



ENGAGE



MULTI-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET

Reporting Back: Out in the Community Phase 1

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Project Overview

Background

A multi-year business planning and budgeting process will allow the City of Saskatoon to take a long-term perspective on financial planning, closely tying the long-term business needs to financial budgets. In turn, this will allow the organization to have meaningful and collaborative dialogue focused on citizen outcomes.

Transitioning to a multi-year budgeting process with the right sequence of activities will reduce the overall annual budget effort and allow the business units and functions to focus on value added activities.

Overlapping a multi-year business plan and budget with Council terms can be very useful in terms of helping cities achieve long-term, strategic objectives.

This pilot project will focus on the development and delivery of a pilot Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget (MYBPB) for the 2019 Budget with an internal two-year budget. Development of the policies and procedures required to change from single year to multi-year will be developed and tested internally. Budget 2019 will be presented to citizens as a single year budget (transition year) with delivery of multi-year citizen engagement to prepare for Budget 2020-2021 - a two-year public budget to provide one year of overlap with the electoral term of City Council.

Engagement Purpose

There are several components of the community engagement plan for MYBPB. Forum Research conducted the annual Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey for 2018 using both telephone and an online panel, which is the subject of a separate report. Forum Research also provided a public link on Saskatoon.ca for self-selected residents to complete the survey, which is also the subject of a separate report.

In conjunction with Forum's work, the City of Saskatoon Communications Division conducted several "out in the community" outreach events. These events provided an opportunity to clarify participants' assessments and better understand their concerns or ideas through dialogue and discussion, as opposed to surveying. This report summarizes the goals and results of that engagement.

Engagement Goals

1. Educate residents about the transition to a multi-year business plan and budget.
2. Validate selected questions from the Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey.
3. Understand participants' context and rationale for service ratings, key issues, and efficiency areas.

How we will use the results

The purpose of the survey is to identify trends, develop baseline performance data, and identify opportunities and issues of importance. The City of Saskatoon will use the results to inform decisions related to strategic priorities, budgeting, and service delivery, and to highlight opportunities for continuous improvement.

What We Asked

Engagement Techniques (Methodology)

Community Outreach Events

1. Understanding Satisfaction Ratings – 5 Key Areas

- *Method:* Plinko Board Survey
- *Description:* Participants played the game Plinko to determine which of the 5 survey questions they would answer. Some respondents were also asked survey questions by staff who were roaming at the events. Responses and explanations were captured on standard feedback forms.

2. Important Issues for the City of Saskatoon

- *Method:* Dotmocracy Board
- *Description:* Participants were given stickers to place on the board to indicate whether they thought different issues required more, less, or the same level of attention. They were also able to indicate “don’t know”.

3. Suggestions for Efficiency

- *Method:* Sticky-note Brainstorm
- *Description:* Participants were invited to brainstorm ideas on post-it notes and add to a larger poster board. Note that this exercise was not conducted at the Broadway Street Fair.

Date	Location	# Surveys	# Dots Placed	# Efficiency Ideas
September 4, 2018	University of Saskatchewan – Campus Expo	51	485	43
September 5, 2018	Saskatoon Farmers Market	7	23	19
September 8, 2018	Broadway Street Fair	72	553	0
	TOTALS	130	1061	62

What We Heard

1. Understanding Satisfaction Ratings – 5 Key Areas

Participants were asked to answer at least one of the following questions. The five topics below were taken from the Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey. These topics were seen as valuable for further engagement in order to better understand the rationale and context for participant ratings.

Participants were asked to rank each area on a scale of 1 to 10 from very unsatisfied to very satisfied, with 5 being neutral. The results below are presented with the average overall rating, along with the percentage of responses that were in the top 5 (satisfaction ratings of 6-10) to be comparable with Forum Research’s survey report.

Ratings

Topic	Question	Average Rating	Top 5
Quality of Services	Overall, how satisfied are you the quality of the services provided by the City of Saskatoon?	7.24	90%
Recreation, Culture and Sport	Generally, how is the City doing with providing a mix of recreation, sport, and cultural facilities year-round?	7.78	94%
City Communications	Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of City communications?	6.56	72%
Public Input on Decisions	Do you think the City does enough, or not, to get the public's input on the decisions it makes?	7.04	88%
Online Services	Have you ever used any of the services the City of Saskatoon offers online? In your opinion, how effectively, if at all, does the City of Saskatoon provide services online?	6.86	86%

Qualitative Comments

Quality of Services

Comments on Rating

Participants had a wide variety of reasons for their ratings. There was positivity about roads getting better, older area redevelopment, bus line improvements, and recreation centres. Reasons for lower scores included: the need for more upkeep in core areas (especially trees); desire for better protection of riverbank, walks, and trails; inefficient transit system; issues with garbage collection and landfill hours; and lack of familiarity with many services.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Roadways:** Grade alleys and paint road lines more often; prioritize fixing roads; snow-clearing especially in bays and coves; improve signage in construction areas; improve crosswalks near Circle Drive.
- **Accessibility:** Improve access for seniors and people with disabilities; repairs to sidewalks at/near Farmer Market building; improved pedestrian crossings (ex. Avenue C & 22nd street)
- **Transit:** Better tracking accuracy of buses (stops); less expensive; warm bus shelters; notification when stops are relocated due to construction; shorter routes to north end; lack of sidewalks near bus stops in some areas (ex. north end); continue work on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); bring in Light Rail Transit (LRT) similar to Edmonton.
- **Waste:** Desire for greater buy-in around compost program, more compost pickups and education; need for more recycling education, buy-in, awareness of rules, pickups, fines, and conveniently located depots for glass; concern about paying by weight for garbage.
- **Bike lanes:** More bike lanes; like the accessibility, but lanes make traffic slow.
- **Low-Income Access Programs:** desire for more information about the program (availability, access, and intent).

- **Safety:** Improve police response on weekends and weeknights (especially Lorne, 33rd, bus depot downtown); improve safety of bike lanes and education about lanes and etiquette for drivers and users.

Recreation, Culture & Sport

Comments on Rating

Participants noted that there were many opportunities and activities to take advantage of, including pools, civic centres, parks, festival spaces, community gardens, playgrounds, the river valley, as well as arts and culture. A few participants were displeased with this area; one commenter specified that they wanted to see more City-run recreational sports leagues.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Promotions:** Invest in more advertising, social media coverage
- **Outdoor Washrooms:** Year-round bathrooms in Rotary Park and along Meewasin Trail for cyclists and runners; want porta-potties on both sides of river trails.
- **Pools:** Would like warmer water for indoor pools; want to see a splash park or pool at Kinsmen Park; smoother surfacing for paddling pools; more outdoor pools.
- **Sports & Recreation:** More gym times available; hockey program; sports programs in city center areas and in Evergreen; more winter activities.
- **Access:** Ensure affordability of facilities and programs; have family rates.
- **Other:** Establish a public square near the Banks condos along the river

City Communications

Comments on Rating

Participants appreciated getting emails, texts and text alerts, and the responsiveness on Facebook and Twitter. Several mentioned park maps – one participant complimented their accuracy but requested street view, while another said they were hard to find online. Some would like to see more posts on Facebook and Twitter, and more of an effort to reach university students.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Fast Response:** Would like 24/7 replies; Communications channels staffed and open for more hours; respond to tweets.
- **Information Quality:** Make concise and easy to access; make maps more accessible.
- **Varied Channels:** Use a variety of communications channels to reach people, including more email and mail for some; more social media including Facebook events; use radio; get more community partners to share posts.

Public Input on Decisions

Comments on Rating

Overall, many participants were somewhat satisfied with the level of public input on decisions though they saw room for improvement. Some were unsure how to participate, felt that

information was sometimes missing, or that they didn't know enough about what the City is doing. One participant recognized that the City sends many surveys, but said they needed to be simplified and were "too wordy". Two participants suggested it is not the City's job to make people interested, and that it is City Council's job to make decisions. One participant said the City is making insufficient efforts to hear student voices.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Variety of Methods:** Nice to have face-to-face opportunities along with online and "smart-phone friendly" methods; ensure City is reaching out to non-online audiences (ex. phone, door-to-door); make more "modern and accessible".
- **Demonstrate Value:** Public engagement at Western Development Museum was good, showed value in public opinion which was reflected in final decision; uncertainty about whether information and feedback gets into the right hands or whether decisions have already been made.
- **Timing:** Have more opportunities that aren't in evenings.
- **Communication:** Better advertising to ways to have input; find ways to reach multi-unit residents; simplify language and information.
- **Other Ideas:** Ask for help from educated people and students in the field; more public forums during election time with candidates outside of your ward too; up to residents to get engaged – can start early with school programs; concentrate on community associations; bring back the welcome wagon; assign neighbourhood block representatives.

Online Services

Comments on Rating

Several participants mentioned that they had never used the City's online services, or that they refuse to use them. One individual was concerned about hackers, because they have friends who successfully hacked the City of Saskatoon's website. Some said the website's maneuverability and user experience had improved, while others reported challenges finding what they were looking for due to the site having too many sections and outdated content. One person appreciated the ease of paying parking tickets online, while another said they had trouble trying to sign up for online bills.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Website Navigation:** Could be simplified; add better search options; reduce large menus with too many options; make easier to navigate from user perspective.
- **Services and Tools:** Make purchase and reloading of transit passes available online; improve interactive transit map.
- **Security and Other:** Improve your online security; note that when City advertises charity events, the email is recognized as spam.

2. Important Issues for the City

This question utilized the list of key issues facing the City that were identified by respondents in the Civic Satisfaction Survey. Participants were then asked: "in your opinion, what level of attention do the below services or issues require?" (answer options: more/less/the same/don't know).

Category	Same	More	Less	Don't Know
Public Transit	7	102	5	5
Public Safety/Crime/Policing	24	67	5	3
Garbage/Recycling/Composting	15	79	4	2
Road Maintenance	22	64	4	2
Poverty	9	81	1	4
Active Transportation	15	63	1	5
Housing	21	53	3	5
Road Construction	26	29	18	3
Property Taxes	20	13	26	15
Employment	14	50	5	3
Infrastructure	24	39	6	1
Traffic	25	30	12	2
Other* (added by participants)	3	20	0	6

*Other included:

- **Environment:** connecting wildlife corridors; addressing bird window strikes on downtown buildings; addressing light pollution.
- **Parks, Recreation & Facilities:** improving parks; new arena development; more gym time; cycling instruction.
- **Accessibility:** sidewalk snow removal to become more wheelchair accessible.
- **Waste (other):** access to hazardous waste disposal for those who don't drive; used battery drop-off at City facilities.
- **Planning:** infill and densification; motion lighting sensors.
- **Transit:** better hours for busing.
- **Policing:** improve policing in Mount Pleasant.
- **Communication:** better and more updated communication on website and roads (construction).

3. Suggestions for Efficiency

Similar to the Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey, participants were asked to identify opportunities for efficiency. They were asked: "The City is continuously looking for ways to become more efficient in service delivery. Do you have a suggestion for innovative, creative or simple things we can do to achieve this?"

Due to the high volume of participants, staff members did not have the chance to clarify the question's intent, or ask further probing questions. As a result, many of the comments are

reiterating suggestions for improvement, or voicing specific concerns. Very few participants identified efficiency areas. Below is a short summary of what was shared, by thematic area.

- **Active Transportation**
 - Bike sharing program; better and more connected bike lanes, corridors, and routes; improved biking conditions and infrastructure; more direct routes from suburbs to core; expert guidance on cycling infrastructure development (instead of special interest groups); special sidewalks for people with disabilities.
- **Garbage/Recycling/Organics**
 - Bring in city-wide organics program; ban plastic bags; recycle plastic bags; waste receptacles for all streams in public places; add cost of organics carts to property taxes (not utility).
- **Civic Facilities**
 - Invest in libraries; keep Fieldhouse open to 5pm on summer weekends.
- **Moving Around**
 - Improve roads and connectivity; transparent process and information about sidewalk repairs and replacements; snow removal and accessibility in the winter; repair potholes; address lack of parking in key areas (ex. Farmers Market); move the railway track; bring in Uber.
- **Transit**
 - Better public transit; better waiting shelters; introduce a campus shuttle; subway or LRT to connect with buses in high-traffic areas; more efficient services; add Wi-Fi on buses; no BRT and no dedicated BRT lane on Broadway; weekend bus services to key destinations; add bus route around Circle Drive for reducing commuter traffic.
- **Environment**
 - Habitat plantings for wildlife in dense urban clusters (ex. using parking lots)
- **Efficiency Ideas**
 - Develop a legacy fund, a self-sustaining passive income source; lower City employee salaries; incentivize local production and value-added products; use local courier services.

Next Steps

Similar engagement activities will be utilized to validate the results of the second survey, focused on civic spending and priorities.

The results from the engagement activities will be used to inform business planning and budgeting for 2020-2021, while also providing valuable information in advance of 2019 budget deliberations.