

2020 Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) strives to become the best-managed city in Canada. The purpose of this report is to provide information to City Council on the City's 2020 accomplishments related to improved service, increased savings, and realized sustainability initiatives in supporting the Strategic Goal of Continuous Improvement.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting held on February 7, 2005, resolved:

1. That City Council confirm its commitment to continually attempt to increase the corporation's productivity and efficiency, and
2. That City Council instruct Administration to prepare a report annually on efficiencies implemented in the previous year.

CURRENT STATUS

The City's annual Service, Savings and Sustainability (SSS) report seeks to highlight the innovative and creative ways staff foster a culture of continuous improvement in all aspects of civic operations.

- Service improvements focus on how staff are working hard to continually enhance the quality and reliability of current civic services as well as adapt to the changing and new needs of residents and visitors.
- Savings highlights the power of thinking differently and adopting new processes in order to use human and financial resources as effectively as possible.
- Sustainability speaks to efforts to ensure Saskatoon grows in harmony with nature outlining initiatives that reduce the City's environmental footprint, mitigate the risks posed by climate change, and create a more equitable and socially responsible community.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In early 2021, all Divisions responded to the call to make impactful contributions to the categories outlined for the 2020 SSS report. In total more than 80 submissions were received. Despite extraordinary circumstances, including a work-from-home directive impacting about 1,000 staff, City employees found innovative ways to safely deliver essential services while also moving forward on several major projects. It was a year of working together...apart. A few highlights from each report section are presented below. The full 2020 SSS report can be reviewed in Appendix 1.

Service

- City Council approved a new Official Community Plan (OCP) in June 2020. Mandated under the Planning and Development Act, 2007, the OCP is the collective long-term vision for Saskatoon. It works in conjunction with the City's

Strategic Plan to guide the physical, environmental, economic, social, and cultural development of the community.

- Holding a civic election during a pandemic required a lot of adaptive thinking to meet both election and public health requirements. One innovation was Saskatoon's first-ever, one-day drive-thru polling station, where more than 500 voters cast their ballot from the safety of their vehicle. The success of the drive-thru poll means it will be considered for future elections.

Savings

- The City's Street Sweeping Program saved approximately \$400,000 through scheduling efficiencies, creation of a weekend night crew to reduce overtime, and changes to contractor assistance usage.
- The City has merged its two printshops into one service. The consolidation realized savings of \$207,000. Most of the savings (\$150,000) were realized by not having to replace aging equipment. Additional savings of \$57,000 were realized by freeing up 240 sq. ft. of prime City Hall office space.

Sustainability

- The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Policy was enacted in 2020 to integrate sustainability into the City's decision-making processes. The policy mandates that all new initiatives consider the four pillars of sustainability—Environmental Health and Integrity, Social Equity and Cultural Wellbeing, Economic Prosperity and Fiscal Responsibility, and Good Governance. Implementation tools include training videos, administrative procedures, a how-to guide and reporting template. In 2020, the TBL Project Manager tracked 19 projects that used the implementation tools to enhance outcomes across the TBL framework.
- To inform planning for future urban development and climate change adaptation, a Natural Capital Asset Valuation pilot project was completed to assign measurable value to natural assets. The project generated an inventory of local natural assets, identified the specific ecosystem services they provide, and assigned financial value to those services. The project estimated the total ecosystem service value of the City's natural assets at over \$48.2M per year. City-wide wetlands, grasslands, and forest store an estimated 1.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in their soil and biomass.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The following financial implications are highlighted within the 2020 SSS report:

- An estimated \$850K in operational savings were identified through a combination of one-time overall and annual savings.
- Saskatoon Land generated \$43.7M in sales and leasing revenues. Financial returns from Land Development operations stay in Saskatoon and are allocated for use in capital projects that would otherwise be funded through property taxes or borrowing.
- Grant funding approvals totaled \$69.8M through a combination of federal and provincial programs.

NEXT STEPS

The 2020 SSS report will be made available on the City’s website saskatoon.ca. The report’s release and content will be promoted through social media channels and a PSA.

Similar to last year, printed hard copies will not be produced. This decision will save approximately \$2,000 in operational spending and supports the ongoing commitment to a digital-first strategy, and cost control measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic’s ongoing impact on civic finances. It also reduces our environmental footprint.

APPENDIX

1. Appendix 1 – 2020 Service, Savings and Sustainability Report

Report Approval

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