

# **North Saskatoon Business Association Questions for Mayoralty Candidates**

## **Lenore Swystun**

### **How do you envision our City being developed over the next few years?**

Historically, development in Saskatoon has been concentric and balanced. Our development plans and policies continue to provide this direction. I envision a Saskatoon that maintains balance as a core development principle.

Saskatoon's development needs are diverse. They range from servicing its growing physical boundaries to providing ongoing support for business and residents in established areas. Our city has established processes for dealing with these challenges.

Recently, development entered a chaotic phase in which timetables were unnecessarily accelerated, development rules were ignored or changed, and funds were preferentially allocated to expensive new projects in response to lobby pressure. Our debt burden increased, but did we really grow? This type of management cannot foster sustainable growth in the long run.

Development in Saskatoon must return to equity and balance. As mayor, I will work to establish a regional retail policy, a long-term infrastructure investment plan and actively lobby for a sustainable funding deal from the other levels of government. We must work together to invest in both old and new areas, respect established policies, and ensure stability and confidence in our development processes in order for Saskatoon to prosper.

### **How do you see elected politicians being involved in policing our community; for example should the Mayor chair the Board of Police Commissioners?**

Policing is the single biggest expense in the City's budget, and is an activity for which Saskatoon has received more unwanted attention than any other. There is much work to be done. Research clearly shows that when this work is politically driven (i.e., with the mayor as chair of the Police Commission), good governance is compromised and instability results. Accountability does not improve - look at the politically motivated dismissals of past police chiefs for evidence of this. It takes time to recover from such turmoil, and policing effectiveness is compromised. Therefore, the mayor should not be Chair of the Police Commission and if elected, I will resign from the position. However, having a member of Council (other than the mayor) as a non-voting member on an expert-citizen based Commission would facilitate the relationship between the Service and the Council.

### **Saskatoon has been in the top three cities in Canada for the last three years for percentage growth of GDP. How do you propose to keep this momentum going? What are your plans for economic development?**

Saskatoon has enjoyed more than ten years of labour market growth. However, the Conference Board of Canada has suggested that Saskatoon might see a significant decrease in the workforce as soon as next year. A similar forecast has been made about our GDP. It is reasonable to expect that Saskatoon will continue to benefit from several resource booms including fertilizer and uranium, agriculture and biotechnology as well as in scientific innovation such as the Synchrotron and their spin-off businesses. However, continued growth at the rates we have become accustomed to will depend on our ability to attract and retain workers, particularly first nation and immigrant workers.

Businesses, workers and their family are attracted by top quality infrastructure that includes affordable housing, office and retail developments in newer and older areas, improved transportation services such as better roads and airline schedules, fair tax laws and a welcoming environment. People are also attracted by unique entertainment and cultural vibrancy. Saskatoon has several advantages in all these areas. We have a cost of living advantage, a high quality of life, a compact and balanced city, environmental preservation and cultural attractions. To build on our advantages, we must act now to ensure our place in tomorrow's economy.

In my mayoral platform, I have proposed a number of strategies for ensuring Saskatoon's place in tomorrow's economy including: establishing a Start and Stay Program that guarantees loans for young entrepreneurs; investment in green technologies including partnering with our learning institutions (SIAST and the U of S) to promote innovative industry development; implementing a business incubator mentorship program; supporting school training programs that prepares youth for skilled labour employment; dedicate municipal resources to improving supports for new immigrants; investing in our cultural capital; and, engaging citizens, businesses, industry and other stakeholders in the decisions that affect them.

As mayor, I will work for opportunity, prosperity and fairness for all citizens.