



Monitoring the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth

April 2015

Introduction

In October 2012, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* which provided a vision with clear growth benchmarks for Saskatchewan until 2020. In many ways the *Plan for Growth* paralleled the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's pre-existing *Sustainable Growth Strategy for the New Saskatchewan* (2007). The most significant difference between the two strategies was the timeframe; the Chamber's strategy planned farther ahead than the government's, looking to 2030.

As a sign of support, and recognition of the government's impressive proposal to look and plan beyond the usual election cycles, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce determined that it would move off of the targets contained in the *Sustainable Growth Strategy*. Instead, the Chamber has decided to advance and monitor the province's *Plan for Growth*.






With over 80 years of experience in monitoring government activities, the Saskatchewan Chamber is well aware of how programs, targets, and initiatives can disappear as the government's priorities are altered and/or targets starts to appear unattainable. In an effort to ensure ongoing momentum towards the achievement of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* targets, the Chamber has developed a monitoring process. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is committed to ensuring that data on the *Plan for Growth* targets remains readily available and publically communicated.

It is worth noting, to ensure clarity of our purpose, that the Chamber's monitoring of the *Plan for Growth* is not in any way a challenge to the *Plan* itself or the efforts of the Province to achieve it. The simple fact that the government set out goals as broad and as long term as these is worthy of applause. The Chamber has endorsed the *Plan* and this monitoring effort is undertaken to support the achievement of the goals. Even when goals may be worked on but not fully achieved, the value of a dedicated effort towards a shared common goal is still significant.






The information available in this monitoring report will be updated each year in April and every effort will be undertaken to ensure that the year-over-year data is easily comparable.

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Targets

-  This symbol indicates that progress is being made towards achieving this target.
-  This symbol indicates that initial process was made but that it has now stopped
-  This symbol indicates that progress has not been made towards achieving this target.
-  This symbol indicates that a target has been achieved and no additional action is required.
-  This symbol indicates that the Government is no longer attempting to achieve this target



Infrastructure

	Progress	Other Information
Establish SaskBuilds		SaskBuilds was established in October 2012.
Transfer \$150 million to the SaskBuilds Fund	 	A formal “SaskBuilds Fund,” has not been established and the province has decided that a formal fund is not the route they intend to take. Despite the decision not to establish a formal fund the province is continuing to move forward with P3s and will dedicate funds to them as necessary.
Invest \$2.5 billion over the next three years in infrastructure		Budget 2015/16 allocated \$1.3 billion for infrastructure expenditures. This amount combined with the \$886.9 million in 2014/15 and \$847.5 million in 2013/14 brings the three year total to \$3.03 billion.
Invest \$344 million to add 12,600 new housing units by 2016		Budget 2015/16 included \$800,000 to support the Rental Construction Incentive (RCI) and the Affordable Home Ownership Program. Also, the province continues to support the federal/provincial Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement (the second year of a five-year extension). This Agreement brings \$9.19 million of federal funding to Saskatchewan that must be matched by the Province on a 50-50 basis. The largest investment in affordable housing mentioned in the Growth Plan is the over \$200


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		million represented by the HeadStart on a Home program (an immigrant investor program that provides low interest loans to builders). The federal government has cancelled the immigrant investor program, but HeadStart on a Home will continue to operate for the next four years as the immigrant investor program is phased out.
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Population

	Progress	Other Information
1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020		As of October 1, 2014, there were 1,129,899 people living in Saskatchewan, up from 1,114,170 in October 2013. This represents an increase of 15,729, an amount above the annual increase of 14,300 necessary to achieve this target by 2020. The population increased by 19,797 from 2012 to 2013.
Increase the cap on provincial immigrant nominees from 4,000 to 6,000		The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program received an increase of 775 people in December 2014 which brought the annual nomination level up to 5,500.




Labour Force

	Progress	Other Information
60,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by 2020 (this would reflect an approximate workforce of 600,000)		According to Statistics Canada, as of September 2014 the Saskatchewan workforce was 566,700, an increase of 11,200 over September 2013 (555,500 persons employed) and an increase of 25,900 over September 2012 (540,800 persons employed).


Education

	Progress	Other Information
Lead the country in Grade 12 graduation rates by 2020		According to the report <i>Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective 2014</i> , Saskatchewan ranks eighth among Canadian provinces in high school completion. This ranking has remained unchanged since 2012.


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<p>Reduce the difference in graduation rates between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students</p>		<p>According to Ministry of Education’s data the graduation rate for Aboriginal students who graduated Grade 12 within three years of starting Grade 10 was 40.3% in 2013-14. This rate includes all students in the province (those attending schools in provincial school divisions, First Nations schools, and independent schools).</p> <p>The 2010/11 data for off-reserve First Nations students was used for the generation of this goal, which at that time had a graduation rate of 30%.</p>
<p>Eliminate the waiting list for Adult Basic Education programs by the end of 2015</p>		<p>Budget 15/16 increased the province’s Adult Basic Education (ABE) investment by \$600,000 (to a total of \$25 million) adding 200 ABE seats for an estimated total program capacity of 8,780 seats. Despite these increases, the waitlist remains.</p> <p>The 2014-15 budget included \$2.1 million in new funding to add 700 seats for ABE. This is in addition to the 300 seats added in Budget 2013-14.</p>
<p>Provide a new “Saskatchewan’s International Future Scholarship” to 20 Saskatchewan students annually to study business at an international institution if they return to Saskatchewan for at least five years after they graduate</p>		<p>Commitment to the implementation of an annual International Future Scholarship was reiterated in the government’s 2014 International Education Strategy but it has not been funded yet.</p>



Health

	Progress	Other Information
<p>Eliminate wait times in emergency rooms by 2017</p>		<p>Budget 2015-16 earmarked \$4.0 million to reduce emergency department wait times and improve patient flow. This is the same amount budgeted in 2014-15, which included \$1.7 million for an emergency department wait time initiative, \$800,000 to develop a program to provide house calls to seniors with complex needs, and \$1.5 million for implementation of the “hotspotting” concept (frequent users). The province has also indicated that they are developing baseline measurements to track progress.</p>



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<p>Reduce surgical wait times to no more than three months by 2014</p>		<p>Between November 1 and January 31, 2015, more than 89.8% of patients received their surgery, or an offer of surgery, within three months. The four-year Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative concluded in March 2014 but wait time information is continuing to be updated and the government is continuing to dedicate resources, including \$48.8 million in Budget 2015-16, to maintain this standard.</p>
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Governance

	Progress	Other Information
<p>Deliver on a targeted 15 per cent reduction in the size of the public service by 2013-14</p>		<p>This goal was initially introduced in Budget 2010-11 as a four year objective with an aim of achieving a 15% reduction in the public service by 2014-15. The planned reduction was based on the number of Full Time Equivalent employees (FTEs) in 2009-10 which was 12,677.2. In Budget 2014-15 the government budgeted for 10,945 FTEs, representing a reduction of 13.6%. At one point the government did achieve slightly better than the 13.6% reduction as they added 127 positions in 2013.</p> <p>In Budget 2015-16 the government budgeted 10,995.4 FTEs, an increase of 50 from the previous year. These changes put the FTE number at 13.3% less than 2009/10.</p>
<p>Maintain a target amount of \$500 million in the Growth and Financial Security Fund with any excess amounts used to invest in infrastructure and reduce debt</p>		<p>According to the 3rd Quarter forecast the closing balance for the Growth and Financial Security Fund at the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year will be \$191 million, down from \$531.3 million at year end 2013/14.</p> <p>The withdrawal in 2014-15 was used to assist with disaster recovery and to offset the drop in oil revenue.</p>

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<p>Cut the provincial debt in half from its 2007 level by 2017</p>		<p>To determine whether the province is accomplishing this goal, the SCC has decided to use the debt number reported on the Summary Financial Statements for general public debt issued by the GRF and other government service organizations (not including government business enterprises). In 2007 this debt was 7.63 billion (therefore the government's target is \$3.815 billion). On March 31, 2015 this debt was \$4.48 billion, up slightly from the \$4.39 billion reported in 2014.</p>
<p>Continue to balance the budget every year</p>		<p>On the summary financial statements Budget 2015/16 is forecasting a surplus of \$107 million. Based on the 2014/15 third quarter forecast the province will end the year with a surplus of \$40 million, similar to 2012-13 when the province reported a surplus of \$37 million.</p>

Business

	Progress	Other Information
<p>Lower the corporate business tax rate from 12 to 10 per cent by 2015</p>		<p>After originally announcing this change for implementation in Budget 2013/14. The Government has failed to implement it in any of following budgets.</p>
<p>Double the value of Saskatchewan's exports by 2020 (\$59 billion by 2020)</p>		<p>Saskatchewan exports hit a record \$35.12 billion for 2014, up 8.9% over the \$32.25 billion recorded 2013 and 19% over the \$29.5 billion recorded in 2011.</p>
<p>Increase crop production by 10 million tonnes by 2020</p>		<p>Statistics Canada's November production survey of principal field crops estimates Saskatchewan 2014 production at 30.7 mmt (million metric tonnes) this is down from the 38.4 mmt reported in November 2013 but still up from 26.0 mmt in November 2012.</p>
<p>Increase exports of agricultural and food products from \$10 billion in 2011 to \$15 billion in 2020</p>		<p>Saskatchewan exported \$13.9 billion in agricultural and agri-food products in 2014. This represents a 19% increase from the \$11.7 billion exported in 2013.</p>

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The Saskatchewan Heritage Initiative

	Progress	Other Information
Establish this initiative to identify options and provide advice to the Government of Saskatchewan for how best to utilize Saskatchewan's non-renewable natural resource revenue after the province's debt has been fully retired		On November 12, 2013 Peter MacKinnon, former President of the University of Saskatchewan, presented a report to the provincial government on the establishment of the Saskatchewan Futures Fund. The government has accepted MacKinnon's recommendations, but no decision has been made yet on when to launch the Futures Fund.

Summary

The 22 goals identified in the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* will build a strong future for the province. In some instances the targets for the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* are still five years away, while others have reached their expiration date. We understand that achieving many of these goals will take time and that the status of those already expired will continue to change. Therefore, the Chamber will continue, on an annual basis, to assess the Plan's success to date against the progress being made not against the strict achievement of goals. In instances where progress has not been made or where it has stalled, our organization will look to ignite forward movement through meetings, communications, policy recommendations, and other applicable recourses.