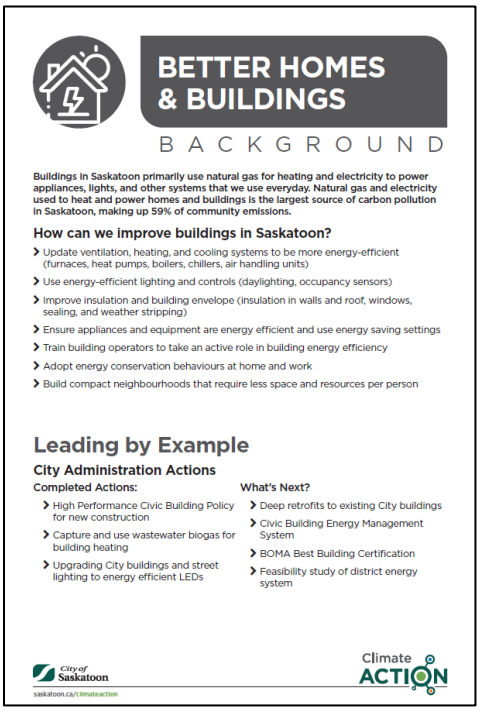


Figure 17: Better Homes and Buildings poster

The following themes emerged from the comments:

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

Support

1. Adopting Building Energy Standard Tier 2 for new homes to exceed minimum (9)
2. Loans to homeowners (and soon businesses) repaid via property tax for upgrades (5)
3. Development of a voluntary benchmarking, labeling, and disclosure program (1)
4. Education Tools: Renovation Resources and Home Energy Map (0)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

Support

1. ***Regulation***: Advancing Building Energy Standard Tiers for new residential and commercial buildings and alterations (7)
2. ***Partnership***: Support an industry-led knowledge exchange on net-zero building design and construction (5)
3. ***Regulation***: Phase-in building energy performance benchmarking, labeling, and disclosure requirements (3)

Regulation: Phase-in building energy performance benchmarking, labeling, and disclosure requirements

Respondents felt regulation has a role in improving building energy performance, but it needs to be phased and targeted. They pointed to large and commercial buildings as a clear starting point, noting that lighting and other systems often run during non-occupancy hours. Respondents supported using national energy standards to create clear performance indicators and using benchmarking and disclosure to track progress and encourage improvement. At the same time, they raised concerns about added costs for homeowners and stressed the importance of working with industry first. Many emphasized pairing new requirements with incentives, such as support/incentives for completing energy audits, so building owners have the tools they need before disclosure or performance standards become mandatory.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Focus first on large and commercial buildings, where energy waste is more common and measurable.
- Use national standards to define clear KPIs and track building performance consistently.
- Phase in benchmarking, labelling, and disclosure, starting voluntary and becoming mandatory over time.
- Work with industry partners early to shape metrics, timelines, and expectations.
- Pair regulation with incentives, such as support for energy audits, to help building owners.

Partnership: Support an industry-led knowledge exchange on net-zero building design and construction

Respondents said the City can best support community action on net-zero buildings by working in partnership with industry. They pointed to existing groups, such as the Energy Management Task Force, as useful forums for sharing knowledge and coordinating action. Respondents also asked the City to pair industry-led training and resource sharing with incentives that help builders and owners apply new technologies and practices. Several emphasized working directly with industry associations to build readiness for higher energy-efficiency tiers and providing guidance that supports local sourcing and lower-carbon supply chains. Overall, respondents want collaboration that builds capacity and confidence across the building sector.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Convene and support industry-led knowledge exchange on net-zero design and construction through existing forums and partnerships.
- Partner with industry associations to deliver training, share resources, and prepare the sector for higher energy-efficiency tiers.
- Align incentives with learning so builders and owners can apply new practices without taking on disproportionate risk.
- Provide guidance on local sourcing and supply chains to reduce emissions and support Saskatoon-based businesses.

Regulation: Advancing Building Energy Standard Tiers for new residential and commercial buildings and alterations

Many participants felt that the City should move quickly to advance higher building energy standard tiers for new residential and commercial buildings, with a clear path toward net-zero. Participants strongly felt Tier 3 and even Tier 4 are achievable with limited additional cost and argued that building to higher standards now will avoid larger retrofit costs later. Respondents called for strong City leadership, including applying ambitious standards to City-owned buildings and advocating for higher tiers at the provincial level. Several emphasized the need to move away from gas-based heating in new constructions, continue progressing to higher tiers without pause, and address technical considerations through guidance and education rather than delay. Overall, participants see builders and occupants as partners in this shift, but only if the City provides clear direction, education, and consistency over time.

Some participants connected building energy with neighbourhood development and city planning, suggesting that how we design neighbourhoods and set rules for development affects building energy use for decades. Participants called for changes in how Saskatoon grows and operates, not just voluntary actions, such as the City using tools like land use planning, development requirements, and bylaws as the fastest way to shape building energy use at a municipal scale. A few participants felt that urban sprawl locks in higher energy demand (e.g., bigger homes, longer commutes, more infrastructure per household, etc.) and would like to see neighbourhoods designed to improve active transportation so that people can walk, bike, or take transit for daily trips.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Advance to higher energy tiers with confidence, based on evidence that cost impacts are manageable.
- Set a clear, phased path toward net-zero, without stopping at intermediate tiers.
- Lead by example by applying ambitious standards to City-owned buildings.
- Advocate to the provincial government for higher, aligned building energy standards.
- Support gas-free heating, starting with new constructions.
- Address technical considerations (such as fire safety) through guidance.
- Develop new baselines/standards for new development so that future buildings don’t add to the already existing demand, including bylaws and policies that shape what gets built, where, and to what performance standard.
- Upgrade civic buildings to cut energy use, costs and lead by example.

Energy Generation

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

Support

1. Solar generation: ACT Arena, Material Recovery Centre and Landfill (7)
2. Dundonald Solar Farm design and ongoing installation (4)
3. Solar panels installed on new Fire Hall #5 (3)
3. Monitor small modular reactor (SMR), nuclear feasibility (3)
4. Landfill gas capture and electricity generation (2)

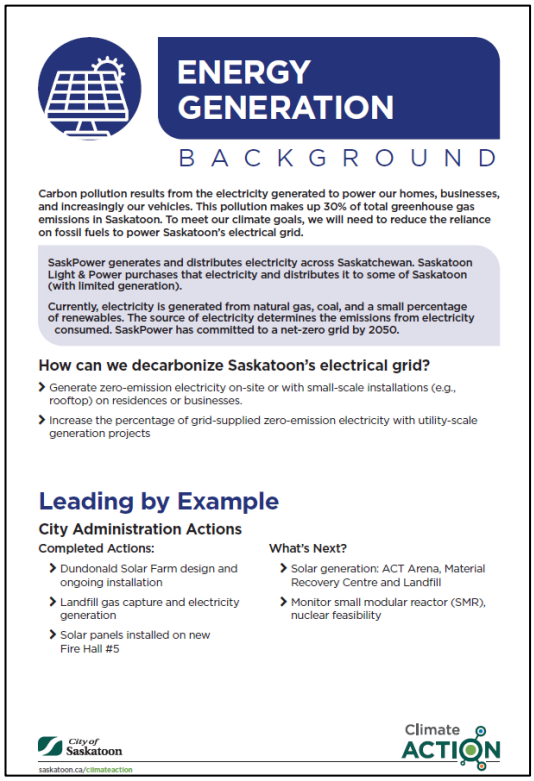


Figure 18: Energy Generation poster

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Explore partnerships: a few respondents suggested exploring bioenergy and carbon-negative electricity through partnerships with institutions like the Saskatchewan Research Council and the University of Saskatchewan.

Generate clean energy: respondents want the City to actively pursue local energy generation and navigate jurisdictional barriers (i.e., provincial government, net-metering, etc.) if needed; some suggested that they see City fleets and operations as a starting point to use clean electricity generated locally and then build to larger scales; a few suggested the City should use its purchasing power and assets to accelerate clean energy deployment.

Nuclear and SMRs: view on nuclear energy and small modular nuclear reactors were mixed; most participants opposed the City exploring nuclear options like SMRs, due to their cost, waste, and risk, and compared nuclear energy unfavorably to renewable forms (e.g., solar and wind).

Solar on City properties: to many participants, solar is seen as a clear, low-risk option the City can implement now; some respondents pointed to civic rooftops and parking lots as quick opportunities and referenced other jurisdictions where solar requirements are already in place.

Transparency: respondents called on the City to provide clearer accounting of health impacts, long-term risks, and avoided costs when evaluating sustainable energy projects; climate impacts should be treated as real financial considerations, not abstract benefits; it was suggested that the City should show how inaction could affect future budgets and development.

Waste to energy: many pointed to waste and the corresponding byproducts as underused resources for energy production, suggesting methane capture at the City's landfill, anaerobic digestion at compost facilities, and using waste heat from power generation to serve nearby buildings.

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Net-Metering, Small Power Producer, and Behind the Meter Programs (6)
1. Loans for solar, to homeowners (and soon businesses) repaid via property tax (6)
2. Review and address administrative barriers to solar installations for electricity customers (2)
3. MyHeat Solar Map provides free solar potential estimates for homeowners (1)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. ***Leading by example***: Monitor feasibility and opportunities for utility-scale zero-emission energy development (hydro, solar PV, SMR nuclear, public private partnerships, etc.) (5)
2. ***Regulation***: Explore approaches for solar PV requirements on new residential and commercial constructions through a Sustainable Building Standard or other mechanisms (3)
3. ***Service***: Offer a renewable subscription service for customers to purchase renewable energy credits through Saskatoon Light & Power (2)

Leading by example: Monitor feasibility and opportunities for utility-scale zero-emission energy development

Some respondents felt that the City should use its influence to accelerate utility-scale zero-emission energy development by advocating to SaskPower and the provincial government. Some participants called for an earlier phase-out of coal and quicker deployment of largescale solar. Many participants felt that renewable electricity should be prioritized and priced more favourably than fossil-fuel-based energy. Several respondents urged the City to explore greenhouse gas-free electricity for its own operations, arguing that large customers can drive change at the grid level and larger scales.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Advocate strongly to the provincial government and SaskPower for faster grid decarbonization and earlier coal phase-out.
- Use City electricity purchasing to demand zero-emission power and signal market demand.
- Push for faster timelines on utility-scale renewable energy projects, especially solar.
- Support pricing structures that favour renewable electricity over fossil-fuel-based energy.
- Recognize and promote the grid-level benefits of distributed solar alongside utility-scale generation.

Regulation: Explore approaches for solar PV requirements on new residential and commercial constructions through a Sustainable Building Standard or other mechanisms

Many participants supported expanding solar PV in Saskatoon but urged the City to focus on enabling measures before introducing new requirements. Participants called for clear cost-benefit analysis, simple utility and permitting rules, and options that work for renters and multi-unit buildings, such as small-scale or “plug-and-play” solar. Many emphasized that cost is the main barrier to adoption and felt that incentives, grants, or financing would drive uptake more effectively than introducing mandates early. Overall, respondents favoured a phased approach that reduces barriers and builds participation before considering solar requirements through a sustainable building standard or similar mechanism.

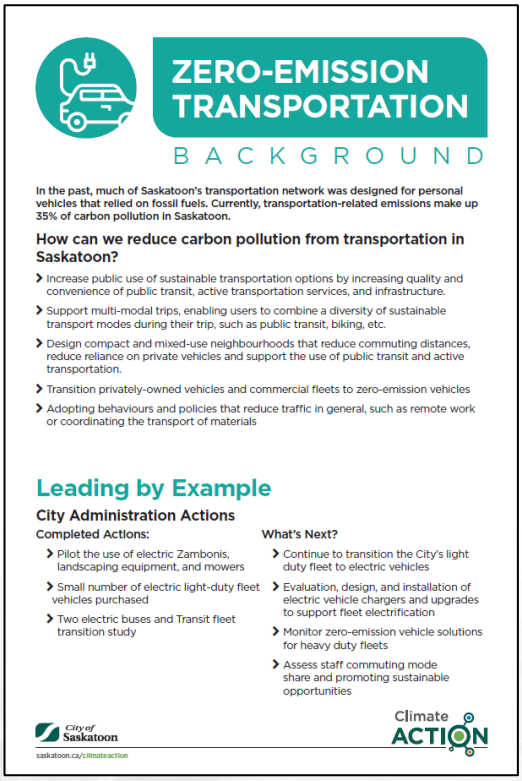
- Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:
- Demonstrate the business case for solar PV before introducing new requirements.
- Reduce regulatory and utility barriers, especially for small-scale and tenant-based solar.
- Enable plug-and-play options through Saskatoon Light and Power.
- Lead with incentives and financing, such as grants, rebates, or loan programs.
- Phase requirements carefully, once costs come down and participation broadens.

Zero-Emission Transportation

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Small number of electric light-duty fleet vehicles purchased (3)
1. Continue to transition the City’s light duty fleet to electric vehicles (3)
2. Evaluation, design, and installation of electric vehicle chargers and upgrades to support fleet electrification (2)
3. Pilot the use of electric Zambonis, landscaping equipment, and mowers (1)
3. Two electric buses and Transit fleet transition study (1)


ZERO-EMISSION TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND

In the past, much of Saskatoon's transportation network was designed for personal vehicles that relied on fossil fuels. Currently, transportation-related emissions make up 35% of carbon pollution in Saskatoon.

How can we reduce carbon pollution from transportation in Saskatoon?

- Increase public use of sustainable transportation options by increasing quality and convenience of public transit, active transportation services, and infrastructure.
- Support multi-modal trips, enabling users to combine a diversity of sustainable transport modes during their trip, such as public transit, biking, etc.
- Design compact and mixed-use neighbourhoods that reduce commuting distances, reduce reliance on private vehicles and support the use of public transit and active transportation.
- Transition privately-owned vehicles and commercial fleets to zero-emission vehicles
- Adopting behaviours and policies that reduce traffic in general, such as remote work or coordinating the transport of materials

Leading by Example

City Administration Actions

Completed Actions:

- Pilot the use of electric Zambonis, landscaping equipment, and mowers
- Small number of electric light-duty fleet vehicles purchased
- Two electric buses and Transit fleet transition study

What's Next?

- Continue to transition the City's light duty fleet to electric vehicles
- Evaluation, design, and installation of electric vehicle chargers and upgrades to support fleet electrification
- Monitor zero-emission vehicle solutions for heavy duty fleets
- Assess staff commuting mode share and promoting sustainable opportunities

City of Saskatoon

saskatoon.ca/climateaction

Climate ACTION

Figure 19: Zero-Emission Transportation poster

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Accelerate fleet electrification: most respondents clearly felt that diesel buses are no longer acceptable and would much rather prefer electric busses; while some participants acknowledged the need to understand the full lifecycle costs, they would prefer a faster transition timeline than Transit has currently planned to treat electrification as urgent, not experimental; some expressed that gradual timelines undermine the City’s climate commitments and delay real emissions reductions

Integrate with green energy: some connected transportation electrification with clean energy generation, stating they would like to see City vehicles powered by renewable electricity.

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Improving the active transportation network (pathways, sidewalks, bike lanes) (7)
2. Link (bus rapid transit) design and construction to improve Transit service (5)
3. Updating Active Transportation Plan and Corridor Planning (1)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. ***Regulation***: Adopt EV-ready bylaws for multi-unit buildings, including requirements for new apartments and condos to include infrastructure for EV charging (8)
2. ***Incentive***: Incentives for vehicle-for-hire (taxis, ridesharing) to adopt EVs and for EV charger retrofits in existing multi-unit buildings. (7)
3. ***Service***: Improve amenities that support multi-modal trips, enabling users to combine multiple modes of sustainable transportation for longer or complete trips (example: secure bike or micromobility parking at transit hubs) (2)

Regulation: Adopt EV-ready bylaws for multi-unit buildings, including requirements for new apartments and condos to include infrastructure for EV charging

Respondents supported preparing multi-unit residential buildings for electric vehicle charging but cautioned against introducing new requirements without addressing cost and utility impacts first. They raised concerns about increased electricity demand charges for buildings with EV chargers and emphasized the need for incentives rather than early mandates. Some respondents also noted that EV-ready bylaws should be part of a broader transportation strategy, pointing out that safety concerns on city streets still limit walking and cycling. Overall, respondents favoured a phased approach that resolves cost barriers, offers incentives, and aligns EV readiness with efforts to reduce the overall reliance on private vehicles.

Other comments provided by participants included the following themes:

Availability: a few participants felt that transit is sometimes added as an afterthought in the planning/design of new neighbourhoods and would instead like transit servicing in place as soon as people move in, so driving isn't the default behaviour in new neighbourhoods.

Invest in active transportation: some participants called for visible, practical investments that make cycling realistic for everyday trips; providing secure storage and end-of-trip facilities are seen as missing links.

Maintenance and winter: respondents emphasized that accessibility and maintenance matter as much as infrastructure; winter conditions are seen as a major barrier to transit and active transportation in Saskatoon.

Mode sharing: one participant suggested that the goal should be to reduce private vehicle use overall and not just increase active transportation.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Resolve or mitigate utility demand-charge impacts for buildings with EV chargers.
- Lead with incentives and financing, especially for multi-unit residential buildings.
- Phase EV-ready requirements carefully, once cost and utility issues are addressed.
- Coordinate EV policies with broader transportation safety measures, including traffic calming and safer street design.

Incentive: Incentives for vehicle-for-hire (taxis, ridesharing) to adopt EVs and for EV charging retrofits in existing multi-unit buildings

Participants supported using incentives to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles in taxis and ridesharing services, particularly by offering discounts or credits to customers who choose electric options. They viewed this as a practical way to reduce emissions from high-use vehicles while increasing public awareness of EVs. Respondents also emphasized the importance of supporting EV-charger retrofits in existing multi-unit buildings and suggested incentives for solar installations in parking lots to help offset charging costs.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Offer incentives tied to consumer choice, such as discounts or credits for using electric taxis and ridesharing services.
- Encourage EV adoption among vehicle-for-hire operators through demand-driven incentives rather than regulation.
- Support EV-charger retrofits in existing multi-unit buildings, especially where cost and infrastructure are barriers.
- Pair charging incentives with on-site renewable energy, such as solar installations in parking lots, to reduce operating costs and emissions.

Service: Improve amenities that support multi-modal trips, enabling users to combine multiple modes of sustainable transportation for longer or complete trips

Many felt that the City can best support multi-modal travel by designing streets, sites, and neighbourhoods for people rather than cars. Participants called for safer walking and cycling routes through large parking lots, greater investment in active transportation infrastructure, and land-use policies that better connect homes and businesses. Some also emphasized the need to align City spending with climate goals, noting that continued investment in fossil-fuel-based transportation undermines efforts to reduce emissions. Overall, respondents want visible service improvements that make it easy and safe to combine walking, cycling, and transit for everyday trips.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Require safe pedestrian and cycling routes through large parking lots and commercial sites.
- Align capital investments with climate and mobility goals, reducing spending on fossil-fuel-based transportation.

- Adopt people-first land-use and street design policies that support proximity and everyday access.
- Expand and maintain active transportation infrastructure, including accessible sidewalks, bike paths, and supporting amenities.

Waste Reduction

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

Support

1. Approaches for waste prevention through purchasing (4)
2. Landfill gas emissions are captured for energy generation (2)
2. Developing corporate waste diversion targets (2)
2. Update the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan (2)
2. Improving waste diversion in public spaces (events, civic facilities, parks, etc.) (2)
3. Continuous improvement and education for proper waste sorting (1)
4. Organics diversion in civic operations (0)

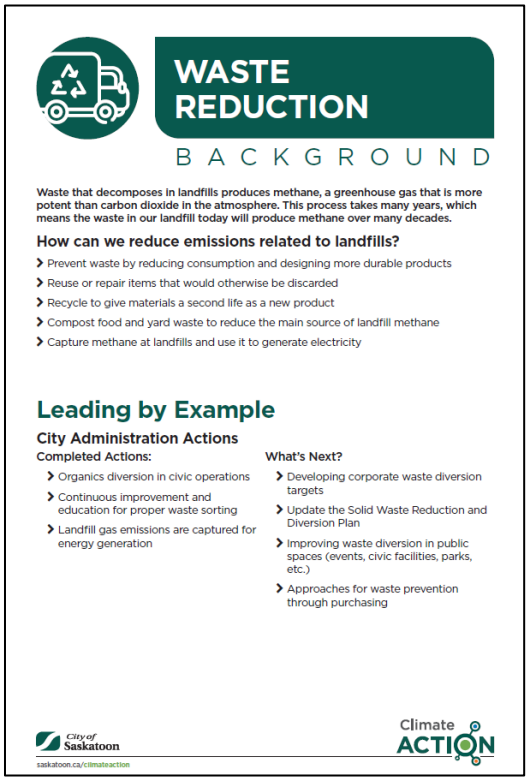


Figure 20: Waste Reduction poster

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Reduce plastic and shift to biodegradable materials: respondents called on the City to reduce reliance on single-use plastics and conventional materials in its own purchasing and operations; some saw procurement choices as a direct way for the City to model waste-reduction behaviour.

Improve waste collection: a few participants pointed to transit stops as high-use public spaces where waste often accumulates; suggestions for improvements included better placement, maintenance, and design of waste and recycling bins so disposal is easy and visible.

Adopt technologies: many were open to innovation and want the City to explore new tools and technologies that reduce waste generation, improve sorting, or support circular systems.

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Regulations that require businesses to divert recycling and organics (5)
2. Curbside residential organic service and multi-unit organics program development (4)
3. Expanding the materials accepted in residential recycling programs (1)
3. Size and fee options for black cart curbside garbage collection (1)
3. Establishing the Material Recovery Centre diversion depot (1)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. ***Regulation***: Explore expanded requirements in the Waste Bylaw to support waste reduction and diversion (5)
2. ***Service***: Expand the materials accepted at the City's Material Recovery Centre (4)
3. ***Service***: Develop an extreme weather response plan for waste management (1)

Regulation: Explore expanded requirements in the Waste Bylaw to support waste reduction and diversion

Respondents supported the goal of reducing waste and increasing diversion but urged caution in expanding Waste Bylaw requirements as the primary tool. They emphasized that incentives and system-level changes are more effective at encouraging behavioral change than regulation alone. Several respondents called for a stronger focus on circular-economy approaches, including reducing planned obsolescence, supporting community repair programs, and using product stewardship to address packaging waste. Overall, respondents favoured regulatory approaches that enable reuse, repair, and upstream responsibility rather than placing additional requirements on end users.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Be cautious about expanding Waste Bylaw requirements without incentives and supports.
- Use the Waste Bylaw to support circular-economy outcomes, such as durability, reuse, and repair.
- Remove regulatory barriers to community repair and reuse programs.
- Advocate for and align with product stewardship programs, particularly to reduce packaging waste.

Service: Expand the materials accepted at the City's Material Recovery Centre

Participants suggested implementing a waste audit on construction and demolition materials for new buildings would help to determine how much waste is being created, what materials the City needs to focus on and what is divertible.

Suggestions for implementing the action included implementing a waste audit on construction and demolition materials

Service: Develop an extreme weather response plan for waste management

Some respondents supported developing an extreme weather response plan for waste management and viewed it as a useful step to reduce harm and protect public health during climate-related events. They emphasized that clear planning and communication would help maintain safe, reliable waste services during heat waves, storms, and other extreme conditions. Respondents also suggested linking emergency response with longer-term sustainability by creating City programs or facilities that use recycled materials.

Suggestions for implementing the action included developing a clear extreme weather response plan for waste management, including collection, facilities, and communication.

Water Conservation

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Set corporate water reduction targets (4)
3. Using raw water for irrigating golf courses (2)
3. Non-potable water pilots (watering truck pilot) (2)
3. Continue upgrading spray pads (1)
5. Reducing breaks and leaks throughout water and wastewater systems (1)
6. Spray pad low flow nozzle pilot (0)
7. Irrigation pilots in City parks and sports fields (0)

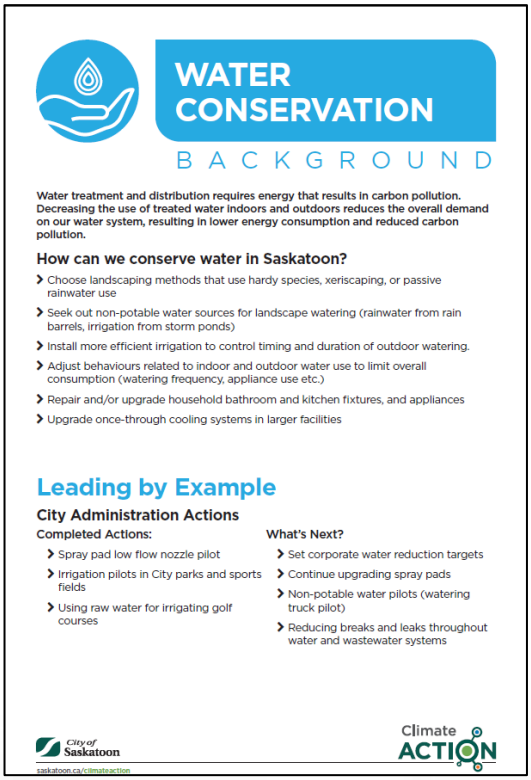


Figure 21: Water Conservation poster

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Water-wise landscaping: respondents strongly support drought-resistant landscaping using native or hardy species that require little supplemental watering; participants called on the City to implement this approach consistently in parks, boulevards, and civic properties.

Irrigation: many called on the City to reuse available water sources wherever possible, particularly for landscape watering; some participants saw stormwater and snowmelt as underused resources that could reduce pressure on treated drinking water supplies.

Improve public awareness: a few participants wanted the City to model best practices, such as avoiding daytime watering, so residents understand what responsible water use looks like in practice.

Guidance and incentives: participants supported practical, accessible resources that help people replicate water-wise practices at home; a few suggested incentives to reduce cost barriers.

Monitoring: one respondent pointed to other communities using metering and monitoring to identify leaks and inefficiencies (e.g., City of Melfort).

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Using SmartUTIL to provide customers with detailed information on their water use (5)
1. Rain barrel rebate program (5)
2. Loans repaid via property tax, available to homeowners for water retrofits (3)
3. Water conservation education (online and at events) (1)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. ***All***: Explore ways to support water conservation through non-potable water use in the community (7)
2. ***Incentive***: Explore further incentives for water conservation to encourage conservation (3)
3. ***Service***: Review of the emergency water restriction policy to explore the impact on water conservation (2)

Incentive: Explore further incentives for water conservation to encourage conservation

Respondents supported expanding incentives to encourage water conservation, particularly for outdoor water use. They expressed strong support for using non-potable or raw water where appropriate, adopting low-water plantings in City-owned landscapes, and rethinking turf in areas such as ditches and boulevards. One respondent pointed to the 20th Street water-collecting boulevard upgrade as a successful example and asked the City to replicate similar projects elsewhere.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Offer incentives for water-smart landscaping, including hardy, low-water plant species.
- Encourage the use of non-potable or raw water for appropriate outdoor uses.
- Expand and replicate successful water-conserving design projects in boulevards, ditches, and public spaces.
- Focus incentives on outdoor water savings, where the largest reductions are achievable.

Incentive: Explore further incentives for water conservation to encourage conservation

Participants supported expanding incentives that help residents reduce outdoor water use in practical ways. They suggested assistance with programming residential irrigation controllers to prevent over-watering, providing low-water alternatives such as clover seed instead of traditional

turf, and offering incentives for rain gardens that capture and use rainfall on site. Overall, respondents favoured hands-on, low-cost incentives that make water-smart landscaping easy to adopt and help reduce peak summer water demand.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Offer hands-on support to help residents program and optimize irrigation controllers.
- Provide material incentives (such as clover seed) that encourage low-water ground covers.
- Introduce or expand rain-garden incentives to reduce irrigation demand and manage stormwater.
- Target incentives to outdoor water use, where the greatest conservation gains are possible.

Green Network

Leading By Example

From the list of completed and future actions the City is taking, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Increase tree canopy (8)
2. Improve Natural Capital Asset Valuation to better understand carbon storage and sequestration (5)
3. Roll-out of the Tree Protection Bylaw for trees on City property (3)
4. Restoration projects (e.g., Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area) (2)
4. Complete Natural Infrastructure Fund projects (2)
5. Delivery of the Dutch Elm Disposal Program (0)
5. Developing Natural Area Management Plans (0)

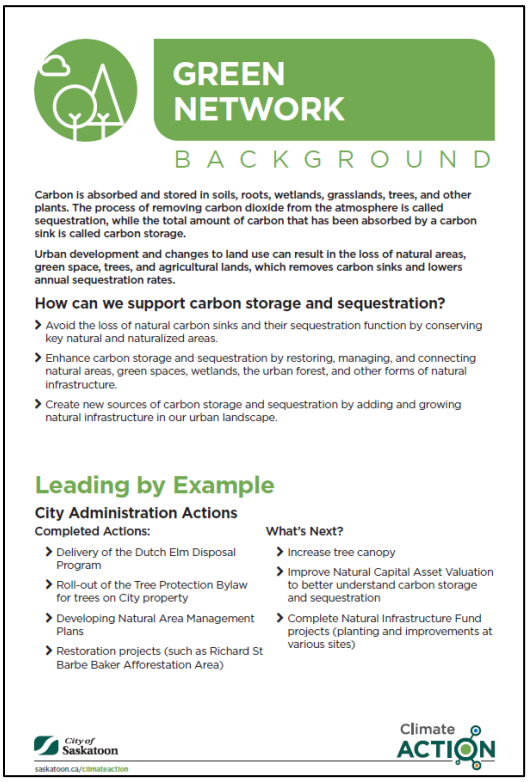


Figure 22: Green Network poster

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Protect existing natural areas: many participants repeatedly stressed the importance of natural areas (e.g., Northeast and Small Swales) and that existing wetlands, swales, and natural areas already store significant carbon, providing co-benefits like flood control and habitat; many are concerned that these systems are being undervalued or replaced with engineered alternatives; many called on the City to protect natural areas from urban sprawl, freeways and future development.

Strengthen green space: respondents want more small-scale, connected green spaces integrated into neighbourhoods, especially where large parks aren't feasible; some suggested that the City add more green space than what they are required to in the municipal reserve; pocket parks were viewed as effective examples.

Tree protection: many expressed their concern about ongoing tree canopy loss, especially in the context of Dutch elm disease and development pressures; participants called for more staff capacity and clearer expectations around replacement when trees are removed; one participant encouraged the City to include tree plantings within the neighbourhood design process and account for more new trees in new neighbourhoods.

Replacement: some understood that trees can't always be replaced like-for-like, but they strongly opposed net loss to Saskatoon's urban forest; participants would like to see consistent replanting policies that maintain the overall ecological function of our urban forest.

Measuring carbon: a few participants stated that without robust measurement and tracking, carbon-rich landscapes will continue to be lost because their value isn't visible in the planning/decision-making process; some suggested advanced data tools to improve assessment and accountability.

Limits to sequestration: several respondents cautioned against over-reliance on tree planting as a robust climate solution, emphasizing that sequestration has limits and must complement, not replace, emissions reductions.

Align land-use with climate goals: strong opposition appeared where major infrastructure is seen as threatening high-value natural areas.

Support biodiversity: a few participants linked carbon storage to healthier soils and pollinator support; alternative plantings could be a way to improve biodiversity while reducing maintenance and water use.

Current and Upcoming Community Initiatives

Participants were provided with a list of current and upcoming community City initiatives, and they provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. Property owners may request boulevard tree plantings adjacent to their properties (5)
2. Collaboration with Meewasin on river valley and swale resource management (4)
3. Public space gardening (2)
3. Education program for residents on sustainable practices through the Healthy Yards Program (2)

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants provided the following ranking based on their support:

1. ***Incentive***: Explore incentives for enhancing natural infrastructure (grants or rebates for industrial and commercial sectors, community organizations, and residents) (5)
1. ***Partnership***: Develop agreements and programs that enable community led planting and stewardship of public green space. (5)
2. ***Regulatory***: Developing policies and processes that identify and conserve natural areas and sensitive habitats throughout planning and development. (4)

Incentive: Explore incentives for enhancing natural infrastructure (grants or rebates for industrial and commercial sectors, community organizations, and residents)

Respondents supported expanding incentives to enhance natural infrastructure across Saskatoon and emphasized encouragement over regulation. They called for grants and rebates that support trees, native plants, community gardens, and pollinator-friendly landscaping on both public and private land. Several respondents stressed the importance of protecting existing trees, particularly on private property, and suggested pairing incentives with education, such as inspections or realtor awareness programs. Others raised interest in complementary incentives, such as dark-sky measures, that support broader ecosystem health. Overall, respondents want incentive-based programs that help residents, businesses, and community organizations actively contribute to a stronger Green Network.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Offer grants or rebates that support planting, maintenance, and stewardship of natural infrastructure.
- Prioritize incentives for native plants, trees, and pollinator-friendly landscapes.
- Encourage protection of existing trees, especially on private property, through incentives and education.
- Support community gardens and community-led greening initiatives.
- Explore complementary incentives, such as dark-sky measures, that support ecosystem health.

Partnership: Develop agreements and programs that enable community led planting and stewardship of public green space.

Respondents suggested that the City should strengthen partnerships that enable community-led planting and stewardship of public green spaces. They called for expanding existing programs like the Healthy Yards program, increasing community garden opportunities, and creating clear agreements that allow residents and organizations to plant and care for them on public land. Respondents also emphasized collaboration with water and land-use planning departments and supporting Meewasin. A few respondents called for formal partnerships and MOUs with Indigenous organizations to support long-term land stewardship. Overall, respondents want community leadership to be enabled through clear partnerships, stable support, and shared responsibility.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Formalize agreements that enable community-led planting and stewardship on public land.
- Expand and strengthen existing programs, such as the Healthy Yards program and community gardening.
- Increase access to public land for community planting through clear guidelines and approvals.
- Coordinate efforts with water management and land-use planning.
- Partner with regional organizations, such as Meewasin, on restoration and preservation.
- Develop long-term partnerships with Indigenous organizations for land stewardship.
- Maintain ongoing City support, including funding, staff time, and technical expertise.

Regulatory: Developing policies and processes that identify and conserve natural areas and sensitive habitats throughout planning and development.

Many participants felt that the City should strengthen regulatory policies and planning processes to better identify and conserve natural areas and sensitive habitats as Saskatoon grows. They called for clearer and more robust protection of swales, wetlands, and other high-value ecosystems, stronger green-space requirements in new neighbourhoods and multi-unit developments, and proactive land acquisition to secure important natural areas. Respondents also emphasized the need to recognize Indigenous plants and cultural values in conservation decisions and to use more beneficial methods for valuing green space and trees that reflect long-term ecological, health, and economic benefits. Overall, respondents want conservation built into planning and development decisions, rather than addressed after the fact.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Adopt stronger policies to identify and protect sensitive natural areas early in the planning process.
- Prevent development and infrastructure projects that threaten high-value ecosystems such as swales and wetlands.
- Increase green-space requirements in new neighbourhoods and multi-unit developments.
- Pursue strategic land acquisition, including beyond current city boundaries.
- Recognize cultural and Indigenous values associated with natural areas and plant species.
- Use more comprehensive valuation methods that account for long-term ecological, health, and cultural benefits.

Carbon Removal

Leading By Example

From the list of future actions the City is taking, participants supported monitoring and piloting development carbon removal technologies (3) and exploring carbon removal policies equally (3).

The following themes emerged from the comments and suggestions for how the City can lead by example:

Demonstrate costs: many participants want any carbon removal initiative to provide substantial value and are concerned about public money being invested in approaches that deliver limited or uncertain benefits

Skeptical of benefits: respondents emphasized that biological systems are part of a natural carbon cycle and do not provide permanent storage; some cautioned against overstating the long-term climate impacts of tree planting or soil-based sequestration; one participant believed that scaling up natural sequestration cannot keep pace with rising emissions from fossil fuels.

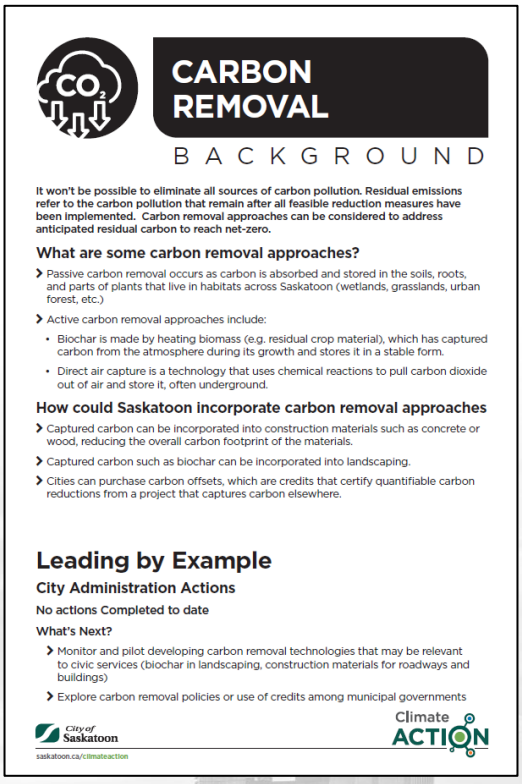


Figure 23: Carbon Removal poster

Distrust: some participants did not have confidence in technological carbon capture and offset markets, stating their concerns for under-performance, high costs, and accountability (i.e., potential for fraud).

Supporting Community Action

When provided with a list of how the City can support community action, participants equally supported the City exploring partnerships with research institutions (3) and industry (3) for carbon removal.

Partnership: Explore partnerships with research institutions and industry on municipal or urban opportunities for carbon removal

Participants supported exploring partnerships with research institutions, industry, and other governments to assess urban carbon removal opportunities, but emphasized an evidence-based and exploratory approach. They suggested piloting a range of options, including using applied technologies such as biochar, low-emission construction materials, and smog-reducing building products. Some respondents also pointed to potential partnerships around bio-energy with carbon capture or provincial carbon capture hubs, noting these would require coordination beyond the municipal level. Overall, respondents want the City to support exploring and learning, with clear measurement, transparency, and realistic expectations about outcomes.

Suggestions for implementing the action included the following:

- Act as a convener and pilot partner, not a sole investor, in carbon removal initiatives.
- Partner with research institutions to test, measure, and verify carbon removal approaches.
- Integrate pilots into existing urban systems, such as natural areas, infrastructure, and land-use planning.
- Explore applied technologies (e.g., bio-based solutions) through pilot projects.
- Coordinate with provincial and federal governments on larger-scale carbon capture opportunities.
- Share results transparently, including limitations and failures.

Additional Benefits and Impacts

When asked to identify any additional community benefits or potential negative impacts from the actions being presented today, participants provided comments that were grouped into the following themes:

Table 9: Potential benefits and impacts for the proposed actions

Target	Community Benefits	Negative Impacts
Social	• Active transportation and green spaces are good for physical and mental health • Improved housing with increased density • Our grandchildren deserve a world without the climate crises • A safe, habitable city with positive health, social and financial outcomes • Increased transportation options with bus, improved walkability and active transportation • Greater health benefits • Better transportation leads to greater safety and mobility for people with barriers	• Increased costs are not equally felt • Be cautious and aware of how regulation can disproportionally affect already marginalized groups • Please try to ensure programs are accessible to low-income renters and new Canadians
Economic	• Increase GDP and jobs • Beneficial for numerous industries, such as mining and landfill • Better transportation is an economic equalizer for people to access the city, leading to increased job opportunities and for businesses to gain customers • It is a lot easier and cheaper to convert deliberately and methodically over 25 years than to do it all in one year in 2049 • Renewables are cheaper and easier than other options like nuclear	• People are already strapped, so what comes off the plate? • Half steps and measures lead to damage, costs and instability very quickly • Climate inaction costs and costs of damage from climate change • Factor in the cost of climate inaction and climate damage
Environmental	• Waste reduction • Cleaner air to breathe • High efficiency buildings are cheaper to operate and they stay warm/cool in when needed • Reconciliation with each other and our environment • Increased food forests and public gardening spaces leads to greater food security • Greater tree canopy/shade leads to less demand on air conditioning, health benefits for at risk populations (elderly, children, etc.)	• Small modular nuclear reactors are costly, slow to build and have significant environmental concerns • What's the plan for when the river runs dry? • How can we adapt when we are still accelerating emissions? • The City needs to demonstrate that they are committed to climate action in everything that we do.

3 EVALUATION OF ENGAGEMENT

Evaluation is discussed in terms of feedback received during engagement activities and through informal comments, data limitations and opportunities for improvement.

3.1 Evaluation

Survey participants indicated support for both the level of engagement conducted and the opportunities provided. For the survey, participants generally agreed or strongly agreed with the information that was provided being clear and understandable (72%) with feeling they were able to provide their opinions fully (75%) and understanding how their input would be used (58%).

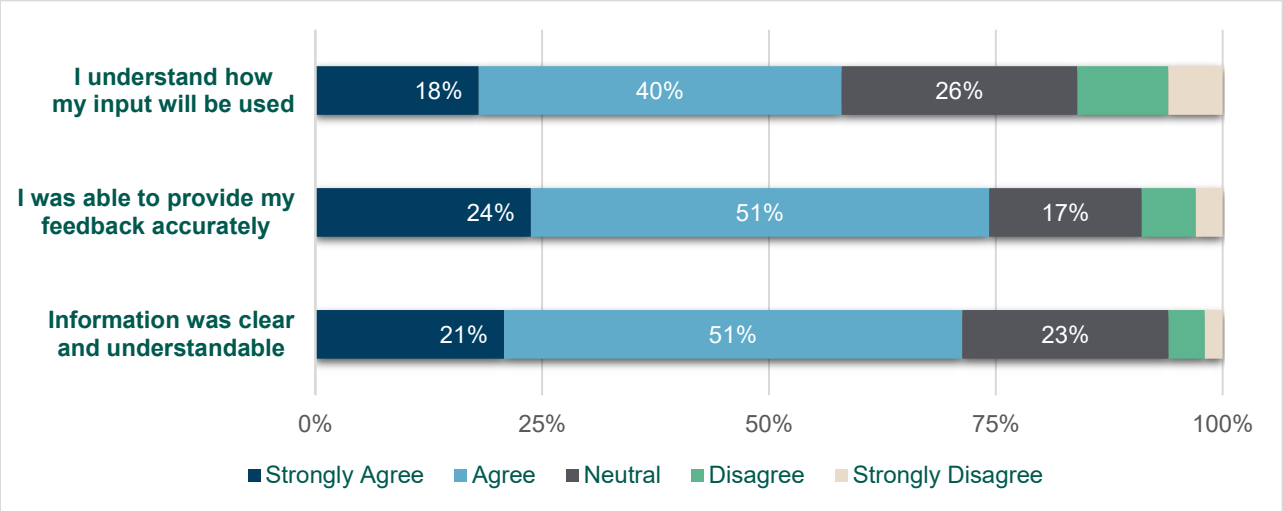


Figure 24: Survey evaluation

Many participants found the survey easy to use, appreciated being asked, and supported the City's efforts to plan for climate action.

"I appreciate how much you ask for feedback."

Some participants questioned the survey's neutrality, design, and whether public input would meaningfully influence decisions.

"Questions were poorly asked and asked in a way that can be taken very out of context."

Throughout the various engagement activities many participants called on the City to continue to engage and collaborate with the public on their climate action efforts. Providing ongoing and accessible public engagement will allow conversations to be open, even amid disagreements and conflicting views surrounding climate change.

A few participants encouraged the City to collaborate with Indigenous leaders, researchers and local experts when implementing any of the climate actions to ensure the success of the initiatives.

3.2 Data Limitations

The engagement findings provide valuable insight into community perspectives and priorities; however, several data limitations should be considered when interpreting the results:

Limited nuance: several questions/topics relied on binary or constrained choices, which some participants felt did not accurately reflect their views.

Voluntary participation and self-selection: survey and engagement activities were open to voluntary participation. As a result, findings reflect the views of those who chose to engage and should not be interpreted as statistically representative of the entire Saskatoon population.

Variation in topic familiarity: evaluation feedback indicated that some participants were unclear about distinctions between climate mitigation and adaptation. This may have influenced how questions were interpreted and how actions or priorities were selected.

3.3 Opportunities for Improvement

Based on participant feedback, the following opportunities for improvement will be considered for future engagement activities:

- Any written or verbal information uses plain language and easy-to-understand terms
- Clearly communicate how the feedback will be used.
- Explore more inclusive and tailored engagement approaches for hard-to-reach groups (e.g., low-income residents, renters, newcomers, etc.)
- Future engagement could more explicitly test willingness to accept trade-offs (e.g., cost, timelines, regulation vs. incentives) rather than focusing primarily on general support or concern.
- Increase the use of in-person, pop-up, or partner-led engagement in community spaces (libraries, community centres, shelters, events) to reduce reliance on online participation.
- Move beyond one-time or project-specific engagement toward sustained, relationship-based collaboration that meaningfully integrates Indigenous knowledge and priorities into decision-making.
- Some participants felt that the differences between climate mitigation and adaptation were not well described and are confusing. Providing clearer, plain-language explanations before and during engagement will help support informed responses and reduce confusion.

4 NEXT STEPS

A report on the options will be presented to City Council in 2026. For more information about when the Program will be presented to City Council, please visit our Engage Page.

We thank all participants who provided their feedback for this and other City of Saskatoon projects.