

Complementary Project Backgrounds

Imagine Idylwyld

The Imagine Idylwyld project involves improvements to Idylwyld Drive between 20th Street and 25th Street East. This portion of Idylwyld Drive is a key linkage between many significant and different land uses and is bordered by four neighbourhoods and two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The current configuration of Idylwyld Drive poses a challenging environment for pedestrians to navigate and to cross, tending to divide, rather than unite, the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts. The corridor's current geometry provides poor driving through lane continuity, a variety of left and right turning lane types, and a lack of ability to coordinate traffic signal infrastructure. In addition, there is no cycling specific infrastructure.

At its meeting on June 11, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation received a report entitled "[Imagine Idylwyld Corridor Concept Plan](#)," which outlined the concept design for the project to improve the function, safety, connectivity, and quality of the public realm along Idylwyld Drive, from 20th Street East to 25th Street East. The concept design is a hybrid of tested options that minimizes travel time for most drivers, while achieving the desire to support all modes of transportation and enabling redevelopment opportunities. The concept design is compatible with the intended evolution of the land use along Idylwyld Drive and adjacent neighbourhoods, and enables safer connections for people riding bicycles or walking, including better access to the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station near 22nd Street.

At its meeting on June 29, 2020, City Council received a report entitled "[Saskatoon Transportation Strategy - Infrastructure Plan](#)," which included a list of prioritized transportation projects. Of over 30 projects presented, the Imagine Idylwyld project ranked third based on seven different prioritization criteria. City Council resolved that the list of prioritized transportation projects be approved in principle and be included in the next multi-year budget cycle (i.e. 2022-23).

Downtown Active Transportation Network

Historically, the operation of Downtown streets has prioritized vehicles as the primary mode of transportation. While improvements have been made over the years to enhance infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, they have been done primarily in an ad-hoc manner and, with the exception of the established sidewalk network, have typically not included dedicated facilities for other modes active transportation.

The need for improved cycling facilities within the Downtown was identified through several City plans and initiatives. The City Centre Plan, approved by City Council in 2013, identified the need to improve cycling as a strategy to increase the attractiveness of, and access to, the Downtown for businesses, residents, and visitors, as well as employers and their employees. The Growth Plan, endorsed by City Council in 2016, provides guidance for civic investments in infrastructure and support programs over the short, medium, and long term that will shape growth patterns and increase transportation choices in order to achieve the social, economic, and environmental aspirations of the

community. The Active Transportation (AT) Plan, endorsed by City Council in 2016, also identified the need to improve cycling for people of all ages and abilities, and recommended the Administration develop a Downtown All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Cycling Network.

At its meeting held on November 20, 2017, City Council considered a report entitled "[Protected Bike Lane Demonstration Project – Evaluation and Next Steps](#)," which described the evaluation results of the Downtown Protected Bike Lane Demonstration Project and an outline of recommended next steps for the provision of a AAA Cycling Network in the Downtown. City Council resolved, in part:

- “1. That a provision for protected bike lanes be included in the Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network; and
2. That the Administration develop a Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network (including protected bike lanes) in concert with other downtown policy and planning initiatives in 2018.”

At its meeting on April 29, 2019, City Council received a report entitled "[Downtown Active Transportation Network](#)," which presented options for various Downtown active transportation network routes. City Council approved the following routes for a future network:

- 19th Street, between Avenue A and 4th Avenue;
- 3rd Avenue, between 25th Street and 19th Street; and
- 23rd Street, between Idylwyld Drive and Spadina Crescent.

Implementation decisions (including capital or detailed design expenses) have currently been deferred until the Administration has completed additional engagement, currently planned in 2021. Following engagement, the Administration will report back with opportunities to reduce costs by completing active transportation work in conjunction with future streetscaping improvements.

At its meeting on June 29, 2020, City Council received a report entitled "[Saskatoon Transportation Strategy - Infrastructure Plan](#)," which included a list of prioritized transportation projects. Of over 30 projects presented, the Downtown AT Network project ranked second based on seven different prioritization criteria. City Council resolved that the list of prioritized transportation projects be approved in principle and be included in the next multi-year budget cycle (i.e. 2022-23).

North Downtown City Yards Relocation

The existing City Yards located in North Downtown (generally located north of 25th Street and west of 1st Avenue) have been the central civic operations hub for the City since the 1940s. The physical size of the City Yards has expanded over the years as various parcels have been purchased as they became available, such as the former Saskatchewan Transportation Company's maintenance property (88 King Street) when operations ceased in 2017. The current size of City Yards is approximately 30 acres, with 9.7 acres being south of Queen Street.

The City Yards is the current hub for a number of highly specialized key assets that support everyday municipal maintenance operation activities of the City. It is also the point of origin and storage for staff, equipment, and materials that the City relies on for maintaining roads (summer and winter functionality), water and sewer infrastructure, garbage collection, fleet maintenance services, and primary support to the City's radio system. Over 500 civic employees as well as 400 civic vehicles and equipment are dispatched daily from City Yards, and an additional 100 civic vehicles utilize it as a central hub for fueling and maintenance.

In addition to city growth increasing demand on civic operations, planning for a Saskatoon population of 375,000 to 500,000+ over the next few decades, and the physical limitations on expanding the current City Yards, there is a need to relocate the majority of these civic operations and begin to make the land available for future redevelopment. North Downtown redevelopment would help to achieve infill targets in the approved Growth Plan.

At its meeting on September 28, 2020, City Council received a report entitled "[Acquisition of 3815 Wanuskewin Road and 3802 Arthur Rose Avenue for Future City Operations North District Yard](#)" and approved the purchase of these two properties located in the City's North Industrial Area. The Administration is evaluating the potential to use these properties for a future north district yard, in addition to future satellite yards to be located in the southwest and southeast areas of Saskatoon to allow relocation of most of the civic operations out of the existing Downtown City Yards.

White Buffalo Youth Lodge

There is opportunity to align with the City's efforts to provide enhanced recreation and social services in the city centre. The White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) is a multi-purpose facility that hosts a variety of recreation, cultural, and social programs designed to "[improve the quality of life and health for children, youth, young adults and their families in the inner city through integrated, holistic support services.](#)"

A potential new WBYL is being discussed by its four partners: the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Saskatchewan Health Authority, and Central Urban Metis Federation Inc. A new WBYL facility, which could serve as a city-centre recreation centre, is envisioned as providing needed cultural, recreational, health and social programs for those living in the city-centre area.

Outdoor Festival Site

At its February 22, 2021 Regular Business Meeting, City Council considered the report entitled "[Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Study.](#)" The Recreation and Parks Master Plan (Master Plan), completed in 2015 and approved by City Council, was developed to guide future decision-making and provide the overall framework for development, delivery, and continuous improvement of recreation and parks programs, services, and facilities. A festival venue/amphitheatre was ranked as the second highest priority (out of 23 identified outcomes) for facility spaces within outdoor recreation.

The river central location located in Friendship Park is the approved site. Phase One of the festival site implementation is budgeted at \$2M and funded through the Municipal Economic Enhancement Fund. Based on available funding, Phase One will include site-wide requirements such as a topographic survey, site assessments, permits, design and construction of the Headquarters Building, and contingency funding. To ultimately achieve the full scope of the permanent festival site vision, the remaining phases of the concept plan are estimated to cost \$10,856,000 in 2021 dollars.

Fire Hall No. 1 Replacement

Further to the report entitled "[Saskatoon Fire Strategic Facilities Master Plan](#)," which was presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services on November 5, 2018, the Saskatoon Fire Department continues to develop its facilities master plan, which includes the planned replacement of Fire Hall No. 1, currently located at 125 Idylwyld Drive South.

Replacement of Fire Hall No. 1 represents an integral investment in the long-term ability to effectively respond to emergencies in the Downtown.

Utility Upgrades to Support Downtown Infill and Increased Densification

At its meeting on February 12, 2018, City Council considered a report entitled "[Streamlining the Downtown Development Process \(aka "Cut the Red Tape" Initiative\)](#)," which outlined a series of recommendations to streamline and encourage development in the Downtown. Among these was a recommendation that the Administration "pre-engineer" the Downtown area to prepare it in advance for significant long-term density.

Accomplishing this work would streamline the development process by eliminating the need for developers to provide time-consuming and resource-intensive servicing strategies for underground services as well as for potential traffic impacts. It would also significantly reduce the developer costs of consulting engineers to deal with these considerations.

Attainable Housing and Support Initiatives to Reduce Risk of Homelessness

Synergies may exist with the City's work in encouraging and facilitating the creation of attainable housing that could include transitional units for those at risk of homelessness to entry-level ownership units. While the City does not have a mandate to build housing units, there could be opportunities to incentivize appropriate units in private developments or sites for attainable housing. In addition, with the replacement of Fire Hall No. 1, a potential partnership with a housing developer could be pursued for a mixed-use building that would assist with reducing homelessness within Saskatoon. An additional option would be to investigate zoning regulations that require a certain amount of attainable housing units (commonly called inclusionary zoning) in new developments in some or all of the Downtown.

In addition to the above options related to achieving additional housing units, additional program supports to enhance and extend the benefits created by the Saweyihtotan Project, in relation to addressing the identified program and system gaps for transitional housing, mental health, and substance use supports, could have substantial benefits on the outcomes for those experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon.