

**PUBLIC AGENDA
SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Friday, June 20, 2025, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Committee Room E, Ground Floor, City Hall

Committee Members:

**Angela Spence, Public, Chair
Manvi Ghai, Public, Vice Chair
Diane Bentley, Public
Ian Judd-Henrey, Public
Erica Maier, Meewasin Valley Authority
Terry Neefs, Public
Palash Sanyal, Public
Colleen Steele, Public
Siobhan Takala, Public**

Other Attendees:

**Councillor Kathryn MacDonald
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
Senior Transportation Engineer, Justine Marcoux
Director of Sustainability, Jeanna South**

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

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]

Recommendation

That the minutes of the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee meeting held on May 16, 2025, be approved.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**6. COMMUNICATIONS****6.1 Meewasin Valley Authority - National Urban Park Program**

A presentation will be provided by Mike Velonas, Interim CEO and Manager of Planning and Conservation, Meewasin Valley Authority.

Recommendation

That the information be received.

6.2 Global Warming – Adelina Chiperi

Adelina Chiperi, École Silverspring School, will provide a presentation on global warming.

Recommendation

That the information be received.

6.3 Saskatoon Public Schools - School Compost Initiative Update

10 - 15

A report from Samantha Gunn, Saskatoon Public Schools, is provided.

Recommendation

That the information be received.

7. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE**7.1 Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan [EUCS2025-0603]**

16 - 32

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division is provided.

Recommendation

That the information be received.

8. WORK PLAN CONSIDERATION**8.1 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.

8.1.1 Education Subcommittee - Welcome Week Proposal

33 - 34

A proposal from the Education Subcommittee is provided.

Recommendation

That the Committee provide direction.

9. BUDGET - STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES FOR 2025 [CK 1704-5]

35 - 35

The current Statement of Expenditures is provided.

Recommendation

That the information be received.

10. VERBAL UPDATES

10.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR [CK 175-9]

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

10.2 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.

10.3 SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES [CK 375-4]

This is a standing item to provide an opportunity for the Subcommittee to report back on referred matters.

10.3.1 Education Subcommittee

10.3.2 Water Conservation and Quality Management Subcommittee

11. ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC MINUTES

SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 16, 2025, 11:30 a.m.

Committee Room E, Ground Floor, City Hall

PRESENT: Angela Spence, Public, Chair
Diane Bentley, Public
Manvi Ghai, Public, at 11:33 a.m.
Ian Judd-Henrey, Public
Erica Maier, Meewasin Valley Authority, via teleconference
Terry Neefs, Public
Palash Sanyal, Public, via teleconference at 11:33 a.m.

ABSENT: Colleen Steele, Public
Siobhan Takala, Public

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor K. MacDonald
Senior Planner, Planning & Development, Lars Ketilson, via teleconference at 11:38 a.m.
Senior Transportation Engineer, Justine Marcoux, via teleconference
Director of Sustainability, Jeanna South
Environmental Operations Manager, Brock Storey, via teleconference
Committee Assistant Kristina Sipes
Committee Assistant M. Lasby

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Item 2 was considered next.

1.1 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Commission was requested to appoint a Vice-Chair for the remainder of 2025.

Robin Steeg was Vice-Chair from January to April 2025.

Manvi Ghai and Palash Sanyal entered the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Diane Bentley nominated Manvi Ghai as Vice Chair.

Moved By: D. Bentley

That the Committee appoint Manvi Ghai as Vice-Chair for the remainder of 2025.

CARRIED

Item 3 was considered next.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Moved By: I. Judd-Henrey

1. That the report 2023-2024 Integrated Waste Management Report and 2026-2027 Work Plan for the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan be added as item 6.1; and
2. That the agenda be confirmed as amended.

CARRIED

Item 1.1 was considered next.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

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

Moved By: P. Sanyal

That the minutes of the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee meeting held on April 25, 2025, be approved.

CARRIED

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

6.1 2023-2024 Integrated Waste Management Report and 2026-2027 Work Plan for the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan [EUCS2023-0604]

The Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services, at its meeting held on May 6, 2025, considered the following

item and resolved in part that the report be forwarded to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee for information.

Administration was in attendance to speak to the matter.

Senior Planner, Planning & Development Ketilson joined the meeting at 11:38 a.m. via teleconference.

Sustainability Project Manager Brodie presented the report with a PowerPoint and along with Educational and Environmental Performance Manager Burns and Environmental Operations Manager Storey responded to questions of Committee.

Key topics of discussion included improving landfill space through compaction and potential shredding equipment, challenges with recycling accessibility, and plans for SK Recycles to take over certain programs by 2027. Emphasis was placed on public education to improve participation, especially around organics and food waste. Administration highlighted progress made through recent initiatives like curbside organics and Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Waste (ICI) bylaws, while noting the need for better data collection, public engagement, and phased implementation of the updated waste diversion plan.

Moved By: I. Judd-Henrey

That the information be received.

CARRIED

8. BUDGET - STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES FOR 2025 [CK 1704-5]

The Statement of Expenditures was provided.

9. VERBAL UPDATES

Moved By: D. Bentley

That the verbal updates included in Items 9.1 to 9.3 received as information.

CARRIED

9.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR [CK 175-9]

Chair Angela Spence provided a verbal update on the following:

- Danielle Kehler resigned from the Committee.

- Saskatchewan Health Authority Representative Darren Hill resigned from the Committee. Saskatchewan Health Authority will advise on the appointment of a new representative.
- *ClimateWest 2025 Forum: Climate Resilient Futures* takes place June 17-18, 2025, at the Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel and online.
- The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services did not refer the report, *Energy Regulation Options for Building Standards*, to the Committee; however, the Committee can submit a letter in support of the recommendation to City Council for the Regular Business Meeting schedule May 21st, 2025. The deadline for submission is Monday, May 19th at 5:00 p.m.

Moved By: I. Judd-Henrey

That the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee submit a letter of support to City Council on the Energy Regulation Options for Building Standards report recommendations.

CARRIED

9.2 COMMITTEE OR RESOURCE MEMBER UPDATE [CK 175-9]

9.2.1 Sustainability Specialist G. Russell

A verbal update was provided on:

- The Water Conservation Program and Communications Plan.

The Committee heard from Sustainability Specialist Russell on progress in Saskatoon's Water Conservation Program, including public education, social media, event outreach, and increased use of rain barrel rebates.

9.2.2 Sustainability Project Manager J. Best

A verbal update was provided on:

- Indigenous Land Use Foundations Project.

The Committee heard from Sustainability Project Manager Best on the Indigenous Land Use Foundations Project, which focuses on

cultural access, removing systemic barriers, and integrating Indigenous perspectives in urban planning. The project is in the scoping phase, with findings to be presented to Council later this year, pending approvals and funding.

Palash Sanyal excused himself from the meeting at 12:31 p.m.

9.2.3 Director of Indigenous Initiatives M. Cote

A verbal update was provided on:

- Indigenous Cultural Spaces Project.

The Committee heard from the Director of Indigenous Initiatives Cote on early efforts to create urban cultural spaces in Saskatoon with several community partners. Since March 2023, gatherings with elders, youth, and knowledge keepers have focused on cultural revitalization and land access. A report on site selection, governance, and funding will go to the Governance and Priorities Committee at a future date. The Committee discussed youth engagement, Indigenous ownership, privacy, and respectful information sharing.

9.3 SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES [CK 375-4]

9.3.1 Education Subcommittee

A proposal from the Education Subcommittee is forthcoming.

The Education Subcommittee discussed plans regarding a proposal for an information booth. The booth would promote environmental and climate awareness at the University of Saskatchewan Welcome Week. Members were encouraged to volunteer.

Administration advised that requests for existing materials and promotional items should be directed through the Committee Assistant. Materials created by the Subcommittee can be printed through the internal Print Shop, and rates will be shared with the Subcommittee to assist with budget planning.

The Committee discussed outreach to schools, City events, and social media. A test budget may be proposed due to platform limits on climate content.

9.3.2 Water Conservation and Quality Management Subcommittee

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

A. Spence, Chair

K. Sipes, Committee Assistant

Saskatoon Public Schools Organic Collection Program Update 2024/2025

Complied by Samantha Gunn, Edited using CoPilot AI Assistant

Executive Summary

This pilot project aimed to support schools interested in managing their own compost programs and gather feedback on their feasibility. Schools identified two main barriers to compost initiatives:

1. Organics management is not part of existing job descriptions within our schools, so we rely on voluntary efforts from staff and students.
2. The cost of organic compost pickup is prohibitive, nearly ten times that of household pickup.

Financial support from SEAC removed the second barrier, and volunteer participation allowed effective organic waste diversion in some schools.

Introduction

Students, teachers, and staff recognize the importance of organics programs. Our partnership with the City of Saskatoon through the Student Action for a Sustainable Future Program has helped schools audit waste and implement compost and recycling programs. With the launch of city-wide organics pickup, sustainable waste management is more achievable.

Organic disposal varies across our 57 schools, from no separation to complex systems involving vermicompost, compost piles, electronic composters, and curbside pickup. Some schools with nutrition programs are required to have organics programs, and our Nutrition Program Coordinator is working with the city to fund and staff these initiatives.

Project Description

We surveyed school principals about piloting school-wide compost pickup, and indicated that teaching staff and students would be responsible for managing collection and disposal. Eight out of 47 elementary schools expressed interest. We secured funding from SEAC, and Loraas Disposal offered a rate of \$70/month per school. Currently Loraas is the only service provider available in Saskatoon. Some principals noted this rate was high compared to city-managed pickup.

One school principal with a history of student-initiated organics collection supported other schools with logistics and sustainable practices. Communication and payments were handled centrally to remove the responsibility from individual schools.

Challenges included varying cart locations and winter storage requests from Loraas, which were not feasible for most schools. Many participating schools had prior experience with waste audits and

sustainability programs, highlighting the need for curricular integration or a dedicated sustainability champion.

Budget

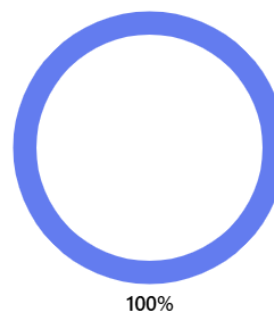
Loraas quoted \$70/month per school for bi-weekly pickup. We applied to SEAC for \$3,360. Additional charges and unforeseen events increased costs, which the school division absorbed.

Participating Schools	Basic Fees: \$70.00/month x 6 months	Additional Fees: \$15.08/month x 6 months	Unforeseen costs	Total Program Cost
Buena Vista	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
King Geroge	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
Ecole Victoria	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48	\$ 105.00- stolen bin \$ 30.00- new chain	\$645.48
John G Egnatoff	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
Hugh Carins	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
Montgomery	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
Prince Phillip	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
Silverwood Heights	\$ 420.00	\$ 90.48		\$510.48
	\$ 3360.00	\$ 723.84	\$ 135.00	\$ 4218.84

Feedback from Principals

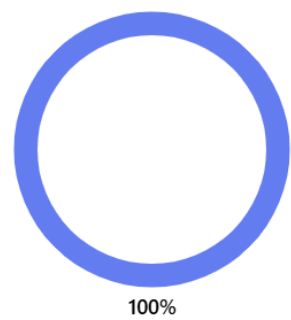
1. Was the compost pickup service consistent and reliable?

● Yes 6
● No 0
● Maybe 0



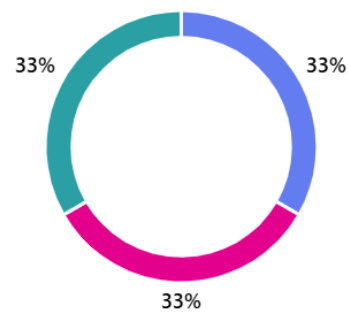
2. Were the provided bins (95-gallon organics carts) sufficient for your needs?

● Yes	6
● No	0
● Maybe	0



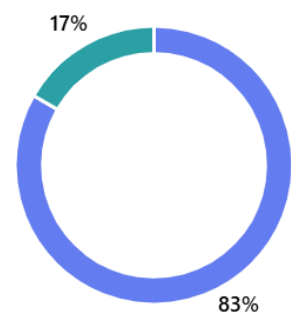
3. In your view, was the \$70/month per cart cost reasonable for the value provided?

● Yes	2
● No	2
● Maybe	2



4. Did the program help reduce your school's overall waste output (estimated)?

● Yes	5
● No	0
● Maybe	1



5. How did students engage with the composting process? (e.g., classroom involvement, student-led efforts, related lessons or projects)

One class had a 'Compost Crew' that went around collecting, emptying and cleaning buckets every day at last recess.

Just had to put food waste in small green bins (one in each class). Teachers then emptied this into the large green bin.

We had an IS student support the daily composting duties.

We didn't have students engage in the process. We have a nutrition program and all of our kitchen green cart items were placed in the bin. If this were to continue, we would work towards having the students put their lunch scraps in there as well.

The option was provided to classrooms and several signed up. The program aligned nicely with sustainability projects and activities that several classes have been participating in. (e.g. field trips to Loraas, waste-reduction activities, ...) We also placed a bin in the staff room and it fills up regularly. A class has volunteered to empty it weekly.

SASF project spear headed by grade 4/5

6. Were there any measurable or anecdotal successes? (e.g., waste audits, enthusiasm, behavior changes)

Staff and students were pleased with the program. The Compost Crew was very dedicated and took their role very seriously. While there is more education and habit change necessary, it was a good first step. One area that we saw a lot of diversion was on hot lunch days, being able to divert food contaminated pizza boxes etc. often filled the receptacle and therefore did not need to go to the landfill.

No waste audit, but far less food waste in garbages.

I do not think that there was a great deal of change although there were conversations had and students beginning to understand the process.

We felt good about diverting waste from the landfill.

Students were eager to participate. If a classroom bin wasn't in place (e.g. temporarily for cleaning) they would ask to have it back so they could "stop wasting good compost in the garbage."

waste audits

7. What challenges did your school face, and what improvements would you suggest for future rollouts?

I am not sure that it made enough of a difference to justify us having to pay \$70/month but with the pilot program covering the cost it was great.

Not needing a large green cart for the winter months. Is a smaller one for less \$ a possibility?

In order for this to be successful there needs to be a staff member that is passionate about it and can lead the work.

Teaching students what goes into the green bin and what doesn't - this would be a school wide learning initiative.

We didn't really face any challenges. We appreciate the support in managing the big cart pickup!

In school was great. Outside, lots of people misused the bin out on the street. This was not a problem of the school, but the general community

Conclusion

We extend our gratitude to SEAC for funding this pilot project. Feedback from principals indicates that the most sustainable approach to organic waste collection in the short term is for schools to self-identify and manage their own programs linked to student learning. With the positive experiences reported by the majority of participating schools, we can expand our network through peer support and mentoring. Participating principals are now equipped to assist each other in managing the logistics of organics collections in their schools. Existing supports from the Student Action for a Sustainable Future Program will help connect organic collection to student learning. These collaborative efforts will help grow support for organic waste collection programs across our schools.

Portfolios for Natural and Naturalized Areas

ISSUE

Natural and naturalized areas deliver essential municipal services such as storm water management, flood prevention, and carbon storage; provide multiple benefits to residents such as recreation and access to nature; and often require fewer resources to maintain than conventional landscaping.

The development of two interconnected portfolios of work is underway to better support natural and naturalized areas. This report provides an update on both portfolios and summarizes funding available to support this work.

BACKGROUND

At its regular business meeting on June 27, 2022, City Council received the [Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan](#) report and unanimously resolved: “That Pathways for an Integrated Green Network, an implementation plan for the Green Infrastructure Strategy, be approved in principle.” High priorities in the implementation plan include actions to support healthy, thriving natural areas and connected, enhanced green spaces:

- 1.1: Protect prioritized natural areas through policies and processes
- 1.2: Manage and restore natural areas through Natural Area Management Plans
- 1.3: Create partnerships to support Indigenous land management
- 1.4: Integrate natural assets into the City’s asset management system
- 1.5: Expand the naturalized park program
- 2.3: Naturalize and restore non-park green spaces

At the 2022/2023 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Deliberations, the Natural Area Management Plan – Templates and Pilots, and Natural Areas Policy and Process Development projects were presented as a [combined Business Plan Option](#) and received funding to proceed in 2022-2023. Both projects then [received funding](#) to proceed to the next phases at the 2024/2025 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Deliberations.

At the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting on August 16, 2023, the committee received the [2024 – 2035 Major Capital Funding Plan](#) report and resolved: “That the Governance and Priorities Committee approve in principle the 2024-2035 Major Capital Funding Plan as presented (Option 1).” The Plan included a recommended allocation of \$3M in 2026 and \$3M in 2027, towards the Green Network – Natural Areas Program.

The 2023 Climate Action Progress Report [EUCS2024-1201] was presented to City Council as information on December 10, 2024. The [report](#) includes information on the Green Network, through an inventory and Green Pathways report card. The implementation and quantification of nature-based climate solutions will be key to

achieving the City's net-zero emissions target and will play a critical role in preparing the community for a changing climate.

Direction to support natural areas and naturalization are further supported through the City of Saskatoon's (City) [Official Community Plan Bylaw 9700](#) (2020), [Pathways to a Sustainable Urban Forest](#) (2022), and [Water Conservation Strategy](#) (2022).

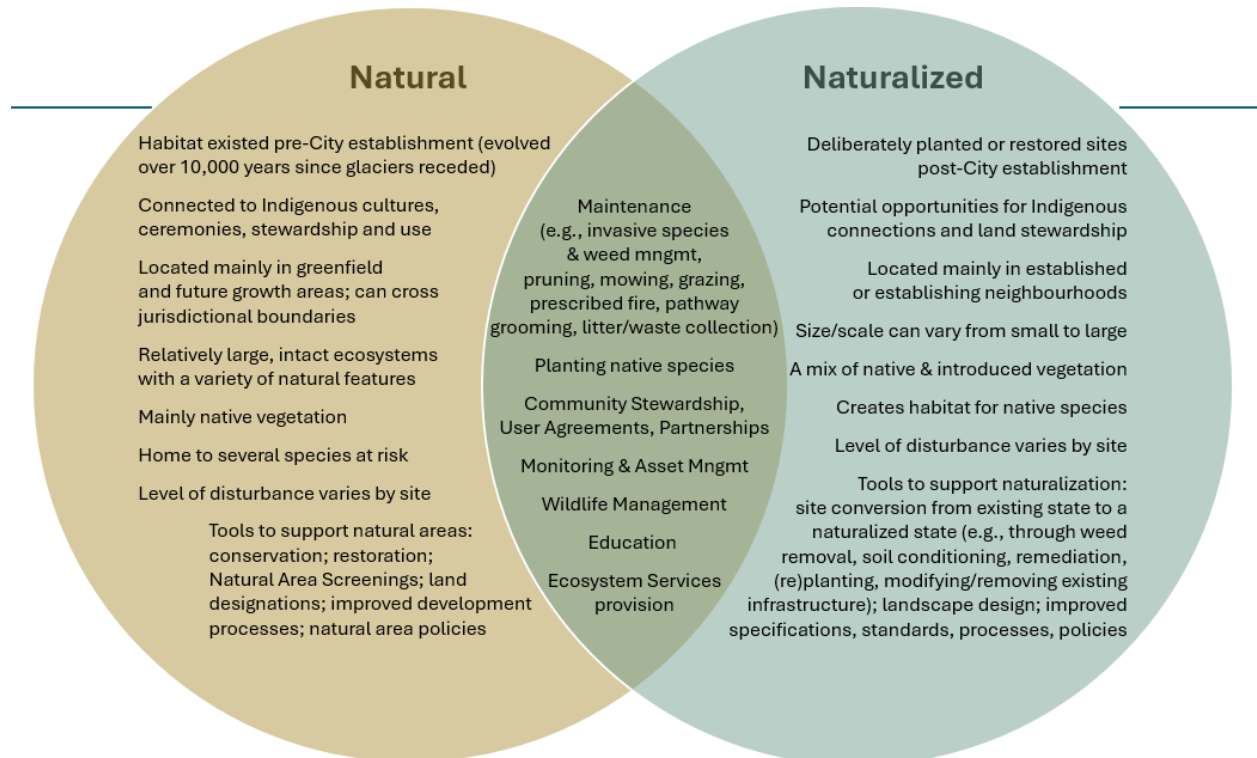
A summary of public engagement results related to Natural and Naturalized Areas is included in Appendix 1.

CURRENT STATUS

Natural areas are ecosystems that existed prior to the City's establishment. They include the South Saskatchewan River, wetlands and grasslands such as those found in the Northeast Swale, and forests. Naturalized areas are sites deliberately developed with predominantly native vegetation through plantings or natural regeneration. They include sites like Donna Birkmaier and Hyde Park. In 2019, Meewasin completed a [Natural Areas Inventory](#) for the City, which describes the types, extent, and health of natural and naturalized areas in Saskatoon.

While there are distinctions between natural and naturalized areas, they share several interconnected priorities and can benefit from similar planning and operational approaches. The figure below provides a summary of the distinctions and similarities.

Figure 1: The Interconnections Between Natural and Naturalized Areas



Natural and naturalized areas provide substantial benefits to the City and community, as documented in a [Natural Capital Asset Valuation](#) pilot project that was presented to City Council in 2020.

Multiple City initiatives are underway that aim to improve the identification, conservation, and management of natural and naturalized areas. These include:

- In 2023, the City established a Green Network Program to support implementation of the City's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) and its implementation plan, [Green Pathways](#).
- In 2024, City Council approved in principle [Natural Area Management and Master Plans](#) (NAMPs) for the Small Swale and Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area (RSBBAA). Discussions are underway with City staff and Meewasin on options and resources for management at these sites. Additional [priority sites](#) in need of NAMPs have also been identified. Administration is also preparing a Natural Asset Framework, which defines how natural assets can be integrated into the City's asset management system.
- The City adopted the [Wetland Policy \(C09-041\)](#) in 2013. This policy provides direction for the City to maintain an inventory of wetlands and requires that wetland mitigation plans be developed during the neighbourhood concept plan process. It also establishes requirements to avoid, minimize, and compensate for wetlands that may be impacted during development. Since 2021, work has been underway to develop recommendations for policy updates and improvements.
- Administration has prepared a Natural Area Policy Framework, which defines the processes needed to identify, prioritize, conserve, and manage natural areas and assets. The policy framework was [presented in an information report](#) to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services in January 2024. The report includes a [Current State Summary](#), which outlines the City's current approach to natural areas identification and regulation. It also includes a summary of [Natural Area Policy Tools](#) that could be explored further. Several of the policy tools identified are currently being explored, including: a natural area policy, Natural Area Screening improvements, natural areas mapping and prioritization tool, and design and development standards.
- Supported by the federal [Natural Infrastructure Fund \(NIF\)](#), several City projects are proceeding with activities that support natural areas, including RSBBAA, as well as naturalization through land development and green space enhancements. The City's NIF projects are nearing completion.
- The Parks department leads coordination, delivery, and management of the Naturalized Parks Program. As of 2025, the City has 17 Naturalized Parks (12 City managed and 5 City-Meewasin managed), which make up approximately 11% of the Parks inventory.
- The Indigenous Land Use Foundations (Foundations) project is identifying options for the City to support Indigenous land uses and cultural spaces. Specific recommendations will be brought forward in early 2026 and could be coordinated with the implementation of natural and naturalized projects.

- Through the [Water Conservation Strategy](#), administration is seeking additional opportunities to upgrade irrigation equipment and automate manually irrigated parks to optimize watering and reduce costs, while maintaining healthy vegetation. A near-term priority includes working towards transitioning 5% of current irrigated park area to a naturalized state to reduce long-term maintenance, increase biodiversity, and improved habitat connectivity.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The initiatives outlined above seek to protect, manage, and restore natural assets and ecosystems in the Green Network, while also supporting community activities such as recreation, education, and cultural uses. Natural and naturalized sites can provide essential balance and livability to urban growth and enhance resilience for urban areas from the impacts of climate change.

While natural and naturalized areas provide substantial benefits to Saskatoon and residents, they face threats (described in Appendix 2) that limit their service delivery. Initiatives that are currently underway are beginning to address these issues but are limited in scope and breadth.

By improving the health and resilience of ecosystems through protection, restoration, and management of natural and naturalized areas, outcomes can be achieved such as reducing flood risk, decreasing emissions and other pollution, improving climate resilience, enhancing community access to nature, and protecting biodiversity. This report outlines an initiative involving two interconnected portfolios of work for Saskatoon's natural and naturalized areas (the Portfolios), which have been developed to support these important outcomes. It details the scope of the Portfolios that was introduced in the 2024/2025 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget and is now proposed for funding through the 2026-2027 Major Capital Funding Plan.

Deliverables

The Portfolios initiative deliverables will:

- Identify goals, targets, and priorities related to natural areas and naturalization to establish clear objectives for the City.
- Improve planning, design, construction, establishment, maintenance, and capital renewal processes.
- Examine/audit site conditions to identify priority sites and opportunities for restoration or naturalization.
- Update or create standards, specifications, policies, guidelines, and procedures to better support natural and naturalized areas.
- Determine a process to transition suitable green spaces to the City's Naturalized Parks Program.
- Identify levels of service, asset management, and operating implications of this work.
- Complete engagement, design, and on-the-ground enhancements at key sites.
- Identify ways to better enable community stewardship (e.g. planting, watering, invasive species removal, harvesting, education, etc.) within the green network.

- Enhance capacity building and education for key stakeholders.

While delivery of these outcomes will be coordinated by the Sustainability department, several departments will help lead and/or be engaged in this work including Parks, Planning & Development, Recreation & Community Development, Indigenous Initiatives, and Communications & Public Engagement.

Major Capital Funding

To progress this work and support tangible and on-the-ground outcomes, a capital project valued at \$6 million (\$3 million in 2026 and \$3 million in 2027) is proposed through the [2024–2035 Major Capital Funding Plan](#) (Option 1: Green Network – Natural Areas Program).

Implementing the Portfolios through a single, financed initiative will ensure that interdepartmental collaboration is supported; and construction and maintenance activities, process improvements, and asset management are coordinated. This will also maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of funding and staff time, as multiple phases and a broad spectrum of the Portfolios can be planned and executed together. Since natural and naturalized areas share several interconnected priorities and can benefit from similar planning and operational approaches, this Major Capital initiative will support activities that progress the Portfolios by addressing the unique needs of each while also finding efficiencies and coordination through overlapping goals and needs.

The Portfolios initiative will focus on the following areas:

1. **Natural Areas:** Roll-out policies, procedures, and asset management approaches to effectively conserve, restore, and manage priority natural areas.
2. **Naturalization:** Improve processes to support naturalized green spaces throughout the City.
3. **On the Ground Projects:** Implement on-the-ground natural and naturalized area improvements to see tangible benefits.
4. **Community Stewardship:** Create a formalized approach to accommodate community-led stewardship within natural and naturalized areas.
5. **Nature-Friendly Initiatives:** Explore opportunities to embed nature-friendly policies into the City's processes, which may include instruments such as Bird-Friendly Measures, Dark Sky Policy, and wildlife monitoring initiatives.

Rationale

The proposed work will result in multiple benefits (see Appendix 2); and will also address gaps in the City's approach to natural areas and naturalization, thereby mitigating risks to these distinct areas.

Natural Areas: Natural areas currently account for about 14% of the City's footprint, and many of these areas are degraded and unmanaged. While the City's role in natural area and green space stewardship is broadly defined in the [Official Community Plan](#), there is limited detail on how to identify, prioritize, and integrate natural areas within the

City's footprint sensitively, effectively, and comprehensively. Moreover, there are few standards, policies, or procedures for staff, developers, or contractors to follow in project planning, design, procurement, construction, establishment, maintenance, monitoring, or enforcement related to natural areas.

Identifying and maintaining, or restoring, high priority natural areas and bringing these sites under formal stewardship through effective policy, processes, and asset management will maximize ecosystem services, improve consistency and coordination between departments, enable staff and developers to follow clear processes, and improve efficiency in project planning and neighbourhood development.

Naturalization: There is currently no clear approach for City staff, developers, or contractors to follow when planning, designing, constructing, establishing, maintaining, or monitoring naturalized green spaces. This has led to knowledge gaps, insufficient resourcing, inconsistent Levels of Service, and unmanaged or under-managed sites.

While the City's Parks Department does operate a Naturalized Parks Program, the program does not currently address the full scope of parks, green spaces, and storm ponds that are (or could be) naturalized, and it does not currently have resourcing to take on additional management or sites. Improving processes to broadly support naturalization could improve the state of existing naturalized areas and provide guidance - from project planning to maintenance - when establishing new naturalized areas or bringing new sites under City management.

On the Ground Projects: Natural area restoration projects and naturalization enhancements require different design, construction, and maintenance approaches than conventional park upgrades and landscaping. Restoration and enhancements of sites will increase service provision, maximize public benefits, and reduce operational costs over the long-term. Building the City's experience through on-the-ground projects will also build capacity, skills, knowledge, and a deeper understanding of how to improve the City's processes, specifications, and policies for natural and naturalized sites.

Community Stewardship: The City receives requests from residents, community organizations, user groups, and schools to plant and maintain City-owned land such as parks, natural areas, naturalized parks, and informal green spaces. However, these fall outside of the City's existing programs and, as such, cannot always be accommodated. Formalizing the City's approach to stewardship programs will provide guidance for staff and community members to follow and better enable public participation in caring for our green network. This will also help to enable volunteer organizations to take on a stewardship role in cases where the City does not have a level of service.

Nature-friendly Initiatives: Embedding standards into development processes such as bird-friendly buildings and dark-sky compliant lighting can support wildlife habitat and connectivity outside of natural and naturalized areas and reduce ecosystem stress. Stakeholders have requested that the City progress this type of work on multiple occasions, but no dedicated resourcing has been received to progress this work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding required to deliver the Portfolios is estimated at \$3 million in 2026 and \$3 million in 2027. A submission will be included as part of the 2026/2027 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Deliberations under Capital Project P.10093, Natural Area Protection.

External Funding Opportunities:

Capital funding can be used to leverage external grants, which often have a matching requirement for the City and funder to split costs. Over the years, there have been increasingly more external funding opportunities to support environmental initiatives, natural infrastructure, climate adaptation, tree planting, and infrastructure improvements for which the Natural Areas Portfolio and Naturalization Portfolio are well suited. External funding opportunities will be explored should funding for the Portfolios be approved.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications:

See Appendix 2 – Benefits of and Risks to Natural and Naturalized Areas.

Asset Management:

This work is being coordinated with the Corporate Asset Management reporting approach. Natural assets will be included in a “State of Report” which will come forward later this year.

NEXT STEPS

If funding is approved through the 2026/2027 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Deliberations, work will commence in 2026 to support the deliverables outlined in this report.

APPENDICES

1. Engagement Summary
2. Benefits of and Risks to Natural and Naturalized Areas

Report Approval

Written by:	Jessie Best, Project Manager (Green Network) Shannon Dyck, Sustainability Specialist (Green Network)
Reviewed by:	Twyla Yobb, Environmental Protection Manager Gabriella James, Senior Financial Business Partner Jeanna South, Director of Sustainability Thai Hoang, Director of Parks
Approved by:	Angela Gardiner, General Manager, Utilities and Environment

Admin Report - Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan.docx

Engagement Summary

NATURAL AREAS ENGAGEMENT

From June 2021 to February 2022, Administration engaged with the community on development of [Green Pathways](#). The [Final Engagement Report](#) found that, overall, the community strongly supports (>80%) of all Green Pathways initiatives, with the strongest support received for Pathway 1: Healthy and Thriving Natural Areas (96%).

Respondents also provided the following comments related to natural areas:

- Protect natural areas in new neighbourhoods and decide on the level of protection that is needed.
- Continue to partner with Meewasin to conserve natural areas and natural storm water management.
- The City should be more aggressive in conserving green spaces through new policies and regulations.
- Revitalize green spaces along major roadways and within ditches.
- Unused areas, such as freeway rights-of-way, should be converted to naturalized spaces with native species to help reduce the cost of maintenance.
- Naturalize areas around stormwater ponds instead of using mowed vegetation and rocks.
- Educate homeowners bordering naturalized spaces.
- Improve current green spaces prior to any further expansion since this infrastructure already exists within our city and may become neglected.
- Existing natural areas should be maintained better.
- Build natural playgrounds and naturalize areas around playgrounds.
- Maintain connections between green spaces.
- Increase funding dedicated to the protection of natural areas.
- Incorporate Indigenous perspectives into natural area management plans (the work should be led by Indigenous community members).
- Balance neighbourhood usability with naturalization.
- Balance density targets and the protection of natural areas within new development areas.
- Clearly communicate the public use of green spaces and their potential value to the community to developers.
- Include environmental considerations/requirements of a site at the onset of neighbourhood planning to support efficient planning.
- Apply smart growth principles and efficiently design neighbourhoods to properly mitigate environmental impacts, improve the efficiency of infrastructure, and minimize the tax burden on future residents.

NATURALIZED AREAS ENGAGEMENT

The Green Pathways [Final Engagement Report](#) found that Pathway 2: Connecting and Regenerating Green Spaces received 92% support from respondents, and respondents ranked “Naturalize: use more native species in parks, storm ponds, and City landscaping” as the top priority within Pathway 2.

Respondents also provided the following comments related to naturalization:

- Respondents indicated there is a need to balance neighbourhood usability with naturalization.
- Some respondents suggested revitalizing green spaces along major roadways and within ditches, which are viewed as barren or wasted spaces; some respondents commended the City for naturalizing unused spaces.
- It was proposed that areas around stormwater ponds need to be naturalized instead of using mowed vegetation and rocks.
- Some respondents requested education to homeowners bordering naturalized spaces.
- Numerous respondents suggested that improving on current green spaces should be done prior to any further expansion since this infrastructure already exists within our city and they may become neglected; they also recommended existing natural areas should be maintained better and unused areas, such as freeway rights-of-way, should be converted to naturalized spaces with native species which may reduce the cost of maintenance.
- It was proposed that natural playgrounds / naturalizing areas around playgrounds be explored.

Additionally, public engagement was conducted from February 2020 to June 2021 seeking feedback on initiatives to improve water conservation. The [Final Engagement Report](#) found that “Increase naturalized areas in parks” received 88% support and was ranked as one of the top five priorities by the community. Comments related to naturalization are summarized below:

- There is strong support for more naturalized parks consisting of native plants
- More nature is always better
- [The City] should focus on new parks rather than pre-existing
- [The City] should still provide areas for families to use freely
- Parks should not get weedy though

Benefits of and Risks to Natural and Naturalized Areas

BENEFITS

Natural and naturalized areas provide multiple benefits, such as:

Economic: natural and naturalized areas provide [millions of dollars annually](#) in essential municipal services such as storm water management, drinking water provision, and carbon storage; attract tourism; create jobs (e.g., landscaping, construction, design); and reduce operational costs through lower maintenance and the use of fewer resources than conventional landscaping and infrastructure.

Social and cultural: create opportunities for recreation, physical activity, education, community and cultural activities, and ceremony.

Health and safety: support storm water management, flood protection, erosion control, shade/cooling, and food production, as well as mitigate community and infrastructure risks due to extreme climate events.

Environmental: provide wildlife habitat, support biodiversity, increase climate resiliency, sequester carbon, and enhance air, water and soil quality.

RISKS

While the benefits of the green network are substantial, there are multiple gaps in and risks to the green network, as well as threats to its integrity. These challenges compromise the ability of natural and naturalized areas to deliver services and benefits.

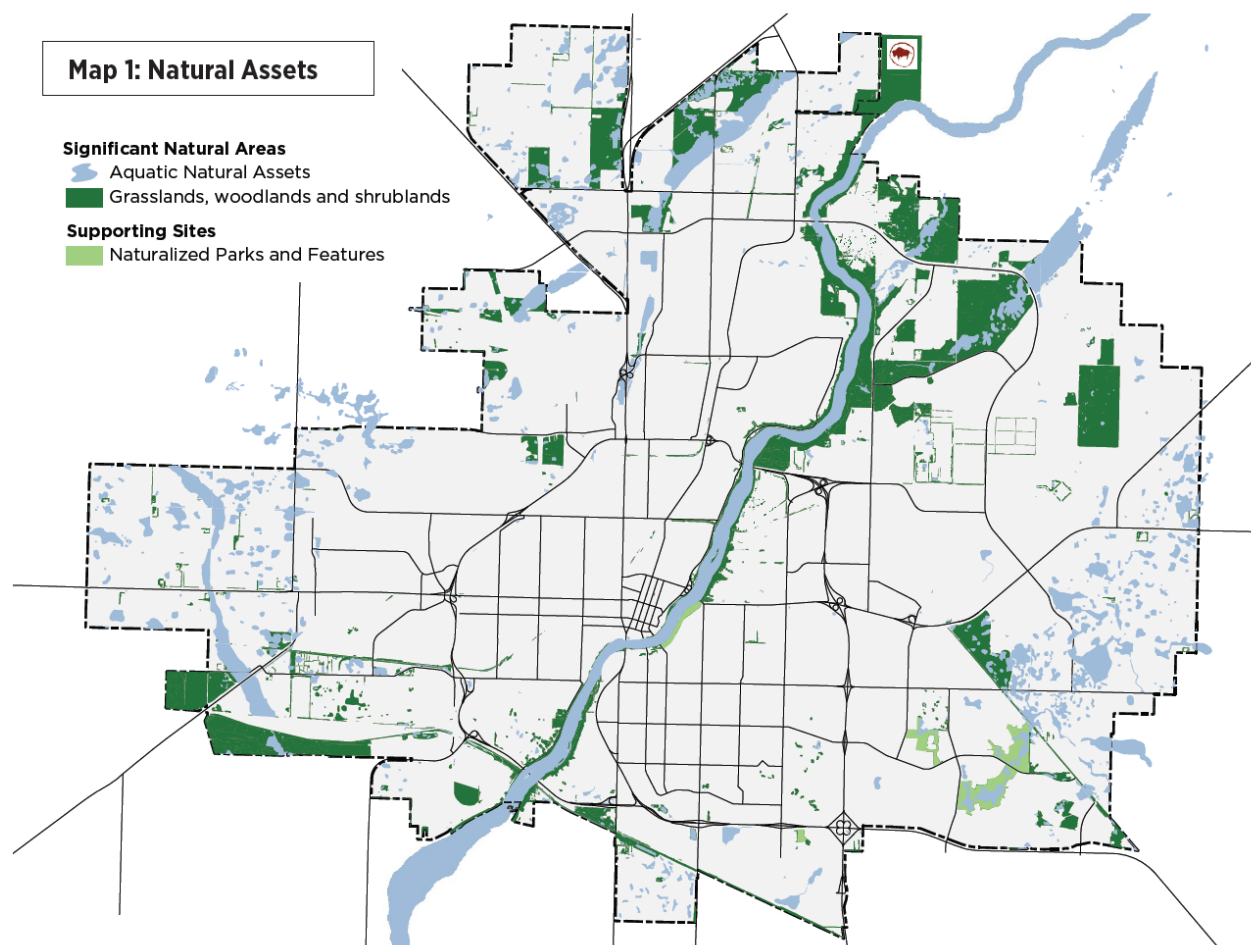
The risks and gaps described below are identified across a range of reports including the City's [Climate Projections and Possible Impacts](#), Meewasin's [Valley-wide Resource Management Plan](#), Municipal Natural Asset Initiative's report *Toward Natural Asset Management in the City of Saskatoon*, and various City asset management plans. Common threats are identified across these reports, several of which can interact, further compounding the issues.

Climate Change: Climate change is anticipated to lead to a warmer, wetter, and wilder weather in Saskatoon. Specific risks to natural and naturalized areas include:

- damage from storms, wind, drought, heat, fluctuating temperatures, and flooding;
- increased pests and diseases;
- invasive species and weeds; and
- biodiversity and species loss.

Equity and Accessibility Gaps: Natural and naturalized areas are not distributed evenly throughout Saskatoon, with limited access in some neighbourhoods.

Figure 1: Natural Assets Map: The Green Infrastructure Strategy



Limited access to nature and opportunities for Indigenous land stewardship have also been identified as barriers through conversations and gatherings with Indigenous communities.

Biodiversity Loss: Saskatoon is home to over 500 unique species, including 70 rare or endangered species. These species are predominantly found in natural and naturalized areas. Threats to biodiversity such as invasive species, urban development, fire suppression, and over-use of or incompatible uses in natural and naturalized areas are compounded by climate change.

Fragmentation: Forming an interconnected green network while balancing urban development is a significant design challenge. Fragmentation due to multiple land uses (e.g. roadways, buildings, and other infrastructure) can reduce the function and benefits of natural and naturalized areas.

Increased Use: As Saskatoon's population grows, more residents are accessing public green spaces and, in some cases, usage is higher than an area has capacity for. This risk was highlighted during COVID-19, which resulted in a 60% increase in trail use and natural area visits. In some cases, the distribution of green space throughout the city, or the availability of design elements such as trails, is insufficient for our population.

Degradation: The community continues to express interest in well-maintained green spaces; however, multiple natural and naturalized sites in Saskatoon are degraded, un- or under-managed, and/or are not maintained for optimal community or habitat benefits. Spaces in poor condition also often attract inappropriate site uses such as illegal dumping.

Overland Flooding: Saskatoon is part of the prairie pothole region, with over 1,200 hectares of wetlands identified within current City limits. Analysis of historic air photos indicates that many areas of the city prone to overland flooding were historically part of large wetland complexes that have since been removed or filled. This demonstrates that the loss of wetlands can have an adverse impact on local drainage patterns, and that conservation of natural assets can prevent costs or damage to other infrastructure.

Insufficient Establishment Periods: Restoration work in natural areas and installation of naturalized landscaping requires a longer establishment period than conventional landscaping. Landscaping contracts typically only require 1-2 years of site maintenance post-installation; however, it could take 5-10 years for native plants to successfully establish and for weed growth and spread to be reduced to levels that can be managed through regular maintenance.

Water Demands: Two thirds of the City's own water use is used outdoors in the summer, the majority for park irrigation. Parks has been exceeding its irrigation budget year-after-year; however, transitioning irrigated turf to unirrigated naturalized plantings can help address these operational risks.

Insufficient Funding: Well-established natural and naturalized areas can require fewer operational resources to maintain than convention landscaping. However, adequate resourcing is still required for conservation, restoration, and maintenance activities. Underfunded operational programs (Naturalized Park Program) and capital programs (Park Upgrades Program) have made it difficult to maintain and improve the assets the City already has, let alone expand upon the City's efforts through additional Naturalization Portfolio deliverables. Deliverables of the City's Natural Area Portfolio are also currently only resourced through limited capital funding. An additional risk is that, without funding in place, the City may not be eligible to apply for external funding.

Subject: Request to Speak - Jan Shadick - Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Saturday, May 31, 2025 8:24 AM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

Subject: Request to Speak - Jan Shadick - Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Saturday, May 31, 2025 - 08:01

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

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, May 31, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Jan

Last Name: Shadick

Phone Number : [306](tel:306) [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Temperance St

Ward: Ward 6

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation

What do you wish to do ?: Request to Speak

If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely: In person

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, UTILITIES AND CORPORATE SERVICES

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 6.3.2 Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan [EUCS2025-0603]

Comments:

6.3.2

Natural and Naturalized Areas Portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan [EUCS2025-0603]

Nature-Friendly Initiatives: Explore opportunities to progress nature-friendly initiatives such as Bird-Friendly measures, Dark Sky guidelines, and wildlife monitoring initiatives.

With so many headline issues at this time, the importance and value of the natural world on human physical and mental health is often lost amongst the noise. This is exactly the problem. We are all overwhelmed by the tragedies and emergencies around us. Taking time for quiet; a walk in a park, listening to birds sing, watching nature in all it's beauty brings the world back into perspective.

We must invest in these natural areas as a balm for our souls; a medicine to combat the stress of daily life. Nature-friendly initiatives are not just for nature, they are for humans to remind us that we are part of this great planet and part of nature. Please fund Bird-friendly initiatives, Dark Sky guidelines and protection of wildlife for our sake. Their contribution to our ecosystem is vital for our survival. Saving birds and wildlife is not optional. So let's follow through on the wisdom of the Green Initiative 3.3.1 - among others.

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

Subject: 6.3.2 - Comments - Candace Savage - Natural and Naturalized Areas portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan
Attachments: Natural and Naturalized Areas Information Report.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 2:39 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Comments - Candace Savage - Natural and Naturalized Areas portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, June 2, 2025 - 14:27

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

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: Monday, June 02, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Candace

Last Name: Savage

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: 306 [REDACTED]

Phone Number : [306](tel:306) [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

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 Environment, Tuesday, June 3

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Re 6.3.2 Natural and Naturalized Areas portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

Comments:

Re 6.3.2 Natural and Naturalized Areas portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

Wild about Saskatoon is a grassroots group that “joyfully advocates for nature in beautiful Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.” In that spirit, we want to express our enthusiastic support for the urgent work that is outlined in this information report.

The importance of this portfolio is clearly defined in Appendix 2, which enumerates the economic, social, cultural, health and environmental benefits of investing in natural and naturalized areas. The report highlights the need to manage and protect these assets against the challenges of urban sprawl, climate change, biodiversity loss – and a history of insufficient funding.

When the City’s budget comes up for discussion this fall, we trust that you will ensure that this work is adequately resourced. At \$3 million per year, the proposed allocation constitutes just .2% of the City’s overall budget, a minimum commitment to maintaining and enhancing these vital assets.

More immediately -- there is a small but significant action that you could take today. While we are all waiting for the full package of Bird Friendly standards to be developed, migrating birds have been lost to window-strikes at City Hall. Collision-deterrent film is not expensive. Isn’t this something that could be fixed before the birds fly south in the fall?

Joanne Blythe
Andrea Schmidt
Candace Savage
for Wild about Saskatoon

Attachments:

- [Natural and Naturalized Areas Information Report.pdf](#)92.43 KB

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



June 2, 2025

Re 6.3.2 Natural and Naturalized Areas portfolios: 2026-27 Capital Project Plan

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Joanne Blythe
Andrea Schmidt
Candace Savage

Wild about Saskatoon



Welcome Week 2025 Proposal & Budget Sheet

Event: Welcome Week 2025

Date: September 2025

Location: The University of Saskatchewan

Organized by: City of Saskatoon's Environmental Advisory Committee

Contact: Manvi Ghai, Angela Spence, Ian Judd-Henrey

Proposal

Welcome Week is an essential annual event designed to foster community engagement, student involvement, and a sense of belonging among new and returning students. For September 2025, our booth will focus on environmental city initiatives and opportunities, showcasing ways students can actively contribute to a greener, more sustainable community.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness about local environmental challenges and solutions.
- Highlight opportunities for students to get involved in city-wide sustainability projects.
- Foster connections between students, local organizations, and environmental leaders.
- Encourage eco-friendly habits and practices among the student body.

Planned Activities:

- An interactive booth showcasing Saskatoon's environmental programs (e.g., waste reduction, public transit, urban forestry).
 - Displays and handouts on how students can reduce their carbon footprint.
 - Sign-ups for volunteering opportunities with local environmental groups.
 - Fun games and quizzes about sustainability (e.g., spin-the-wheel for eco facts).
 - Posters and signage promoting green initiatives, recycling programs, and climate action events in the city.
 - Swag items like reusable bags, water bottles, and plantable seed cards to encourage sustainable habits.
-

Budget Breakdown

Item	Details	Estimated Cost
Table Booking	Table cost by the USSU	\$200
Posters & Pamphlets	For event promotion and wayfinding.	\$50
Swag	e.g., stickers, pens, tote bags, seed bags.	\$100
Games	Interactive activities, prizes, decorations.	\$20
Social Media Promotion	Instagram and Facebook	\$50
Total		\$420

SASKATOON ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 2025 BUDGET - \$7,800.00								
DATE	NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE	GL	TOTAL SPENT	BUDGET REMAINING
		Beginning Balance						\$7,800.00
March 21, 2025		Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan	\$2,000.00				\$2,000.00	\$5,800.00

2024 Budget		
Instagram Post		\$6.29
Instagram Post		\$11.55
Instagram Post		\$4.99
Instagram Post		\$0.24
Instagram Post		\$1.00
Saskatoon Public Schools		\$3,360.00
SOS Trees Soalition		4,000.00
2024 Total		\$7,384.07

2024 Actuals		\$7,384.07
2024 Budget		\$7,800.00
2024 Variance		-\$415.93