



February 22, 2021

City Council
City of Saskatoon
222 3rd Ave North
Saskatoon SK, S7K 0J5

RE: Agenda item: 6.1.1 The Knox United Church Heritage Designation Amendment Bylaw, 2021

Dear Council,

The Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association represents the professional sector of home building, which, as you know means we advocate for a strong and varied housing continuum. There are many topics of interest for our sector in today's Council meeting – thank you for your patience as we comment on a few of them.

A pillar of any successful city is a varied offering of housing, which also attracts business investment. Employment and population growth lead to an increased tax base. All that development makes up a sort of ecosystem, and **an ecosystem's health is much larger than what we find in our individual backyards.**

A growing tax base should become a key performance indicator of municipalities looking to compete in the modern post-covid economy. Municipalities often struggle to offer all the services that residents want and need, which can lead to continual tax increases. Ensuring our ecosystem is healthy is a far better way of building our resilience.

In recent years, our city has experienced significant pushback for several outstanding infill growth opportunities. We need a strengthened consultation process which will focus on more than our backyards.

We want to be that city. That city that people flock to for opportunities, great schools, a vibrant downtown, jobs and housing options for people of all backgrounds. That city that is growing, inclusive, neighbourly. But we should be honest with ourselves. In recent years, we as a city have not been all that kind or welcoming to growth.

Saskatoon is planning to grow to half a million in population in the next 25-30 years. There is a fine balance between greenfield and infill growth – I do not begin to understand the balance you weigh every time you make such decisions. But let's remember, eventually **all** neighborhoods become established and have the opportunity for redevelopment and infill presented within it. All neighborhoods will eventually have growth "in their backyard", **contributing to a healthier municipal ecosystem.** And most importantly, **we all** at one point were the new people moving into a neighborhood and wondered how we would be welcomed.

The project before you today will enhance our City's ecosystem: it will add choice to our housing continuum, increase our tax base, maximize our efficiency in infrastructure and at the end of the day, it's simply smart growth. This is not about taste and character. This is about growth and welcoming new people to our city. Let's make sure we do that well.

Now more than ever, we need to make sure we are doing everything we can, both as policy makers and as residents, to welcome renewal and development. We need to be saying yes to Saskatoon a lot more than we are, and set our sights much farther than our individual backyards.

I hope Council moves ahead with the approval so we can see more smart growth in our City.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Guérette
CEO