

# University Sector Plan

## ISSUE

The University Sector Plan responds to objectives of both the Official Community Plan 2020, Bylaw No. 9700 (OCP) and the Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan) and direction included in the Strategic Plan by outlining the development framework for future growth within the University of Saskatchewan endowment lands (see Appendix 1). The University Sector Plan (the Plan) is a comprehensive report outlining high-level strategies for land use, open space, utility servicing, environmental considerations, mobility and phasing.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Plan identifies a long-term vision of increased infill development to achieve the Strategic Goal of Sustainable Growth. The University of Saskatchewan (USask) designated its endowment lands for strategic infill growth, aligning with the City's vision for infill growth, making this area the most significant component of the City's identified strategic infill initiative.

On February 27, 2018, USask and the City signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the purpose of strategically increasing collaboration between the two organizations. Land development was identified as an area of collaboration including work related to the City's Growth Plan, such as strategic infill development.

A sector plan serves as a development framework for future growth and is based on policies contained within the OCP. To comply with *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, a sector plan and any amendments must be approved by City Council.

## CURRENT STATUS

Since 2018, the City and USask have been working together, in partnership, developing the University Sector Plan (the Plan). The direction of the Plan was informed by Vision 2057: University Land Use Planning (Vision 2057). The Vision 2057 report outlines a range of potential uses for USask's endowment lands. Special policies and considerations were made to address the unique ownership, authority and urban location of the land included in the Plan.

The Plan was endorsed by the University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors on March 23, 2021 and was presented to the Municipal Planning Commission on March 30, 2021. The Plan will be presented to the Meewasin Board on April 9, 2021, as the Plan falls within the Meewasin Conservation Zone. The Plan will be presented for City Council consideration at a public hearing scheduled for April 26, 2021.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

### Location

The University Sector is bounded by the South Saskatchewan River to the west, the northeast swale and future development lands within the University Heights Sector to

the north, College Drive and 14<sup>th</sup> Street East to the south and the existing neighbourhoods of College Park, Sutherland and Silverspring to the east. The Plan area contains approximately 960.97 hectares (2,374.60 acres) of gross land, with approximately 365 hectares (900 acres) of potential development land (see Figure 3 in Appendix 1).

### Vision and Land Use Planning Principles

The vision for the University Sector is for these lands to become complete, vibrant, sustainable and distinct urban communities which support a walkable, transit-oriented lifestyle, connected with USask while harmonizing and integrating with surrounding communities. They are intended to become neighbourhoods of the future, housing Saskatoon's growing population, while sharing a unique relationship with one of Canada's leading universities.

The vision of the University Sector will be achieved through embodiment of the following USask land use planning principles:

1. Support the Academic Mission: Recognizing the lands are a long-term strategic and economic asset to be retained and leveraged to support the University's mission.
2. Indigenous Engagement: Enacting inclusive, respectful and reciprocal processes with Indigenous Peoples, communities and organizations to ensure Indigenous perspectives are represented and realized in the pursuit of design excellence.
3. Pursue Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action: Embody environmental sustainability in land infrastructure, open space and building development.
4. Create Model Communities Which Boldly Advance Well-being and Sustainability: Support outstanding sustainable community development including mixed use, transit-supportive development.

### Land Use

The University Sector can accommodate decades of urban growth, in alignment with the strategic infill targets identified in the OCP, Vision 2057 and the Growth Plan. The projected population for the University Sector is 57,147 people at full build-out. This projection represents a higher average density level than most areas in the city. Land uses are strategically located, based on density levels, creating a framework for land uses to complement one another and interface appropriately with surrounding areas.

Locations for mixed use developments are identified along the Corridor Growth Area, which aligns with the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. To ensure potential development interfaces appropriately with existing communities, specific areas adjacent to established neighbourhoods have been identified to act as transition areas. These areas would transition from higher density land uses to lower density land uses adjacent to established communities, complementing and integrating with the existing building form and characteristics of those communities.

### Open Space and Heritage Resources

A natural area screening was completed as part of the sector plan process. The natural area screening identified several sensitive areas where further field studies will be required as part of a concept plan process. Field studies will identify sensitive plant species, wildlife habitat and wetland quality through functional assessments. As the University Sector falls within Meewasin's jurisdiction, consultation with the Meewasin, along with USask and the City, will occur to identify parameters or protection for specific areas.

The Plan outlines municipal reserve dedication requirements, as well as requirements regarding heritage resources. There are several heritage sensitive areas throughout the University Sector. Many of the sites are concentrated along the South Saskatchewan River. In consultation with technical experts and stakeholders, the Plan outlines how these resources should be incorporated and conserved in future developments.

### Mobility and Transportation

The Plan outlines requirements regarding mobility, including active transportation, transit service and the street network. The intent of the policies contained within the mobility section is to ensure the street network functions efficiently for all modes of travel. A mix of density, its central location and a focus on a high-quality public realm is expected to facilitate increased use of active transportation. Similarly, the strategic location of land uses based on density will complement and support the long-term success of the planned BRT system.

Upgrades and new infrastructure will be needed to achieve the projected development outlined in the Plan. Transportation impact assessments will be required at the time of a concept plan submission and will confirm the specific details of what new infrastructure and upgrades may be needed. The Plan outlines the general parameters required to ensure the existing street network continues to function efficiently, while accommodating the increased mobility needs resulting from new development.

### Utility Servicing and Phasing

The Plan identifies the major water and sewer infrastructure required to serve the University Sector. Required infrastructure upgrades will inform the phasing sequence of the Plan. Based on preliminary analysis and market research completed by USask, initial development is most likely to occur adjacent to the College Quarter area. Subsequently Parcel K, north of Innovation Place adjacent to the river, is expected as the second phase (see Figure 20, page 87 in Appendix 1). Changes to the development sequence may occur based on market demand, servicing opportunities and other considerations.

The phasing strategy in a sector plan outlines the parameters to be considered when determining future concept plans. The University Sector will require several concept plans and will result in multiple new neighbourhoods as the sector incrementally builds

out. Further phasing sequencing for specific areas and new neighbourhoods will be detailed within respective future concept plans.

### Shared Principles for Development

As part of the University Sector Plan process, a separate document entitled “Shared Principles Report” (see Appendix 2) outlines principles which will guide future development activities in the University Sector. This document builds on the existing partnership between the City and USask and has been endorsed administratively by both organizations. The document outlines high level principles which the City and USask have agreed on relating to strategic, authority and financial considerations. The Shared Principles Report will be used internally by both organizations as a framework for discussions and future partnerships related to the implementation of the University Sector Plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To provide servicing and access for future city growth, the University Sector, like any development area, will require incremental investment in infrastructure over the course of its development. Many of the infrastructure costs are funded through prepaid service rates imposed on development to cover the cost of direct and off-site services, as allowed under the *Planning and Development Act, 2007*. Other necessary infrastructure may be partially funded or unfunded. When infrastructure is partially funded or unfunded, Administration works to identify and secure funding sources. Funding sources typically include changes to prepaid service rates, special assessments, developer contributions and senior government funding. In principle, infrastructure which has a direct benefit to a sector rather than a more general city-wide benefit is to be funded through the development of the sector.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

As the Plan was done in partnership, both the City and USask were active in communication and engagement activities in both respective organisations. The Plan process had the following stakeholder and public involvement and reflects the feedback which has been received:

1. Open House – A public open house was held in 2019, to introduce the Plan and garner input regarding connections, land use transition areas, desired amenities, natural features and open space. Results of this input were incorporated in the design of the Plan. Approximately 200 people attended this open house.
2. Online engagement portal – A webpage was used as a central source for public information to be disseminated about the project, as well to solicit information and feedback from participants. Email newsletters and notifications were also distributed throughout the project to several stakeholders.
3. Technical meetings and review – Internal departments and external agencies were involved directly with the development of the Plan and review of the proposed Plan.
  - a. Internal – Approximately 20 departments including Real Estate Section from Saskatoon Land, Saskatoon Fire, Saskatoon Police Service,

- Saskatoon Light and Power, Corporate Risk, Communications and Public Engagement, Indigenous Initiatives, Sustainability, Community Standards, Parks, Planning and Development, Recreation and Community Development, Building Standards, Saskatoon Transit, Saskatoon Water, Technical Services, Transportation, Solicitors and Construction and Design.
- b. External – Approximately 11 agencies including Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Medavie Health Services, Saskatoon Public Schools, Meewasin, Canada Post, CP Rail, SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy and Shaw Cable.
  - c. University-related agencies – Approximately 10 agencies/businesses operating on USask lands, as well as internal colleges and work groups with USask were consulted and informed of the Plan. Direction and decisions were guided by the University Board of Governors and subsequent University committees.
4. Virtual engagement – Engagement moved virtual in 2020/21, with public health orders. An information video, produced in partnership between USask and the City, outlining the Plan was available for public viewing on an updated Engage Page. This video and related feedback request was shared with stakeholders via newsletters, as well as through social media advertising. All public information indicated how stakeholders and interested citizens could participate and provide input regarding the Plan.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The University Sector Plan will be considered by City Council at an upcoming public hearing.

### **APPENDICES**

1. University Sector Plan
2. Shared Principles Report

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

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