

University Sector Plan - Update

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Plan identifies a long-term vision of increased infill development as a means to achieve the Strategic Goal of Sustainable Growth. The City's Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan) and Official Community Plan (OCP) identify strategic infill areas as high-priority areas for large scale development in Saskatoon's established neighbourhoods. The University of Saskatchewan (University) has designated its endowment lands for strategic infill growth, aligning with the City's vision for infill growth and making these areas the most significant component of the City's identified strategic infill areas.

The University Sector Plan responds to objectives of the Growth Plan and the direction included in the Strategic Plan by outlining the development framework for future growth within the University endowment lands. Upon completion, the University Sector Plan will include a comprehensive report that outlines high-level strategies for land use and development, green space(s), utilities and servicing, transportation and a development phasing plan.

This report provides an update regarding the University Sector Plan, an overview of work completed to date and next steps before the final University Sector Plan report is brought forward.

BACKGROUND

On February 27, 2018, the University and the City signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of strategically increasing collaboration between these two organizations. Land development was identified as an area of collaboration through the MOU, including work related to the City's Growth Plan, such as strategic infill development.

The City and the University have been working together, in partnership, to develop the University Sector Plan. Intent of the University Sector Plan is to provide sufficient direction on high-level strategies such that subject lands are development ready, subject to preparation of further detailed area concept plans led by the landowner(s).

Sector Plans serve as a development framework for future growth and are based on policies contained within Bylaw No. 8769, Official Community Plan. *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, requires sector plans and any amendments be approved by City Council.

CURRENT STATUS

The University completed the study entitled Vision 2057: University Land Use Planning (Vision 2057). The Vision 2057 report outlines a range of potential uses for the University's endowment lands. Vision 2057 has not been endorsed administratively or adopted by City Council as a vision for the city's growth in this area.

From 2018 to present, the City and the University have worked together, in partnership, developing the University Sector Plan. The direction of the University Sector Plan has been informed by the land use plan set out in Vision 2057. Special policies and considerations are expected to be proposed to address the unique ownership, authority and urban location of the University Sector Plan lands (see Appendix 1 for the location plan).

An overview of what is expected to be included in University Sector Plan report is noted below.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Land Use Planning Principles

The vision and objectives for the University Sector Plan will describe aspirations of the City, the University, their partners and stakeholders involved in the process of developing the University Sector Plan. The vision for the University Sector Plan will be achieved through the embodiment of the following land use principles:

1. Recognize that University lands are a long-term strategic and economic asset to be retained and leveraged to support the University's mission.
2. Promote an inclusive process that supports design excellence and reflects Indigenous places and spaces.
3. Embody environmental sustainability in land infrastructure, open space and building development.
4. Support sustainable community development including mixed use, transit supportive development.

Land Use

The Growth Plan and Vision 2057 both outlined a population target of approximately 50,000 people within the University Sector Plan area, at full build-out. This target represents a higher planned density level than any other neighbourhood or area within the city. To help achieve this, the land use plan will provide an overall approach to strategically locating higher density land uses to ensure expected land uses complement one another and interface appropriately with surrounding areas.

Strategic locations for high and medium mixed-use and residential density land uses have been identified along Corridor Growth Areas which align with the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, as outlined in Appendix 2. To ensure development is consistent with established communities, specific areas within the University Sector Plan adjacent to established neighbourhoods are proposed to be identified as transition areas, in order to complement and integrate the existing building form and character of the community.

Green Space & Heritage

A natural area screening was completed as part of the University Sector Plan process. The natural area screening identified a number of sensitive areas within the Sector Plan area. Sensitive areas are where further field studies will be required as part of the development of area concept plans. This will ensure that sensitive plants and wildlife habitat can be identified and wetland quality can be determined through functional assessments. As this area falls within their jurisdiction, further consultation will occur with Meewasin to identify which specific areas should be protected.

The University Sector Plan will outline Municipal Reserve requirements, as well as requirements regarding heritage sensitivity. There are a number of heritage sensitive areas throughout the University Sector Plan. These are primarily concentrated along the South Saskatchewan River, as shown in Appendix 3. In consultation with technical experts and stakeholders, the University Sector Plan will outline how these heritage resources should be incorporated within future development.

Utilities and Servicing

The University Sector Plan will outline requirements intended to ensure the development area is fully serviced by utilities, water services, sanitary services and stormwater management facilities. Based on population targets for this area, major upgrades and new infrastructure will be required to ensure an appropriate service level for new development is established and service level for existing development is maintained.

Requirements pertaining to existing utilities will be outlined within the University Sector Plan. This includes design parameters for development within clearance areas for underground and overhead utility lines. Options for relocating utilities will also be outlined within the University Sector Plan to ensure clarity is provided to the future developer(s) of the subject land.

Mobility and Transportation

This section of the University Sector Plan Report will outline requirements regarding mobility, including those intended to facilitate use of active transportation and those intended to ensure transit and the street network function efficiently. Increased density, the central location and a focus on a high quality public realm is expected to facilitate increased use of active transportation in this area. Similarly, planned higher density development will complement and support long-term success of the planned BRT system.

Upgrades will be required to the street network ranging from various low cost improvements to the construction of new major infrastructure. The Plan's transportation strategy will outline general parameters required to ensure the existing street network continues to function efficiently, while accommodating the increased mobility needs resulting from the new development.

Phasing

Required water, sanitary, stormwater and transportation infrastructure upgrades will inform the phasing sequence for the University Sector Plan. Based on preliminary analysis, development is most likely to proceed in a south to north direction, as shown in Appendix 4.

The phasing plan in a Sector Plan defines the development sequence for future area concept plans. Development of the University Sector Plan area will require a number of future area concept plans and will result in multiple new neighbourhoods. Further phasing sequences of each specific area will be included within each respective area concept plans.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The University Sector Plan is the first Sector Plan that has been developed in partnership with an external institution. As such, it will act as a joint document between the University and the City and requires endorsement from both organizations. The final University Sector Plan Report will be presented for consideration to both City Council and the University Board of Governors.

Further implications will be contained within the final University Sector Plan Report.

NEXT STEPS

The majority of information gathering, and technical expertise needed to fulfill the strategies for the University Sector Plan have been completed. The University Sector Plan Report is currently being drafted and is expected to be ready for review in early 2020.

The review process will include circulation to internal divisions, external agencies, identified stakeholders, input from the surrounding community and a public open house. This process is expected to take place throughout Q1 and Q2 of 2020, with final presentation to committees, the University Board of Governors, followed by City Council in Q2 of 2020.

APPENDICES

1. Location Plan
2. Corridor Growth Areas & Proposed Transition Areas
3. Heritage Resources & Sensitive Areas
4. Proposed Phasing Sequence

REPORT APPROVAL

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