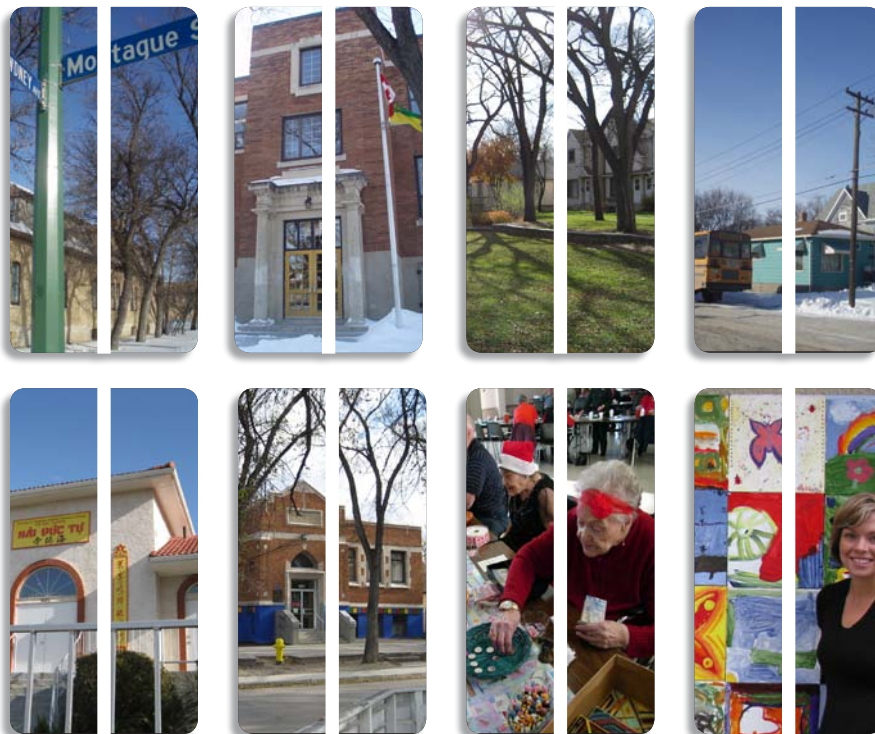




# North Central Community Legacy Study



 officeforurbanism + AECOM

April 15, 2009

*Regina*  
CITY OF REGINA

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude towards the following individuals who have provided great hospitality and support throughout the process of this study. Their dedication and commitment to this community is unwavering and has been a constant source of energy and inspiration.

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Randall Fielding

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# **North Central Community Legacy Study**

Submitted to:  
Bruce Rice  
City of Regina  
April 15, 2009

Prepared by:  
Office for Urbanism



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North Central Community Gardens Project

# 1.0 Introduction

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North Central is one of Regina's oldest neighbourhoods and the largest neighbourhood in the Inner City area. Its street grid system, mature trees and the predominance of older-style single family homes comprise a heritage asset for the city. It is a complex environment home to many community-based services. It is also a neighbourhood with deep-rooted social challenges, but with residents who refuse to resign to exaggerated labels given to the place they call home.

Positive initiatives abound. The North Central Community Association continues to play an unprecedented role in addressing a broad range of community needs. The proposed Shared Facility points to a hopeful new model for collaboration across jurisdictions, including the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Regina School Board, the City, community agencies, the Regina Public Library, Police Services, and Saskatchewan Government Departments.

Significant government investment has been directed to North Central as a response to mitigating social issues. At the same time, it continues to be difficult to assess the success of initiatives at addressing these issues, given that outcomes have rarely been comprehensively measured on a neighbourhood wide basis. Indeed, this Study marks the lack of clear measures

as a key challenge to overcome in this neighbourhood in order to fully understand the impact of existing interventions.

**Chapters 2 to 5** of this report describe the existing conditions and characteristics of North Central. Essentially, they are the observations from which the analysis and recommendations were derived.

**Chapters 6 and 7** describe in detail the analysis completed and the recommendations, which have been termed 'Directions for Change', and which function as guiding pieces towards the next step in planning for the neighbourhood.

**Chapters 8 and 9** recognize the need to accelerate both the monitoring of the neighbourhood and the implementation of design standards (given the imminence of the proposed Shared Facility) - two of the key recommendations in the Directions for Change. As such, Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines, as well as Measures and Indicators, have been developed in these final chapters of this report.

---

- 1.1 Study Purpose

The North Central Community Legacy Study (the Study) is intended as a preliminary planning assessment of the North Central neighbourhood. This assessment, it is hoped, both lays the foundations for a future neighbourhood plan and identifies implementable Directions for Change. The Study examines the opportunities and constraints of the North Central neighbourhood – physical and social infrastructure – with particular emphasis on evaluating the urban design quality of recently built and proposed new public buildings and facilities.

The Study, as a preliminary assessment, is based on:

- An examination, assessment and interpretation of the body of work already completed and/or underway for the neighbourhood; and
- Original research and stakeholder interviews conducted by City of Regina staff as well as the consultants (Office for Urbanism and AECOM).

## 1.2 Study Objectives

The main objective of this Study is to identify key considerations for planning in North Central in light of the future proposed North Central Shared Facility. Currently in the design stage, the Shared Facility will be a state-of-the-art learning centre, community centre, health care centre, and school utilizing a new model of learning unprecedented in the City of Regina, that focuses on the integration of community services, education, and neighbourhood amenity.

The magnitude of this project presents a significant opportunity to the North Central neighbourhood, both in terms of the collaborative and community-based model that it embodies as well as the opportunity it presents to better respond to existing, real community needs.

The success of the Shared Facility will have a positive impact on the issues that the neighbourhood is seeking to confront; in turn, the continued evolution of the neighbourhood as a safe, affordable and desirable place to live, work and play will have a significant impact on the success of the Shared Facility. Recognizing this interdependence, this study seeks to identify initiatives, neighbourhood improvements, and urban design guidelines that will support the success of the Shared Facility, thereby supporting the future transformation of the neighbourhood as a whole.



### 1.3 Study Scope: a Preliminary Planning Assessment

This preliminary planning assessment is intended to provide an initial review, analysis and direction to guide future work. It includes a scan of existing information, opportunities and constraints analyses, development of strategic recommendations, and an evaluation of these opportunities and constraints against neighbourhood planning goals.

The objective of this study has not been to undertake, or to repeat, the extensive analysis that already exists. It has involved a comprehensive review of documents, studies, and reports, on various themes within the social and physical realms of the neighbourhood (see Appendix A). To supplement this method, raw data was collected on neighbourhood businesses, community agencies, and locations of boarded up homes (see Appendix B and C and Schedule D4).

Reconnaissance has also consisted of touching base with some of the key stakeholders in the neighbourhood, such as community leaders, agency workers, youth at both the Rainbow Youth Center and at Scott Collegiate, as well as the North Central Community Association, to get a sense of the scope of issues in the neighbourhood. This approach was enhanced by focus group discussions, stakeholder interviews, conference calls, and public open houses that have provided insight into the neighbourhood and informed the proposed recommendations.

Given the imminence of the proposed Shared Facility, this preliminary planning assessment was required to gain a high level understanding of the issues faced by the neighbourhood, and has been different from other studies undertaken to date due to its broad and interdisciplinary scope. It is recognized that a thorough planning study informed by extensive stakeholder consultation should be pursued, and might result in a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan at some point in the near future.

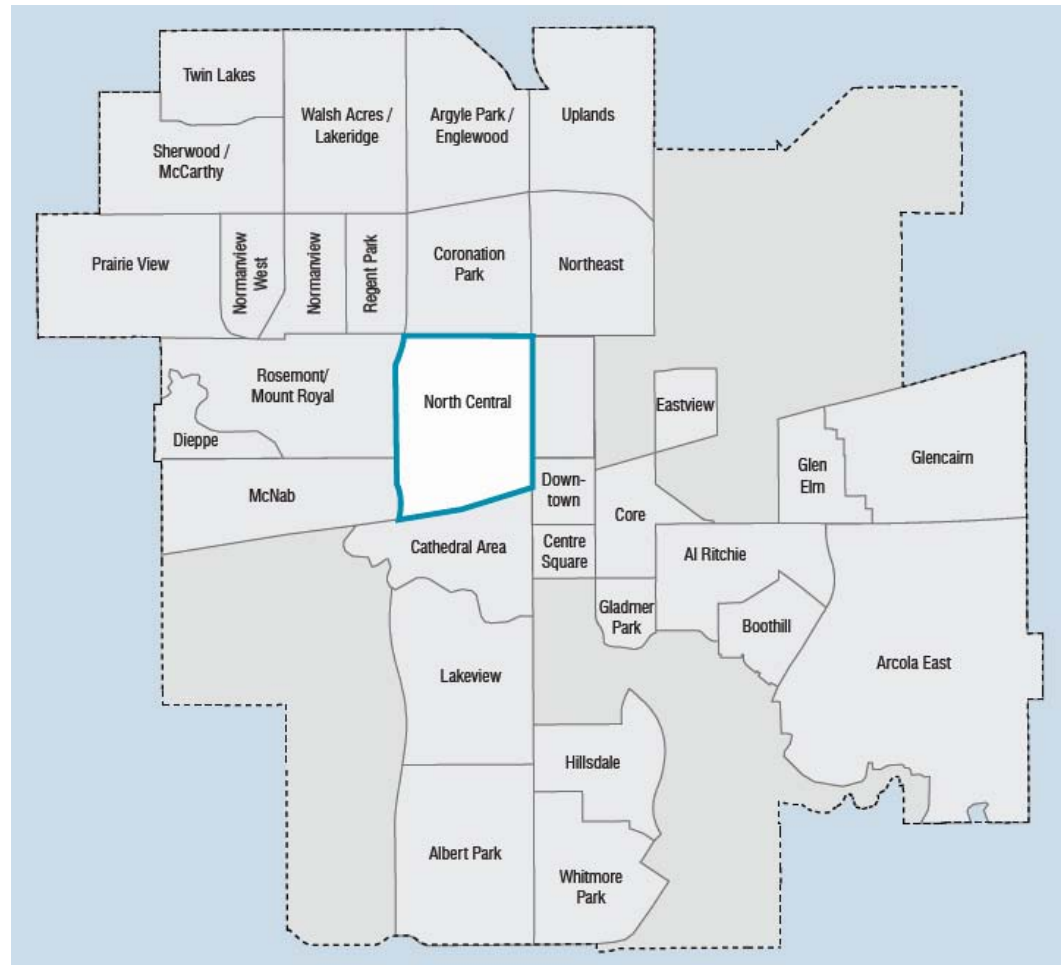
Four key areas were considered in the context of this study:

#### **Neighbourhood Sustainability**

The key objective has been to understand constraints and opportunities related to ensuring North Central is working towards becoming a great place to live, work, and play in an environment that is safe, healthy, and supports the overall well being of its residents. In general, neighbourhood sustainability considered how the neighbourhood will, over time, begin to normalize by considering some of the high level issues affecting community development.

#### **Housing**

Recognizing that housing quality and accessibility continues to be an on-going issue, the objective with respect to housing has been to position North Central as a desirable place to live within the city, where residents take pride in their neighbourhood and their homes. Some primary analysis was undertaken in this area, and consideration was given to existing recommendations in recent studies.



### Transportation

To our knowledge, a study has not been undertaken in the past that considers transportation and movement in North Central specifically. For this reason, in this area we evaluated how people move about, including the street and transit systems. The key objective was to ensure that it is possible to move with ease and through North Central in a variety of ways, and to evaluate whether transportation systems contribute to larger social issues.

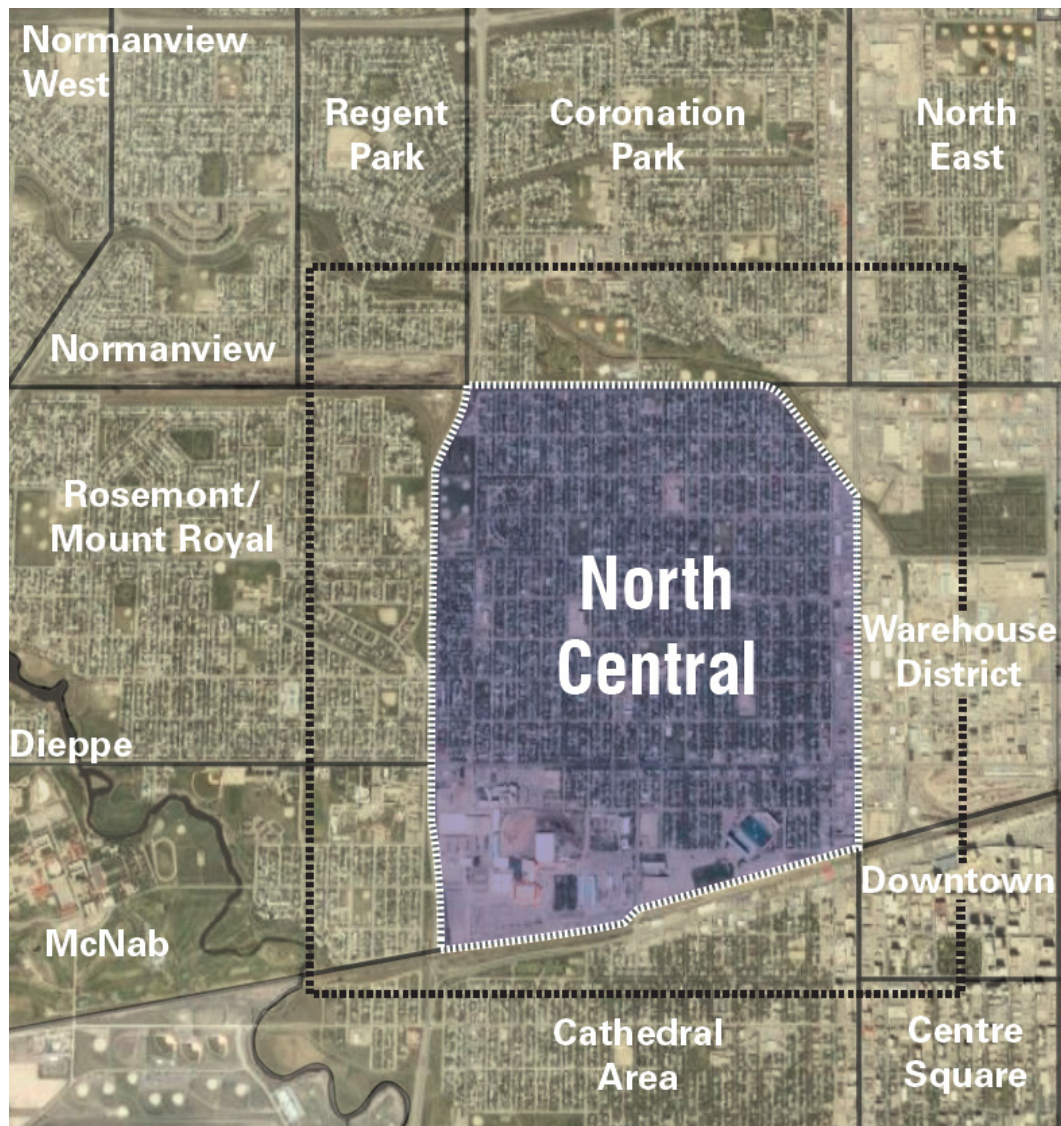
### Land Use

By stepping back and evaluating land uses in the context of other neighbourhood considerations, such as social issues, it has been possible to understand whether land uses in the neighbourhood support community development, and whether land uses respect and reinforce the unique aspects of the neighbourhood.

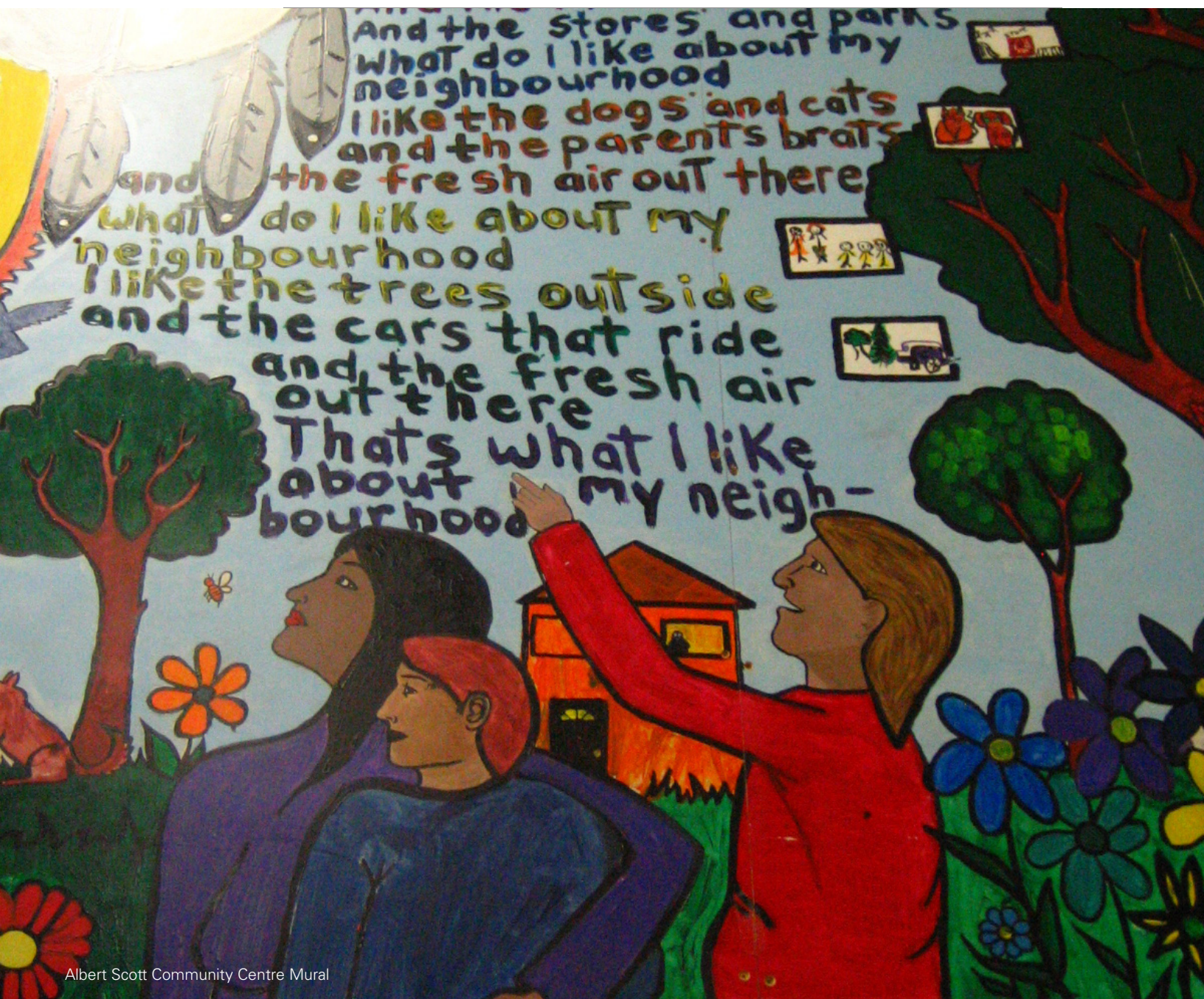
## 1.4 Study Area Boundaries

The North Central Study Area is bordered by the Warehouse District to the east of Albert Street, the Cathedral Area to the south of the Canadian Pacific rail tracks, the Rosemont/Mount Royal neighbourhood to

the west of Lewvan Drive, and Coronation Park neighbourhood to the north of the CP rail tracks. North Central is part of Inner City Regina with approximately 386 hectares of land, of which 75% is comprised of low-rise, low-density residential uses. Downtown Regina is connected to North Central by the Albert Street underpass at Saskatchewan Drive.







Albert Scott Community Centre Mural

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## 1.5 The North Central 2020 Vision

In 2003, the North Central community, through the work of the North Central Community Partnership, generated a 2020 Vision Statement that set in motion a renewed momentum towards neighbourhood improvement. The Vision built upon the existing assets of North Central: its geographic centrality, its built-form character, its proximity to a variety of recreational facilities, its adaptable and resilient human nature, and its pride as a great place to live. It also describes the character of its residents as healthy, caring, and living in a safe environment – aspirations that are seemingly more and more attainable as the neighbourhood works together towards change.

This Vision statement has been reinforced through this Study, and has informed the development of the Directions for Change described in Chapter 7.0.

### The North Central 2020 Vision

*In the year 2020,  
North Central will be a  
safer, healthier, more  
generous, and prouder  
community. As such,  
from now until then  
we need to foster  
and nourish budding  
community leaders  
who can continue to  
drive the momentum  
of community  
development forward  
and be champions  
for North Central's  
transformation into  
2020 and beyond.*

Source: Report on the Community Vision and Action  
Plan, 2003





Question and answer at the Public Open House, February 2009

# 2.0 Background

---

## 2.1 Study Team and Advisory Committee

The Study was led by a planning and urban design consultant team, Office for Urbanism, in partnership with Bruce Belmore of AECOM (for a transportation analysis) and the City of Regina Planning and Development Division, under the supervision of Bruce Rice, Acting Manager of Comprehensive Planning.

An Advisory Committee was assembled to provide guidance to the Study Team. The Advisory Committee was comprised of the North Central Shared Facility Project Team partners (Ministry of Education, Scott Collegiate, City of Regina) and Project Manager; City staff from Comprehensive Planning, of the Planning and Development Division; community members, and the North Central Community Association (please see acknowledgements for a list of the members).



Public Open House, November 2008

## 2.2 Study Process

### 2.2.1 Study Kick-Off Event

The Study process began in November 2008, with a Kick-off event held on November 3, 2008 in Regina.

### 2.2.2 Phase I: Getting to know the community

The primary objective of Phase I was to gather information through site visits to the neighbourhood, which familiarized the team to key locations, destinations, physical conditions, and streets worth noting. Demographic statistics and the history of North Central were researched. The existing policy framework and planning environment was investigated.



Public Open House, November 2008



Family Fun Day, December 2008



Family Fun Day, December 2008



Public Open House, November 2008



The project team and consultants met with the Advisory Committee to learn about issues and opportunities in North Central and to be briefed on the proposed North Central Shared Facility. Communications between the consultants and the North Central Shared Facility consultants resulted in a round of discussions related to the urban design of the proposed Shared Facility design.

A Public Open House as well as a series of stakeholder interviews with community agencies was held on December 4, 2008. In some instances, site visits to agency offices were also undertaken.

The environmental scan of documents, studies, and reports on North Central identified key documents which required follow-up. Authors of these reports were further consulted through teleconferencing to determine the status of various recommendations. These teleconferences proved to be essential to identifying gaps in the implementation of these reports.

#### Documents and Reports Reviewed

- Towards 2000...A Community Action Plan for the North Central Community Society, Haskins and Associates Ltd., January 1997.
- North Central Community Partnership: Report on the Community Vision and Action Plan, Jeremy Parnes, May 2003.
- North Central Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Final Report, Prairie Sky Consulting, March 2004.
- An Employment Development Strategy for Inner-City Regina, Garven & Associates, 2005.
- Quality of Life in Regina: A Pilot Study, David A Gauthier, Robert A. Figueroa and Lorena Patino, November 2005.

- Business Concept Development & Feasibility Study concerning the establishment of a North Central Regina Community Grocery Store, CS&R Associates, March 2006.
- Neighbourhood Characteristics and the Distribution of Crime in Regina, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, November 2006.
- A Report on Grocery Buying Habits of Residents of North-Central Regina, Arcas Strategic Marketing Group, January 2006.
- Improving Rental Housing in Regina, NCCA, January 2007.
- Inner City Tenants Survey, NCCA, March 2007
- Research Report on Rental Housing Regulations, NCCA, 2007.
- Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan, City of Regina, September 2007.
- The Open Space Management Strategy, City of Regina, Community & Protective Services Division, October 2007.
- Regina Community Plan 2007: A Home for All, Kael Consulting, November 2007.
- Regina Public Library Service Plan, Regina Public Library, September 2008.
- Core Neighbourhood Plan - Draft, HB Lanarc, October 2008.
- North Central Community Association PATH Planning Session, NCCA, November 2008.
- Reducing Gaps in Health: A Focus on Socio-Economic Status in Urban Canada, The Canadian Public Health Initiative, November 2008.
- Executive Summary to North Central Shared Facility, Croft Planning + Design & Stantec, January 2008.
- Renewing Regina Public Schools: A 10-Year Plan, Regina Public Schools, November 2007.



Public Open House, November 2008



Public Open House, February 2009



Public Open House, February 2009

Public Open House, February 2009



Public Open House, February 2009



Public Open House, February 2009



### 2.2.3 Phase II: Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

Through January 2009 the project team and consultants identified the key opportunities and constraints in North Central from a planning and urban design perspective. Mapping was generated to illustrate the policy and planning frameworks, aspects of the physical infrastructure such as urban fabric and permeability, locational analyses of key community services, and opportunity sites for additional community services.

The project team consolidated the analyses into draft 'observations' that would become the founding pieces of the study recommendations. These were submitted to the Advisory Committee for review and comment. Recommendations were then generated and vetted with the Advisory Committee and City Staff before presentation to the public at the second Public Open House on February 2, 2009. The draft study report was then completed and submitted to the City on February 17, 2009.

### 2.2.4 Phase III: Finalizing the Study

Following the submission and subsequent review of the draft study report by the City and the Advisory Committee, revisions were received and a final document was submitted on February 25, 2009.



# 3.0 North Central Neighbourhood Profile

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## 3.1 History of North Central

The area currently known as the North Central neighbourhood was once a midway point between the east and west town sites, given its proximity to both the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) station and government buildings. As the CPR was moving west towards British Columbia in the late 19th century, the decision to lay tracks in the southern portion of the Great Plains, near an area known as Pile of Bones, was what led to the formation of Regina, capital of the Northwest Territories. While there were no water sources nearby, Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney insisted that a spot close to the main rail line was more beneficial to the capital city.

However, Dewdney's intentions were later revealed as being somewhat self serving, as lands close to the proposed government buildings for the new capital were owned by Dewdney himself. Eventually, the CPR decided to locate the station east of Dewdney's sites, and local businesses followed. The North Central neighbourhood quickly became home to Europeans who worked for the CPR as labourers, and later would become an affluent district for the middle class until the 1950's.

### Historic Settlements

A town site was surveyed and lots were laid out for sale covering a large area from Winnipeg Street to Pasqua Street on the west and between 1st Avenue and



Regina Territorial Administration Building, ca. 1915

(City of Regina Archives Photograph Collection, CORA-RPLB-39)

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16th Avenue (College Ave) to the south. The town site property was held in trust by four men, Donald Smith and Richard Angus of the CPR as well as Edmund Osler and William Scarth for the Canada Northwest Land Company. The original plan of subdivision, Old 33 was drawn up in 1883. Most development was concentrated on the downtown area, but connections were being made between the Territorial buildings as well as the RCMP lands. In 1905 the subdivisions of Washington Park and Parkdale (the northeast and northwest quadrants of North Central) were created.

In 1948 the subdivision of Windsor Park was developed. It is a small area between 2nd Avenue and 4th Avenue and contains Elizabeth Crescent. In the following year, 1949 Pasqua Place was created along the western edge of the North Central neighbourhood, between 7th Avenue and 4th Avenue. Both of these subdivisions were developed with wartime housing.

### **The Territorial Administration Building**

The Territorial Administration Building (on Dewdney Ave. at Montague St.), two miles east of the North West Mounted Police and Government House, housed the Indian Office, Territorial Council chambers (1891-1905) and the provincial government (1905-1910). It was the home of the Ruthenian

Training School (for immigrants from Eastern Europe) from 1910 until 1922, and after surviving a devastating fire, it was rebuilt in 1922 by the Salvation Army who began using it as Grace Haven, a hospital and home for unwed mothers, which closed in 1971. Until 1979, the building deteriorated, when it was restored by the provincial government and became the North Central Community Centre, and later Saskatchewan Express. In 1982, it was designated a provincial heritage property as the Territorial Administration Building and is one of the oldest remaining structures in Regina.

### **The Exhibition Grounds**

Early town founders were eager to promote Regina in order to attract business and settlers to the community. In 1891, Senator William D. Perley of Wolseley initially suggested that the local agricultural societies fund an exhibition. Lieutenant-Governor Charles H. Macintosh revived the idea in 1893 when he came to the Northwest Territories to begin his term, and convinced the Regina town council to put \$10,000 behind the scheme in order to purchase a site and buildings for the exhibition. Funding for the event was a joint effort of the town, the Northwest Territories and the federal government. The Territorial Exhibition was held in

(City of Regina Archives Photograph Collection, CORA-H-10.1)

Regina Fair at Exhibition Grounds, ca 1913



1895, and was an instant success. In 1896, town council purchased the buildings on the same site that the Exhibition Grounds currently sit, and since 1899, the event has become an annual tradition.

### Park de Young/Mosaic Stadium

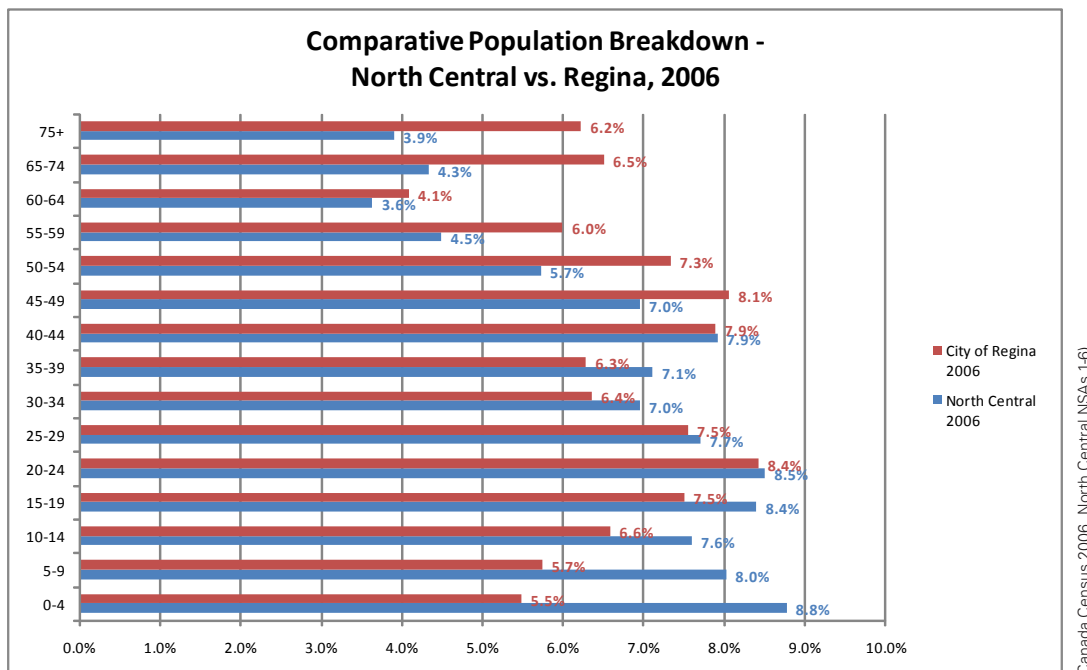
Taylor Field stadium, originally known as Park de Young Stadium, was built in 1927 and became home of the Roughriders that year. In 1946 it was renamed Taylor Field, in honour of Neil J. "Piffles" Taylor, an enthusiastic sportsman, World War I fighter pilot, and lawyer. In June of 2006, the facility was renamed Mosaic Stadium at Taylor Field after naming rights were purchased by the Mosaic Company.

### Neighbourhood Schools

The first Albert School opened in 1905, but by January of 1908, a new Albert School had to open to accommodate the increased number of students. Also around this time,

the city's direction of growth indicated the need for a collegiate in the northwest, so the Collegiate Board purchased a block on 7th Avenue in preparation for a new school. WWI postponed this project, however, and it was not until 1923 that Scott Collegiate was built. Within a few years the 11 rooms were overcrowded so an addition was built in 1927. In 1985 the decision to build a new school was made because of rising costs to maintain the old structure.

Kitchener Community Elementary was built in North Central in 1922. Sacred Heart school was built in 1928. In 1980 Kitchener and Sacred Heart were two of the original elementary schools that received a community school designation. Herchmer School closed in June of 2008, and was later demolished. Students and staff from Herchmer school were amalgamated with Wascana Community School.



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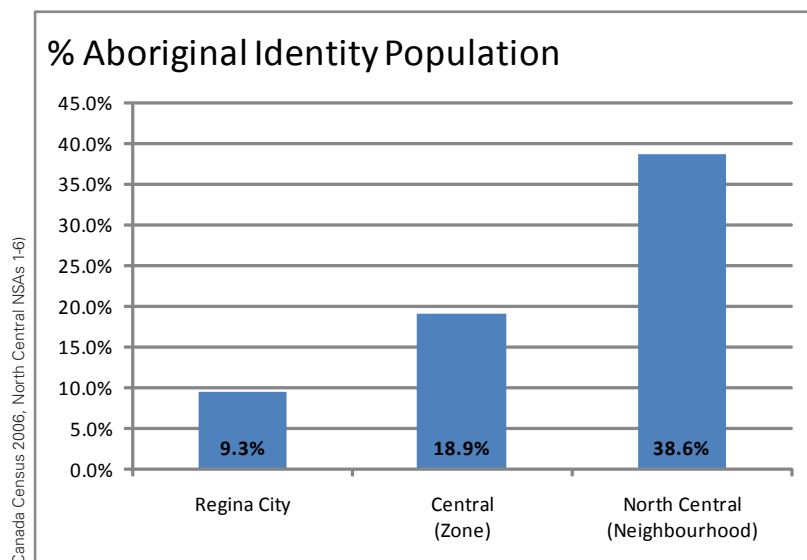
### Towards the 21st Century

When mobility restrictions were lifted on Status Indians in 1985, the demographic in North Central began to shift significantly, and the aboriginal population of North Central began to increase. This was reflected in the number of aboriginal children enrolled in the neighbourhood schools.

North Central neighbourhood stabilized, experiencing only a small overall decline to a population of 10,350. The most recent census period, however, saw a resumption of substantial population declines for the area. Between 2001 and 2006, North Central neighbourhood population experienced a 10.2% decline, from 10,350 to 9,290 persons.

### Population Composition

Younger cohort comprise the largest components of the North Central population. The cohorts between the ages of 0-4, 5-9, 15-19, and 20-24 each constitute over 8% of the total area population. In this respect, the composition of the North Central neighbourhood population is quite different from that of the City of Regina overall. Whereas the North Central neighbourhood composition is weighted toward younger cohorts, city-wide there is a heavier weighting toward older cohorts, in particular, a stronger representation of residents aged 45 and older. The comparative differences in population composition are clearly evidenced by the dramatic difference in the respective median ages of the North Central neighbourhood population (30.8) and of the City of Regina population (38.6).



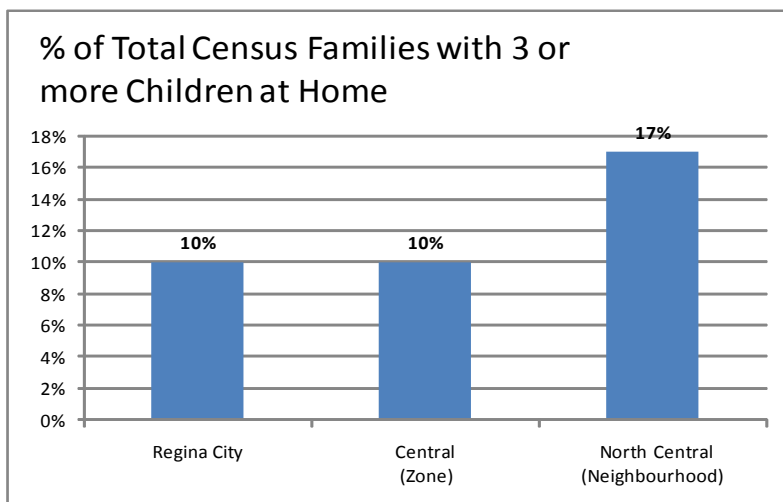
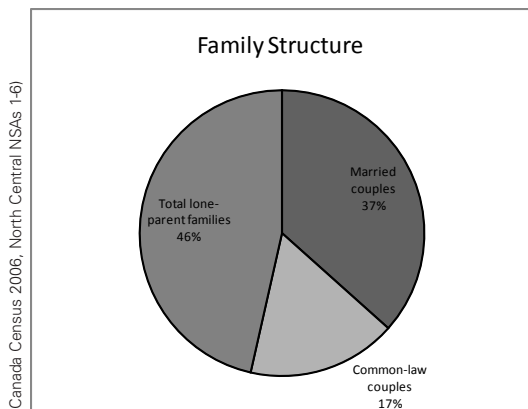
## 3.2 Demographic Profile

### 3.2.1 Population Characteristics

#### Total Population

Following a period of relative stability, the population of the North Central neighbourhood has recently experienced a decline. As of the 1961 census, the North Central neighbourhood had a population of 17,000 persons, but the population declined substantially over each of the next four census periods, reaching a population of 10,735 by the 1981 census. Between 1981 and 2001, the population of the

The recent North Central neighbourhood population declines have not been experienced evenly across the range of age cohorts. The 0-4, 5-9, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 65-74, and 74+ age cohorts all experienced declines of close to 20%. The 55-59 and 60-64 age cohorts, however, grew approximately 18% and 30%, respectively. Although over all there is a weighting towards younger cohorts in the neighborhood, this is shifting significantly towards an older adult population.

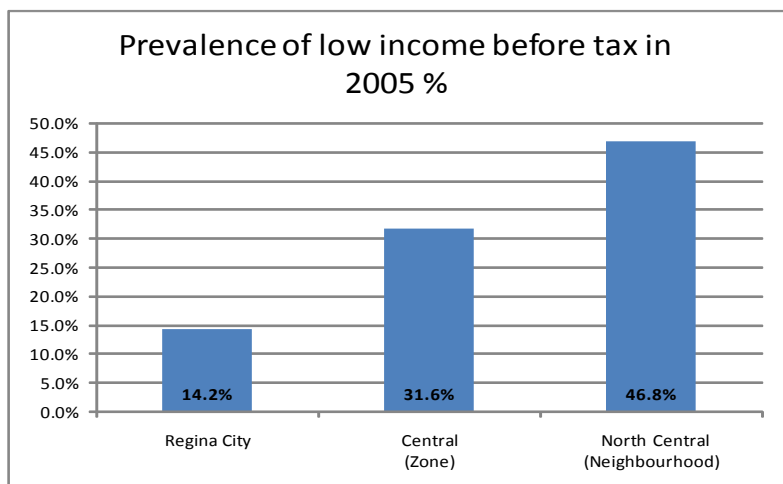
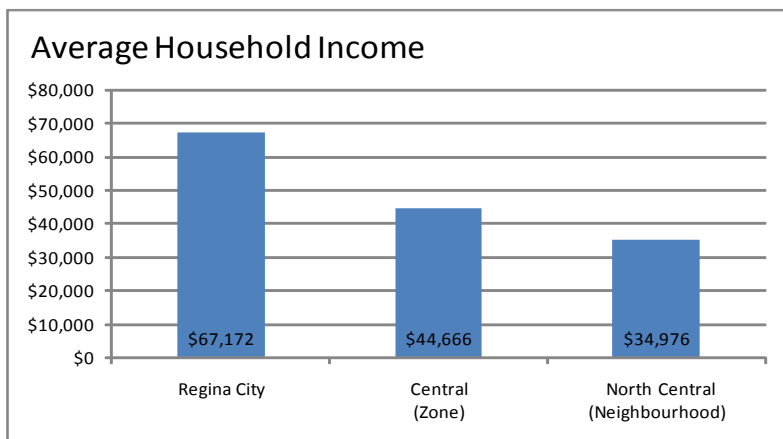


### Aboriginal Identity

Persons identifying with at least one Aboriginal group constitute 38.6% of the North Central neighbourhood population. This compares with 18.9% Aboriginal identity population in the Central Zone, and 9.3% Aboriginal identity population in the entire City of Regina.

### Immigrant Status

Both settled and recent immigrants are relatively under-represented in the North Central neighbourhood. Immigrants constitute 8.0% of the City of Regina population and 9.3% of the Central Zone population, but only make up 5.4% of the North Central neighbourhood population. Similarly, while recent immigrants constitute 1.4% of the overall City population and 2.1% of the Central Zone population, they only represent 0.3% of the North Central neighbourhood population.





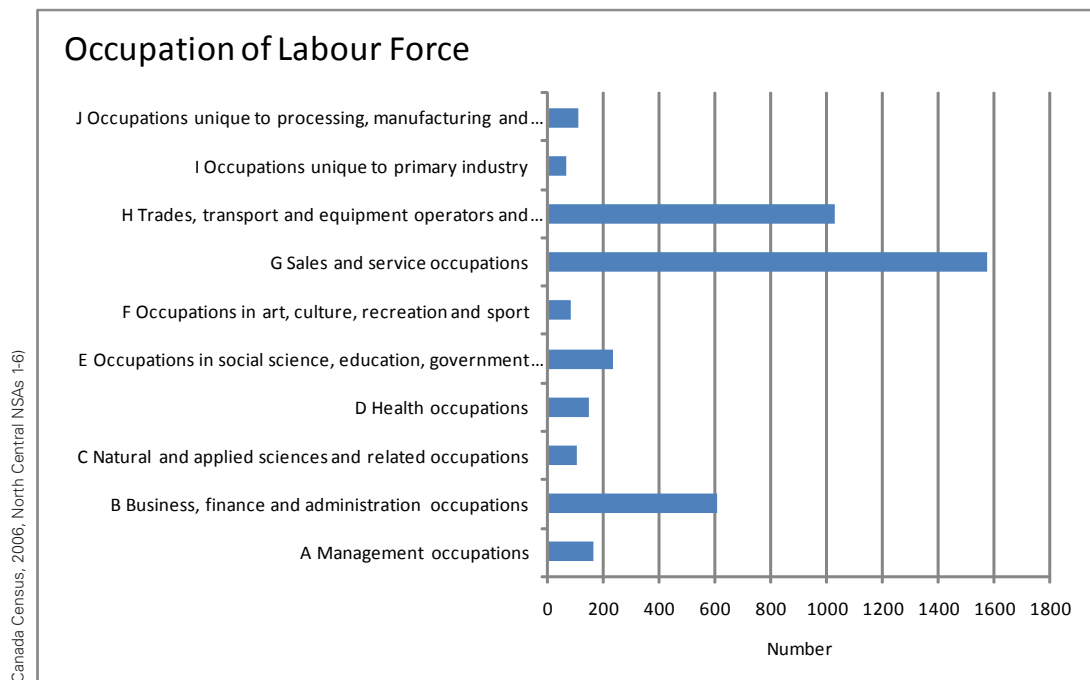
### 3.2.2 Family Characteristics

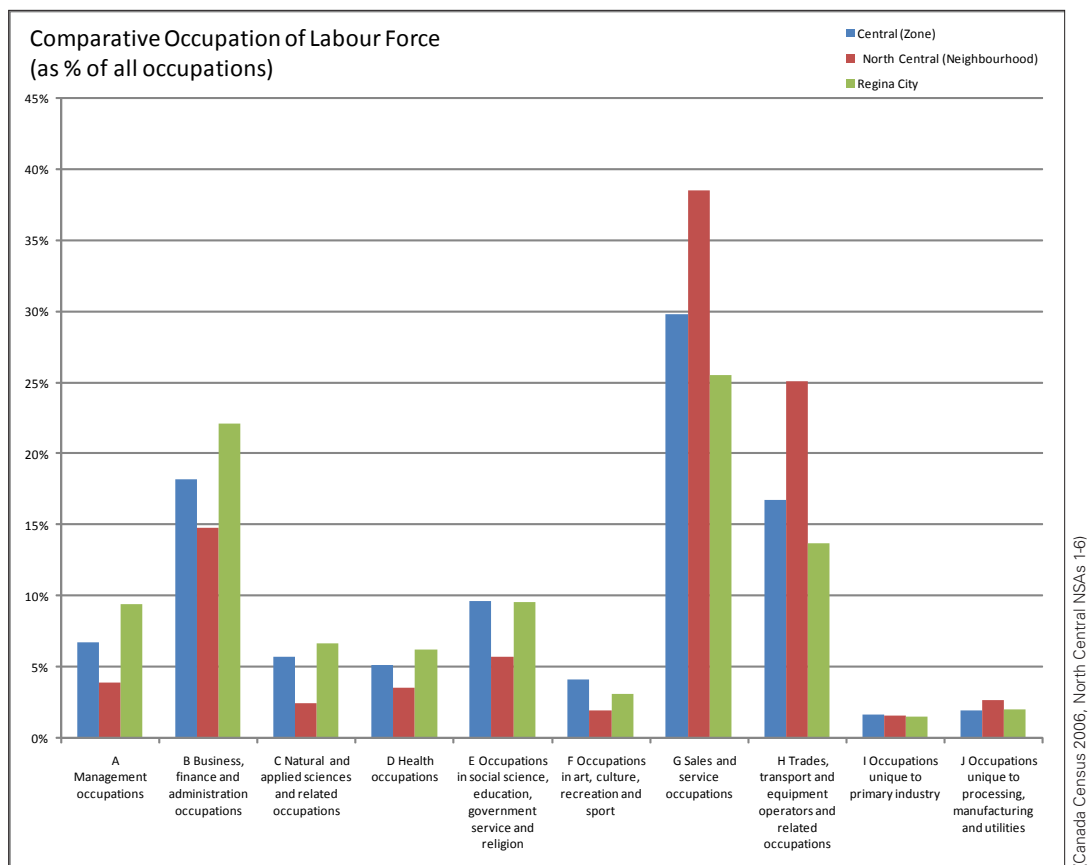
#### Family Structure

Measures of family structure in the North Central neighbourhood are considerably different than those taken at the city-wide level, particularly with regard to married couples and lone-parent families. Of census families in the North Central neighbourhood, 37% are married couples, 17% are common law couples and 46% are lone-parent families. In the City of Regina, 69% of census families are married couples, 11% are common law couples, and 20% are lone-parent families.

#### Common Law Status

A higher percentage of census families in the North Central neighbourhood are in a common law relationship than is the case in the City of Regina as a whole. In the North Central neighbourhood 18% of census families are in a common law relationship, as compared with 11% in the City of Regina.





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### 3.2.3 Household Characteristics

#### Household Income

Average household income in the North Central neighbourhood is \$34,976. This is approximately half of the \$67,172 average household income in the entire City of Regina. In keeping with the average household incomes figures, the prevalence of low income before tax (defined as income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend 20% more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing) in the North Central neighbourhood is 46.8%. This is over three times the 14.2% prevalence of low income before tax exhibited by the entire City of Regina.

#### Household Size

The North Central neighbourhood is comprised by:

- Total number of private households: 3925
- Total number of persons in private households: 9270
- Average number of persons per private households: 2.4
- Total number of private households by size:

1 person	1350
2 persons	1205
3 persons	610
3 to 5 persons	580
6 or more persons	170

In both the City of Regina and in the Central Zone, approximately 10% of total census families have 3 or more children at home. In the North Central neighbourhood, however, over 17% of total census families have 3 or more children at home. The difference is even more pronounced with regard to lone-parent families – in the

North Central neighbourhood, 12% of lone parent families have 3 or more children at home, as compared to only 2.7% of lone-parent families city-wide.

Several of the characteristics discussed in this Chapter – a population composition weighted towards younger cohorts; high numbers of lone parent families; and high numbers of families with 3 or more children at home – depict a situation in which the adequate supervision of youth might be a challenge and in which lone parent families is a significant issue.

#### 3.2.4 Occupation

Among the 4230 North Central neighbourhood residents 15 years and older in the labour force, the most common occupations are: sales and service occupations (1575 persons); trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations (1025); and, business, finance, and administration occupations (605, mostly in clerical occupations). A higher percentage of the North Central neighbourhood labour force are employed in sales and service occupation (38.6%) and in trades, transport and equipment operators occupations (25.1%), than is the case in either the Central Zone (29.8% and 16.8%, respectively) or in the City of Regina (25.5% and 13.7%).

# 4.0 Planning and Policy Framework

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## 4.1 Federal Legislation

### 4.1.1 The New Deal for Canada's Communities

Under the New Deal for Canada's Communities (announced in the 2005 Federal budget), \$336.5 million of Gas Tax Funds have been allocated for Saskatchewan for years between 2007 to 2014. The Gas Tax Fund (GTF) is *"a key component of the Building Canada infrastructure plan, helping to build Canada's communities by providing predictable and long-term funding in support of municipal infrastructure that contributes to cleaner air, cleaner water and reduced greenhouse gas emissions"* (Infrastructure Canada, 2009).

The GTF supports environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure, such as:

- Public transit
- Drinking water
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Green energy
- Solid waste management
- Local roads and bridges

### 4.1.2 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is the main housing policy and program delivery mechanism for the Government of Canada. CMHC also sponsors and undertakes extensive research on housing market, innovative practices and many other subjects.

CMHC provides a range of financial assistance programs for affordable housing development. Financial assistance programs are available for projects in the early stages of development, to support the creation of new affordable housing, and for renovation projects.

#### Seed Funding

Housing providers who are in the early stages of developing affordable housing project proposals can apply for financial assistance of up to \$20,000. The funds may be used for business plans, design work, site assessment and other planning.

#### Affordable Housing Initiative

The AHI provides contributions to increase the supply of off reserve affordable housing, in partnership with provinces and territories. Under the AHI bilateral agreements, the provinces and territories cost-match the federal investment. This funding may come from the province or territory and from other parties (e.g. municipalities, private sector, donations etc.).

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Within these terms and conditions, each provincial or territorial housing agency has designed its own housing program and is responsible for program delivery, including the selection of housing projects that receive AHI funding. The Federal Government recently announced it is extending funding for affordable housing for five years.

### **Proposal Development Funding**

This program provides repayable interest-free loans to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

### **Renovations Program**

Financial assistance is available to fund repairs, renovations, accessibility modifications, the creation of low-income rental units, and home adaptations. Renovation assistance programs include:

#### **Home Owner Programs:**

- Homeowner Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (Homeowner RRAP)
- Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities
- Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence
- Emergency Repair Program (ERP)

#### **Multi-Unit Projects:**

- Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program – Rental RRAP
- RRAP for Conversions
- RRAP for Rooming Houses
- Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)

### **CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance**

Typically, lenders require mortgage loan insurance for loans made to anyone that wishes to purchase a home with less than 20% of the purchase price. The Canadian Bank Act prohibits most federally regulated lending institutions from providing mortgages without mortgage loan insurance for amounts that exceed 80% of the value of the home or purchases with less than 20% down payment.

Through the lender, CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance enables individuals to finance up to 95% of the purchase price of a home.

#### **4.1.3 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is responsible for administering legislation related to Indians ("Status Indians") and lands reserved for Indians ("Reserves") under the Indian Act, and for the policies between the Federal Government and Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon. Services to Indian peoples in Regina are primarily provided through funding agreements with organizations such as Regina Treaty Status Indian Services (RTSIS). The mandate of the department includes:

- Improving social well-being and economic prosperity;
- developing healthier, more sustainable communities; and
- participating more fully in Canada's political, social and economic development - to the benefit of all Canadians.

Source: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/index-eng.asp>



The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), a national initiative funded by INAC, is designed to reduce the level of disparity between urban Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians by better tailoring government programs to local needs and priorities. The Objectives of UAS are to build partnerships based on common objectives, focus investments to enable urban Aboriginal communities to be more self-reliant, to align federal initiatives with those of other levels of government and to support awareness of Aboriginal issues. National priorities are to improve life skills, promote job training, skills and entrepreneurship, and supporting Aboriginal women, children and families. The Regina UAS Steering Committee makes recommendations on the delivery of UAS in the city.

#### **4.1.4 National Homelessness Initiative/ Homelessness Partnering Strategy**

The Government of Canada has invested funds in communities across Canada to prevent and reduce homelessness using the National Homelessness Initiative (from 1999 to March, 2007) and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (from April, 2007 to March, 2009).

It should be noted that while Homelessness funds are not used for the cost of regular housing, they have played a major role in needs identification, feasibility studies, capacity-building, co-location and coordination of services with housing, community development, and housing policy development.

During the National Homelessness Initiative, the Government of Canada invested over \$8 million in Regina, Saskatchewan through 70 projects. Please

refer to Appendix E for a list of recipients from 2000 to 2008.

#### **4.1.5 Service Canada**

Service Canada offers single-window access to a wide range of Government of Canada programs and services for citizens and are also the first point of contact for clients seeking information on Government of Canada programs such as:

- Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Opportunities Fund for People with Disabilities
- Youth Employment Strategy (YES)

Homelessness and YES funding have made a significant contribution to service development in North Central (Appendix E).

## **4.2 Provincial Policies**

### **4.2.1 Cities Act, 2003**

Municipal powers for the City of Regina are listed under the The Cities Act (2003) which stipulates the form of governance for Saskatchewan municipalities. Powers for planning and development of municipalities, including the responsibility to create an Official Community Plan (OCP), are established under The Planning and Development Act (2007). The new Act provides more flexibility for municipalities and promotes the inclusion of social and sustainability objectives as a part of the OCP. The City of Regina Corporate Strategic Plan includes the completion of a new OCP in 2012.

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#### **4.2.2 Ministry of Social Services, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Housing Division**

The Ministry of Social Services, through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), promotes self-sufficiency and independence by providing housing and housing services for families, seniors, persons with disabilities and others who could not otherwise afford safe, secure shelter. Programs and policies offered address issues of affordability, housing supply, housing quality, and neighbourhood revitalization. Provincial housing programs that have produced 606 housing units in the city since 2001 at a total development cost of \$61.6 million

The Ministry of Social Services also administers social services programs to assist community based organizations, low-income families, and children in need (refer to Appendix E for further details on housing programs and social services).

#### **4.2.3 Urban Development Agreements**

The Urban Development Agreements (UDAs) are five-year agreements to cooperate and collaborate on areas of shared interest and priority that have been negotiated between the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, and the cities of Regina and Saskatoon. The UDAs are to be cost shared on a 50/25/25 federal/provincial/city basis. 2008-09 is the third year of a five-year program. As a result, the provincial \$5 million funding contribution, together with each city's contribution of \$2.5 million and the federal government's commitment of up to \$5 million for each UDA, will provide a total of \$20 million over five years to be directed to urban development priorities in the two cities.

The key objectives of the UDAs are to increase economic activity and improve the quality of life in Regina/Saskatoon; and to facilitate intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration. The initial priority areas that will be the focus of the two current UDAs are:

1. Affordable housing and the renewal of inner city and older neighbourhoods;
2. The development of cultural and recreational opportunities;
3. Initiatives to protect the environment and address climate change;
4. Achieving a positive business climate and enhanced competitiveness;
5. Enhanced Aboriginal participation in the economy; and
6. Strategic infrastructure needed to achieve continued physical, social and economic development and address the other priority areas.

#### **4.2.4 Department of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs**

The Minister of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for administering policies and programs for social and economic development of Indians and Métis in Saskatchewan and is charged with co-ordinating, developing, promoting, and implementing policies and programs of urban municipalities which are related to various aspects of the community planning process. The Minister is also the point of contact for relations between the Province and the Indian and Métis people, and with other bodies of government.

#### 4.2.5 Other Policies and Programs

The Provincial Government provides operating grants for municipalities, capital funding for infrastructure, and funding for transit and other services.

### 4.3 Regina Development Plan, Bylaw No. 7877 (Regina Official Community Plan)

North Central is part of the 'Inner City' area, as defined in the Regina Development Plan (RDP, By-law 7877). The 2001 Neighbourhood Profiles publication is a comparison of neighbourhood characteristics based on Census data and identifies this area as the 'Central Zone'.

#### 4.3.1 Part A – Policy Plan

In Regina, land use is directed by a set of general policy objectives and a neighbourhood or sector plan.

Of particular relevance to this study, Part A objectives state that the City shall:

- Encourage residential infill development in the Inner City (Chapter 3.3, 7.20)
- Support aboriginal economic development through the development of urban reserves (Chapter 4.1, 4.5)
- Develop or upgrade public recreational open space to meet or exceed minimum standards (Chapter 5.2)
- Improve safety by incorporating CPTED principles in design guidelines (Chapter 5.3)

- Create ceremonial routes to the downtown from the Exhibition Park and Territorial Building (Chapter 5.17)
- Stabilize older residential neighbourhoods (Chapter 5.19, 7.1)
- Encourage the development of vacant residential sites (Chapter 7.6)
- Transfer Municipal Lands and Buildings for social housing, based on a needs assessment (Chapter 7.7)

#### 4.3.2 Part E – Inner City Development Plan (1984)

Neighbourhood plans cover areas considered to be part of the 'Inner City' whereas the Northwest and Southeast Sector Plans are for areas outside the Inner City in which new neighbourhoods should form. The neighbourhood plan is implemented through the Zoning Bylaw, Building Bylaw, Maintenance Bylaw, and Heritage Holding Bylaw.

Part E of the RDP identifies North Central as the Albert-Scott Neighbourhood, and does not include the Exhibition grounds south of Dewdney Avenue. The policies for this Plan are referenced to Part K of the RDP.

### Schedule C1: Generalized Land Use



1. Maintain and improve the residential character of the area
2. Implement a strategy for overall development
3. Promote continued maintenance and upgrading of dwellings, parks, and facilities
4. Develop social programs to meet the needs of the disadvantaged or underserved groups in the community.

These goals are achieved through policy recommendations defined under categories that reflect the major neighbourhood issues at the time the Plan was created. These include:

- Property and building maintenance
- Personal Security and Safety
- Traffic Management
- Parks and Recreation
- Bylaw Enforcement
- Land Use and Zoning

The Policy Districts outlined in the Land Use and Zoning Chapter of the Plan reflect the existing land uses today. Each Policy District includes a statement on the intent, existing uses, an urban design context, and recommended zoning changes which are reflected in the current Zoning Bylaw. The urban design context statements describe general characteristics of the built form and acceptable building typologies (e.g. “low-density single unit dwellings with traditional building setbacks”). Policy districts for parks and open spaces are not specified.

It was recommended that in the Albert Street and Dewdney commercial zones, an urban design review be undertaken to establish policies for creating a uniform street wall setback along these streets as they currently consist of irregular street setbacks. There are policy directions for creating a mixed-use commercial shopping street along 5th Avenue from Angus Street to Garnet Street, however this has been difficult to realize given the existing local market environment. Site visits did not indicate any significant non-conforming land uses in the existing context based on this Plan.

## **Schedule C2:** **Zoning**



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#### 4.3.4 North Central Zones (Zoning Bylaw No. 9250)

##### **Residential Zone Policies**

###### R1 – Residential Detached

- Permit the development of single detached dwelling units in suburban areas.
- Protect suburban residential community character of max 25 dwelling units per hectare.

###### R1A – Residential Older Neighbourhood Detached Zone

- Permit conservation of existing general character of Inner City single detached residential.
- Promote maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

###### R3 – Residential Older Neighbourhood

- Provide the conservation of older Inner City neighbourhoods that have developed over time as a mixture of duplexes and triplexes.
- Provide for flexibility in residential development or redevelopment is desired at moderate density.

###### R4 – Residential Older Neighbourhood

- Stabilize older, low density residential areas.
- Recognize demand to convert older and larger detached dwellings to rental accommodations.
- Encourage provision of affordable housing (for low and moderate income households).

- Encourage conservation, maintenance and renewal for energy efficiency.

###### R4A – Residential Infill Housing

- Provide for the retention of older Inner City single detached residential units.
- Provide for sensitive redevelopment and conversion at existing or medium densities.
- Encourage provision of affordable housing (for low and moderate income households)
- Encourage infill development.

##### **Commercial Zone Policies**

###### MAC – Major Arterial Commercial

- Provide for development of retail, service, an office businesses serving the City at large, travelling public (good visibility and accessibility along major routes).
- Establishments limited to 1000 sq.m. floor area (to protect downtown desirability as main commercial zone).

###### LC1 – Local Commercial

- Provide commercial and personal service uses at moderate intensity.
- Allow retailing of convenience, personal, durable fashion goods, and office uses.
- Establishments limited to 300 sq.m floor area.

###### LC3 – Local Commercial Shopping Street

- Provide for the sensitive redevelopment or development of business uses around older buildings, areas, and traffic circulation hazards.

- Establishments limited to 150 sq.m floor area.
- Allow for flexibility in site design to account for sensitivities.

#### MX – Mixed Residential Business

- Provide for flexible design in areas considered to be in transition zones from residential development.
- Assist in maintaining general residential character while accommodating services.
- Encourage the adaptive re-use of existing public and private structures.
- Encourage sensitive distribution of affordable housing.
- Also applies to areas where mixed residential commercial already exists.
- Applies to existing small commercial nodes which have failed to develop to their potential.
- Desirable in inner fringes of the Downtown zone, edges of older residential zones.
- Increase housing opportunities in the Downtown periphery (office conversions above low-rise is encouraged).

### **Special Zone Policies**

#### C – Contract

- Allow for unique development opportunities on special sites such as an irregularly shaped lot, unusual conditions, or environmental constraints (allowing City to engage in contract zoning) where special consideration is needed in the planning of the site to achieve the desired results.

#### I – Institutional

- Provide sites for or provision of facilities of an institutional and community service nature
- Confined to lands owned or used by public bodies for public benefit.
- Provide for areas and services that improve the quality of life.

#### PS – Public Service

- Preserve and control areas used or intended to be used by the public for active and passive recreational purposes.
- Confined to natural or parkland areas that are environmentally sensitive or represent valuable esthetic to the community.
- Protect life, property, natural ecosystems, prevent hazards, enhance natural character of zone.

### **Overlay Zone Policy**

#### AP – Aquifer Protection

- Provide additional regulations to protect the Regina Aquifer system from contamination from development activities.

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#### **4.3.5 Other Relevant Bylaws**

##### **Building Bylaw**

This Bylaw specifies parameters for developments in the City of Regina including but not limited to building envelopes, streetscape and signage standards, setbacks, and emergency and safety standards for buildings.

##### **Maintenance Bylaw**

Mandated in the Cities Act, 2003, the Maintenance Bylaw aims to ensure safe and tidy neighbourhoods by setting minimum maintenance standards of properties by tenants and property owners. Implementation and management of the Bylaw occurs through community reporting and city inspection. The extent of application of this Bylaw in North Central is not measured and reported.

##### **Heritage Holding Bylaw**

Potential heritage properties are protected from demolition under a 60-day holding period to allow the City to assess the heritage merits of the property and review alternatives to demolition. The Exhibition Grounds Grain Show Building (1700 Elphinstone St.) is listed as held through this Bylaw as of February 2009.

#### **4.3.6 City of Regina Housing Role**

Rather than managing or developing housing, the City promotes housing by working with communities, co-operation the community and residents, the private sector, the housing providers and key stakeholders. City policies are coordinated with Federal and Provincial housing programs. The municipal housing incentives are designed to be “stacked” with programs of other levels of government. The City is an active member of the Regina Inner City Community Partnership, Regina Intersectoral Committee and the Regina Homelessness Committee. These bodies play a key role in encouraging a coordinated approach to addressing a range of Inner City issues, including housing.

#### 4.3.6.1 Development Plan Housing Policy Objectives:

The Regina Development Plan Bylaw No. 7877 establishes city-wide housing objectives and policies. These policies are reflected in sector and neighbourhood plans, zoning, housing incentive programs and other City initiatives. Key housing objectives in the Development Plan of special relevance to the Inner City, including North Central, are:

- To accommodate the demand for a variety of housing types throughout the city.
- To encourage the provision of affordable housing particularly for low and moderate income households and special needs groups.
- To direct major residential growth and development in a logical and phased manner consistent with the efficient provision and use of the city's transportation and infrastructure systems.
- To stabilize older neighbourhoods through community development strategies, the efficient use and maintenance of existing housing stock and sustainable redevelopment.
- To encourage higher density housing and mixed use development along or adjacent to major arterial streets.
- To ensure that residential development and redevelopment is compatible with adjacent residential and non-residential development.
- To encourage the maintenance, conservation, renewal and retrofitting for greater energy efficiency in the use of existing housing.
- To facilitate choice and integration of housing for special needs groups in the community.
- To support seniors remaining in their homes throughout their life cycle.
- To ensure on-going research, monitoring and consultation respecting housing needs and availability in Regina.



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#### **4.3.6.2 City Housing Incentive Programs**

##### **Inner City Housing Stimulation Strategy (ICHSS)**

The City provides a five-year tax exemption on new owner-occupied housing in Regina's Inner City. The program was expanded in 2002 to provide an exemption for multi-unit rental developments in Core and North Central Neighbourhoods and for model housing developments demonstrating a high degree of innovation. The program is currently under review with an emphasis on greater flexibility, encouraging more effective use of large sites, incentives for rental developments, sustainability and neighbourhood fit.

##### **Downtown Residential Tax Exemption Program (DRIP)**

DRIP provides a five-year tax exemption to support the conversion of vacant Downtown commercial space to residential use and for new residential development. Units may be owner-occupied or rented. The need for a Downtown Housing Strategy has been identified through the new Downtown Plan process.

##### **Regina Housing Incentives Policy – Warehouse District (RHIP)**

The Regina Housing Incentives Policy provides a five-year municipal tax exemption, up to a maximum amount of \$7500 per unit in the Warehouse District. The exemption applies to both the re-use of existing commercial space and to new construction. Developments must fit the heritage character of the Warehouse District and ground floor commercial portions of the building must be preserved where feasible. Units may be owner-occupied or rented.

##### **Social Development Reserve**

The City's Social Development Reserve is used to support affordable and social housing projects requiring direct capital contributions and grants. The City has also provided land and infill lots on a case-by-case basis to support affordable housing development.

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#### **4.3.8 Other Programs for Neighbourhood and Community Development**

##### **Municipal Incentive Policy for the Preservation of Heritage Properties**

This offers property tax exemption for up to 10 years for properties designated as Municipal Heritage Property in Downtown and/or a direct municipal grant of up to \$25,000 subject to availability of funds.

##### **Civic Arts Funding Program**

The Civic Arts Funding Program is designed to support Saskatchewan-based non-profit arts organizations serving Regina to “establish themselves, enhance their services, and provide their programming to the community”. An application to the fund can be made under one of four categories: (i) Ongoing programming, (ii) Community Arts, (iii) Special Projects, or (iv) contingency (emergencies, projects occurring after annual deadline) and funds are awarded on a basis of artistic merit and organizational capacity.

##### **Festival Funding Program**

The Festival Funding Program provides funds for cultural and/or artistic festivals/events that are open to the general public and promotes and awareness and appreciation for an arts or cultural theme. Applicants must be a Saskatchewan-based non-profit organization and funding is based on organizational capacity.

##### **Community Capital Partnership Program (formerly Self Help Program)**

The Community Capital Partnership Program, formerly called the Self-Help Program, assists community based non-profit organizations to initiate capital projects that will improve the organizations

stability and increase service delivery capacity in the areas of arts, culture, heritage, recreation and sports for Regina residents.

##### **Hosting Assistance Program**

This program is designed to encourage organizations to host amateur championship events in Regina to non-profit community organizations to assist with the facility and equipment rental fees for championship competitions held in Regina.

##### **Urban Aboriginal Community Grant Program**

The Urban Aboriginal Community Grant Program assists non-profit community organizations in the development and provision of sport, culture, and recreation programs for aboriginal people living in Regina, to improve physical fitness and learning opportunities.

##### **Social Development Community Investment Program**

This program is designed to assist Regina-based non-profit organizations to deliver social services for individuals and families who are vulnerable and living in Regina by providing funding to enable agencies to develop and implement effective services that address priority social issues and services.







# 5.0 Existing Conditions

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## 5.1 Overview

North Central is an exceptional environment, on all accounts. From a planning and design perspective, it has the fundamental and critical physical infrastructure than is necessary to the success of any urban neighbourhood: a well defined and extensive grid street system, well located local public schools and parks, and several key corridors that could function as a typical main street to the community.

It is also supported by various community agencies, services, and organizations that are working towards a vision of an improved community, and organizational institutions are constantly being developed under this mandate. However, significant social challenges in the neighbourhood remain unabated, despite an unprecedented amount of programming and community work. Opinions within the community vary with respect to identifying community assets. In general, there is some doubt about the success of some of services being provided, and whether services over all are having an impact on the root of the issues.

## 5.2 General Land Use

The general land uses in North Central include low-rise residential (1,600,413 m<sup>2</sup>), parks/open spaces (523,237 m<sup>2</sup>), institutional (187,177 m<sup>2</sup>), and commercial (264,628 m<sup>2</sup>). Schedule D2 shows that North Central is rather homogenous with respect to low-rise residential uses. It also shows the adjacency of low-rise residential uses and large-scale public uses and private residential uses abutting each south of Dewdney Avenue. Generally, there have

not been any significant changes in land use since the last Neighbourhood Plan in 1988. Zones have generally generated the types of uses intended.

There is a significant amount of open spaces/parks in North Central. Nine blocks, or roughly 523,237 m<sup>2</sup> of open space is available. Excluding school grounds, these open spaces are: Parkdale Park, Grassick Playground, Kinsmen Park North, Patty Cake Park, Pasqua/7th Avenue Park, Confederation Park, and Dewdney Pool Park. Parks and open spaces are already located in ideal locations (nearly all homes are within a 5 min walking radii of a public park).

However, not all of this space is maintained in a usable condition, nor are perceived as accessible due to safety concerns. Spaces such as the Herchmer school site is currently unusable (due to demolition waste), while parks like Confederation Park is perceived as a private and inaccessible space. Albert Scott and Kitchener school grounds are not considerably green parks and parks that are grassed are generally only fields with some play equipment. Use is minimal due to extreme weather or safety concerns.

There are two noted historic properties in North Central. The Territorial Administration Building was designated a Provincial Heritage Property in 1982. Built between 1890 and 1891, it was used as administrative offices by the North West Territorial government, and then by the newly formed Saskatchewan government in 1905, until the Legislative building opened in 1910.

Built in 1927, the Albert Scott Library was one of Regina's first branch libraries. The

**Schedule D1:**  
Parks, Open Spaces,  
and Community  
Infrastructure



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entrance way features intricate Gothic detailing in Tyndal stone and terra cotta. The Albert Scott Library became a designated Municipal Heritage Property in 1984 and remains functioning as a public library today.

#### **Neighbourhood Destinations**

Six designated community schools are well situated in the neighbourhood:

1. Wascana School (public elementary)
2. Albert Community School (public elementary)
3. Kitchener Community School (public elementary)
4. Scott Collegiate (public high school)
5. Sacred Heart Community School (Catholic elementary)
6. ENCORE Program (adult learning)

#### **Schedule E1: Character Areas and Community Landmarks**

South of Dewdney Avenue, there are major institutional buildings including Taylor Field, the Exhibition Grounds, and Pasqua Hospital, which draw users from across the city. The Albert Library, Four Directions Community Health Centre located at Elphinstone Street, Dewdney Pool on 8th Avenue, and 5th Avenue are also a major draws to the inner part of this neighbourhood.

#### **Schedule D2: Streets and Blocks**

## **5.3 Urban Fabric**

North Central has a desirable urban fabric and structure that is pedestrian-oriented and walkable. The general form of North Central is representative of the block structures seen throughout most of the Inner City (93 m x 163 m). These blocks are shaped by an excellent grid pattern of streets, typically with 2 lanes and on-street parking on both sides. Each block is divided in half longitudinally by an alley which houses back onto. Albert Street and Dewdney Avenue, Pasqua Street, 5th Avenue, and 3rd Avenue are wider roads (4-6 lanes) that Chapter the neighbourhood.

North Central has a rather homogenous built form character. Most buildings are residential dwellings in house form, with few apartment complexes on Dewdney, Albert, and within the neighbourhood. Lot sizes are typically 290 m<sup>2</sup> and building footprints normally cover about 87 m<sup>2</sup>, or 30% percent. South of Dewdney, except for the residential blocks between Princess Street and Angus Street, are buildings of significantly larger scale. Taylor Field covers roughly 2.5 neighbourhood blocks, Evraz Place covers roughly 16 neighbourhood blocks (buildings and hard surface), and Pasqua Hospital covers 4 neighbourhood blocks (including surface parking). Collectively, these uses cover more than 50% of the area between Dewdney Avenue and the CP rail line border to the south.

The commercial blocks along Albert Street resemble building shape and mass of the Warehouse District to the east. Low to mid-rise buildings cover 50% of the block, and the remaining is covered by surface parking. Commercial buildings along the



Albert Community School



Wascana School



Scott Collegiate



Kitchener School



Sacred Heart Community School



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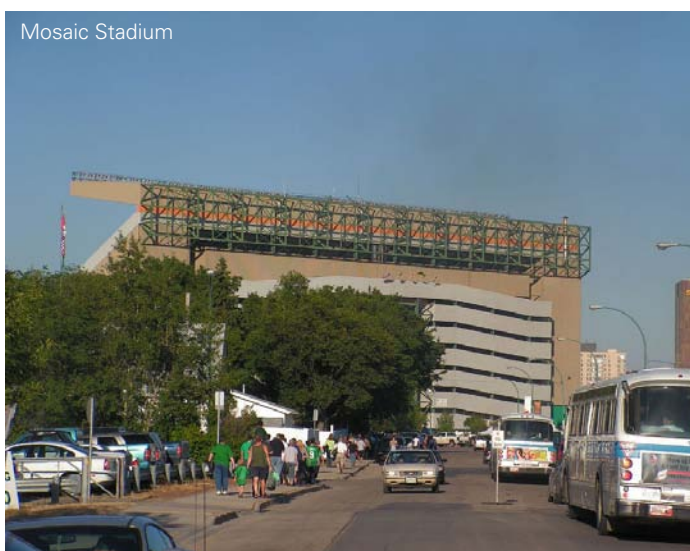
Grain Show Building, Evraz Place



Four Directions Community Health Centre



Mosaic Stadium



Albert Library, Municipal Heritage Building



Pasqua Hospital



commercial zones on Dewdney Avenue have a smaller footprint and may often be a business in a house.

Larger scale uses are clustered to the south of Dewdney Avenue and to the east along Albert Street. As such, it is in these areas where transitions from low-scale residential to larger, more active uses present concerns for neighbouring residents, particularly related to traffic impacts.

## 5.4 General Urban Design

In the grid system of residential blocks, houses are typically set back roughly 8-12 metres from the road. Agreeably, all streets except Albert Street, the rail lines, 3rd, 9th and 10th Avenues, are lined with healthy trees. There is concern, however, that these trees need to be better maintained and trimmed back to increase lighting onto the road at night.

The parks and open spaces in North Central are well located and the majority of residents are no more than a 5 min walk away. Five minute walking radii from schools and parks demonstrates that many North Central residents are a mere five minute walk away from a park or school. Well-supported community gardens also service the neighbourhood. Private gardens and front yards do not appear to be frequently used, due to safety concerns and the desire for anonymity within the neighbourhood.

North Central is well serviced by public transit, and has a number of bus routes running through it. There appears to be more pedestrian and transit activity near schools and parks.

Despite transit links, North Central is not well connected to adjacent communities or districts due to physical boundaries like the CP Rail lines and Lewvan Drive. Schedule E2 illustrates the barriers which prevent vehicular and pedestrian linkages into other neighbourhoods, and includes potential connections that could exist, in order to make the area more accessible. Of importance is the underpass at Albert Street and Saskatchewan Drive to the downtown, and the connections east to the Warehouse District.

North Central is mostly residential in character, with well-defined commercial, mixed use, and recreational areas. The Pasqua Hospital also lends a unique character to the Dewdney Avenue corridor, contradictory to the residential areas that generally define North Central. The heavily commercial Chapter of Albert Street that defines the eastern most portion of the North Central study area boundary influences the type of traffic which frequently infiltrates the neighbourhood from the east, and along Dewdney towards Pasqua Hospital. The Fieldhouse and Lawson Aquatic Centre (Regina Sportplex), Taylor Field at Mosaic Stadium, Brandt Centre and Evraz Place comprise Regina's largest recreation and entertainment complexes, located in the southern most portion of the study area.

### **Schedule E2:** Opportunities and Constraints

### **Schedule E3:** 5 min walking radii from schools

### **Schedule E4:** 5 min walking radii from parks





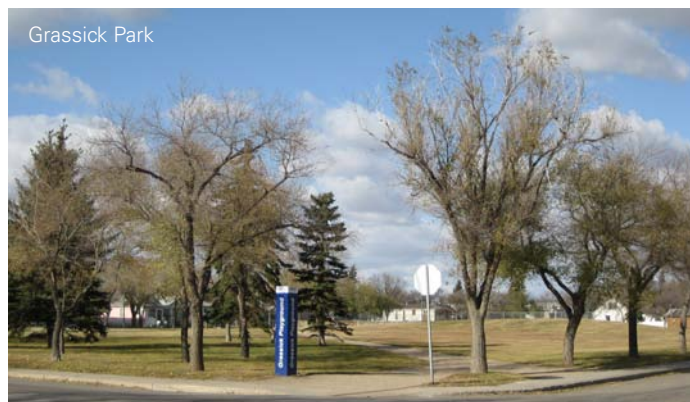
Dewdney Pool



Territorial Administration Building, Provincial Heritage Site



Kinsmen North Park



Grassick Park



Patty Cake Play Park





Typical low-rise house form



Typical laneway



Typical low-rise house form



Low-rise apartment form



Typical low-rise house form



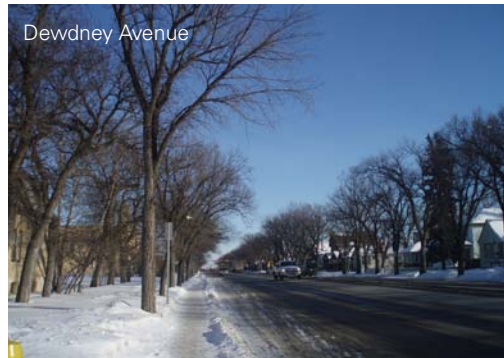
Typical low-rise house form



Typical low-rise house form



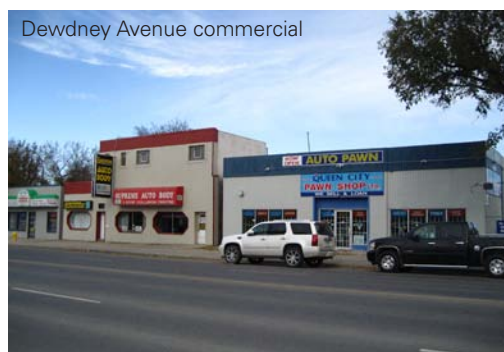
Low-rise apartment on 5th Ave.



Dewdney Avenue



Typical residential street



Dewdney Avenue commercial



5th Avenue commercial

## 5.5 Transportation

### 5.5.1 Road Network Overview

The road network in the North Central neighbourhood is a typical grid network. The bounding roadways are all major arterials, with the exception of Lewvan Drive which is an expressway. Both Albert Street and Lewvan Drive, as boundary roads, carry some of the highest traffic volumes in the city. The daily traffic volume reaches between 30,000 and 40,000 vehicles per day. To put this in context, these volumes are only exceeded by Victoria Avenue East at 55,000 vehicles per day. The roadways on the periphery of the North Central neighbourhood also act as heavy truck routes. As a result of the types and volumes of traffic carried by the bounding roads, they create a barrier effect, isolating the neighbourhood.

Local north-south streets are yield controlled, requiring motorists to slow down and yield to traffic on the intersecting east-west roadway. The east-west roadways are free-flow within the North Central neighbourhood. One outcome of this arrangement appears to be predominant east-west travel pattern.

A possible concern, with regard to the cohesiveness of the neighbourhood, is the number of east-west roadways carrying high levels of vehicular traffic. 3rd Avenue is a divided 4-lane facility, 4th Avenue is an arterial through route traffic and a key pickup and delivery truck route (providing access to McCarthy Boulevard and northwest Regina), 5th Avenue is a commercial street, and 7th Avenue is a main east-west connection with signalized access to Lewvan Drive and to Albert Street. These roadways carry 5,000 to 9,000



vehicles per day (i.e. approximately 10 vehicles or more every minute during peak daytime periods).

Dewdney Avenue is an east-west roadway on which many neighbourhood services are located, as well as neighbourhood homes. This roadway is a key commuter route and carries a significant volume of vehicles per day (16,000). Many of the services on Dewdney Avenue have located on the north side of the roadway, and as a result residents on the south side near Taylor Filed frequently have to cross Dewdney Avenue. There have been pedestrian fatalities along this roadway and the City has previously developed plans to address some of the safety issues.

### 5.5.2 Laneways

There are a large number of laneways in the neighbourhood, primarily running between the north-south roadways. In an effort to make the laneways safer, a nominal amount of lighting (several lights per block) was installed on certain laneways during a City pilot project. The concern was subsequently expressed that this may have attracted people to walk through the laneways as opposed to along the streets at night.

The installed lighting was also seen as unsafe because of the shadows and dark corners caused by improper placement or insufficient fixtures.

### 5.5.3 Travel

As described in the road network overview, the neighbourhood has a large amount of car activity during the day, most of which is through traffic through Dewdney Avenue, 5th Avenue, and Albert Street. During site visits, taxis were evident on neighbourhood

roadways serving residents, and the relatively few people seen walking were mostly children. A survey conducted as part of this study indicated that not many school aged children use bicycles for travel. Part of the reason could be safety of their property when left unattended in the neighbourhood or simply the cost of owning a bicycle.

Several transit routes serve the area including:

- Route #1 Dieppe, Broad North
- Route #3 University/Sherwood Estates
- Route #4 Hillsdale, Walsh Acres
- Route #11 Normanview, Normandy Heights
- Route #13 Mount Royal, South Lakeview

While measurements regarding the level of transit ridership in the North Central neighbourhood were not available for this study, transit issues affecting North Central are likely similar to those affecting the rest of Regina, including limited late-hour service, transit travel times, and directness of service for reaching a destination. Changes to the transit system are being proposed as part of an ongoing transit study being conducted by the City.

### 5.5.4 Parking

Many North Central neighbourhood residents park in back laneways directly behind their residence either on surface lots or in detached garages. Some residents feel unsafe parking behind their house in the laneway (there is evidence of graffiti and gang symbols on trash bins and garages in laneways, suggesting that these locations

## Schedule D3: Mobility

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may not be safe at night) and instead opt to park on-street where their car is more visible under street lights and they are able to access their home in clear view of neighbours.

Mosaic Stadium and Pasqua Hospital both have an influence on the North Central neighbourhood. While parking is restricted on-street except by permit during CFL games (approximately 10 times per year) for the three blocks north of Taylor Field, consultation indicated that home owners and tenants 'rent' their front lawns for parking space during Rough Rider games. Neighbourhood streets in the west part of the neighbourhood are also used by hospital workers for parking, even though parking longer than the two-hour limit is prohibited unless residents purchase a Parking Permit. This indicates a lack of parking enforcement.

#### 5.5.5 Street Closures

Street closures, like the closure of Rae Street between 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue have had mixed results in calming neighbourhood traffic. A cul de sac was constructed on Rae Street in 1983 to physically close the street to through traffic. Part of the street was transformed into a pedestrian place with walking surfaces, grass, trees and amenities like benches. This street closure had little impact on limiting commuter traffic short-cutting through the area, as the short-cutting occurs primarily in an east-west direction on 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue. A small amount of north-south traffic on Rae Street was relocated to the alleys on either side of Rae Street or to Angus Street or Retallack Street. The street closure became a neighbourhood gathering place which created some problems for Rae Street residents. Increased vandalism, graffiti



Parkette created by a closed street at Rae Street and 7th Ave.

and littering were common complaints when the cul de sac was first constructed.

## 5.6 Housing

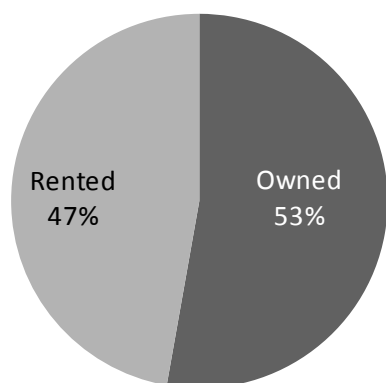
### 5.6.1 Housing Tenure and Rent

52% of the occupied private dwellings in the North Central neighbourhood are owned, and 47% rented. This represents a higher level of rental tenure than is found across the City of Regina as a whole, where 68% of occupied private dwellings are owned, and 32% are rented.

According to the 2006 census, average gross rent in the North Central neighbourhood was \$598 for tenant-occupied private dwellings. While somewhat lower than both the \$657 average gross rent in the City of Regina, rent clearly represents a substantial financial burden for many households, as 1000 tenant-occupied households in the North Central neighbourhood spend 30%



## Housing by Tenure



(Canada Census, 2006, North Central NSAs 1-6)

or more of household income on gross rent (this represents 53.9% of tenant households in the North Central neighbourhood, and 25.5% of all households in the area).

The high proportion of households spending 30% or more of household income on gross rent is in keeping with the income characteristics discussed in Chapter 1.2.3 – in particular, low average incomes, and a high prevalence of low income before tax.

### 5.6.2 Type of Housing Stock

The housing stock in the North Central neighbourhood is primarily comprised of single-detached houses. Of the 3930 occupied private dwellings in the North Central neighbourhood (as recorded by the 2006 census), 3380 are in single-detached homes, 460 are in apartments (including duplex apartments), and 85 are in semi-detached houses.

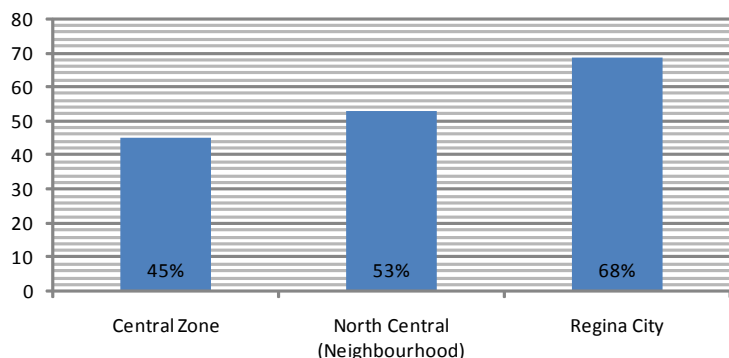
### 5.6.3 Age of Housing Stock

Housing in the North Central neighbourhood is predominately pre-1961 in age. 35% of the local housing stock was constructed before 1946, and 38% was constructed between 1946 and 1960.

Overall, since 2001 there has been little change in the number of dwelling units. There has been some construction of new units but the number of demolitions has offset the number of total dwellings. Between 2004 and 2006, 52 new units have been constructed in North Central: 30 suites for singles at the Souls Harbour Rescue Mission, 12 units at Washington Park Place, and 12 units at Red Ribbon Place. Three new single family homes have also been constructed by Habitat for Humanity.

## Schedule D4: Ownership and Boarded Up Homes

### % of Owner-Occupied Private Dwellings



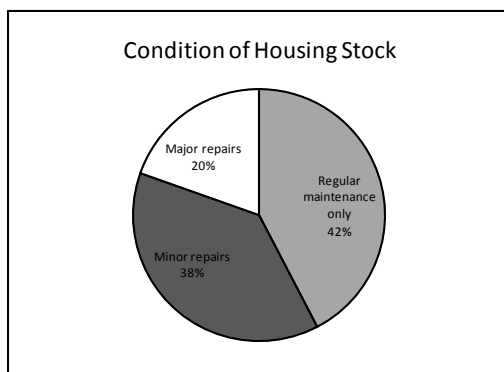
(Canada Census, 2006, North Central NSAs 1-6)

**Schedule D4:**  
Ownership and  
Boarded Up Homes

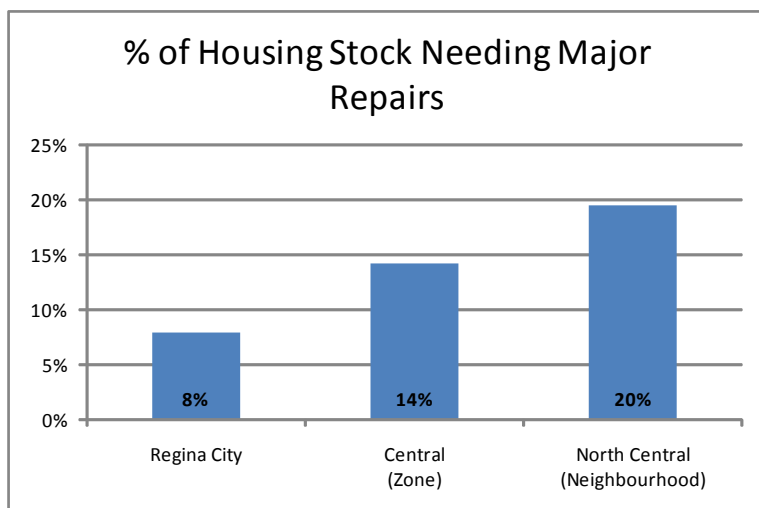
### 5.6.4 Condition of Housing Stock

Private dwellings in the North Central neighbourhood are generally in a poorer state of repair than are dwellings in the Central Zone, or in the City of Regina. 20% of private dwellings in North Central are in need of major repairs, as compared to 14% of dwellings in the Central Zone, and 8% of dwelling city-wide. Several boarded up homes exist among the blocks east of Athol Street and detract from the quality of the neighbourhood.

(Canada Census, 2006, North Central NSAs 1-6)



(Canada Census, 2006, North Central NSAs 1-6)



Boarded up homes detract from the quality of the neighbourhood.



(Regina Police Services, 2008)

### 5.6.5 Core Housing Need

Core Housing Need is a measure used to assess households whose housing does not meet the standards of “acceptable housing”. CMHC defines Core Housing Need as follows:

The term “*acceptable housing*” refers to housing that is in adequate condition, of suitable size, and affordable.

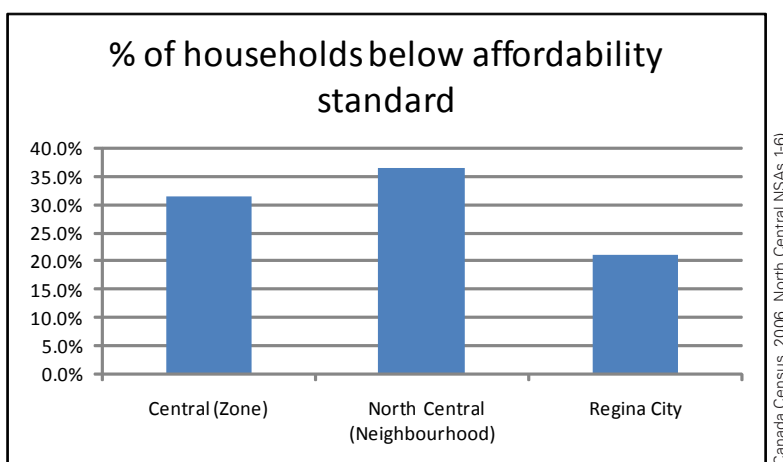
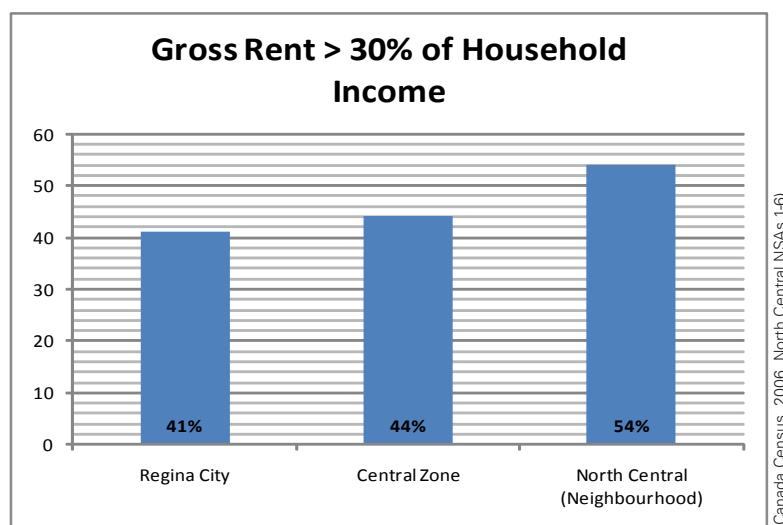
*Adequate dwellings* are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.

*Suitable dwellings* have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements. Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of before-tax household income.

A household is said to be in *core housing need* if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three standards).

The assessment of core housing need in the North Central neighbourhood would require data that was not available for the preparation of this report. Based on available 2006 census data, however, some inferences can be drawn as to the number of households that are likely candidates to be in core housing need.

With regard to the affordability standard of core housing need, 36.3% of households in the North Central neighbourhood spend 30% or more of their household income on dwelling costs (gross rent or owner’s major



payments). From the standpoint of adequacy, 20% of occupied private dwellings in the North Central neighbourhood are in need of major repairs.

In 2006, 11.8% of Saskatchewan households and 9.9% of Regina households (7,435 households) were in core housing need. Provincially, there was a slight increase in core housing need between 2001 and 2006 (11.5% and 11.8%, respectively). Regina had 7,435 (9.9%) households in core need in 2006.

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Neighbourhood data is not yet available, but when 2001 trends are adjusted for the increase in households with affordability problems in North Central, it is estimated that there are 1300 households (34%) in core housing need in North Central. Previous research conducted as part of Regina's homelessness plan indicates that one out of two households in core need are spending at least 50% of their income on shelter.

This is, however, a conservative estimate. Conditions in 2008 are considerably more difficult than was the case at the time of the 2006 census. A key aspect of determining core housing need is the availability of local housing alternatives that are affordable and acceptable (if a household is below one or more of the standards of 'acceptable housing', but has a locally available housing alternative that is affordable and adequate, they are not deemed to be in core housing need – but if there is no such local alternative available, they are considered to be in core housing need), and the availability of affordable alternatives has declined since 2006.

According to CMHC market reports, the average vacancy rate in Regina rental apartments declined from 3.3 per cent in 2006 to 0.5% in October 2008; average rents increased substantially over the last two years – in the City of Regina, private apartment average rents increased from \$559 in 2006 to \$688 in 2008, a 23% increase over a two-year period; and, the Regina CMA rental affordability indicator dropped sharply over the same period – particularly during 2008;

- Given rent increases, and the deterioration of affordability measures, it can be assumed that the percentage of North Central neighbourhood

households spending 30% or more of their household income on dwelling costs has increased from the 36.3% reported in the 2006 census;

- Given the decrease in rental apartment vacancy rates, it can be assumed that a local alternative that is affordable and adequate does not exist for most households that are below one or more of the standards of acceptable housing;
- The net implication of these assumptions is that it is likely that well over 40% of households in the North Central neighbourhood are in core housing need.

## 5.7 Safety

The CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) audit of North Central was a joint project between the City of Regina, North Central Community Society (now NCCA), Regina Police Service, and North Central residents. Data was collected through audits of streets, alleys, and parks conducted by 40 volunteer residents aged 18-60, and published in a Final Report dated March 13, 2004. Depth to the data was generated through focus group sessions with auditors and Regina Police Services.

Generally, the areas auditors felt most unsafe was in the 1000-1400 blocks, east of Elphinstone Street. Factors that contributed to feeling unsafe were damaged property, graffiti, low lighting, and poor visibility of signage. Recommended actions include:

- trimming trees and bushes to increase visibility;



- cleaning up streets and yards;
- improving lighting;
- improving signage (house numbers, particularly for aiding emergency services);
- continuing efforts to light the alleys;
- cleaning up alleys and yards;
- updating park designs and providing more activities (play grounds, basketball courts); and
- improve overall maintenance in Confederation, Parkdale and Dewdney Pool Parks.

Hot spots have been documented by Regina City Police statistics and identify locations of concentrated crime or violence. These dynamic hot spots fluctuate, and can be based on time of day or type of crime. Hot spots offer criminals an opportunity to take over, perpetuating the fear of local residents who abide by the law. As

a result, many residents are implementing their own CPTED principles, installing alarms, putting burglar bars in windows, having guard dogs and putting guard dog signs up in the windows. Territoriality is supported by erecting high chain link or wooden fences, and creating these gated households suggests that there is a reason to feel unsafe.

When asked about how safe the auditors felt, one auditor remarked, “Not safe, because no one cares about how they live or how they look”. Generally, untidy yards, obvious security measures on homes, high volumes of traffic and the absence of people made auditors feel unsafe. One-third of the auditors felt as though the street lighting at night could be improved, by trimming trees and shrubs, adding more streetlights, or modifying the type of bulb used in the street fixtures.

The CPTED report indicated that 73% of auditors felt as though there were places



Unplowed roads and sidewalks are a hazard to pedestrians, drivers, and persons in wheelchairs



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that someone could hide, in darkened alleys, unlocked garages, parking lots, or behind trees and shrubs. Auditors raised concerns about pedestrian safety, indicating that they felt that traffic moved too quickly, intersections were not equipped with bells or buzzers, and that the risks after dark increased, with a great chance of drunk drivers being on the road.

Maintenance and general tidiness of the area was noted, and auditors commented on the number of junked cars, couches, mattresses and furniture left outdoors, and the amount of garbage found in alleyways. Forty-four percent of the auditors noted that there was graffiti in the alleys, and nearly half felt that the graffiti was racist or sexist.

The auditors felt relatively optimistic about parks in North Central, although there were concerns about maintenance and arboriculture issues. This relates back to the importance of maintenance as increasing the perception of safety in general. Lighting was mentioned as a possible improvement, and auditors felt that programming and activities could be planned so that community members would be encouraged to visit the parks.



## 5.8 Commercial/Business

Local businesses in the area were surveyed to determine the extent, type, and distribution of businesses in the neighbourhood (Appendix C). Businesses were categorized into five business types, each type having a variety of sectors. The building type occupied by each business was also noted to assist in a land use analysis related to business establishments, and to inform future growth objectives.

Business Types:

1. **Retail:** Establishments vending produced and/or packaged goods
2. **Restaurant/Bars:** Establishments vending foods and beverages
3. **Office:** Offices primarily for service industries
4. **Health Service:** Doctor and dentist offices, health clinics, and hospitals
5. **Service:** General services relating to daily life needs (pharmacy, convenience stores, bank, laundromat, auto shop, and community agency offices such as family centres)

The survey indicates that 40% of the business establishments are of a retail type, 36% are of the general service establishments, 9% are of the office and health services each, and 5% are restaurants. Of the retail and general services business type, businesses are independent in nature rather than representative of franchises and big box businesses.

Businesses on Albert serve a wider market catchment area, since it functions as an arterial street through the city and includes a mix of goods and services from law offices, restaurants, family services, and automobile services. Dewdney businesses are a mix of pawn shops, thrift stores, confectionery stores, and community agencies that tend to service the more local area. Of significance, however, is the limited availability of food markets which sell fresh foods within the neighbourhood boundaries (except for the REACH program at the Albert Scott Community Centre).

Typically business establishments occupy single story buildings. One to two storey strip malls occur both on Dewdney Avenue and Albert Street, some with apartment residential uses above; although on Dewdney Avenue many businesses tend to occupy houses which have been converted to business use through zoning provisions.

The limitations to this survey was in its ability to determine, even as a rough estimate, the number and type of jobs generated by these business establishments which might be available to local residents. The benefit, however, is in establishing a method of monitoring over time the types of businesses that do establish, measuring their success rates, and identifying a relationship between business types to built form and quality of the physical connections.

(Source: North Central Community Association)



## 5.9 Community Agencies

A diverse range of community organizations and programs are offered in the North Central neighbourhood, providing a broad spectrum of services to the community. While many of the organizations offer programs to the community at large, the majority of these programs are targeted towards the Aboriginal community.

Agencies serving North Central provide assistance for common challenges such as stable housing, safety, employment, education, and health. Many of these organizations offer multiple programs and services which provide support, counseling, and skills development for youth. They also aim to educate, inform and empower participants to lead better lives. While each of the organizations have the similar goal of helping the underserved members of the community find a balanced, healthy and improved lifestyle, each organization has a main focus and specific goal, offering slightly more specialized programs unique to the agency.

Some of the programs offered are linked to one another, either through shared facilities, or by informing their respective participants through a common source, such as a shared website or newsletter. The linkage of programs creates a network of services, which serve as stepping stones for vulnerable individuals and families as they work toward independence and sustainability.

Many of these established associations have been in operation since the early 1980's, indicating the continuing need for support and assistance in the aforementioned social challenges. Some programs undoubtedly reach more participants than others. Organizations such as the North Central Community Association, Circle Project, Chili for Children, REACH, Rainbow Youth Services, North Central Family Centre, Four Directions Health Centre, and the community schools seem to have a known presence in the community. They offer a variety of services to both the aboriginal and non-aboriginal community; and has an accessible website and community centre.

The abundance of neighbourhood-based charitable organizations, particularly those serving the aboriginal community, tells us that the needs of this community are overwhelming. These community organizations are essential to the enhancement of the community as they provide necessary services and support to a neighbourhood of which the City is unable to provide.

**Schedule D1:**  
Parks, Open Spaces,  
and Community  
Infrastructure





# 6.0 Planning Considerations

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At the outset of this study, it became clear that any recommendations moving forward would need to consider the uniqueness of North Central as an environment that is experiencing significant stress as characterized by boarded up homes, gang activity, the high yearly turn over and high absenteeism in schools, in the prevalence of prostitution, the high proportion of single-parent led households, and an overall concern about personal safety.

As such, a series of high level working assumptions follow that point to the complexity of this context and the need for innovation in order to begin to address the issues facing North Central today.

## 6.1 Physical Realm: North Central has good bones

From an urban design perspective, the infrastructure (sidewalks, roads, curbs) are in good repair. North Central's physical form is relatively predictable and well organized. A regular street grid, measurable traffic flows, transit service, housing, built forms, and general land uses have remained constant for many years.

The existing street grid allows for an environment that is easily permeable by pedestrians within the neighbourhood, since it is possible to traverse the shortest distance between two points on a sidewalk. Although there are some issues related to the permeability of the neighbourhood to the north and west (due to the rail tracks and Lewvan Drive), downtown is accessible directly through the south via Albert Street underpass (although public

realm improvements are required) and to the Warehouse District via 7th, 6th and 4th Avenue (see Chapter 5.5). The public schools as well as other neighbourhood amenities are well located, with Scott Collegiate as a neighbourhood focal point within walking distance of each of these other amenities (see Chapter 5.1-5.4). These are enviable urban elements that can be leveraged by small infrastructure investments such as enhanced streetscaping and park beautification projects.

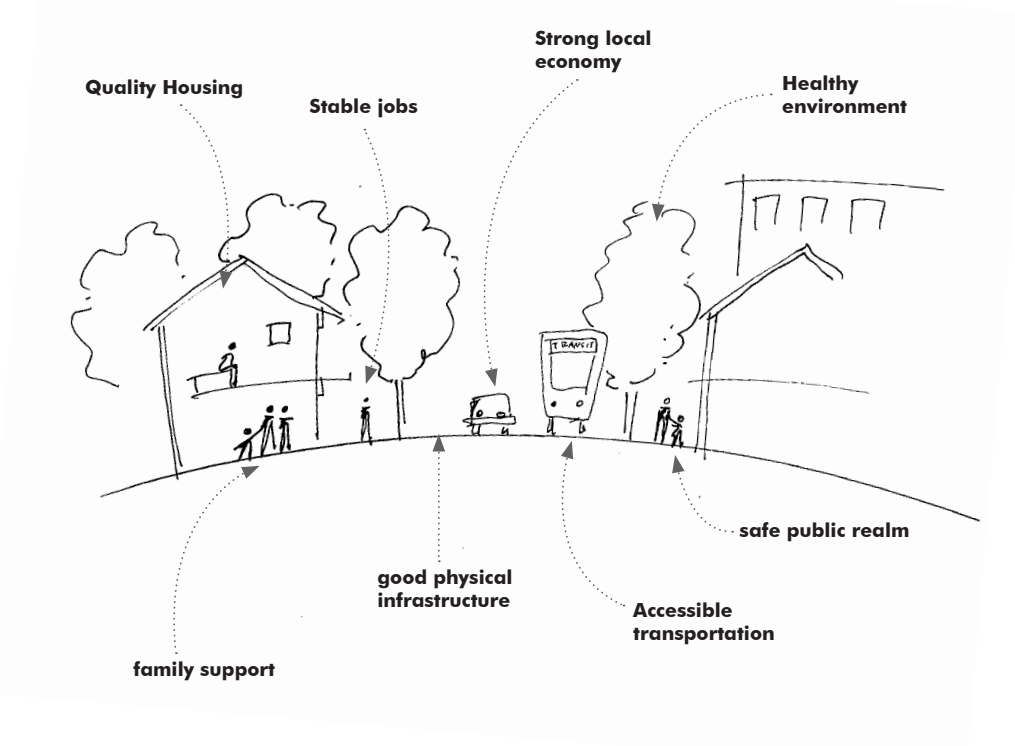
While zoning and land use plans might have directed the existing physical conditions, the interaction with the social realm has led to a relatively greater diversity in intensities of uses that may not necessarily respect land use policies and must be accounted for in the decision making process.

## 6.2 Social Realm: Conventional approaches do not apply

It is difficult to assess and understand needs related to land use planning and design when social issues play such a significant role in defining the challenges that may seem to be related to physical infrastructure. For example, in terms of neighbourhood amenities, North Central has well located parks and public schools. The challenges that these parks and schools face, however, is related more so to social issues (gang activity, truancy, high turnover in school populations) than it is related to the infrastructure itself. There is a complex social nature to the neighbourhood that

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A complete and stable community is complex and each element is interconnected.



must be acknowledged. This also includes the impacts created by city-wide events held at the Exhibition Grounds and Taylor Field, and the volume of people visiting Pasqua Hospital, as influencing North Central's common social realm. Part of the challenge faced by planners, then, is in accounting for complexity in the planning process in North Central.

There are three main neighbourhood characteristics that should inform land use planning in North Central, which have implications on the assumptions made during the planning and implementation process, and which are outlined below.

### 6.2.1 A Low-Income Neighbourhood

A significant portion of the residents in North Central fall below the low income cut-off (see Chapter 3.2); whereas in 2005 14.2% of households were considered low income before tax in the City of Regina overall, in North Central, 46.8% of households were considered low income before tax in North Central. Consequences of low income include a lower threshold of accessibility for foods, goods, and services, as well as less access to stable, desirable housing, or housing choice.

A further consequence of neighbourhood poverty is the local black-market economy, that provides illegally procured goods in neighbourhood homes at lower than market

value. North Central's black market has not been measured or accessed through this study (although it was mentioned often in stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions), but it likely has an implication on the viability of local businesses which are legitimately established. Economic development strategies should account for the impacts of this activity on local business development.

A conventional approach to addressing the need for an economic stimulus (i.e. injecting a significant residential population into the area), do not apply given that there appears to be a thriving (albeit illegal) sub-culture of commercial activity that fundamentally undermines the viability of neighbourhood commercial uses.

Low incomes in North Central directly impact housing quality. Residents frequently cite unacceptable housing conditions, particularly related to maintenance; however, fearing eviction and lacking in other options, they fail to report maintenance issues.

### **6.2.2 First Nation and Métis Peoples**

Currently, 50% of Canada's First Nation and Métis Peoples population lives in urban centres and that number is projected to grow. In North Central, roughly 40% of residents identify themselves as being of Aboriginal origin (First Nation and Métis Peoples). It is fair to extrapolate, given the neighbourhood agencies directed to First Nation and Métis Peoples needs, that this community struggles with the realities and consequences of addiction, poverty, and homelessness. This affects the overall health of the neighbourhood.

First Nation and Métis Peoples thriving is a significant national issue that is currently being studied by the Environics Institute (the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study). The objective of the study is to create a narrative of urban First Nation and Métis Peoples living in 10 cities across Canada. This forthcoming analysis will be imperative to understanding the needs of urban First Nation and Métis Peoples in North Central. The recommendations of this report focus on overall neighbourhood health, recognizing that the outcomes of the Environics Institute study will be an important overlay to consider in the future.

### **6.2.3 A Young Population**

North Central's demographic make-up indicates a significant young population (see Chapter 3.2.1), which has implications on the services needed and delivered in this neighbourhood. Children and youth generally do not generate income for households, or at least do not contribute significant amounts. Rather, a younger population consumes household income and requires additional neighbourhood amenities. Public consultations indicated that in the case of urban Aboriginal people, the typical family structure of two parents and two children was not realistic or accurate and that families often consist of single parents or between 4-6 children (see Chapter 3.2.2). This represents a significant burden on the individual generating household income, and a significant burden to the entire household to maintain a decent quality of life.

A young population also has advantages, provided the right investment and programs are implemented. Youth respond well to mentorship and guidance, learn quickly,



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and can be easily inspired to channel their emotional energy towards positive activities that contribute to the betterment of themselves and their communities. There is an incredible opportunity to develop leaders at an early age.

## 6.3 Realm of Governance: Incorporate adaptation in planning

Neighbourhood planners are essentially engaged in the management of neighbourhood development – from plan to implementation, and from implementation to plan – providing advice, direction, and assessments, and linking people to resources in order to devise and implement the necessary physical and social infrastructure necessary as per a neighbourhood's vision for growth. Neighbourhood development typically requires investments from all levels of government to instigate positive change and/or preservation of what is cherished both in the physical and social realms.

Despite media stereotypes of North Central, further exploration shows that North Central is characterized by a complex social context. This context, based on the rise and fall of partnerships, and ongoing social services, is not easily monitored or managed under a larger mandate by any one body. This level of uncertainty poses a challenge to neighbourhood development.

### 6.3.1 Cross-sectoral Collaboration to Implementation and Monitoring

A multifaceted strategy, as has generally been the approach to community development thus far, is essential to ensure that the diverse “root causes” and their complexity are addressed. North Central is complex and the challenges faced have high risks to successful solutions. Efforts from every sector are required to amount to a cumulative positive result.

There is a wealth of thinking, as captured in various reports, designed to alleviate or address some of the most difficult and outstanding issues in North Central (such as the Regina Community Plan 2007: A Home for All; the 2004 CPTED Report; the 2003 NCCA Report on the Community Vision and Action Plan). Further, it became clear through our discussions that initiatives are being implemented. However, given that implementation is not consistently monitored and measured, there is an overwhelming sense by residents, city staff and agency workers that they do not know whether these efforts are making things better.

Some felt that over the past five years, the neighbourhood has continued to decline, that there has been significant overlap in the services delivered, that many services offered are ineffective. Others felt that things are getting better. Monitoring and measuring would answer these questions in a tangible way, validate work currently being undertaken. There is a need to encourage collaboration among organizations, to coordinate funding, to measure outcomes and to reward success.

# 7.0 Directions for Change

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The following Directions for Change identify a series of key recommendations in the four areas within the scope of this study: neighbourhood sustainability, housing, transportation and land use. These directions need to be understood as positioned within a series of outstanding recommendations which we have not sought to reiterate or reorganize. Rather, we affirm outstanding recommendations, as identified in the following documents.

- North Central Community Vision and Action Plan
- Regina Community Plan 2007: A Home for All
- An Employment Development Strategy for Inner-City Regina
- North Central Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- Renewing Regina's Public Schools – A 10-year Plan

These preceding recommendations are the context within which the following recommendations are proposed. Further, the above mentioned reports need to be revisited, evaluated, implemented and monitored, in instances where this is not currently taking place.

The Directions for Change do not seek to be comprehensive, rather the objective has been to identify key areas where immediate action should take place in order to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the proposed Shared Facility, and to support and ensure its success. The emphasis has also been on initiatives that do not require significant amounts of capital investment, but rather, initiatives that leverage existing energy (i.e. the work of Habitat for Humanity, and the North Central Community Association), assets (i.e. city-owned vacant land) and community passion (i.e. community gardens).

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## 7.1 Sustainability

**Objective:** To ensure the long-term viability of North Central as a place to live, work and play in an environment that is safe, healthy and supports the overall well-being of its residents.

**Direction 1: The City needs to play an expanded leadership role moving forward.**

*Action: Renew the commitment of the Regina Inner City Community Partnership, the City of Regina and other key stakeholders, to fulfilling the mandate of the North Central 2020 Community Vision and Action Plan.*

*Action: Explore an expanded leadership role for the City, moving forward.*

In an environment with a complexity of needs – such as North Central – neighbourhood development involves investments from all levels of government to instigate positive change and/or preservation of what is cherished both in the physical and social realms.

The City can play an expanded role and act as a relatively neutral body in facilitating the next phase of the community vision, and by continuing to work with key bodies such as the Regina Inner City Community Partnership and the Regina Intersectoral Committee.

**Direction 2: Build leadership capacity for community involvement.**

*Action: Strengthen and coordinate mechanisms to support leadership capacity and community involvement.*

If a grass roots approach to community development is to take hold in a manner that will truly result in transformative change, it is necessary to provide people who live in the neighbourhood with leadership development opportunities and learning through participation on boards, working on committees, administering programs and service; maximizing their resources; and transferring their knowledge and experience to the community at large. There are community leaders in North Central now and there have been some significant achievements since the 2020 Vision was established. However, the leadership pool needs to be expanded and opportunities for learning and leadership development need to be enhanced. There is still a great deal to be done in this area.

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One strategy is to facilitate coordination among investment programs to support leadership development as a strategic priority. One example of current programs that focus on strengthen leadership capacity at an individual level is the Aboriginal Leadership Development Program (Tomorrow's Leaders Program) and Leadership Regina. The City applies for grant money for Tomorrow's Leaders Program through Saskatchewan Lotteries and the YMCA administers this program on the City's behalf. Leadership Regina provides an Leadership Training program for designed to develop leadership competencies though an intensive process over a period of several months. The participants are from a range of community backgrounds and experience.

*Action: Continue to strengthen leadership training for youth, to further develop long-term leadership capacity and soft skills development.*

*Action: Create a neighbourhood-wide mentorship program, whereby youth or other potential community leaders are mentored by community leaders from across the City.*

Whereas it is known that no single solution can break the cycle of poverty, initiatives can be implemented that empower residents to make life choices that can improve their overall quality of life. Training for life skills are benefits of the school system which most people take for granted. In North Central, the highly transient nature of children in schools has resulted in children being unable to fully develop their life skills. This has subsequently led to difficulties finding jobs into their adolescent and adult lives. Intersecting with this consequence is an insufficient level of outreach and facilities to encourage youth to gain or improve their life skills through accessible and affordable training and employment services.

This goes hand in hand with the training of trades skills which further empowers individuals, particularly single adolescent males (who are statistically more likely to be involved in the legal system and fall within the poverty line), to gain control over their financial lives and improve their overall quality of life. Training of these skills will surpass the benefits of temporary support programs such as recreation drop-in centres which only provide short-term social relief as opposed to long-term life-gain.

Community agencies should begin to emphasize services related to training of life skills and trades skills. The potential establishment of the Regina Trades and Skills Centre in North Central would be an asset. In addition, the City may also play a significant role by providing funding to agencies which offer such training and employment services.



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*Action: Celebrate and raise awareness about neighbourhood services that are not crisis oriented.*

There are many social services in the North Central neighbourhood that are not geared specifically towards those in crisis. These may include programs such as Common Weal, library programs, and sports programs at schools. Albert Scott Community Centre provides a very strong teen program. North Central has strong sport, culture and recreation programs offered at schools and throughout the community on a year-round basis. These positive programs offer services which engage and empower the community, promote cultural identity, and a healthy lifestyle, through collaboration and creative expression. Promoting these services will be an important part of improving neighbourhood identity.

*Action: Reinforce public schools as places of community and neighbourhood development.*

Community School coordinators work with schools and families to develop programs and build relationships between the schools and the community they serve. Community organizations can access school facilities through Joint Use Agreements with the City of Regina.

Given the uniqueness and breadth of the issues North Central faces, schools provide a unique opportunity both for parental involvement and for programming. This should continue to be increased, and reinforced as an essential element to neighbourhood development.

Neighbourhood schools also function as community centres and safe havens for children. They are also a key asset for developing community leaders, and a neighbourhood identity. An example of this would be the Hawks Nest cultural room at Wascana School.

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**Direction 3: Actively implement, monitor and evaluate initiatives and recommendations.**

*Action: Identify and adopt measures, indicators, and targets for monitoring and evaluating change in neighbourhood stability, community cohesion, public safety, public health, economic development, and physical infrastructure, to be published on an annual basis (see Chapter 9 of this document).*

Measuring verifies the efficacy of programs and initiatives, and provide justification for the continuation of these. This ensures that funding is as effective as possible, and should be done through the partnership between the City, Province, and key community agencies.

Measures, indicators and targets are necessary to:

- understand the existing conditions in a comparative way;
- develop specific actions and strategies to exert change, with quantifiable targets;
- understand the success and impact of actions and strategies; and
- develop new targets, actions and strategies, on an on-going basis.

Measures are the areas over which we want to exert change (e.g. public safety).

Indicators are quantifiable measurements, which reflect a specific condition and can be tracked overtime and space (e.g. number of house break-ins in North Central / per capita, over a one year period).

Targets indicate a specific desired outcome upon that which is being measured (e.g. reduce the number of house break-ins by 50% over a 3 year period).

*Action: For each of the key documents below, responsible authors should produce a Report Card to measure implementation. Where necessary, continue to do so, on an annual basis.*

- Community Vision and Action Plan (2003)
- North Central Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (2004)
- An Employment Development Strategy for Inner-City Regina (2005)
- Regina Community Plan 2007: A Home for All

Several recommendations have been generated specifically for neighbourhood development in North Central in a variety of areas. Some recommendations have been implemented without being measured for their successes, and some have not yet been implemented. Consultations revealed that this is a result of a missing accountability structure within these reports and a rapid turnover of people within the agencies which have conducted the studies, resulting in a loss of organizational 'memory'. As a result, it is difficult to understand which initiatives have been implemented, and which initiatives have had a substantive impact on neighbourhood change.

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Monitoring mechanisms should be created for neighbourhood development in the areas of housing, safety, health, economic development, and transportation. One option is to request that the Regina Intersectoral Committee, with assistance from the City and other stakeholders with the required capacity and expertise, establish a mechanism to monitor progress toward community goals and the implementation of key recommendations in North Central reports. All new documents should include a monitoring and evaluation framework. Some efficiencies could be achieved by coordinating this work with neighbourhood planning initiatives of Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, the Focusing on People report, the reporting process that is currently being developed through the Regina Homelessness Roundtable, and neighbourhood profiles and reporting by the City of Regina.

**Direction 4: Prioritize safety, as a first condition that is necessary for other initiatives to be successful.**

*Action: Assess the impact of CPTED initiatives in North Central. This may include an auditing of back alleys. Assess the impact of other crime prevention initiatives,. Continue to develop, strengthen and evaluate initiatives that address the social dimensions of community safety issues in North Central.*

There is still a significant percentage of the population that does not feel safe walking down the streets of North Central. Improving pedestrian-level street lighting conditions has proven to be an effective method of increasing the perception of safety in a variety of contexts. In North Central, this will involve two key actions. The first is a review of the impact of CPTED in North Central to assess the outcomes of the CPTED initiative. A report is currently in progress on a follow-up lighting audit that was undertaken in 2008 through the University of Regina. It may be necessary to revisit the recommendations and conditions identified in the 2004 CPTED audit. This might mean, for example, that trees and bushes that currently obscure street lights are re-trimmed, or planned to be re-trimmed on a yearly basis.

The second action will be to determine to what extent a back-alley lighting program will need to be initiated to increase safety in these inconspicuous areas. There is no data to which back-alley pedestrian traffic has been measured, but the pathways created by back-alleys nearly match those of the regular street grid.

Finally, second generation CPTED activities should be enhanced. This includes support for block-level activities and community-building initiatives that enhance safety, cohesion and caring. Generally there is a need for more comprehensive approach to reporting on crime prevention and safety-related initiatives in the neighbourhood.

*Action: Ensure that through the City's review of its Winter Maintenance Policy that snow removal on sidewalks in North Central, particularly near the future North Central Shared Facility, is prioritized.*

A secondary concern for residents is an inadequate level of snow removal within the neighbourhood causing difficulties for pedestrians to travel to their neighbourhood destinations on foot. This is a particularly important concern for those who do not own vehicles and cannot rely on public transit for various reasons. Additionally, the development of the North Central Shared Facility is expected to cause an increase in the volume of traffic around the facility block. It is recommended that the snow removal service reflect the increasing volume of traffic that may ensue. The area immediately around this block should be categorized as Blue or Green, as is normally categorized for removal around neighbourhood schools and large recreational facilities. Snow removal service for the blocks surrounding the facility and along streets which connect the facility to schools should be reconsidered for an increased classification.

*Action: Improve safety in parks by enhancing landscaping and adding desirable recreational facilities to increase eyes on the streets (e.g. basketball courts).*

While there is an abundance of parks and open spaces available to North Central residents, the quality of the parks with respect to function and maintenance are considered inadequate. The 2007 Open Space Management Strategy states that Pasqua, 7th Avenue, Albert Scott, and Patty Cake Play Park shall be considered for upgrading, but in general all parks are rated 'good'. Despite this, consultations revealed that residents do not feel safe or find that there are activities and facilities that are usable. For the most part, these parks are large open spaces and where there are facilities or equipment, these are in poor condition.

Furthermore, facilities that are intended to service North Central residents are realistically considered inaccessible due to the invisible social boundaries many residents feel from using facilities such as Taylor Field and the Sportplex. Serious consideration should be given to park upgrades, including increasing the perception of safety through lighting strategies, increasing surveillance and maintenance (which can be done through voluntary partnerships with community agencies), and the addition of facilities that serve the majority of this young population. Playgrounds and basketball courts have been identified as the most desirable additions.



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*Action: Explore the viability of motion-sensor alleyway lighting with a low setting though the evening period that brightens to illuminate the area based on movement.*

Criminal activity is less likely to take place in well-lit areas. With the security of the neighbourhood in mind, it is important to explore options for lighting underutilized areas which are poorly lit and may influence crime.

There is some concern that if alleyways in the neighbourhood are fully lit throughout the evening and night, it will in fact encourage more traffic through those areas. An alternative to this would be to introduce motion-sensor alleyway lighting which brightens when there is movement, to improve visibility and reduce offensive activity.

*Action: Consider an incentive program for residents to install and/or improve motion-sensor lighting on garages and homes.*

A significant issue to consider is the fact that there is currently little regard by pedestrians for distinguishing between a public and private realm. That is, people walk “all over the place”, between buildings and houses and crisscross across blocks. This results in unsafe conditions and the proliferation of areas where nobody has a direct sense of ownership. As residents take responsibility for areas within the block, and natural surveillance increases, unsafe areas can be mitigated and better controlled.

Adding motion-sensor lighting to homes and garages creates that sense of ownership and increases natural surveillance. An incentive program for residents would help raise this awareness, improve safety in a short period of time and give residents the opportunity to take responsibility for the security of their neighbourhood. Partnerships with the private sector (such as insurance companies) could help to achieve such an incentive program.

## 7.2 Housing

**Objective:** To position North Central as a desirable place to live within the City, where residents take pride in their neighborhood and their homes.

### **Direction 5: Reverse the concentration of poverty in North Central.**

*Action: Develop housing incentives whereby the City partners with organizations under a unified vision to create more quality affordable single family houses, to increase opportunities for home ownership in the Priority Housing Revitalization Area.*

*Action: Develop a strategy to transform renters into owners.*

Through partnerships with organizations, it becomes possible to transform the perception of North Central by creating a critical mass of new houses, that are affordable and geared towards existing area residents, that will in turn act as a stimulus to neighbourhood improvements on private property. The objective will be to begin to develop pride of ownership, and to create an environment that is appealing for outside investment.

A strategy should be developed whereby the City and other developers work under a unified vision to create more quality affordable housing units, and increase the opportunities for home ownership. As such, a land acquisition plan by the City is needed to provide detailed direction.

Some considerations in the housing revitalization strategy are:

- Identify new program models for addressing housing need that leverages existing housing stock through rehabilitation of existing homes and rental unit protection.
- Adjust the eligibility criteria for housing programs to capture households with lower incomes than is currently set.
- Encourage governments to support minor home repair programs.
- Consider programs to support the aesthetic maintenance of a house to compliment existing programs on improving structural stability.
- Suggested targets to measure over time:
  - Increase the proportion of homeowners from 53% to 60% (half the difference between NC and the City home ownership rate of 68% over 10 years. This translates into 300 more homeowners. The priority should be on converting renters in the area to homeowners.

### **Schedule E5:** Priority Housing Revitalization Area

#### **Schedule D4:** Ownership and Boarded Up Homes

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##### ***Action: Devise a strategy to eliminate boarded up homes***

Target of eliminating such homes within two years. Use a mixed approach: work with landlords (as NCCA is already doing), Bylaw Enforcement, and research on what other cities have done, a no-tolerance policy, a communications strategy, regular monitoring through RICCP or an appropriate working group. The City should ensure that boarding-up through bylaw and other enforcement activities is minimized and time-limited when there is no other option. This is a high priority because of the visibility & impact of the problem.

The strategy should consider:

- Developing strategies for Habitat for Humanity and other non-profit, cooperative, and First Nations groups to promote the development of groups of city lots and other vacant lots.
- New housing incentives (ICHSS) and grants (Social Development Reserve) will provide more effective assistance than in the past, especially for small developments with 2-4 units, and for larger developments.
- A focus on the Shared Facility vicinity as proposed in this report (the Priority Housing Revitalization Area).
- Working with the Province to establish neighbourhood minor repair and block-by-block strategies.
- Suggested targets to measure over time:
  - Elimination of all boarded-up houses in two years.

- Reduce number of homes needing major repairs from 20% (770) to 14% (550), the Central Zone average, in five to six years. This goal would require all three levels of government working together with the community.

##### ***Action: Explore models for alternative housing typologies (not single family dwellings), as well as alternative ownership models, such as cooperatives.***

By offering a variety of housing typologies and alternative ownership models, the needs of the larger neighbourhood population can be accommodated. This creates a greater opportunity for home ownership, in turn stimulating a sense of pride and responsibility for the future of the area.

## 7.3 Transportation

**Objective:** To ensure that it is possible to move within and through North Central in a variety of ways with ease; to ensure that transportations systems do not contribute to larger social issues.

### **Direction 6: Improve mobility options and connections.**

*Action: Ensure that in the context of the Transit Service Review that transit service to key neighbourhood destinations (e.g. Pasqua Hospital; North Central Shared Facility) is examined. Ensure patrons board and alight from the bus on the same side of the street as the proposed Shared Facility.*

Transit service to and from the neighbourhood needs to be reviewed, particularly when many services are accessed just outside of the study area within the 'area of influence'. Routes directly to the Shared Facility should also be considered, which will connect the facility to adjacent neighbourhoods, North Central schools, the Downtown and the Warehouse District.

*Action: The grid system of streets should be conserved and restored wherever possible.*

The current street grid system within the neighbourhood is an ideal condition for a walkable community. In fact, pedestrian counts show that the neighbourhood is highly permeable and there is no one prominent walking route that is preferred by residents. However, the grid system within the study area is not extended fully outward into neighbouring communities such that the safest and easiest way to leave the neighbourhood will only be by car or by infrequent transit.



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*Action: Extend neighbourhood streets (and connections) to the north, east and west wherever possible.*

Permeability into the neighbourhood is as important as permeability within, as many daily-life needs are accessed outside North Central. Currently, proximity to other areas of the City is an important asset to the neighbourhood that should be leveraged.

To increase the options for those who either cannot afford a car or rely on transit to sufficiently fulfil their transportation requirements, public works should consider extending the street grid outside of its boundaries to the north, east, and west. These new intersections should be designed with safe crosswalks to better integrate the neighbourhood physically and provide safer options to walk in and out of the neighbourhood. Priority extensions are to the east across Albert Street.

*Action: Improve connections from North Central to the Downtown by redesigning the underpass south of Saskatchewan Drive, on Albert Street.*

*Action: Provide adequate, secure and visible bicycle parking at school locations and other public spaces. Continue to strengthen and improve initiatives that provide low-cost revamped bikes to children.*

In our consultations, very few people recorded using cycling as a form of transportation. In part, this could be a result of inadequate and unreliable bicycle parking. Providing more secure and visible options for parking will likely increase bicycle ridership, improving mobility options and increasing the permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.

*Action: Continue to allow street side parking throughout the neighbourhood, as a means to providing “eyes on the street” and easy access to parking.*

## 7.4 Land Use

**Objective:** To utilize land in a manner that supports community development, respects and reinforces the unique assets of the neighborhood, and creates a safer environment for all.

### **Direction 7: Develop a strategy related to vacant sites.**

*Action: Consider establishing an active public use in the Albert Library building, to ensure this historic building remains a hub within the neighbourhood.*

*Action: Consider the current Four Directions site as a place to offer a component of the Regina Trades and Skills Center programming.*

The vacancies created by the move of the public library and the Four Direction Health Care Centre provide opportunities to establish offices for other essential community services. The Historic Albert Library building could easily be transformed into an employment centre equipped with computer labs and offices for resume development, an invaluable service identified by residents. Alternatively, the Four Directions site could be used for a much larger operation, perhaps coupled with other training and certification programs that are run through City-Agency partnerships, such as the Regina Trades and Skills Centre.

There is an opportunity to meet local market demand by establishing a retail store that supplies affordable home and personal products. This might include thrift and bargain stores with products that are more accessible to peoples of low incomes, and may be run by a community agency/organization. The Yonge Street Mission in Toronto was initially a religiously driven charitable organization established in 1896 with a mandate to serving underprivileged people and has flourished as an organization through establishing a strong network of volunteers but also a stable home base in the heart of downtown where they also run a second-hand retail store. Eventually, through good marketing and promotion of such a service, this could become a secondary neighbourhood destination, bringing essential goods within reach.

The Library should establish a steering committee to determine a new appropriate use for the current Albert Library building, which is in good structural condition, and generate ideas on solving programmatic and logistical issues to desirable future uses.

## Schedule E2: Opportunities and Constraints

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*Action: Four community gardens currently exist in North Central (south east quadrant: Blocks 172-173). Create community gardens within a 5 min walking distance of all neighbourhood homes.*

*Action: Generate a strategy to coordinate housing development and school programming with community gardens.*

Coordinating a programming strategy creates an opportunity for community cohesion, and for people to meet their neighbours. School programming can also aid in developing enthusiasm for this level of community involvement, bringing awareness to the impact that can result from a single effort. This also develops responsibility in youth and how they view their neighbourhood.

*Action: For the short-term, and prior to the building of new home construction, use City-owned vacant lots for temporary community gardens.*

Several vacant lots throughout North Central, particularly east of Cameron Street, present gaps in the streetscape character. Vacant lots and buildings are great flexible spaces to hold community building activities such as community gardens, which may be of permanent or temporary use.

*Action: Explore a partnership between the community gardens initiative and Reach, as a means to educating about healthy food and food growing.*

This enables capacity building within the community, providing education on topics such as agriculture and health. Introducing community gardens also cultivates a sense of responsibility within the community as the garden is dependent on the care of the community residents.

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**Direction 8: Conserve and leverage heritage resources to restore a sense of identity and neighbourhood pride.**

*Action: Explore the value of creating a strategy that reinforces the historic nature of the neighbourhood to leverage and trigger change.*

Other assets could be recognized as historic include some of the schools, the grid system of streets and area parks. These should be recognized as heritage assets in a future neighbourhood plan.

North Central is a heritage neighbourhood. It includes a number of buildings, structures, properties and spaces that retain both the memory of better days, and the opportunity to recapture a positive sense of identity with good urban principles. These include:

- Residential buildings and homes, many of which are designed, sited and built in a way that they contribute to good neighbourhood planning. Over the years, many of them have been ill maintained or have been boarded up and fallen to disrepair. However, in their essence, they contain the positive qualities and character which are desired for the neighbourhood (e.g. good relationship to the street, good scale, pedestrian oriented);
- Streets and open spaces, many of which have “good bones”, and are well positioned to make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood. These have also fallen to disrepair and resulted in unsafe conditions; and

- Character areas and the neighbourhood as a whole – where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts – where a collective sense of character and identity can be restored.

Building upon and leveraging the existing resources (buildings, properties, structures, landscapes and open spaces) can offer notable change, for relatively minimal intervention.

Heritage resources (homes, parks, streetscapes, and special buildings) have an important role to play in defining the neighbourhood’s character, identity, history and sense of place. As individual resources are conserved, and different areas regain a positive sense of identity, residents will often begin to take pride and responsibility over their physical space (both public and private). In this way, heritage conservation can often function as a trigger and impetus for greater transformations and participation.



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**Direction 9: Improve the physical infrastructure of the neighbourhood and ensure future development is of the highest design standard.**

*Action: Adopt the proposed Urban Design Guidelines (Chapter 8) and ensure future development conforms to them.*

An Urban Design Framework guides how buildings should be developed such that they are in keeping with an established character of the neighbourhood, enhancing safety, functionality and a desired character. This is achieved through design-based decisions related to the orientation, massing, and location of the built form.

Some consideration should be given to the transferability of the Core neighbourhood urban design guidelines to North Central. However this transferability needs to be carefully assessed in light of the exceptional magnitude of housing issues in North Central compared to Core.

*Action: Encourage development along Albert Street that facilitates better pedestrian connections into North Central and towards the Warehouse District.*

This action is described in Chapter 8.5.4 of the Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines, which outlines the urban design considerations necessary to achieve this action.

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**Direction 10: Enhance accessibility to regional recreational services in the South Recreation and Sports Amenities area (refer to Chapter 8.5.3) specifically for North Central residents.**

*Action: Encourage the use of recreational services in this area by better advertising programs.*

*Action: Through partnerships, tailor programming that is geared specifically towards North Central youth. This might be partly accomplished by created dedicated use times for North Central residents only.*

While it is an overall benefit to have such facilities in the core of the city, careful consideration must be given to the impact it has on the immediate community with respect to inconvenience and safety, and to accessibility of unique services. Since it is unlikely that these uses will be relocated, opportunities to maximize utilization and benefits of services and programs for residents of North Central should be explored.

The recreation facilities and programs south of Dewdney (Evraz Place and Regina Sportplex) are city-wide amenities and are not perceived as services for North Central residents and were seldom mentioned in focus groups. Some programming for area residents does occur, however, and the experience has been that when such opportunities have been provided the response from the neighbourhood has been strong.



Dewdney Avenue

# 8.0 Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines

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The following Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines for the North Central neighbourhood are intended to begin implementing the North Central Vision and to provide the foundation for a Neighbourhood Plan. Until a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, these considerations and guidelines should be employed when evaluating any new development within, or adjacent to, North Central, as well as for significant investments and initiatives affecting the public realm and/or community facilities.

## 8.1 A Neighbourhood Structure

Successful neighbourhoods function at a walkable scale, encompassing an area within which people can conduct their everyday lives. The North Central neighbourhood has a walkable scale.

In order to function as a safe, welcoming, successful neighbourhood, the key elements which comprise the neighbourhood structure must operate in concert. The neighbourhood as a whole requires a defined structure to conserve what is cherished, and to direct new developments towards the fulfillment of the North Central vision. Key elements of the neighbourhood structure include:

- the pattern of streets and blocks, which determine the character of development, its physical and visual connectivity, and the way in which uses interact with each other and the surrounding context;

- the clustering of land uses, as the activities that take place within different areas, such as: residential, commercial, institutional, or recreational;
- the presence of physical boundaries or constraints, such as: railway lines, busy transportation corridors, or natural features;
- the location of open spaces and parks, which serve to define centres and boundaries and contribute to a neighbourhoods unique physical character and community use;
- the location of landmark sites and community uses, which serve as a centre of activity, and establish a relationship (physical and of use) with surrounding uses; and
- the character of private properties, which determine how a block is parceled, the scale and spacing of development, frontages and access, and the overall character of an area.

The neighbourhood structure serves as a strategic framework for accommodating and directing new development and initiatives, in a way that best leverages each one, for the enhancement of all, and the fulfillment of the North Central Vision.

In North Central, the neighbourhood structure, which results from its historical layout, has many positive aspects. Streets, laneways, and blocks are well laid out. Key public spaces and significant landmarks are typically positioned at the centre of their catchment area. Private residences



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typically line the street and create frontage. A Neighbourhood Plan should be created for North Central to further identify aspects of the neighbourhood structure that should be conserved, and aspects that should evolve.

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The neighbourhood structure of North Central must support a safe, walkable environment, and must seek to fulfill the North Central vision.
2. New public spaces and public buildings and new development in North Central must seek to reinforce the neighbourhood structure.

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**8.1.1 A sense of place and identity**

North Central, as other areas in Regina, has a unique sense of identity and character, which is sustained in part through the built environment. At present, the identity of North Central has many challenges to overcome, including one of lack of safety (real and perceived).

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. New public spaces and public buildings and new development in North Central must contribute to the creation of a positive sense of place and identity for North Central.

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**8.1.2 A grid system of streets and blocks**

Streets and blocks are one of the key components of the neighbourhood structure. The North Central neighbourhood is fortunate to include a well defined pattern of streets and blocks, that operate as a grid, at a walkable scale. The advantages of a grid include:

- encouraging a high level of permeability and accessibility;
- providing building frontages and addresses to the street;
- encouraging parking access at the rear via a rear lane; and
- allowing for a fine network of vehicular and pedestrian connections.

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The prevailing grid pattern of streets and blocks should be maintained. The grid pattern of streets and blocks should be restored and completed where it has been interrupted (e.g. a street closure), or where it can result in improved pedestrian connections.
2. Consider development opportunities that enhance the existing grid structure and increase public access and linkages throughout the neighbourhood, especially to existing and proposed neighbourhood amenities, key destinations and landmark sites.
3. Discourage private streets and laneways, street closures, and front car garage parking access.

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### 8.1.3 Neighbourhood connectivity

While the existing grid pattern of streets and blocks provides excellent connectivity within the neighbourhood, challenges exist regarding North Central's connectivity towards other neighbourhoods. Physical barriers such as train tracks (to the north and south) and high-traffic corridors (to the west) are difficult to overcome.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. All existing connections to the surrounding context should be improved for pedestrian use, including streetscapes, pedestrian crossings and railway crossings – especially across Lewvan Drive, Saskatchewan Drive, and Albert Street – with increased and improved cross walks, pedestrian signals and street lights, and improved lighting and streetscape enhancements.
2. New pedestrian connections should be explored in all directions, prioritizing at-grade connections (e.g. to the east and west) and considering grade separated connections where necessary (e.g. over the train tracks to the north and south).
3. All new developments must seek to improve pedestrian connections within the neighbourhood and towards adjacent areas (e.g. to/through the sport complex to the south and to McKinley Park to the north).
4. Large sites (e.g. assembled blocks; the hospital; the sport facilities to the south) should seek to improve pedestrian connections within the neighbourhood and towards adjacent areas.
5. Streetscape enhancements should be undertaken along streets that connect to key open spaces and neighbourhood amenities and destinations.
6. Laneways should be designed and maintained as key pedestrian and bicycle linkages, with improved lighting and visibility.

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### 8.1.4 Transitions

Part of the neighbourhood structure will be to adequately connect and transition to adjacent areas, in a way that is:

- permeable, safe, and pedestrian oriented, year-round and at all times of the day;
- respectful of the character and identity of established areas; and
- serves to implement and enhance the open space and built form frameworks.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

##### Towards Albert street:

- new and renovated building should transition in form and use from the low rise residential context to the mixed commercial uses of Albert Street and 5th Avenue;
- opportunities exist for higher density, mixed-use development (including residential) especially east of Angus Street. The west side of Angus Street should be considered as the low rise residential boundary.

##### Towards the Sports Complex and Hospital area:

- new and renovated building should transition in form and use from the low rise residential context towards

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Dewdney Avenue, which includes a mix of uses and the potential for greater building heights;

- properties that include, and surround, the Sports Complex and Hospital area south of Dewdney Avenue, have significant development opportunity and should:
  - extend the grid-pattern of streets and blocks;
  - improve north-south and east-west pedestrian connections;
  - incorporate higher densities (including residential); and
  - continue the existing street wall frontage along Dewdney Avenue with mixed uses at grade.

**Towards west and north neighbourhoods:**

- new and renovated building should transition in form and use to adjacent neighbourhoods, seeking to improve pedestrian and cycling connections wherever possible;
- new and renovated building along Lewvan Drive (to the west):
  - may accommodate greater densities and mix of uses, on sites that front Lewvan Drive;
  - should seek to improve the street condition and frontages for pedestrians and transit use (e.g. incorporating safe and attractive sidewalks, most notably along the underpass under the railway, north of Saskatchewan Drive).

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**8.1.5 Laneways**

The North Central neighbourhood benefits from the existing system of laneways, which provide access to parking and servicing to the rear side of residential properties. These laneways are a significant asset, which should be conserved and properly utilized. Unfortunately, currently laneways are not deemed to be safe or inviting.

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Public laneways should be maintained as an important part of the overall street network, and used primarily for vehicular parking access and servicing, and as pedestrian and bicycle linkages.
2. Public laneways should be made safe through lighting and other CPTED design features.
3. Public laneways should function to reduce vehicular congestion and on-street access points, improving pedestrian safety and circulation on the streets.

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## 8.2 An Open Space Framework

An open space framework defines the desired future character and function of the various components that form an open space system, including parks, enhanced streets, trails, bike paths, and civic uses. The intent of an open space framework is to guide private developments and public investments towards the creation of a consistent and inter-connected system of public and private open spaces and to identify opportunities to maximize the amount of open space available.

### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Provide a diverse, fine grain layering of open spaces, such as streets, neighbourhood parks, parkettes, civic spaces, and community gardens that are accessible and connected, and play an important role in providing essential open space amenities to support a healthy community environment.
2. Establish partnerships with institutions and community facilities to enhance and expand on open space opportunities.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that the open space system is reflective of neighbourhood needs.

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### 8.2.1 Streets and Streetscapes

Streetscapes constitute a primary component of the open space system:

- they are the physical space, within the public realm, where people spend most time;
- they have a vital function in supporting

a safe, attractive and well used pedestrian environment;

- they are a prominent aspect of the neighbourhood's sense of place and identity;
- they function as a casual gathering place, supporting community cohesion;
- they have a vital environmental function, by accommodating a significant amount of tree canopy and connections to other open spaces; and
- they provide a conduit for a number of modes of transportation, including: walking, cycling, transit, and cars.

### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

#### Public streets should be designed to:

- work as an integrated system – accommodating transportation, movement, pedestrian activity and servicing, while contributing to the public realm environment and the overall urban forestry and connectivity of the open space framework;
- provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment;
- function as a well-connected, grid system;
- accommodate various modes of transportation including transit, vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian movement;
- accommodate on-street parking, where possible;
- provide access to off-street parking and servicing through laneways;



- support a positive sense of place and identity throughout the public realm environment with quality streetscape treatments, street furnishings, active uses and frontages; and
- support a continuous tree canopy.

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### 8.2.2 Neighbourhood Parks

Parks are an essential component of the physical and social infrastructure of the neighbourhood, providing a highly-visible space for social gathering and community interaction, as well as providing opportunities for place making and for defining the character of the neighbourhood. Parks are also a significant component of a healthy natural environment (e.g. the overall tree canopy) and of supporting healthy lifestyles (e.g. active uses, recreation, sports, walking).

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Parks should be designed and maintained to function as places for social gathering and as hubs of recreational activity for the community.
2. Parks should be visible, easily accessible and centrally located.
3. Parks should be defined through public streets, with active uses fronting the park, including residential.
4. Parks should have adequate lighting and signage for ease of use and access.
5. Residents of North Central should have a community park within a five minute walk (500 m) of where they live.
6. Parks should be community oriented and be flexible and responsive to the existing or emerging neighbourhood

demographic in terms of design, use and programming.

7. Parks may incorporate areas for community gardens.

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### 8.2.3 Parks related to Community Uses

Like neighbourhood parks, schools and community facilities can provide both indoor and outdoor places for gathering and social activity, and can include: libraries, theatres, community centres, daycare centres, and senior's meeting places.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Community facilities should contribute to the overall open space or recreational needs of the community, incorporating uses such as: bowling greens, library parkettes, theatre plazas, skating rinks, and community centre playgrounds.
2. School parks should contribute to the overall open space needs of the community, providing playful and innovative learning environments where children can safely play.
3. School parks can be designed in concert with neighbourhood parks or be accessible to neighbourhood parks, to create larger, contiguous open space opportunities.
4. School parks can be designed to support joint community/school facilities such as daycare playgrounds spaces and after school play activity for youth.
5. Schools facilities and buildings can also function as opportunities to augment recreational needs for the community.

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#### 8.2.4 Community Gardens

Community gardens offer opportunities for the improvement of neighbourhood open spaces – usually of vacant, derelict or underutilized sites. Community gardens establish a sense of community and pride; encourage social gathering or efforts around a common goal – usually to provide access to fresh produce and plants, or simply for the joy of gardening, physical activity and community interaction.

##### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Community gardens should be open to the public, and provide green space for the neighbourhood.
2. Community gardens should be created and promoted as opportunities for social gatherings, healthy living, beautification, education and recreation.
3. Residents of North Central should have a community garden within five to ten minute walk of where they live.

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#### 8.2.5 Private Gardens and Front Yards (that are street related)

Private open spaces are key components of the public realm and while some of these spaces may have limited or restricted public use, they play a significant role in contributing to the overall beautification and open space amenity base for the neighbourhood and should be integrated in the overall network of open spaces. Private open spaces also play an important function in the overall health and integrity of the natural environment (e.g. providing a contiguous tree canopy).

##### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Private open spaces must contribute to the beautification of the neighbourhood in the form of enhanced landscaping and should be visually accessible to the public.
2. Front yards, although publicly inaccessible, should remain transparent to the street without high fences or walls, and should be enhanced with landscaping such as gardens or trees, to contribute to the overall streetscape character and beautification, as well as to the open visibility, safety and comfort of the public realm.
3. Private open spaces should contribute to the overall health and integrity of the natural environment, seeking to maintain a contiguous tree canopy.

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#### 8.2.6 The sports complex

The sports complex and surrounding context is a defining component of the North Central neighbourhood. This area has the potential to function as a major recreational facility that is fully integrated with neighbourhood life, on a year-round basis. Currently, the area is devoid of activity during much of the year, and is inhospitable to pedestrians.

##### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Opportunities to incorporate the fine grain grid system of streets and blocks should be considered in any new development for the Stadium and surrounding context – extension of

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the street grid, pedestrian paths and linkages, alignment of key buildings and structures as visual termini, frontages and proximity of buildings to the street edge, improved street interface especially along Dewdney Avenue.

2. The Stadium and surrounding context should seek to:

- be publicly accessible and connected to the open space system;
- increase the year-round use of public open spaces through a reduction of surface parking, improved pedestrian circulation and the integration of other amenities and uses;
- support, and not detract from, the function and recreational activities of neighbourhood parks;
- be visually and physically integrated within the neighbourhood as an attractive destination that has clear frontages, visible entrances and enhanced open spaces that are publicly accessible and contribute to the public realm;
- extend the tree canopy, especially through streets and areas of pedestrian circulation; and
- seek to provide pedestrian connections across the tracks to the south.

## 8.3 A Safe, Attractive and Walkable Public Realm

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### 8.3.1 Safety

Safety is one of the most critical factors for North Central. It is without doubt a critical factor in encouraging people to walk along public streets, to use public spaces and parks and to invest in their homes and gardens.

Creating a safe environment for all, is priority, and the foundation upon which all else can develop.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Implement CPTED principles (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) in the design of streetscapes, public spaces and public facilities.
2. Implement the recommendations of the North Central CPTED Study.
3. Ensure that streets and public spaces, including parks, schools, and community facilities, are fronted by buildings with doors and windows (i.e. “eyes on the street, and park”), avoiding blank walls.

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### 8.3.2 Lighting

The adequate illumination of public spaces and streetscapes is critical to providing a safe environment and a welcoming identity for the neighbourhood.

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**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Placement and style of lighting should achieve the necessary level of illumination required for the given streetscape or open space area in terms of providing safety for vehicular visibility and pedestrian comfort and safety.
2. A hierarchy of street lighting standards should be established for various street types and open space areas to accommodate varying conditions such as: pedestrian scaled lighting along more pedestrian-oriented streets or trails, or a combination of pedestrian and vehicular lighting for the main streets, pedestrian scaled lighting for parks and open spaces.
3. Within the neighbourhoods, a combination of both street lighting and pedestrian scale lighting could be used to create individual identity for different areas.
4. Placement of lighting should be coordinated and in keeping with the rhythm and placement of other streetscape features such as street trees, benches and other furnishings.
5. Laneways should be well lit, and may include lighting fixtures that are motion sensitive.

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**8.3.3 A walkable public realm**

North Central is already, in principle, a walkable neighbourhood. Currently pedestrian activity is challenged mostly by matters of personal safety and, to a certain extent, the difficulty of connecting to the surrounding areas (i.e. across train tracks, busy streets and open expanses).

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Maintain and enhance streetscapes to be attractive and pedestrian-oriented by:
  - providing a public sidewalk on both sides of the street that is well connected and maintained;
  - locating active uses at-grade directly connected to the public sidewalk;
  - providing enhances landscaping;
  - providing adequate lighting; and
  - concealing unappealing uses from view, including parking and servicing.
2. A fine network of connected streets and open spaces should be maintained.
3. Street crossings should be regularly spaces and designed to prioritize pedestrians, with reduced right-of-ways and priority signalization.
4. New and enhanced pedestrian connections within, and beyond, the neighbourhood should be sought and maintained.

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**8.3.4 Signage and wayfinding**

Street signage and commercial signage, have an important role to play in defining the character and identity of North Central, as well as in ensuring that people can navigate the area and reach their destinations with ease.



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### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. All signage should be expressive of the character, identity and quality of the neighbourhood.
2. All signage should be located in a way that protects significant views and does not detract from the quality and character of the built form and natural features.
3. Street signage should be designed to direct visitors and the community to key places, community facilities, transit facilities and special neighbourhood features such as parks, amenities and heritage features.
4. Commercial signage should be limited to ground level uses and should be considered with building façade guidelines.
5. Third party signage should only be considered when no undue impacts result to the character of the neighbourhood, or to the quality of the space.

## 8.4 Mobility

A balanced and accessible movement system should be established that encourages a multi-modal system, including:

- prioritizing pedestrians – through pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and development;
- cycling – through an integrated system of cycling facilities and trails;
- transit – through a connected and efficient system which is integrated with the pedestrian realm, and which people can safely opt to use at different times of the day, and different times of the year; and
- cars – as one of the modes of transportation integrated within the right-of-way and supported by a grid-pattern of streets and laneways and by accessible street side parking.

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### 8.4.1 Pedestrians first

The idea of prioritizing pedestrians in the design of the neighbourhood is a key factor in:

- improving safety, real and perceived;
- creating a more attractive and welcoming public realm;
- increasing community interaction and cohesion;
- supporting healthy and active lifestyles;
- supporting the transit system;
- offering mobility choices to all, and supporting people who do not have access to a car; and

- creating a more sustainable urban environment.

### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Public streets should be designed to provide safe, accessible, animated and comfortable environments for pedestrians, including without limitation: enhanced street furnishings and amenities, signage and wayfinding, pedestrian scale lighting, spacious sidewalks, street trees and awnings for shade and comfort.
2. Street intersections should include street crossings that prioritize the comfort and safety of pedestrians.
3. The streetscape environment and especially street crossings should have a high level of design consideration in terms of traffic calming measures such as: signalization, clearly defined boundaries, marked crosswalks and signage, and special paving materials.
4. Transit and bicycle facilities and amenities should be located in areas that are well used by, and accessible to, pedestrians.
5. Vehicular service entrances and parking access and egress should be located away from the pedestrian environment to avoid interfering with pedestrian circulation and activity.

#### **8.4.2 Accessibility**

The definition and understanding of “pedestrian” in this report includes people with disabilities, people who use wheelchairs, and people who have other physical disabilities. Past information

indicates that there is a relatively high disability rate in North Central despite the fact that the population is relatively young. “Service access” and “built form access” are dependent measures that must be addressed simultaneously.

### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Ensure parks and public spaces are accessible. Adopt Universal Design Guidelines for accessibility.
2. Ensure transit stops, sidewalks, signage, and other transportation amenities are accessible or are made accessible as existing amenities are replaced.

#### **8.4.3 Transit**

Transit should be considered as a major component of a healthy neighbourhood and in achieving a walkable, accessible neighbourhood environment.

### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The transit network should be integrated with other modes of transportation and focused to service areas of high pedestrian use, significant destinations (e.g. schools, community facilities) and residential areas.
2. Transit facilities should be designed to be: integrated within the streetscape design, safe and accessible by pedestrians and cyclists.
3. New development should support investment in public transit through increased densities and efficient design.

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#### 8.4.4 Bicycle Infrastructure

Cycling in Regina is a viable, yet underutilized mode of transportation. At a city-wide level, cycling is being encouraged and accommodated within the street network. North Central has the potential to incorporate cycling facilities, and to encourage bicycle use as a safe, attractive and sustainable mode of transportation linking areas within, and beyond, the neighbourhood.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Encourage cycling as part of the movement network by introducing bike routes throughout the neighbourhood, bike lanes as part of main street right-of-ways where necessary, and the provision of bike facilities along the main streets, transit stops and key destinations.
2. Improve the cycling connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, by providing a safe and connected system of trails and bike paths.

## 8.5 Character Areas

Character Areas are defined, usually as part of future visioning for an area, to guide future development and public investments, in a way that serves to: a) conserve significant elements of the existing character; and b) to reinforce a future vision. A future Neighbourhood Plan will serve to establish a clear vision and direction for the different Character Areas within North Central.

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#### 8.5.1 Mixed-Use Areas

The “Vision” for the North Central neighbourhood is that it is intended to become a vibrant, safe, mixed-use area, reflecting a “complete” neighbourhood structure, with a “fine-grain” mix of land uses, located within walking distance. To support this vision, certain areas will be the focus of mixed-uses, accommodating a balance of retail, commercial, and institutional uses to serve the neighbourhood, and be integrated with residential uses.

Key elements of mixed-use areas include:

- a vibrant “main street” environment, with commercial uses, animated store frontages, pedestrian activity, and neighbourhood retail;
- an enhanced walkable environment and human scale streets that are comfortable, safe and pleasant to walk and cycle, and make efficient use of road right-of-ways;
- a “fine-grain” (i.e. small footprints) and mix of land uses (e.g. a shop with residential above)
- a critical mass of residents and activities to support a vibrant street environment

and transit;

- direct pedestrian connections to the residential areas;
- an enriched residential environment with a range of housing types, including a complimentary range of heights and unit types and sizes;
- an appropriate and respectful transition between uses and different building types and scales;
- high quality, safe and appealing public realm, including: a variety of open spaces; inviting and animated streets; strengthened visual and physical connectivity; and
- a distinct identity and character, building upon public buildings, landmark sites and landscapes and heritage resources.

#### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Area should accommodate a mix of uses, including: retail, office, institutional, residential, community uses and neighbourhood destinations.
2. A vertical mix of uses is encouraged (e.g. retail at grade, office on the 2 floor, and residential above).
3. Buildings and uses should be of a fine-grain scale (i.e. small footprints) in order to support an animated ground level and streetscape for pedestrians.
4. Buildings should be designed and located to face the street and public sidewalk, with doors and windows at regular intervals.
5. New buildings should have a minimum of 2 floors.

6. The streetscape should be designed to encourage pedestrian use.
7. Transit facilities should be integrated within mixed use areas.
8. In some areas, retail may be a required use at grade.
9. Pedestrian connections to residential areas should be direct, safe and convenient.

#### **8.5.2 Residential Areas**

Much of North Central is covered by residential houses – these are the linchpin of the neighbourhood. In order for North Central to be successful as a neighbourhood, homes must be safe, attractive and desirable places for people to live in.

Many of the homes in North Central accommodate atypical uses or living arrangements. For example, some homes function as places of employment or retail. Or, some homes accommodate more than one family. This diversity and flexibility can be positive, if it results in creating safe, attractive and desirable places for people to live in.

Residential areas generally should include a diversity of uses and building types, in order to support a number of complimentary activities, and to be viable for people of different backgrounds, different family compositions, different income brackets and tenures, and of different age groups.



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### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Residential areas will include within walking distance:
  - a diversity of complimentary uses;
  - a diversity of housing types and densities (including; single family, apartments and condo dwellings); and
  - a diversity of ownership options.
2. Residential areas will seek to add to the diversity of uses and housing options by allowing secondary units and home-occupation.
3. Residential areas will seek to create an attractive and safe environment by:
  - reinforce pedestrian-oriented streets and streetscapes;
  - locating buildings to face the street, with doors and windows (i.e. eyes on the street); and
  - locating parking and servicing areas to the back of lots.
4. Residential areas will be well connected to neighbourhood amenities and to surrounding areas and neighbourhoods, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
5. Residential areas will maintain and enhance the open space amenities – community gardens, parkettes, neighbourhood parks.
6. Residential areas will establish an appropriate scale of development and a respectful transition of land uses, building heights and scales to adjacent areas.
7. Residential areas will seek to identify and conserve heritage resources

(buildings and landscapes).

8. Residential areas will seek to establish a strategy for the infill of vacant and underutilized sites.

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### **8.5.3 Hospital Area and South Recreation and Sports Amenities**

The Hospital Area and South Recreation and Sports Amenities area includes the Sportplex (Lawson Pool and Fieldhouse), and Evraz Place. Collectively, this area has a commanding presence within North Central. They are regional destinations, attracting people from all of Regina. However, given their function, scale and design, they are not well-integrated within the neighbourhood.

### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The Sports Complex and Hospital Area, in addition to acting as a regional destination, should seek to function as:
  - a southern recreational anchor for the neighbourhood (McKinley Park being the northern anchor);
  - a revitalized recreational and entertainment “campus” with additional uses that service the local community, as well as the city as a whole; and
  - an accessible and linked transition to downtown.
2. Public streets should be extended along a grid pattern, at a pedestrian oriented scale, and seek to a finer grain of uses.
3. The tree canopy should be extended, especially along pedestrian oriented areas.

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4. Parking and servicing should be concealed from view; and where possible located underground.
  5. Surface parking lots should be broken up with landscaping and pedestrian walkways.
  6. Opportunities should be explored to reconnect the neighbourhood fabric (e.g. building west along Dewdney Avenue toward the hospital), including:
    - higher density housing and seniors residences related to the hospital;
    - mixed use commercial frontage along the avenue; and
    - new parks and open spaces – as transitions to the neighbourhood and to provide additional amenity space.

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#### 8.5.4 Albert Street

Albert Street is North Central's most permeable edge (others include train tracks and busy roadways). As such, it has the greatest opportunity to facilitate pedestrian connections between North Central and surrounding neighbourhoods.

At a regional scale, Albert Street has a mixed-commercial function. As it enters downtown, the vision is for it to become a higher-density environment to accommodate a significant residential population. New growth of a significant scale should be oriented towards downtown. However, in the vicinity of North Central, Albert Street can be significantly improved overtime, and establish a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Lower Albert (south of Dewdney

Avenue) functions as a gateway into the neighbourhood and the Warehouse District, and has the opportunity to accommodate some landmark buildings and landscapes. The underpass linking with Saskatchewan Drive requires significant improvements, to make it attractive for pedestrians to use year-round.

Upper Albert (north of Dewdney Avenue) has the opportunity to accommodate a revitalized street with some infill development, including 2-3 storey mixed use service oriented commercial – office, retail, residential above – with animated street frontages and enhanced streetscaping.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. New development along Albert Street should:
  - establish a zero setback condition;
  - face the street with doors and windows;
  - seek to create an inviting public realm environment;
  - locate parking to the rear of the building;
  - be a minimum of 2 storeys; and
  - encourage a fine grain mix of uses.
2. The streetscape along Albert Street and the crossing streets should seek to:
  - provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment; and
  - maintain and enhance a continuous tree canopy.

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3. Albert Street shall seek to function as a seam between North Central and the Warehouse District, establishing a unique sense of identity as a mixed-use hub, from Saskatchewan Drive to 3rd Avenue.
  4. Opportunities for larger infill development should be identified for service oriented uses such as supermarkets, hardware stores, institutions, and community uses.

## 8.6 Built Form Framework

The built form framework provides the criteria to guide the evolution of new development and defines the desired future character and function of built elements within the area. The intent is to ensure that new buildings reinforce a coherent, harmonious and appealing urban environment, as well as contribute to the enhancement of the public realm. Built form design guidelines are a tool to achieve high quality character, distinctive place making and design excellence, while promoting a healthy range of architectural expression and variation which can contribute to the diversity, uniqueness and interest of the built environment. The framework considers required setbacks, building height and massing, street frontages, street wall, transitions and points of access, building types, landmark sites, views and parking and servicing.

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### 8.6.1 Building Typologies

North Central will benefit from being able to accommodate people from different backgrounds, different family sizes and living arrangements, different income brackets and tenures, and of different age groups. To do so, the City must seek to establish in North Central:

- a diversity of building types, including: single family detached homes (predominant today), semi-detached, townhouses, stacked townhouses, apartments, condos, senior residences, live-work units, secondary units, and mixed use buildings;
- a diversity of building tenures; and
- a flexible use of buildings, including

home-occupation, in a way that is compatible with adjacent uses.

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#### **8.6.2 Landmark sites, views and view termini**

View corridors (e.g. along a street) and view termini (e.g. at the end of the street view corridor) are an important aspect of the neighbourhood's identity and sense of place and contributes to wayfinding and safety. Significant views also serve to give certain sites special prominence and make them landmarks within the neighbourhood.

#### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The view corridors along all public streets should be maintained and protected from obstruction (e.g. with third party signage).
2. Buildings and landscapes located on view termini should be designed in a way that recognizes and enforces their prominence.
3. Views to open space and built form landmarks should be maintained and enhanced.

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#### **8.6.3 Frontages, entrances and setbacks**

The siting of buildings, in terms of their location within a property and in terms of the orientation of their façades, is a critical factor in the definition of a welcoming and safe pedestrian environment along streets and public spaces.

#### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. All building must be oriented to front onto public streets and other public spaces, in order to clearly define the public realm, create a consistent street wall, and to create an attractive street environment for pedestrians.
2. All buildings oriented toward public streets, must have clearly defined primary entry points that open directly on to the public sidewalk.
3. For all new development, primary and prominent building entrances and frontages must first be located to address the intersection or corner locations, secondly the primary street frontages, and thirdly the local street frontages and other publicly accessible open spaces, in this order of priority.
4. All uses facing the street should be animated with frequent entries and glazing.
5. Architectural features are encouraged at all corner building locations to enhance the visual prominence and identity of the streets.
6. Pavilion style buildings (open buildings such as gazebos and kiosks) within a public space must have frontages on all sides. Service entrances for these buildings should be kept to a minimum and be discretely integrated in the design of the building facades.
7. For all new development, parking should not be permitted between the edge of the public right-of-way or public realm and the building face or setback area.



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#### 8.6.4 Street wall

Pedestrians interact closely with the first 2 to 4 floors of a building. At this level it is important to provide a continuous “street wall” in order to achieve a “human scale” experience at grade.

- “Street wall” makes reference to the effect achieved by a collection of buildings, acting together, which line a street. The continuity of the building base along the full length of a property and street, with animated uses, is a good way to provide a well defined and comfortable pedestrian environment.
- “Human scale” makes reference to the experience of the mass of buildings in relation to the size of its users. Buildings and the elements which constitute the façade must have a proportion and scale that is welcoming.

#### Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:

1. Each street, in accordance with historical patterns and the envisioned building typologies, will establish a consistent street wall for all new buildings, including policies for:
  - setbacks;
  - podium heights;
  - stepbacks (above a podium height) to protect views, and allow sunlight penetration.
2. The street wall along commercial uses should seek to have a minimum (or zero) setback and be directly linked with the public sidewalk. Weather protection for pedestrians is encouraged through the use of awnings and canopies.
3. The street wall along residential uses should seek to have a setback that allows for a clearly defined front yard and can be directly linked with the public sidewalk. New residential development should have at grade access units with appropriate privacy measures such as landscaping, stairs, porches that is in keeping with the desired character for the street.
4. The street wall alongside heritage buildings and landscapes should seek to integrate with the historical pattern, conserve the historical context and stature, and conserve the views, vantage points and prominence of heritage resources.

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#### 8.6.5 Building height

Building heights are also a significant aspect of defining the neighbourhood’s character and identify. Through their height, buildings establish a relationship with other adjacent buildings, and can gain prominence. Buildings can typically either integrate (replicating the height of adjacent buildings) or stand out (with a greater or lesser height than adjacent buildings). And while a diversity of building heights adds character to the neighbourhood and some sites present unique opportunities for intensification given their location and configuration, new infill development should generally seek to integrate within the existing height framework.

As with other components of the urban design vision, a defined framework for building heights will need to be established through a Neighbourhood Plan.

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**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. The height of new buildings should seek to:
  - make a positive contribution to their surrounding context;
  - respect the scale of adjacent buildings (especially when adjacent to: heritage properties, a lower density land use or a public open space) by providing a proper transition in heights;
  - protect views, sky views, and sunlight penetration for the adjacent properties and public realm;
  - have no undue impact on weather and wind; and
  - accommodate a critical mass of activity and population to sustain a vibrant neighbourhood and streetscape.
2. Additional height might be considered on sites and developments that:
  - are uniquely positioned to enhance transit use and walkability throughout the neighbourhood;
  - can achieve a significant contribution to the public realm; and
  - have no undue impact to the surrounding context.

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**8.6.6 Parking and services**

Vehicular parking and servicing are integral components of a functioning neighbourhood. For both residents and visitors the ease of movement and the availability and safety of parking is an important determinant in choosing North

Central as a place to live, work, recreate and visit.

Parking and servicing, however, must be well designed and integrated with other uses to make a positive contribution.

**Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Parking and servicing, including areas of access and egress, on all streets and properties, should prioritize the movement and experience of pedestrians.
2. Parking and servicing facilities (including without limitation ramps, entries and signage) should be concealed from view and integrated within the building structure, where possible.
3. On-street parking should be maintained and enhanced on all public streets, where viable, to:
  - accommodate a portion of the neighbourhoods demand for parking, on the street, in a way that is highly visible and convenient;
  - provide visitor parking for commercial uses;
  - distribute parking along the length of a street (rather than concentrate it in one large area);
  - maintain an active use (cars coming in and out) and increase the number of users and “eyes-on-the-street”; and
  - buffer pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic.
4. Underground parking is the most desirable form, as it has the least impact on the streetscape and the public realm,

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and as it allows for the greatest number of above grade uses and development potential.

5. Structured parking is a second (less desirable) option, which may be considered when the resulting structure is concealed from view and has no undue impact on the neighbourhood character and on neighbouring uses.
6. Surface parking lots should be avoided, wherever possible, and concealed from view from the street and public realm. Large surface parking lots should be landscaped (around the perimeter and within), to be broken up in smaller portions, and to provide safe and attractive pedestrian walkways.
7. Private residential parking pads and garages should be accessed from the laneways and located in the back of the lot, concealed from view by the main building and by landscaping.

## 8.7 Heritage: Conserving the Legacy

Heritage resources (including buildings, landscapes, streetscapes, and significant structures) should constitute the foundation upon which a new vision for North Central is realized.

North Central has many redeeming qualities and resources, which are a legacy of past investments and visions. Upmost on this list is the grid-pattern of streets and blocks, but also include buildings and landscapes of historical and landmark significance. These resources should be conserved and leveraged to achieve other city-building objectives.

The history of North Central includes many tangible and intangible elements. Intangible elements include things like demographic shifts, or political upheavals. Tangible elements include the physical things, which we can touch and see – including: “artefacts”, which can be easily moved (e.g. furniture) and larger elements which cannot be easily moved (e.g. buildings and trees).

These guidelines are focused primarily on the tangible heritage resources, which are more permanently located in the neighbourhood, while still recognizing the historical significance of smaller artefacts and the intangible history of North Central.

Generally speaking, there are two scales of heritage resources, which are the focus of this study:

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1. Individual properties (buildings or landscapes) that have historical significance on their own merits through their design, construction, or history.
  2. A district; a collection of properties (where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts) that collectively establish a heritage character worth conserving (e.g. a well-proportioned residential street, lined with trees, that reflects the district's history).

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#### **8.7.1 Heritage Properties**

The Territorial Building and the Albert Scott Library building are the only two designated heritage properties in North Central. The Grain Show Building at Exhibition Park/Evaz Place has been identified as having heritage potential. Any intervention on or near a heritage property should entail a proper examination (i.e. Heritage Impact Study).

#### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. Develop a list of potential heritage properties.
2. New buildings must be sympathetic to the location, orientation, setback and built form of adjacent heritage resources.

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#### **8.7.2 A district-wide heritage character**

North Central, or portions of, have functioned historically as a district and may have attained, overtime, a heritage character (e.g. some of the residential streets with greater integrity). Where a collection of properties displays a heritage character, it should still be studied, documented, evaluated and if significant it should be conserved.

#### **Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines:**

1. New development within North Central should seek to:
  - identify and conserve the significant heritage character of the neighbourhood and of adjacent properties and streets; and
  - contribute to the heritage character and attributes of the area.
2. If a collection of heritage resources is found to be concentrated in sufficient numbers, the merits of formally designating the area as a Heritage Conservation District (HDC) should be considered.





# 9.0 Monitoring Progress

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Carrying out the recommendations presented in this Study requires an ongoing monitoring of their implementation and effectiveness— identifying what works and what doesn't. Tracking the outcomes of different initiatives on a regular basis enables strategies to be adjusted and efforts to be re-directed, to ensure goals are met.

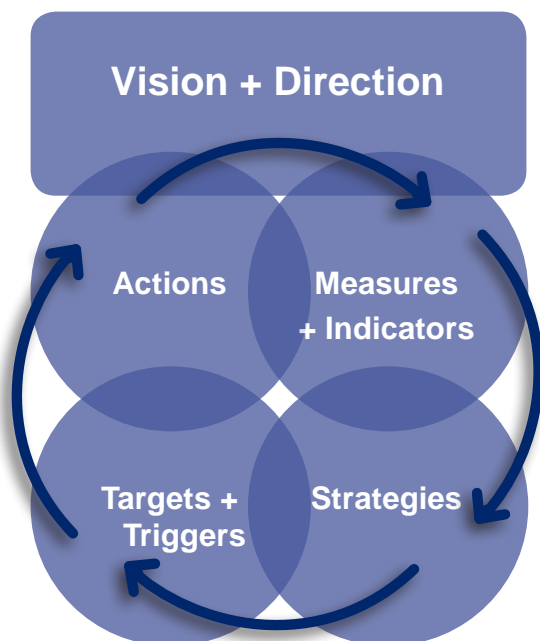
The City of Regina, in partnership with community agencies, will need to establish proper mechanisms to monitor the implementation of each recommendation. This Chapter provides some of the considerations involved in preparing a monitoring mechanism, and some suggested measures and indicators that can be considered. These should be taken as a starting point for developing a set of initial indicators for North Central. The next step will be to create an evaluation process for specific community development programs to relate the overall state of the neighbourhood back to actual programs and services.

To implement this approach, a two-tiered approach is recommended:

1. Set up a working group (not more than 4 or 5 key partners) to develop an initial set of targets and proposed indicators and proposed measures. This could be achieved under the auspices of a group like RICCP or RIC, with input and participation from City staff with knowledge of the neighbourhood.
2. Ask funding bodies to adopt a protocol regarding the evaluation of projects to be funded in North Central. They should set funding priorities, report on what services were provided, who was actually helped, and track changes in the population they are assisting. Employment, safety, housing, and education are some obvious project areas to begin evaluating initiatives.

Consideration could be given to a moratorium on funding for new organizations, except for services that are provided in partnership with existing North Central neighbourhood services. The idea is to build up a critical mass of capacity in key organizations.

Therefore, the approach should be to assist existing groups with governance, strategic planning and improving services. In other words, the purpose of the measures is to improve services within existing organizations that work.



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## 9.1 A Monitoring Framework

In developing a mechanism to monitor change in North Central and the outcomes of different interventions, the following framework should be considered:\

- A Vision. The vision provides a basis for agreement, for the negotiation of actions and targets, and for developing work plans. The vision must remain at the forefront of all decisions and evaluations. It is also key to communicating outcomes to the public. Are we achieving the vision? Or not?
- Direction. The vision translated into specific directives – used to guide organizations, experts or staff , and council to develop specific programs. Expressed as objectives, they can also function as milestones or benchmarks for the overall vision.
- Measures. They are the topic, subject of analysis and observation (e.g. neighbourhood stability). They can be qualitative.
- Indicators. They are the actual measurement(e.g.%ofhomeownership). They are always quantitative – ratios, %, levels, etc. They should be based on the determinants of health (also known as determinants of 'community well being') and use a developmental asset building approach.
- Targets. They are a goal and commitment, determining a desired outcome within a specific timeline (e.g. increase the % of home ownership by 10% within 3 years). Targets permit managers to evaluate the actions being taken and the progress being made – relative to the indicators.
- Strategies. They are the specific initiatives generated to achieve the intended targets (e.g. create a home ownership program...).
- Actions. They are a detailed breakdown of the strategies, indicating actions, actors, and timeliness to implement a strategy (e.g. XX Agency will develop XX number of homes / year, geared to home ownership). These should be precise and contain specific projects, time schedules for implementation, and a commitment to allocate time, money, and human resources.
- Triggers. They are agreed-upon future conditions that prompt future actions (i.e. when X is achieved, undertake Y).

## 9.2 Developing Measures and Indicators

Important considerations for the development of indicators include:

- There should be a direct correlation between what is being measured, and the associated indicator. Identifying the purpose and associated measure for each indicator.
- There should be a direct correlation between the indicator, and the corresponding strategies, targets and actions. Identifying the mechanisms intended to affect change on each indicator.
- Identifying the target audience. Ensuring indicators are understandable and accepted by the people involved with the implementation and outcomes. Indicators should be easy-to-understand and represent issues of direct concern (for public consumption, as well as more technical supporting indicators). Key indicators should be made public on a regular basis (e.g. a one-page report card, published yearly) to allow stakeholders to monitor progress and become engaged.
- The availability and sources of information, overtime. To the extent possible, employing existing mechanisms for data collection (e.g. Census Canada) will allow to both back track (i.e. understand past trends) and to minimize the cost of primary data collection. Data availability may limit the number of indicators.
- The ability to compare with other geographies (adjacent neighbourhoods, Regina as a whole, and other cities) and other moments in time (years past).
- That data is collected, documented, analyzed, and presented properly. The indicator will be useful to the extent that it is accurate, current, and precise.

As a useful reference, the government of Canada has developed the Sustainable Community Indicators Program (SCIP), which functions as a resource for communities for the creation of indicators of sustainability and for establishing a sustainability indicators program.



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## 9.3 Potential Measures and Indicators

The following are recommended measures and indicators for North Central, which can assist with monitoring change, and with communicating outcomes.

### 9.3.1 Measure: Neighbourhood Stability

Many issues in North Central are connected to an instability that is generated by a population that is highly transient. This transience impacts both access to, and the success of, services that are designed to address root issues like substance abuse, the breakdown of the family structure, homelessness and housing, and health (diabetes in particular).

#### Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):

- Percentage of North Central resident high school students who graduate
- Percentage of Scott Collegiate alumni who graduate from post secondary programs
- Average time North Central children stay in one school
- Average time North Central residents live at the same address
- Percentage of North Central residents who own the house they live in

### 9.3.2 Measure: Community Cohesion

Social infrastructure is generated when residents have strong community connections. Community connections contribute to quality of life by increasing safety, and promoting pride and well being. In communities where people take responsibility for their neighborhood, they contribute not only to the overall health of the community, but their own health is improved. In general, people who participate in their communities not only develop important social networks and civic skills, but they also increasingly develop more sophisticated responses to the challenges that we face as a society.

#### Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):

- Percentage of North Central residents who use the public library system
- Percentage of North Central residents who use the Dewdney Sports Complex
- Percentage of North Central residents who participate in community gardening
- Percentage of North Central residents who volunteer
- Percentage of eligible North Central residents who voted in the last election
- Number of people who both live and work in North Central

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### 9.3.3 Measure: Public Safety

Many of the concerns expressed by residents of North Central relate to public safety. Several of the recommendations in this report are focused on creating a safe environment for all. Public safety, real and perceived, will be one of the most significant measures of progress. Actual safety statistics will be available from different sources. Collecting data on the perceived sense of safety may require direct surveys and interviews.

**Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):**

- Crime rates in North Central
- Percentage of North Central residents who feel safe walking alone, compared by demographics (age-group, gender, etc.)

### 9.3.4 Measure: Public Health

Looking at public health offers a good window into understating the overall wellbeing, or lack of a community. If people are ill or have health challenges, above and beyond the norm, it warrants further attention.

Furthermore, public health itself is a good indication of the success, or lack of broader city-building objectives, including promoting active lifestyles and creating a healthy environment for children, seniors, and the physically- and mentally-challenged. In this regard, public health is also a contributing factor to making North Central a desirable place to live.

**Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):**

- Percentage of diabetic North Central residents
- Percentage of obese North Central residents (by age group)
- Percentage of North Central residents with a diagnosed addiction
- Percentage of North Central residents with a diagnosed mental illness

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### 9.3.5 Measure: Economic Development

Issues of poverty can be related to job generation and stability, and the overall ability of the population to secure jobs on a long-term basis. Measuring the level of basic soft-skills and life training among North Central residents (cross-referenced with the number and type of jobs which are created and maintained) can indicate the power and capacity of the neighbourhood to develop a self-sustaining local economy.

#### **Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):**

- Number of jobs in North Central, by job type and sector
- Number of businesses by sector in North Central
- Market size (spending power)
- Literacy rate

### 9.3.6 Measure: Physical Infrastructure

Every neighbourhood requires a physical infrastructure comprised of roads, parks, community facilities, transit services, schools, etc. These, in part, are what make a neighbourhood desirable to live in. They are also an important reason why people from other parts of the city visit a neighbourhood.

Community planning in North Central, as with any other neighbourhood, includes ensuring that people have the required number of facilities and resources to conduct their everyday life. However, availability does not entail use – it may be that some facilities are available, yet not used. Identifying where this is the case, and the reasons behind it, are key to establishing a new course of action. Furthermore, the success of a particular facility can be gauged by the number of people who use it coming from outside North Central, making it and North Central a destination.

#### **Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):**

- Availability of public transit, within walking distance from home (500 m)
- Percentage of North Central residents who use transit
- Availability of groceries, within walking distance from home (500 m)
- Percentage of North Central residents who purchase groceries within North Central
- Availability of public parks, within walking distance from home (500 m)
- Percentage of North Central residents who use public parks

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- Percentage of Regina residents who use North Centre's parks
  - Availability of community facilities, within walking distance from home (500 m)
  - Percentage of North Central residents who use community facilities
  - Percentage of Regina residents who use North Centre's community facilities

### 9.3.7 Measure: Mobility

Currently many residents of North Central do not own a car. Often, they walk and use transit out of necessity, not choice. Walking, cycling, and transit are not desirable modes of transportation, as they are often deemed unsafe, unreliable, and onerous.

In the future, walking, cycling, and transit should be the preferred modes of transportation. How people move is an important measure of their quality of life, and of the long term sustainability of the neighbourhood. As people are increasingly able to walk and use transit as their preferred methods of movement, their quality of life and affordability will increase. Neighbourhoods where people choose to walk and use transit are usually safe, healthy, vibrant, and desirable places to live, work, and recreate.

#### Indicators (to be compared to Regina wide average, and tracked yearly):

- North Central Modal split (Percentage of residents who use transit and active modes of transportation)





# 10.0 Conclusion

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As a preliminary planning assessment, this Study demonstrates that North Central is a complex environment faced with exceptional circumstances that demand a collaborative approach moving forward. Community leaders from diverse sectors continue to focus their energy, passion and commitment to the challenges that continue in North Central. These leaders – and others – will be needed to continue to work towards the North Central 2020 Vision.

It is hoped that this document will serve to focus community and City efforts, to coordinate services and funding in support of current community needs. It is critical to monitor initiatives and to measure progress toward goals to ensure that all parties are moving in a cohesive direction, and to provide some of the tangible tools (i.e. the Urban Design Considerations and Guidelines; measures related to monitoring progress) needed to shape physical and social change.

Leadership and tenacity will be required to transform North Central, and now is the time to begin this new chapter in neighborhood development.

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# Schedules

**A1:** Context

**B1:** Study Area

**C1:** Generalized Land Use

**C2:** Zoning

**D1:** Parks, Open Spaces, & Community Infrastructure

**D2:** Streets & Blocks

**D3:** Mobility

**D4:** Ownership & Boarded Up Homes

**E1:** Character Areas & Community Landmarks

**E2:** Opportunities & Constraints

**E3:** 5 min. walking radii from schools

**E4:** 5 min. walking radii from parks

**E5:** Priority Housing Revitalization Area

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# Appendix A

## Environmental Scan Summary Chart



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# Appendix B

## Community Agencies

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# Appendix C

## Business Survey

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# Appendix D

***“The Path Towards Sustainability  
An Evaluation of the “Sustainability-ness”  
of Selected Municipal Plans in Canada”***

**Infrastructure Canada, December 2006**

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# Appendix E

## **Planning and Policy Framework: Federal and Provincial program descriptions**







