

New Meewasin Master Agreement – Key Terms and Conditions

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to present an overview on the proposed terms of a new Master Agreement with Meewasin, and to bring forward a new Master Agreement, which will be signed by both parties. The report includes information on the key terms and conditions that will be incorporated into the new Master Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION

That a report be submitted to City Council recommending:

- 1) That the proposed terms of the new Master Agreement between Meewasin and the City of Saskatoon, as outlined in this report, be approved; and
- 2) That the Solicitor's Office be authorized to prepare the appropriate agreement for the Master Agreement; and that His Worship the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement under the Corporate Seal.

BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon (City) and Meewasin conduct many projects and initiatives with an aligned vision and purpose. The City has had an agreement with Meewasin since 1982 (last amended in 2017); this agreement is primarily focused on facility (trail and amenity) maintenance. While the current agreement has served both parties well, it has become apparent that a new approach would provide increased benefits.

In mid-2019, it was mutually decided that a new Master Agreement (Agreement) with an expanded scope and focus would further help improve the relationship, communication, and performance between the two organizations, with the ultimate goal of improving quality of life and benefits to the community.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The purpose of a new Agreement is to strengthen communication, innovation, role clarity, and collaboration between the parties by identifying mutually beneficial projects through a joint steering committee and its subcommittees. Beginning in September 2019, a series of sessions were held between the Meewasin Management Team and relevant senior staff of the City to discuss:

- a) Areas of intersection and differentiation between the two parties;
- b) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the current City-Meewasin relationship;
- c) Creation of strategies and improvements for the relationship based on the highest ranking SWOT; and
- d) An appropriate framework and content for a new Agreement based on the above.

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Values and Guiding Principles

During development of the new Agreement framework, it was agreed that values and guiding principles specific to the City-Meewasin relationship should form the foundation of the Agreement. These will help ensure longevity, shared vision, and a sense of purpose as the sub-committees begin their work:

Value 1: Working Together

Guiding Principle: We work together in a complementary way that reinforces each other's strengths, and increases the efficiency of our collective work.

Value 2: Meaningful Engagement

Guiding Principle: We engage in a meaningful, transparent, and coordinated way with each other, residents, and other stakeholders to improve quality of life and achieve value.

Value 3: Collaborative Planning and Communication

Guiding Principle: To achieve our shared vision, we plan ahead together by maintaining collaborative planning processes and consistent communication.

Value 4: Innovation

Guiding Principle: We will be flexible, nimble, adaptive, and willing to explore new ideas in order to meet the changing expectations of the community.

Value 5: Healthy Natural Areas

Guiding Principle: Together, we will work to improve the social, economic, and environmental health of the river valley corridor, and connected green network to provide a more resilient, healthy community for residents and visitors.

Key Terms of the New Agreement

The new Agreement will provide an overview of the foundational principles and key terms each party will follow; there will be one master Agreement to include key terms and be signed by both parties. The key terms and conditions of the Agreement include:

- a) That it will be managed by a steering committee, comprised of representatives from each of the parties. The steering committee maintains a strategic leadership role, advocating the principles of the Agreement and overseeing joint policy and projects for Meewasin and the City. To meet a minimum of one time per year.
- b) Sub-committees shall be created and governed by the steering committee, have oversight of operational, project, and initiative-specific matters as delegated by the steering committee, and will be made up of representatives from the City, Meewasin, and external organizations, if applicable.

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- c) A focus on collaboration, each sub-committee will be responsible for developing their own projects and directly related initiatives by following the Guiding Principles outlined in the Agreement.
- d) Mechanisms for privacy, dispute resolution and mediation, confidentiality, termination, and indemnification.
- e) A requirement to review the Agreement a minimum of every four years.
- f) Provisions to have other agreements in place for specific facilities, infrastructure, initiatives, and programs; the Agreement will act as a framework for cooperation.

Proposed Sub-Committee Structure and Purpose

The sub-committees of the steering committee are crucial to a strengthened relationship going forward. Specifically, the sub-committees will:

- a) Have oversight of operational, project, and initiative-specific matters;
- b) Create, manage, implement, and execute projects and initiatives in line with their purpose and scope;
- c) Operate in accordance with the objectives, intent, and guiding principles of the Agreement; and
- d) Raise issues, initiate discussions, and make suggestions for improvements to ensure shared objectives are advanced and completed in line with the Guiding Principles.

Subject to change and finalization by the steering committee, the proposed sub-committees are:

- a) Education, Experiences, and Engagement (includes tourism, events, amenity and trail development, and internal communications process improvements);
- b) Research (includes conservation, research partnerships, and sustainability);
- c) Planning and Resourcing (including long-range planning, asset management, and shared procurement); and
- d) Safety, Enforcement, and Enjoyment (includes safety recommendations, enforcement, policies, regulation development, and river Access studies).

Sub-committees will have a well-defined scope and purpose, a regular meeting schedule, and appropriate representation from both the City and Meewasin.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, financial, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

As of the writing of this report, a similar report was also prepared for the Meewasin Board of Directors, for consideration and approval, at their meeting on August 14, 2020.

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NEXT STEPS

Pending approval by Committee and Council, the Solicitor's Office would then prepare the new Master Agreement, and arrange for signing by both parties. Following this, the next steps would include establishment of the steering committee, finalization of the sub-committees, and initiation of existing and upcoming projects and initiatives through the new framework.

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Konrad Andre, Performance Improvement Coordinator, Parks
Reviewed by: Andrew Glum, Solicitor, City Solicitor's Office
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Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services
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