
Community Winter City Strategy Development

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services recommend to the 2017 Business Plan and Budget deliberations:

That development of a Community Winter City Strategy for Saskatoon proceed in 2017 as outlined in this report requesting \$50,000 to be funded using the Reserve for Capital Expenditures (RCE).

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to convey results of initial Winter City stakeholder engagement and outline a proposed plan and budget for broader, inclusive public engagement and related steps needed for development of a Community Winter City Strategy for Saskatoon.

Report Highlights

1. A Community Winter City Strategy stakeholder workshop in March was well-attended by diverse stakeholders who showed strong interest in engaging further in this project. The top priority identified was the need to better document and communicate existing winter assets to leverage them more fully.
2. The proposed project budget supports Phase 1 of the Engagement and Awareness Plan next winter, including an online resource hub, events, an e-newsletter and a social media campaign.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the Strategic Goal of Quality of Life by providing opportunities for activities in a winter city.

Background

At its March 8, 2016 meeting, the Administration provided City Council with information on the movement towards “winter cities”; potential elements of a Saskatoon winter strategy; a possible timeline for strategy-development; plans for an initial stakeholder event; and indicated it would report back with stakeholder feedback and a proposed public engagement process to begin in January 2017.

Report

March 2016 Stakeholder Engagement

As a first engagement step, an interactive breakfast workshop was held on March 15 at Le Relais, attended by 45 community members. Attachment 1 provides a summary of the workshop and its results. Stakeholders pointed to the need to first inventory these assets and improve awareness of them. There was strong stakeholder interest in engaging in the next steps in a Winter City Strategy, either through volunteering with tasks and events or on a project committee.

Phase 1 Engagement

Attachment 2 shows the proposed Engagement and Awareness Plan, including tactics anticipated to engage a broad and diverse cross-section of the community, ensuring the Strategy is inclusive. The Plan will be implemented over the next two winters: Phase 1 (2017) and Phase 2 (2018). Phase 1 tactics include: roundtables, use of the Citizens Advisory Panel, creation of an online resource hub, events, an e-newsletter and a social media campaign. This work will be completed with existing in-house resources and will also require \$50,000 to cover the costs for implementing the tactics.

Prior to and during Phase 1, an inter-departmental staff working group will explore ways of responding to the priority issues identified by stakeholders at the March workshop. Any actions resulting from this will be undertaken with existing funding resources.

Options to the Recommendation

City Council has the option to provide the Administration with alternate direction.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders will be engaged at each stage of the Strategy's development, providing meaningful opportunities to shape, design and influence the direction of the strategy and participate actively in its implementation.

Communication Plan

Communications goals include building enthusiasm for a community-wide Winter City Strategy and connecting the value and importance of a Winter City Strategy to the strategic goal of fostering Quality of Life for all citizens.

Prior to Phase 1, advance work will be done during 2016 on event planning, webpage content development and an inventory of existing winter assets.

Phase 1 will include promotion of the City's webpage to direct people to various winter activities, events and programs. Multi-channel communications tools could include the news media, social and digital advertising, radio advertising, contesting and an online survey to measure against the baseline survey results. Phase 2 will be informed by the results and lessons learned from Phase 1.

Policy Implications

Subject to outcomes from the engagement process, the strategy may identify changes to existing policies and/or new policies to position Saskatoon as a leading Winter City.

Financial Implications

The proposed project funding request from Reserve for Capital Expenditures (RCE) for 2017 is \$50,000 to cover the costs associated with implementing Phase 1 of the Engagement and Awareness Plan in 2017.

If approved, the funds required in 2017 would be built into the 2017 capital budget.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no environmental, privacy or CPTED implications at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

The Administration will report back in early 2017 with an update on work-to-date, initial engagement results, and initial estimates of capital funding needs for 2018 to complete the next phase of the Strategy.

Public Notice

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

Attachments

1. Winter City Strategy Workshop Results
2. Proposed Winter City Strategy Engagement and Awareness Plan

Report Approval

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Reviewed by: Brenda Wallace, Director of Environmental & Corporate Initiatives
Carla Blumers, Director of Communications
Approved by: Catherine Gryba, General Manager, Corporate Performance Department

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Winter City Strategy Workshop Results

In addition to interested individuals, participants represented a diverse range of stakeholders, including:

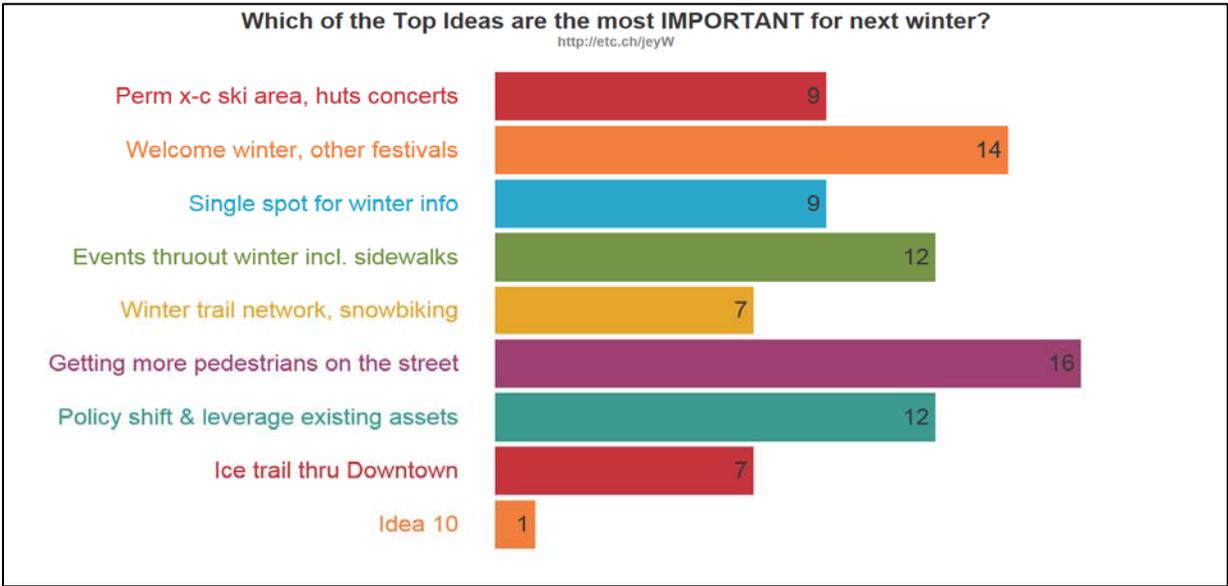
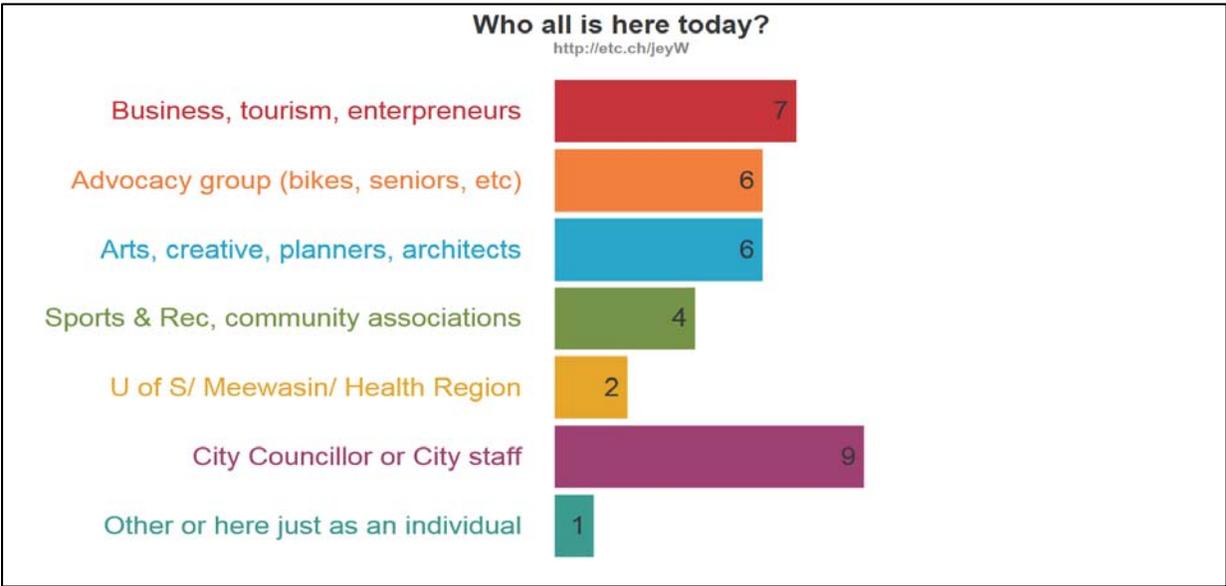
- First Nations
- Community Associations
- Seniors
- Business and tourism groups
- Winter-oriented small businesses
- Performing arts and design
- Major institutions
- Sustainable transportation
- Outdoor recreation groups

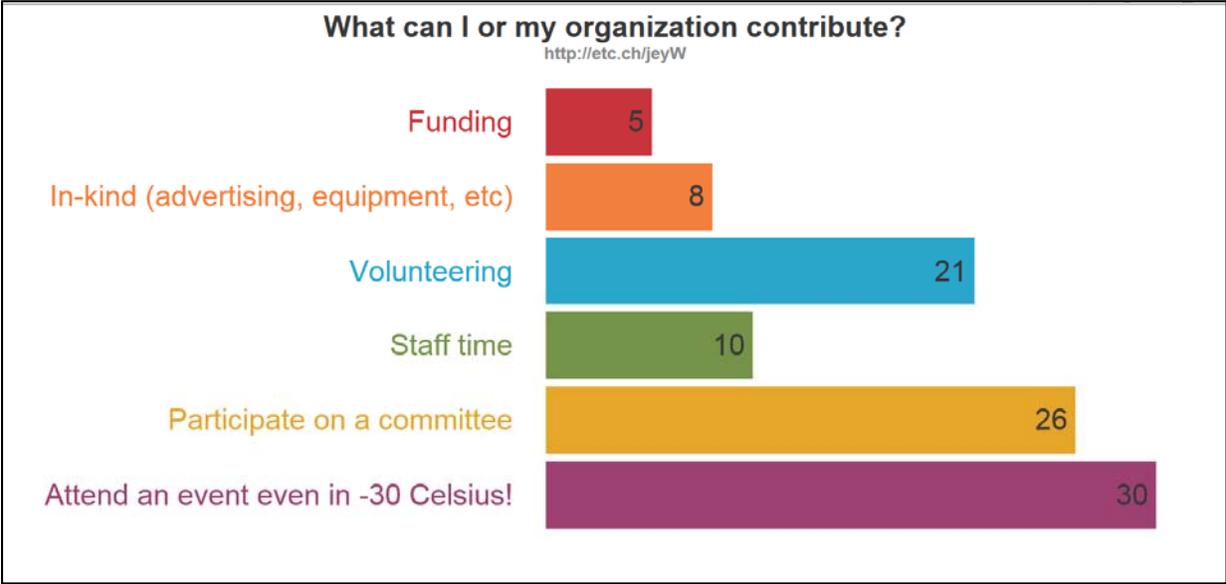
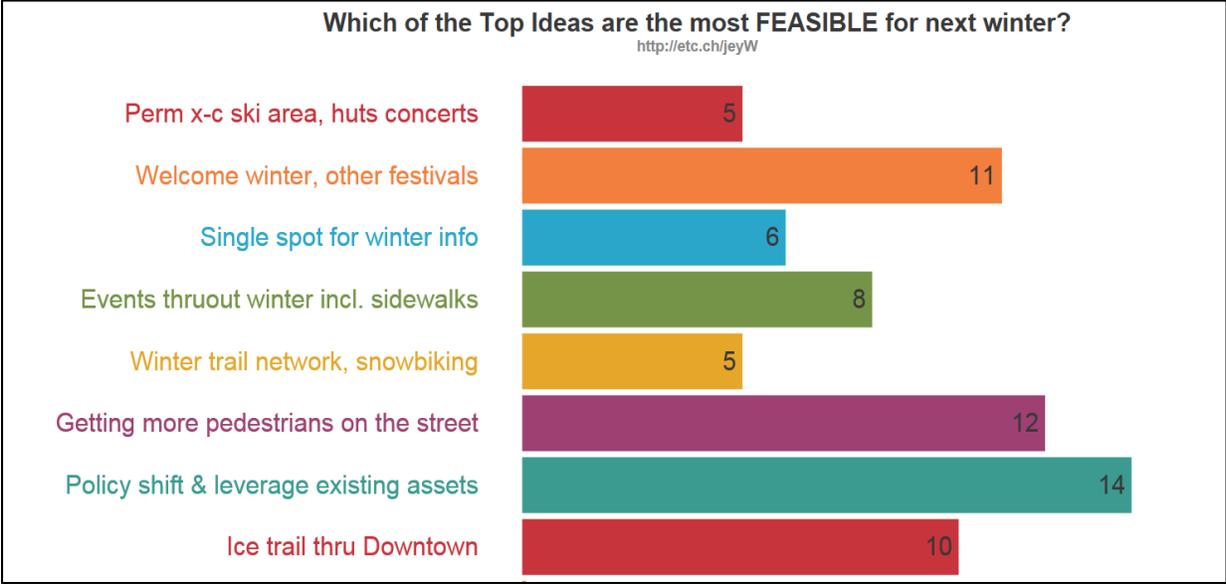
In table groups, participants were asked to generate ideas feasible in the short-term, and then as a group to pick one top idea. These were fed into a live smartphone-based DirectPoll vote, where all participants voted to indicate the “most important” and “most feasible” ideas as shown on the following pages.

Among the over 100 ideas submitted, the idea most frequently stated was the need to make better use of the assets the City and community already have. This idea also ranked highly in the DirectPoll. This includes existing facilities, events and organizations. Stakeholders pointed to the need to first inventory these assets and improve awareness of them. For example, creating online and printable maps showing outdoor rink locations and winter washrooms open along the Meewasin Trail. A key part of improved communication would be creation of a one-stop winter information website with event details, activity ideas, and updates on the strategy process itself.

The DirectPoll and written ideas also show a strong desire for more winter events and festivals. This demand was evident last winter at events such as the Traffic Bridge demolition and Guinness World Record snowball fight. Citizens want to get out and participate in winter, whether as a spectator or by being physically active. Similarly, participants also called for measures to improve winter pedestrian mobility.

Lastly, the poll also shows the strong stakeholder interest in engaging in the next steps in a Winter City Strategy, either through volunteering with tasks and events or on a project committee.





Proposed Winter City Strategy Engagement and Awareness Plan

Engagement Objectives:

The notion of a Winter City Strategy is vague and intangible. The purpose of engagement and awareness is to make it real through stakeholder and community conversations, a digital presence through a webpage, and starting the work to create experiences.

Success of the Strategy requires:

- a) Momentum among stakeholders capable of initiating 'quick win' ideas and events to demonstrate the Winter City concept and provide immediate opportunities for the community to have a personal experience (i.e. institutional stakeholders); and
- b) Motivating a balanced group of stakeholders to participate in engagement opportunities to help guide the development of a Winter City Strategy that is inclusive.

Objectives therefore include:

- a) Effectively promoting the opportunities a Winter City Strategy can unlock in Saskatoon with the goal of building enthusiasm, support, and engagement among stakeholders.
- b) Providing accessible and inclusive opportunities to engage by soliciting participation from a broad range of stakeholders throughout various stages of strategy development and implementation. Within our ability, we strive to ensure the results reflect the full range of citizens, businesses, associations, volunteer organizations and other community stakeholders that make up Saskatoon now and into the future.
- c) We seek opportunities to partner with businesses and community organizations to ensure the future Winter City is community owned.

Public and/or Stakeholders:

Public Representation on Internal Steering Committee

- Pending interest of 1-2 individual citizens, the Committee will look at a similar model used by the Website Steering Committee. This may include 1-2 public representatives on the City of Saskatoon Internal Steering Committee. Citizens would represent the broader community interests and encourage community engagement throughout the process. The Project Plan would include various community and business stakeholders using other methodologies and subcommittees.

Community and Business Stakeholders:

- Organizations representing citizens, businesses or non-profit entities within Saskatoon who have a vested interest in building vitality in Saskatoon during the

winter months. Examples include: Saskatoon Health Region, Tourism Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan, Meewasin, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Central Urban Metis Federation Inc., Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Saskatoon & Region Chamber of Commerce, North Saskatoon Business Association, Wanuskewin, Saskatoon Public Library, Community Associations, Saskatoon Council on Aging, Saskatoon Open Door Society, various sport and recreational organizations, cultural groups, as well as other interested groups.

Individual Citizens and Businesses:

- Residents of Saskatoon wanting to participate in, or influence others' participation in, activities that have cultural, recreational, or economic impact as well as for-profit organizations operating within the City who contribute to our social, cultural, or economic prosperity.

Strategy:

- Create momentum among stakeholders capable of initiating “quick win” ideas and events to demonstrate and provide immediate opportunities for the community to have a personal Winter City experience and embrace the concept (i.e. institutional stakeholders);
- Motivate a balanced group of stakeholders to participate in engagement opportunities to help guide the development of a Winter City Strategy that is inclusive.
- Begin with Phase 1 engagement in January 2017 for the upcoming winter and Phase 2 engagement in January 2018 the following winter.

Measures of Success:

- # or % of stakeholders who participate in engagement events
- # or % of stakeholders who participate in surveys

Tactics for Engagement and Awareness for Phases 1 and 2:

1. *Build the Framework for funnelling community content/contributions*

Many ideas and initiatives will find a ‘fit’ with the Winter City Strategy. It is therefore helpful to organize information to bring initial focus to community conversations. For example:

- Get Active (recreation, sport)
- Get Outside (city wide festivals, neighbourhood events)
- Get Together (hospitality, gatherings, social activities)
- Get Inspired (beauty, arts, culture)
- Get Around (safety, mobility, public transit)

2. *Take a Digital First Perspective*

Once we have a helpful way to organize information, the City of Saskatoon will create and host a temporary webpage as the hub for existing (and new) community information. Initially, the page may feature and promote consultation schedules, photos from engagement activities and existing events/activities, and links to other online engagement opportunities. Following the engagement phase, it can continue to provide the online resource hub, calendar and ideas guide noted as a missing element among current 'winter assets' in Saskatoon.

3. *Omnibus Survey*

Utilizing a full-service omnibus survey, develop a question or two to obtain the general pulse of citizen attitudes toward winter life in Saskatoon. This would include approximately 400 people from Saskatoon and will provide a general baseline in 2017 to compare effectiveness on shifting attitudes over time.

4. *Multi-channel conversations*

Create a variety of engagement opportunities to appeal to a broad and balanced group of stakeholders. The focus of engagement will be open, discussion-provoking questions that:

- generate ideas on promoting Saskatoon's winter programs, services and experiences;
- identify challenges and opportunities associated with a thriving Winter City; and
- suggest policy directions to Saskatoon City Council that support the Winter City Strategy.

Conversation will be facilitated using various in-person and online engagement techniques to seek a balanced representation of opinions by removing barriers and making it easy for everyone to share their perspectives:

- Online Channels
 - Shaping Saskatoon Webpage: various engagement opportunities will be shared on the City's Shaping Saskatoon webpage.
- Citizen Advisory Panel
 - As part of the broader Shaping Saskatoon community engagement initiative, a Citizen Advisory Panel was created in April 2016 to offer a new way for citizens to provide feedback and share perspectives. The online advisory panel is a simple and easy way for citizens to provide suggestions on a range of issues and initiatives.
 - The Citizen Advisory Panel will be used to gather input and preferences around the Winter City concept.
- Roundtables
 - Over the course of 2017 and 2018, convene small groups of individuals, for example Community Associations may convene neighbourhood-level conversations or a business organization may bring together member businesses within a particular sector.

- Summit
 - Host an event to create an ‘ideas blizzard’ where citizens can come together for a day of speakers, sessions and panel discussions on what’s required to make Saskatoon a liveable, enjoyable and viable Winter City.

5. *Draft Strategy Open House*

Convene a final public information open house to report on ideas and themes that emerged through the multi-channel conversations. Refine the Strategy for presentation to City Council and institutional stakeholders.

Tactics for Phase 1 (2017)

- Roundtables
- Webpage online resource hub
- Citizen Advisory Panel
- Winter events
- E-newsletter and social media campaign

Proposed Timeline:

- Pre-Engagement (June to December 2016)
 - Advance work for Phase 1 engagement
 - Advance work on inventory of existing assets
- Phase 1 Engagement (January to June 2017)
 - Report to Council: early 2017 project update and outline of Phase 2 Engagement activities and costs
- Advance work for Phase 2 Engagement (July to December 2017)
- Phase 2 Engagement
 - January to June 2018
 - Report to Council: early 2018 project update