



Growing Together

A vision for Saskatoon in the new economy

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INTRODUCTION

From the swiftly flowing river where Saskatchewan gets its name, to the vast, ever-changing sea of sky above us, Saskatoon is a special place.

Our city deserves a vision for growth that matches its expansive energy. Over the past year, people from across the Saskatoon Region consulted with SREDA to create this vision. These organizations and individuals helped us articulate how Saskatoon's growth can secure a thriving future for all involved.

This vision for growth is meant to align with and support the national, western Canadian, provincial and regional growth plans already in existence. It will act as a foundational document to guide SREDA's efforts. We intend for it to be a living strategy that not only prompts progress on these key opportunities over the next five years, but also remains flexible to new opportunities and challenges as they arise.

4 Focus Areas:



Continue to be a global leader in natural resources



Be a center where industries grow through innovation



Be a leader in Indigenous economic reconciliation



Be known as Canada's most livable mid-sized city

Saskatoon's proud, energetic people are already shaping the future. We must continue to build upon what makes us who we are, from our innovation in the face of icy winters to local Indigenous history spanning thousands of years. We have the opportunity to create a diversified economy that reflects both where we have been and where we are going - a future that engages all of the people who make our beautiful city such a great place to be.

Let's make the most of it.



WHY NOW?

Saskatoon is at a pivotal time in our history, one where we have the opportunity to engage in meaningful economic reconciliation with the growing Indigenous population of Saskatoon and develop a talented local workforce.

We can also further diversify our economy through the creation of value-added services in our natural resource sectors. Globally, we are seeing a massive shift towards the innovative use of technology to solve problems.

Surrounded by a wealth of resources, Saskatoon has what the world needs. With an economy historically tied to commodities, our prosperity has closely matched the shifting fortunes of commodity markets. Our city is now in a moment of transformation. With a strong research sector and a growing technology sector, we must seize this moment and continue to bolster and diversify our economy.

OUR PROCESS

Over the past year, SREDA engaged more than 500 business leaders, industry associations, community stakeholders and Saskatonians. With their deep insights and valued input, we were able to create a vision of how Saskatoon's growth can secure a thriving future for all involved. Our process was:



Thank you to our key contributors:

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OUR CITY

Saskatoon sits on Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional Homeland of the Métis, land that now acts as a home to people of all nations. We are known for our many bridges; they are an iconic symbol of our city's creativity and determination. They connect us, sustaining our ability to function as a community. In this growth vision for Saskatoon, we highlight the four bridges representative of Saskatoon's new economy: the Traffic Bridge, the University Bridge, Chief Mistawasis Bridge and the Broadway Bridge. These bridges, just like the focus areas articulated in this document, offer a meaningful path forward. We hope that whenever you look at these bridges, you are reminded of this vision for growth.

Traffic Bridge

We are a city surrounded by the resources that feed, fuel and fertilize the world. With half the world's potash reserves and almost a quarter of its uranium production, our province is a leader in mining. Though once known as the breadbasket of Canada, Saskatchewan uses its vast farmland - 40% of Canada's total - to act as the world's top exporter of many crops in addition to wheat, from lentils to canola. Saskatchewan is also rich in energy. We are Canada's second largest producer of oil and third largest of natural gas. These foundational industries are symbolized by the Traffic Bridge, once the oldest bridge in the city, now rebuilt for the new century.

University Bridge

Saskatoon is at the center of it all. As a hub for business and amenities as well as technology, entrepreneurship and research, we have the inventive ideas to bolster the resources that surround us. Expansive, big sky thinking comes naturally to us - after all, we are the land of the living skies. Local researchers are solving problems like securing sustainable food production, preventing disease and ensuring nuclear energy is clean and affordable. Our technology companies are creating software that improves efficiency in areas like restaurant scheduling, satellite communication and digital marketing. Our entrepreneurial spirit is embodied in the University Bridge, which links the innovative University of Saskatchewan campus with our dynamic downtown core.

Chief Mistawasis Bridge

Saskatoon is young, diverse and vibrant. The growing local Indigenous population is a key part of that vibrancy. We are home to eight urban reserves, one of the highest concentrations in a Canadian municipality, and we are leading the way with policies focused on the engagement of Indigenous businesses. Our city embraces the new and the ancient, from the recently built Chief Mistawasis Bridge, named in the spirit of reconciliation after the first signatory of Treaty 6, to Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a National Historic Site that teaches visitors about and celebrates local Indigenous culture. While we have more work to do, there are ever increasing opportunities to take part in the process of reconciliation.

Broadway Bridge

The people of Saskatoon make our city welcoming and distinct, with a strong sense of community. Taking a walk along the Broadway Bridge, representative of our incredible people, can lead you to our riverbank trail, the Meewasin. From there, you can explore nature in the center of the city or head to many creative businesses or restaurants led by incredible chefs. We have the benefits of being a small, friendly city, with the amenities and opportunities of a much larger center. And we are growing - strategically. We envision Saskatoon as a place where ambitious people and businesses can thrive.

Saskatoon has the resources the world needs, including a collaborative and entrepreneurial population. What's more, we are a welcoming, energizing place where people from around the world can come to solve important global challenges.

FOCUS AREAS

Continue to be a global leader in natural resources

Saskatoon is surrounded by the resources that feed, fuel and fertilize the world. Much of our growth in the 20th century was powered by our abundant natural resources. Represented by the Traffic Bridge, one of the most recognizable monuments in our city, these foundational industries provided a strong base upon which to thrive. They continue to do so today, and we intend for Saskatoon to remain a global leader in natural resources into the future.

Saskatchewan is rich in energy. Canada is one of the world's top oil producers, and our province is the second largest producer of oil in the country, with 178.4 million barrels supplied in 2018. Not only that, but we also act as the third largest provider of natural gas in Canada. Combined, oil and gas make up 15% of Saskatchewan's GDP. We have the opportunity to reinforce our strength in this area and expand its use of technology, thereby increasing our potential and reducing our environmental impact.

With half the world's potash reserves and almost a quarter of its uranium production, our province is a leader in mining. We are home to the Canadian head offices for potash companies like Nutrien, BHP and K+S Potash Canada, as well as the head office for uranium producer Cameco. Our city is the center for mining innovation and is poised to be an ideal option as the future home of remote offices for high-tech mining sites in Saskatchewan. We also possess the innovation to bolster these resources.



Though once known as the breadbasket of Canada, Saskatchewan uses its vast farmland - 40% of Canada's total - to act as the world's top exporter of many crops in addition to wheat, from lentils to canola. We now offer value-added exports in addition to raw ingredients, making us a global food supplier ready to feed the world of the future. This is especially true given plant-based diets' increasing popularity, which offers Saskatchewan the opportunity to provide protein across the globe to established and emerging markets alike.

Forestry is the second largest industry in Northern Saskatchewan, and growth in this industry can provide thousands of additional jobs to the area. Improvements to employment in the North strengthen Indigenous economic reconciliation, as over 30% of the forestry workforce are Indigenous. Growth in our forestry industry also brings opportunities for biofuels, biomass and other forms of efficiencies.

To continue to be a global leader in natural resources, we intend to pursue four key tactics:

- Actively promote the global value of Saskatoon's natural resource sectors
- Support the attraction of value-added processing facilities to the Saskatoon Region
- Encourage more Saskatoon entrepreneurs and businesses to become export ready
- Identify opportunities to support the use of innovation to advance natural resource sectors, particularly in sustainability

FOCUS AREAS

Be a center where industries grow through innovation

The University Bridge connects Saskatoon's downtown core with the University of Saskatchewan, linking industry to innovation. This bridge represents our goal of growth through big ideas, ambition and technology. Researchers and entrepreneurs throughout our city are leading the way forward for this goal. We intend to foster that drive.

Saskatoon has always been a leader in agriculture and biosciences, producing research and technologies to further the industry. The University of Saskatchewan is a world-leading agriculture research center and collaborates with partner organizations like the Global Institute for Food Security and Global Institute for Water Security to put their research to use. A wide variety of other organizations dedicated to research and development in biosciences are located on campus at Innovation Place, one of North America's most successful university technology parks. VIDO-InterVac is one of these organizations, focusing on developing solutions to prevent and control infectious diseases.

Saskatoon is home to the Canadian Light Source, a national synchrotron light source facility. Ag-West Bio, which helps commercialize new biotechnologies in Saskatchewan, is also located in our city. We are set up for success in growing the protein industry as well as many other agricultural areas through our outstanding research facilities and talent.



Saskatoon has been described as "Sasktech" and the "Silicon Valley of the Prairies." Our entrepreneurial spirit is rich in our technology sector. We have many successful entrepreneurs who have grown their companies to be major employers, brought in external venture capital and become important contributors to Saskatoon's economy. We are also home to Co.Labs, Saskatchewan's technology incubator, with more than 30 companies at all stages of growth. As our city evolves, we want to continue to support start-up and scale-up tech and research companies through a variety of programs.

In Saskatoon, we are ambitious. Our entrepreneurs, scientists and industrial trailblazers are all leaders in their fields. We want the world to know about the world-class work they are doing. More importantly, we want the world to know about Saskatoon and the opportunities our city offers to become a leader, whatever your field. We are a city where driven people can come to solve interesting problems that the whole world faces. Now is the time to start telling that story.

To be a center where industries grow through innovation, we intend to pursue four key tactics:

- Promote existing initiatives and supports for technology, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Support ongoing education and retention efforts for local talent
- Assist in talent attraction initiatives nationally and internationally
- Develop business incentives for emerging industries

FOCUS AREAS

Be a leader in Indigenous economic reconciliation

Indigenous economic reconciliation is represented by our newest bridge, Chief Mistawasis Bridge. This land, this place we all call home, is part of Treaty 6 territory and the Homeland of the Métis. Chief Mistawasis signed Treaty 6 in 1876; Chief Mistawasis Bridge was named after his leadership in recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. For this vision, we focus on the economic aspects of that process, ensuring that those disadvantaged by our history have access to a thriving future.

Saskatoon is home to eight urban reserves, one of the highest concentrations in a Canadian municipality. We are also leading the way with policies focused on the engagement of Indigenous businesses: the City of Saskatoon implemented a more inclusive procurement policy in 2018 and larger organizations like Nutrien also have Indigenous procurement policies. On top of that, our citizens and businesses are involved in a variety of initiatives to further inclusive economic development, one example of which is 98 organizations coming together to form Reconciliation Saskatoon.

However, we still have a long way to go. Indigenous peoples are currently underrepresented in education and the workforce. Saskatoon, like most of Canada, is facing a social and economic gap. Addressing this gap through the process of Indigenous economic reconciliation is a crucial opportunity for positive change as well as economic growth in our city.



In 2016, the Saskatoon CMA's self-identified Indigenous population was 10.6% of the total and growing quickly. The provincial unemployment rate for Indigenous peoples, however, was 14.5% in 2018, while the overall provincial and Saskatoon averages were 6.2% and 6.8%, respectively. Indigenous peoples' average annual income was \$32,976 in 2016, with 68.5% considered low income, whereas the provincial average annual income was \$49,409, with 12.8% of the population considered low income. In education, the on-time graduation rate of Indigenous students from the Saskatoon Public School Division was 38% in the 2016-17 school year, compared to 78% of non-Indigenous students.

Educational institutions in Saskatoon are working to improve their preparation of Indigenous youth for the future. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has developed an Indigenous Student Success Strategy, and the University of Saskatchewan has made "transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation" a key part of their strategic plan. These efforts will be bolstered by other institutions focused on Indigenous success, like the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) and the Gabriel Dumont Institute, which have been empowering First Nations and Métis students in Saskatoon for years.

To be a leader in Indigenous economic reconciliation, we intend to pursue four key tactics:

- Respond to the TRC's Calls to Action related to Indigenous business development and employment
- Create programs that accelerate the growth of Indigenous leaders and businesses
- Encourage and support Indigenization in local businesses
- Incorporate Indigenous arts and culture into city infrastructure

FOCUS AREAS

Be known as Canada's most livable mid-sized city

Saskatoon's people are humble but strong, creative and ambitious. You can see our community's spirit on a cold day's snowstorm, when neighbours will leave the comfort of their homes and cars to help push out vehicles stuck in the snow. The Broadway Bridge encapsulates this energy, linking the vibrant Broadway area to our dynamic downtown core. We want the world to know about the spirit of Saskatoon and how enjoyable it is to live here.

Saskatoon is a great place to call home. Our city is community-oriented and poised for growth. Young professionals and families can afford to own a home here, and we have the amenities and career opportunities of a bigger city. Saskatoon also benefits from shorter commutes, with the average drive time by car being 18.7 minutes, 28% lower than the Canadian average. Both of these measures show how Saskatoon offers a high quality of life.

Our city is also full of breathtaking views, vibrant streets and endless opportunities to explore. The South Saskatchewan River flows through Saskatoon, giving us 60-plus kilometres of Meewasin Trail on its banks where we can explore nature in the heart of the city. We are home to the Remai Modern, a world-class museum providing a taste of modern and contemporary art. Our neighbourhoods are brimming with culinary experiences, and local is our choice when it comes to purchasing goods and services. We have entrepreneurs in abundance offering everything from artfully designed clothing touting local pride to craft beer, wine and spirits.



We are a creative and dynamic city, an ideal place to grow. The City of Saskatoon is planning for a vital future, having created both a transit and corridor plan to prepare for a growing population. These plans include the introduction of a bus rapid transit system (BRT) and a focus on infill development near transit corridors. The City is also preparing for the future of our downtown by determining the location of a new arena and event center, planning the development of our North Downtown neighbourhood and opening areas like River Landing for development.

Saskatoon is a small city with the amenities and opportunities of a big city. As our city grows, we want to ensure we keep the community-oriented feel that makes Saskatoon unique. By focusing on infill development, more efficient transportation options and expanding the arts, culture and entertainment options our city has to offer, we aim to keep our city affordable, easy to get around and an enjoyable, welcoming place to live.

To be known as Canada's most livable mid-sized city, we intend to pursue three key tactics:

- Develop a brand for Saskatoon
- Grow the vibrancy of the downtown core
- Enhance city connectivity through improved transportation options



THE PATH FORWARD

By focusing on the areas outlined in this document, Saskatoon can move into the future with a vision for what growth will look like in the new economy.

Many individuals and organizations throughout Saskatoon were consulted as part of building this vision. Their input provided valuable guidance for how Saskatoon can make the most of its opportunities and challenges. Likewise, implementing these tactics will take the strength of many people's actions. SREDA will refer to this vision for growth as a foundational document as we look to the future. We intend to work on an ongoing basis with the organizations involved in developing this vision. The way forward is collaboration.

We hope you will join us.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

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