

# Recovery & Efficiency Task Force:

## Final Report



**Mayor Sandra Masters**

Office of the Mayor

City of Regina

November 30, 2021

Dear Mayor Masters and City Council:

### **Re: Recovery & Efficiency Task Force - Submission of Final Report**

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On behalf of our colleagues on the City of Regina - Recovery & Efficiency Task Force, it gives us great pleasure to formally submit our Final Report with respect to establishing a "made in Regina" COVID-19 recovery plan aimed at meeting the social, economic, and sustainability needs of the community. In submitting this Final Report, the Task Force is of the belief that a series of small but meaningful investments and key actions – all aligned to steer Regina in a common and purposeful direction – can assist with meaningful change and deliver timely help with our COVID-19 recovery.

Key recommendations by the Task Force have been grouped into six themes that contain specific actions in support of the City's short-term economic recovery:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. A livable, sustainable, and vibrant downtown.           | 4. Service efficiency.                      |
| 2. Attracting investment with a focus on service delivery. | 5. Delivering on the needs of all citizens. |
| 3. Sustainable and resilient growth.                       | 6. A vocal advocate for Regina.             |

It should be noted that since establishing the Task Force in February of 2021, we have been actively providing and engaging with City administration on a number of key ideas and initiatives, and are encouraged to see that several developments, in advance of this report, are well underway. As well, with the recent completion of Deloitte's City of Regina Efficiency Review (which was completed in conjunction with our efforts), we are excited to note and further highlight the more foundational opportunities outlined within their report:

- Establishment of a Transformation Office;
- Creation of a Service Culture and Mindset; and,
- Development of a City-wide Performance Management System.

We believe these foundational aspects, in coordination with our Final Report, will further assist this city in collectively moving forward.

On behalf of the Task Force, thank you for the opportunity. We are excited for our city's future prospects and collective vision in meeting the social, economic, and sustainability needs for all citizens and businesses.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M Molnar'.

Mitch Molnar  
Task Force Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Andrews Stevens'.

Andrews Stevens  
Task Force Co-Chair

# City of Regina

## Recovery & Efficiency Task Force

November 30th, 2021



Key Findings and  
Recommendations  
2022-2024



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# Purpose & Overview

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## Background & Context

Reporting directly to City Council, a community-based Recovery & Efficiency Task Force (the Task Force) was established in February 2021 and charged with establishing a “made in Regina” COVID-19 recovery plan that meets the social, economic and sustainability needs of the community, with a focus on activities over the next 18-24 months.

The Task Force was advisory in nature and acted as a reference group for City Council respecting not only the community’s COVID-19 recovery efforts, but also its sustainable growth into the near future. In this regard, the work of the Task Force was intentionally designed to align with and support other longer-term City of Regina initiatives and strategies underway, such as the Efficiency Review Program and the Energy and Sustainability framework.

## Task Force Leadership

Membership on the Task Force was designed to be representative of key sectors in our community and includes both business and social voices, in an effort to create a balanced approach.

Members of the Task Force are as follows:

- Andrew Stevens Co-chair (Councillor, City of Regina)
- Mitch Molnar Co-chair (CEO, Mitchell Developments Ltd)
- Chris Holden (City Manager, City of Regina)
- Laird Williamson (President, CUPE Local 21)
- Trevor Boquist (President & CEO, Driving Change Automotive Group, Bennett Dunlop Ford)
- Randy Beattie (President & CEO, PFM Capital Inc.)
- Tina Svedahl (VP Investments, Harvard Developments Inc.)
- Erica Beaudin (Executive Director, Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services)
- Brett Dolter (Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Regina)
- Shaadie Musleh, (Economic Development Regina)





## Mandate

The Task Force was mandated to identify short-term actions and opportunities in support of economic and community recovery, with a focus on improving the business environment within Regina and supporting community and strategic infrastructure investments, while also aligning with other longer term City strategies and priorities.

Because of time and resource constraints, as well as public health restrictions due to COVID-19, a more traditional approach to formal stakeholder engagement (including public meetings) was not used; instead, members of the Task Force brought forward questions and ideas from the sectors/constituents they represented. City administration also provided information on current state activities and processes to support the Task Force's work.

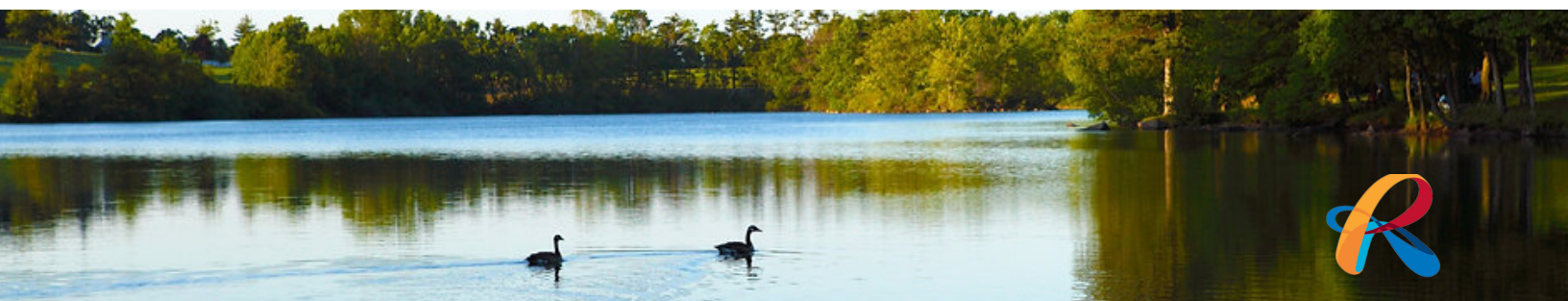
The scope of the Task Force was designed to complement the Efficiency Review Program (being delivered by Deloitte), which is focused on identifying opportunities for municipal government efficiency and effectiveness. In support of the Efficiency Review Program, the Task Force identified current pain points and opportunities to Deloitte consultants regarding the current state of City services.

The Task Force viewed itself as a bridge between the longer-term lens of the Efficiency Review Program and more immediate COVID-19 recovery activities. In this role, the Task Force was asked to focus on identifying opportunities for:

- Economic and community recovery
- Improving the business environment for jobs and investment
- Smart infrastructure investments for the future.

The work of the Efficiency Review Program is anticipated to ultimately create additional capacity within City of Regina administration that will allow work to proceed on recommendations put forth by the Task Force.

The mandate of the Task Force was designed to also reflect best practice for municipalities as reported in the scorecard compiled by the national Municipal Benchmarking Network, of which the City of Regina is a member.



## Task Force Approach

The Task Force used a variety of approaches in gathering information and developing recommendations, including:

- Task Force member meetings and discussion
  - A total of 10 meetings were held between February 2021 and December 2021
  - Due to time, resource, and public health constraints, individual Task Force members were responsible for bringing questions and ideas forward from the constituents/sector they represented
- Presentations to the Task Force by stakeholders, including:
  - Economic Development Regina (EDR), focusing on COVID-19's impact on the City's economy and opportunities for recovery
  - Consultants from Deloitte, focusing on the Efficiency Review Program
  - Staff from the City of Regina administration, focusing on COVID-19 impacts; development levies; ongoing sustainability initiatives; information regarding core vs. non-core services currently delivered by the City of Regina; and relevant current state processes
- Benchmarking against other municipalities
- Brainstorming and idea generation

## Alignment with other City of Regina Initiatives

As Task Force members completed their work, they continually checked to ensure that efforts and focus were aligned with other relevant and ongoing City of Regina initiatives/reports already in flight when the Task Force was created, or that were launched while deliberations were underway. These include:

- 1 2023 Growth Plan - Economic Development Regina
- 2 Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan – City of Regina.
- 3 Tourism Visitor Strategy – Tourism Regina/Economic Development Regina.
- 4 Energy and Sustainability Framework – City of Regina.
- 5 Master Transit Plan – City of Regina.
- 6 Reimagine: Globe Theatre Capital Campaign.
- 7 Intensification Levy Referral Report.

*Note: While work on some of the above initiatives/reports has been concluded, efforts to finalize others (Energy and Sustainability Framework, Master Transit Plan) are ongoing.*





# City of Regina Current State

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## Problem/Opportunity Statement

As our city begins its recovery from COVID-19, there is an opportunity to remove barriers and address hurdles that hamper short and long-term prosperity. These include:



Aging city infrastructure that is not energy efficient and may have outlived its useful life.



Less-than-expected results from current downtown renewal/revitalization initiatives.



A tax system that inadvertently impedes growth and provides a disincentive to future investment and business opportunities.



City processes, policies, and practices that do not compare favourably to municipal best practice in Canada.



Growing issues related to a lack of affordable housing, increasing poverty, addictions, and other social problems.



A City of Regina service model that is not focused on customer service or prioritizes the need to make it easy to do business with administration.



## Task Force Method

Members of the Task Force targeted their discussion and recommendations on items that City Council and administration can influence in removing these hurdles, such as finding ways to reduce cumbersome process and policy that might impede sustainable growth, or the renewal of downtown. The Task Force also focused on identifying quick wins that would not require detailed studies or large financial investments by the City. In submitting this report, the Task Force is of the belief that a series of small but meaningful recommendations – all aligned to steer Regina in a common and purposeful direction – can prompt meaningful change and deliver timely help with COVID-19 recovery.

A guiding principle for the work of the Task Force was to constantly reflect upon - and challenge - the current scope of services being delivered by the City. This was part of a larger and ongoing discussion amongst Task Force members seeking to ensure that the City of Regina's focus is on delivery of core/essential services - not only during the pandemic, but also as part of a longer-term sustainable service model. By challenging the status quo in terms of what services the City should be delivering – and recommending that this scope be regularly reviewed – the Task Force believes the city will be better positioned for long-term success in delivering core services, instead of being burdened with an overly ambitious service mandate that is unachievable.





# A Vision For The City of Regina

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## Alignment with Desired End State

In undertaking its work, the Task Force members relied on a shared future vision for Regina - reflected in the statements below – to guide their recommendations for municipal recovery over the next 18-24 months:

- A growing and sustainable city where people want to live and work.
- A city that attracts, supports, and retains businesses.
- A city that makes sustainable investments in community infrastructure.
- A city that cares for its most vulnerable citizens.

In addition, the work of the Task Force also aligns with the vision and activities contained within the existing Official Community Plan.

## Recommendation Themes

Recommendations by the Task Force have been grouped into six themes that contain specific actions in support of the City's short-term economic recovery:

- 1 A liveable, sustainable, and vibrant downtown.
- 2 Attracting investment with a focus on service delivery.
- 3 Sustainable and resilient growth.
- 4 Service efficiency.
- 5 Delivering on the needs of all citizens.  
A vocal advocate for Regina.

Note: While some recommendations in this Task Force report support more than one of these six themes, each recommendation is only noted once – under the theme where the Task Force believes that particular action will have the biggest impact.



The submission of this report may mark the end of the Task Force's work, but the recommendations provided here must always be considered in the context of the dynamic nature of COVID-19. Nearly 21 months into the pandemic, there are signs of emerging economic recovery, but ongoing diligence among the City of Regina's elected officials and administration in monitoring COVID-19 trends remains an essential task, as does the need for development and implementation of timely responses at the municipal level to protect the health and well-being of all citizens. While members of the Task Force recognize that we are at a point in the pandemic where recovery is now our primary focus – and that we all, to some extent, have to learn to live with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future - that does not mean that work to implement any of our recommendations should impede Council or administration from taking continued action to avert future sickness among Regina citizens.

## Recommendations Moving Forward

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### Priority 1: A liveable, Sustainable, and Vibrant Downtown

Regina's downtown is truly the heart of the city and plays an essential role in generating the taxes that support our City's delivery of essential services. Investment in downtown Regina will help spur short-term economic recovery and set the stage for longer-term growth that is not only sustainable but will also help attract more citizens to live, work and play in our downtown.

**Specific Task Force recommendations in support of a liveable, sustainable, and vibrant downtown include:**

- Re-establish the downtown as a unique planning district with a dedicated planner and resources to bring focus to the area that aligns with its important cultural and revenue generation role in our City.
- In support of the above recommendation, establish a standing committee on Regina downtown with a set term of 24 months that will ensure priority is accorded to this essential area during post pandemic recovery. As part of this, the standing committee, along with the Regina Downtown Business Improvement District (RDBID) and Economic Development Regina (EDR), should continue to work in concert and avoid any overlap in roles. If resources are available, the City should consider funding a dedicated position through the RDBID to ensure necessary focus is brought to downtown.





- Revisit past municipal studies regarding the economic health of downtown and re-visit outstanding recommendations in support of short-term economic renewal in the area (i.e., consider all recommendations in the parking strategy).
- Pursue densification policies through incentives and bylaw requirements.
- Engage with developers to recruit industry to actively participate in downtown renewal.
- Make downtown more attractive to developers by removing the current intensification levy and reconsidering the current requirement that developers must correct existing infrastructure shortfalls as part of any new project.
- To avoid “demolition by neglect” when it comes to older buildings, review current permitting and code compliance requirements/enforcement to ensure they are not inadvertently providing a disincentive for adaptive reuse. City administration should look to other cities that have wrestled with the constraints of heritage building stock and the need to accommodate citizens with disabilities (as one example).
- Collaborate with developers to find common ground when it comes to meeting current building codes in a way that does not make the redevelopment of older downtown buildings cost prohibitive. Instead of relying on a “one size fits all” approach that focuses on code compliance, the city should work with heritage consultants and developers to find win-win solutions that encourage adaptive reuse and will promote more significant redevelopment, attract higher rents, and result in more tax revenue.
- Pursue available federal and provincial funding to support energy efficiency retrofits for downtown building stock. This could involve collaboration with provincial Crown utilities.
- Create downtown revenue streams (i.e., dedicated parking fee and fines reserves, etc.) and support these with policy to ensure revenues collected are used exclusively in support of downtown infrastructure and programming efforts.
- Allocate a set percentage of taxes (or a fixed dollar amount) currently collected from downtown properties directly to upgrades for downtown infrastructure. This steady investment in local improvements will help attract citizens, businesses, and greater mixed-use activity to downtown.
- Recognize and respect the cultural and economic value of downtown’s built heritage by improving the current heritage designation process; consider expanding current incentives for redevelopment.
- Seek out opportunities to expand the current Community Support Program and continue improvements to downtown safety by addressing core issues such as poverty and homelessness. Pursue an integrated approach that includes other levels of government, the Regina Police Service (RPS), and non-profit community organizations in order to achieve best possible results.



- Direct City administration to tabulate the current financial contribution resulting from ongoing downtown activities to inform a more comprehensive understanding of their role within the broader city budget. This tabulation will enable the City to have a benchmark from which to measure the impact of any other incentivization or tax relief that may be initiated and targeted at downtown.
- Promote downtown liveability through active transportation improvements that include enhanced safety for pedestrians; evaluate the feasibility of adding separated and protected bicycle lanes.
- Continue to build on the success of the downtown plaza in attracting people to the area by creating wind-sheltered, all-season gathering places.
- Leverage the current Globe Theatre renovation to enhance the street experience on Scarth Street, and as an important connection from the downtown plaza to the Cornwall Centre.



## Priority 2: Attracting Investment with a Focus on Service Delivery and Community Responsibility

New business investment in Regina will create jobs and generate additional tax revenue that are both essential aspects of the City's post-pandemic recovery. While Regina offers unique advantages that attract businesses to start-up or relocate to our city, we face growing competition from other municipalities as they become increasingly aggressive in recruiting businesses. Implementing a customer-service focus and streamlining permitting and processes for new and expanding enterprises will help set Regina apart. As we work to attract new investment and businesses to our City, we must also emphasize the importance of businesses investing back into the community which serves as their home.



**Specific Task Force recommendations to attract investment and help make the City easier to do business with include:**

- Establishing a metro planning committee that includes adjoining urban and rural areas and works to align regional interests in attracting investment by packaging broader regional benefits; this could eventually expand into a broader metro planning authority whose mandate includes discussion of improved and integrated infrastructure for the region.
- Adopt a service model that treats citizens and businesses as customers, with a focus on making it easy to do business with the City.
- Ensure all business attraction efforts are aligned with EDR's strategic investment attraction focus, and that work by City administration and EDR staff is complementary (vs competing). Ensure roles and responsibilities for each entity are clearly articulated for maximum impact.
- Work with select industry associations and building trades to recruit and build a skilled labour force to the metro area, in support of EDR's strategic investment attraction focus.
- Encourage business growth in sectors that are well positioned to succeed in the low-carbon transition, such as value-added agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy, and tech.
- Work with regional municipalities and local First Nations to locally site renewable energy projects that align with the City's Energy and Sustainability Framework.
- Encourage and promote an understanding among new businesses regarding the value and benefit of investing back into the communities that make up our City. This shared social responsibility and community benefit can be achieved through promoting partnerships, community engagement, and opportunities to be involved in civic celebrations.
- Take steps to streamline and improve services that help new businesses set up in Regina, such as: digitization of services, permits, forms and payments; a one-stop concierge service for new businesses; fewer discretionary applications before City Council; and the use of smart technology that can respond automatically to regular requests (saving time for extraordinary items to be handled by staff).
- Conduct a review of current City procurement practices to see where they may inadvertently hamper investment attraction; whenever possible, expand opportunities for procurement to support local community development and other socio-economic objects such as Economic Reconciliation, fair wages, environmental sustainability, and opportunities for businesses owned by visible minorities.
- Consider adopting early engagement practices with industry when it comes to procurement, as well as vendor performance management, to support small and local businesses in becoming more competitive by submitting stronger bid responses to the City's requests for goods and services.





- Create a property tax structure that helps attract talent through skills and innovation incentives (e.g., City of Kelowna Digital Media Tax Credit program).
- Improve engagement with Indigenous and visible minority-owned businesses seeking to set up business or expand business in the City by removing unintentional barriers and by ensuring EDR resources and focus are aligned to help these businesses succeed.
- Establish a collaborative forum to explore opportunities for Indigenous business partnerships and innovation with the City.
- Evaluate the feasibility of having the City take the lead in ensuring build-ready lands are available to attract new business. Engagement with regional and neighbouring rural municipalities, towns, and cities will be critical in this effort.
- In accordance with the City of Regina's underutilized land strategy and the objective of bringing more land assets back into use, ensure that penalties for underdeveloped lots do not inadvertently restrict development because of financial constraints or the absence of effective incentive policies.
- Consider an updated marketing/promotion campaign that highlights how Regina is receptive to new business, is easy to do business with, and which articulates the region's strategic economic focus and opportunities.
- Enhance EDR's operations so it can function as a resource for City Council and administration regarding best practices on taxation and economic development policy that encourages growth.





### Priority 3: Sustainable and Resilient Growth

While new business investment is essential for the City's prosperity, growth must not be achieved at the expense of sustainability. The City is making important strides in preparing for the future through its Energy and Sustainability Framework. Focusing on sustainable development – especially in short-term activities that also support post-pandemic recovery - reflects a meaningful commitment towards responsible municipal growth.

#### Specific Task Force recommendations reflecting sustainable growth include:

- Review the current scope of services being delivered by the City to ensure primary focus is on the delivery of essential services in a sustainable manner. This would help ensure the City does not commit to an overly ambitious – and unachievable – service mandate. Adherence to the City's Official Community Plan and other strategic objectives is critical.
- Encourage the City to evaluate policy decisions by applying a full-cost accounting methodology that accounts for social benefits alongside economic and business outcomes. This approach would include valuation and consideration of non-monetary impacts such as community well-being and climate change.
- Focus on sustainable infill development that makes better use of existing infrastructure. Consider changing the policy that current levies an infill surcharge. Conduct a review to ensure other existing city policies do not inadvertently serve to stymie infill development. Proactively undertake surveys of existing water and sewer infrastructure at potential infill sites to reduce risk and delays for new development.
- Explore ways to speed up the time it takes to process infill development permit applications. Evaluate the feasibility of setting a guaranteed time limit for processing applications.
- Explore opportunities for multi-level parkades that will free up surface level parking lots for new infill development.
- Expand the current coach house/secondary suite pilot so it includes all residential zoning classifications and allows for gentle density (such as townhouses and low-rise apartments) in more areas.
- Look for opportunities - and develop strategies as required – for the City to partner with private business and other levels of government to develop underutilized lands/buildings.
- Aggressively pursue energy efficiency retrofits at City facilities that qualify for federal funding in order to create short-term green jobs and reduce building emissions.
- Evaluate the feasibility of PACE loans for homeowners; engage with City of Saskatoon and other municipalities that have pursued this policy to hear about lessons learned.



- Adopt a green building code for all new construction in the City (where legally permissible) and create appropriate incentives that help facilitate this transition.
- Ensure Regina is ready for the electric vehicle transition through a combination of incentives and regulations that increase EV charging stations and require all new buildings to provide EV charging stations (including apartment buildings and office buildings).
- Conduct a transit plan review that reflects current and projected needs in light of the recent shift to virtual work. This review should also assess actual costs and benefits of any potential transit fleet electrification (cost of investment vs. net environmental and social savings). The transit plan review should also consider alternatives for a downtown transit hub (i.e., do all passengers have to be picked up/dropped off at the same location?) Evaluate how transit stops and hub locations could encourage pedestrian movement through downtown and activate the streetscape.
- Look at options to reduce emissions from the City's vehicle fleet, including policies regarding shared use, idling, and an evaluation of fleet electrification feasibility.
- Review and update policies and procedures related to parks maintenance so they are aligned with sustainable best practice. Rely on consistent standards so it is more cost-effective for City staff to maintain parks after developer hand-over. Investigate the feasibility of community/crowd-sourced park maintenance through a pilot project (i.e., community gardening and boulevard maintenance).
- Restore, expand, and build resilience in Regina's urban forest through a focused and affordable strategy that aligns with the goal of a sustainable city. Urban forests are increasingly threatened by drought and pests. Make urban tree canopies a requirement in new neighbourhoods.
- Evaluate opportunities for naturalization of park spaces to native grasses and a less manicured state. Conduct a pilot project for this approach in existing City green spaces that receive little foot traffic.
- Craft sustainable landscaping requirements for industrial areas by reviewing codes that inadvertently discourage developers from maintaining plants and shrubs that are required as part of any new builds.
- Explore additional options for waste diversion services and alternative service delivery models that will prolong the operating life of the landfill.
- Investigate options to cease operating City-owned assets and recreational infrastructure (e.g., Centennial rinks) that are at or near the end of their useful life, and then make the land available for new infill development. Pursuing select closures would support the City's sustainability goals (fewer and more efficiently operated rinks). In evaluating options for facility closure, ensure that under-served neighbourhoods are not deprived of essential recreation infrastructure, and that the recreation master plan's goals are not compromised.



- To ensure growth is not only sustainable but inclusive, continue seeking out opportunities for Indigenous engagement and economic inclusion as part of the City's ongoing commitment to Economic Reconciliation. Step up work with local Indigenous organizations, communities, leaders, development corporations, and Tribal Councils to better understand the challenges faced by First Nation and Metis residents when it comes to employment, starting a business, or accessing services.
- Direct EDR to partner with appropriate community organizations (newcomer agencies, post-secondary institutions) to conduct retention surveys and research that drives new policies aimed at keeping young people and newcomers permanently living and working in Regina.
- Embrace the fact that Regina is a winter city and position this as an advantage when attracting and retaining residents and businesses. Explore new ways to encourage safe outdoor winter recreation in support of a better quality of life for all citizens.
- Keep up current efforts to improve active transportation options that are safe and accessible for all Regina residents through each season of the year; continue work on a city-wide grid of east-west and north-south cycling lanes.



### Priority 4: Service Efficiency

Improving the City's efficiency in delivering services to citizens and businesses supports and aligns with other Task Force recommendations on sustainable growth and improving customer experience.

**Specific Task Force recommendations that address service efficiency include:**

- Expand efforts already underway through the Efficiency Review Program to uncover additional service improvement opportunities. In particular, the Task Force recommends a review of current state/future state processes that focusses on City core services.
- Continue searching for additional efficiencies in City operations by specifically addressing its root causes. Examples include:
  - Legal fees associated with City employee grievances could be reduced by identifying and resolving the root cause(s) of employee/employer labour relations issues.
  - Overtime at job sites could be reduced if existing processes for assigning work among and between crews were streamlined.



- Direct administration to conduct a high-level policy review to ensure that policies guiding the City's work in core services do not inadvertently conflict with each other and lead to duplication or inefficiencies.
- Implement a process across the administration to formalize a commitment to ongoing continuous improvement.
- To encourage employee innovation, consider adopting a recognition/incentive/awards program to inspire new thinking and ideas among City staff.
- Design and apply formal measurement processes to better assess the City's efforts in delivery of core services; these measures will also help uncover improvement opportunities.
- Establish performance management goals and measurable targets for department leaders to improve staff management and reporting.
- Introduce a city scorecard that offers citizens a clear line of sight regarding the City's efficiency in delivering on its core service areas. Once established, evaluate options for future scorecards that include reporting on socio-economic growth targets (i.e., number of new businesses; food bank usage). Benchmark against recognized Canadian municipal leaders in sustainable development to identify other potential indicators.
- In collaboration with EDR, improve business intelligence/data mining efforts that inform predictive trends analysis which can then guide administration's future work focus. These insights can also be used to improve administration's briefings to City Council.
- Pursue data sharing to better understand current infrastructure capacity, in support of future development (e.g., water and sewer capacity).
- Step up bylaw enforcement efforts (e.g., collecting on outstanding parking tickets).
- To help alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 without compromising on revenues, develop a program that would allow business property taxes of 2021 & 2022 to be paid over an extended period.
- Establish a development entity (e.g., municipal development corporation) to reactivate City-owned land that is undeveloped. While this entity would not compete with industry, it would focus on providing build-ready lands and enhancing their development prospects to attract private development.
- Set service delivery model standards regarding information requests from City Council to administration, ensuring that employees are delivering meaningful advice to Council in a timely fashion.
- To improve service delivery by external consultants hired by the City, implement procurement procedures requiring they demonstrate work experience in communities with a size and make-up similar to Regina. At the same time, look for ways to bolster procurement policies that place a higher priority on local knowledge and thus ensure service providers understand our city before work begins.
- Initiate a shift to a more customer-centric service model across City operations in which businesses and citizens are viewed as customers, and not just taxpayers or ratepayers.





- Urge administration to explore new approaches to stakeholder engagement for proposed projects and developments that allows and encourages Council to dialogue and hear from a wider more diverse number of businesses and citizens. At the same time, direct administration to deploy different stakeholder engagement tools and techniques so that Council better understands – and can then address – issues, concerns, and responses to new and proposed developments.
- Align Council and City strategic plans (Official Community Plan) in a single high-level document.

## Priority 5: Delivering on the Needs of All Citizens

The pandemic has cast a spotlight on the issue of poverty in our city and the urgent needs of those citizens who do not have secure housing or food. While the City is responding to the immediate crisis regarding homelessness and poverty, a set of longer-term solutions are needed to ensure sustainable and meaningful changes are implemented that improve the lives of our city's most vulnerable citizens.

**Specific Task Force recommendations to guide the City in delivering on the needs of all citizens include:**

- Undertake immediate efforts to determine how the City can better use housing stock within its control – both in the short and long-term –to address the homeless crisis. Partnerships with the Regina Housing Authority (RHA) and community-based organizations should be explored. Where possible, this collaboration should extend beyond homelessness to also address food security and sustainability issues.
- Work with Regina Housing Authority and Saskatchewan Housing Authority to increase its collaborative efforts with the RPS, relevant provincial agencies, and community NGOs to identify and implement opportunities for safely housing vulnerable citizens in locations where they can also be offered a full range of support services in the same facility.





- Explore opportunities to repurpose existing RHA assets so they can serve the needs of vulnerable/homeless citizens (through renovations and shifting of tenant mix in specific buildings). As much as possible, ensure options for independent housing are linked to necessary social supports for at-risk tenants that help re-integrate these citizens back into the community; avoid locating all at-risk tenants in the same facility.
- Work with the non-profit sector to examine the feasibility of creating a centralized location/hub where these community-based organizations can operate; this will reduce their administrative costs and free up more resources to support citizens in need.
- Engage with developers and funders to explore fast builds of affordable housing projects.
- Ensure that any new rental housing projects meet or exceed CMHC's definition of affordability; this requires a minimum of 30% of the housing units rented below 80% of median market rents. Developers who receive funding from the City must be held accountable for delivering on these objectives.
- Continue exploring innovative options for the delivery of community supports (i.e., dedicated RPS officers/resourcing /programs); this work should include an evaluation of successful solutions implemented in other municipal jurisdictions. Any implementation efforts should align with best practices for early intervention and focus on redirecting people in need from the justice system to social services and community support programs.
- Develop a City community wellness approach that includes options for youth engagement, vulnerable population supports, and harm reduction.
- Explore opportunities to use the Canada Community-Building Fund to fund splash pads and accessible playgrounds that promote outdoor safe recreation in underserved neighbourhoods.
- Maintain investment in the Plan to End Homelessness and related initiatives, while continuing to press the province to finance their share of the plan.



## Priority 6: A Vocal Advocate for Regina

Engaging with all levels of government and interested stakeholders to advocate for the needs of Regina's citizens and businesses is essential if our city is to thrive in the post-pandemic landscape. Clear and unified calls for action will help cut through the many voices also clamouring for support at this time. Collaborative models for service delivery that include multiple levels of government will be critical to ensure an ongoing and sustainable approach to growth.

Specific Task Force recommendations to guide the City as a vocal advocate for Regina include:

- Ongoing monitoring of recovery announcements and programs from all levels of government. A dedicated team in City administration should be established to capitalize on time-sensitive opportunities; this team would disband after 24 months.
- Engage in ongoing discussions with the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure Crown corporations and provincial ministries are committed to maintaining a significant and important employee presence in downtown that helps drive local business in the area.
- Mayor and Council must continue to press all levels of government regarding issues that impact the citizens and businesses of Regina.
- As much as possible, seek opportunities where Council can speak with a united voice in its efforts to secure funding from other levels of government and stakeholders that will help address sustainability and social issues in our city.
- Develop a strategy that clearly defines the focus of the City's lobbying/engagement efforts at the provincial and federal levels, as well as with local/existing businesses.
- Advocate with SaskPower and the Government of Saskatchewan regarding the development of clean power options that support the City's Energy and Sustainability Framework.
- Engage with the Government of Canada for additional funding in support of the City's ongoing sustainability transition (i.e., funding for energy efficiency retrofits).
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with Indigenous Leadership and organizations to find common ground on issues that can be jointly advanced at the provincial and federal levels.
- Continue focused dialogue with all levels of government regarding collaborative service delivery that crosses traditional jurisdictional lines while placing citizen's needs first.





# Measuring Success

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Transparent and regular measurement of progress against any Task Force recommendations that are ultimately adopted will allow both Council and citizens to easily evaluate success in real-time.

It was not possible within the scope of this report to prescribe specific metrics to be implemented; this work can only be completed once priority decisions have been made by Council and administration regarding the recommendations presented here, and how work will subsequently proceed. That being said, the Task Force believes that comparing our progress on recommendations against similar efforts in other Canadian cities like Regina – through tools available in the Municipal Benchmarking Network – should be considered in any measurement framework. In developing measures, the Task Force also believes it is essential that they are designed using a holistic approach, so that success in one recommendation does not inadvertently impede progress on others.

