**Appendix 2 – Saskatoon's City Centre and DEED Plan – Interim Strategic Directions Report**

**Cover Page**

The cover page for the “Saskatoon’s City Centre and Downtown Event and Entertainment District Plan” dated February 2024. It features a background photo of the Downtown Saskatoon skyline and the South Saskatchewan River, there are green trees lining the river and the clouds in the sky are reflected in the river. The logos for the City of Saskatoon and the Journey to the District (Event Centre/Arena, Convention Centre, and BRT) are at the bottom of the page.

**Summary**

The Downtown Event and Entertainment District (District) is a key component of the Downtown, within the City Centre. This interim report presents the Strategic Directions for Saskatoon’s City Centre and Downtown Event and Entertainment District Plan. It outlines the strategic directions that the City of Saskatoon (City) is currently pursuing through an update to the City Centre Plan that integrates a plan for the Downtown Event and Entertainment District.

The focus of this report includes the potential establishment of a Downtown Event and Entertainment District within Saskatoon’s broader City Centre. City staff, in consultation with technical consultants and incorporating input from the community, aim to update the City Centre Plan, incorporating decisions that have been made and changes in policy and context since its approval in 2013.

This report serves as a roadmap, offering a vision and strategies to facilitate the finalization of the City Centre and District Plan. The intended outcome is the development of the strategic moves, directions and actions to achieve the identified outcomes for the City Centre and District.

**Land Acknowledgement**

As we work together on city-building projects, we acknowledge our ancestors and future generations. We honour Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, by sharing this land under Treaty with the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Métis, Dene, and Non-Indigenous peoples. We commit to Truth and Reconciliation and the Calls to Action.

Indigenous Peoples of primarily Cree, Dakota and Saulteaux have called the area known as Saskatoon home for thousands of years. Today, Saskatoon is home to Indigenous peoples from a diversity of cultures and language groups.

The City of Saskatoon (City) recognizes the distinct order of government of First Nations and Métis and is committed to maintaining strong relationships through meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Strengthening cooperation and mutual support by working in partnership with Indigenous communities towards respective community goals and objectives is vital to fostering more inclusive communities.

Images:

Image 1: Indian Treaty No 6 – 1876 Medal. The medal is silver with a red ribbon, depicting two people shaking hands with the sun and tipis in the background.

Image 2: Homeland of the Métis Medal. The medal is silver with a blue ribbon, depicting a Red River Cart, a Métis sash, a bison, and an infinity symbol.

**Page 1**

1. Introduction

Downtown serves as both the geographical and metaphorical heart of Saskatoon. To unlock its full potential, we must wholeheartedly embrace and invest in Downtown, recognizing its pivotal role as the vibrant heart of our city.

Downtown is...

A Place to Work. Highest concentration of jobs in the city

An Economic Force. Over 10% of the city’s total municipal property tax, less than 1% of its area

A Place connected with Nature. 60% of Downtown is within a 5 minute walk of river trails

A Place to Connect. Saskatoon’s transportation and social hub

A Public Service Hub. The city’s administrative hub easily accessible to residents

A Place for Inspiration. Remai Modern, Remai Arts Centre, Sid Buckwold Theatre, Central Library and several art galleries

An Emblem. Saskatoon’s image to the world

A Place to Discover. The primary destination for visitors.

Image. The header of the page is an aerial view of Downtown Saskatoon focusing on the Bessborough Hotel looking west along a tree lined 21st Street East towards the Midtown Plaza.

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About the Plan

Saskatoon’s City Centre and Downtown Event and Entertainment District Plan (the Plan) will be a non-statutory plan outlining the vision and strategic initiatives to support the Downtown, District and broader City Centre. Achieving the Plan’s vision will require building on momentum, strategic investment, multi-party collaboration and adaptability.

Image. A person riding a bike with the Bessborough Hotel and the red Bus Stops Refreshments bus in the background.

**Page 3**

The Downtown Event and Entertainment District

A Downtown Event and Entertainment District (District) will create a place for people to come together from the city and surrounding area. The District positions Downtown as the centre of commercial, tourism, services and entertainment. While Downtown generally attracts residents and visitors, the District itself does not currently meet its potential. The District is presently characterized by surface parking lots and a lack of quality public space and connections with the rest of Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods. An enhanced District will bring more people and activity to the Downtown both on event days, and throughout the year, welcoming visitors and enhancing the overall appeal of Downtown and Saskatoon.

Image. A diagram showing the times of day that current user groups and potential user groups are or are predicted to be in the District between 6am and 2am. Under the category of current user groups, convention visitors are present between 8am and 6pm attending conferences and eating lunch. Theatre visitors are present between 8pm and 12am for the concert or event. Employees are present between 8am and 6pm for office hours and lunch. Civic services are present between 8am and 6pm for municipal services. Under the category of potential user groups, convention visitors are predicted to be present between 8am and 6pm for conference and lunch and between 6pm and 10pm for networking. Theatre visitors are predicted to be present between 4pm and 8pm for pre-event dinner, between 8pm and 12am for the concert or event, and between 12am and 2am for after event drinks. Arena visitors are predicted to be present between 4pm and 8pm for pre-event dinner, between 8pm and 12am for concert or event, and between 12am and 2am for after event drinks. Young professionals are predicted to be present between 12pm and 2pm for lunch, and between 6pm and 2am for networking, dinner and drinks. Residents are predicted to be present between 6am and 8am for morning jogs, between 10am and 4pm for children’s activities, park and library visits, and between 6pm and 10 for dinner, socializing and shopping. Tourists are predicted to be present between 8am and 2am for breakfast, visiting attractions, lunch, dinner, events, and post event drinks. Neighbourhood services are predicted to be present between 10am and 10pm for library, retail and household items. Employees are predicted to be present between 8am and 12am for office hours, lunch, dinner, drinks, and networking. Civic services are predicted to be present between 8am and 6pm for municipal services.

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2. Context and Analysis

Plan Area

Established in the 2013 City Centre Plan, the City Centre encompasses approximately 246 hectares (608 acres). The City Centre includes the Downtown, the District study area and recognizes the pivotal role of Broadway Avenue, 20th Street West and College Drive as contributing to the overall City Centre. While Broadway Avenue, 20th Street West and College Drive significantly contribute to the Downtown and City Centre, detailed plans tailored specifically to those areas will be addressed through the Corridor Planning Program. This Plan will primarily focus on the Downtown and the District.

Images.

Image 1. The header for this page is a photo of a downtown Saskatoon street with mid-rise buildings on both sides of the street, and a centre median with a lamp post and banners hanging from it. There are vehicles parked on the street, and a few green trees on the sidewalk. In the far background there are construction cranes.

Image 2. A satellite map focusing on downtown Saskatoon. The City Centre Boundary, which includes all of downtown, the connections from downtown to 20th Street West, College Drive, and Broadway Avenue is highlighted. The Downtown Entertainment and Event District study area is also highlighted.

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3. Vision and Principles

A safe and vibrant Downtown is a welcoming and inclusive place for all people to come together in cooperative spirit. The Downtown and District supports a strong economy, strengthens our diverse community and attracts people to live, work, play and learn in the Downtown.

Image. A crowd of people clapping above their heads at a concert. There is a purple background and bright lights shining towards the crowd. The source of this image is Sik Pics, Discover Saskatoon.

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Guiding Principles

The development of the City Centre and District Plan have been guided by the following principles:

Reconciliation by honouring Indigenous Peoples, histories, languages and culture. Establish inclusive, respectful and reciprocal processes throughout the planning process that align with and support the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is the City’s Reconciliation Visual Identity. It depicts an inner circle with a beaded City of Saskatoon logo in green and blue. The middle circle is a collection of 8 beaded symbols that show a prairie lily flower, a bison, a hand with a heart in the palm, the Reconciliation Saskatoon logo, a tree with a heart amongst its branches, a turtle, an infinity symbol, and a fire. The outer circle is divided into 4 sections to depict the medicine wheel with a white, yellow, blue and red section.

A distinctive identity through placemaking/placekeeping. Recognize and enhance a Downtown that celebrates the land’s heritage, city’s history, community’s culture and embraces our winter city to foster a year round hub for culture and entertainment.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon showing a park with green grass, several trees, bushes, and a path leading to a decorative water fountain in the middle.

Architectural and public realm design excellence. Inspire a sense of place through high quality facility design, the use of environmental design principles in buildings and public space and embracing all-season design.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon of a building being constructed next to a crane.

Reliable and efficient transportation options. Enhance accessibility and connectivity of all modes of transportation to allow for enjoyable, safe and cost-effective movement of people in, to and around the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon of a sheltered bus stop with a bench and a billboard with signage.

Downtown density with a focus on housing. Plan and encourage a mix of housing choices in the Downtown to attract a diversity of community members.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon of 3 apartment buildings.

Leadership in sustainability and resiliency. Demonstrate and exemplify leadership in sustainability through urban infill choices, economic development, climate resiliency and green infrastructure.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon with a wind turbine, tall buildings, a solar panel and the sun.

A robust and diverse economy. Preserve the Downtown as the cultural, social and employment centre of the community, while encouraging a thriving, diverse economy that attracts local, regional and global employers that generate high quality jobs throughout the Downtown and city.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon that shows a building, with a coin, and a bar graph with an arrow demonstrating that the bars in the graph are increasing.

A healthy and safe community. Support an authentic and welcoming community that promotes equitable opportunities for all to participate, fosters a safe and inclusive environment and cultivates a strong sense of belonging.

Image. Next to this guiding principle is an icon of a circle of people that are overlapping each other.

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4. Supporting Strategies

The City Centre and District Plan will be built around a number of supporting strategies, each based on an understanding of the City Centre’s strengths, impacts and opportunities.

4.1 Public Realm Strategy. Creates streets and public spaces that provide a safe, vibrant and comfortable environment.

4.2 Parks and Open Space Strategy. Focused on developing a system of connected, all-season green and open spaces designed with people and purpose in mind.

4.3 Economy and Land Use Strategy. Creates a range of development and land uses goals that contributes to the Downtown's economic growth and prosperity.

4.4 Connectivity and Mobility Strategy. Expanding on the Public Realm Strategy, this component concentrates on how people move and interact in the Downtown.

4.5 Inclusiveness and Vibrancy Strategy. Ensuring culture and heritage opportunities are integrated to honour Downtown’s heritage, represent Saskatoon’s diversity and showcase its creativity.

4.6 Resilient Infrastructure & Servicing Strategy. Providing a practical and future-focused lens on innovations that allow the Downtown to grow, reduce its environmental impact and become a more resilient place.

Image. The header of the page is a photo of downtown Saskatoon with the Birks clock in the foreground, the Saskatoon Board of Education building, green trees, and parked vehicles along 21st Street E in the middle, and the Bessborough Hotel in the background.

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4.1 Public Realm Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Establish a framework of Downtown street typologies to inform design and guide decision-making around allocation of street space.
* Identify catalyst streetscape projects to directly support adjacent investments in the District and enhance key connections and gateways to the District and Downtown.
* Establish an approach to Placemaking/Placekeeping that reflects Indigenous presence, belonging and cultural continuity, and advances Reconciliation efforts.

Vibrant downtowns and districts are characterized by the presence of great streets, as these streets serve as the public realm where people move through and explore the area, whether by foot, mobility device, bike, scooter, transit or vehicle.

Great streets are designed for people. This involves creating safe, comfortable environments equipped with street furnishings, shade from trees and an inviting atmosphere. Incorporating

transparent ground floor land uses, outdoor seating, pedestrian scale details and aesthetic materials contribute to the vibrancy and activity of these streets.

By investing in the streets and public spaces of the Downtown and District, the City not only enhances civic assets but also lays the groundwork for increased private development investment.

Key Streetscaping Design Elements:

Enhanced Urban Design: Design details and furnishings exhibit a higher level of design treatment and offers spaces that are comfortable for pedestrians.

Image. Next to this element there is an icon that shows two buildings with a tree and the sun.

Street Furniture: Components that augment the pedestrian experience including but not limited to benches, lighting, receptacles, planters and wayfinding.

Image. Next to this element there is an icon that shows a person sitting on a bench, a lamppost, and a garbage bin.

Passive Gathering Space: Passive space in the public realm, such as plazas, seating areas or shared space in adjacent land uses, such as patios, are used for gathering.

Image. Next to this element there is an icon of someone waiting at a bus stop with a tree and bench.

Space for Movement: Active space in the public realm devoted to providing a comfortable through zone for large volumes of pedestrians.

Image. Next to this element is an icon of two people walking along a path.

Enhanced Landscaping: Intensified landscaping with features to capture rainfall, maximize water infiltration, improve the tree canopy and add park like features.

Image. Next to this element is an icon of trees.

On-Street Parking: Allows vehicular parking access and provides a buffer between the pedestrian realm and vehicular traffic lanes.

Image. Next to this element is an icon of a parked vehicle next to a restaurant patio.

Vehicular Movement: The primary function is the movement of vehicles, goods and services. Access management tactics are included to minimize conflict with pedestrians and crossings.

Image. Next to this element is an icon of an aerial view of a 2 lane street with a bus, a truck, and a small vehicle.

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Street Types

Downtown streets are categorized into seven types based on their fundamental roles in street movement and placemaking/placekeeping. Each type is described to convey their intended purpose and outline key elements prioritized in the public realm design.

Image. A map of downtown Saskatoon to show the different street types present. 22nd Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue, Spadina Crescent between 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue, and Pacific Avenue between the Event Centre and 22nd Street are Festival. 23rd Street between Idylwyld Drive and Spadina Crescent, 22nd Street between 2nd Avenue and Spadina Crescent, 3rd Avenue between 25th Street and 19th Street, and Spadina Crescent between 25th Street and 19th Street are all Downtown Parkway. 21st Street between 1st Avenue and Spadina Crescent, Saunders Place, Spadina Crescent between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue, and 2nd Avenue between 25th Street and Spadina Crescent is Signature. 24th Street between 2nd Avenue and Spadina Crescent, 23rd Street between Avenue B and Idylwyld Drive, 21st Street between Avenue B and Idylwyld Drive, 20th Street between Avenue B and Spadina Crescent, and 19th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 4th Avenue, 4th Avenue between 25th Street and the beginning of the Broadway Bridge, 5th Avenue between 25th Street and 22nd Street, and 6th Avenue between 25th Street and 24th Street are Downtown Mixed. 24th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue, Wall Street between 25th Street and 23rd Street, Pacific Avenue between 25th Street and 23rd Street, and Ontario Avenue between 25th Street and 23rd Street are Warehouse. 25th Street between Idylwyld Drive and University Bridge, 22nd Street between Avenue B and Idylwyld Drive, and Idylwyld Drive between 25th Street and 19th Street are Downtown Connector. 1st Avenue between 25th Street and 19th Street is a Major Transit.

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Catalyst Streetscape Projects

The City Centre and District Plan prioritizes the enhancement of 22nd Street and 23rd Street in support of the District Core catalyst facilities. The City Centre and District Plan will support the Imagine Idylwyld concept for Idylwyld Drive, and integrate green elements, low-impact development, and active transportation routes into the 23rd Street Downtown Greenway.

Images.

Image 1: a rendering of what 22nd Street will look like in between the Event Centre and the expanded Convention Centre. There are many people walking on a wide sidewalk, vehicles and bicycles travelling on the street, and the expanded convention centre has wooden panel siding and large glass windows and a large and colourful digital billboard.

Image 2: Proposed 22nd Street cross section. From left to right, this cross section shows people gathering on grass, children playing in the grass, a cluster of trees, people walking with a dog along a sidewalk, a street lamp, a parked vehicle, then 2 lanes of traffic (one vehicle is a bus), followed by another cluster of trees on this side of the street, people walking on a sidewalk, and two people appear to be chatting on grass.

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Placemaking/Placekeeping

The term ‘placemaking’ is often used to describe design and architecture strategies that can be used to make a space more meaningful and provide a closer connection between users and the land. While placemaking strategies are intended to be used in this Plan, the focus also emphasizes placekeeping.

Placekeeping goes beyond placemaking by recognizing that spaces have existed for Indigenous Peoples for millennia. Preserving the character and essence of what this land signifies for Indigenous people is the primary placekeeping priority for the Downtown and District. The emphasis in on recognizing that this place already exists, and measures must be taken to keep the culture and the narrative of the land alive.

Downtown Placekeeping Goals:

* Create and design decolonized public spaces
* Design a public realm that reflects Indigenous presence, belonging and cultural continuity
* Create spaces where Indigenous Peoples feel safe, welcomed and that reflects their cultural identify and lived experience
* Advance Reconciliation efforts

Image: A couple in a side hug looking at a mural. The mural has a variety of images within it, including a sideways house, an airplane, a set of stairs, the sun, Pacman, an upside-down transport truck travelling on a road, a flower, a watermelon, a pineapple, and a taxi travelling on a road.

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4.2 Parks and Open Space Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Identify opportunities to create a network of public parks and open spaces in the Downtown through enhancements to existing parks and establishment of new parks and green connections.
* Support residential development goals by introducing a community park in the Warehouse district that provides both active and passive recreation and leisure opportunities as well as an active transportation linkage to the District.

One of Saskatoon’s greatest assets lies in its extensive river valley along the South Saskatchewan River and the accompanying Meewasin Trail network. Despite this extensive trail network, the Downtown area lacks sufficient green spaces and green connections to access the river from the heart of Downtown or District.

Strategically positioning new parks and open spaces to connect the river valley to other prominent Downtown locations will enhance the livability and experience of Downtown.

Image: a map showing the proposed parks and open space connections downtown. A green arrow is shown connecting Victoria Park along the river towards the north. A green arrow is shown connecting the Event Centre and Spadina Crescent along 22nd Street. A green arrow is shown connecting Avenue B to Spadina Crescent along 23rd Street with a label that says “Connective between Meewasin Trail and District Core”. A thin wavy green arrow is shown connecting 3rd Avenue to Kinsmen Park along 26th Street with a label that says “Future Pedestrian Priority Street connection to Kinsmen Park”. There is a thin wavy green arrow connecting Victoria Park and the Event Centre along Avenue A and Idylwyld Drive. There is a green arrow connecting the Event Centre and 26th Street along a Community Park and Linear Park located in between Ontario Avenue and 1st Avenue. At the north end of this arrow there is a label that says “Future connection along former rail line towards 33rd Street”. The Community Park is between 23rd Street and 24th Street. The linear park is between 24th Street and 25th Street. There is a green arrow pointing south on the Idylwyld or Sid Buckwold Bridge. There is a green arrow connecting 26th Street and Victoria or the Traffic Bridge with a label that says “Green connection towards Farmers Market, River Landing, and bridges”. Other points of interest identified on the map include Isinger Park near Avenue B and Spadina Crescent, K.W. Nasser Plaza located between the buildings at River Landing, River Landing, Friendship Park, Kiwanis Memorial Park, Kinsmen Park, the Farmers Market between Avenue A and B at 19th Street, the public plaza spaces outside the entrances of the Event Centre and the Convention Centre, the new central Library plaza at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 24th Street, a loop for Warehouse District and Downtown Residents that is made by all of the intersecting arrows. This loop would provide connection from the corner of 23rd Street and the Community Park, 1st Avenue and 26th Street, 26th Street and 3rd Avenue, and 3rd Avenue and 23rd Street.

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4.3 Economy and Land Use Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Identify opportunities to foster development in the Downtown
* Support development goals and the land use strategy through strategic place-based investments in amenities
* Adopt new zoning regulations in the Downtown to encourage mid-rise form

Saskatoon’s future prosperity relies on Downtown becoming an attractive destination for living, visiting, establishing businesses and working.

Adapting to the changing economy is imperative for Downtown’s success. A strategic approach is required to overcome the perception that Downtown is exclusively for the office market. Investors need to perceive the Downtown and District as forward-thinking and flourishing, presenting a substantial investment opportunity for the city and region.

Market analysis and Trends

A market demand analysis was conducted for the District and the broader Downtown, incorporating insights from discussions with various stakeholders, including developers and retailers. The market analysis examined development in the residential, office, retail and hospitality markets. Key takeaways include:

* Invest in downtown amenities that act as a catalyst for development.
* Reduced development cost and risk can streamline land for development.
* Review and amend zoning regulations in the Downtown to encourage a mid-rise building form, diversifying the residential market Downtown.
* Focus investment on locations that strengthen connections to existing amenities to maximize impact.
* Encourage office moves from suburban locations to the Downtown.

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Land Use

The Economy and Land Use Strategy aims to facilitate and support a dynamic mix of uses across Downtown and the District, aligning with key insights from the market analysis. It advocates for residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, cultural and community uses.

The Economy and Land Use Strategy will facilitate development by supporting residential development in the Warehouse District, revising the development standards along key gateways such as 22nd Street, and continuing to support mixed-use development along the east and south boundaries of the Downtown adjacent to the river valley. Guided by the market analysis, the land use direction will focus on these three key approaches:

1. Build on the strength of the river valley, which is identified as the single greatest asset for the Downtown and city in the market analysis.
2. Leveraging opportunities in the Warehouse District for a diverse urban residential community, such as lower land values compared to the riverbank areas.
3. Facilitate development that enhances and completes important connections in the Downtown, filling gaps in the urban form and reframing important gateway locations into Downtown.

Image: A rendering of a 5-storey mixed-use building with clouds in the sky and vehicles driving along the road in front of the building.

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Zoning Strategy

In order to achieve and nurture the right mix of uses in the Downtown, the following zoning strategy is under consideration:

Introduction of a new zoning district for the District Core: A new zoning district is being developed for lands within the District Core. The zoning will implement standards to ensure appropriate land use and facilitate high quality building design that integrates with the public realm.

Amendments to the B6 – Downtown Commercial District: Over the past year, a comprehensive review has been conducted to identify potential amendments to the B6 District. Proposed amendments aim to improve the open volume regulations, design guidelines and adaptive reuse, while also addressing the regulation of surface parking lots.

Amendments to the MX2 – Downtown Warehouse Mixed Use: Proposed amendments to the MX2 District are intended to encourage greater residential development. These amendments to reframe the height and scale of development, will promote a mid-rise form that complements the existing Warehouse District character. Additionally, amendments to the scale of commercial uses will be explored, emphasizing the significance of household commercial and retail functions to support a growing community.

Amendments to the Density Bonus Provisions: Density bonus provisions allow the City to require public benefits tied to proposed developments, contributing to the public realm and overall livability of the area. These public benefits are provided in exchange for predetermined ‘bonus’ development rights, which are granted in addition to what is permitted as-of-right.

Image: A diagram of a building with the “as-of-right” dimensions identified. The additional 3 storeys of the building are labeled as the ‘bonus’ portion of the development provided in exchange for public benefit.

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4.4 Connectivity and Mobility Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Establish a mobility network that focuses on prioritization of active modes, organization around the BRT network and universal accessibility.
* Ensure the Downtown street network maintains connectivity and permeability for all modes of travel, while accounting for priority modes that align with the Public Realm Strategy.
* Pursue a model for parking management that encourages information sharing and incentivizes parking operators to participate.

The historic street networks within the city shapes transportation dynamics in the area. The City Centre and District Plan is dedicated to optimizing accessibility and permeability for all modes of transportation, aiming to create a well-connected and efficient urban environment.

Pedestrian Network

The Plan envisions a comprehensive pedestrian network, where all streets incorporate fundamental elements of walkable design. Expanding on the streetscape types in the Public Realm Strategy, the Plan proposes pedestrian priority streets. These streets serve as catalysts for economic development, placemaking/placekeeping and reinforcement of neighbourhood identity.

The pedestrian network encompasses designated pedestrian priority streets and the Meewasin trail network, connecting pedestrians along the river through Downtown and beyond.

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Accessibility

The vision for the Downtown and District prioritizes inclusivity, striving to create a welcoming community for individuals of all abilities, including those with visual and/or physical disabilities. To ensure comfort and functionality for people of all ages and abilities, various design considerations will be actively encouraged.

Accessibility Design Considerations:

* Accessible entrances: Implementation of accessible entrances to facilitate easy entre for everyone.
* Provision for access transit vehicles and disability permits: Accommodations for access transit vehicles and vehicles with disability permits.
* Curb ramps at intersections: Integration of curb ramps at intersections and public spaces to enhance accessibility.
* Regularly placed seating: Strategic placement of seating at regular intervals to provide rest spots.
* Level hardscaped materials: Utilizations of level hardscaped materials to minimize tripping hazards.
* Service animal relief areas: Areas available for service animal relief.
* Universal symbols and audible signals: Use of universal symbols and audible signals for wayfinding and crossings.

Active Transportation Network

The active transportation network in Downtown is envisioned to capitalize on its proximity to the Meewasin Trail multi-use pathway and future BRT stations. The network will feature cycle lanes and supporting infrastructure and facilities.

Bicycle facilities (bike racks and potential bike-share stations) are planned for strategic locations through the District Core to accommodate expected event traffic and where transitions on and off bike may occur.

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Transit

The proposed Transit framework places a primary focus on establishing the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, to facilitate high frequency, direct service along major corridors.

Leveraging BRT stations in the Downtown as focal points, the Plan not only enhances density but also positions these stations as vital arrival points for the broader city.

The District Core will be well-served with a station on 22nd Street on the event plaza serving the Red and Green line and a station on 1st Avenue at 23rd Street serving all three BRT lines.

Key enhancements include the introduction of dedicated running lanes for transit along 1st Avenue, strategically positioned stations on 22nd Street and 1st Avenue/23rd Street (near the Gateway Plaza) will serve the District well.

Images:

Image 1. A map showing the future downtown active transportation network. The Existing Downtown Active Transportation Network is shown on 23rd Street between Idylwyld Drive and Spadina Crescent, on 19th Street between Avenue A and Spadina Crescent, and on 3rd Avenue from 25th Street to 19th Street. The existing All Ages and Abilities (AAA) routes are identified on the map as the variety of interconnected trails in the parks along the river, including the pedestrian paths on all 4 bridges in downtown. The Future Active Transportation Plan streets with functional plans that are underway are shown on 3rd Avenue starting at 25th Street and going north off of the map. The future functional plans that have been approved are shown on Idylwyld Drive from 25th Stret to 20th Street. The future AAA routes are shown on Avenue C from Spadina Crescent going north off the map beyond 25th Street, and on Avenue A between 19th Street and 20th Street.

Image 2. A map showing the downtown transit network. The existing transit routes are identified. The future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes are identified. The future BRT stops are identified at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 19th Street, 1st Avenue and 20th Street, Avenue C and 22nd Street, in front of the event and convention centres on 22nd Street, the corner of 1st Avenue and 23rd Street, Ontario Avenue and 25th Street, and 5th Avenue and 25th Street.

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Parking

Parking is a crucial component of Downtown transportation, serving local businesses and future development needs. The City Centre and District Plan will introduce an overarching parking strategy to address current conditions and facilitate further development Downtown.

To optimize parking resources, Downtown would benefit from a shared parking system. Rather than creating an excess of supply of parking, shared parking throughout the Downtown that incentivizes structured parking operators to participate in a coordinated mobility solution could enhances access, reduce traffic congestion and stimulate economic activity.

As Downtown grows and changes, opportunities for future adjustments to on-street parking configurations will be explored to align with the public realm envisioned for changing streets.

Image: A map showing the locations of various parking facilities in the downtown including public surface lots, public parkades, and private surface lots.

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4.5 Inclusiveness and Vibrancy Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Establish spaces for activation that enables cultural participation with priority for Indigenous storytelling and cultural expression.
* Identify opportunities to expand and enhance activation and programming through a review of existing regulatory and policy frameworks for parklets, parking patios, outdoor dining, sidewalk cafes, food trucks and push carts.
* Encourage more events and programming in the Downtown and District.
* Identify opportunities to preserve heritage assets through enhancements to the heritage program focused on heritage assets in the Downtown.
* Establish supportive actions, policies and programs to ensure a Downtown that both feels safe and is safe.

Vibrant downtowns have activity at all times of day and throughout all seasons, with a healthy mix of development and amenities to support it. The Plan acknowledges the importance of heritage and culture assets, aiming to integrate them into the public realm for broader accessibility and participation in arts, culture and education.

Culture and Public Art

Saskatoon has a rich cultural landscape composed of many different cultures. Public art reflects the culture of our city and makes public spaces more inspiring and welcoming. The Plan provides opportunities to showcase public art and grow Saskatoon's cultural scene.

Emphasis will be given to equitable representation of Indigenous, ethno-cultural, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA2S+ communities, and spaces for Indigenous storytelling and cultural expression.

Image: the ‘Rise from Water Mural’ in downtown Saskatoon. It features a young Indigenous couple holding an infant.

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Activation and Programming

A focus on creative programming and placemaking in the City Centre is an investment that will continue to enhance public space, engage citizens, and build on and celebrate the city’s character and history. Strategies to promote activation in the Downtown and the District will include a review of outdoor dining regulations, sidewalk bumpouts and additional event programming.

Heritage

There are over eighty heritage buildings identified within the City Centre boundary as having architectural and/or cultural significance. Over sixty of those buildings are in the Downtown. Conservation of significant heritage assets in the Downtown is necessary to maintaining the area's historic character.

The proposed District also provides greater opportunities to incorporate both Saskatoon's heritage and story telling through interpretive features.

Inclusiveness

The vision for the Downtown and District is centered on inclusivity, welcoming people from all walks of life. Through education, awareness, policies and investment, the Downtown and the District can remain a place that is safe and welcoming to all and where the city’s most vulnerable residents can make use of quality services.

Safety

Safety and perceptions of safety in the Downtown present challenges in the face of issues surrounding homelessness, mental health and addictions. While these issues are complex and are best addressed outside the scope of this Plan, there are improvements to the public realm to help reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety. There are many supports that can come together to help ensure the Downtown is safe and feels safe.

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4.6 Resilient Infrastructure and Servicing Strategy

Strategic Directions

* Enhance the existing tree canopy to provide shaded areas and enhance biodiversity.
* Aim to minimize the use of potable water and use a naturalized approach to water management to protect water resources.
* Empower residents and visitors to make sustainable decisions in how they work, live, play and learn in the Downtown.

The City Centre and District will develop over the coming decades. During this time, expectations of buildings and communities will change.

Responding to the need for climate adaptations and resiliency, the Plan advances the Downtown on a path to become more sustainable and resilient to our changing climate.

Image: People on bicycles and walking along a path surrounded by green trees and grass. The river and a bridge are in the background.

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Implementation and Next Steps

The City Centre and District Plan intends to be an action-oriented Plan that brings together the City and civic partners in a coordinated and collaborative effort to make life better every day for citizens, residents, workers and visitors. The final Plan intends to bring new energy and a comprehensive approach to align existing projects and initiatives, while also incorporating the potential Downtown Event and Entertainment District.

Over the coming months, building on the directions outlined in this report, the City Centre and District Plan will be developed with actions to achieve the vision for the Downtown and District. Civic Departments and Divisions responsible for delivering on the actions outlined in the Plan will be engaged to develop the implementation strategy to achieve the long-term goals for the Downtown and District.