

August 25, 2025

Dear NSBA Members,

Re: Speak Up: Help Shape Saskatoon's 2026–2029 Strategic Plan!

On behalf of the NSBA, Saskatoon's Business Association, we want to inform members that the City of Saskatoon is currently seeking input on its [2026–2029 Strategic Plan](#), and your voice as local business leaders is vital. Your feedback can help ensure that the Plan delivers the right mix of vibrancy, growth, and fairness for our broader business community.

Here are some key areas in the plan that directly impact businesses like yours:

1. Business-Friendly Policies & Permits

- The City proposes to continue the business incentives program and explore a small-business incentive.
- They plan to use a Business-Friendly Initiatives Ad Hoc Committee to address red-tape, streamline permits and licenses and implement a sustainable and transparent levy system.
Why it matters: Quicker approvals and clearer costs help you start and run your business more efficiently. However, businesses are concerned that without real accountability and timelines, permit processing could still face delays, and levies may increase unpredictably if “transparency” does not come with genuine consultation.

2. Downtown Activation & Safety

- The Plan supports improvements through coordinated public safety, cultural programming, and the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID).
- The design phase for a Downtown Event & Entertainment District (DEED) is also proposed—subject to funding.
Why it matters: A safer, livelier downtown means more foot traffic and a stronger business environment. The NSBA has always voiced its support of DEED as long as the business case and costs are reasonable and transparent.

3. Infrastructure & Resiliency

- Major projects include advancing the Waterworks Program, building a new water treatment plant, and responsibly maintaining city assets.
Why it matters: Reliable infrastructure is critical for smooth operations and long-term

growth. But businesses worry that major projects could bring higher utility rates, construction-related disruptions, and long-term debt loads that eventually feed into property tax increases.

4. Sustainability, Climate & Waste

- The City plans to embed the Climate Action Plan into budgeting, adopt climate-conscious budget practices, and push for stronger waste diversion.

Why it matters: These initiatives have the potential to reduce operational costs over time and align with possible consumer demand for sustainable practices. Still, there are concerns about the costs of compliance, potential new fees, and whether the City will provide support for smaller businesses to transition toward sustainability goals.

5. Expanded Bike Lanes

- Proposed bicycle lanes across the city aim to improve cycling safety and connectivity.

Why it matters: Bike lanes and corridors can boost local retail and hospitality by making the area more accessible and attractive to active commuters. However, poorly planned bike routes can have negative impacts on businesses and safety. Businesses along these bike lanes and corridors must be properly and meaningfully consulted.

6. Urban Reserves & Off-Site Levies

- Urban Reserves are areas designated for future development on formerly First Nations lands.
- NSBA supports the calls to action from the TRC but has concerns: we want the City to ensure off-site levies are charged appropriately to Urban Reserves developments like they would be for any other similar projects —so the cost isn't shifted onto taxpayers or existing businesses.

Why it matters: This protects current businesses and taxpayers from shouldering infrastructure costs tied to future development.

What You Can Do

1. **Fill out the City's survey** for the Strategic Plan before September 19, 2025. ([Linked here.](#))
2. **Highlight these priorities:**
 - Business incentives, streamlined permits, and levy transparency.
 - Ongoing investment in downtown safety and programming.
 - Infrastructure projects with minimal service disruption.
 - Responsible Climate-friendly budgeting and waste diversion programs.

- Expansion of safe, connected bike lanes with proper consultation.
- Ensuring Urban Reserves developments fully bear their own off-site levy costs.

You'll be helping shape a plan that keeps Saskatoon economically vibrant, fair, and forward-looking.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to strengthening Saskatoon's business community.

Together, let's make sure the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan works for Saskatoon Businesses.

Sincerely,



Keith Moen
Executive Director, NSBA