

Mike McKague (Ward 6)

1) The City of Saskatoon provides vital public services to its citizens. What public services need to be strengthened through the injection of new financial resources? How would you propose to pay for better public services in Saskatoon?

The City of Saskatoon should emphasize strengthening public services that enhance residents' quality of life and ensure that all residents, including disadvantaged communities, have access to those services. Thus, in terms of providing additional support, the City should focus first on services such as leisure, sports, and cultural facilities, and transit, with the goal of ensuring that all residents have access to those facilities and services. The level of access to those types of services in Saskatoon is significantly lower than other municipalities, and the provision of those types of services will enhance the City's reputation and enable it to better attract businesses and residents who will bring investment capital into the local economy. In budgeting for these items, and in all budgeting decisions, the City should first seek to leverage efficiencies in existing revenue streams to pay for enhanced or new services.

2) What is your view of privatization of public services? Would you reverse the services that have been privatized by previous city governments?

Pragmatism guides my view on the issue of whether the City should ever privatize any city services, and I remain very skeptical of the ideological position that the use of private enterprise is inherently more efficient or cost effective than the direct provision of services by government. In making any decision on whether to provide services through the private or public sector, the analysis must take into account not just the immediate gain to the City's short-term budget, but also the long-term budgetary impacts and how the decision will affect the City's ability to provide services, including its response to emergencies and in exceptional circumstances. In addition to the impact on the City, any such decision should also consider the financial impact on residents, in terms of the effects of any change in cost and the level of services provided.

I have currently have no proposals for the City to resume the direct provision of services that have been outsourced to private enterprise, but would be willing to consider such a plan. In assessing any such proposal, I will ensure that the City considers not just the impact on the municipal budget, but also the impact on residents, local businesses, tax revenue, and the overall health of the local economy.

3) What could the City of Saskatoon do to improve its relationship with its employees? How can the collective bargaining rights of City of Saskatoon employees be better protected?

The City must emphasize common issues shared by the municipal government, City employees, and residents. All three of these groups have common goals, namely, to enhance Saskatoon's quality of life, make sure that the City remains a great place to live, and enhance our image as a desirable place for residents and businesses. The City's approach and attitude towards its employees should foster a relationship based on collaboration, cooperation, courtesy, and respect.

In its negotiations over collective bargaining agreements, the City must be proactive in its approach, encouraging negotiations over known differences in advance of the expiration of any

agreement. The City should never use brinkmanship as a bargaining posture, and should seek to avoid politicization of the bargaining process.

4) What can the City of Saskatoon do to provide safe and affordable housing? How can we ensure that marginalized residents have a say in community and social planning?

Housing remains one of the most important issues affecting the City, and the lack of safe and affordable housing affects a wide array of other city services, especially those related to public safety. City government has a responsibility to enact policies that allow all residents, including those from disadvantaged communities, access to safe and affordable housing. Effectively doing so reduces the cost of providing other city services, makes Saskatoon a stronger and safer community, strengthens the local economy, and reduces the scope and impact of other related social issues.

Unfortunately, housing policies are often politicized to residents' detriment. The City routinely commissions long-range plans to specifically address residents' housing needs, but Council fails to consistently follow through on them, and instead focuses on more immediate and less effective measures. I will push Council to follow through on the implementation of these plans (which have already been paid for), and seek to use their guidelines and strategies to make Council's housing policy more effective.

5) What role do you see for the City of Saskatoon to improve around economic development?

The City can best improve economic development by better providing existing city services and enhancing residents' quality of life. Put simply, businesses will only invest outside capital if there is a strong local workforce, and, in order to attract new business opportunities, the City must make sure that current residents want to stay in Saskatoon, and that new residents want to live here. By ensuring that Saskatoon remains a great place to live and work, the City can facilitate the diversification of the local economy, attract new business, and continue economic growth in a sustainable manner that benefits both business and residents.

6) What specific initiatives would you propose to move Saskatoon to a low-carbon economy and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

In addressing this question, it is crucial that people understand what is at stake, regardless of their position on environmental issues, climate change, or the fossil fuel industry. Whatever view one has on carbon emissions, there will be increasing incentives for their reduction, and increasing international and national pressures to move towards low-carbon emission power sources. Put simply, whatever your position on the issue, the future will be based on "clean" power sources, and to stay economically competitive, the City must enact policies to foster the development of these types of power. Even if you do not believe in or agree with the need to make these changes, they are coming, and if the City fails to account for these changes, it will have a dire effect on the local economy.

Also, when policies to curb carbon emissions are discussed, many people assume that any attempt to do so will necessarily cripple economic growth and opportunity. This assumption is **empirically false**, and many jurisdictions and localities are in the process of implementing dramatic carbon emission reductions while simultaneously experiencing excellent local economic growth.

The City can leverage its control of Saskatoon Light & Power as a means of implementing low-carbon policies. The City must begin assessing the impact of carbon emissions, with an eye towards shifting away from the fossil-fuel based economy towards more modern, twenty-first century power sources. Saskatoon should examine policies enacted by other jurisdictions throughout the world, and use those successes as a model, borrowing those policies where they would be effective and appropriate.

7) What can the City of Saskatoon do to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians?

Reconciliation is merely the start of the process of building a community that is inclusive for Aboriginal people. Put another way, reconciliation is a first-step, and must be part of a process that seeks to ensure that Aboriginal Canadians can fully participate in the social, economic, and political fabric of society. To facilitate this process, the City must examine a wide range of policies, and focus on whether or not its decisions, and the way services are provided, to make sure all residents get equal treatment and opportunity, so that disadvantaged populations, including Aboriginal Canadians, can fully participate in civic life.

8) If you are an existing councilor, what is one decision you have made over the past 4 years which best demonstrates your leadership and commitment to Saskatoon residents?

Although I am not an existing Councillor, I have served as the president of the Nutana Community Association, and have experience dealing with Council, and my local community, on issues that affect the residents of my neighborhood. I have seen firsthand the lack of leadership and vision that has made council ineffective at addressing many pressing needs of the City. I have also helped develop neighborhood specific programs that provided opportunities for artistic and cultural enrichment, fostered awareness of the history and heritage of the local community, and addressed needs relating to traffic and urban planning.

The specific decision made during my tenure with the Nutana Community Association that best demonstrates my leadership and commitment involved Council's adoption of a bylaw governing neighborhood-specific infill rules. Council had initially planned on setting one, city-wide rule governing infill, without any consideration on how that generic, one-size-fits-all approach would affect the character of various neighborhoods through the City. By mobilizing and coordinating with other community associations, we were able to persuade Council to reconsider its approach, and instead adopt an infill plan that contained rules and guidelines adopted on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, ensuring that the scale of proposed infill was appropriate for the project's location.