

North Commuter Parkway Opening – Communications Strategy Summary

At its meeting on August 27, 2018, City Council requested the following:

“8. That the Administration report to the Northeast Swale Watchers working group regarding what is being done for education and what types of signage is being considered including what opportunities for collaboration there will be with the Meewasin Valley Authority prior to the opening of the roadway with a follow-up report presented to the appropriate Standing Policy Committee.”

This document summarizes the communication initiatives that occurred ahead of the North Commuter Parkway opening to ensure there was appropriate awareness of the importance of the Northeast Swale (Swale), and of the work that has been done to ensure appropriate development in and around the Swale. These initiatives were discussed at the Northeast Swale Working Group (Swale Working Group) meeting on September 4, 2018. A summary of these initiatives was also provided to the Swale Watchers ahead of the North Commuter Parkway opening.

October 2 – NCP Bridge Opening Event

Media packages will include background on the Northeast Swale and the conservation considerations that were included in the design (see pages 3 to 5).

Social Media Posts

Starting October 2, 2018, six social media posts (one every other day) on City of Saskatoon (City) media sites (Twitter/Facebook) were made to educate the public on the opening of the North Commuter Parkway, the speed limits, and the conservation of the Northeast Swale.

City of Saskatoon Website

Additional Northeast Swale information was added to the North Commuter Parkway project page (www.saskatoon.ca/bridging), and a new Northeast Swale specific page was created (<http://saskatoon.ca/swale>).

Welcome to the Northeast Swale Signage

Four additional “Welcome to the Northeast Swale” signs were installed at major entrance points to the Swale - two along McOrmond Drive (one at each side of the Northeast Swale), one at the corner of Agra Road and Central Avenue, and one along Fedoruk Road, near the Southwest corner of Aspen Ridge.

Electronic Message Boards

Temporary variable electronic message boards were placed alongside McOrmond Drive near the entrances to the Northeast Swale displaying a message about wildlife and obeying the speed limit.

Roadway Speed Map

A map was created showing the changes in the speed limit along McOrmond Drive, Central Avenue, and the North Commuter Parkway (see page 5). It was included in media packages for North Commuter Parkway opening and is posted on the City of Saskatoon webpage.

Speed Enforcement

The Saskatoon Police Service (Police Service) was made aware of the opening date of the North Commuter Parkway and did do speed enforcement from the beginning of the North Commuter Parkway opening. The Transportation and Construction Department (Transportation) was monitoring traffic as well. If speed is identified as an issue, the Police Service and Transportation will work together to address it.

CONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE NORTHEAST SWALE



Before and during construction of the McOrmond Drive and Central Avenue extensions, many considerations were made in order to help conserve and protect the Northeast Swale (the Swale), as well as the wetlands, wildlife, and grasslands within it.

The following wildlife friendly design features have been built in and will be monitored for years to come.

- **Reduced speeds and narrowed roadways through the Swale**
 - There is a 50 km/h speed limit on the narrowed roadways through the Swale to help prevent wildlife collisions and to reduce impact adjacent habitat.
- **Installation of wildlife-friendly fencing**
 - Fencing has been installed along a portion of the west side of Central Avenue to reduce the amount of animal-human interactions.
 - This fencing allows for the movement of animals over and under the fence, with the use of smooth wire on the top and bottom and barbed-wire in the middle.
- **Development of natural contamination control**
 - Storm water from the roads flows through vegetated swales with rock check dams and into sedimentation basins before the water is discharged into the Swale.
- **Installation of Dark Sky Compliant Lighting**
 - Saskatoon Light and Power installed energy efficient Dark Sky Compliant Lighting to preserve the natural dark light cycles of the inhabitants of the area, while also not releasing any light above 90 degrees.
- **Signage**
 - “Wildlife Crossing” and “No Stopping” signage is in place for the safety of both drivers and wildlife.
- **Use of a Custom grass seed mix**
 - A custom grass seed mix is being used around the swales to help with weed management, invasive species prevention and erosion control.
- **Built-in animal and amphibian crossings under the roads**
 - Crossings are in place for the safe movement of small animals and amphibians. The entrances of these crossings are to simulate natural areas with the use of rocks and plants.

Resources

- **Northeast Swale Development Guidelines (2012)** were developed with various stakeholders, including the Meewasin Valley Authority (Meewasin), and are intended to ensure minimal impact to the Swale from adjacent development, roads and infrastructure.
- The **Northeast Swale Resource Management Plan (2013)** is a description of management techniques appropriate to a natural area, including prescribed burning and grazing to manage invasive species and to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- The **Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan (2015)** is a strategy to conserve biodiversity, accommodate educational programming, interpret cultural and natural history, and support passive recreation activities. The Master Plan refers to the portion of the Swale within Saskatoon city limits, which is approximately 5 kilometres long covering 300 hectares.

How You Can Help

Conserving the Swale cannot be done without our community. When in the Swale, please:

- Take photographs of this beautiful area;
- Enjoy watching for interesting wildlife;
- Bike on developed pathways or walk around the area; and
- Consider planting native species on your property and use dark sky lighting if you live in the area.

Please don't:

- Dump waste or garbage;
- Bring your dogs (no dogs in the Ecological Core);
- Use motorized vehicles; and
- Pick plants.

More Information

For more information on the Swale, please visit meewasin.com or contact the Meewasin at **306-665-6887**.



