

November 14, 2025

**Her Worship Cynthia Block**  
**Mayor, City of Saskatoon**  
**City Hall**  
**222 3rd Avenue North**  
**Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5**

Dear Mayor Block and Members of City Council;

**Re: Recommendations to Control Costs and Limit Property Tax Increases for Consideration**

On behalf of the NSBA – Saskatoon's Business Association, I am writing to provide recommendations for the City's consideration in the upcoming municipal budget. Our members are deeply invested in Saskatoon's economic growth and competitiveness and are concerned about rising municipal costs and ongoing property tax pressures that affect both businesses and residents.

There are traditional recommendations such as limiting the hiring of new FTEs but we believe there are also other practical opportunities for the City to reduce expenditures, improve efficiency, and stabilize tax rates without compromising service quality. Drawing on best practices from other Canadian municipalities, the NSBA respectfully submits the following recommendations for Council's consideration:

**1. Implement Priority-Based Budgeting**

Align municipal spending directly with Council's strategic priorities, ensuring every dollar contributes to outcomes that matter most to residents and businesses. Cities such as Edmonton have successfully used this approach to reduce low-value spending while maintaining high-impact programs. This would enhance fiscal discipline, transparency, and predictability for businesses.

**2. Strengthen Asset Management & Preventative Maintenance**

Proactive maintenance extends the lifespan of municipal infrastructure and reduces future replacement costs. Kitchener's advanced asset management strategies have successfully deferred costly rebuilds, ensuring reliable services and avoiding future tax shocks.

**3. Explore Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

PPPs can finance facilities and infrastructure projects—such as parking structures, energy projects, or recreation facilities—reducing upfront capital costs to the City. Markham has leveraged PPPs to deliver infrastructure efficiently while minimizing debt and tax impacts.

**4. Pursue Joint Procurement & Inter-Municipal Purchasing**

Pooling resources for purchases such as vehicles, IT systems, or energy can generate significant cost savings. Several Ontario municipalities have demonstrated millions in annual savings through joint procurement initiatives, lowering operating costs and easing tax pressures.

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## **5. Accelerate Digital Transformation and Integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Digital permitting, automated inspections, and AI-assisted systems can streamline operations, reduce administrative costs, and improve service delivery. Burnaby and other cities have successfully implemented digital licensing, while AI can further enhance predictive maintenance, financial forecasting, and workflow efficiency, reducing delays for business approvals and municipal operations.

## **6. Increase the Use of Value-for-Money Audits, Beginning with Climate-Related Expenditures**

The City should expand value-for-money audits to ensure all programs deliver measurable outcomes. A first priority should be a comprehensive audit of all climate-related expenditures, including capital and operating budgets. Calgary recently proposed a similar approach, ensuring that climate investments are effective, efficient, and aligned with strategic goals. Expanded auditing across departments will build taxpayer confidence, limit waste, and reduce potential future tax pressures.

The NSBA respectfully urges City Council to consider these recommendations as part of the 2026/2027 budget deliberations. By implementing these strategies, the City can demonstrate leadership in fiscal responsibility, strengthen public trust, and maintain Saskatoon's competitiveness and affordability for businesses and residents alike.

We appreciate your consideration and welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further with Council or Administration.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Keith Moen  
Executive Director, NSBA