



**PUBLIC AGENDA  
SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Friday, January 19, 2024, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

**Committee Room E, Ground Floor, City Hall**

**Committee Members:**

**Diane Bentley, Public  
Manvi Ghai, Public  
Carmen Gilmore, Public  
Eve Keller, Meewasin Valley Authority  
Alasdair Morrison, Public  
Terry Neefs, Public  
Palash Sanyal, Public  
Matthew Shumaker, Saskatchewan Health Authority  
Angela Spence, Public  
Robin Steeg, Public  
John Paul Wasan, Public**

**Other Attendees:**

**Councillor Sarina Gersher  
Metering & Sustainable Electricity Manager, Jose Cheruvallath  
Director of Building Standards, Kara Fagnou  
Environment Projects and Protection Manager, Dan Gauthier  
Senior Planner, Planning & Development, Lars Ketilson  
Director of Transportation, Jay Magus  
Director of Sustainability, Jeanna South**

Submissions providing comments and/or requesting to speak will be accepted for public meetings using the online form at [saskatoon.ca/writetocouncil](https://saskatoon.ca/writetocouncil). If your submission includes a request to speak, you will be contacted by a representative from the City Clerk's Office with further information. Submissions will be accepted no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday the week of the meeting.

**Pages**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Committee Assistant will call the meeting to order on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis People and confirm roll call.

**1.1 Committee Orientation [CK 175-9]**

The Committee Assistant will provide an overview of the Committee process.

**Recommendation**

That the information be received.

**1.2 2024 Membership - Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee [CK 175-9]**

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on November 22, 2023, adopted a recommendation of its Governance and Priorities Committee that the following be (re)appointed to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee for the term indicated:

Appointed to the end of 2025:

- Matthew Shumaker, Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Diane Bentley, Public Representative
- Palash Sanyal, Public Representative
- Angela Spence, Public Representative
- John Paul Wasan, Public Representative
- Terry Neefs, Public Representative
- Robin Steeg, Public Representative

The following were previously appointed by City Council to the end of 2024:

- Eve Keller, Meewasin Valley Authority
- Carmen Gilmore, Public Representative
- Alasdair Morrison, Public Representative
- Manvi Ghai, Public Representative - Youth

**Recommendation**

That the information be received.

**1.3 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair [CK 175-9]**

The Committee is requested to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024. John Paul Wasan was Chair and Angela Spence and Vice-Chair for 2023.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024.

#### **1.4 2024 Meeting Dates**

The meeting dates for 2024 are as follows:

- January 19;
- February 16;
- March 15;
- April 19;
- May 17;
- June 21;
- September 20; and
- November 15.

##### **Recommendation**

That the information be received.

#### **2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

##### **Recommendation**

That the agenda be confirmed as presented.

#### **3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

#### **4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES [CK 175-9-1]**

6 - 10

##### **Recommendation**

That the minutes of the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee meeting held on November 17, 2023, be approved.

#### **5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **6. VERBAL UPDATES**

##### **6.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR [CK 175-9]**

*This is a standing item on the agenda to provide the Chair an opportunity to update on his activities since the last meeting.*

##### **Recommendation**

That the information be received.

## **6.2 COMMITTEE OR RESOURCE MEMBER UPDATE [CK 175-9]**

*This is a standing item on the agenda to provide an opportunity for a Committee or Resource member to update on issues, trends, events, etc. that pertain to the Committee's mandate.*

## **7. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE**

### **7.1 Natural Areas Policy Framework [PDCS2024-0103]**

11 - 53

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services at its meeting held on January 10, 2024, considered the following item and resolved in part that the report be forwarded to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee for information.

Administration will be in attendance to present the report.

#### **Recommendation**

That the report be received as information.

### **8. Environmental Grant Program - Adjudication Committee Member [CK 225-4-3]**

54 - 54

A request for a Committee member to sit on the Environmental Grant Program - Adjudication Committee is provided. Administration will be in attendance to speak to the matter.

#### **Recommendation**

That the Committee provide direction.

## **9. WORK PLAN CONSIDERATION**

### **9.1 WORK PLAN AND REFERRALS TO STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE [CK 175-9]**

55 - 65

*This is a standing item on the agenda for the Committee, and/or any Subcommittee, to provide updates regarding items on its Work Plan and any matters being referred to the Standing Policy Committee for consideration.*

As stated in the Terms of Reference, the Committee shall submit a work plan for the upcoming year to City Council, through the Standing Policy Committee on Environment Utilities and Corporate Services.

The 2023 Work Plan is provided for the Committee's information.

The 2024 Work Plan will be discussed at the meeting.

#### **Recommendation**

That the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee draft its Work Plan for 2024, for submission to City Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services by March 31, 2024.

**9.1.1 EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE - UPDATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS [CK 375-4]**

An Advisory Committee may form subcommittees and working groups within its membership as necessary to address specific issues within its mandate. Subcommittees shall draw upon voting members of the Committee.

The Committee currently has one Subcommittee:

- Education Subcommittee

The Committee is requested to determine if a Subcommittee is required and to appoint members for the Subcommittee for 2024.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee provide direction.

**10. BUDGET - STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES FOR 2023 [CK 1704-5]**

66 - 66

The 2023 year end budget is provided. The 2024 approved budget is \$7,800.00.

The 2023 distribution was as follows:

- Sponsored Social Media Promotion - \$500.00
- Student Action for a Sustainable Future (SASF) Program - \$1,800.00
- Public Education/Information Gathering - \$5,500.00

The Committee is requested to review the budget and provide the 2024 distribution.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee provide direction.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

## **PUBLIC MINUTES**

### **SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**November 17, 2023, 11:30 a.m.**

**Committee Room E, Ground Floor, City Hall**

**PRESENT:**

John Paul Wasan, Public, Chair  
Angela Spence, Public, Vice Chair  
Diane Bentley, Public at 11:34 a.m.  
Manvi Ghai, Public, via teleconference  
Carmen Gilmore, Public  
Mostofa Kamal, Public, via teleconference  
Eve Keller, Meewasin Valley Authority  
Alasdair Morrison, Public, via teleconference  
Palash Sanyal, Public, via teleconference

**ABSENT:**

Omar Nawara, Public  
Matthew Shumaker, Saskatchewan Health Authority

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor Sarina Gersher, via teleconference  
Director of Building Standards, Kara Fagnou, via teleconference  
Senior Planner, Planning & Development, Lars Ketilson, via teleconference  
Director of Sustainability, Jeanna South  
Committee Assistant Heather Janzen

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis People and confirmed roll call.

#### **2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

**Moved By:** C. Gilmore

1. That the amended letter from Megan Van Buskirk, Acting Executive Director, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, dated November 9, 2023, be added to Item 6.1 and replace the November 3, 2023, Saskatchewan Environmental Society letter; and

2. That the agenda be confirmed as amended.

**CARRIED**

3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES [CK 175-9-1]**

**Moved By:** A. Morrison

That the minutes of the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee meeting held on October 20, 2023, be approved.

**CARRIED**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

6. **COMMUNICATIONS**

- 6.1 **Saskatchewan Environmental Society [CK 1870-1]**

An amended letter from Megan Van Buskirk, Acting Executive Director, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, dated November 9, 2023, regarding a funding request was provided.

Chair Wasan introduced the item.

Education and Environmental Performance Manager Burns was in attendance and noted that the program may be available for funding through the City's Environmental Gash Grant program.

Diane Bentley entered the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

**Moved By:** C. Gilmore

That the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee contribute \$4,200.00 from its 2023 budget to the Saskatchewan Environmental Society.

**CARRIED**

7. **VERBAL UPDATES**

## **7.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR [CK 175-9]**

*This is a standing item on the agenda to provide the Chair an opportunity to update on his activities since the last meeting.*

Chair Wasan provided a verbal update on the following:

- The Chair and Vice-Chair met with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society on November 9<sup>th</sup>, to discuss their funding request.
- SaskPower is hosting engagement sessions, Future Supply, on future energy technologies and reaching net zero. They will be held November 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. and November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the Agriculture Building at the University of Saskatchewan.
- Renny Grilz at Meewasin Valley Authority received a grant for research and professional development on native seedbanks, native seed industry networks, and seed supply for restoration projects.

**Moved By:** A. Spence

That the information be received.

**CARRIED**

## **7.2 COMMITTEE OR RESOURCE MEMBER UPDATE [CK 175-9]**

*This is a standing item on the agenda to provide an opportunity for a Committee or Resource member to update on issues, trends, events, etc. that pertain to the Committee's mandate.*

## **8. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE**

### **8.1 Funding Environmental Sustainability Actions and Climate Budget - Update [EUCS2023-1103]**

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services, at its meeting held on November 1, 2023, considered the following item and resolved in part that the report be forwarded to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee for information.



Director of Sustainability South presented the report with a PowerPoint presentation. Together with Education and Environmental Performance Manager Weckworth they responded to questions of the Committee regarding climate emergency, green network actions and transportation.

**Moved By:** D. Bentley

That the information be received.

**CARRIED**

## **9. ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PLAN CONSIDERATION**

*In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, it shall submit an annual report outlining the previous year's accomplishments and a work plan for the upcoming year.*

As stated in the Terms of Reference, the Committee shall submit an annual report, in the prescribed form, outlining the previous year's accomplishments to City Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services.

A copy of the 2022 Annual Report and Work Plan was provided, the 2024 work plan will be discussed at the January 2024 meeting.

The draft 2023 Annual Report was also provided.

Chair Wasan spoke to the matter and noted that the Committee was active this year in writing to Council, Administration and other groups.

**Moved By:** M. Ghai

That the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee approve its 2023 Annual Report for submission to City Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Environmental, Utilities & Corporate Services.

**CARRIED**

### **9.1 WORK PLAN AND REFERRALS TO STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE [CK 175-9]**

*This is a standing item on the agenda for the Committee, and/or any Subcommittee, to provide updates regarding items on its Work Plan and*

*any matters being referred to the Standing Policy Committee for consideration.*

**9.1.1 EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE - UPDATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS [CK 375-4]**

There was no update from the Education Subcommittee.

Chair Wasan noted that with the approved funding for the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, the Subcommittee may want to discuss how the Committee can be involved with the project and consider adding an item to the future workplan.

**Moved By:** D. Bentley

That the information be received.

**CARRIED**

**10. BUDGET - STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES FOR 2023 [CK 1704-5]**

The current Statement of Expenditures is provided for the Committee's information.

**Moved By:** C. Gilmore

That the information be received.

**CARRIED**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

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JP. Wasan, Chair

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H. Janzen, Committee Assistant

# Natural Areas Policy Framework

## ISSUE

"Pathways for an Integrated Green Network: An Implementation Plan for Saskatoon's Green Infrastructure Strategy" (Green Pathways) includes an action to pursue the development of tools and a policy to provide support and direction for identification, prioritization, conservation and designation of natural areas as well as the connections between those natural areas. This work includes exploring updates to existing policy and processes and/or the creation of a new policy.

## BACKGROUND

The Natural Area Management Plan – Templates and Pilots and the Natural Areas Policy and Process Development projects address the following actions from [Green Pathways](#):

- Action 1.1: Protect prioritized natural areas through policies and processes.
- Action 1.2: Manage and restore natural areas through Natural Area Management Plans.
- Action 1.4: Integrate natural assets into the City's asset management system.

## CURRENT STATUS

The City of Saskatoon (City) has conducted several engagements on natural areas and how they integrate into urban development (see Appendix 1). Throughout these engagements, key themes emerged as challenges and opportunities for improvement within the City's existing systems for identifying and conserving natural areas. This process led to stakeholder groups identifying perceived gaps, related to how natural areas are considered through the development process.

As part of the initial work to address these gaps and any opportunities for improvement, Administration conducted an in-depth review of relevant City policies and processes (see Appendix 2). This review focused on the development process as a key means through which natural areas are identified, boundaries for conservation are determined and land use designations and dedications are applied.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

To develop recommendations for improvements to the City's natural areas framework, Administration reviewed policies, bylaws, regulations and tools used by other Canadian municipalities to consider natural areas and assets (see Appendix 3). Tools were evaluated in the context of the *Planning & Development Act, 2007*, to determine potential for use in Saskatchewan.

Administration presented these tools to both internal departments and external stakeholders, including the Natural Areas Working Group and the Saskatoon and Region Home Builders' Association, to identify any significant concerns or challenges with any of the options.

Through these discussions, stakeholders provided valuable considerations for evaluating these options. This process led to the following tools being identified as priorities to evaluate further and, if appropriate, to consider for implementation:

- Natural Area Policy;
- Natural Area Screening Improvements;
- Natural Areas Mapping and Prioritization Resource;
- Administrative Procedures;
- Heritage Property Designation;
- Design and Development Standards;
- Zoning Tools; and
- Natural Areas Acquisition Fund

A further description of the intent of each tool is described in Appendix 3.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications at this time; however, future implications are expected to vary depending on the tools pursued. Financial implications will be identified and reported to the relevant committee(s) during further phasing work of this project.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal, privacy, social or environmental implications at this time. Some potential tools may require changes to existing bylaws, policies or other management documents, or the introduction of new bylaws, policies or management documents. Specific implications will be identified and presented during future reporting, related to this project.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Administration will investigate the tools presented in this report in greater detail and will engage internal and external stakeholders on each individual tool chosen to be considered for implementation. Based on this engagement, chosen tools will be further refined and brought forward for approval and adoption from relevant committee(s) and City Council, when appropriate.

### **APPENDICES**

1. City of Saskatoon Natural Areas Engagement Overview
2. City of Saskatoon Natural Areas Policy Current State Summary
3. City of Saskatoon Natural Area Policy Framework: Tools Summary

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Written by: Anastasia Conly, Senior Planner  
Kenneth Weddige, Planner

Reviewed by: Tyson McShane, Long Range Planning Manager  
Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development

Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services

## **City of Saskatoon Natural Areas Engagement Overview**

### **Purpose**

This appendix provides an overview of:

- Past engagement opportunities related to natural areas, as it relates to the Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS); and
- Current engagement opportunities as part of the Natural Area Policy and Process (NAPP) project.

For additional information related to each specific engagement opportunity, links have been included for the outcome documents, typically in the form of a report or summary.

### **1. Past Engagement on Green Infrastructure Strategy**

#### **Background**

The City of Saskatoon (City) has been engaging on the integration of natural areas into Saskatoon's urban development for several years. Recognizing the value of ecosystem services for a healthy community, the GIS aims to establish the vision, actions and implementation framework to enhance Saskatoon's Green Network, by integrating green infrastructure into land use planning and asset management.

Table 1 summarizes recent engagement conducted under the umbrella of the City's GIS.

<b>Table 1: Natural Areas and Green Infrastructure Strategy Engagement Timeline</b>			
<b>Date</b>		<b>Engagement Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes (Reports/Summaries)</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>		
<b>2017</b>	December	Green Infrastructure Strategy Information Gathering Workshop	<a href="#"><i>March 2019 - Natural Areas – What we Heard: Green Strategy Workshop 2 Summary.</i></a>
<b>2018</b>	October	The Green Strategy Workshop 2: Natural Area Standards and Urban Forest Infrastructure Strategy and Natural Area Standards	
<b>2019</b>	February	Shaping a Natural Community (Student Workshop)	<a href="#"><i>Green Infrastructure Strategy Comprehensive Engagement Report (December 2019)</i></a>
	April	Action Identification Survey	
	May	Growing a NatureCity	
	June	Green Strategy pop-up events	
	July	Indigenous Technical Advisory Group Meeting	
	August	Emerging Priorities Survey	
	November	Our Green Network Workshop Event	
<b>2021</b>	June–July	Help Grow our Green Network Community Survey	<a href="#"><i>Green Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Engagement Report (June 2022)</i></a>
	June–July	All Participants Survey	
	June–July	Community Partners and Subject Matter Experts Workshops	
<b>2022</b>	February	Saskatoon & Region Homebuilders Workshop	Workshop was hosted online and was recorded.
	February	Wetland Policy and Process Improvements Developers Workshop	

## **Engagement Results**

From June 2021 to February 2022, Administration engaged with the community on [Pathways for an Integrated Green Network](#) (Green Pathways). The [Final Engagement Report](#) found, overall, the community strongly supports (>80% of participants) all Green Pathways initiatives, with the strongest support for the Natural Areas Program (96%). Participants stressed the importance of implementing levels of protection for natural areas and called on the City to be more aggressive in conserving green spaces through new policies and regulations.

When asked to state their level of support for the proposed initiatives within the Natural Areas Program, most respondents either strongly or somewhat supported (≥94%) all the initiatives. The level of support is summarized as follows:

- Natural Areas Management Plans (96%);
- Natural Asset Framework (95%);
- Natural Storm Water Management (95%); and
- Natural Area Process and Policy (94%).

## **2. Natural Area Policy and Process Engagement**

The purpose of the NAPP project is to evaluate different policy processes and tools related to natural areas and determine, through research and engagement with stakeholders, appropriate options for Saskatoon. These processes include methods for identification, prioritization, conservation and management of natural areas within an urban environment, principally through the development process.

The NAPP project team completed a policy review of Canadian Municipalities and engaged with key stakeholders between Quarter 3, 2022 and Quarter 3, 2023. During this time, Administration identified several potential policy tools, appropriate within the context of Saskatchewan's *Planning and Development Act*, and reviewed these with stakeholders.

Table 2 outlines engagement activities as part of the NAPP project.

<b>Table 2: Natural Area Policy and Process Engagement Timeline</b>		
<b>Date</b>		<b>Engagement Activity</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	
<b>2023</b>	March - June	Meeting with Various Internal Departments - Current state - Tools Introduction
	June	<a href="#">Natural Areas Working Group</a> Presentation - Current state - Introduction
	August	Meeting with <a href="#">Saskatoon &amp; Region Home Builders' Association (SRHBA)</a> - Current state - Tools Introduction

### **Engagement Results:**

Throughout 2023, the NAPP project team engaged internal working groups and external stakeholders. The purpose of the engagements was to:

- Confirm the current state of the development process, as it specifically relates to natural areas;
- Confirm and identify any policy or process related gaps or barriers to planning for natural areas; and
- Introduce potential tool options and identify any concerns related to the possible changes associated with policy and process updates.

During engagement, internal working groups and external stakeholders were receptive to meaningful change. They confirmed there are policy and process gaps related to natural areas. There were several challenges identified during the early planning stages, which subsequently impact the City's ability to achieve their goals and objectives for natural areas during later stages of the planning process. Consistent themes emerged as gaps or opportunities for improvement. These themes are outlined in the table below:

<b>THEME</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Unclear terminology</b>	Uncertainty over specific definitions of terms, such as natural area or natural asset.
<b>Transparency and participation</b>	How and when people can get involved and how their feedback is used in the design and decision-making process.
<b>Mistrust in the process</b>	Unclear and inconsistent decision making, a lack of confidence the City will follow through on their commitments, lack of trust that consultant reports are impartial when funded by the project proponent, as observed in some natural area screenings.
<b>Authority, and permanence of civic conservation tools</b>	The current tools, used to identify and designate land for management as a natural or naturalized area, lack legal authority to ensure they will remain natural/naturalized into perpetuity.
<b>Grey infrastructure planned before green infrastructure.</b>	There is a perception that grey infrastructure planning happens earlier than green infrastructure planning, and more information of where and how that infrastructure should be laid out is known before we know the condition or value of natural areas, which may be in the same areas.
<b>Reactive instead of proactive</b>	As an extension of the above gap, there is a perception that grey infrastructure is planned for before green infrastructure is accounted for, resulting in conservation work being focused on what area is left over, after infrastructure or developable land is accounted for, instead of being considered at the same time as other decisions.
<b>Timing of information gathering and analysis</b>	Administration doesn't have the right information about natural areas early enough in the process, compared to the level of information Administration has related to other development priorities when Administration is making decisions.
<b>Unclear, inconsistent, and un-enforceable compensation for loss of natural areas</b>	Under the current <a href="#">Council Policy C09-041, the Wetland Policy</a> , there is a hierarchy for avoid, minimize and compensate. During engagement on the Wetland Policy Improvement Project, comments were received that the process for review, approving and enforcing a compensatory condition is not clear enough to be actionable. This is a challenge that will need to be addressed for broader natural areas as well.

<b>THEME</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Recommendations are not requirements.</b>	Administration is not able to hold project proponents to any standards since they are recommended best practices instead of minimum requirements, and Administration has been unable to enforce compliance with existing policies.
<b>Financially sustainable cost of development and growth</b>	Cost of development increases if the amount of developable land decreases and/or infrastructure is spread out further. This can mean when project proponents are required to extend services around natural areas, to avoid them, cost of development can increase, which can in turn impact the cost of housing through the increased cost of land.
<b>Competing and contradictory civic priorities</b>	The City has many civic priorities intended to be accomplished through development. Sometimes these priorities come into direct conflict with each other, and they cannot all be achieved. Currently, there is no consistent or transparent process for determining which civic priority should take precedent under various circumstances.

The tools discussed in Appendix 3 were identified with the intention of working to address the gaps brought forward by residents and stakeholders. The next phase of this work will require Administration to prepare detailed options that could be reviewed and commented on by stakeholders.





# NATURAL AREAS POLICY: CURRENT STATE SUMMARY

**Background for the Natural Areas Policy and Process Project**  
December, 2023



# CONTENTS

Contents .....	1
Purpose.....	2
1 Planning Framework.....	2
1.1 <i>Planning &amp; Development Act, 2007</i> .....	2
1.2 Official Community Plan & Zoning Bylaw .....	2
1.3 City Policies.....	3
2 Natural Areas in the Development Process .....	3
2.1 Future Growth Studies.....	4
2.2 Sector Plans.....	4
2.3 Concept Plans.....	5
2.4 Subdivision and Zoning.....	6
2.5 Maintenance and Enforcement .....	7
2.6 Natural Areas and Infill Development.....	7
2.7 Regional Growth.....	7
2.7.1 Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth.....	7
2.1.1 Meewasin Conservation Area .....	9
3. Planning Tools: Policy and Processes.....	10
3.1 Natural Area Screening.....	10
3.2 Natural Area Standards.....	10
3.3 Wetland Policy .....	11
3.4 Asset Management Policy .....	12
3.5 Design and Development Standards and Specifications.....	12
4. Planning Tools: Dedications, Designations, and Regulations.....	13
4.1 Dedications.....	15
4.1.1 Municipal Reserve.....	15
4.1.2 Environmental Reserve .....	16
4.1.3 Buffers / Utility Parcels .....	17
4.2 Conservation Easements.....	17
4.3 Official Community Plan Land Use Designations.....	17
4.4 Zoning Designations .....	19
4.5 Park Classifications.....	20
5. Gaps.....	21

5.1	Terminology.....	22
5.2	Timing, Coordination, and Prioritization.....	22
5.3	Valuation.....	23
5.4	Enforcement.....	23
5.5	Resiliency and Climate Change.....	23
	Conclusion.....	24

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## Purpose

This summary outlines the City of Saskatoon’s (City) current approach to natural areas identification and regulation. It is intended to act as a primer and to inform future steps in refining policies and processes to better achieve goals of the [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) and the City’s overall long term vision.

## 1 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

To understand the current state of the City’s natural areas policies and processes, it is important to acknowledge the larger planning framework, within which this work can take place.

### 1.1 *Planning & Development Act, 2007*

The [Planning & Development Act](#) (Act) is the provincial legislative document which governs planning in the province of Saskatchewan. Under the authority of *the Act*, the City is required to adopt and maintain an official community plan.

### 1.2 Official Community Plan & Zoning Bylaw

The City’s [Bylaw No. 9700, the Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020](#) (OCP), is a statutory document required by law, which provides a comprehensive policy framework for achieving the community that Saskatoon residents collectively envision and desire. It guides the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of our community, through a broad set of goals, objectives and policies. These inform all planning, decision-making and priority-setting for the City.

[Bylaw No. 8770, the Zoning Bylaw, 2009](#) (Zoning Bylaw), is a regulatory document which facilitates implementation of the City’s OCP. All land in Saskatoon is assigned a zoning district and subject to development standards associated with that district.

### 1.3 City Policies

In addition to *the Act*, OCP and the Zoning Bylaw, City Council has adopted various civic strategies and policies which direct the way land is developed and managed in and around natural areas. In 2020, City Council adopted Saskatoon's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#), which takes a nature-based approach, by outlining a vision for Saskatoon's Green Network. The Green Infrastructure Strategy is accompanied by the [Pathways for an Integrated Green Network](#), an implementation plan guiding the City's work through five implementation phases, which help to address risks to these assets.

At this time, the City's most significant policy, which guides planning and development of areas that include natural assets, is [Council Policy C09-041, the Wetland Policy](#), (Wetland Policy), which was adopted in 2013, and outlines the City's approach to avoidance, minimizing impact and compensation related to wetlands. The City has adopted several other policies which provide further support for both natural areas and, more generally, sustainability. The Triple Bottom Line framework is a process guided by [Council Policy C08-001, the Triple Bottom Line Policy](#), which reviews projects for sustainable outcomes, and [Council Policy C07-031, the Corporate Asset Management Policy](#), (Corporate Asset Management Policy) includes green assets. In addition, the City's [Administrative Policy A10-017, the Park Development Guidelines Policy](#) (Park Development Guidelines Policy), and the upcoming Tree Protection Bylaw, which is currently being developed, provide valuable direction and insight related to natural areas.

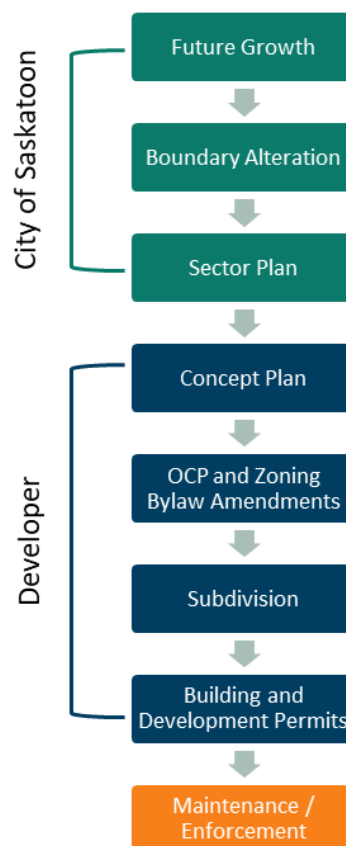


Figure 1 Development Process Overview

## 2 NATURAL AREAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Natural areas are best accounted for when identified and studied early in the development process, however, best management practices occur throughout. The following section outlines when and how natural areas are currently integrated into the City's development process.

## **2.1 Future Growth Studies**

Future growth studies are the first step in the development process and are used to identify land needed to accommodate projected growth. These studies inform municipal boundary alteration as well as prioritization and phasing of planned development areas. There are several factors that go into these decisions; however, one of the most significant considerations is the location and direction of how existing infrastructure is extended to service new areas. Leveraging existing major infrastructure like storm, sewer, water and roads, while ensuring development is compact and contiguous, is a financially sustainable growth model for the City. While this model has been effective, in many cases it can be viewed as though the City prioritizes infrastructure planning over the conservation of natural areas.

## **2.2 Sector Plans**

Based on direction provided from future growth studies and the existing policy framework, sector plans are created to provide a framework for development in an individual sector (see Map 7 in Saskatoon's [OCP](#) for each sector's boundaries). A sector plan is a high-level planning document and does not identify specific, detailed boundaries or buffers for individual land uses or areas, including natural areas. Any boundaries shown are intended to be general and require further study at the concept plan stage.

When drafting sector plans, planners must balance various competing civic priorities, including environmental sustainability. Direction is used from the OCP and other policy documents, when evaluating competing interests, but there is no standardized procedure for prioritizing these different goals and objectives when they conflict. Each scenario is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, as no two ecologically sensitive areas are the same. All new sector plans and sector plan amendments are required to go through the City's Triple Bottom-Line Review, as outlined in Council Policy C08–001, the Triple Bottom Line Policy.

A desktop natural area screening (NAS) takes place as part of the sector planning process. Additional field studies may be undertaken based on these findings; however, there is no standardized procedure for when such a study would be triggered at this stage. Ecologically significant areas, which include natural areas and wetlands, may be identified through sector plans. The delineation of these areas is still subject to change through detailed design; however, significant changes would require an amendment to the sector plan and approval by Council. Under the current approach, at the sector plan level, Administration may make recommendations for conservation areas, Municipal Reserve, Environmental Reserve or the consideration of other legal tools for protecting various natural areas. However, these recommendations would be refined through a more detailed design of subsequent concept plans, as more study occurs.



## 2.3 Concept Plans

At the concept planning stage, the planning process changes from being Administration-led to developer-led, with Administration acting as the regulating body, ensuring plans comply with City policies, bylaws and provincial regulations.

A concept plan is a land use plan and policy document which guides development of a new neighbourhood-scale area in Saskatoon. It outlines the land uses, densities, transportation network, grey and green infrastructure services, parks systems and community facilities intended for a development area as it grows. While more detailed than a sector plan, concept plans still do not include detailed design of individual lots; however, to ensure lot requirements fit and land is being efficiently used in their plan, most developers will consider lot size and type of zoning they may want. This means there is a reasonable degree of certainty when it comes to amount and size of park spaces, natural assets and integrated assets, such as storm ponds.

As part of the concept plan process, a NAS is required specific to the development area. This NAS includes a field screening of the development area, including any sensitive areas identified through a previous sector plan-level NAS. The information collected at this stage provides updates to information obtained previously, as well as providing a more detailed, on the ground assessment of existing natural areas. The intention is for applicants to use the information in both the sector NAS and concept NAS to inform the design of their development proposal. The proponent is required to justify any departure from the recommendations outlined in the screenings.

On at least two occasions, the City has identified significant natural areas through the sector planning process. This resulted in Administration planning for these areas concurrently with adjacent concept plans being prepared by developers. Examples of this approach include sections of the Northeast Swale as well as Hyde Park in Rosewood. These areas are managed as naturalized parks, offering additional amenities for residents, and increasing market values for developers by offering homes near a naturalized park.

While a concept plan study area might end at the boundaries for these natural and naturalized areas, the City's policy framework provides general direction that development of adjacent concept plans should be complementary to natural areas.

It is important to note, in situations like this, where natural areas are identified as being outside of a concept plan area, there is not currently a defined process for the development of a plan for these natural areas. In the case of the Northeast Swale, Meewasin took the initiative to develop a Northeast Swale Master Plan. In the case of Hyde Park, planning for this area was coordinated between the City, Meewasin and Ducks Unlimited.

## **2.4 Subdivision and Zoning**

Once Council has approved the concept plan, subdivision in the neighbourhood will begin. This is where frontages are calculated, levies or service fees are paid and Municipal Reserve and utility parcels are dedicated. This is also the stage in which the Environmental Reserve would be dedicated if the City begins to use this tool.

Natural areas, like all other land in Saskatoon, will have a zoning district which dictates standards for development and permitted land uses. Parks are listed as a permitted land use in several residential, agricultural and future urban development districts. The most common zoning district applied to parks and naturalized areas is a residential zoning district. There are currently no zoning districts for the sole purpose and intent of parks or natural areas. The Zoning Bylaw regulates setbacks; landscaping requirements within required front, back and side yards; as well as building minimums and maximums. As mentioned above, parks are a permitted use within several zoning districts; therefore, development standards for parks have been established. The Zoning Bylaw does not regulate the design of park areas or landscaping outside of required setbacks. This design work is regulated by the Park Development Guidelines Policy and under [the List of Standard Construction Specifications: Parks \(2023\)](#).

During the development process for a new neighbourhood area, the Zoning Bylaw requires property owners or developers to obtain a development permit for excavation, stripping and grading of land and modification of wetlands. In cases of large development applications, this could result in the requirement of a NAS report. Where modification of a wetland is being proposed, the Wetland Policy is triggered, and applicants are required to comply with that policy for the approval of their permit.

The Zoning Bylaw also has conditions for the approval of a Pre-Development Permit, which entitles a landowner to begin certain elements of site work prior to the approval of a concept plan or development permit. In these cases, the property-owner must legally indemnify themselves as solely responsible for cost and restoration of any excavation, stripping and grading that was completed if their development application is not approved.

In the event of an application for pre-development being received for an area where there is no approved concept plan, the Zoning Bylaw outlines the proponent may have to complete a NAS. In these cases, a concept plan application must be currently under review at the City for a pre-development permit to be considered.

## **2.5 Maintenance and Enforcement**

Following the subdivision of land, any publicly owned parks, Municipal Reserve or naturalized areas will be managed and maintained by the City's Parks Department and programmed through the Recreation and Community Development Department. Specialized management plans have been developed for certain areas, and the City is currently working towards standardizing a process for developing natural area management plans. The City also coordinates management and maintenance efforts with Meewasin in certain areas.

## **2.6 Natural Areas and Infill Development**

While natural areas in greenfield developments have been in the spotlight in recent years, it is important to note there are natural and naturalized areas identified within established neighbourhoods of Saskatoon. Some examples of natural areas in an established neighbourhood are the Gabriel Dumont Park, the area adjacent to the weir, as well as the area around Nutrien Wonder Hub, all of which are along the river valley. In recent years, there has been a shift towards prioritizing infill development. As a result, Saskatoon is seeing a greater number of large-scale infill developments and re-development of land. As the City develops plans for areas such as the University Sector Plan and future Corridor Area Plans, there is a growing opportunity to identify and protect ecologically significant assets within these areas. Currently, there are few processes in place for identifying, managing or acquiring natural assets in infill growth areas. While there are some provisions in place for City-owned trees and park areas, services gaps do exist, and there are few policies or bylaws in place which require natural assets on private property to be maintained.

## **2.7 Regional Growth**

### **2.7.1 Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth**

Natural areas extend beyond municipal boundaries, which is why it is important for the City to work with surrounding municipalities and maintain planning processes at a regional level. The principal regional planning partnership for the City is the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth (P4G). The P4G is a regional collaboration of five partnering municipalities, including the Rural Municipality of Corman Park No. 344; the Town of Osler; and the Cities of Martensville, Saskatoon and Warman.



The P4G was formed to develop and implement a regional planning framework to sustain economic prosperity, support a high quality of life and protect the region's natural beauty, ecology and heritage.

The Green Network Study Area (GNSA), included as part of the P4G Plan, represents sensitive ecological areas where development is to be avoided or managed. The GNSA is identified on the District OCP land use map. The network primarily consists of water drainage and flow courses through the P4G area. It is worth noting, while this study provides valuable information on flooding implications, it does not typically incorporate other natural areas.

Where development is enabled within the GNSA, the proponent is required to provide supporting evidence, prepared by a qualified professional, to demonstrate natural areas are not adversely affected. For sites located outside of the designated GNSA, Corman Park has authority to request additional screenings and studies at its discretion.

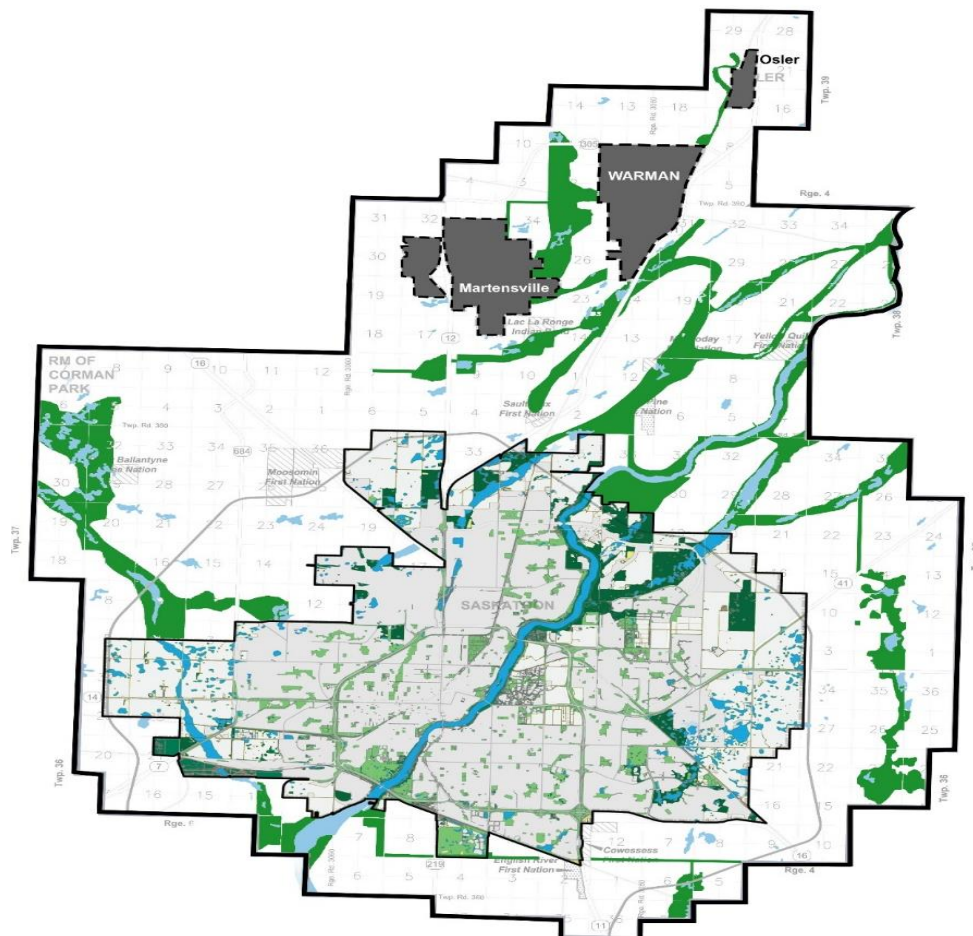


Figure 2: Combined Green Network Study Area and City of Saskatoon Natural Areas Inventory Map

### 2.1.1 Meewasin Conservation Area

The Meewasin Conservation Area has its own development review process and policy, which regulates development in addition to the City's regulations. When the City receives a development permit application for a site in the conservation area, the application is referred to the Meewasin Development Review Board, who must respond to the application within 60 days.

Meewasin operates several other processes which support natural areas under their jurisdiction, both in and around Saskatoon. These include resource management plans, baseline inventories, master plans and monitoring. The City and Meewasin have a long-standing partnership when it comes to natural areas and work together often when considering new development proposals, policies and sharing information.

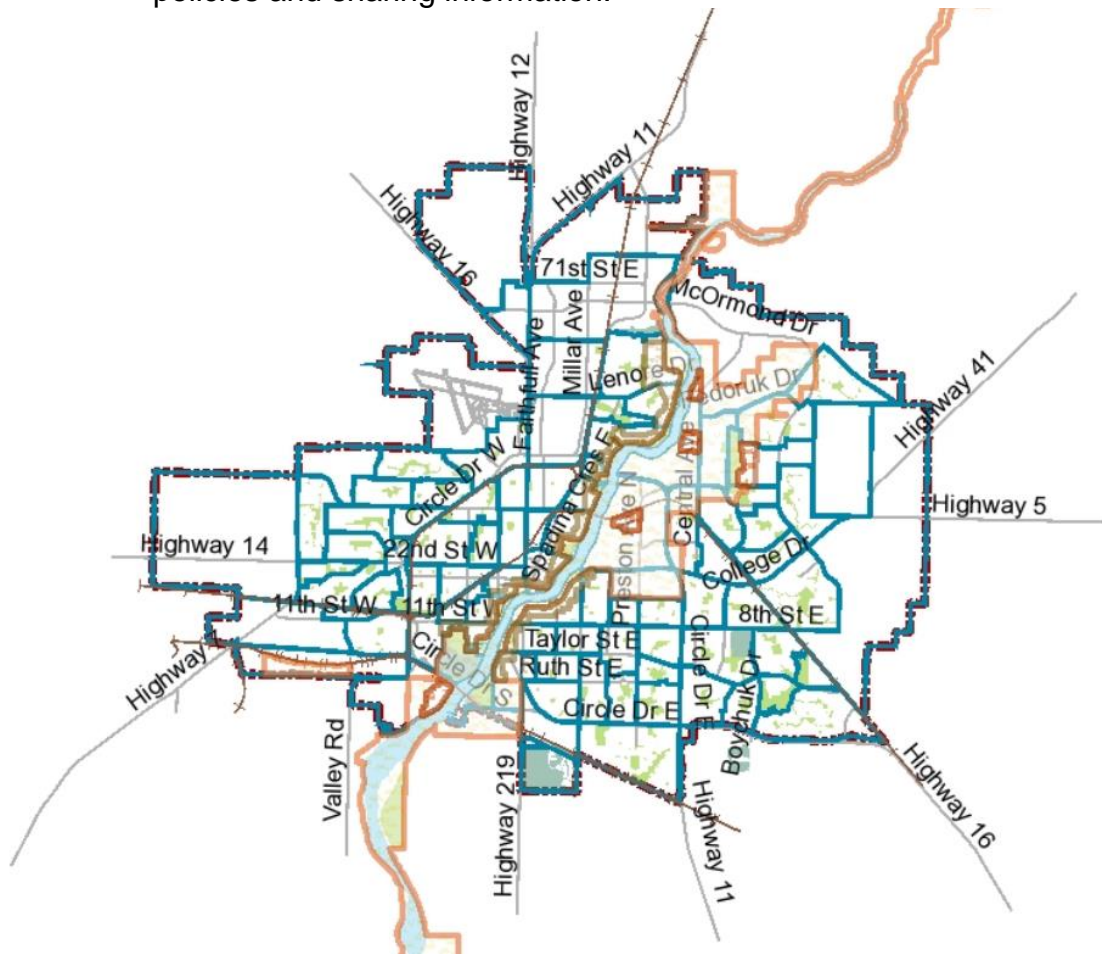


Figure 3 Meewasin Valley Conservation Area Highlighted in Red

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### **3. PLANNING TOOLS: POLICY AND PROCESSES**

The City has several policies, guidelines and standards related to natural areas, which provide varying degrees of direction. While there are several documents which provide support to both natural areas and the overall green network, the focus of this section is on those documents with a direct impact on the planning and development process for natural areas. These include Natural Area Screenings, Natural Area Standards, the Wetland Policy and the Design and Development Standards and Specifications.

#### **3.1 Natural Area Screening**

A NAS is a study intended to identify natural assets using available sources, including, but not limited to, aerial imagery, the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre, the Meewasin Natural Areas Inventory and the City's Wetland Inventory. A NAS is required at both the sector planning and concept planning stage, as well as for major infill development, site works or maintenance, as deemed necessary by Administration. At the sector level, Administration engages a qualified consultant to undertake a desktop study. Field studies may be an option if funding is available and any known unique features will be included within the study area. During the concept plan stage and for some smaller scale projects, a field study is required. Project proponents are required to hire a qualified consultant to perform the NAS and submit findings in a detailed report to the Planning & Development Department, as part of the development review process.

Findings in the NAS inform the design and planning of these developments. The findings are used by Administration to determine appropriate regulatory requirements and policy interpretations. That said, many findings from the NAS are recommended best practices and are not regulatory requirements. As a result, proponents may propose alternatives to the recommendations. Other infrastructure or services required for a development can often be seen as having priority over avoiding and mitigating impacts to natural areas. This is partly due to a lack of sound valuation practices around the services offered by natural resources and the cost of losing these services not being consistently built into the analysis of infrastructure service planning. Currently, there is no policy requirement for the recommendations within a NAS to be treated as requirements, further contributing to a lack of enforceability.

#### **3.2 Natural Area Standards**

The Natural Area Standards is a draft document intended to guide project proponents through the development process as it relates to natural areas. Once complete and approved, this document will highlight the required submissions, best practices for developing in and around natural areas as well as complimentary land uses which can be used to inform project planning and design.

This document is currently set up to principally act as a guideline document, and as such, there may be challenges requiring use of the standards by external project proponents, as seen with the NAS, Wetland Policy and Contractor Environmental Guidelines. It is worth noting that generic, or one size fits all, regulations for natural areas are difficult and often not recommended as every ecosystem is different. For this reason, standards are intended to operate as a standardized process. The City is piloting an asset management approach to meet individual needs of these areas. Further work is being completed to determine which best practices are suited to become requirements or regulations.

### **3.3 Wetland Policy**

The City's Wetland Policy is the principal means for implementing wetland conservation and mitigation. The Wetland Policy was developed to provide guidance to landowners, developers and City staff on achieving responsible integration of wetlands into the urban environment.

The Wetland Policy identifies criteria for wetland classification, based on a standard assessment method. The Wetland Policy formalizes the City's responsibility to maintain an inventory of wetlands and identifies criteria for when a functional assessment should occur. This assessment identifies the form and function of a wetland, based on the above-noted classification system. The latter part of the Wetland Policy focuses on criteria for when a wetland mitigation plan is required and timing of when this plan is needed in relation to the City's existing development process.

Further work has been underway regarding the standards and practices required to implement the Wetland Policy in a more comprehensive manner. The process for mitigation, which developers are intended to follow, is to avoid where possible, minimize impact if avoidance is not possible and, finally, replace or compensate loss of a wetland area if impacts could not be minimized appropriately. Typically, a wetland mitigation plan is done to either restore wetlands or replace lost wetlands in another location, through a payment-in-lieu fee on a per hectare basis. Since 2013, there have only been two wetland mitigation plans which resulted in compensation, two interchanges and a small agreement in Brighton. There has been very little compensation for wetlands due to the compensation portion of the Wetland Policy being a new initiative with limited precedent in Saskatoon and region. Supporting administrative procedures and development standards may be helpful in providing a consistent framework for this policy's implementation. The Sustainability Department is currently leading a review for improvements to the Wetland Policy, to bring greater awareness to this part of the policy and to bring considerations forward to Council to strengthen its enforceability.

The [Wetland Design Guidelines](#) are a requirement of the Wetland Policy and provide a basic set of guidelines for treatment of wetlands. These guidelines do not currently outline practices for the naturalization of wetlands. Administration intends to update these guidelines, along with the other Wetland Policy Improvements.

### **3.4 Asset Management Policy**

In 2020, City Council adopted the [Corporate Asset Management Policy](#), which includes not only grey infrastructure but also natural assets. The Asset Management strategy and framework complement existing initiatives at the City, while providing additional focus to asset management principles. In the Corporate Asset Management Policy, there are seven principles which should be incorporated into planning decisions around natural assets. These seven principles can be reviewed in greater detail in the Corporate Asset Management Policy, and have only been summarized below:

1. Holistic – an integrated approach that considers the impact of the entire asset life cycle and service level;
2. Service Focused – defines and documents the needs and expectations of customers and residents;
3. Risk-Based – Focuses resources, expenditures, and priorities based upon risk assessments and the corresponding cost/benefit analyses;
4. Innovative – continuous improvements in the City’s Asset Management approach;
5. Value-Based/Affordable – Identification of practices, interventions and operations that aim at reducing the life cycle cost of asset ownership, while maintaining levels of service;
6. Sustainable – Assessment of Asset Management decisions using a Triple Bottom Line sustainability approach with respect to the environment, social equity, and economic responsibility; and
7. Regulatory and legal requirements – To comply with legislation and regulatory requirements enacted by the federal, provincial and the municipal government.

### **3.5 Design and Development Standards and Specifications**

The Design & Development Standards Manual provides process and design details to interested parties who require information about new subdivision developments, infill development and redevelopment of properties in Saskatoon. The standards and specifications laid out in this document are required for approval of major development plans. Under these documents, there is currently very little guidance related to natural areas.



In recent years, Saskatoon has seen a growing willingness from the development community to increase the integration of both green and grey infrastructure. Infrastructure assets, which combine both green and grey infrastructure services, such as naturalized storm ponds, can provide functional, aesthetic and ecological value to a development area. However, while the City has specifications related to storm water drainage through natural courses, they do not include specifications for the riparian area around the pond, which is required for the successful naturalization of an area.

Under the [City's Standard Specifications, Division 1 – General Requirements, Section 01035 Environmental Protection](#), there are requirements for environmental protection, including appropriate recycling, reuse and disposal for waste, surface and groundwater management, fill, spills, environmentally sensitive lands, tree protection and other relevant best practices as they relate to the environment. These specifications deal with management practices during the construction period and do not include requirements for design or planning in and around environmentally significant areas. One of the more significant gaps, related to this, is a lack of guidance for proponents on how to develop or naturalize riparian areas or plan appropriate buffers. Through the Wetland Policy, Administration may ask for this work to be completed; however, there are currently no standards or clear expectations on how this should be achieved.

#### **4. PLANNING TOOLS: DEDICATIONS, DESIGNATIONS, AND REGULATIONS**

Land use dedications and designations will be applied to land throughout the development process. Dedications, such as Municipal Reserve or Environmental Reserve, utility parcels and easements, will be planned for during the sector and concept planning stages and implemented during subdivision. The City is not required to pay the landowner for the dedication of these lands. Designations, which dictate appropriate land uses in an area, will be applied throughout; beginning at a high-level, to guide development at the Sector Plan, and increasing in detail as the development process moves through the concept plan stage and zoning.

By the time an individual site development is completed, that site will have, at a minimum, an OCP land use designation and a corresponding zoning district. A park area dedicated as Municipal Reserve will also have an OCP designation and a zoning district. The “stacking” of these various tools is a result of the planning and development process, as required by *the Act*, with each level of the process increasing the level of detail for requirements and expected development conditions of a site. This section will highlight the City’s current practices when applying these tools.

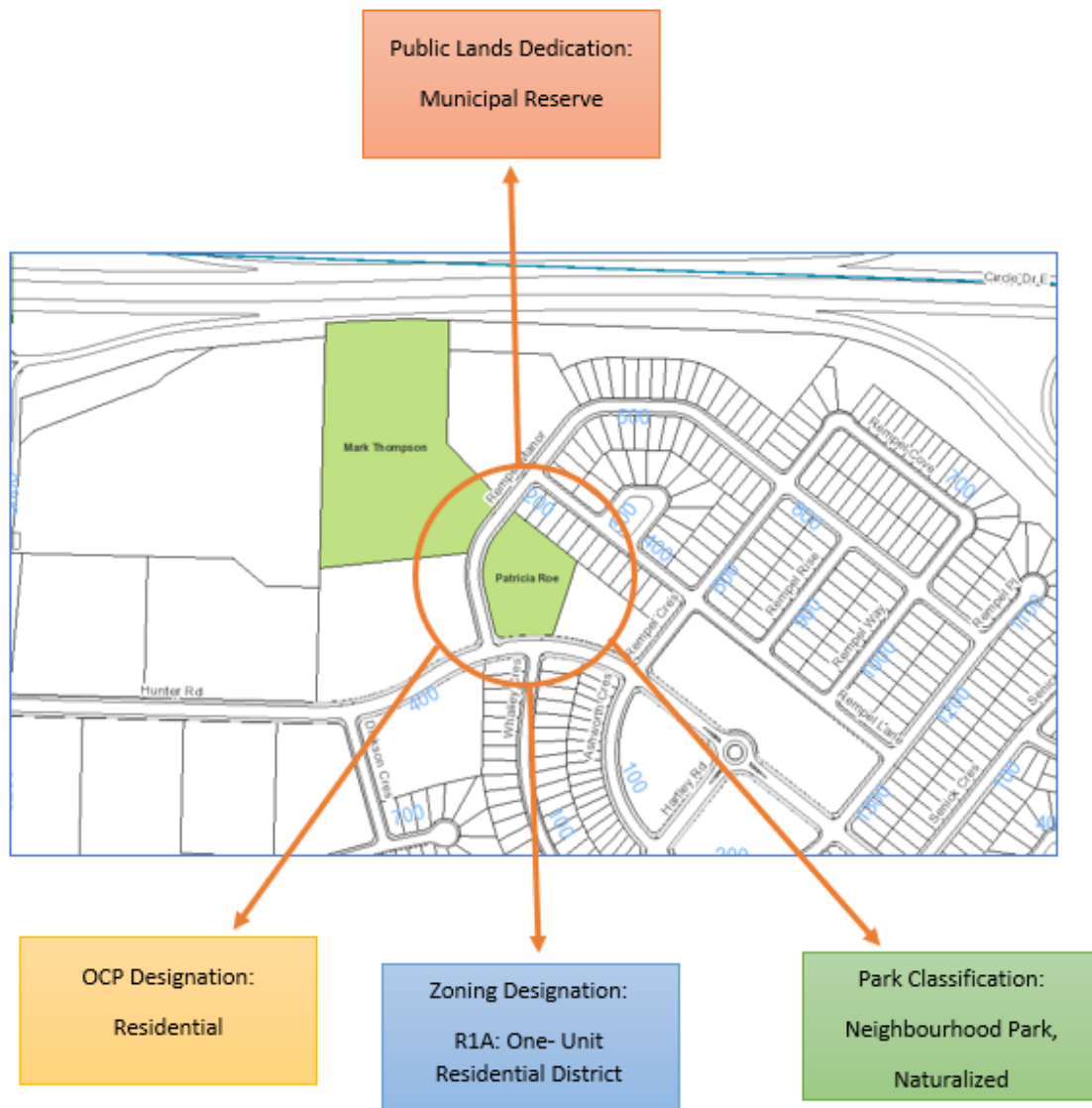


Figure 4 Patricia Row Park in Stonebridge Neighbourhood is shown with all planning regulatory tools currently applied to the site

## 4.1 Dedications

### 4.1.1 Municipal Reserve

When land is developed in Saskatoon, in accordance with [Bylaw No. 6537, the Subdivision Bylaw, 1985](#), and *The Act*, the City requires Municipal Reserve to be dedicated as part of that subdivision. The City requires 10% dedication on residential subdivisions, such as neighbourhoods, and 5% dedication for commercial subdivisions, such as

business parks and employment areas. Although Municipal Reserve is not officially dedicated until subdivision, the location and size of the Municipal Reserve sites are planned for during the concept plan stage. This allows for park space to be identified and ensures any remaining dedication is either deferred to future development areas or addressed through money-in-lieu.

The Municipal Reserve may consist of programmable and manicured park area, sport fields and recreational amenity area or naturalized park area. It has become a trend for many new developments to utilize the Municipal Reserve for smaller scale passive opportunities, including linear corridors to accommodate pathways and/or integrated stormwater management areas. This is in addition to having the required core parks with sport fields and other programmable spaces. However, in some cases, this trend has made it challenging to provide

sufficient park space for the programming needs, expected by residents.



Figure 5: Hyde Park, Trounce Pond, and Donna L. Birkmaier Parks are shown on the map in Green while the areas dedicated as Municipal Reserve areas are outlined in red.



Since many natural areas are not compatible with many active recreation activities, they are typically not desirable for the Parks Department to accept as part of the Municipal Reserve requirement. Accepting natural areas as Municipal Reserve can result in a deficit of spaces appropriate for sport fields, community facilities and other amenities. For this reason, it may be preferred that naturalized parks are designated as utility parcels or dedicated as an Environmental Reserve, where appropriate, to ensure Saskatoon's growing recreational needs are met in new development areas. Currently, the examples of naturalized park areas within Saskatoon, including Hyde Park and the Northeast Swale, are not dedicated through subdivision, instead are identified as naturalized park areas through the Sector Plan.

It is important to note, however, not all parks are dedicated as Municipal Reserve. A utility parcel may look and function like a park, but not be dedicated as Municipal Reserve. Other buffers or open spaces may be treated in the same way. If a project proponent or the City were to consider removal of a park area, or a significant change of land use, there are steps in place to ensure a public process takes place, and any decisions to remove a park area, once it has been established, is made by City Council at a Public Hearing. If a park area is dedicated Municipal Reserve, *the Act* provides required steps to remove the Municipal Reserve designation. When a park area acts like a Municipal Reserve, Administration follows the same process, treating that area the same way, regardless of dedication.

Details of specific types of parks as well as their requirements and intended function can be found in Saskatoon's [Park Development Guidelines Policy](#), intended to be replaced with new [Park Development Standards](#), which are currently under development.

#### **4.1.2 Environmental Reserve**

Under *The Act*, the City can dedicate lands as Environmental Reserve. This can include natural drainage courses, wildlife habitats, significant natural features, land that abuts the bed and shore of any body of water as well as land prone to flooding or instability. The Environmental Reserve does not count towards the amount of Municipal Reserve dedication in a subdivision and does not contribute to the land used to calculate that requirement. To date, the City has never used this dedication and there is currently no procedure for how to identify and prioritize areas that could be suitable for this dedication. In the Park Development Guidelines Policy, Appendices C and D provide some high-level recommendations for what could be considered for Environmental Reserve and how it can fit into the larger distribution of park areas.

#### **4.1.3 Buffers / Utility Parcels**

Municipal Utility Parcels are lands provided to the City for the purpose of locating a public work or public utilities. A Municipal Utility Parcel may have a secondary function as park space and may be integrated with Environmental Reserve and/or Municipal Reserve.

Buffer dedications are intended by *The Act* to provide land for a buffer where the use of land is not compatible with use of the subdivision. *The Act* does not require a minimum number of buffers or a minimum size for buffer parcels when they are dedicated. Buffer strips do not count toward Municipal Reserve calculations or dedications; however, the public often perceives these buffer areas to be part of the City's green network and even as an extension of a natural area, in some cases. Under the Park Development Guidelines Policy, storm ponds, right of way and other utility services that may need to run through public lands are recommended to be placed on a buffer or utility parcel and not through Municipal Reserve. This is to ensure programming of Municipal Reserve is never compromised for extended periods of time. As a guideline document, this recommendation currently lacks necessary enforceability to ensure this is a standard practice.

#### **4.2 Conservation Easements**

A Conservation Easement is a legal agreement between a grantor (the landowner) and a holder (government agencies, conservation organizations or municipalities) that is registered on title with the objective of protecting and preserving the biological, physical and cultural attributes of the land. This can be an effective tool to use on privately owned land, which contains significant natural areas. Currently the City does not have any conservation easements registered on the title of any other property owner.

#### **4.3 Official Community Plan Land Use Designations**

Land uses within the OCP can be used to distinguish natural areas and prevent certain types of development or incompatible land uses from locating within that designated area. This includes the designations of Park, Conservation Area, Utility Area, Special Use Area and Urban Holding. Each of these terms have been defined in the OCP and transcribed below. It is worth noting, to date, both the Park and Conservation Area land designations have not been implemented in practice; however, work is currently underway to align sector plans and concept plans with the new land designations in the OCP. Prior to adding these additional land use designations to the OCP in 2020, parks and natural areas would typically be identified on a land use map as either residential or urban holding areas.

**Park**

Land designated as “Park” has the potential for greenspace that includes active and/or passive recreation and are further subcategorized and defined in accordance with the Park Development Guidelines Policy.

**Conservation Area**

Land designated as “Conservation Area” has the potential for the conservation or development of natural areas, naturalized areas, wetlands, and constructed wetlands in accordance with the Park Development Guidelines Policy.

**Utility Area**

Land designated as “Utility Area” has the potential for parcels or corridors of land to be reserved for above or below ground utility installations and infrastructure and may form part of the green network.

**Special Use Area**

Land designated as “Special Use Area” has the potential for post-secondary education facilities, airports, cemeteries, railyards, significant open spaces, and major utility installations.

**Urban Holding**

Land is designated as “Urban Holding” where future land use and/or timing of greenfield development are yet to be established, where existing uses may continue and interim uses may be established.

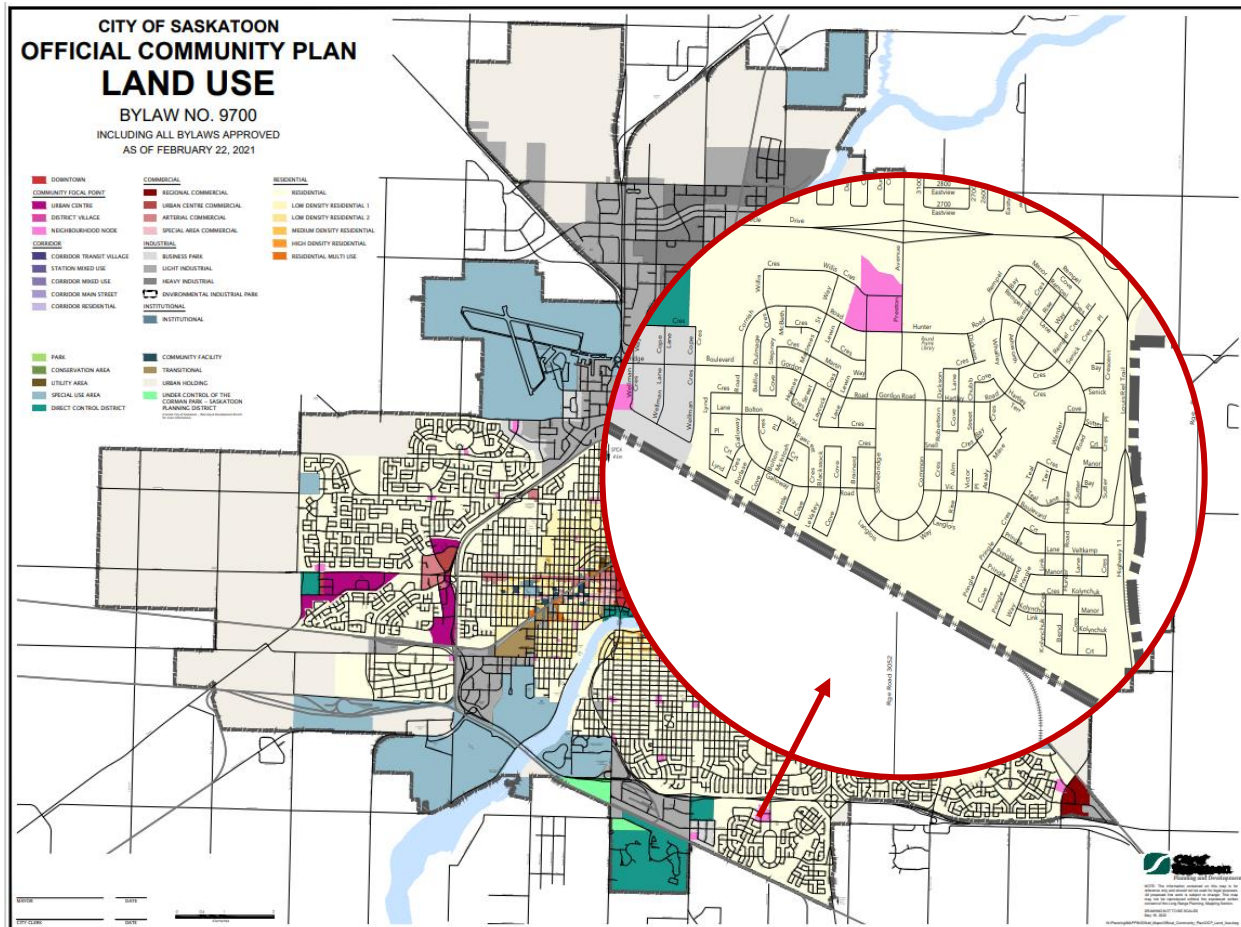


Figure 6 Saskatoon's OCP Land Use Map, parks located in the Stonebridge Neighbourhood are all identified as residential areas.

#### 4.4 Zoning Designations

As part of the development process, natural areas are assigned to a zoning district. The City's Zoning Bylaw does not have a zoning district for parks or conservation areas, rather parks are a land use which can be included in other zoning districts. Natural areas are often designated as residential, future urban development or agricultural zoning which permit parks as a land use. When land is owned by the City, this can result in minimal conflicts as Administration can still create management plans, designate district naturalized parks and work with partners, like Meewasin, to conserve these areas, regardless of the zoning district. In the past, the City has received criticism of this practice due to the perceived lack of protection offered by these zoning districts, in particular, for natural areas and parks that have not been dedicated as Municipal Reserve or Environmental Reserve.

For land not owned by the City, there are no regulations to maintain natural assets on private property. A property owner is allowed to make changes to their site, including removal of trees or other natural assets, provided any new development complies with requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

#### **4.5 Park Classifications**

The City's [Park Development Guidelines](#) Policy is an administrative policy, used to guide the implementation of the OCP concerning the development of parks and recreation open spaces. Parks in Saskatoon can include Municipal Reserve or Environmental Reserve dedicated lands; however, they do not need to be dedicated. In fact, many older parks in Saskatoon are not dedicated. Parks can consist of any publicly owned land the City has chosen to manage as a programmable open space, under the categories outlined in the Park Development Guidelines Policy. Under this policy, natural areas can be included as part of any park category. At this time, the City manages six parks as natural or naturalized areas. These designations as a natural park area do not offer any legal protection and are identified at an administrative level only for operational purposes.

It would be extremely rare for the City to choose to change an area, being operated as a park, into a development site. If changes were proposed to an area acting as Municipal Reserve, Administration would outline the justification for any changes, complete public engagement and bring the request forward to Council at a public hearing.

The following identifies the park categories which are required during the sector and concept plan stages. While detailed design is not completed until later, the required minimum lands for Municipal Reserve will be identified during the concept plan stage. More information on the appropriate size and details for these park categories can be found in the Park Development Guidelines Policy.

##### **Neighbourhood level Parks**

Parks which use 61% of the required Municipal Reserve dedication in new development areas can consist of Pocket Parks, Core Parks, Linear Parks and a Village Square Park.

##### **District Parks**

Parks which use 36% of the required Municipal Reserve dedication in new development areas are intended to serve the active and passive recreational needs of residents in multiple neighbourhoods, with an emphasis on structured sports. Structured sports typically include support for athletic needs of high school students and young adults, including large sport fields and associated infrastructure.

##### **Multi-District**

Parks which use the remaining 3% of the required Municipal Reserve dedication for new development areas accommodate Saskatoon-wide use and require sport fields to be suitable for international levels of competition, in addition to serving specialized leisure requirements and amenities, which are otherwise not served in smaller scaled parks and open spaces.

### Natural (or Naturalized) Park Areas

Parks which may be incorporated into any of the above park categories of neighbourhood, district or multi-district, as deemed necessary, during review of new development areas. Typically, naturalized park areas will be identified at a high-level during the concept planning stage, and detailed design and management planning will take place as the area is built out in accordance with the Park Development Guidelines Policy. The following is a list of existing naturalized parks in Saskatoon, and the category of park they help to make up:

- Donna Birkmaier – District Park (Rosewood);
- Hyde Park – District Park (Rosewood);
- Lakewood – Multi-District Park (Lakewood);
- Heritage Park – Multi-District Park (Lakewood);
- Patricia Roe – Neighbourhood Park (Stonebridge); and
- Mark Thompson – Neighbourhood Park (Stonebridge).

Park Area Suitability Matrix				
Park Classifications	Neighbourhood	District Village	Suburban Centre	Industrial Area
Neighbourhood Core	Required	Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Pocket	If Necessary	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Village Square	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Not Permitted
District	Under Special Circumstances	Permitted	Permitted	Under Special Circumstances
Multi-District	Under Special Circumstances	Under Special Circumstances	Permitted	Under Special Circumstances
Natural	If Necessary			
Special Use	Under Special Circumstances			

Figure 7 Excerpt table from the Park Development Guidelines Administrative Policy

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## 5. GAPS

During the scan of existing policies and processes related to natural areas, several gaps were identified. Throughout the current state summary, gaps have been identified within specific processes and how they relate to natural areas. This section of the report will focus on system-wide gaps which exist at a higher-level and often across processes and work groups. Further gaps to highlight challenges and opportunities will likely be identified as work continues with internal and external stakeholders. Some initial system gaps include:



## **5.1 Terminology**

An initial scan of several civic documents revealed some inconsistency with key terms related to natural areas and how they are defined. Inconsistencies were also noted across different internal departments when reviewing and commenting on development plans. This can result in miscommunication between work groups, resulting in one department having the understanding their conditions have been satisfied, while in practice, the condition is not being adequately met. For example, to some, preservation of a wetland may mean there will be a wetland or storm pond at the end of development from an infrastructure perspective. For others, it would mean a wetland will remain undisturbed throughout the development process. This inconsistency of interpretation can result in drastically different outcomes and a lack of clarity in civic policies. As part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Plan, a more comprehensive review of existing terminology is underway, which will consider application of various terms in regulatory and policy documents as well as plain language for communication and public awareness.

## **5.2 Timing, Coordination, and Prioritization**

When a NAS is completed at the sector and concept plan level, some consideration has already been put into the long-term infrastructure development for Saskatoon. As previously noted, planning for future growth along existing major infrastructure results in a more financially sustainable growth model. However, this practice has not always accounted for situations where those major infrastructure lines may intersect with natural areas which have not been adequately studied. By the time reasonable baseline data is available through the screenings, many staff resources may have already been placed into planning of future drainage, storm water, water and sewer trunks, as well as major transportation connections. Budgetary, real estate or planning decisions may have been made which assume the general alignment, shown in a sector plan or other plan, is a confirmed final location. If this happens prior to a more detailed study of the area, it can result in challenges regarding final alignments or design details and how competing priorities are considered.

As further work is completed on the natural areas management pilot projects, additional consideration will need to be placed on how those management plans both inform and are informed by sector and concept planning. Clarifying the timing, scope and process for all projects which may impact natural areas or assets, will be important.



### 5.3 Valuation

In recent years, Administration has been working to value various natural areas within the Saskatoon Natural Areas Inventory and the services they provide, including carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, habitats, storm water drainage and more. However, challenges still exist at the development level. Administration is frequently challenged by project proponents on the loss of developable area, in exchange for the preservation or mitigation of natural areas and therefore the loss of earning potential within a development area. While awareness of the benefits natural areas provide has improved, more work could be done to bridge the gap between the perceived loss of developable land and the increase in both market value and quality of life, through the preservation and integration of natural assets in new development areas. Finding a way to better communicate how natural areas benefit all of us and could help provide greater incentive for all parties to consider natural areas in a more comprehensive way during the planning and design process of new projects.

### 5.4 Enforcement

Planning and designing a development project in and around natural areas doesn't typically work in a one-size-fits-all regulatory approach. As a result, much of the City's wording is around recommendations and best practices, leaving uncertainty on how policy or recommendations may be interpreted by Administration as well as private developers and community members. This lack of concrete policy and regulation can result in some decisions or interpretations being left to the developer to either follow through with or justify alternatives. This is in part due to the City not having a natural areas specific bylaw, which regulates enforcement, and partially due to the nature of diverse ecosystems requiring a level of interpretation and flexibility not typically conducive for setting consistent requirements. As a result of this approach, some natural areas are at a greater risk where loss of developable area or redirection of major infrastructure results in an unappealing cost to the project proponent, as it is easier to trade-off the natural area where many preservation and mitigation tactics are only recommendations and not required.

### 5.5 Resiliency and Climate Change

Through the City's [Strategic Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#) and OCP, Council has recognized the increasing need for the City to improve its long-term resilience, ensuring the City is prepared to mitigate current and future contributions to climate change.

The [Climate Projections and Possible Impacts](#) report outlines possible scenarios for climate impacts in Saskatoon. The [Corporate Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) and the [Natural Capital Asset Valuation](#) report recognizes the role of green infrastructure and natural areas in climate adaptation, such as carbon sequestration. However, detailed information about the contribution of specific assets to climate adaptation is not currently available, and current processes do not have a standardized method of considering climate adaptation as it relates to land development. Tools, such as climate forecasting, are emerging and can help predict what new development areas could look like in the future, when considering threats such as drought or flooding, and can allow for the modelling of different scenarios to determine potential impacts. Natural asset management planning also considers climate risks as part of its methodology. The linkages between climate adaptation and natural assets may be explored further in future stages of the Natural Areas Program. As these tools continue to improve, the City may want to explore these options further to be a leader in resiliency and to better protect civic investments in infrastructure and development against significant climate events.

## Conclusion

To Saskatoon and its residents, natural areas have always held a place of importance and provide a great deal of enjoyment and aesthetic value. In recent years, expectations from the community have changed, as has the knowledge of the value natural areas can provide to cities. The City's current approach to identifying and legally protecting natural areas has been criticized as being reactive. Concurrently, there has been an increased demand for transparency and predictability, regarding how the City plans for natural areas and how they are integrated into the urban fabric. As Saskatoon continues to grow, so does the need to formalize and document processes to ensure natural areas are appropriately considered through a transparent, predictable process.

This current state report has highlighted the key components of the development process as it relates to natural areas and the planning tools, designations and dedications the City currently employs, while acknowledging gaps that exist throughout. As part of the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Natural Area Policy and Process project is intended to review, refine and formalize the City's approach to the conservation and management of natural areas, through policy development and process improvements, aiming to close some of these gaps. This work is currently underway and is anticipated to conclude with a policy framework and recommendations in Quarter Four of 2024.

## **City of Saskatoon Natural Area Policy Framework: Tools Summary**

### **Tools and Process Overview**

Based on Administration's review of policies, bylaws, regulations and tools from other Canadian municipalities, the following list of eight tools were determined as appropriate for use in Saskatchewan and warranted further exploration in the context of Saskatoon:

<b>Tool / Process</b>	<b>Development Process Stage</b>	<b>Intent</b>
Natural Area Policy	All	To provide specific direction for how natural areas are considered in Saskatoon. It would refine current direction on what processes are required, who they apply to, the authority in which those processes are reviewed and approved as well as the timing for which those processes take place.
Natural Area Screening Improvements	Sector Plan, Concept Plan, Building & Development Permits	To formalize the existing natural area screening process into an administrative procedure and review opportunities for collecting additional field data earlier in the development process, in order to better understand the ecological services and condition, prior to making significant design decisions for the area.
Natural Areas Mapping and Prioritization Tool	Sector Plan, Concept Plan	<p>Using existing inventories and studies, a natural area mapping and prioritization tool would formalize a process for consolidating information, from previous studies and future Natural Area Screenings, into a single resource for internal and external stakeholders to use in identifying priority natural areas and their implications early in the development process.</p> <p>This would not be a map deciding where all final natural areas will be after development; rather, it would be a map showing which significant natural areas the natural area policy and subsequent decision-making process and evaluation tools would apply to and prioritize.</p>
Administrative Procedures	All	For the tools outlined in the framework, an administrative procedure may be required to provide a consistent approach for reviewing, updating and managing these documents; how to circulate plans and applications to the appropriate subject matter experts; as well as expectations for documenting work and updating our inventories, mapping and databases.
Heritage Property Designation	Sector, Concept and Building & Development Permits	<a href="#">Council Policy C10-020, the Civic Heritage Policy</a> , under Section 4.5, allows for the designation of natural heritage, paleontological and archaeological sites. While the policy allows the City of Saskatoon (City) to pursue municipal heritage designation for areas of significant natural heritage, the Heritage Program is currently focused on built heritage. Program updates could be made to provide more support to the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and City Administration in consideration of natural areas as heritage properties.

<b>Tool / Processes</b>	<b>Development Process Stage</b>	<b>Intent</b>
Design and Development Standards	Concept Plan, Detailed Design and Subdivision, Building & Development Permits	To develop specific, technical standards for design and development of natural areas and development adjacent to those natural areas, standards can be established as a minimum requirement for various development applications to adhere to.
Zoning Tools	Building & Development Permits	Zoning tools regulate development on private property and, where appropriate, can potentially be used to support natural areas and conservation zones. More information is needed to determine what kinds of regulations would create development that is more complementary to, and supportive of, adjacent natural areas. Once these objectives are identified and it is determined they can be supported through development regulations, then the appropriate zoning tools can be identified.
Natural Areas Acquisition Fund	Outside of typical development process, exercise when development is not imminent.	When development is not imminent, but a significant natural area has been identified and determined to be at risk without intervention, a natural area acquisition fund could be a tool which exists outside of the typical development process. This tool requires establishment of a fund, specific for the purchasing of significant natural areas, as well as supporting criteria to guide purchases.

### Identified Gaps

During engagements conducted by Administration, consistent themes emerged as gaps or opportunities for improvement. See Appendix 1 for a full list of the summary themes. The tools above have been identified with the intention of working to address the gaps brought forward by residents and stakeholders.

It is important to note the list of potential natural area tools for Saskatoon, provided in this appendix, is not an all-encompassing list of available tools to guide the identification, prioritization, conservation and management of natural areas. As the Natural Areas Policy Framework project continues, more tools may be identified, while others may be further refined. It is also important to note this summary did not focus on the management of natural areas. Management of natural areas is being addressed through an ongoing Natural Areas Management Plan Pilot Project, led by the Sustainability Department in the Utilities and Environment Division. Ongoing management, operational impacts and enforcement are vital components to ensuring the success of a Natural Areas Program.

**Lasby, Mary**

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**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - Candace Savage - Wild about Saskatoon - Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 4110-38  
**Attachments:** Natural Areas Policy Framework January 2024.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <[web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 6, 2024 3:27 PM  
**To:** City Council <[City.Council@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:City.Council@Saskatoon.ca)>  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - Candace Savage - Wild about Saskatoon - Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 4110-38

--- Replies to this email will go to [hello@wildaboutsaskatoon.org](mailto:hello@wildaboutsaskatoon.org) ---

Submitted on Saturday, January 6, 2024 - 15:24

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Saturday, January 06, 2024

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** Candace

**Last Name:** Savage

**Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [hello@wildaboutsaskatoon.org](mailto:hello@wildaboutsaskatoon.org)

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] Albert Avenue

**Ward:** Ward 6

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Wild about Saskatoon

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** SPC Planning

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** 8.3.1 Natural Areas Policy Framework

**Comments:**

Please circulate the attached letter to members of the committee.

**Attachments:**

- [Natural Areas Policy Framework January 2024.pdf](#)104.01 KB

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?:** No

# Wild About Saskatoon

January 6, 2024

## Re 8.3.1. Natural Areas Policy Framework

By studying the small print in the City's pre-budget documents, we had mistakenly concluded that this important initiative had been lost in the shuffle. We are very glad to see that work on the Natural Areas Policy Framework has, in fact, advanced and will begin bearing fruit later this year.

We appreciate the candid analysis of gaps and weaknesses in the City's current process that are identified in Appendix 1. This understanding, which matches our experience, establishes a good basis for moving forward with necessary improvements.

A few questions and comments about Appendix 2, *Natural Areas Policy-Current State Summary*:

\* Section 1.3 identifies the Wetland Policy as the City's "most significant policy" for "planning and development of areas that include natural assets." Strengthening of the Wetland Policy is not listed among the goals of this Policy Framework as summarized in Appendix 3. Can we expect to see a revised Wetland Policy in 2024?

\* Figure 2 maps the connection between the City's green network and the Green Network Study Area in the P4G. Again, this connection is not highlighted in the outcomes for the Policy Framework. How will the City of Saskatoon engage with its partners in the P4G to develop an effective Natural Areas Policy Framework for the region?

\* Section 5.4 identifies the difficulty of protecting natural areas through "one-size-fits-all" regulations "partially due to the nature of diverse ecosystems requiring a level of interpretation and flexibility." The City of Edmonton has addressed this challenge through (among other measures) its Natural Area Systems policy (2007). This foundational document combines high-level statements of desired outcomes with a clear delegation of responsibility, across all city departments, for ensuring



that these outcomes are achieved.<sup>1</sup> We look forward to seeing the same vision and clarity expressed in Saskatoon's forthcoming Natural Area Policy.

\* Section 5.5 acknowledges the linkage between climate resilience and the protection of wetlands and other natural areas. Unfortunately, the language in this section of the report is weak, promising only that tools "may be explored further in future stages." As difficult as these issues may be to address, we believe that nature-based solutions to climate change should be prioritized and included in the deliverables for this project. This would bring us up to date with Calgary<sup>2</sup>, Windsor<sup>3</sup> and many other cities in Canada and around the world.<sup>4</sup>

Overall, we are grateful that this work is proceeding and look forward to reviewing the new processes and policies as they are developed.

Joanne Blythe  
Chad Hammond  
Candace Savage

Wild about Saskatoon  
[www.wildaboutsaskatoon.org](http://www.wildaboutsaskatoon.org)

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PoliciesDirectives/C531.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.calgary.ca/environment/climate/natural-area-restored.html>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/environment/climate-change-adaptation/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.unep.org/resources/report/smart-sustainable-and-resilient-cities-power-nature-based-solutions>

**Lasby, Mary**

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**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - Meghan Mickelson - Swale Watchers - Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 4110-38  
**Attachments:** January 7-SwaleWatcher-Submission.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <[web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 7, 2024 9:09 AM  
**To:** City Council <[City.Council@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:City.Council@Saskatoon.ca)>  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - Meghan Mickelson - Swale Watchers - Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 4110-38

--- Replies to this email will go to [swalewatchers@gmail.com](mailto:swalewatchers@gmail.com) ---

Submitted on Sunday, January 7, 2024 - 09:07

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Sunday, January 07, 2024

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**Pronouns:** She/her/hers

**First Name:** Meghan

**Last Name:** Mickelson

**Email:** [swalewatchers@gmail.com](mailto:swalewatchers@gmail.com)

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] 2nd St E

**Ward:** Ward 6

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Swale Watchers

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** SPC-PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - PUBLIC

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** 8.3.1

**Comments:**

View attached letter

**Attachments:**

- [January 7-SwaleWatcher-Submission.pdf](#)64.61 KB

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?:** No



January 7, 2023

### 8.3.1 Natural Areas Policy Framework.

We look forward to reviewing the various tools described in this report when they become available later in the year. Saskatoon is far behind the curve when it comes to protecting natural areas, and these new policies and procedures can't come soon enough. Recently, we had an opportunity to speak with Catherine Shier, formerly the Senior Ecological Planner for the City of Edmonton (did you hear that—Senior *Ecological* Planner), now conservation coordinator with Edmonton's Valley Zoo. She was shocked to learn that the City of Saskatoon still does not have a bylaw or policy directive establishing its commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity.

While we wait for the Natural Area Policy Framework to be fleshed out, the City's most important biodiversity hotspots—the Northeast and Small Swales—continue to be at risk. Remember the old saying about shutting the barn door after the horse has run away? The Swales are the best of what's left in this city, and we trust that they will be top of mind as the various aspects of the Framework are developed. How can the new tools guide and support the protection of these irreplaceable natural assets while we still have time?

Meghan Mickelson, co-chair

Swale Watchers

[www.swalewatchers.org](http://www.swalewatchers.org) email: [swalewatchers@gmail.com](mailto:swalewatchers@gmail.com)

**Lasby, Mary**

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**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - Julia Adamson - Approval of Site Enhancement Design and Construction for Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area and Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 430-4 and CK 4110-38

**Attachments:** January 10 PDCS Letter.pdf; January 9 EU&CS Letter.pdf

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**From:** Friends Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc <[friendsafforestation@gmail.com](mailto:friendsafforestation@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 8, 2024 9:24 AM

**To:** Web E-mail - City Clerks <[City.Clerks@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:City.Clerks@Saskatoon.ca)>

**Subject:** Email - Communication - Julia Adamson - Approval of Site Enhancement Design and Construction for Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area and Natural Areas Policy Framework - CK 430-4 and CK 4110-38

[Warning: This email originated outside our email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

City Clerks office  
His Worship Charlie Clark and councillors of Saskatoon

The Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc not profit charity wishes to submit the following letters to the upcoming committee meetings please.

The City of Saskatoon website is undergoing maintenance, so we are emailing our request in via email to present this information to the committees.

We have no videos to submit, and we do not wish to speak.

Kind Regards  
Julia Adamson

210 Appleby Court Saskatoon, SK S7M 4B2



## Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc.

Registered Charity #777143876 RR 0001  
210 Appleby Court, Saskatoon, SK S7M 4B2

Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services (PDCS)  
City of Saskatoon  
222 3rd Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK,  
S7K 0J5

**Subject: Natural Areas Policy Framework [PDCS2024-0103] - Agenda Item 8.3.1 - January 10, 2024**

Dear Members of the Standing Policy Committee on PDCS,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. The Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas extends its gratitude for your dedication to the well-being and sustainable development of our beloved city.

We are writing to express our wholehearted support for the Natural Areas Policy Framework [PDCS2024-0103], as presented in the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. The report, authored by Anastasia Conly, Senior Planner with the City of Saskatoon, is a significant step towards fostering the conservation and enhancement of our natural areas.

Green spaces are the soul of a community, and the proposed framework recognizes their vital role in defining our sense of place and quality of life. From nature trails to wetlands, these areas contribute to an inclusive, healthy, and active lifestyle while providing essential natural services. They enhance community resilience, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and generate economic benefits.

The Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area, named after the inspirational visionary and environmentalist Richard St. Barbe Baker, is a testament to the power of green spaces. St. Barbe Baker's legacy of saving and planting billions of trees has had a profound impact globally. It is fitting that he was honored as the first inaugural Honorary Life Member of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The proposed Natural Areas Policy Framework aligns seamlessly with the goals outlined in "Pathways for an Integrated Green Network: An Implementation Plan for Saskatoon's Green Infrastructure Strategy." By pursuing tools and policies to support the identification, prioritization, conservation, and designation of natural areas, Saskatoon takes a significant step towards sustainable and integrated urban development.

The comprehensive overview in the report, including the engagement overview, current state summary, and tools summary, reflects thorough consideration and analysis. The identification of

priorities, such as a Natural Area Policy, Screening Improvements, Mapping and Prioritization Resource, Administrative Procedures, Heritage Property Designation, Design and Development Standards, Zoning Tools, and a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, demonstrates a holistic approach to natural area management.

We understand that there may be future financial implications, and we appreciate the commitment to identifying and reporting on these matters during subsequent phases of the project. The Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas supports the administration's thorough investigation of the proposed tools and the engagement of internal and external stakeholders.

As stewards of the environment, we recognize the importance of these initiatives in creating a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable Saskatoon. We commend the City's dedication to pursuing tools that contribute to the protection and enhancement of our natural assets.

We urge you to approve the Natural Areas Policy Framework and believe that its implementation will significantly contribute to a more environmentally conscious and resilient future for our city.

Thank you for your time, commitment, and consideration of this vital matter. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact of this framework on Saskatoon's natural areas.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas [Your Contact Information]



## Environmental Grant Program – Adjudication Committee Member

The Environmental Grant is offered to Saskatoon based non-profit organizations. These organizations can apply for up to \$10,000 to:

- protect or enhance Saskatoon's green network;
- improve energy and water efficiencies;
- increase awareness and protection of our water resources;
- reduce the amount of waste going to landfills;
- provide stewardship, education and/or enhancements to the green network;
- encourage active transportation; and
- provide learning opportunities that support the City's environmental goals.

The grant funds are reviewed and distributed by three committee members; one from the Sustainability, one from Transportation, and one from Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Council (SEAC). We are looking for a volunteer from SEAC to be on the committee for 2024. The committee members will evaluate each application based on community need, the impact and effectiveness of the project or program, volunteer involvement, and the overall quality of the application.

### Role of the Reviewer:

- 1) Attend initial meeting to learn to use the new grant website for reviewing applications.
- 2) Review and rate applications online between February 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> based on evaluation criteria.
- 3) Attend a two hour meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> to work with other panel members to distribute and confirm funds for applicants. The committee member should also be familiar with the Environmental Cash Grant Guidelines before reviewing applications.

If there are any questions, please contact Sarah Timmons at [sarah.timmons@saskatoon.ca](mailto:sarah.timmons@saskatoon.ca)

**2022 ANNUAL REPORT AND 2023 WORK PLAN**

March 17, 2023

Secretary, Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services

**Re: 2022 Annual Report and 2023 Work Plan – Saskatoon Environmental  
Advisory Committee (File No. CK. 175-9)**

The mandate of the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (the Committee) is to provide advice on matters relating to the environmental implications of City planning, programs, policies and operations, and to identify environmental issues of potential relevance to the City of Saskatoon. The Committee provides guidance on a variety of topics including:

- Climate change and reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions;
- Waste reduction and diversion;
- Renewal and alternative energy;
- Ecological systems and green spaces;
- Energy efficiency and building codes;
- Active and alternative transportation; and
- Water conservation and management.

**Committee Membership**

Membership on the Committee for the year 2022 was as follows:

**Members**

- John Paul Wasan, Chair
- Erin Akins, Vice Chair (resigned in September)
- Rourke Wunder-Buhr, Vice Chair (Oct. to Dec.) and Indigenous Representative
- Diane Bentley
- Mostofa Kamal
- Anita Masse (resigned in May)
- Christine McRorie (Youth Representative)
- Alasdair Morrison
- Omar Nawara
- Palash Sanyal
- Matthew Shumaker (Saskatchewan Health Authority Representative)
- Angela Spence
- Mike Velonas (Meewasin Valley Authority Representative)

### **Resource Members**

- Councillor Sarina Gersher
- Director of Sustainability Jeanne South
- Director of Transportation Jay Magus
- Director of Building Standards Kara Fagnou
- Long Range Planning Manager Tyson McShane
- Metering & Sustainable Electricity Manager Jose Cheruvallath
- Environment Projects and Protection Manager Dan Gauthier

The 2023 membership on the Committee is as follows:

### **Members**

- John Paul Wasan, Public, Chair
- Angela Spence, Public, Vice Chair
- Diane Bentley, Public
- Manvi Ghai, Public
- Carmen Gilmore, Public
- Mostofa Kamal, Public
- Eve Keller, Meewasin Valley Authority
- Alasdair Morrison, Public
- Omar Nawara, Public
- Palash Sanyal, Public
- Matthew Shumaker, Saskatchewan Health Authority

### **Resource Members**

- Councillor Sarina Gersher
- Director of Sustainability Jeanne South
- Director of Transportation Jay Magus
- Director of Building Standards Kara Fagnou
- Senior Planner, Planning & Development, Lars Ketilson
- Metering & Sustainable Electricity Manager Jose Cheruvallath
- Environment Projects and Protection Manager Dan Gauthier

### **Work Plan Goals and Accomplishments**

The work plan goals of the Committee in 2022, aligned with the City of Saskatoon Strategic Plan, were as follows.

1. Environmental Leadership
2. Sustainable Growth
3. Moving Around Sustainably
4. Quality of Life (Community Engagement)

## 1. Environmental Leadership

- ***Encourage City Council to take a leading and innovative stance in Municipal issues relating to environment and sustainability.***

Feedback was provided to the Governance and Priorities Committee on the SEAC Terms of Reference to ensure the continued effectiveness of the committee. The Committee also received several presentations on the development of the Pilot Shared Electric Scooter Program and provided feedback to Administration.

- ***Continue to advise City Council in the implementation of the Low Emissions Community (i.e. mitigation) Plan, including renewable energy and supporting infrastructure.***

SEAC reviewed a report on the Home Energy Loan Program in March. The Committee has followed and advised on the development of HELP over the years.

- ***Continue to advise City Council on Waste Reduction and Diversion, including Green Bin and composting programs.***

In February we reviewed a report on the Curbside Organics Program, as well as a report on Waste Diversion for the ICI Sector in March. The expansion of Green Bin programs has been of interest to SEAC for many years.

- ***Advise City Council on water quality as well as quantity management topics.***

In May we reviewed a report on the ongoing Water Conservation Strategy.

- ***Continue to advise City Council in their adoption and implementation of the Triple Bottom Line Policy.***

SEAC received a report on the continuation of the TBL Policy in May. The Committee has encouraged the use of TBL in decision-making and supports the further implementation of this policy.

## 2. Sustainable Growth

- ***Stay informed on all components of the Plan for Growth and encourage City Council to ensure it is environmentally sustainable.***

While SEAC did not receive any updates on the Official Community Plan in 2022, we will continue to encourage Council to balance sustainability and urban growth.

- ***Advise on the alignment of building and construction standards with waste, water, transportation and emissions reduction goals.***

SEAC reviewed reports on HELP and Waste Diversion in the ICI sector and will continue to advise Council on sustainable building standards.

- ***Advise on the protection of natural areas, including the Swales, through initiatives such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Natural Capital Asset Valuation file and food security through community garden policy.***

In June, the Committee reviewed a report on the Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan. Maintaining conservation areas and a healthy green network is a strong focus of SEAC.

### **3. Moving Around Sustainably**

- ***Continue to support the development of a Bus Rapid Transit system and implementation of the Active Transportation Plan, which are critical components of the Saskatoon Low Emissions Community Plan.***

Auxiliary to active transportation, SEAC advised on the development of the Shared Electric Scooter Pilot. Encouraging alternative transportation, especially through BRT and cycling networks, has been of interest to SEAC for many years.

### **4. Quality of Life (Community Engagement)**

- ***Continue to support community and education initiatives, such as the Student Action for a Sustainable Future.***

This year we provided \$1,800.00 to SASF to continue their work supporting elementary classrooms' sustainability projects. We also assisted with the adjudication of the Environmental Community Cash Grants program.

- ***Maintain our education-based social media presence.***

SEAC distributed a new RFI in March 2022 for a social media content creator with the value of \$5,000.00 for the creation of 24 posts on Facebook and Instagram platforms. Greg Basky was contracted to create education-based

social media content for SEAC for the second consecutive year. Two to three posts were released monthly at the direction of Angela Spence and Rourke Wunder-Buhr. These posts have had some success on Facebook, reaching 40 to 555 pages per post for a to-date reach of 1930 pages (down 70.6% from 2022) and to-date reach of 431 profiles on Instagram (down 68.4% from 2021). Facebook page visits increased 210.0% from 2021 for a total of 878. Instagram profile visits decreased 63.8% from 2021 for a total of 141. Overall, SEAC gained 88 followers on Facebook and 0 followers on Instagram in 2022. A large part of this reduced success can be attributed to the fact SEAC boosted (paid for viewing increase) less posts than in 2021.

## **2022 Reports and Communications**

### **Matters Referred by SPC or City Council**

1. Julia Adamson, City Nature Challenge 2022 [CK 150-1] – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered on January 13, 2022
2. Governance Review – Advisory Committees – Review of Terms of Reference [CK 225-1 x 255-2]
  - a. Considered on January 13, 2022
3. Curbside Organics Program Update [CK 7830-7] – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered February 10, 2022
4. Waste Diversion Regulation for the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Sector – Bylaw Compliance and Education [CK 7830-1] – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered on March 16, 2022
5. FCM Funding Decision for Home Energy Loan Program [CK 752-2] – Standing Policy Committee on Environmental, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered on March 16, 2022
6. Triple Bottom Line Program Continuation [CK 7550-1 x 17021] – City Council
  - a. Considered May 18, 2022
7. Water Conservation Strategy [CK 7900-1] – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered May 18, 2022
8. Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan [CK 4110-38] – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
  - a. Considered June 15, 2022

### **Reports/Recommendations Submitted to City Council:**

1. There were no matters submitted to City Council.

**Reports/Recommendations Submitted to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services:**

1. 2021 Annual Report and 2022 Work Plan [CK 175-9]
  - a. Submitted February 10, 2022

**Reports/Recommendations Submitted to the Governance and Priority Committee:**

1. There were no matters submitted to the Governance and Priority Committee.

**Communication by Committee Representatives (Chair, Vice-Chair, or designate) to the local media:**

1. The Chair spoke to Global News Saskatoon regarding Earth Day and SEAC's Activities on April 22, 2022.

**Work Plan for 2023**

In 2023 SEAC will do the following, aligned with the City of Saskatoon strategic plan:

**1. Environmental Leadership**

- Encourage City Council to take a leading and innovative stance in Municipal issues relating to environment and sustainability.
- Continue to advise City Council in the implementation of the Low Emissions Community Plan and the Corporate Climate Adaptation Strategy, including renewable energy such as solar and supporting infrastructure.
- Continue to advise City Council on Waste Reduction and Diversion, including Green Bin and organics programs.
- Advise City Council on water conservation and quality management.
- Continue to advise City Council in their adoption and implementation of the Triple Bottom Line Policy.
- Advise City Council in the sustainable development of new facilities.

**2. Sustainable Growth**

- Stay informed on all components of the Plan for Growth and encourage City Council to ensure it is environmentally sustainable.
- Advise on the alignment of building and construction standards with waste, water, transportation, and emissions reduction goals.



- Advise on the protection of natural areas, through initiatives such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Natural Capital Asset Valuation program.
- Advise on the protection of significant natural areas, including boundary delineation, rare species habitat and integration with urban development, such as for the NE and Small Swales and the Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area.

### **3. Moving Around Sustainably**

- Continue to support the development of a Bus Rapid Transit system and implementation of the Active Transportation Plan, which are critical components of the Saskatoon Low Emissions Community Plan.
- Continue to advise on alternative transportation methods such as development of the electric scooter program.

### **4. Quality of Life**

- Advise City Council on food security and community garden programs.
- Advise City Council on implications of climate change on community health and well-being.

### **Community Engagement**

- Continue to support community and education initiatives, such as the Student Action for a Sustainable Future program.
- Maintain our education-based social media programming.
- Support the Environmental Cash Grants program.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Appendix 1 – 2022 Meeting Summary
2. Appendix 2 – 2022 Expenditures

Sincerely,



**John Paul Wasan**  
**Chair, Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee**

## Appendix 1 – 2022 Meeting Summary – Key Topics and Resolutions

Meeting	Summary – Key Topics and Resolutions
January	<p>Reports from Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee Orientation</li> </ul> <p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A letter from Julia Adamson regarding the City Nature Challenge (EUCS)</li> <li>Review of Terms of Reference (GPC)</li> </ul> <p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That John Paul Wasan be appointed Chair and Erin Akins be appointed Vice-Chair for 2022.</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anita Masse was appointed to serve as Subcommittee Chair for 2022</li> </ul>
February	<p>Reports from Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electric Scooter Pilot Project Framework Project Update</li> </ul> <p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curbside Organics Program Update (EUCS)</li> </ul> <p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That Christina McRorie serves as the SEAC representative to the Community Groups - Cash Grants Program - Environmental Component for 2022.</li> <li>That the 2021 Annual Report and 2022 Work Plan be approved.</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The subcommittee reported that it was continuing with the social media campaign for 2022</li> </ul>
March	<p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste Diversion Regulation for the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Sector (EUCS)</li> <li>Bylaw Compliance and Education and FCM Funding Decision for Home Energy Loan Program (EUCS)</li> </ul>

	<p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That \$1,800.00 be contributed to Student Action for a Sustainable Future.</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subcommittee reported on the drafting of an RFI for the social media campaign and current engagement</li> </ul>
April	<p>Reports from Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Shared Electric Scooter Program: Update and Input Request</li> </ul> <p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Committee approve entering into a contract with Greg Basky to provide social media expertise content regarding urban environmental sustainability and responsibility campaign and public engagement</li> <li>• That the contract be drawn up in the amount of \$5,000, including applicable taxes, and outlining expectations for fulfilling the position.</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subcommittee reported on the selection of a proponent for the RFI for the social media campaign</li> </ul>
May	<p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triple Bottom Line Program Continuation to Committee (City Council)</li> <li>• Water Conservation Strategy (EUCS)</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the resignation of Anita Masse from SEAC, Angela Spence was appointed Subcommittee Chair for 2022</li> </ul>
June	<p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan (EUCS)</li> </ul> <p>Committee Member Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christina provided an update on the outcome of the 2022 Environmental Community Cash Grants Program</li> </ul>

September	<p>Reports from Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Regulatory Framework – Shared Electric Scooter Program Pilot</li> </ul> <p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Rourke Wunder-Buhr was appointed Vice Chair for the remainder of 2022 (due to the resignation of Erin Akins from SEAC).</li> </ul>
October	No meeting was held due to insufficient items.
November	<p>Referrals from Council or Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Action Plan – Progress Report 2021 (EUCS)</li> <li>• Renewable and Low-emission Energy Implementation Plan (EUCS)</li> </ul> <p>Motions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee approve its 2022 Annual Report for submission to City Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities &amp; Corporate Services by March 31, 2023</li> </ul> <p>GHG Subcommittee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media campaign update</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 – 2022 Expenditures

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>March 25, 2022</b>	Student Action for a Sustainable Future (SASF) Program Funding for 2022/2023	\$1,800.00
<b>August 3, 2022</b>	Social Media Content – May-Aug Facebook & Instagram posts - G. Basky Contract (1 <sup>st</sup> Payment)	\$2,499.00
<b>November 24, 2022</b>	Social Media Content – September – December Facebook & Instagram posts - G. Basky Contract (2 <sup>nd</sup> Payment)	\$2,499.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,798.00</b>

SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 2023 BUDGET - \$7,800.00								
DATE	NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE	GL	TOTAL SPENT	BUDGET REMAINING
		Beginning Balance						<b>\$7,800.00</b>
May 11, 2023	24634	Student Action for a Sustainable Future (SASF) Program funding for 2023/2024	\$3,600.00				\$3,600.00	\$4,200.00
November 23, 2023	24750	Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) funding for Living Cities Project	\$4,200.00				\$4,200.00	\$0.00

<b>2022 Budget</b>		
Sponsored social media promotion		500.00
Student Action for a Sustainable Future (SASF) Program		1,800.00
Public Education/Information Gathering		5,500.00
<b>2022 Total</b>		<b>\$7,800.00</b>
<b>2022 Forecasted Variance</b>		<b>\$7,800.00</b>
<b>2022 Actuals</b>		<b>\$6,798.00</b>
<b>2022 Budget</b>		<b>\$7,800.00</b>
<b>2022 Variance (Under)</b>		<b>-\$1,002.00</b>