

# Platinum Certification – World Council on Cities Data Pilot Project

## ISSUE

Where possible, the City of Saskatoon (the City) utilizes data to make budgetary, policy, program, and service delivery decisions. It also uses data to measure performance and to compare itself to other cities. However, obtaining, verifiable, standardized data on various measures can be challenging. As a result, the City is participating in a Government of Canada sponsored pilot project to assist it to obtain and use robust, comparable, and independently verified municipal data.

## BACKGROUND

In 2019, the City was approached by the World Council on Cities Data (WCCD) to participate in the Data for Canadian Cities Pilot Project. The project is a three-year initiative that enables the WCCD to work with 15 Canadian cities (and municipalities) to collect a globally standardized data set that measures the quality of life and service delivery in cities. The project is sponsored by the Government of Canada, through the Department of Infrastructure and Communities.

In early 2020, the City entered into a three-year agreement with the WCCD officially supporting the City's participation in the pilot project. Subsequently, the Administration compiled and submitted the required data for the year-one intake for the project. As a result, the WCCD notified the City that it had met the data requirements for the project. The WCCD also informed the City that it is receiving a "Platinum Certification" for the quality of the data.

## CURRENT STATUS

The Administration successfully completed the year-one data collection and submission process for the pilot project, so WCCD will officially award the City with a Platinum Certification. A Platinum Certification is the highest level of certification that can be achieved. In the next couple of months, the Administration will collect and submit data for year two of the project.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The WCCD (<https://www.dataforcities.org/>) is a Toronto-based not-for-profit organization founded in 2014. It exists to help communities of all sizes – in Canada and across the globe – to embrace standardized, independently verified, and globally comparable city data to become more sustainable, resilient, prosperous, inclusive, and smart.

To support the pilot project, the Government of Canada has approved \$3 million in funding for the WCCD to work with 15 municipalities across Canada to help them become certified under ISO 37120, the first international standard for city data. The participating cities and municipalities in the pilot project are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1:

**THE DATA FOR CANADIAN CITIES PROJECT – PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES**

Fifteen new Canadian municipalities participating in the Data for Canadian Cities Project join established WCCD member cities to create a cohort of thirty WCCD-certified Canadian cities. Graphs in this document showcase cities in this cohort as well as appropriate global peers. Peer cities are selected on the basis of various criteria, including for example population size, density, economic profile, demographic makeup and location.



In terms of the data standard, ISO 37120 is a globally standardized data set that measures quality of life and delivery of municipal services. Since its creation, the WCCD has been working with 100 cities worldwide to help them adopt the standard, the first international standard for city data.

More specifically, the standard includes 104 indicators across 19 themes and standardizes a set of city services and quality of life for citizens. The ISO 37120 standard provides cities with quantitative, globally comparable, and independently verified local-level data enabling any city, of any size, to measure and compare its social, economic, and environmental progress internally year-over-year, and also in relation to other peer cities locally and globally. A list of these indicators is provided in Appendix 1.

The indicators listed in Appendix 1 may help to supply the City with more benchmark data to help it achieve its strategic goals and City Council priorities. It may also help to better measure outcomes with respect to economic, environmental, and social sustainability as acknowledged in City Council's Triple Bottom Line Sustainability Policy.<sup>1</sup>

To that end, Appendix 2, as compiled by WCCD, compares Saskatoon with respect to several Canadian and global cities on a subset of indicators. This shows that Saskatoon scores very well in many areas with respect to peer cities. Saskatoon's performance with respect to all indicators will be shared on a data portal (<https://www.dataforcities.org/data-portal>) at a future date.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-clerk/civic-policies/C08-001.pdf>

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As noted in the previous section, the Government of Canada allocated \$3 million to the WCCD to support the pilot project. The cost to join the project for each city is \$33,000, or \$11,000 per year. Government of Canada funding pays for the first two years of the project, while the participating city pays for the final year. Thus, the direct financial cost to the City is \$11,000. The funding is covered within existing budgets.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Administration, led by the Strategy and Transformation Division, is in the data collection process for year two of the project (2019 data). In years two and three of the project, the focus is placed on assisting the City in using the data to potentially improve city services and the quality of life for citizens. The data may also help to inform priorities for the next iteration of the City's Strategic Plan and future budgetary or investment decisions.

Officials from the WCCD will acknowledge the City's first-year accomplishments by virtually presenting it with a Platinum Certification during Public Acknowledgements at the February 22, 2021, Regular Business Meeting of City Council.

## **APPENDICES**

1. ISO 37120: 2018 Sustainable cities and communities – Indicators for city services and quality of life
2. City of Saskatoon Data Driven Insights WCCD August 2020

### Report Approval

Written by: Mike Jordan, Chief Public Policy and Government Relations Officer  
Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

Admin Report - Platinum Certification – World Council on Cities Data Pilot Project.docx