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**From:** City Council  
**Subject:** RTS - Candace Savage - Swale Watchers - NUP  
**Attachments:** RR 8.5.2..National Urban Park- Vision, Governance and Boundaries.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2026 3:40 PM  
**To:** City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>  
**Subject:** Request to Speak - Candace Savage - National Urban Park - Vision, Governance and Boundaries

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Sunday, March 22, 2026 - 15:37

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Sunday, March 22, 2026

**To:** Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** Candace

**Last Name:** Savage

**Phone Number :** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] Albert Avenue

**Ward:** Ward 6

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Swale Watchers

**What do you wish to do ?:** Request to Speak

**If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely:** In person

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** City Council March 25

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** 8.5.2 National Urban Park: Vision, Governance and Boundaries

**Comments:**

We need your help, please. Could you please swap this new version of our submission, RR 8.5.2, for the one we submitted earlier? The new text reads as follows:

March 22, 2026

Re: 8.5.2 National Urban Park: Vision, Governance and Boundaries

First, we would like to thank Council, especially Councillor DuBois, for bringing a measure of clarity to the discussion of this matter at the Governance and Priorities Committee and for acknowledging the public interest in the protection of the Swales.

Over the last five years, seven cities across the country have been vying for the honour of creating Canada's newest and most exciting National Urban Park. Of these, four candidates have fallen behind, but three have successfully completed Pre-feasibility studies and progressed into the Planning phase. These three front-runners are Halifax, Windsor and – applause! – Saskatoon.

Halifax's entry is a stunning landscape of forest, rivers and lakes right on the edge of the city. Imagine being able to reach Waskesiu-caliber hiking trails and canoeable waterways by taking a city bus. That is what Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes National Urban Park will have to offer.

Meanwhile, Windsor is forging ahead with its Ojibway Prairie initiative. A year ago, in March, 2025, the federal government pledged \$36.1 million over five years to establish Windsor's park, plus an operating budget of \$4.6 million per year. At the moment, the City of Windsor is anticipating a further commitment of funds to purchase additional land, with an announcement expected by the end of this month.

It seems that Saskatoon's proposal may be a step behind. If Saskatoon wants to shine in this company, we need to show up at our boldest and best. And that means foregrounding the boundaries for the Northeast and Small Swales that Council endorsed in 2023.

Today, you are not being asked to make a final decision about Swale boundaries. That will come at a later date, in the context of the UH3 Concept Plan. But what you can do today is send a clear message to Parks Canada that Saskatoon is serious about creating a National Urban Park that is worthy of recognition and deserving of generous funding.

The boundaries that Council endorsed in 2023 do not have the power of law, but they are not just idle chitchat either. They represent an honourable compromise, based on careful consideration, extensive data and sound, scientific principles. Council's thoughtful recommendations deserve to be respected by City administration, by Saskatoon Land and by Council itself.

In many years of observing Saskatoon City Council, we have never seen a case in which explicit instructions from elected leadership have been so blatantly ignored and overwritten by the hired help.

And that brings us to our second point. In February of 2023, Council did more than provide guidance on Swale boundaries. You also instructed City administration to work with all stakeholders during development of the Concept Plan for UH3. And it's not just City Councillors who have been calling for public engagement. The public itself – as represented by participants in an online forum on UH3 back in 2022 – loudly made the same demand. "Meaningful, deliberate, early, and ongoing engagement" is also a requirement of Parks Canada under their National Urban Parks policy.

Way back when, Saskatoon Land did host a half-day workshop on UH3 that brought contractors and home-building groups together with conservation advocates. This gathering was animated by a remarkable degree of agreement among the diverse participants on a desire to protect the Swales. It was a good beginning but that's where it stopped. If a report on the session was issued, it was so vague and obscure that we can't even remember it.

Over the past couple of years, Swale Watchers have reached out to Saskatoon Land several times, looking for updates or hoping for an opportunity to share our expertise, but they were clearly not interested in talking to us. They repeatedly said they wanted to know what we wanted to know, yet they were unwilling to explain what they were doing. Without that information, it was impossible to know what questions to ask. Saskatoon Land has demonstrated a serious lack of effective public engagement.

But back to the documents you are considering today.

#### On Governance

To date, the steering committee for the proposed National Urban Park has consisted solely of municipal and Indigenous governments, together with Wanuskewin and Meewasin. Neither the public nor the conservation community has been included in decision-making. This exclusion may have made sense in the early stages, when gaining the approval of land owners and other rights holders was paramount. But with these approvals granted and the Park poised to begin operation, it is critical that public representatives, including voices from the conservation community, be included on the new advisory committee.

#### On Boundaries

The map presented in Appendix 4 of your meeting package is very confusing, but it does make one thing clear. Important decisions about the Northeast and Small Swales are currently being made behind closed doors. By the time those back-room decisions are made public, all the i's will be dotted and t's will be crossed, and there will be very little opportunity for change. Conserving nature in an urban context is not easy. As Swale Watchers, we want opportunities to help identify problems and find solutions.

#### Recommendations

In summary, we urge you to --

- (1) Make the best possible case for funding by Parks Canada by reaffirming the boundaries for the Northeast and Small Swale that were approved by Council in 2023, acknowledging that the final decision is yet to be made;
- (2) Express support for the Governance model presented for the Park, subject to the addition of representation from the public and the conservation community on the advisory committee; and
- (3) Instruct City administration to create opportunities for transparent and authentic engagement with Swale Watchers and other members of the conservation community regarding any decisions that will affect the health or protection of the Northeast and Small Swales.

Meghan Mickelson & Candace Savage, co-chairs

Swale Watchers

<https://swalewatchers.org/>

#### Attachments:

- [RR 8.5.2..National Urban Park- Vision, Governance and Boundaries.pdf](#) 139.08 KB

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No**



March 20, 2026

Re: 8.5.2 National Urban Park: Vision, Governance and Boundaries

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.am800cklw.com/news/city-officials-encouraged-by-talks-with-parks-canada-over-help-to-buy-land-for-ojibway-national-urban-park.html>

The boundaries that Council endorsed in 2023 do not have the power of law, but they are not just idle chitchat either. They represent an honourable compromise, based on careful consideration, extensive data and sound, scientific principles. Council's thoughtful recommendations deserve to be respected by City administration, by Saskatoon Land and by Council itself.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/corporate-performance/communications/Engagement/2022.06.01\\_-\\_pathways\\_for\\_an\\_integrated\\_green\\_network\\_-\\_final\\_engagement\\_report.pdf](https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/corporate-performance/communications/Engagement/2022.06.01_-_pathways_for_an_integrated_green_network_-_final_engagement_report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> National%20Urban%20Parks%20Policy.pdf

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### **On Boundaries**

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### **Recommendations**

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