

May 21, 2024

City Council

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

**Re: Small Swale and Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area - Natural Area Management and Conceptual Master Plans [CC2023-0406]****Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

On May 17, 2024, SEAC resolved to provide feedback to City Council concerning the Small Swale and Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area - Natural Area and Conceptual Master Plans.

**SEAC recommends that City Council endorses the Small Swale and Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area (RSBBAA) - Natural Area Management and Conceptual Master Plans for the following reasons:**


- **Green Infrastructure Strategy:** The Swale's are identified as significant natural areas and the Green Infrastructure Strategy 11th Action is to protect, restore and manage significant natural areas. This pilot project supports the Green Infrastructure Strategy. However, bicycling regulations need to be reviewed to ensure consistency in natural areas. Currently, cycling is encouraged in RSBBAA but not in the Northeast or Small Swale, which could lead to confusion and require enhanced citizen education.
- **Northeast Swale and Small Swale Boundary Endorsement:** In February 2023 City Council endorsed the proposal to adopt additional boundaries for the NE Swale. This project builds on this endorsement. To ensure success, the plan should specify conservation strategies that have a proven track record, unlike the example of Nose Hill Park in Calgary, where the Sharp-tailed Grouse became extinct.
- **Biodiversity:** This project will provide maintenance and monitoring to ensure species are protected and increase in abundance in the areas. We recommend that the funding mechanisms for maintenance and monitoring be clearly outlined to guarantee sustained efforts.
- **Collaboration:** The collaboration between the City and Meewasin is crucial. However, clear delineation of responsibilities is necessary to avoid duplication of services and confusion about management. Additionally, collaboration with the Rural Municipality (RM) of Corman Park (Corman Park) should be considered as the Small Swale is located near the municipal boundary between the City and Corman Park and future development of the P4G Planning District could impact the Small Swale.

- **Social Value:** The social value of the Smale Swale and RSBBA will be realized through the conversations amongst visitors and conservation groups such as the Swale Waters will have a meaningful impact on the importance of preserving these natural areas.
- **Swale Economic Value:** The City of Saskatoon's Natural Capital Asset Valuation determined that the Small Swale alone provides \$731,200/year in ecosystem services. This project will ensure the Small Swale and RSBBA continue to provide economic and social value for the community.
- **Drainage:** A comprehensive study should be conducted to assess the impact of stormwater drainage. Natural drainage solutions should be prioritized to mitigate potential negative effects.
- **National Urban Park:** Including the Small Swale and RSBBA natural areas in the application for the National Urban Park designation would ensure conservation of these areas and connect Saskatoon residents and visitors to nature.
- **Monitoring:** The report suggests a five to ten-year evaluation period. We recommend annual evaluations for the first five years to promptly address critical issues. Additionally, an independent third party should be contracted at regular intervals to verify ongoing conservation efforts.

### **Further Recommendations**

- SEAC recommends that communities adjacent to existing sensitive areas (Aspen Ridge, Silverspring, Riversedge acreages, and farmers along Range Roads 3050 and 3045) be engaged to receive feedback on living adjacent to these natural areas.
- SEAC supports Friends of Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. recommendation that educational signage and temporary barrier use in the RSBBA be included in the plan to inform park users about the presence of waterfowl and shoreline wading bird species at risk and emphasize the importance of protecting their habitat, especially during the nesting period between mid-March to mid-August to prevent off-leash dogs accessing the wetlands.
- SEAC supports Friends of Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. recommendation for City Council to ban the use of all pesticides (i.e., Avitrol) for pigeon control in Saskatoon.

Sincerely,



**Angela Spence**  
**Chair, Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee**