

Municipal Wards Commission

Establishment of Municipal Ward Boundaries

Effective November 13, 2024

Presented to City Council

2023-11-22

2024 City of Saskatoon Ward Boundary Review

Introduction

Population data for the City of Saskatoon shows two civic wards that are outside of the acceptable variance allowed under *The Cities Act*. The current wards were established by the Municipal Wards Commission in 2019 and were effective November 9, 2020. As there will be a civic election in 2024, a review of ward boundaries is required to be undertaken.

Sections 57-62 of *The Cities Act* contain the rules for creating wards, as well as the requirement to maintain a uniform population in each ward where established. The Act requires that the population of each ward must not vary by more than 10 percent. Should a variance more than 10% be determined, a Municipal Wards Commission is required to review the ward boundaries. While not applicable in this case, legislation also requires a review at least once every three election cycles. Ward boundary reviews must be completed no less than 180 days prior to a general municipal election.

A Ward Boundary Commission was struck in early 2023 in accordance with Bylaw No. 8164, *The Municipal Wards Commission Bylaw*, consisting of a judge from the Court of King's Bench (Justice Richard Danyliuk) as Chair, a representative from the University of Saskatchewan's Department of Political Studies (Dr. Kathy Walker), and the City Clerk (Adam Tittlemore). The Commission has been tasked with completing the ward boundary review, then reporting to City Council the results. The Commission is independent of City Council and makes the final decision on ward boundaries.

The Municipal Wards Commission has reviewed the ward boundaries and submits revised ward boundaries that will take effect November 13, 2024, the date of the next municipal election.

Population Data

The population of Saskatoon is 285,445, as of June 30, 2022, according to numbers obtained from Saskatchewan eHealth information. Based on legislative requirements and population data, each of the ten wards in Saskatoon must have a population within +/- 10% of 28,545 (25,690 – 31,399). Current ward populations using the June 30, 2022 Saskatchewan eHealth population information show that Wards 2 and 7 are outside of the 10% variation limit.

Summary of Saskatoon’s Population by Ward

Ward #	Population	Variance (%)	Range to Achieve Variation Limit Quotient: 28,545 Range: 25,690 - 31,399
1	26,082	-8.63	n/a
2	25,188	-11.76*	Increase by 502 - 6211
3	29,653	3.88	n/a
4	27,674	-3.05	n/a
5	27,128	-4.96	n/a
6	28,917	1.3	n/a
7	31,718	11.12*	Decrease by 319 - 6028
8	29,938	4.88	n/a
9	27,913	-2.21	n/a
10	31,234	9.42	n/a

* indicates a ward that must change due to being above or below the allowable 10% population variance limit

Saskatchewan has among the lowest allowable population variance for wards in Canada, and because of a growing population the City of Saskatoon has undertaken a boundary review prior to each of the last four municipal elections and is expected to continue with this pattern. While Saskatoon City Council has made a formal request to the Government of Saskatchewan for a review of *The Cities Act* requirements and potential change to allow for a greater population variance, any changes would not come into effect until after the 2024 municipal elections.

General Principles

When considering potential ward boundary options, the Commission maintained several core principles for the 2024 review where possible, in addition to the legislated population variance requirement of plus/minus ten percent:

1. Maintain neighborhood boundaries.

Neighborhoods are to be fully contained within any one ward. This is important to maintain continuity in neighborhoods and to reduce confusion in voting and councillor representation.

2. Use natural or man-made barriers as boundaries where possible.

Barriers such as the river where crossings do not exist, and major arterial roadways should be considered as boundaries where possible. It should be noted that this is not possible in all cases, and existing and future boundaries will span these barriers out of necessity.

3. Account for future growth.

Recognizing the legislated ward boundary variance restriction, subdivision and building permit data growth should be accounted for to “future proof” boundaries.

4. Maintain continuity within wards for growth plans and other land use planning projects.

Certain land use planning projects have grouped neighborhoods together for planning purposes. Maintaining continuity in these areas is helpful.

5. Limit change

In any ward boundary review limiting change as much as possible is desired to avoid confusion in the electoral process and with council representation. For this review especially this principle becomes important, and growth levels in certain areas of the City all but guarantee larger change prior to 2028.

Neighborhood Growth Projections

An analysis of population statistics for each neighborhood was conducted using information gathered on lot vacancy and building permit data from each neighborhood, projected forward four years. Based on the analysis, the following summary can be utilized:

Growth Neighborhoods:

Aspen Ridge (Ward 10)
Brighton (Ward 8)
Evergreen (Ward 10)
Kensington (Ward 3)
Rosewood (Ward 9)

Significant growth is expected in Wards 3, 8, 9, and 10. Expected growth in these areas is at such a rate that it cannot be accounted for in this boundary review within current legislative authority and will result in changes in future reviews. Ward 6 will see some growth but is more difficult to project as it is based on infill. Ward 7, which has been a fast-growing area recently, is not expected to see significant growth, as the primary driver (Stonebridge) is now built out. Remaining areas are expected to stay relatively constant over the next five years.

Longer term development areas such as Holmwood and University Heights are not included in this analysis as they project beyond this or the next potential boundary review.

Based on growth projections, there is no future proofing that can occur during this ward boundary review that will not result in another review in four years' time, regardless of legislative change to the allowable variance. Significant change is expected for 2028 regardless of changes made during this process. In all cases, neighborhood moves presented as options have tried to keep as much demographic continuity as possible.

Options Considered

The following options were presented for public consultation, held in two phases as summarized in the next section.

Map 1 – Minimum Change

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

This option creates the least amount of change. While no future proofing occurs in this option, as noted above there is no ability to truly do so, therefore minimum change is beneficial. This map was presented as Option 1 during the first round of engagement, and as Option A during the second round of engagement.

Population affected - 3994

Map 2 – Minimum Change with Balancing

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

This option is similar to Map 1, however achieves some additional population balancing between wards. This map was presented as Option 2 during the first round of engagement and was eliminated prior to the second round following consideration of feedback.

Population affected – 7984

Map 3 – Richmond Heights Move

- Confederation Urban Centre moves from Ward 3 to Ward 2

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

This option contains less movement than others and increases Ward 5 population with a well-fitting neighborhood. It does require two additional moves than the least invasive option (1), with little gain and risk of switching back in four years' time. This map was presented as Option 3 during the first round of engagement and was eliminated prior to the second round following consideration of feedback.

Population affected - 6763

Map 4 – Downtown Move

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

The option provides an alternative to changes affecting Ward 3 and Ward 9, however comes with a challenge of moving the Downtown. This map was presented as Option B during the second round of engagement.

Population affected - 8490

Consultation and Process Summary

Public engagement is an important part of a ward boundary review. Engagement was solicited over two periods during the review, with options available for provision of feedback in person, online, by mail, or via phone. Two in-person consultation meetings were held at City Hall, on June 20, 2023 and September 18, 2023. A full summary of the public engagement process and commentary received is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Conclusion

Following careful consideration of all submissions and feedback, and in accordance with the guiding principles and legislation, the Municipal Wards Commission has determined that the City of Saskatoon ward boundaries will be altered to move Confederation Urban Centre from Ward 3 to Ward 2 and Nutana Park from Ward 7 to Ward 9. The below map highlights the new established boundaries.

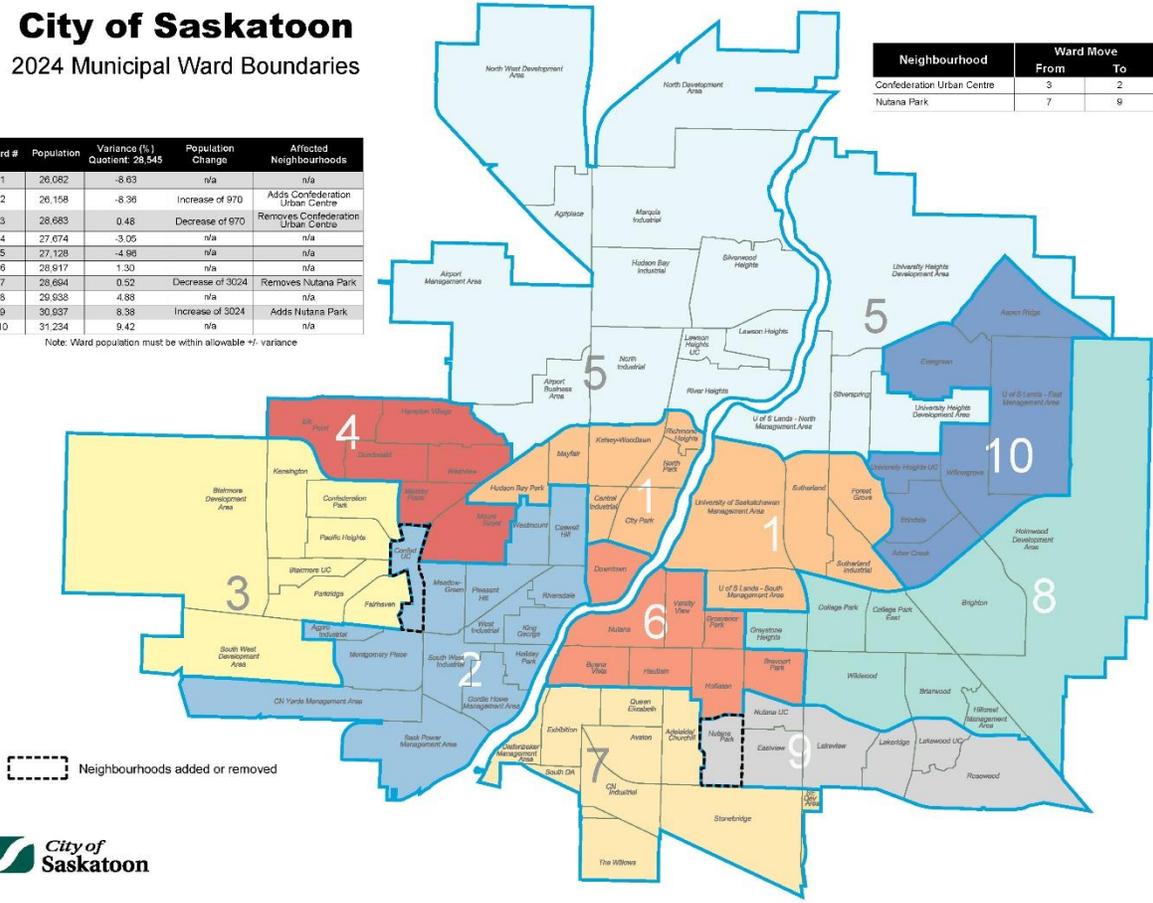
This balances population in accordance with legislation with the least amount of population impacted.

City of Saskatoon 2024 Municipal Ward Boundaries

Ward #	Population	Variance (%) Quotient: 28,545	Population Change	Affected Neighbourhoods
1	26,062	-8.63	n/a	n/a
2	26,158	-8.36	Increase of 970	Adds Confederation Urban Centre
3	28,683	0.48	Decrease of 970	Removes Confederation Urban Centre
4	27,674	-3.05	n/a	n/a
5	27,128	-4.98	n/a	n/a
6	28,917	1.30	n/a	n/a
7	28,694	0.52	Decrease of 3024	Removes Nutana Park
8	29,938	4.88	n/a	n/a
9	30,937	8.38	Increase of 3024	Adds Nutana Park
10	31,234	9.42	n/a	n/a

Note: Ward population must be within allowable +/- variance

Neighbourhood	Ward Move	
	From	To
Confederation Urban Centre	3	2
Nutana Park	7	9



The Commission wishes to extend sincere thanks to the contributions made by staff in the Planning and Development division for providing background information on development and population data and estimates, and the preparation of the ward map options; staff in the Communications and Public Engagement division for their assistance in communicating options, setting up the engagement webpage, and public consultations; and to staff in the City Clerk’s Office for providing logistical arrangements for the public consultations and posting ward boundary options on the City’s website.

Respectfully submitted,

SASKATOON MUNICIPAL WARDS COMMISSION
Justice Richard Danyliuk, Chair
Professor Dr. Kathy Walker
City Clerk Adam Titemore

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Public Engagement Summary

Appendix 2: Ward boundary map for 2024 local government elections