

Councillor Blog



Scott Moskal

Welcome back fellow residents of White City, and those reading from the surrounding area, for the September 2021 edition of the White City Councillor Blog. I was elected to White City Town Council in 2016 – and a key reason I ran for re-election in 2020 was to see the vision of One Community realized.

Saskatchewan is growing – the province has a plan for it and so should we. Places like White City and the surrounding region have experienced incredible growth over the past ten years, and we don't see that trend changing anytime soon. Bringing White City, Emerald Park and the surrounding areas together as One Community is more critical now than ever before.

For those unfamiliar, White City has proposed a One Community structure where White City and Emerald Park would come together along with Escott Deneve, Meadow Ridge, Park Meadows and the Great Plains Industrial Park. The proposal also includes undeveloped lands for future growth.

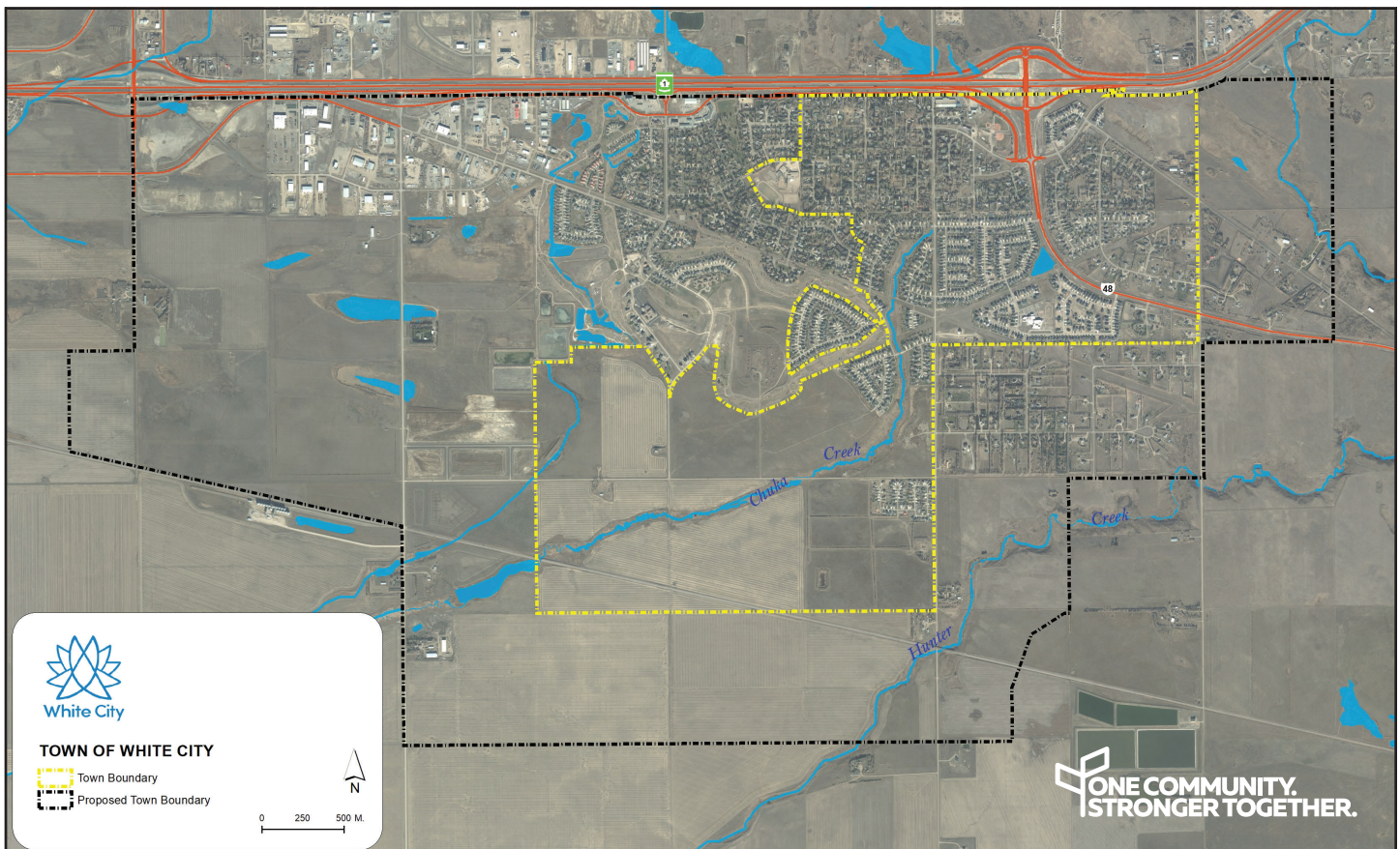
We would no longer be divided, but a strong, united urban community – Saskatchewan's next city!

We have always been One Community in spirit. We work, play and live together. We're neighbours, co-workers, our kids do activities and go to school together – we share a sense of community.

By joining together officially, we'd be in a stronger position to attract a high school. One Community means the ability to plan and build a recreation facility for the whole region. One Community means the ability to establish efficient community planning, infrastructure development, policing and fire protection to better serve citizens and keep taxes low.

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Current and Proposed Town Boundaries



Having two governments managing one community, along an arbitrary line, puts our community at a disadvantage for funding, efficiencies for service provision and having a strong voice to advocate for the benefit of our community and the region. The town's proposal to alter the municipal boundaries, or annex lands, is common practice as urban municipalities grow – in some cases even for developed lands.

White City is facing an unprecedented situation – today 55% of the town is already surrounded by urban development in the RM or other impediments to growth. The RM's new Official Community Plan will continue urban development around White City and result in 85% of White City's boundaries being encumbered.

The result will be very little opportunity for the future growth of White City. Without a boundary reset, the current path to managing growth in the White City region will continue to encourage unnecessary competition between the RM and the Town resulting in increased costs, confusion, and lost opportunities for citizens. Coming together provides benefits and opportunities for White City, the RM and our residents.

In 2019, White City and the RM engaged in mediation in attempts to discuss the town's proposal. After multiple sessions, it was clear that no matter what structure was proposed, the RM has a vastly different vision for the urban community than White City that would keep our communities separated. Unable to come to an agreement, the town submitted our proposal to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB), who can decide and enforce a boundary change.

In July 2020, the SMB assigned a case manager to the file to ensure all parties understand the basis of the application and to manage and work through preliminary matters and schedule hearings. Shortly after a case manager was assigned to the file, the RM raised a question of jurisdiction to whether the town's application had to be submitted to the Minister of Government Relations or directly to the SMB.

A jurisdictional hearing was scheduled for January 2021, however, due to COVID-19 the SMB postponed the hearing date. With the lifting of provincial health restrictions, we hope to have a hearing date set shortly and bring a resolution to the project so we can continue to move our community forward.

We will continue to press forward and advocate for this important change to our community. We've missed out on too much by not advocating together. If we plan together and advocate together, we'll grow together and be stronger together.

It's time for our government to reflect who we really are.

It's time to bring our communities together.

If you have any questions, have a comment, want more information or want to suggest a topic for a future blog please email townoffice@whitecity.ca or call **306-781-2355** – we look forward to hearing from you!

