

Unprecedented Times, Unprecedented Collaboration

Pandemic Partnerships Showcase
Saskatoon's Thriving Community

Same Bridges, New Face

I acknowledge that Tourism Saskatoon, our stakeholders, and members operate and thrive on Treaty 6 Territory and The Homeland of The Metis. A traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries in the past and the imprints we'll make together going forward. We pay our respect for this stolen land of incredible beauty. As we reaffirm our relationship with one another and commit to building strong, lasting partnerships, we are so grateful for the sacrifices made by the Indigenous community. We give thanks for our opportunity to do our work on these traditional lands.

Uncertainty and unpredictability are here to stay as the global pandemic continues to disrupt the tourism sector. While the future can't be predicted, it can be envisioned and brought passionately into being! Saskatoon will be most successful when we heed the learnings from these disruptive times, and seek the opportunities within the challenges. Our aim is not to survive — it is to grow, thrive, and even profit during this period of vulnerability.

Throughout this year, our interdependence has been made glaringly obvious. Our role in building and nurturing an engaged tourism sector is so important, now more than ever. Our focus is on collaboration and contributing to a viable economic model for Saskatoon's visitor economy, and doing so with sustainability and purpose. We are on a path towards a resilient future, where new ways of collaborating will be key to our success in Saskatoon, a community flourishing because of the tourism ecosystem. Doing business must contribute to positive outcomes in a broader perspective:

For our businesses – through competitiveness and profits that are contributing to overall social wellbeing

For our planet – regenerating natural capital and avoiding all forms of waste

For our people – a sector of satisfied employees inspired by our long-term vision, and a healthy local community where equality and diversity are thriving

Together, this is our journey: to create our destination with a vision as long and far-reaching as our skylines, a place of opportunity as golden as our wheat fields.

Unprecedented times calls for unprecedented collaboration. We can come together as a committed group of partners invested in seeing Saskatoon thrive. Our message will inspire visitation for generations to come, and our experiences will have a meaningful impact on both traveller and residents, creating a sense of pride and passion for our city and province.

It is my honour to share this opportunity with you.



Stephanie Clovechok
CEO, Tourism Saskatoon

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Planning In A Pandemic – A Journey of Place Discovery

How can we plan when every day presents us with a new reality, a new restriction, and further constraints? We need to look inward. Of all the challenges that this age of COVID-19 has brought, there is one gift being presented to us: discovery of Saskatoon’s true sense of place. We need to understand how residents, visitors, and potential visitors perceive this place so our team can articulate the intrinsic character of our destination. Saskatoon is much more than a tangible “thing” or a product meant for consumption. It meets the needs of many, including visitors, residents, companies, and human capital (students and academics). Saskatoon is for experience seekers absorbing the inconsumable. While we could focus solely on attracting visitors, we must also be aware of the greater values that define our city and plan for that impact.

Planning in a pandemic has begged us to ask more questions and embrace who we truly are at our core.

- Who is this community? Who are we and what defines us?
- What do we care about? What do we have in common and what unites us?
- What do we worry about?
- What do we wish for our future generations?
- What do we wish to keep to ourselves?

By asking these questions we can create a sustainable, competitive advantage. Something that differentiates us from other markets. Something that embraces our identity, our authenticity, and even our quirks. Only then can we leverage this unique opportunity to have a solid understanding of our destination’s identity, and know how this foundation intricately shares the value we offer. Misalignment can lead to the wrong expectations from visitors and residents who do not support tourism.

To effectively communicate our message and our story, we need to really understand who we are talking to. By creating relevant customer personas and comprehensively documenting the customer journey, we will better understand what gives our destination its soul and sense of place. We will work alongside strong advisory committees that align with our new lines of business to help us understand what it is that makes Saskatoon so special, putting words to what currently exists only as feelings. Saskatoon has a reason for existence, and this question of purpose is essential to shaping a strong brand that inspires local ambassadorship and drives visitation when it is possible again. We won’t need to compete with neighbouring destinations, but instead drive unique, consistent communications (both offline and online) that reflect our identity.

This year has had us in triage mode with our partners, advisory groups, stakeholders, and board of directors. Constantly assessing risks, identifying opportunities for recovery and resilience, and aligning on strategic priorities have all brought us to find our role in the bigger picture, and our role in the world. These are the issues we must address now.

This cannot be done by a single individual. It’s going to take all of us. The clearer our identity, the more credible our messaging will be. The more aware and inspired our residents are, the stronger and more competitive our destination will become. We know that when we speak to everyone, we effectively speak to no one. Travel means a reinvigoration, new energy, and opportunity — what does travel to Saskatoon mean? By articulating our why, we build a magnetic pull that will draw people from near and far. By defining the uniqueness of our city, we create the power to share the stories of her people, and to support the landscape for exponential growth.

Partner to Prosper

Our Vision: Saskatoon is renowned worldwide as a place to be inspired.

Our Mission: Our Mission is to drive the economic and social wellbeing of Saskatoon through marketing expertise and innovation.

From the onset of the global pandemic, Tourism Saskatoon has been present with partners across the country as Destination Canada and TIAC led weekly conversations about recovery and resilience. Maintaining this connection will be a priority into the far distant future to ensure that we are informed by the most current data, and are hearing from colleagues throughout the country to build collective strategies for recovery. Having an advisory role with Destination Canada’s TradeX team ensure that Saskatoon and our prairie needs are identified and brought forward. Breaking down borders of competition and secrecy, we are now learning from like-minded destinations to grow through innovation. Western Economic Diversification will continue to receive updates from our leadership team as we proactively pursue funding from fewderal initiatives. Continued partnership development with Saskatchewan’s ministry of Trade and Export and the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership is a priority. These partnerships help us to leverage the tourism sector as a strategic tool for recovery, and further advocate for funding support to stabilize our DMO into the future. Tourism Saskatchewan plays a key role as we align in marketing and development efforts. Our message is strongest together, both here in Saskatchewan, and abroad in core markets like the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and USA. In these global markets, Tourism Saskatchewan is working to build awareness of our destination, so we can create strategic partnerships that drive visitation to Saskatoon.

TradeX: is formed from senior leaders within Canada's provincial, territorial and city marketing organizations – with Destination Canada has the role of team administrator and invites leaders from organizations to join. The TradeX group will work together to improve the outcomes of Canada's relationships and investments with the travel trade.

Travel trade partnerships nationally will increase itineraries being offered by travel agents, tour operators, and receptive tour operators to Canadian and international travellers. With safety and consumer confidence being a major deciding factor in travel booking, more and more travellers are choosing to book their travel through travel agents and tour operators. Our dedication to training and building joint marketing partnerships with strategic travel trade partners will drive visitation to Saskatoon as early as spring/summer of 2021.

Locally, collaborations between hotels, facilities, tourism members, and the City of Saskatoon will create a never before seen unity that increases local pride of place, drives visitation from around Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, and stabilizes Tourism Saskatoon’s funding model.

The discovery of who we really are is only made authentically possible by strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with our Indigenous and Metis community members. In the absence of a provincial Indigenous tourism organization, we will commit to building a collaborative approach to a thriving community through combined efforts and equal seats at our table.

Reality & Restraints

As we build and plan for a comprehensive paradigm shift of what Saskatoon means, we work within unique realities and restraints. The following are facts that we must build around and through:

<div><div></div>Extreme Risk</div> <div><div></div>Neutral</div> <div><div></div>Opportunity</div>
Many businesses that are integral to the fabric of who we are may not make it through to the summer of 2021.
We are experiencing unprecedented collapse.
Recovery is being pushed out to 2024 - 2026.
Reliance on business events and sporting events has created vulnerability in Saskatoon's visitor economy and begs for urgent diversification, as business travel may not return as it once was ever again.
Festivals and events are the heart of destination DNA, and cannot operate without visitor revenue or the ability to gather people.
The crippled business events sector presents Saskatoon with a loss of 33,466 room nights in between 2020-2021 resulting in a total economic impact loss of \$43,253,342 to our city.
The accommodation sector in Canada has lost 82% of revenues in Q2 of 2020 alone.
The revenue that remains — domestic travel from other Canadians — is far lower than international travellers. The average Canadian on a domestic holiday spends \$360, compared to the typical American and international visitor spend of \$800-\$1700 on a holiday.
The Canadian domestic recovery process is much slower than anticipated, with many provinces still stuck in a hyper-local or regional travel phase. This leaves inter-provincial, tentative international, and regularized international travel reliant on government sentiment, resident sentiment, border reopening, vaccine deployment, and herd immunity.
Cities, as the economic driver of Canada, have been particularly hardest hit – of summer seeing occupancy rates of below 40% and, carry a perception of less safety compared to resort, rural or nature based destinations”.
There are many national needs that must be addressed: Any air travel: More people travelling accomplishes two objectives: 1)revenue for airlines, and; 2)word of mouth on the actual experience of air travel Hotel stays: Travel that includes at least one night stay in paid accommodation. This will lead to higher overall revenues, and non-day tripper travel. Volume into cities: Cities are in critical need of visitation Higher revenue per trip: We need to create awareness and demand for domestic travellers' potential experiences that drive revenue

Fall & winter travel: We need to help provide a light at the end of the tunnel. The November to March months are some of the lowest in terms of overall visitation. Many businesses are facing decisions on whether to stay open over the next months Saskatoon's facilities and hotels have the space to provide a safe return to face to face meetings while the business event sector evolves based on treatment and vaccines.
There is positive hope for a vaccine in spring of 2021, however, it will take until at least the spring of 2022 for distancing measures and mask wearing to be completely alleviated.
No part of Canada is immune to this impact -- all bets are off and recovery will be asymmetrical nationwide.
Nature-based travel is thriving, encouraging experience development. This is aligned with travel experiences Saskatoon can authentically deliver on.
Safety and security is at the top of mind for all travellers. More travellers are booking their trips, especially business travellers, through a travel agent or third party. Will be key to driving visitation and extending stays in Saskatoon.
Most Canadian RTOs and tour operators have pivoted to selling fly / drive itineraries to Canadian travellers while still inspiring awareness in distant markets.
Virtual or hybrid business events will continue to be the choice of many associations and third parties.
Partnerships with travel agencies will support leisure campaigns that look to transform business travel. Many business travellers will now opt to stay in a centre, extending their trip to include recreational travel.
Any experience that provides wellness, rejuvenation, and connection are highly sought after, as travellers seek to find healing from the collective trauma felt by the pandemic.
Experiences that partner with or offer locally sourced products are preferred and must be protected, as they support local supply chains in addition to their own contributions to the local economy.
Sport will require innovation with the challenge to return to tournament play.
Event incubation and experience development will provide opportunity to inspire local and regional travel for Saskatchewan residents.
Tourism organizations are obligated to leverage the sectors' opportunity to provide hope and positivity to contribute to mental and emotional wellbeing of travellers.
Tourism organizations must support the education of their local residents to support behavioural shifts to purchase as many commodities and resources locally from hyper local businesses and producers.
Circular economic models are no longer being considered as a trend or nice to have, but rather an urgent need to build resiliency and brace for further disruption in the future.
A strengthened tourism brand and message is more important now than ever to inspire investment and human capital to the overall economy of a destination.

Our Tourism Team Values



BE INNOVATIVE

We are industry leaders. We support each other's ideas and encourage creative thinking.



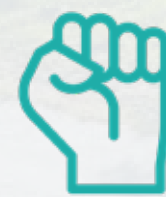
BE INSPIRATIONAL

We inspire our community to move forward through passion and commitment. We are responsible for encouraging our partners to grow with us.



BE AUTHENTIC

An authentic voice builds trust, internally and externally.



BE EMPOWERING

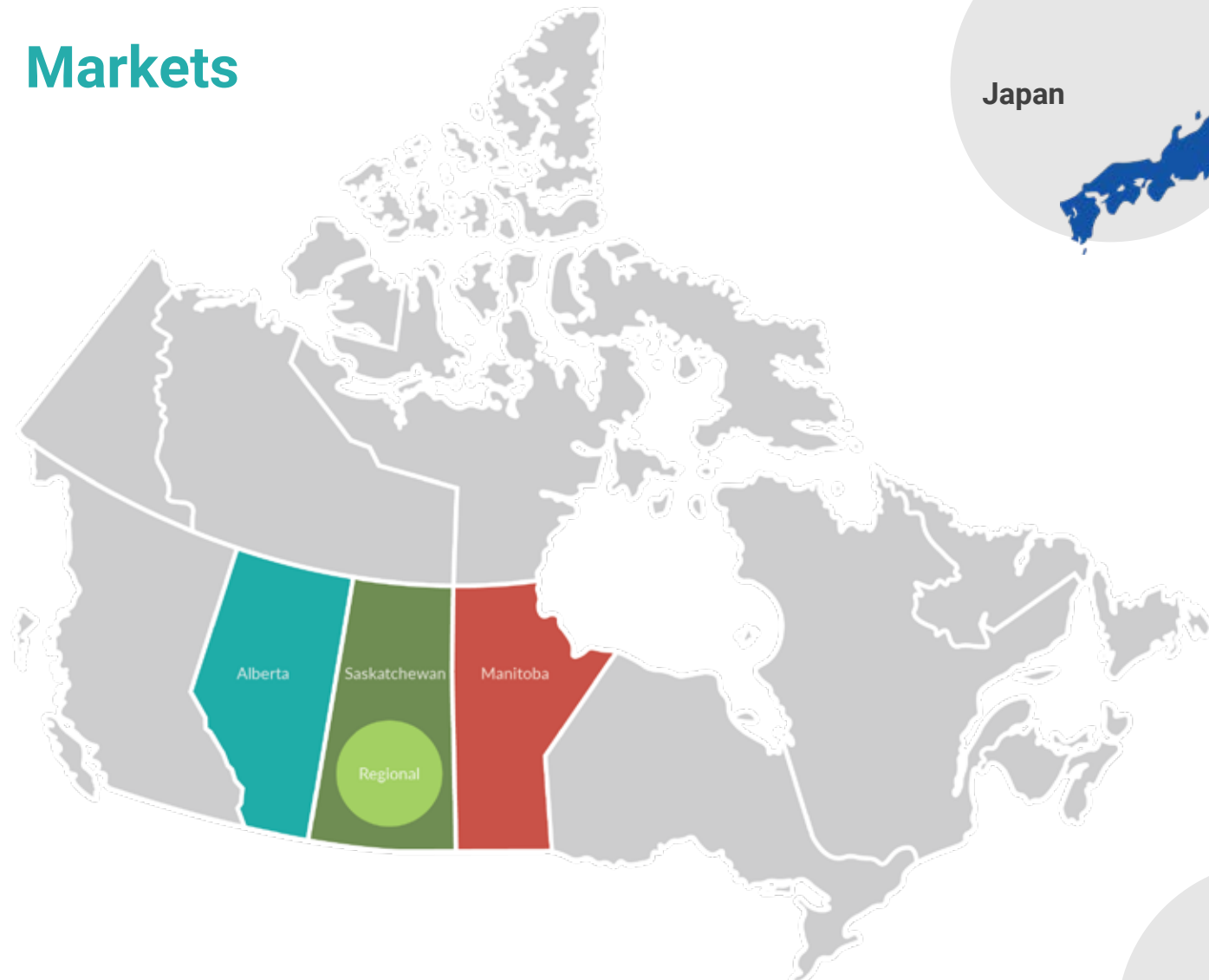
We invest in ourselves and our partners. The stronger we become, the more resilient our industry is.



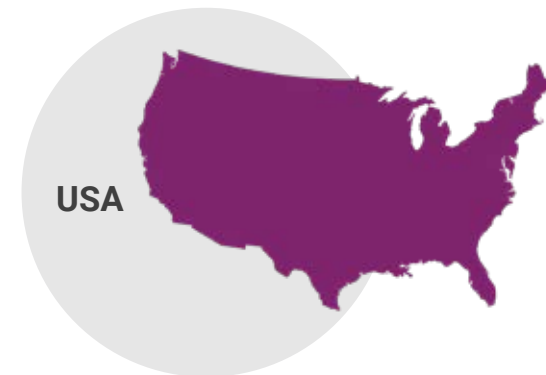
BE COLLABORATIVE

We are stronger together than as individuals. Our united voice is powerful.

Markets



Tourism Saskatoon has borders that reach far beyond our shining city, and far beyond Saskatchewan's iconic rectangular boundaries. We have identified new markets for expansion. Regionally, we will be targeting locals and Saskatchewanians with vigour. Our provincial neighbours of Alberta and Manitoba are a common sense approach to inter-provincial travel, both from a geographic sense and through marketable messages of community and unique offerings. Intensified international presence in UK, Germany, Japan and USA will ensure Saskatoon is highly sought after for the value we present through our experiences.



Safety Top of Mind & In Plain Sight

Regardless of our optimism levels, there is no denying the immense impact COVID-19 has had on our community. Businesses have been put under incredible strain while consumers are left in a state of perpetual anxiety. The pressure felt to follow the guidelines within the provincial re-open plan while receiving constant information and supplemental resources is immense. There are two things immune to change: 1) We will get through this, together, and; 2) Tourism Saskatoon is here to help.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do, and the strength of the tourism sector depends on the resilience of our business community. Like the waters of the river that runs through our core, Saskatoon businesses are the lifeblood of our city. Tourism Saskatoon is putting unparalleled resources and brainpower to getting through this pandemic. In June, we launched the Saskatoon CommUNITY Commitment; a co-created destination-wide pledge that provides resources and support for businesses to check or develop their internal controls, mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission for their employees, our local community, and visitors to our city. Our resources are not meant to replace any guidelines, but rather help businesses through the most trying times in their history. This commitment is something we have all begun to unify around, bolstering Saskatoon as a pre-eminent Canadian destination that offers safety and security for all. Our partners display a written statement to their customers reflecting the value that they place on health and safety. Many of them proudly display CommUNITY Commitment in physical signage and on digital platforms, showcasing their belief that we are all better together.

This is Crucial. Here's Why

Without significant intervention, we will lose more than half the jobs from the visitor economy. This number is huge — 1 in 11 jobs in Canada is directly involved with travellers, meaning a potential loss of 400,000 jobs. Destination Canada forecasts a catastrophic loss of 61% of revenues versus 2019. The two most affected business sectors are within the visitor economy: accommodations and food services, arts and culture, entertainment, and recreation. The bad news is that the leanest months are yet to come, as Canadians often seek out alternate destinations during winter months. Events and businesses that have helped to define Saskatoon cannot exist in their intended form — annual festivals, restaurants, event spaces, music venues, film showings, and the list goes on. Data is not the problem in defining this issue — there are more data points than possible to internalize. These dire numbers are not meant to evoke fear or anxiety, though there's no evading those emotions. Right now, these numbers are furiously writing our story, and it's time for us to take control. The Saskatoon CommUNITY Commitment is our first step towards rectifying a sector in turmoil. We can drown in numbers no longer. It's time to grab our life jackets and swim as though our lives depend on it — our sector's existence surely does.



A Circular Future

There is an understandable desire to get “back to normal” as soon as possible. Yet, this crisis offers a unique opportunity to reflect and ask important questions about the future, including those related to the sector’s adverse environmental and social impacts, overall resilience, risks, and opportunities amidst 21st century sustainability challenges. The current focus is understandably on dealing with the pandemic’s immediate health and economic consequences. However, medium and long term economic recovery efforts affecting the travel and tourism ecosystem may fall into two distinct paths:

A business as usual, resource and greenhouse gas intensive linear “take, make, waste” growth model, predominantly based on volume growth

A circular model intentionally designed to be regenerative of natural, human, and social capital, operating within our destinations’ sustainable boundaries.

Linear vs Circular Economy:

Linear economy is the current approach taken by most market economies. This is seen as the take-make-dispose approach.

These three steps do not completely disappear in a circular economy. Within our economy we still need to or extract resources, but it must be done in a reduced manner, and with a greater respect for our planet. Within the foundations of circular economy, the idea of borrowing instead of taking is at the forefront. Earth and sustainability should be included in the economic journey as an additional economic factor alongside consumers, producers, government, and financial institutions.

Circular economy does not mean the end of production, but goods and services need to be designed to minimize resources needed, to last, to be repairable, and more importantly, to be reusable or recyclable.

Circular Economy in the Tourism Sector:

As a business decision, there are good reasons to believe that businesses within the tourism sector have a vested interest to adapt

their production process to circular economics or circular tourism. Each business has competitors, and we have to be able to differentiate from our competitors. The more we can differentiate ourselves from our competitors, the bigger advantage we have on a national and international level.

Transitioning from linear to circular tourism is a way to differentiate.

In the long run, not adapting to the new models of consumption could put us at a competitive risk. Conversations about climate change and sustainability are of extreme importance. In the near future, consumers may not accept linear ways of thinking and doing business, and will be unwilling to consume goods and services unhealthy for our planet.

Changes do not necessarily need to be radical. The ultimate goal is to illustrate to consumers that their desires are seriously considered, and that efforts are undertaken to satisfy them. The quicker our partners and businesses in our community adapt, the smoother the transition will be towards a circular economy and circular tourism.

We are being called to ask ourselves: what can tourism do to contribute to the health and well-being of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada and its citizens? How can we build a visitor economy that delivers demonstrable net benefit to the host community that serves the visitor?

We need to create a sustainable visitor economy that enables residents, local businesses, and communities to thrive, flourish, and be healthy in every way. And what does it mean to flourish? There are enormous benefits of using flourishing as an indicator of success. It encompasses human well-being, financial performance, and environmental health. It delivers increased productivity, resilience, adaptability, and innovative capacity.

What role and contribution can the visitor economy make in realizing our vision for the future?

How can we welcome visitors to enlist us as a host destination?

What kinds of meaningful, enriching encounters can we offer that benefit both them and us?

How can welcoming visitors actually make us resilient and thrive?

Can a circular economy approach create value and competitive advantage for hotel operators? Emerging global case studies are proving that the answer is yes. Gaining competitive advantage with customers and end consumers through circular or sustainability market segmentation is an opportunity for Saskatoon the coming years.

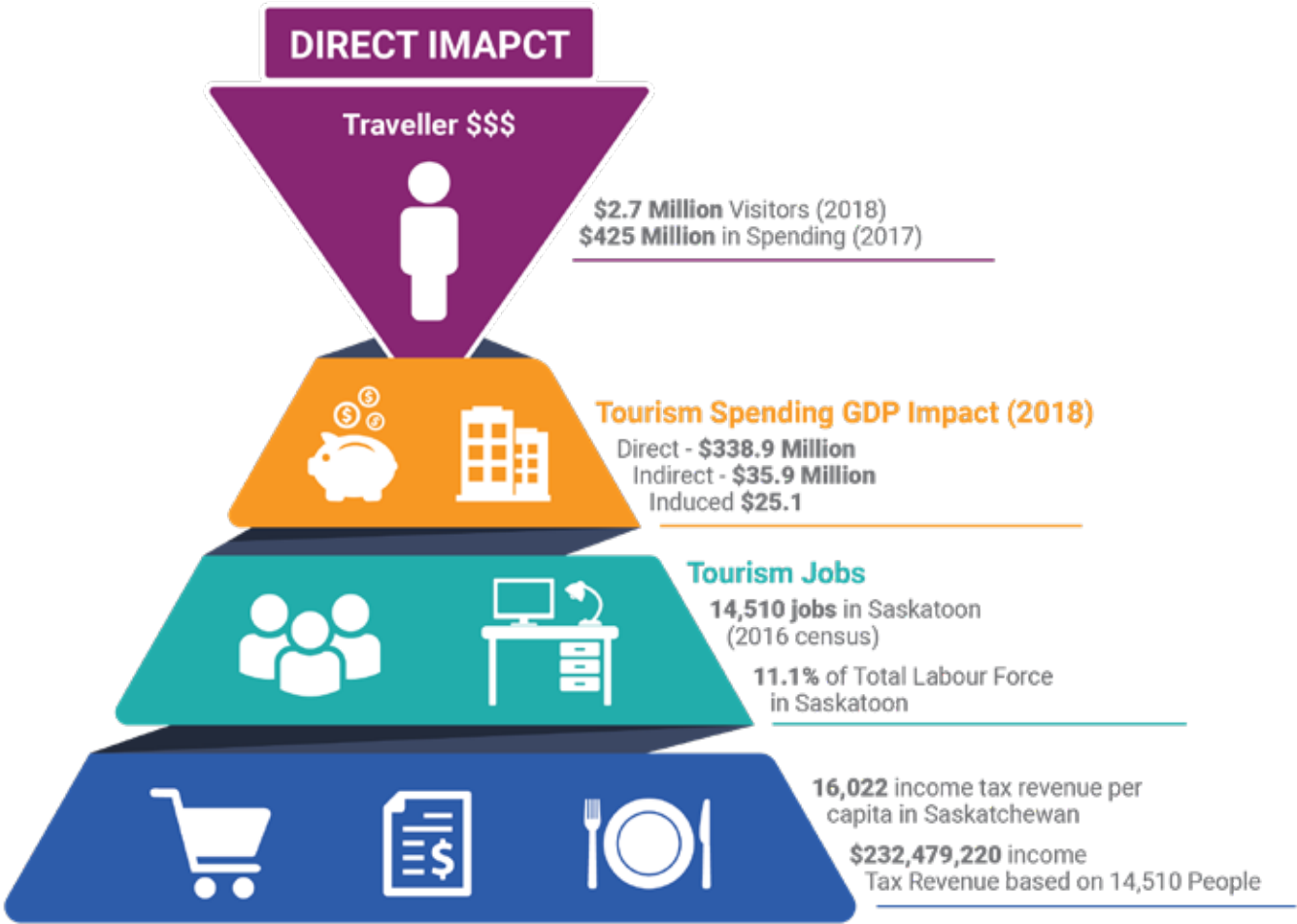
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We will **LEARN** about sustainable and regenerative tourism from experts, professionals and travellers around the world.

We will take **ACTION** steps towards advancing the United Nations **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS** and **PARTNER** with other sectors willing to make a collaborative difference.

We will **SHARE** our events, initiatives, research and stories to show the world what we have been doing for the Sustainable Development Goals and a regenerative, circular future.

SASKATOON’S VISITOR ECONOMY





Develop An Aligned & Sustainable Sector

Insights from our industry partners will continue to inform and strengthen our strategic planning process and refine our communication approaches. Using data to inform our decisions ensures for delivery of timely updates on success and tools to strengthen our resiliency and learn the framework of a circular economy, providing Saskatoon with a competitive advantage as we grow the potential amongst us all. An increasingly informed and educated membership will allow for industry alignment, bringing our destination to life, and increasing our effectiveness.

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen Partner Collaboration & Participation

A unified approach to driving the visitor economy of Saskatoon by all hoteliers will ensure that our destination is successful because knowledge, skills and resources will be combined. We will deliver meaningful training programs that support our partners in creating a destination wide experience that is reflective of our excellence and long-term vision for our community. We will stand committed to the onboarding and welcoming of new partners and will acknowledge the value of our programs through consistent communication and engagement.



Strategies

- Increase engagement of hotel & industry partners with resources and tools.
- Create experiential onboarding program for new hotels and partners
- Play an active role in the political landscape of Saskatchewan
- CEO communication strategy

Goal

- Free cash flow from additional sources to support acute shortfalls in DMP revenues while Tourism Saskatoon strengthens and returns to a sustainable funding model.
- Maintain 75% participation by hotel partners in DMP
- Maintain membership base

Highlighted Tactics

- The development of a collaborative “hotel sector concierge” mentality will help hotels position themselves as partners in a collaborative, B2B approach to encouraging overnight visitation
- Offer the opportunity to learn the framework of circular economics, its rationale, potential impacts on individual businesses, and Saskatoon’s value chain
- Support the sophistication of Saskatoon Destination Marketing Hotels Inc. through a strategic planning process
- Pilot the integration of circular business models into at least two hotel partner operations
- Onboard all existing and upcoming hotel partners with a new experiential program
- Further develop PRIMED Tourism Academy to provide educational opportunities from all lines of Tourism Saskatoon business, encouraging involvement in strategic initiatives
- Launch CEO communication strategy to elected officials that supports quarterly meetings with provincial and municipal governments to advocate for and prove the value of Saskatoon’s visitor economy. The goal is to acquire cash flow from additional sources to support the shortfall in DMP.
- Launch CEO “work from hotel” initiative and subsequent blog
- Establish advisory groups for newly established lines of business
- Build a commitment to a circular economy for tourism in Saskatoon — an inclusive, diverse, and hip city on the banks of the South Saskatchewan river that has positioned the hotel sector as a key leader in the “Heavy Asset Class” of this circular economy
- Host open house opportunities that demonstrate the importance of business events in Saskatoon and the excellence of safety and security standards that hotel and venue partners uphold

OBJECTIVE 2

Full Participation from Industry Partners in Strategic Initiatives



Strategies

- Establish strong local ambassadorship and leadership in Saskatoon's centers of excellence.
- Seek and develop partnerships to gain access to new audiences and grow current networks – influence and drive business
- Further investments and reach in marketing by working with non-traditional partners.

Goal

- Create and Launch Saskatoon's "Lead the Way" program
- Sign MOU with University of Saskatchewan

Highlighted Tactics

- Continue working with Tourism Saskatchewan, Destination Canada, Destination Indigenous , SREDA, and the Saskatoon Tribal Council
- Develop relationship and partnership with University of Saskatchewan
- Host member engagement events in person or virtually to enable the development of B2B partnerships within industry
- Host a virtual or hybrid industry conference that incentivizes overnight stays in partner hotels, showcases Saskatoon's culinary experiences, engages thought leaders in the tourism sector, and highlights local leaders within centres of excellence
- Enhance membership presence on tourismsaskatoon.com The Bridge (membership extranet) and additional digital platforms
- Report monthly on value provided to membership in summary and quarterly to each member business
- Integrate SREDA's Local Link program
- Partner with STEC for a destination wide service program to enhance visitor experience
- Finalize 2SLGBTQ+ strategy and implement in partnership with all industry partners to provide national leadership in how to provide a safe and inclusive experience for this traveller demographic
- Enable connection between all industry partners to join forces in sourcing, designing, optimizing procurement, delivery, and disposal of personal protective gear and cleaning equipment



Enhance & Evolve The Visitor Experience

To ensure Saskatoon takes its rightful place as a transformative, inspiring destination we must cultivate our “One Thing” and support the creation of the experiences that celebrate our unique authenticity. Our work will enhance the visitor experience by mobilizing ambassadors of Saskatoon and connecting with residents in new ways that make them proud to live, work and play in Saskatoon.

OBJECTIVE 1

Grow Year-Round Visitation

We will offer connection and create community through event incubation, experience development, and strengthened marketing campaigns that leverage local and provincial media outlets as ambassadors, not just media partners. We want to market all the seasonal experiences Saskatoon has to offer.



Strategies

- Present a collaborative vision and plan for the safe return to face-to-face gatherings at 50% capacity within hosting spaces to provincial government officials
- Launch seasonal marketing campaigns that inspire local pride and drive visitation to local businesses. Through these campaigns, we will leverage key digital channels while building local ambassadorship through traditional local media outlets
- Leverage Ottawa sales executive position in key markets to drive travellers to Saskatoon for business events, travel trade, and sport tourism.
- Lengthen current business travellers stay in Saskatoon

Goal

- Maintain hotel occupancy level that meets ever evolving national average
- Increase in number of Saskatoonians that believe tourism is an important contributor to the local economy and quality of life.

Highlighted Tactics

- Partner with local leaders in the tech sector to build and launch a digital platform that enables a point of purchase and packaging for local consumers and visitors to Saskatoon
- Ensure that the website is an essential online resource for visitors and residents to pre-plan their tourism experience in Saskatoon, and generates leads to members before travelling
- Launch marketing strategy that focuses on driving the awareness and consideration pieces of the sales funnel. This will be a multi-channel approach that includes digital ads, traditional local media, e-communications, Saskatooning Blog, influencer marketing, contesting, print marketing, and more.
- Facilitate and evolve “Saskatoon Staycation Series” in partnership with CTV, Uniglobe, and SDMH Inc. hotel partners
- Develop a digital analytics strategy that informs marketing tactics and the experience development process
- Attend key travel media and travel trade marketplaces
- Develop and launch “safe meetings strategy” and “no waste event strategy”
- Packaged AV solutions created as incentive for all business events, including local and provincial micro meetings
- Host virtual or in-person familiarization tours with key media, associations, and trade partners
- Partnership development with local tech leaders to support the further sophistication of Saskatoon’s visitor experience through technology and Artificial Intelligence
- Incentivize and market Saskatoon experiences through trade partners and local networks in centres of excellence to lengthen business traveller stays
- Build travel trade joint marketing partnerships that increase the number of Saskatoon itineraries sold and drive visitation from domestic and eventual international markets
- Host travel agent, tour operator, and receptive tour operator training during virtual or in-person sales calls
- Continue to deploy Saskatoon experience boxes to clients in conjunction with online training or virtual fam hosting
- Saskatoon CommUNITY Commitment is top of mind and in plain sight through all marketing and communications to demonstrate the destination wide commitment and belief to our safety standards in travel
- Itinerary development with trade and association partners
- Work closely with Tourism Saskatchewan, Destination Canada, Destination Indigenous and others to create opportunities to grow demand in domestic and international markets

OBJECTIVE 2

Drive Experience Development And Event Incubation

Experience development continues to result in more diversified and resilient travel products while lowering negative social and environmental impacts, preserving Saskatoon's destination asset value. To demonstrate that tourism is a driver of innovation, sustainable practices within Saskatchewan's experience development must be founded in authenticity, relevancy, and boldness.



Strategies

- Complete all contracted experience development projects with Western Diversification in partnership with The Culinary Tourism Alliance, TIAC and Earth Rhythms.
- Incubate one winter event and one summer event that drives overnight room nights from wherever travel is possible locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.
- Enhance Tourism Saskatoon Visitor Centre and Visitor Services experience to become essential resource for local residents and travellers to plan their trip and while in destination.
- Build partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council, Destination Indigenous, The Indigenous Tourism Corridor and other Indigenous leadership to support the development of Indigenously owned and operated tourism organizations and experiences.

Goal

- Launch social enterprise in partnership with Saskatoon Food Council in June of 2021
- Include six (6) new agricultural culinary tourism experiences in trade and consumer itineraries
- Include three (3) newly developed or enhanced experiences in trade and consumer itineraries
- Launch Saskatoon's first industry conference
- Increase the number of sporting events hosted and incubated in Saskatoon

Highlighted Tactics

- Incubate events that drive overnight room nights to align with fall/winter and spring/summer campaigns and experiences being offered during those times that integrate at least one of the business models for a circular economy
- Create and launch six new agricultural culinary experiences in partnership with The Culinary Tourism Alliance and The Saskatoon Food Council
- Create and launch a social enterprise that is owned in partnership with The Saskatoon Food Council that operates tours and facilitates immersion in newly created experiences
- Create new or enhance existing regenerative experiences through the Experience Development Program
- Launch professional organized, annual events that safely allow community gatherings within relevant and evolving public health guidelines
- Increase the number of virtual or mobile visitor service sites and interpretive displays throughout airport, hotels, and attractions to enhance visitor experience
- Create and enhance winter experiences that enable local businesses and individuals to provide purchasable, immersive experiences outdoors
- Develop an ongoing approach to collecting information and analyzing all events
- Support the establishment of an Indigenous Tourism Council in Saskatoon.

OBJECTIVE 3

Partner For Urgent Action In Support Of Business Event Hosting Facilities And An Entertainment District.

The competitive nature of the tourism industry's business event sector has eternally been high, and now the pandemic has called all bets off and leveled the playing field. Attractions such as oceans and mountains obviously draw high numbers of travellers due to the amount of activity and natural beauty they provide. Saskatchewan's assets may be lesser known, but are equally precious and propitious in offering a transformative experience to business travellers who know very little of our province and city prior to arriving. Well known Canadian destinations like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver have long been removed from the national meetings sector, focusing on highly lucrative, high volume international markets that drive large volumes of high yield travellers to their destinations. Saskatoon must present an even more compelling invitation to our destination. Being granted host city status relies on leveraging our current assets, assessing what enhancements are required and building an entertainment district that supports the City of Saskatoon's vision for a thriving downtown centre. The events sector may be the first tourism industry sector to explore how the circular economy framework could be implemented into the production and delivery of events.



Strategies

- Develop scenarios that provide a comparative analysis of competitive destination hosting and event facilities, and accompanying ideation of facilities that best suit the priorities for future event hosting
- Maintain an advisory and decision-making role in further planning committees
- Develop sustainability certification process that ensures Saskatoon's events sector evaluates and ranks the impacts on our destination's supply chain and workforce

Goal

- Stay active in municipal and provincial discussions or committees

Highlighted Tactics

- Create and implement a stakeholder mapping system to support the evaluation of impact on Saskatoon's supply chain and workforce
- Optimize Saskatoon's sustainability certification by consistently evaluating and improving communications regarding the positive economic and social impacts in the community



Live & Lead With Our Brand

While in the process of reconfiguring tourism post COVID-19, it is important to remember the importance of inspiring residents of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan to experience the value of tourism in our city. Their positive sentiment and pride of place is accompanied by a deep belief that tourism plays a vital role in their economic prosperity. Social wellbeing is crucial to future resilience, sustainability, competitiveness, and relevance of Saskatoon's visitor economy. These times highlight the growing need for innovation, robust sustainability, health and safety performance, and cost optimization as important elements of differentiation and competitiveness in the coming years.

Our place DNA needs to shine through our brand. When an image of Saskatoon or a snippet of our copy is seen out of context, it should be instantly identifiable to our brand. To lead with our brand means visitors inherently understand the meaning of place we've created for Saskatoon. This brand cannot be created in a vacuum. The meaning runs deeper when we connect our brand to locals' understanding of Saskatoon. We will articulate the sentiment that locals feel, put words to the experience of visitors, and create a definition of Saskatoon that can be shared and loved by all.

OBJECTIVE 1

Build Destination Brand Alignment

We will leverage our compelling, humorous, and locally created marketing campaigns to build momentum and pride of place. Safety is always top of mind and in plain sight, and will be emphasized more dramatically during and following the pandemic



Strategies

- Align strategic partners in Saskatoon with brand pillars and key messaging
- Engage the community of Saskatoon in building the destination brand through Place DNA discovery

Goal

- Increase in the number of Saskatonians that believe tourism is an important contributor to the local economy and quality of life
- Increase brand awareness, measurable through various KPIs including backlink increase, media mentions, and digital platform metrics

Highlighted Tactics

- Initiate a resident sentiment survey, reassessing the outcomes every three months through the course of 2021
- Collaborate to form a local leadership task force composed of local leaders from Saskatoon's sectors of strength in business and sport
- Host workshops and educational opportunities to bring the brand to life with industry partners
- Enhance communications to industry partners providing opportunities for brand alignment
- Ensure alignment in marketing campaigns across all lines of Tourism Saskatoon business
- Design and launch a content strategy that is informed by digital analytics and fueled by innovative experience, offering and packaging opportunities
- Partners with local and hosted influencers in the Saskatooning blog, through social channels and throughout marketing campaigns
- Create story pillars that align with local and domestic traveller desires and niche markets brought on by the global pandemic, like wellness and outdoor and nature-based experiences
- Maintain partnerships to showcase Saskatoon campaign and messaging at industry events and through the "Cities in Sync" partnership
- Animate events with Tourism Saskatoon brand and campaign messaging
- Ensure collateral and marketing key messages are inclusive and inspiring for target audiences
- Maintain on-air presence with local radio and TV partners showcasing brand pillars and promise

OBJECTIVE 2

Fuel Local & Traveller Advocacy



Strategies

- Provide a platform for residents and business owners to share their story.
- Build a conversation with locals, visitors and prospects.
- Create retail sales opportunities in the Visitor Centre that build on pride and positivity in destination experiences

Goal

- Define local and traveller awareness and advocacy measures

Highlighted Tactics

- Leverage partnerships with local traditional media outlets to increase local traveller awareness
- Host local media personalities on packaged staycations
- Follow through on inspiring marketing campaigns with the delivery of exceptional experiences throughout the destination
- Stay connected with Tourism Saskatchewan and Destination Canada to enable greater distribution of traveller experiences and local stories from industry partners
- Provide travel writers, online marketers, and other media partners with virtual or in person fam opportunities that highlight key experiences and the circular evolution of Saskatoon.



Operate a Culturally Sound & Performance-based Organization

OBJECTIVE 1

Delivery Exemplary Fiscal Processes



Strategies

- Improve financial literacy within internal team
- Deliver timely and accurate financial information to facilitate decision making, monthly variance reporting, and quarterly forecasting
- Build best practices for nonprofit management at the team and board level

Goal

- Clean audit outcome
- Free cash flow

Highlighted Tactics

- Refine budgeting and forecasting process with monthly variance reporting and quarterly forecasting.
- Improve team member understanding of cash flow complexities
- Implement project authorization process

OBJECTIVE 2

Optimize Investments



Strategies

- Maximize return on federal and provincial investments
- Make data informed decisions
- Create and implement efficient programs and processes

Goal

- Find financial efficiencies that provide opportunity to build financial reserves

Highlighted Tactics

- Deliver exceptional and timely reporting to federal and provincial funding partners that demonstrates achievement of project goals alongside obvious indicators of economic and social enhancement
- Measure success of events incubated within public health orders to reflect substantial restrictions that can lower overall ROI
- Review and optimize consumer and trade investments
- Begin marketing initiatives with clear understanding of the target consumer and expected outcomes

OBJECTIVE 3

Stabilize DMO Through Enhanced Funding Model And Additional Funding Sources

The Destination Market Program in Saskatoon has evolved through times of high occupancy into times of great strain, and now requires either full collaboration by all hotels in Saskatoon or the pursuit of a different model.

Tourism Saskatoon has successfully acquired \$1.2 million dollars worth of additional revenue to support destination development, business development, and marketing efforts over the past year and will continue this pursuit. The stability of our destination's visitor economy requires a commitment by current stakeholders and our team if Saskatoon is going to stay relevant and competitive in years to come.



Strategies

- Connect to all available federal, provincial, and municipal funding opportunities that provide funding relief and free cash flow
- Complete funding model risk assessment for presentation to Tourism Saskatoon Board of Directors
- Improve frequency of program area reporting to investing hotel partners through SDMH Inc. and SHA meetings

Goal

- Free cash flow to support 2021 program plans
- Stabilized funding model
- Minimum 75% collaboration by all Saskatoon and area hotels in the Destination Marketing Program



Highlighted Tactics

- Present partnership and commitment opportunities to all non SHDM Inc hotel partners
- Onboard all existing hotel partners through new onboarding program
- Provide interactive and experiential reporting and presentations at Saskatoon Hotel Association meetings
- Present a one time funding opportunity to the Government of Saskatchewan in support of stabilization of Tourism Saskatoon's funding model
- Present City of Saskatoon with a partnership opportunity that allows for the municipality to govern the tourism levy charged on every room night stay
- Apply for all available funding through Western Diversification, Tourism Saskatchewan, and City of Saskatoon

OBJECTIVE 4

Manage Talent And Promote Team Member Effectiveness



Strategies

- Team member wellness is supported
- Align all business development functions within one line of business
- Continue creating collaborative and focused work environment virtually or in person
- Invest in team member professional development that aligns with aspirations and operational changes

Highlighted Tactics

- Refine team members performance process
- Refine programs to hire and retain top talent
- Support culture team and ensure function in supporting healthy work – life blend.

The Scorecard

Develop an Aligned & Sustainable Sector

GOALS



Create experiential onboarding program for new hotels and partners



Maintain membership base

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen hotel sector and member collaboration and participation.
- Develop partnerships for full and enthusiastic participation by all industry partners.

STRATEGIES

- Increase engagement of hotel & industry partners with resources and tools.
- Play an active role in the political landscape of Saskatchewan
- Seek and develop partnerships to gain access to new audiences and grow current networks – influence and drive business

Enhance & Evolve the Visitor Experience

GOALS



Launch social enterprise in partnership with Saskatoon Food Council in June of 2021



Launch Saskatoon’s first Industry Conference

OBJECTIVES

- Grow year-round visitation
- Drive experience development and event incubation
- Advocate for urgent development of convention center and entertainment district

STRATEGIES

- Lengthen current business travellers stay in Saskatoon
- Develop sustainability certification process that ensures Saskatoon’s events sector evaluates and ranks the impacts on our destination’s supply chain and workforce

Live & Lead with our Brand

GOALS



Define local and traveller awareness and advocacy measure



Increase in number of Saskatoonians that believe tourism is an important contributor to the local economy and quality of life.

OBJECTIVES

- Build Destination Brand Alignment
- Fuel local & traveller advocacy

STRATEGIES

- Align strategic partners in Saskatoon with brand pillars and key messaging
- Engage the community of Saskatoon in building the destination brand through Place DNA discovery
- Provide a platform for residents and business owners to share their story.
- Build a conversation with locals, visitors and prospects.

Operate a Culturally Sound & Performance Based Organization

GOALS



Free cash flow



Clean audit outcome

OBJECTIVES

- Delivery Exemplary Fiscal Processes
- Optimize Investments
- Stabilize DMO through enhanced funding model and additional funding sources
- Manage talent and promote team member effectiveness

STRATEGIES

- Maximize return on federal and provincial investments
- Make data informed decisions
- Create and implement efficient programs and processes
- Team member wellness is supported
- Align all business development functions within one line of business



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