

Municipal Ward Boundaries Review
Engagement Summary

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Background

The City of Saskatoon is divided into ten wards. *The Cities Act* requires that each ward must contain approximately the same population, with ward populations varying by no more than 10% from the average ward population (the City's total population divided by the ten wards).

Currently, the populations of Ward 7 and Ward 2 are both outside the 10% variance. The population within Ward 2 is below the limit, and in Ward 7 it is above. Accordingly, the Municipal Wards Commission will establish new ward boundaries to be in effect for the city's municipal election and school boards' elections in fall 2024.

There are several general principles that guide the review process of ward boundaries, such as:

- Geographic conditions and natural barriers, such as the river or major corridors;
- Population density and relative rate of population growth;
- Any special diversity or community of interest of residents;
- Maintain neighbourhood boundaries; and
- Limit change.

The public engagement process was conducted in two phases. In phase 1, residents were asked to provide feedback on three presented options for ward boundary changes. Based on feedback received in phase 1 (summer 2023), two revised options were presented in phase 2 (fall 2023) for public feedback.

Phase 1

Three viable options for ward boundary changes were identified in phase 1 and presented for public feedback. Engagement activities included an online survey (89 responses) and a public information session (5 attendees).

Option 1

Moves:

- Confederation Urban Centre from Ward 3 to Ward 2
- Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 9

Option 1 involves moving two neighbourhoods and creates the least amount of change. The affected wards are 2, 3, 7 and 9.

This option achieves the 10% variance requirement, and moving Confederation Urban Centre to Ward 2 gives Ward 3 some room to grow. Moving Nutana Park may be temporary as Wards 7 and 9 will see growth over the next four years.

Option 2

Moves:

- Confederation Urban Centre from Ward 3 to Ward 2
- Hudson Bay Park from Ward 1 to Ward 2
- Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 9
- University Heights Urban Centre from Ward 10 to Ward 1

Option 2 moves four neighbourhoods and provides increased changes. The affected wards are 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, and 10.

This option better future proofs Ward 2 by adding in the population of Hudson Bay Park, however it also requires additional change to Ward 1 to balance the population. It is possible that in the future University Heights Urban Centre would shift in the future based on Ward 10 growth.

Option 3

Moves:

- Confederation Urban Centre from Ward 3 to Ward 2
- Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 9
- Richmond Heights from Ward 1 to Ward 5
- University Heights Urban Centre from Ward 10 to Ward 1

Option 3 also moves four neighbourhoods and provides alternate changes. The affected wards are 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10.

This option increases Ward 5 population with a well-fitting neighbourhood.

Phase 2

Following initial feedback from residents and stakeholders, the Municipal Wards Commission presented two revised options on ward boundary changes for feedback.

Option A

Option A was unchanged from Option 1 in Phase 1. Options 2 and 3 in Phase 1 were no longer being considered in Phase 2.

Moves:

- Confederation Urban Centre from Ward 3 to Ward 2
- Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 9

Option 1 involves moving two neighbourhoods and creates the least amount of change. The affected wards are 2, 3, 7 and 9.

This option achieves the 10% variance requirement, and moving Confederation Urban Centre to Ward 2 gives Ward 3 some room to grow. Moving Nutana Park may be temporary as Wards 7 and 9 will see growth over the next four years.

Option B

Moves:

- Hudson Bay Park from Ward 1 to Ward 2
- Downtown from Ward 6 to Ward 1
- Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 6

Option B moves three neighbourhoods compared to two neighbourhoods with Option A. The affected wards are 1, 2, 6, and 7.

This option meets the variance requirements for Ward 2 by adding in the population of Hudson Bay Park; however, it also requires additional changes to Ward 1 and Ward 6 to balance the population.

Marketing

A variety of dedicated communication channels were used to increase awareness and build understanding around the 2024 Ward Boundary Review, its process, the options presented, and timeline – and on the in-person and online participation opportunities provided to the public as follows:

Media Releases

Media releases were reported out on by local television and radio stations. Below are the Public Service Announcements issued for this engagement project:

- October 21st, 2022: [Ward boundaries in Saskatoon to be reviewed; a first step in preparing for the 2024 civic election](#)
- June 6th, 2023: [2024 Ward Boundary Review: Public input invited, help us draw new lines!](#)
- June 19th, 2023: [Reminder! 2024 Ward Boundary Review Public Engagement session tomorrow evening](#)
- September 11th, 2023: [Proposed Ward Boundary changes for 2024: Public invited to review, give feedback](#)
- September 17th, 2023: [Reminder: In-person public engagement today on proposed options to change ward boundaries](#)

Print Advertising

Print advertising insertions in City of Saskatoon City Pages, Saskatoon Star Phoenix:

- June 10th, 2023
- June 17th, 2023
- September 16th, 2023

Social Media

Ongoing social media posts, including reminders on all important dates and deadlines across all City channels, June-October 2023, including Facebook, Twitter (X), and Instagram.

Earned Media

Adam Tittermore, City Clerk, was interviewed by various media stations for additional public broadcast on TV/radio.

Print Posters

Posters were distributed to City of Saskatoon Leisure Centres and Public Library locations.

Engage Page

A project [Engage page](#) was created to provide background on the ward boundary review process, up-to-date information on options being presented for feedback, and promoting opportunities to participate in the engagement through information sessions or online surveys.

Information on the process and engagement opportunities were also posted on the City's [Ward Boundaries and Changes web page](#).

Engagement Results

Phase 1 Survey

An online survey was posted on the project's [Engage page](#) and was open for responses from June 6th through 30th. In total, there were 89 responses.

Below are common themes provided by survey respondents related to neighbourhood implications. General comments related to the review process are also provided. Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the options was their preference.

Confederation Urban Centre

Included in Options 1, 2, and 3

- The City is moving the wellness centre issues from Ward 3 to Ward 2
 - Perception that the City is “playing politics”, bad optics, people in Ward 2 not wanting to take on issues currently in Ward 3
 - Belief this would add too much to a Ward 2 City Councillor’s workload
- Does not share commonality with Ward 2 – much more connected with the adjacent neighbourhoods in Ward 3
- Major corridors (e.g., Circle Drive) is a barrier between Confederation Urban Centre and Ward 2
- Mostly a business area, not residential

- All options include moving Confederation Urban Centre to Ward 2, so not truly being given options
- Perception this would negatively impact Ward 3's political influence (fewer voters)
- Alternative neighbourhoods were suggested rather than Confederation Urban Centre to move population between wards (e.g., Downtown, Exhibition)

Nutana Park

Included in Options 1, 2, and 3

- Preston Avenue is a barrier between NP and the rest of Ward 9
- All options include moving NP to Ward 9, so not truly given options if impacted by this change

Hudson Bay Park

Included in Option 2

- More in common with Ward 2 than Ward 1
 - Ward 1 currently stretches from Hudson Bay Park all the way to the edge of Erindale – not much commonality with some of Ward 1 neighbourhoods (e.g., Forest Grove)
- Potential impact to the joint Community Association
 - some are concerned with this impact, some do not see it as an issue

Richmond Heights

Included in Option 3

- Disruptive to separate Richmond Heights from North Park

University Heights Urban Centre

Included in Options 2 and 3

- Ward 10 will continue to grow and future changes will also be needed to reduce the ward's population
- Close link with Willowgrove needs to be considered

General comments

- Some are dissatisfied with all options having some of the same changes in each, which means they are not really options for some
- Ward change decisions are too focused on population data and not enough on commonality and connections of neighbourhoods

Do you have a preference among the three options?

Of the 89 total respondents, 51 responded to this question.

More than half of the respondents to this question did not indicate a preference. Of those who had a preference, the majority selected Option 1.

Option 1	13
Option 2	8
Option 3	1
No preference	29
Total	51

Phase 1 In-Person Information Session

There were five attendees to the Phase 1 In-Person Information Session held on the evening of June 20th, 2023 at City Hall, Committee Room E.

Topics of conversation included:

- Attendees had questions about the process for developing options for ward boundary changes; and
- A few attendees expressed dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of diversity among the options since all three included Confederation Urban Centre moving from Ward 3 to Ward 2 and Nutana Park moving from Ward 7 to Ward 9.

Phase 2 Survey

An online survey was posted on the project's [Engage page](#) and was open for responses from September 5th through October 3rd. In total, there were 190 responses.

Below are common themes provided by survey respondents related to neighbourhood implications. General comments related to the review process are also provided. Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the options was their preference.

Confederation Urban Centre Included in Option A

- The City is moving the wellness centre issues from Ward 3 to Ward 2
 - Perception that the City is “playing politics”
 - Belief this would add too much to a Ward 2 City Councillor’s workload
- Does not share commonality with Ward 2 – much more connected with the adjacent neighbourhoods in Ward 3
- Major corridors (e.g., Circle Drive) is a barrier between Confederation Urban Centre and Ward 2
- Perception this would negatively impact Ward 3’s political influence (fewer voters)
- Concerns regarding impacts to students if moved to a different ward / catchment area
- Confederation Urban Centre does not share commonality with Ward 2’s Montgomery Place

Downtown

Included in Option B

- Downtown shares commonality with City Park
- Downtown is a focus area for all City Council, not just its ward's City Councillor
- It is the only neighbourhood in Ward 6 on the west side of the river

Hudson Bay Park

Included in Option B

- More in common with Ward 2 than Ward 1
 - Ward 1 currently stretches from Hudson Bay Park all the way to the edge of Erindale – not much commonality with some of Ward 1 neighbourhoods
- This change would reduce Ward 1's influence on the west side of the river
- Potential impact to the joint Community Association

Nutana Park

Included in Options A and B

- Moving Nutana Park to a different ward would be a temporary fix
- Nutana Park shares more commonality with Ward 6 (Option B) than Ward 9 (Option A)

General comments

- Ward change decisions are too focused on population data
 - Should also consider degree of commonality and connections of neighbourhoods
 - Should also consider workload impacts to City Councillors of moving complex localized issues from one ward to another
- Suspicion regarding the motives and process for changing ward boundaries
- The City should have done more promote the engagement on this project (e.g., send a flyer to all properties in all impacted neighbourhoods)
- The most common response was related to concerns with the wellness centre on Fairmont Drive, which is not within the scope of this project

Do you have a preference among the three options?

Of the 190 total respondents, 184 responded to this question.

Approximately 80% of the 184 respondents preferred Option B.

Option A	29
Option B	146
No preference	9
Total	184

Of note, approximately 65% of the 190 total responses were received in the final 30 hours the survey was open (October 2nd and 3rd). It was noted in some comments received during this period that they were made aware of the survey through online conversations regarding the wellness centre on Fairmont Drive. Responses received during this period had a much stronger preference for Option B (89%) than in responses received prior to October 2nd (61%).

Phase 2 In-Person Information Session

There were three public attendees to the Phase 2 In-Person Information Session held on the evening of September 18th, 2023 at City Hall, Committee Room E.

Topics of conversation included:

- One attendee had concerns that the number of schools / students per ward are not considered when developing options since this impacts school board trustees' workloads, who are also impacted by ward boundary changes
- One attendee appreciated that Options A and B in Phase 2 were seen as more differentiated than Options 1, 2 and 3 in Phase 1 (e.g., Phase 2 has an option in which Confederation Urban Centre would not be moved from Ward 3)
- One attendee would prefer Downtown remain in Ward 6

Next Steps

The Municipal Wards Commission will consider feedback received through public engagement to help inform the final decision on ward boundary changes for the 2024 civic election.

An information report with the ward boundary changes will be presented to City Council later in 2023.