

WALKWAY POLICIES AND PROGRAMS OPTIONS

To address maintenance, graffiti, vandalism, crime and enhance the overall feeling of safety in our neighbourhoods, a collaborative approach was undertaken with representatives from the following groups:

- Transportation and Construction
- Community Services
- Saskatoon Police Service
- Public Engagement
- Saskatoon Light and Power

Several ways to improve the safety and perception of safety in walkways were discussed. The main themes discussed include:

1. Illumination
2. Graffiti Removal
3. Community Association Support
4. Crime Reporting Support
5. Walkway Evaluation and Closure Policy
6. Other Considerations

The current practice for each of these items was assessed for its effectiveness and then options to modify, change or expand on the current practices were explored. A summary of each of these options, their implications, and the recommendation is included below.

1. Illumination

Residents who have safety concerns with walkways often request illumination. Although lighting can be effective for some situations, lighting is only effective if there are eyes on the lit space. Lighting can be problematic because it can be a draw for some criminal activities, such as drug use, and unintended impacts on surrounding residents.

Current Practices

The City currently explores illumination to address concerns in walkways that cannot be closed due to the walkway being a pedestrian connection route or major opposition from the community. Lighting is only considered if it will effectively address the issues of concern. The specific circumstances in which lighting may be explored are:

- The walkway is directly connected to a school or a Suburban Centre Commercial area;
- The walkway is a direct commuter route through the City, as defined by Transportation; or,
- The walkway is identified as a unique space due to:
 - Destinations on each end;
 - High evening use; and
 - Low incidents of crime.

When the City installs pole top lights, timers are also installed so that the walkway is not lit overnight. This policy has been effective since lighting is not always the best solution to address perceptions of safety.

Options

Several changes to the existing practice for illumination in walkways were considered.

- A. **Temporary Lighting** – A temporary light on a trailer would be installed on a temporary basis to determine whether illumination will effectively resolve the concerns by changing the behaviour. Potential power sources for temporary lighting include solar and generators.
- B. **Bollard Lighting** – Lights installed on the bollards would be installed at the entrances of the walkway.
- C. **Pole Top Lighting** – A light installed on a pole would be installed either midway through the walkways or at the entrances of the walkways.
- D. **Motion Light** – A grant program would be introduced to provide motion-activated lights to property owners adjacent to walkways to install on their private property.

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Temporary Lighting	- Cheaper than installing a permanent light fixture - Allows assessment of the site to determine if lighting does what is intended	- Only a temporary solution - Generators are noisy - Solar is not dependable - Trailer is susceptible to damage and theft
Bollard Lighting	Can be decorative	- Lighting is not directed to the walkway - Susceptible to damage and vandalism - Can be costly to maintain and replace - No light directed above the waist of the walkway user so it can be difficult to distinguish facial features
Pole Top Lighting	Illumination from above allows people to identify faces	- Less susceptible to damage - Lights are energy efficient and dark sky compliant - Installed on timers so that the walkway is lit between dusk and park closure, not overnight
Motion Light Program	The property owners are responsible for installation and maintenance	- Creates loss of control for the City - Lighting would illuminate private property rather than the walkway - Could negatively affect neighbouring properties - Can result in vandalism against homeowners who have installed the light - Can result in reduced perception of safety – lighting is activated by motion; residents may become aware of additional walkway use throughout the night-time hours, even for legitimate activities - Lights may not be installed according to dark sky principles

Recommendation

Due to the effectiveness of the current policy, it is recommended that the current practice continues; in which lighting will only be considered under specific circumstances and only if it will effectively address the issues of concern. This is because lighting is only effective if there are eyes on the lit space and lighting can be a draw for some drug activities.

Of the light options investigated, it is recommended that pole top lighting with an appropriate power source be used in these circumstances. Pole top lighting is a permanent solution that is more difficult to damage than other options and allows the City to maintain control over the solution. The cost estimate for pole top lighting is \$7,000 per light.

2. Graffiti Vandalism Removal

The appearance that an area is well-maintained can improve the perception of safety for users of the space. The presence of graffiti vandalism can give the impression that the space is not well tended and can encourage illegitimate activities within the space. Prompt removal of graffiti vandalism in walkways can reinforce the message that this space is well-used and well-maintained and discourage further crime or mischief within the walkway.

Current Policy

A two-person crew goes out every spring to take pictures and notes of the graffiti into the Graffiti Tracker Program. If graffiti is on civic property, it is handled within 24 hours to 7 days. This practice only applies to graffiti removal on public property and utilities.

If the graffiti is on private property, it falls under the Bylaw 8175 - Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw. This bylaw is managed by the Fire Department who will notify the property owner and provide them with the Youth Works information.

To help with graffiti on public property, there is currently a Graffiti Grant program, which allows for up to \$5,000 annually to be used for graffiti removal or prevention efforts.

The Graffiti Vandalism Removal Toolkit Program is managed by Community Services. This program allows Community Associations to access Graffiti Vandalism Removal Toolkits to remove graffiti vandalism for outdoor community rinks. Toolkits include a tip sheet, paint buckets, rollers etc. The materials are not always returned; therefore, restocking poses a challenge. The cost for the kits was approximately \$200-\$250. This program is not sustainable. This program is only available to the Community Associations and not individual residents.

Options

- A. **Modification to the Graffiti Removal Policy** – On November 26, 2018 at the 2019 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget Meeting, a Graffiti Management Program and Service Level Report was presented to City Council. The recommendation from this review was that the current service level for graffiti management be maintained and approved.
- B. **Pro-actively Check for Graffiti Vandalism in Walkways** – Walkway maintenance crews would actively search for graffiti vandalism in walkways during their regular maintenance activities, and report it in the Graffiti Tracker, regardless of whether the graffiti vandalism is on private or public property.

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Modification to Graffiti Removal Policy	• Quicker response for graffiti vandalism removal on city property	• Does not address the problem of graffiti vandalism on private property
Pro-Active Approach	• Allow for tracking of graffiti and monitoring trends • Inexpensive	• Additional responsibility for crews • New equipment required to complete this in the field

Recommendation

To create a pro-active approach to addressing graffiti vandalism on civic property in walkways, it is recommended that the Roadways Crews review the walkways for graffiti vandalism as part of their regular maintenance program and report it via the Facilities' Graffiti Tracker. The estimated cost to provide this service is about \$1,000/year for the Road Maintenance Service Line for the purchase of tablets for the crews to take photos of the graffiti vandalism and submit the Graffiti Tracker form.

3. Community Association Support

Community Associations are important to our neighbourhoods. They deliver sport and recreation programs to residents and often act as the voice of the neighbourhood.

There are eight community consultants within the Community Services Division who assist the community associations in liaising with City Hall.

Current Practice

There are no current practices for providing support to Community Associations specific to walkway safety.

Options

- A. **Community Association Education and Awareness Communications Toolkit** – Develop a toolkit to assist Community Associations with improving community cohesion (several resources would be included to accommodate the

variety in Community Associations). Examples of resources that could be considered for the toolkit include the following:

- Resource guide
- Good neighbour booklet
- See something, say something
- Block party kits
- Block garage sale kits
- Work bee guide
- Community clean ups
- Communication pieces that could be used for various modes of communications (e.g. newsletter articles, social media posts, etc.)

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Community Association Toolkit	• Supports community cohesion • Tailored response based on community preferences / needs • Provides community consultants with additional information / resources to support the community associations.	• No room for storage if it is needed • Lack of tracking what residents/neighbourhoods actually do • Cost

Recommendation

To improve community cohesion within neighbourhoods, it is recommended that Community Services prepare a toolkit to provide additional support to the Community Associations. This allows Community Associations to use the tools that work best for their neighbourhood and the issue of concern. The costs for preparing the resources for the toolkit are to be confirmed, but a preliminary estimate is \$5,000.

4. Crime Reporting Support

Graffiti vandalism, mischief, and some theft crimes are often not reported to the Saskatoon Police Service because residents don't want to bother police, find the online forms cumbersome, believe that the police have more important things to do, or believe that the police can not do anything if the crime is not immediately occurring.

Current Practices

There is no current program for supporting residents with reporting crime.

Options

- A. Crime Reporting Support Material** –The support material will explain to residents that it is important to report past crimes to track trends in criminal

activity. Develop materials to distribute to residents and community associations to help highlight:

- why reporting crimes is important;
- how to report crimes;
- what information is needed to submit a report; and
- what Saskatoon Police Service does with the crime reports.

B. **Citizen Patrol** – This program is facilitated by the Saskatoon Police Service.

These patrols depend heavily on volunteers to provide a positive visible presence in their neighborhoods and serve as a deterrent to criminal activity.

C. **Expanded Community Watch Program** – Community Watch is a flexible crime prevention and crime interruption program that supports the partnering of the Saskatoon Police Service and the community in making our communities a safe place to live and work. Neighbourhoods with walkways could be encouraged to join the Community Watch program.

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Crime Reporting Support Material	• Encourages participation in crime prevention	• Residents may feel unsatisfied if there is no follow-up from a submitted crime report
Citizen or Park Patrol	• Increased presence in and around walkways can deter illegitimate activity • Positive results can increase sustainability of the program	• Experience shows that it is sometimes difficult to recruit volunteers, making the patrol potentially unsustainable in the long run
Community Watch	• Supports community cohesion • Encourages participation in crime prevention	• Depends largely on a commitment to cooperation between area residents and the police - and between residents themselves

Recommendation

It is recommended that Crime Reporting Support Materials be prepared and added to the Community Association Toolkit. The costs for preparing the Crime Reporting Support Materials will be covered by the Neighbourhood Safety program. Additional funds of \$5,000 for printing costs is required.

5. Walkway Evaluation and Closure Policy

The City's Walkway Evaluation and Closure policy shows who is responsible for walkway concerns and how they are handled. When walkways are closed, walking distances can become much farther to specific destination points such as commercial development sites, schools, community centres and bus stops.

Current Practice

The current policy is described in the Council Policy C07-017 Walkway Evaluation and Closure. All other options must be explored prior to closure, which include a CPTED review, removal of any sight obstructions, review of the adequacy of street lighting and the possible installation of posts or bollards.

After all these steps, closure will be considered if the following criteria is met:

1. At least one adjacent property owner is willing to purchase the land;
 - a. The land cost for each adjacent property owner acquiring land shall be \$2,000.
2. All fees and land costs are paid by the applicant(s) prior to a public hearing.
 - a. The application fee for each adjacent property owner shall be \$2,000.
3. Walkway applications must be received in writing and signed by all adjacent property owners indicating reasons for closure.

If a walkway meets the guidelines above, but the adjacent property owners are not willing to purchase the lane (at least one property owner per parcel), there will be a three-year waiting period for another application.

All costs over and above the application fees and land costs stated above will be paid by the City of Saskatoon except for the cost of utility relocations, which will be the responsibility of the applicants.

Walkways which serve as an essential connection or are serving as part of the storm water management system will not be considered for closure unless suitable arrangements can be made for the adequate provision of this service.

Options

To make the walkway closure policy more accessible to residents the following options were explored:

- A. **Change Fee Structure** – This option results in the process for a walkway closure to remain the same, with the exception of the fee structure. All steps would remain the same, with the resident only having to pay the application fee and land acquisition fee after the walkway closure has been approved.
- B. **Petition Model** – Initiation of the review would begin with a citizen-lead petition, similar to the Traffic Calming Policy. Assuming there is sufficient support from the community, the review process would proceed. A petition model would follow the following steps:

1. Applicant would apply for closure. The applicant must agree to cover all associated closure costs and land transaction costs. One or both adjacent owners must be willing to acquire the entire width of the walkway.
 2. City staff would check if it meets the criteria for closure. Closures would not proceed if there are AT network requirements, or if drainage and utility issues prevent a closure. All walkways would be assessed and categorized to identify those that must remain open. Walkways that are essential to the AT network include those that:
 - Provide a connection to significant neighbourhood destinations such as schools, places of worship, civic centres, libraries, commercial centres, parks, transit stations.
 - Connect to significant active transportation routes or facilities, such as bridges, pedestrian underpasses, or pedestrian overpasses.
 - Minimize travel times significantly, or reduce the safety exposure for users on the alternate routes (for example, a child walking to school would be expected to cross an arterial roadway without pedestrian devices).
 - Improve accessibility for users with mobility challenges.
 3. Applicant would be responsible for documenting community support through a petition. City staff would provide the applicant with the capture area for the walkway.
 4. Should the minimum support be received, City staff hosts a community meeting. At the meeting, City staff would present information about the walkway, such as destinations, capture area, change in walking times if the walkway were closed. Saskatoon Police Service would be present to discuss enforcement efforts. Applicant for the closure would have the opportunity to present their concerns with the walkway.
 5. If the applicant still wishes to proceed to closure after the meeting, City staff would coordinate a public hearing for the closure.
- C. **Policy Rescinded** – This option would result in the existing policy being rescinded. Each request for a walkway closure would require a public hearing and would need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Change the fee structure	Residents will not have to pay for an unknown outcome	- May result in higher number of applications - Does not respond to community concerns that all adjacent property owners must support the walkway closure
Petition model	- The onus of obtaining public support is not on City staff - Citizen-initiated process - Relies on community input - The public hearing ensures that City Council has the opportunity to balance the safety issues, community values and transportation needs of the neighbourhood	- Increased effort required for residents interested in pursuing closure - The walkway closure process would not necessarily be driven by concerns with public safety, crime, or graffiti vandalism - Does not align with the AT Plan direction that the City should avoid closing walkways wherever possible
Policy Rescinded	Less work required for residents	- Additional time for review and consideration by City Council - Does not address safety issues around the walkway - Can create division between neighbours

Recommendation

The recommendation is that the Transportation Department update the Council Policy C07-017 Walkway Evaluation and Closure to a petition model format and report back on additional funding requirements after two years, if required.

The petition model would put the onus on the applicant to obtain community support, encouraging neighbours to work collaboratively to resolve the problem. Residents would be able to gauge interest and determine if closure is an option prior to the payment of fees.

The proposed revisions to the Walkway Evaluation and Closure Policy would ensure that the review would be initiated by a citizen-lead petition, similar to the Traffic Calming Policy. Assuming that there is sufficient support from the community, the review process would proceed. The initial financial burden would be eliminated from the applicant; but, one or both adjacent owners must commit to purchase the walkway in the event that closure is successful. The entire width of the walkway must be acquired. All associated closure costs and land transaction costs remain with the benefiting owners. Closures would not proceed if there are drainage, utility, or AT network requirements. The final closure decision would be addressed through a public hearing.

6. Other Items

The following options were also discussed:

- A. **Bylaw to Restrict Hours of Access** – A bylaw to restrict walkway access in the night-time hours, similar to the Parks Usage Bylaw would be introduced.
- B. **Walkway Maintenance Policy Update** – Increased service level maintenance activities and/or grass improvements, including increasing the service level to bi-weekly mowing and litter pick up, and one-time re-seeding grass and watering.
- C. **Education Campaign** – A targeted public awareness campaign to provide information about neighbourhood safety and encourage residents to take action to prevent or reduce crime. Educating the public can be an important strategy for preventing crime. People who know what actions they can take to reduce their risk of crime and how they can enhance neighborhood safety are the core of a safer community.
- D. **Wayfinding Signage** – Wayfinding signage could be provided to direct the public, depending on the length and type of walkway. If appropriate, information related to destinations, emergency contact numbers and illumination hours (if applicable) could be included on the signage.

The table below demonstrates the pros and cons for each option.

Option	Pros	Cons
Bylaw to Restrict Hours of Access	Provides the platform for police to question the presence of users within a walkway	- Police don't have the capacity to enforce timed walkway access - Walkways provide a different purpose than parks and may be part of an essential trip
Walkway Maintenance Policy Update	Improvements to the maintenance of the walkways may improve the appearance of the walkways and provide greater comfort levels to users	- Increased service levels for maintenance of walkways is unlikely to curb criminal and illegal activity - Increasing the service level to bi-weekly mowing and litter pick up would require an estimated \$75,000 increase in the operating funding for the 01-678 – TU – City Section program - One-time re-seeding grass and watering would cost an estimated \$150,000 to 01-678 – TU – City Section program

Option	Pros	Cons
Education Campaign	• Could be tailored to address a specific neighbourhood or city-wide • Residents may feel empowered by knowing what they can do to address safety in their community	• Limited effectiveness unless the campaign is repeated • Costs, highly dependent on the extent and reach of the campaign
Wayfinding Signage	• Improved navigation within the walkway network • Increased user comfort using the walkway	• Signs could be susceptible to vandalism, increasing maintenance required

Recommendation

That wayfinding signage be installed, where appropriate (e.g. near major destinations, when walkway divides into two paths, etc.). That guidelines to determine the appropriate locations for wayfinding signage be included in the Active Transportation Wayfinding Strategy.