

Northeast Swale Working Group Issue Actions Summary

This document summarizes each of the identified issues the Northeast Swale Working Group (NSWG) was tasked with addressing. Under each theme, issues have been identified. The report or correspondence that raised each issue is listed in brackets. Each falls under one of the following items:

- The Swale Watchers document “Twelve Main Points for City-Responsible Protection of the Swale” (Twelve Points);
- The Swale Watchers document “Protecting the City of Saskatoon’s (City) Northeast Swale: An ACTION UPDATE for City Council” (Twelve Points Update);
- Direction from the SPC on Transportation - September 11, 2017; and
- Direction from the SPC on Transportation - August 15, 2017.

Swale Boundaries

Identified Issue:

Include Petursson’s Ravine and Central Avenue Crossing within the Swale as indicated in the Meewasin Valley Authority (Meewasin) Northeast Swale Master Plan (Twelve Points – #1).

Action – Information Sharing

Petursson’s Ravine and the Central Avenue Crossing were identified as natural areas through the University Heights Sector Plan amendment, approved by City Council on October 7, 2013. These areas are identified as natural areas based on the boundaries laid out through the Northeast Swale Development Guidelines (which also identifies these lands as within the Swale boundary).

Next Steps for the NSWG: No further action required.

Identified Issue:

Ensure that the University Heights Neighbourhood #3 (UH3) area is either not developed, or that the current design is scrapped and redeveloped as a model-sustainable community as suggested in Moriyama's 100-Year Plan. The current plan does not support designated environmental reserve lands that should be in excess of the minimal 10% for parks, playing fields, etc., and does not allow for an efficient public transportation plan (Twelve Points – #10).

Action – Information Sharing

There is currently no design for UH3. Saskatoon Land, the lead developer of this area, is currently in the process of developing a design and a Concept Plan for the area but they do not anticipate having a plan to submit to the Administration for review until late 2023 at the earliest.

Next Steps for the NSWG: No further action required.

Identified Issue:

Enlarge the Area Defined as the City's Swale (Twelve Points Update).

Action – New Action Items

At a meeting on May 15, 2018, the NSWG was provided the direction that further study of the area was required in order to assess if the Northeast Swale boundary was in the appropriate location.

Discussions between representatives of the NSWG and Saskatoon Land on June 12, 2018, resulted in the following direction for the next steps:

1. When Saskatoon Land is ready to proceed with the required additional studies, the following process will be followed:
 - Saskatoon Land will provide their draft Request for Proposals to the City (via Long Range Planning) for review. The Sustainability Division and the Planning & Development Division will review the Request for Proposal (RFP) and coordinate with the relevant parties to ensure the consultant's report will contain any needed new information.
 - Prior to the completion of the study, Sustainability Division will review the draft report to ensure it contains the needed information and recommendations to allow the development to proceed.

On January 18, 2019, Saskatoon Land released an RFP for a Natural Area Screening (NAS) for the area including the Small Swale, the Northeast Swale, and the UH3 area. Prior to its review the City's Sustainability Division and Long Range Planning Section conducted an in-depth review of the RFP to ensure it would provide the appropriate information required to inform further discussions on the Northeast Swale boundary.

A summary of the NAS results was shared with the NSWG on February 23, 2021 and a public open house was hosted on June 21, 2021 where the full NAS was released to the public. Comments on the NAS were received from stakeholder groups in November, 2021. Based on these, Administration provided recommendations on new swale boundaries and hosted a meeting of the NSWG on December 7, 2022, which lead to this report recommending new swale boundaries be endorsed by City Council.

Next Steps for the NSWG: No further action required.

Dark Sky Lighting**Identified Issue:**

Impose Dark Sky policy lighting standards in neighbourhoods adjacent to the Swale through zoning bylaw changes that include neighbourhood roadways, residential and commercial properties, lit signage, and minimally-lit roadways through the Swale (Twelve Points – #3).

Identified Issue:

Expand Dark-Sky Lighting to Commercial and Residential Areas near the Swale (Twelve Points Update).

Action – Information Sharing

At a NSWG meeting on September 4, 2018, the Administration provided confirmation that dark sky compliant lighting was installed the entire length of the North Commuter Parkway.

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

Discussion occurred regarding available tools to regulate lighting, with direction to assess these tools against dark sky principles. A number of initiatives are currently underway to address this direction including:

1. Zoning Bylaw Review – It is currently under way and includes an assessment of options for regulations regarding dark sky compliant lighting.
2. Sign Regulations Review – This review is underway. It includes a review of digital billboards and their compliance with dark sky principles.
3. Lighting Working Group - The City has initiated a community working group focused on discussing how to move forward with planning and policy regarding lighting.
4. Meewasin Lighting Policy – Meewasin has initiated a project to review options with regard to regulating lighting for areas within their jurisdiction, including the Northeast Swale area.

Action – New Action Items

Issues with the angle of the tilt of some light fixtures was discussed. In response to this, Gord Stushnoff of Saskatoon Light and Power (SL&P) and Rick Huziak (of the Swale Watchers) met on site at the Northeast Swale on September 10, 2018, to identify which light fixtures required adjustment. SL&P has fixed the tilt of each light fixture identified at the meeting.

Lighting on the Aspen Ridge lift station was identified as not dark sky compliant and as a significant source of light pollution in the area. The lighting was reviewed and City Administration has recommended that the lights be replaced with dark sky compliant lights. New lights have been ordered and are expected to be installed soon.

Next Steps for the NSWG: No further action required.

Saskatoon Freeway

Identified Issue:

Insist that the Province relocate the Perimeter Highway to Clark's Crossing, to go around the Swale within the Greater Saskatoon area region (Twelve Points – #2).

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

This item was discussed and it was determined that there was no additional actions or discussions required from the NSWG. The Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure is currently leading a functional planning study on this project and has assembled a series of technical working groups to aid in this work. The City is represented on these, as are the Swale Watchers. This study and the work of these

technical working groups is the appropriate place to address any concerns regarding the Saskatoon Freeway.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*

Wildlife Corridors/Crossings

Identified Issue:

Eliminate bottlenecks for safe wildlife passage, modelling from Edmonton's Wildlife Passage Guidelines, and ensure there is an ecological network in place to enable the wildlife to move unimpeded from the river through the Swale and back (Twelve Points – #4).

Identified Issue:

Ensure that wildlife crossings over roads and small animal crossings under roads are designed and installed for all roadways. The success of these crossings should be monitored (Twelve Points – #5).

Identified Issue:

Provide for Safe Animal Crossing of the New Freeways at Central Avenue, Fedoruk Drive, and McOrmond Drive (Twelve Points Update).

Action – Information Sharing

At a NSWG meeting on June 18, 2018, it was confirmed by Administration that wildlife-friendly design features were included as part of the North Commuter Parkway. It was also confirmed that the wildlife-friendly design features followed the recommendations included in the Northeast Swale Development Guidelines and the Meewasin's Northeast Swale Impact and Mitigation Assessment report, also known as 'the CanNorth report'.

Action – New Action Items

A collaboration between the City, Meewasin, and the University of Saskatchewan to monitor animal movements in the Northeast Swale area was instigated by the NSWG discussion. This is expected to be an ongoing project coordinated by Meewasin.

Direction was gained on the design of signage needs for the section of the North Commuter Parkway that crosses the Northeast Swale. This signage has now been installed.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*

Speed Limits/Traffic Calming

Identified Issue:

Ensure that traffic-calming measures, including an enforced 50 km/h speed limit, are implemented on all roads through the Swale (Twelve Points – #6).

Identified Issue:

That Recommendation 8 (That a speed limit of 70 km/h on McOrmond Drive from Central Avenue to Wanuskewin Road be established;) be amended to add "the Small Swale has been recognized to have similar ecological significance to the Northeast

Swale, as such the decision to determine the speed limit for the Small Swale be referred to the Northeast Swale stakeholder committee before the speed is determined.” (SPC on Transportation September 11, 2017).

Action – Information Sharing

The Transportation and Construction Department (Transportation) provided an overview of traffic calming measures that have been used and an explanation why other traffic calming ideas were not appropriate for the McOrmond Drive and Central Avenue through the Northeast Swale.

Action – New Action Items

Discussion occurred regarding speed limits for the North Commuter Parkway from the Northeast Swale through to Wanuskewin Road. The following direction was provided:

1. Transportation would propose a speed limit of 60km/h for the area northwest of Central Avenue on McOrmond Drive, as part of the annual Traffic Bylaw Speed Limits Update Report.
 - City Council did not approve this proposal. At the September 24, 2018 City Council meeting, Council approved a speed limit of 70km/h from Central Avenue to Wanuskewin Road for McOrmond Drive.

Next Steps for the NSWG: No further action required.

Low Road

Identified Issue:

Identified Item: Protect the Core Area of the City’s Swale by closing Low Road (Twelve Points Update).

Identified Issue:

That the issue of the future of Low Road be referred to the Swale Stakeholder group and the Administration for reporting back (SPC on Transportation August 15, 2017).

Action – Information Sharing

A summary of the use of Low Road was provided at the June 18, 2018 NSWG meeting.

1. Low Road is needed for the following reasons:
 - a secondary connection to the UH3 neighbourhood (once it is developed); and
 - fire access to the UH3 development area until a new fire station is built somewhere in UH3 or the surrounding area.

Action – New Action Items

The following action items were identified at the June 18, 2018 NSWG meeting:

2. Transportation will request approval to close a portion of Low Road between the Northeast Swale and McOrmond Drive.
 - a report outlining this went to the August 13, 2018 SPC on Transportation; and

- a temporary closure for Lowe Road has been proposed and is currently under review. It is expected that a decision will be made whether to proceed with the closure in summer 2019.

Direction from the NSWG was provided that further discussion regarding the future of Lowe Road should occur once further discussion regarding the Northeast Swale boundary has occurred.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required at this time. There may need to be further discussions on Lowe Road by the NSWG once the Swale boundaries have been confirmed. At that time, Administration will determine the next appropriate steps.*

Construction Management

Identified Issue:

1. Ensure that there is minimum damage to the Northeast Swale and Small Swale during road and neighbourhood construction.
2. Follow the City's Predevelopment Protocol and Meewasin's Construction Protocols (articulated under the revised Development Review process) in a proactive way that includes environmental monitors with stop work authority (Twelve Points – #7).

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

At the January 31, 2019 NSWG meeting information was shared regarding Contractor Environmental Guidelines which are currently being developed by the City. The following is a summary of their current status:

- expected to be completed in 2019;
- will be piloted with Construction & Design staff and Parks staff;
- includes a requirement for an Environmental Management Plan, which requires information on waste management, spill prevention and reporting, fill management, and site clearing; and
- a training program for internal staff is being developed and will be launched with the role out of the guidelines.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required at this time.*

Meewasin Funding

Identified Issue:

Ensure that Meewasin has sufficient funding to finance the Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan and expand the Master Plan to include the Small Swale (Twelve Points – #8).

Action – Information Sharing

This was discussed at the January 31, 2019 NSWG meeting and it was determined that there was no direct work that the NSWG could do

regarding this issue. It was acknowledged that the City provides significant funding for Meewasin and has provided letters of support to Meewasin for funding applications they have completed.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*

Legal Protection of the Swale

Identified Issue:

Enact long-term legal protection of the Northeast Swale and the Small Swale through a change to Bylaw No. 8770, Zoning Bylaw, through a special designation mandated by City Council (Twelve Points – #9).

Identified Issue:

Ensure Long-Term Protection of the City's Swale (Twelve Points Update).

Action – Information Sharing

An overview of the existing legal protections that are in place for the Northeast Swale was provided at the May 15, 2018 NSWG meeting. This included:

- the information on the “layers” of protection that exist for the Swale that was summarized in the Administration’s report to the SPC on EUCS from March 13, 2017, “Development of the Swale – Response to Northeast Swale Watchers’ 12 Points”;
- the information regarding Municipal Heritage Designation that was presented in the Administration’s report to the SPC on EUCS on January 4, 2017, “The Northeast Swale – Heritage Considerations”; and
- information on how the area is currently protected from immediate development through the City’s development process was also shared. In order for development to occur, at minimum, the following steps would be required:
 - Sector Plan amendment for the University Heights Sector Plan;
 - UH3 Concept Plan approval, or an amendment to the Aspen Ridge Concept Plan; and
 - Subdivision of the Northeast Swale.

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

The Green Infrastructure Strategy was identified as a concurrent initiative that includes a review of legal options for the protection and conservation of natural areas. It is expected the findings of this project could be applied to the Northeast Swale.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *As legal protection for a parcel of land would require the parcel to be subdivided and have legal boundaries (which the Northeast Swale does not currently have), the direction from the NSWG was provided that further discussion regarding legal protection should occur after the Northeast Swale boundary location is confirmed.*

Stormwater Management

Identified Issue:

Ensure the stormwater handling systems do not allow contaminants to enter the adjacent wetlands. They are experimental, so careful monitoring will be needed, especially since regulations for the Pesticide Use Policy and the Wetlands Policy are not in place (Twelve Points – #11).

Identified Issue:

Manage Storm Water from Surrounding Neighbourhoods outside the Swale (Twelve Points Update).

Action - Information Sharing

A discussion on stormwater management occurred at the NSWG meeting on January 28, 2020 and a summary of Stormwater handling systems for the areas directly adjacent to the Swale was shared with the NSWG.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*

Regional Connection

Identified Issue:

Ensure that environmental protection policies are coordinated and adopted with the P4G group through the Saskatoon North Regional Study for the entire Swale region (Twelve Points – #12).

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

A summary of the work currently underway regarding the coordination of policy between the City and our regional partners, was provided at the January 31, 2018 SNSWG meeting. This included updates regarding:

- P4G Regional Plan – Green Network Refinement Study
 - Natural Area Assessments are underway.
- Official Community Plan Redesign
 - Policy is being updated to ensure alignment between the OCP and the P4G.

These initiatives were discussed and it was determined that there was no additional actions or discussions required from the NSWG.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*

Conservation of Biodiversity

Identified Issue:

Establish Conservation of Biodiversity as a priority for the City (Twelve Points Update).

Action – Identification of Existing Initiatives

A summary of the work currently underway regarding the conservation of biodiversity by the City was provided at the January 31, 2018 NSWG meeting. This included updates regarding:

- Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - Which has identified Ecological Integrity, which includes biodiversity, as a guiding principle.
- Official Community Plan Redesign
 - Proposed updates will included wording to reflect the Green Infrastructure Strategy Guidelines Principles and Policy No. C02-036, Environmental Policy, both of which address the conservation of biodiversity.

These initiatives were discussed and it was determined that there was no additional actions or discussions required from the NSWG.

Next Steps for the NSWG: *No further action required.*