
Saskatoon Strides – 2017 - Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability

Recommendation

That the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated May 28, 2018, be received as information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information to City Council on the City of Saskatoon's (City's) accomplishments in the areas of service, savings, and sustainability in 2017. The City continues to look for innovative service delivery alternatives that reduce the costs of municipal services and positively impact the value to citizens, ensuring programs and services that matter most to citizens are provided.

With a vision of being the best-managed city in Canada, the City is committed to continue to explore and implement new ways to improve service, increase savings, and grow Saskatoon in a sustainable way.

Report Highlights

1. With a focus on improving service to citizens, Service Saskatoon continues to focus on how the City delivers front-line service and connects citizens to the answers and information they need – quickly, simply, and seamlessly.
2. The City identified savings, additional funding, and revenues totalling over \$30M. Increased operational efficiencies and service level enhancements resulted in savings of over \$4.5M. Federal grant funding was approved for \$431,000. Saskatoon Land delivered \$25.1M in financial returns.
3. The City's various environmental programs helped reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by approximately 48,000 tonnes CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent), equal to removing 10,300 cars off roads. Civic programs also diverted approximately 27,900 tonnes of waste from the Saskatoon Landfill.
4. The City received awards and recognition locally, nationally and globally from the industry and citizens on services it provides.
5. As part of the Mayor and City Council's initiative for a healthy City Hall, an employee engagement survey was conducted. Employee response rate was 53% and the results showed that 75.6% of respondents are engaged or almost engaged.

Strategic Goals

Focusing on the long-term goal of being the best-managed city in Canada, this report aligns with all seven strategic goals and highlights areas that have gone beyond conventional approaches to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of citizens.

Background

City Council, at its meeting held on February 7, 2005, resolved:

- “1. That City Council confirm its commitment to continually attempt to increase the corporation’s productivity and efficiency, and
2. That City Council instruct Administration to prepare a report annually on efficiencies implemented in the previous year.”

Report

The City is committed to high standards of performance and to providing services that matter most to citizens. The Continuous Improvement Strategy, introduced in 2013, is a long-term strategy that focuses on using innovative means to improve municipal services and operations.

With a focus on improving service to citizens, Service Saskatoon continued to work with divisions to improve internal processes and to define and document clear service level agreements for several public-facing core services. Work continues with the Information Technology division to secure an enterprise Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The CRM will be key to providing a reliable and consistent citizen service across the organization through information access, service request tracking and accountability. Customer service training programs and the Employee Code of Citizen Service were introduced to establish standardized processes and to ensure staff are trained, equipped, and ready to respond. Service Saskatoon’s vision is to provide an exceptional and consistent experience to citizens every time, through the new customer service delivery model, and creating a culture of citizen-centric service in the organization.

In addition to highlighting efforts the City is making in improving services to citizens, Saskatoon Strides – 2017, Our Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability (Attachment 1) highlights how the City has:

- Identified over \$30M in operational efficiencies and additional revenue, including \$25.1M in financial returns from Saskatoon Land, and over \$4.5M in operational efficiencies and enhanced service levels.
- Received funding through three Federal infrastructure grant programs totalling \$431,000. These programs help support key civic programs and to offset capital and operating costs in the City’s budget.
- Grown in a sustainable way by reducing civic Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by approximately 48,000 tonnes CO₂e, the equivalent of taking 10,300 cars off roads. Civic programs also diverted 27,900 tonnes of waste from the Saskatoon Landfill, contributing to reduced GHG emissions and extending the life of the landfill.

Initiatives that have made a positive impact and realized improvements in City services, savings, and sustainability are highlighted in the report and associated savings are incorporated into the budget to help offset the cost of growth and reduce reliance on property taxes.

The report also documents numerous local, national, and global awards and recognition that the City has received throughout the year from citizens and organizations. Additionally, spotlight stories that highlight innovations and achievements of divisions, teams, and individuals are featured. Celebrating these successes fosters a positive, productive, and innovative organizational culture which engages and empowers employees to build a better city.

In an effort to promote a healthy City Hall, an employee engagement survey conducted in July 2017 by McLean & Company, an independent third-party provider, had a 53% response rate. Results show that 75.6% of respondents are engaged or almost engaged which is in line with the benchmark of 75.3% for other organizations using the McLean & Company survey. Action plans focused on maintaining areas where employee engagement is high and improving on areas where engagement is low will be developed through 2018. Annual pulse surveys and a biennial survey will measure employee engagement on an ongoing basis to ensure we continue to focus on being an employer of choice.

Employees who are passionate about their work and are committed to the City's goals are more productive and will deliver a higher quality of service, thereby ensuring that the City is a great place to live, work, learn and play.

Communication Plan

A copy of Saskatoon Strides – 2017, Our Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability is posted on the City of Saskatoon website under financial reporting, and highlighted to citizens via the City's social media channels. Hard copies will be forwarded to stakeholder organizations including the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, North Saskatoon Business Association, and Business Improvement Districts.

Financial Implications

As outlined in the report, \$30M in operational efficiencies, service level enhancements, and additional funding and revenue has been identified across the organization.

Examples include:

- Saskatoon Land generated \$25.1M in returns. Financial returns from Land Development operations stay in Saskatoon and are allocated for use in capital projects that would otherwise be funded through the property taxes or borrowing. Since 2007, Saskatoon Land has allocated \$123.3M in net proceeds from the sale of property in Hampton Village, Willowgrove, Rosewood, and Evergreen.
- Funding approval was granted for \$431,000 through three Federal programs: the Rail Safety Improvement Program, the Climate Innovation Program – Climate and Asset Management Network, and the Climate Innovation Program – Climate Change Mitigation Business Plan.
- Operational efficiencies have a direct impact on the amount of property taxes collected, and these efficiencies and savings resulted in approximately 1% of avoided property tax increase.
- The savings are a result of a combination of efficiencies. For example, some savings are due to better use of materials and supplies, reducing the amount of

new tax dollars requested to run operations. There were savings in staff time by replacing manual processes with technology which allows staff to focus on providing services to citizens, instead of processing paper work.

- Streamlining operations through multi-divisional civic service reviews and internal process reviews identified over \$1.4M in savings.
- A number of continuous improvement initiatives in the Information Technology division resulted in over \$800,000 savings across several divisions in 2017.

Environmental Implications

Environmental initiatives helped reduce civic GHG emissions by approximately 48,000 tonnes CO₂e, the equivalent of taking over 10,300 cars off roads. Civic programs also diverted approximately 27,900 tonnes of waste from the Saskatoon Landfill.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no options, public and/or stakeholder involvement, policy, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

The 2018 Service, Savings and Sustainability report will be tabled with City Council in second quarter 2019.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachment

1. Saskatoon Strides – 2017 - Our Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability

Report Approval

Written by: Scott Bastian, Performance Improvement Coordinator
Reviewed by: Kim Matheson, Director of Employee Experience & Performance
Approved by: Dan Willems, Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department

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