



background

The City Centre

The role of downtowns in contemporary cities is fast evolving. No longer just central business districts and civic centres, downtowns are attracting more and more residential development and becoming real neighbourhoods. Their role as cultural destinations is more important than ever to attracting people and investment to a city. With so much more happening in downtowns, socially, culturally and economically, the physical qualities of their buildings, streets and open spaces takes on great significance. The image of a city is reflected most vividly in its downtown.

Saskatoon's City Centre has the potential to attract many more residents, businesses and visitors, expanding its vitality for the benefit of the entire city.

Shaping the City Centre

Saskatoon’s City Centre, which includes Downtown, Riversdale, Broadway and College Drive (see map), has become more vibrant in the past decade as the city’s growing wealth has boosted the local retail, restaurant and entertainment industries. New developments such as the Galaxy Cinemas, Remai Arts Centre and River Landing are drawing more residents downtown, and business travelers are filling hotels. More and more people are choosing to live downtown to take advantage of the amenities it offers. The Warehouse District is gradually becoming a unique neighbourhood and a hub for the city’s creative economy. The recent Lux development has had a positive impact on Broadway.

Living in the City Centre

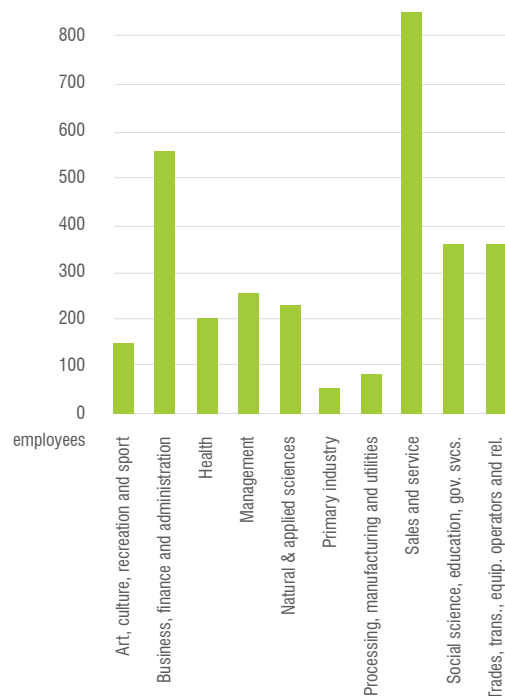
Almost 6,000 people live in the City Centre today, nearly a third of whom are under 30. There is also a significant seniors population. The number of University of Saskatchewan and SIAST students living in the City Centre increased by 17% between 2008 and 2009. Most residents live in rented apartments, though the housing options are growing. In 2009, more than 320 condominiums were sold in the City Centre, at an average price of approximately \$200,000.



Working in the City Centre

Residents in the City Centre work in a wide variety of occupations, including arts and culture, business and finance, health and government, sales and service, and trades and transportation. Half of the people living in the City Centre drive to their place of work, while almost 10% take public transit and more than a quarter walk. These “modal splits” for transit and walking are much higher than in the rest of the city.

There are a lot of exciting things happening downtown and in the larger City Centre yet still so much opportunity. The City has put in place a range of incentives to spur more development downtown and sees the potential for its population to double or triple in the decades ahead. There is also an enormous opportunity to accommodate more office employment and retail businesses downtown. In 2009, 93 new businesses were started in the City Centre, for a net increase of 60.



Major Occupations

(source: City Centre Plan - Study Area Profile 2010)

Connecting to core neighbourhoods

While the City Centre is a distinct part of the city, the core neighbourhoods that surround it are important to its long-term health and vitality. Residents of those neighbourhoods will always be strong supporters of City Centre businesses and cultural attractions, and many of them will work downtown and use their feet, transit or bicycles to get there. Therefore, as the City Centre continues to improve, so should the core neighbourhoods and physical connections to them.

Supporting a sustainable city

The City Centre and the neighbourhoods that surround it have vital roles to play in the future prosperity and sustainability of Saskatoon. By targeting significant residential and job growth and creating new places in the City Centre, the city can achieve the following:

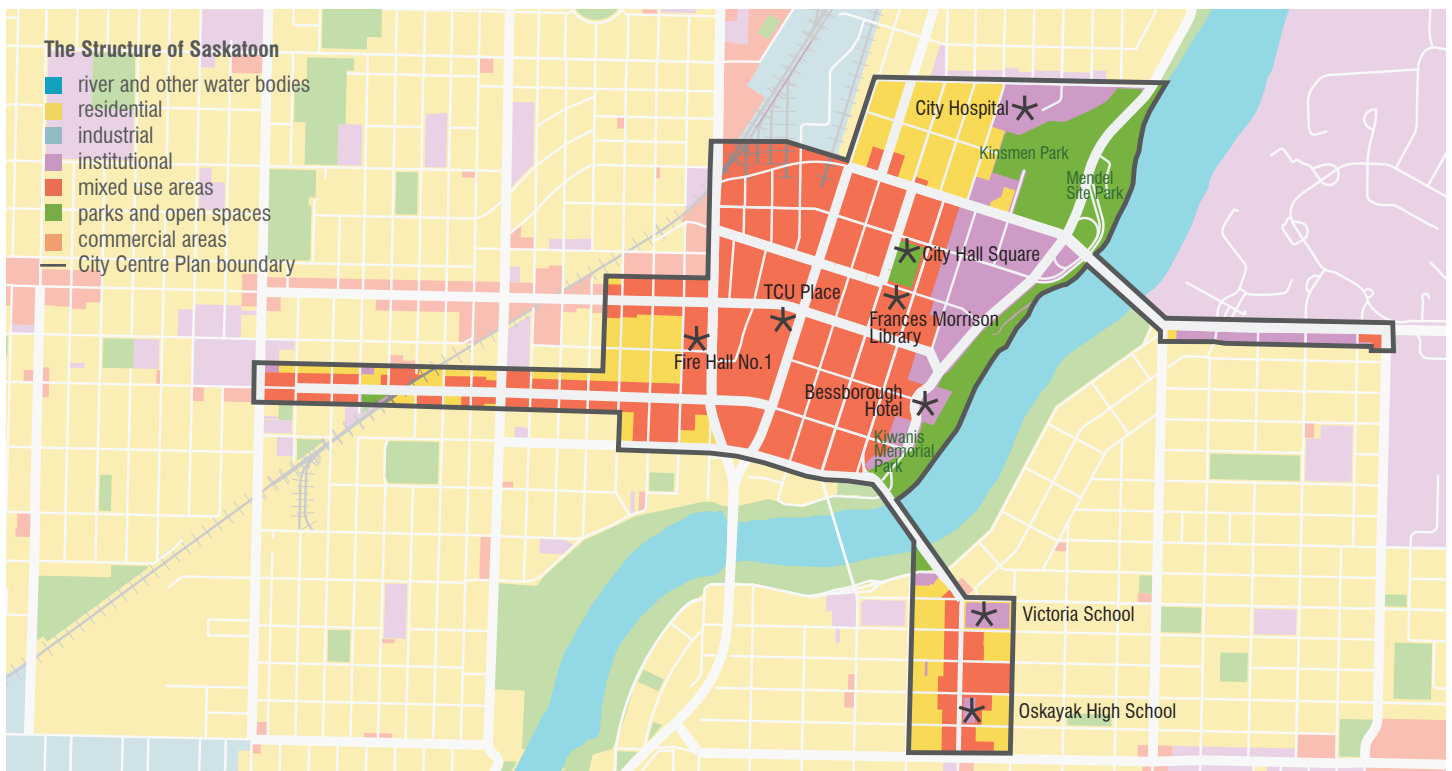
- A smaller overall ecological footprint;
- A “live-work” balance that allows residents to walk, cycle or take transit to work and shop;
- An enhanced setting for cultural events;
- A complete urban experience attractive to newcomers and tourists;
- A higher quality of life for all Saskatonians.

City Centre Plan

Central Saskatoon is undergoing fundamental changes, from a heightened community desire for improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities to potentially new developments in River Landing, city centre housing, public spaces, transit and library facilities. With stewardship and good planning, Saskatoon’s centre will be the focus of a city which is lively, attractive, safe, sustainable and healthy.

The City Centre Plan is a multi-year project with four distinct phases. Phase 1, a baseline data and analysis study, and Phase 2, Community Engagement are currently underway. Phase 3, the Civic Plaza Precinct Masterplan will start in January 2011.

The ongoing revitalization of core neighbourhoods will be critical to the success of downtown, and vice versa.





There are a number of ways to share your vision and help shape Saskatoon's future!
For more information please visit **saskatoonspeaks.com**.

Produced September 2010

Efforts were taken to ensure the accuracy of information. Updates to any of the content will be posted to the website.
We encourage everyone to return the information book for re-use at all Saskatoon Speaks events and activities.



courtesy flickr sambasupernova