

Dear City Council,

I am a 64-year-old retiree, and a licenced drone pilot. And in these days of Covid-19, having a hobby is a very good way to deal with the lack of activities a person can do.

However, in January of 2020, Saskatoon passed a bylaw that effectively banned flying drones anywhere within the city.

I live outside any airport control zone (in the southern area of Saskatoon) and before the bylaw was passed, I enjoyed flying short flights around our neighbourhood.

But, with the bylaw that city council introduced to ban the flying of drones, that hobby has been taken away.

Saskatoon is one of the few cities in Canada and North America that has banned flying drones.

When you drive by many of the parks in Saskatoon, most of them are unused, with no-one in them.

I would ask that, perhaps, Saskatoon might allow casual, recreational flying of drones in one of its parks.

There are many large parks in the southern area of the city that are out of the airport control zone that would work well.

I have driven by James Anderson Park, near Preston and Arlington, and there wasn't a soul in the park. It's a nice large park with not too many trees, and is out of the airport control zone. Also, another good park that is not often used (I used to live in the area and walk my dog there) is Wildwood Park, just south of Parkdale Road and Moss Ave.

Please see attached JPG file showing southeast Saskatoon and the boundary of the airport control zone.

I realize that for council to pass a bylaw prohibiting drone flights within the city, there must be a concern and mistrust of people flying drones. Please keep in mind that a licenced drone pilot is registered, and has passed a test, with Transport Canada. And they know and comply with the safety guidelines laid out by Transport Canada.

As well, any drone pilot that I know has no interest in 'spying' on people. Our interest is entirely in taking scenic pictures and videos from the air. And many of those videos and photographs can be quite breathtaking.

I use my drone exclusively for video recording scenery, and enjoy not only the flying, but the post-processing of the video as well.

Please see the following links to view a couple of my scenic drone videos:

Morning flight: <https://vimeo.com/376443114>

Afternoon shadows: <https://vimeo.com/364905612>

I would propose the drone pilot would register with the city, both for themselves and their drone. Perhaps if there is a high demand for pilots to fly their drones, a schedule might be set up for when a person could fly.

Staying within the boundaries of the park and at a pre-determined maximum altitude, as well as being no closer than the 30 metres from people as laid out in Transport Canada regulations, would all have to be followed.

One additional comment for those who may be worried about the control of the drone(s). Most of the high-end drones (DJI, Autel, Parrot, etc.) are GPS drones. They always 'know' where they are, and will stop moving and just hover when there is no input from the pilot. As well, they log all their flights internally with info such as GPS coordinates, altitudes, speed, etc. And in the case of any investigation, all that information is available.

I don't often have the opportunity to fly out of the city, and having a place within city limits where I could practice flying would be greatly appreciated. It would be a wonderful way to deal with life's restrictions during Covid-19 and into the future.

I would appreciate your consideration to my request.

I realize this is a special interest request. But the city handles many special interest requests, like bicycles and downtown riding lanes, so I'm hoping that you may consider my request.

Sincerely,

Murray Wilson

Calder Cr.

Saskatoon Sk

