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**From:** Will Lofdahl <wlofdahl@sasktelcentre.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 21, 2019 5:16 PM  
**To:** Web E-mail - City Clerks  
**Cc:** Jorgenson, Jeff; PAUL JASPAR; Farbacher, Corina; Leanne Johnson; Russel Marcoux; Mark Arcand; Harms, Todd (TU - Transportation); bryan@3twenty.ca; Blair Davidson; Clark, Charlie; Davies, Troy (City Councillor); Iwanchuk, Ann (City Councillor)  
**Subject:** Letter from Board Chair of SaskPlace Association  
**Attachments:** Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Printer.pdf

Dear Sir or Madam,

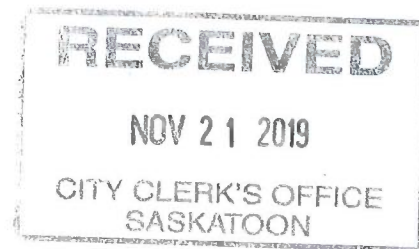
Please accept this letter from Mr. Blair Davidson to His Worship and City Council.

Sincerely,

**Will Lofdahl** | Chief Executive Officer



#101-3515 Thatcher Avenue | Saskatoon, SK | S7R 1C4  
D 306.975.3150 | C 306.222.4946 | F 306.975.2907  
E [wlofdahl@sasktelcentre.com](mailto:wlofdahl@sasktelcentre.com) [www.sasktelcentre.com](http://www.sasktelcentre.com)





November 21, 2019

Mayor and City Council  
City Hall  
222 Third Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5



Dear Your Worship and City Council,

On Behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to express SaskTel Centre's interest in working with the City of Saskatoon along with other partners toward the planning and implementation of a prosperous future of our downtown core.

In the spring of 2018, both SaskTel Centre and TCU Place presented a report detailing the challenges that are faced by both facilities in their current condition. The report stated that both facilities are nearing the end of their useful lives and that plans should be made to bring successor facilities onboard and that both successor facilities should be located in the downtown core.

SaskTel Centre has long contributed to the quality of life within the region; as the biggest names in the live sports and entertainment industry have graced our stage over and over through the years. Not only do events of this magnitude provide enjoyment to those that attend, but they also bring strong economic impact to the region. For example, the six Garth Brooks concerts of 2016, provided an economic impact of over ten million dollars to our region. The 2013, Memorial Cup brought the community over twenty-six million dollars of economic impact and the World Junior Hockey Championships of 2009/10 were responsible for over seventy-five million dollars of impact to the province.

As the City of Saskatoon prioritizes its long-term capital projects, our Board of Directors respectfully requests that strong consideration be given to proceeding in a manner that gives all projects the attention that they deserve and allows the City to successfully bring a library, a convention center and an arena on board in the core of our community. To do this efficiently and effectively would, in our view, necessitate all three groups working together to make this vision a reality.

We look forward to working with Council, City Administration, TCU Place and the library to successfully navigate the challenges presented to us.

Sincerely,

Blair Davidson  
Board Chair  
SaskPlace Association

375-4  
x1700-1

**From:** Tasker Wanlin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2019 12:01 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council



Submitted on Monday, November 25, 2019 - 00:00

Submitted by anonymous user: 204.83.44.213

Submitted values are:

Date Sunday, November 24, 2019  
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council  
First Name Tasker  
Last Name Wanlin  
Email [REDACTED]  
Address [REDACTED] Cumberland Ave. S  
City Saskatoon  
Province Saskatchewan  
Postal Code [REDACTED]  
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)  
Subject Budget Deliberations and Climate Action  
Meeting (if known)  
Comments  
Dear City of Saskatoon,

My name is Tasker Wanlin and I am a University of Saskatchewan student living in Saskatoon. I want to inform you that I support spending aimed at reducing emissions so that a safe future can be secured for my generation. I support all avenues of climate action, but I especially want to state my support for two green options which are difficult to come by in Saskatoon. First, solar power is the most versatile source of electricity as it can be placed on rooftops, thus requiring no extra space. There are numerous solar power startup companies in Saskatchewan, but Saskpower has recently suspended buying back, making it less attractive for homeowners to install solar panels. Please incentivize powering our homes with green energy to prevent these green companies from going under and losing all of the progress we have made in this avenue of change. Second, it is nearly impossible, or at least extremely inconvenient, to not drive in Saskatchewan. Saskatoon is no exception. I have had half-hour walks that were much faster than the bus, and I have missed the bus because their communication with apps such as google maps and transit is so inadequate. Please provide funding to make the bus a feasible option for more commuters. This will also help increase the revenue from the transit system. As a resident of both Saskatoon and our global environment which is at risk, I support allocating any necessary portion of the city's budget to these and any other climate action strategies. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Tasker Wanlin  
Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

**From:** CFIB\_SK <MS.Saskatchewan@cfib.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2019 10:16 AM  
**To:** Web E-mail - City Clerks  
**Subject:** CFIB Submission Re: City of Saskatoon Preliminary 2020-2021 General Operating Budgets  
**Attachments:** CFIB-LettertoCityofSaskatoonReProposed2020and2021OperatingBudgets.pdf

Good morning - Please find attached the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) submission for the City of Saskatoon's Preliminary 2020-2021 General Operating Budgets.

We would kindly request that you please print/distribute the attached pre-budget submission to Mayor Charlie Clark and City Councillors **prior to their budget deliberations this week.**

Please note that CFIB does not request to present our 2020-2021 Budget submission in-person to City Council.

Please confirm receipt of our submission.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions at 306 757-0000.

Regards,

Natalie

**Natalie Beaton**  
 Business Counsellor/Administrative Assistant  
 T: 306 757-0000 or 1 888 234-2232  
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



**CFIB** – In business for your business.

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**CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS**

***In business for your business.***

2400 College Avenue, Suite 503  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 1C8

November 22, 2019

**Re: City of Saskatoon's Preliminary 2020 and 2021 Operating Budgets**

On behalf of the CFIB and our Saskatoon small business members, we are pleased to provide our members' views and concerns regarding the City of Saskatoon's Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and the 2020 and 2021 Budgets. These Budgets propose overall municipal property tax increases of 3.23 per cent and 3.54 per cent in 2020 and 2021 respectively for the average household.

We note that while in the message from the City Manager, he stated "the multi-year budget aims to control expenditures, keep property taxes and fees as low as possible in 2020/2021," we do not believe this goal has been fully achieved. We recognize that the proposed property tax hikes are the lowest in several years, but they are still too high especially given the many challenges and weak economic outlook facing small businesses in Saskatoon and elsewhere in the province. Similarly, while we understand the City is trying to reign in spending to be more accountable - a multi-year budget is one constructive way to help achieve this goal - more can and must be done to reduce operating spending growth in 2020-21 and 2021-22 in order to further limit property tax increases.

Again, the economic concerns facing the City's small businesses cannot be overstated. As they are the City's economic drivers, we hope that Council will find further cost savings, and focus solely on key spending priorities in order to further limit property tax increases over the next two years to help small businesses mitigate these serious concerns.

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**Sask small business optimism continues decline in October; lowest in Canada**

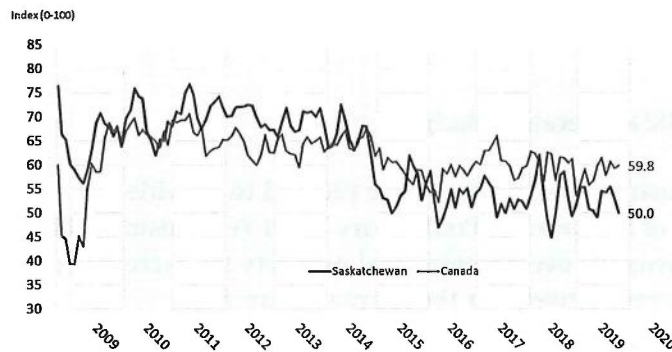
CFIB's Monthly Business Barometer® has shown to be an extremely accurate indicator of economic growth and is utilized by a number of financial institutions in Canada including Bloomberg, the Bank of Canada and Scotiabank. Tracked against GDP, the Barometer index closely reflects what is currently happening in the economy. Index levels normally range between 65-70 when the economy is growing at its potential.

Saskatchewan's small business optimism continued its decline in October; down to an index of 50.0 - the lowest in Canada and 3.2 points below its level at this time last year (see Figure 1). And, given the historically bad harvest this fall, ongoing trade uncertainty, rail transportation problems, a costly federal carbon tax and several more years of CPP premium hikes yet to come, we worry the index may continue to fall in the near future. Similarly, short-term employment plans further weakened with 25 per cent of businesses looking to layoff staff, while just 9 per cent are planning to hire in the next three months (see Figure 2). These employment plans are considerably worse now than in October

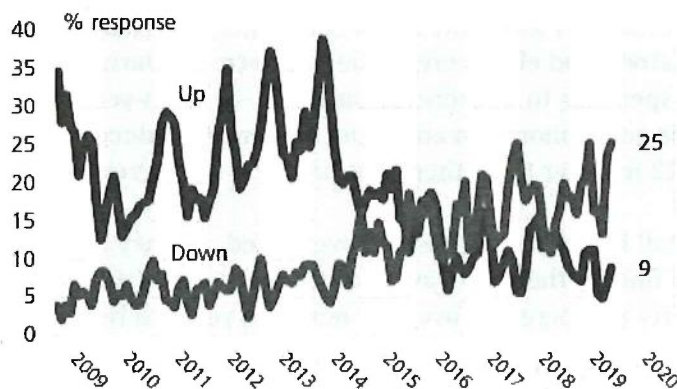
2018, when 12 per cent of entrepreneurs were planning to hire and 16 per cent were planning to layoff staff.

Figure 1

**CFIB Monthly Business Barometer Index (Sask vs. Canada)**



Source: CFIB Monthly Business Barometer, Saskatchewan, October 2019.



Source: CFIB Monthly Business Barometer, Saskatchewan, October 2019.

### Impact of municipal property tax increases

We realize budget deliberations require difficult decisions as Council strives to meet the challenges of a weakened economy and a growing population. That being said, we are concerned that the City is considering overall municipal property tax increases of 3.23 per cent and 3.54 per cent in 2020 and 2021 respectively, for the average household. These tax hikes are on top even larger tax hikes in recent years. This is also in addition to significant user fees that will impact businesses including those for Saskatoon Light & Power and for water and wastewater.

### Top cost pressures: tax and regulatory costs

CFIB's monthly Business Barometer Index revealed that the top cost pressures for Saskatchewan entrepreneurs continues to be tax and regulatory costs, cited by 70 per cent of respondents in October 2019<sup>1</sup>.

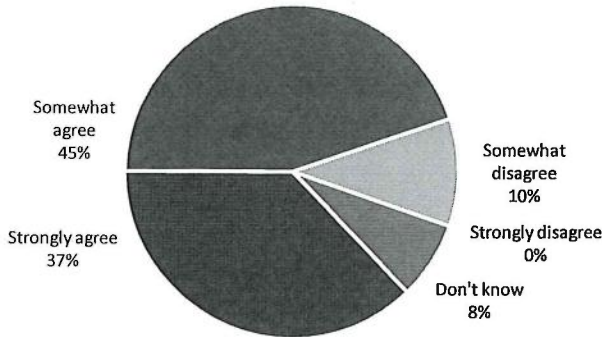
It is not surprising then that the province's small business owners rank the total tax burden as their most serious concern (88%) and the cost of local government as the fourth (59%)<sup>2</sup>.

There is little doubt that some of the major contributing factors are related to several federal cost increases and trade uncertainty, but raising cost pressures at the municipal level will only make this bad problem worse.

<sup>1</sup> Source: CFIB Monthly Business Barometer, Saskatchewan, October 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Source: CFIB Our Members' Opinion Survey, January - June 2019, n = 858.

Figure 3  
Recent municipal property tax increases have negatively impacted my business.



Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, Saskatoon results.

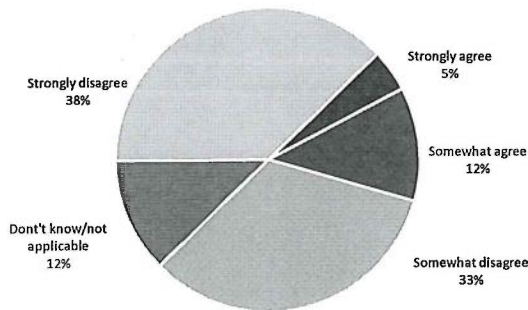
For those that suggest municipal property tax increases don't have an impact on Saskatoon's business community or that these small businesses can simply absorb the continual hikes, it is clear our job creators have a very different perspective. We are not talking about billion-dollar multi-national corporations that can shoulder these increases. This is about your local hardware store or your favourite restaurant. It is about your florist, your mechanic, and your hairdresser.

There are all kinds of businesses who are impacted by annual property tax hikes. In fact, a recent CFIB survey found that 82 per cent of Saskatoon business owners stated that recent municipal property tax increases have negatively impacted their business. Only 10 per cent strongly disagreed with this statement (see Figure 3).

The high level of taxation is a huge problem for small businesses, as well as a key solution to help them succeed, if the City can help lessen their property tax burden. When surveyed, 62 per cent of Saskatoon's businesses wanted to see property tax levels improved in order to help their business succeed (see Figure 5).

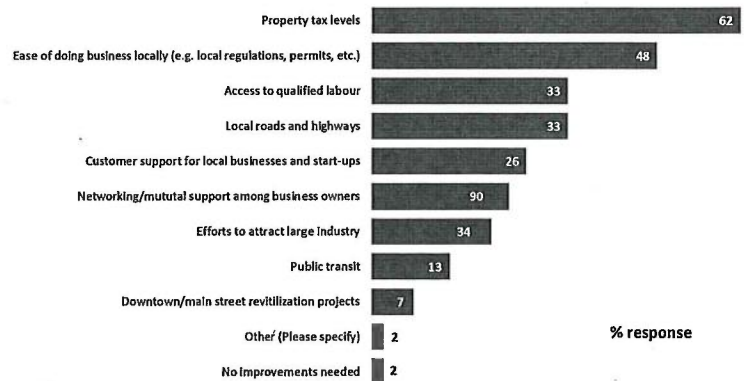
In addition to this needed help, the majority (71%) of the City's small business owners do not believe they are receiving better value-for-money for their municipal services (see Figure 4). Just five per cent of respondents strongly agreed that they are receiving better value-for-money for their municipal taxes/fees than they did three years ago.

Figure 4  
Over the past three years, value-for-money in terms of municipal services I receive and municipal taxes/fees I pay as a business owner has improved.



Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, Saskatoon results.

Figure 5  
In your community, which of the following would you like to see improve to help your business succeed?



Source: CFIB Municipal Issues Survey, September - November 2018, Saskatoon results.

The small business owners themselves sum up the problem best:

***“Begin a process of examining all departments for efficiencies and cutting administration as much as possible. The council need to change their attitude that 4% or 5% tax increases are acceptable.”***

***“Any more double-digit property tax increases will force our business to relocate to Warman or Martensville where they value the contributions of small business to their community.”***

***“Lower property taxes on businesses. We have to compete with online businesses who do not pay our local property taxes. The current system is best for the 20th century but does not work in our 21st century reality.”***

***“I pay more than double the property tax than 11 years ago and receive the same poor service yet our City wants to increase taxes by 4% a year and they seem to have nothing to do except plan.”***

***“Lower property taxes. This city needs to make major cuts to non-essential services.”<sup>3</sup>***

No support for increased taxation powers to municipalities

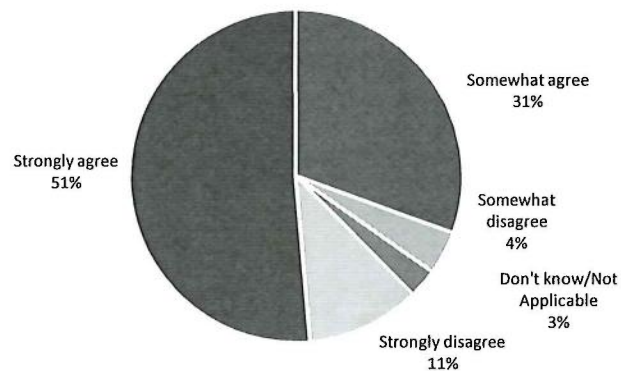
On February 15, 2018 in a media interview with CBC news, City of Regina's Mayor Fougere stated: “we're discussing through the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the City Mayors' Caucus the whole issue of new sources of revenue for municipalities.”

While we recognize the fiscal pressures Saskatchewan municipalities face, we fear giving new taxation powers to them would further hurt their local small business community that are already struggling in a slower economy.

While the provincial government has demonstrated no appetite for allowing these changes, CFIB recently surveyed members to determine if they were still opposed to municipalities receiving new taxation powers. Just 15 per cent of Saskatoon's small business owners disagree that the province should continue its opposition to this (see Figure 6). It is important for everyone involved to remember that while we have three levels of government, there is only one level of taxpayer.

Figure 6

***The provincial government should continue to oppose giving municipalities new taxation powers.***



Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, Saskatoon results.

<sup>3</sup> Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, n=383, Saskatoon results.



Continue to find cost-savings to freeze property tax increases

Based on CFIB’s calculations, inflation is expected to increase in Saskatchewan by 2.10 per cent and 2.00 per cent in 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. Combined with the City’s projections for population growth (based on their ten-year average), the population grow is expected to be 2.0 per cent each year. Therefore, CFIB’s projected annual sustainable operating spending increases for the City of Saskatoon are 4.10 per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal year and 4.00 per cent in the 2021-22 fiscal year. We also note that these forecasts are higher than those the City is forecasting (an average of 1.86% inflation and 1.75% population growth over the two years).

As the City is currently projecting a 3.84 per cent increase in operating spending in the 2020 budget, these increases are below CFIB’s sustainable benchmark (population growth plus inflation) for the year, as is the projected 3.47 per cent increase in 2021. However, we believe that given the weak economic outlook and layoff plans facing Saskatoon small businesses, the City must do everything possible to prioritize its spending, find further efficiencies to mitigate the proposed property tax increases.

It is also important to note that the last decade plus of spending increases points to potential for savings today. For example, in 2018-19, the Government of Saskatchewan distributed nearly \$241.1 million to municipalities in municipal revenue sharing; a \$114 million increase over 2007-08. Of this, revenue sharing in Saskatoon increased from \$17,775,569 in 2007-08 to \$43,381,601 in 2018-19; a 153% increase over 2007-08.

Despite these significant increase, the City’s property tax revenues have also increased significantly over this same period (117.3% between 2007-08 and 2017-18).

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Reduce labour costs

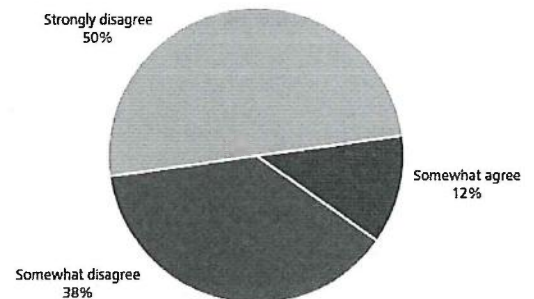
Business owners make difficult decisions every day in order to live within their means and keep their businesses running, and they expect their local governments to do the same.

We know salaries make up the most significant operating expenditure for the City. In fact, compared to the 2019 Budget, the share of operating spending on staff compensation grew from 57.8 per cent in 2019 to 58.2 per cent in 2020 and 58.0 per cent in 2021. It is concerning that this problem is getting worse.

This is not surprising if you when looking at the FTEs staff changes over this time. For example, staff in corporate governance and finance grew by more than the number of staff in police, and staff in corporate asset management grew by more than those in fire. In total, there will be 58.8 total additional FTE staff in 2020 and an additional 40.5 in 2021, at a time when more small businesses are being forced to layoff staff than hire across the province.

Figure 7

*My municipal government needs to increase in size (e.g. increase spending/taxes) to keep up with my community’s growth*



Source: CFIB, 2019 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2018, Saskatoon responses, n=68

Instead, the City should focus on reducing staff and to prioritize spending needs. A recent CFIB survey found 88 per cent of Saskatoon business owners don't believe the City needs to increase in size to keep up with the community's growth (see Figure 7).

As recommended previously, we believe the City should consider attrition-focused staffing reductions and introduce a plan to reduce the size and cost of its municipal civil service. A CFIB survey found the majority (64%) of Saskatchewan business owners believe municipalities should reduce the size and cost of their civil service through attrition (i.e. not replacing employees who retire or leave)<sup>4</sup>. Supporters say it would result in smaller, less costly and more efficient municipal governments. It would also help free up revenue for other municipal initiatives (e.g. infrastructure). Only 17 per cent opposed the idea.

The City should also reform its outdated "sick day" policy. In Saskatoon, employees can bank up to 194 days, which can be converted to cash payments upon retirement under certain grandfathered collective agreements. According to the City's 2017 Annual Report, Saskatoon had \$20.5 million in banked sick day liability.

### Areas to prioritize for spending

When surveying members in Saskatoon, it was clear that the majority want the City to reduce spending growth by focusing on key services and infrastructure investments. As one member summed it up:

***"They need to limit the increases in spending and stick to the primary mandates for cities. I feel that they are trying to be everything to everyone."<sup>5</sup>***

However, two areas for spending priorities emerged: investing in core infrastructure and crime prevention.

The City should treat core infrastructure projects as their spending priority for infrastructure (see Figure 8). A focus on core infrastructure investments, compared to those on transit, social services, green infrastructure, and cultural and recreational facilities, is clearly the priority of small business owners.

This makes perfect sense: given the weak economic outlook, the City should focus on delivering those services and investments that are essential. This idea is also supported by the fact that 85 per cent of Saskatoon's small business owners support the City increasing its spending levels on local infrastructure by finding efficiencies in other areas<sup>6</sup>.

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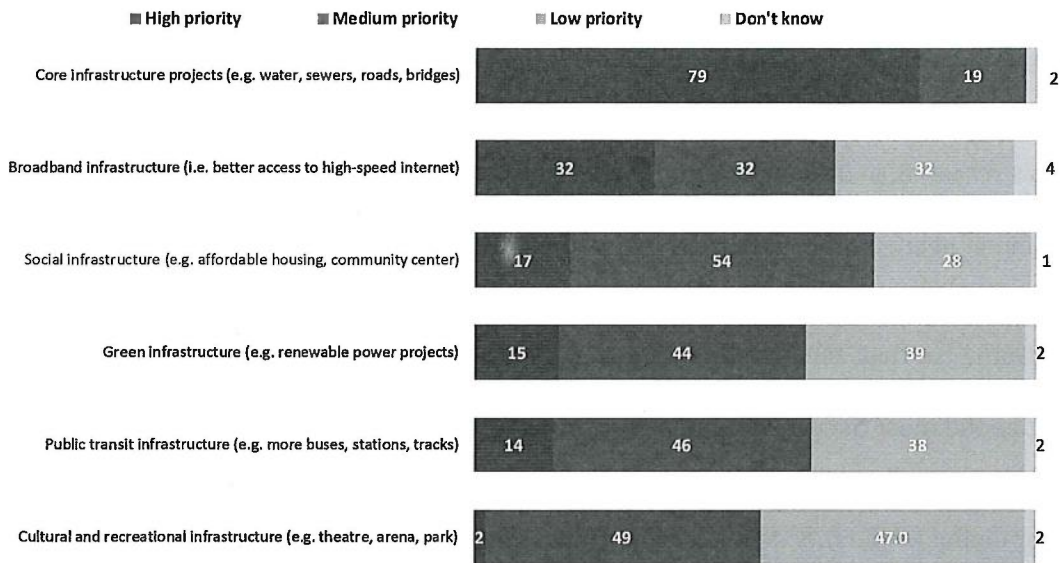
<sup>4</sup> Source: CFIB, Saskatchewan Mandate 267, 358 Saskatchewan responses.

<sup>5</sup> Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, n=383, Saskatoon results.

<sup>6</sup> Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, n=383, Saskatoon results.

Figure 8

*How should governments prioritize the allocation of more funds to each of the following types of infrastructure projects?*



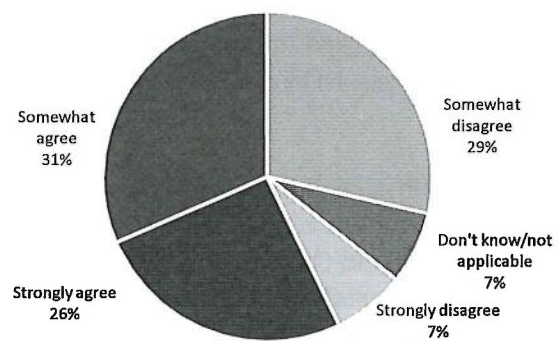
Source: CFIB Municipal Issues Survey, June – July 2017, National results =5,573, Saskatoon results.

In addition, Saskatoon’s small businesses support the City placing a spending priority on crime prevention. This is not surprising as the level of crime in Saskatoon has had a negative impact on businesses. When surveyed, 57 per cent of business owners believed the level of crime had negatively impacted their business (see Figure 9).

As mentioned earlier, it is concerning that there are more FTE positions being created for corporate governance and finance than for police. However, CFIB recommends the City not just add more police in an effort to reduce crime, but run the department in a more cost-effective way so they can be as cost-effective as possible for taxpayers. For example, the City of Winnipeg is currently reviewing its pension contribution rates with its police to be more fair and balanced compared to the private sector. In addition, it is important to recognize that crime prevention requires all levels of government working collaboratively. In fact, 89% of Saskatchewan small business owners agree that the provincial government should increase spending on crime prevention across the province<sup>7</sup>.

Figure 9

*The level of crime in my area negatively impacts my business.*



Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, Saskatoon results.

<sup>7</sup> Source: CFIB, 2020 Saskatchewan Pre-Budget Survey, October 2019, n=383.

## Additional ways to help small businesses – cutting red tape for Saskatoon business owners

We know entrepreneurs deal with piles of red tape associated with the PST, GST, employment standards, payroll taxes, WCB paperwork—the list goes on and on. One significant area of red tape that many businesses and residents deal with though are municipal permits.

According to CFIB's research, in Saskatchewan, federal, provincial and municipal regulations cost businesses \$1.1 billion per year, of which \$330 million is considered “red tape”. Reducing municipal red tape can give much needed time and money back to business owners.

In a recent CFIB survey, our Saskatoon members were asked to identify which municipal regulations were most burdensome for their business in terms of time and money spent on compliance. Thirty per cent of Saskatoon entrepreneurs cited building and renovation permits and 16 per cent cited business licensing as the most burdensome regulations to their business.

We recognize the City administration's ongoing work to streamline and improve some processes. For example, the streamlining of the City's policies and requirements for infill developments in the Downtown core will improve the development process and make it easier for developers looking to build downtown including no longer requiring traffic impact studies for Downtown development and waiving any requirements for on-site storm water retention within the downtown area. However, CFIB is challenging municipalities across the country to place an emphasis on red tape reduction to afford businesses more time to spend growing the economy.

We encourage the City to take the examples of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the City of Winnipeg to help ramp up Saskatoon's red tape reduction efforts. The HRM has partnered with the Government of Nova Scotia to provide ongoing feedback and insight into regulatory changes that are being proposed, as well as those that need to take place. Given the Government of Saskatchewan's growing expertise in red tape reduction, this could be a positive step. The City of Winnipeg is in the process of completing the first iteration of their *Red Tape Top 10 List*, which has developed in partnership with CFIB and is expected to bring forward many positive by-law and policy changes to help small businesses. CFIB would be pleased to work with the City of Saskatoon to hold a similar consultation.

In addition, CFIB has challenged municipalities across Canada to implement a construction mitigation policy and follow recommendations from the *Paving a Smoother Road* report<sup>8</sup>. Several municipalities including Montreal and Quebec City have adopted most of CFIB's recommendations including compensation for businesses most severely impacted by local roadwork. CFIB would be pleased to work with the City of Saskatoon to develop a similar construction mitigation policy as they have in Montreal, Quebec City and, just recently, in Winnipeg.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/sites/default/files/2018-05/report-paving-a-smoother-road-construction-mitigation-policy-FINAL.pdf>

Recommendations:

**With these facts in mind, CFIB urges Council to consider the following recommendations to further contain operating costs in order to mitigate the proposed municipal property tax increases:**

**Short-term recommendations:**

- 1. Continue to find cost-savings and internal efficiencies by:**
  - **Continuing to review current programs and services** with the objective of identifying programs and service areas that can be eliminated, streamlined, contracted out to the private sector, or sold.
- 2. Develop a plan to work with the Government of Saskatchewan and key stakeholders to reduce red tape.**
- 3. Develop a construction mitigation policy in partnership with key stakeholders.**

**Medium to Long-term recommendations:**

- 4. Continue to reduce the size & cost of the municipal civil service by:**
  - **Introducing a plan to reduce the size and cost of the civil service (primarily through attrition and pension reform).**
  - **Developing a long-term strategy to narrow the compensation disparity between public and private sector employees.**
  - **Eliminating the costly and outdated municipal banked sick day policies and replacing it with affordable short-term disability plan.**
- 5. Adopt the Administration's proposed plan for the Municipal Tax Policy Ratio between commercial and residential properties to be shifted to 1.43 over an 8 year period.**
- 6. Consider the introduction of a base tax for all homeowners.**

We thank you for considering the views of Saskatoon's small business community as you work to finalize the City of Saskatoon's 2020 & 2021 Preliminary Budgets. As CFIB's research has shown, municipal decisions significantly impact Saskatoon business owners' ability to grow and create jobs.

Respectfully submitted by,

Marilyn Braun-Pollon  
Vice-President, Western Canada & Agri-business