

**Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency
City/Commercial Advisory Committees**

Meeting Minutes for March 21, 2024

Ramada Hotel – Oak Room 1818 Victoria Avenue, Regina; or
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Commercial Advisory Committee

Members Present:

Audrey Trombley – Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member
Jim Angus (non-voting), SAMA Board Member
Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair
Anna Gardikiotis, Regional Downtown Business Improvement District
Noel Geremia, Saskatchewan REALTORS® Association
Ed Bobiash, Saskatchewan REALTORS® Association
Ian Magdiak, Canadian Property Tax Association
David Roberts, Western Grain Elevator Association Tax Committee
Kirk Wasyluk, Pipeline Property Tax Group
Mark Pinney, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Darwin Collins, Saskatchewan Mining Association
David Hopkins, Railway Association of Canada
Melissa Barr, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association
Grace Muzyka, Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada
Ken Patsula, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Members Absent:

Randy Goulden, SAMA Board Member, Urban Sector
Richard Marleau, SAMA Board Member
Vacant, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce
Tony Playter, Regina & District Chamber of Commerce
Brianna Soberg, Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Wendy Kopeck, Building Owners and Managers Association
Jim Bence, Saskatchewan Hotel & Hospitality Association
Cameron Johnson, National Golf Course Owners Association, Saskatchewan Chapter
Monty Reich, Inland Terminal Association of Canada
Corinne Li, Railway Association of Canada

City Advisory Committee

Members Present:

Dawn Luhning, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member
Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair
John Wagner, (voting), SAMA Board Member
Vanessa Vaughan, City of Prince Albert
Dawn Kilmer, City of Prince Albert
Jason Mancinelli, City of Regina
Colinda Johnson, City of Regina
Bev Dubois, City of Saskatoon
Darren Hill, City of Saskatoon
Julianne Rempel, City of Swift Current
Melissa Barr, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

Members Absent:

Maryse Carmichael, City of Moose Jaw
Clive Tolley, City of Moose Jaw
Al Bridal, City of Swift Current
Jean-Marc Nadeau, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Suzanne Zwarych, Saskatchewan School Boards Association

Observers Present:

Abayomi Akintola, Ministry of Government Relations
Dennis Lowe, Ministry of Trade and Export Development
Carey Baker, Tourism Saskatchewan
Colinda Johnson, City of Regina
Bryce Trew, City of Saskatoon
Vanessa Vaughan, City of Prince Albert
Julianne Rempel, City of Swift Current
Myron Kopeck, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Rod Quintin, RM of Dundurn
Betty Rogers, SAMA CEO

Observers Absent:

Kareen Holtby, Ministry of Trade and Export Development
Chad Boyko, Saskatchewan Municipal Board
Amy McInnis, Tourism Saskatchewan
Siân Pascoe, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Darwin Whitfield, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Guests Absent:

Cole Zawislak, Saskatchewan REALTORS® Association
Erwin Heuck, Canadian Renewable Energy Association

Administration Present:

Darwin Kanius, Committee Secretary, SAMA
Todd Treslan, SAMA ASD
Rebecca Schultz, SAMA ASD, Industrial Unit
Karlo Simonson, SAMA QAD
Susanna Hadi, SAMA TS&P

Administration Absent:

Andrew Workman, SAMA TS&P

Observers Present:

Rod Nasewich, Ministry of Government Relations
Bill Fraser, City of Moose Jaw
Dale Braitenbach, City of Prince Albert
Tanya Mills, City of Regina
Bryce Trew, City of Saskatoon
Betty Rogers, CEO, SAMA

Observers Absent:

Crystal Froese, Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Trustee
Mason Stott, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Administration
Vacant, City of Swift Current

Administration Present:

Dallas Pitt, Committee Secretary, SAMA
Shaun Cooney, SAMA TS&P
Garry Hammett, SAMA TS&P
Karlo Simonson, SAMA QAD

Administration Absent:

Kevin Groat, SAMA ASD

Agenda Item:

Decision/Resolution:

1. Call to Order
Audrey Trombley, Chair of the Commercial Advisory Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. Opening Remarks
Myron Knafelc, SAMA Board Member, welcomed attendees to the City/Commercial Advisory Committee.
3. Introductions
Audrey Trombley opened the floor for in-person attendees to introduce themselves to remote attendees.
4. Approval of the Meeting Agenda
Audrey Trombley introduced the agenda.

MOTION by Ken Patsula, Public Works and Government Services Canada, to approve the agenda.

Carried
5. Minutes from the Previous Business Meeting held November 30, 2023
Audrey Trombley provided a forum for members to provide feedback on the previous City/Commercial Advisory Committees joint meeting minutes.

No comments or corrections were provided on the meeting minutes.

MOTION by Dawn Luhnig, SAMA Board Member, that the joint minutes for the November 30, 2023 City and Commercial Advisory Committee’s business meeting be adopted as circulated.

Carried
6. Business Arising from the Minutes of each respective Committee
No issues arising from the previous meeting on November 30, 2023.
7. SAMA Update
- 7a. CEO Report
PowerPoint presentation by Betty Rogers, SAMA CEO.

Note: PowerPoint presentations and reports will be made available to committee members in SAMACloud.

Comments/Questions
No comments or questions.

MOTION by Ken Patsula, Public Works and Government Services Canada, to receive the CEO report.

Carried
- 7b. Assessment Services Division (ASD) Report
SAMA Update: PowerPoint presentation by Todd Treslan, SAMA ASD

Comments/Questions
No comments or questions.

MOTION by Darren Hill, City of Saskatoon, to receive the SAMA ASD report.

Carried

7c. Other Assessment Service Provider (ASP) Updates (Saskatoon / Regina / Prince Albert / Swift Current)

City of Saskatoon Update: Verbal presentation by Bryce Trew.

2024 Assessment Roll: Saskatoon's roll opened on January 2, 2024 and closed on February 5, 2024. Saskatoon is seeking to get amended notices submitted by the end of April ahead of the tax billing process which begins in May.

Staffing: Saskatoon's city council approved a new appraiser position for the assessment department last November. Currently, there are ten appraisers, six technicians, six senior appraisers and five managers in the department.

The city has recently updated the administrative function for the department by combining it with the corporate revenue branch due to overlapping work. This change allowed for two assessment assistant positions to be converted to technicians.

Saskatoon's assessment department will be closed to the public starting in April 2024. Property owners will be able to meet appraisers in-person at city hall to discuss property assessment inquiries. This was recommended due to confusion with property owners previously going to city hall when the assessment department is located one block north of city hall.

BoR Appeal Update: The City of Saskatoon is preparing a report on appeal contingency for city council in April.

On the 2024 assessment roll, Saskatoon has received 109 appeals to the Board of Revision (BoR). There are 83 commercial and 26 residential appeals. Currently, 25 appeals have been resolved with 11 through agreements to adjust and 14 withdrawals.

Saskatoon's BoR has made a change this year that the appellant's tax agent must have received authorization from the property owner prior to launching the appeal.

SMB and CoA Appeal Update: Saskatoon received 501 appeals in 2022 and 468 appeals in 2023 to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB). For 2022, SMB appeals have either been resolved or received decisions. For 2023, there are 174 appeals that are outstanding with the SMB.

At the Court of Appeal (CoA), there have been 10 appeals filed during this revaluation cycle. Currently, 9 of these appeals are active with three being granted leave, and one appeal was denied leave.

There is risk at the CoA level for Saskatoon due to these appeals encompassing over 250 individual properties with around \$1.1 billion in assessment or roughly \$10.5 million in municipal tax dollars under appeal.

2025 Revaluation: The City of Saskatoon has completed analysis on improved residential, residential land, and commercial and multi-family land ahead of the April 1st preliminary values deadline for the Ministry of Government Relations. Trending will be needed for improved commercial and multi-family values for the deadline.

Saskatoon is continuing to engage with property owners to receive their feedback ahead of the upcoming revaluation. Part of this process has involved sale reviews with tax agents, which has been a welcome addition to receive feedback from affected stakeholders.

During the spring, Saskatoon will be discussing assessment phase-in and revaluation issues and concerns with property owners. Saskatoon is hoping these consultative reviews increase stakeholder understanding ahead of the revaluation.

City of Saskatoon Update – Comments/Questions

SAMA Board Member: How many assessment staff are employed with the City of Saskatoon?

City of Saskatoon: For roughly 100,000 properties, the City of Saskatoon has 10 appraisers along with 20 other positions that include management and entry level positions.

Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada: When Saskatoon rolls out the assessment impact this fall to property owners, will the impact also include the estimated property tax shift?

City of Saskatoon: Saskatoon provides a tax tool online for property owners to review their anticipated property taxes. However, updates to the tool will not be finalized until after city budget approval in November.

City of Regina Update: Verbal presentation by Colinda Johnson.

Staffing: The City of Regina has 18 staff within their assessment office. This includes ten licensed assessment appraisers, six staff working towards their designation with the Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers Association (SAAA), and two support staff.

There are two middle management positions that are currently vacant with the city. Regina has had success attracting candidates for these positions. However, some candidates are seeking remote work from their current location in other provinces, which does not align with the city's business plan.

2024 Assessment Roll: Regina's roll opened on January 5th and closed on February 5th. There were 198 appeals filed to the BoR on the 2024 roll. There are around 120 appeals on the industrial warehouse model. Currently, there have been five appeals resolved through agreements to adjust and one appeal has been withdrawn.

Regina has received three requests from tax agents to release sale verification form information. Regina is not willing to provide this information due to breaching the confidentiality of property owners. However, Regina does provide a masked list of property sales on the city's website. Additionally, tax agents can receive information directly

from Information Services Corporation (ISC) or directly contacting property owners.

SMB and CoA Update: Regina has received notable appeal decisions for the 2019 Boardwalk and 2019 Southland Mall appeals. These appeals centred around issues of disclosure and were remitted to the SMB by the CoA.

Southland has been appealed back to the CoA, and has been granted leave, to review if the SMB erred in law by finding that only one property's rental information can be used to build a rent model. Boardwalk's SMB decision was recently released in favour of Regina.

For 2023, there are 49 appeals at the SMB. These appeals include 16 hotels within the City of Regina.

At the CoA, Regina has two appeals for 2021 that have been granted leave and are waiting for hearings to be scheduled. These appeals are on office and retail models and include around 92 properties. Additionally, for the 2020 roll, there are two appeals that the CoA has remitted to the SMB and one appeal that is awaiting a decision.

2025 Revaluation: For the upcoming preliminary value deadline on April 1st, Regina is continuing to work on finalizing revaluation models. The condo model has recently been finalized and the commercial model has been trended for preliminary values.

Regina will be rolling out preliminary values and the revaluation communication strategy to city council in May. The planned strategy includes engaging with major stakeholders in the community, such as the Regina Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Improvement District, and the Hotel Association. An additional change for this revaluation is Regina is not planning to forward estimate letters to property owners.

Other Projects: Regina is continuing to upgrade their Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system. This was scheduled for completion prior to 2024, but there have been delays caused by resource and system issues. Therefore, the CAMA upgrade is now anticipated to be complete in 2025.

Other noteworthy items for Regina include the construction of a new aquatic centre and changes made to zoning bylaws to accelerate housing developments within the city as part of the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund.

City of Regina Update – Comments/Questions

City of Saskatoon: Regarding staff vacancies where people want to work remotely. Is Regina's corporate policy related to their distance away from the city?

City of Regina: Yes, that is correct.

City of Saskatoon: Is Regina planning any notable change to your revaluation communication practices for the 2025 revaluation?

City of Regina: Regina is shifting to an online focus of communication ahead of the upcoming revaluation. The information that was previously made available in the estimate letters will be now provided on the city's website.

City of Prince Albert Update: Verbal presentation by Vanessa Vaughan.

Staffing: Prince Albert has a full complement of assessment staff. Currently, one appraiser is fully licensed with the SAAA and other staff are working toward their designations.

The 2024 plan for the department is to continuing training staff on other areas of assessment such as commercial valuation.

2024 Assessment Roll: Prince Albert's roll opened on February 1st and closed on March 1st.

Commercial properties within the city received new assessment notices in 2024 due to model changes from a 2022 SMB appeal decision, which updated how depreciation for these property types should be calculated and also increased commercial market adjustment factors.

Prince Albert received 85 BoR appeals on the 2024 roll. These appeals include 58 commercial on the updated commercial model, one multi-residential and 26 residential properties.

2023 SMB Appeals: Prince Albert has several appeals at the SMB on the 2023 roll that are waiting to be scheduled or receive decisions. There are nine commercial appeals waiting for a hearing, two awaiting a decision.

There are three 2023 SMB appeals that have been decided and were won by the appellant. Prince Albert is reviewing whether these decisions should be brought forward to the CoA.

2025 Revaluation: Prince Albert has completed their sales review with all verifications and physical inspections complete except for residential properties.

For assessment models, the condo model and all vacant land models have been completed ahead of the preliminary value deadline on April 1st. The residential model has also been completed for preliminary values but will need to be re-reviewed in April once all residential sale reviews are completed.

Commercial preliminary values will be delivered to the Ministry of Government Relations using the cost approach. Following April 1st, Prince Albert will be updating commercial valuations to the income approach for the 2025 revaluation. Prince Albert anticipates that all 2025 models will be finalized by the end of June 2024.

Prince Albert is reviewing what additional information should be shared on the city's website, or be presented through public presentations and social media, ahead of the 2025 revaluation.

City of Prince Albert Update – Comments/Questions

No comments or questions.

City of Swift Current Update: Verbal presentation by Julianne Rempel.

Staffing: Swift Current has one city assessor and one administrator who recently started in January 2024. The administrator has expressed an interest in taking the necessary courses to become an assessment appraiser with the SAAA.

2024 Assessment Roll: Swift Current's roll opened on March 15th and will close on April 15th.

2023 SMB Appeals: Swift Current had two appeals at the SMB on the 2023 assessment roll. These appeals have been resolved through agreements to adjust.

2025 Revaluation: Swift Current will be trending all values ahead of the preliminary values deadline on April 1st. Swift Current is currently working on income and sale verifications to ensure these are in place ahead of reviewing changes to assessment models.

To assist with the revaluation, Swift Current has hired an external assessment modeling consultant. This should help expediate model development once information is fully verified.

Swift Current is reviewing additional communication strategies, such as an enhanced social media presence and providing estimates for property owners, ahead of the 2025 revaluation.

Other Projects: Swift Current is reviewing potential upgrades to their CAMA system that would also provide additional geographic information system (GIS) functionality.

City of Swift Current Update – Comments/Questions

No comments or questions.

MOTION by Grace Muzyka, Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada, to receive the verbal ASP reports.

Carried

7d. Assessment Governance Report

PowerPoint presentation by Shaun Cooney, SAMA TS&P

Comments/Questions

SAMA Board Member: For agricultural land, the preliminary trend of 40% will be present on all land throughout the province. This is not a scenario where the southern portion of the province increased 60% and the northern area 20% to arrive at a 40% average preliminary trend.

Most appeals for agricultural land result in agreements to adjust based upon physical changes due to the regulated productivity model.

MOTION by John Wagner, SAMA Board Member, to receive the Assessment Governance report.

Carried

8. Assessment Appeals Update

8a. Assessment Appeals and Court of Appeal Update

PowerPoint presentation by Darwin Kanius, SAMA TS&P.

Court of Appeal and Court of King's Bench decisions discussed during this presentation can be accessed at www.canlii.org/en/sk.

Comments/Questions

No comments or questions.

MOTION by Ken Patsula, Public Works and Government Services Canada, to receive the Assessment Appeals report.

Carried

Lunch Break

12:08 pm to 12:50 pm

9. Revaluation and Policy Developments

9a. Oil and Gas Site Land Valuation Issue

PowerPoint presentation by Dean McCartney-Fuchs, SAMA TS&P

Comments/Questions

SAMA Board Member: The circumstances behind the land review are unfortunate as the previous practice appeared to be a reasonable solution for municipalities and industry. However, due to the equity concerns, the option that best achieves equity appears to be the application of primary industrial land rates to the lessee.

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities: Would the oil and gas company be responsible for paying the additional taxes on the leased land? Would the agricultural land owner continue to pay taxes on their leased land as well?

SAMA Administration: SAMA's recommendation directs the assessment to the primary industrial land lessee (e.g. oil or gas, pipeline or mining company) due to the development of the land to support their property use such as an oil and gas non-well or a pipeline facility.

The industrial acres assessed to the lessee would be removed from the landowner's agricultural land assessment because if the land were left with both parties, there would be duplicate land assessments from the same parcel.

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities: When does SAMA require feedback from SARM on this recommendation?

SAMA Administration: SAMA would appreciate a response from SARM within the next couple of weeks. SAMA prefers to receive feedback from all stakeholder groups ahead of moving forward with the potential

Manual amendments and sending requests for leased land information from stakeholders.

SAMA considers that the assess to lessee option is the most equitable solution as identical property uses, regardless of their ownership, will begin to be assessed identically for the 2025 revaluation.

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers: CAPP recommends that consideration should be provided on which primary industrial land rate is most applicable based upon the intensity of the property use.

For example, the difference between a header and a larger scale battery facility or the consideration that farming can continue to be performed around most oil and gas non-well sites.

SAMA Administration: SAMA will ensure that this is a consideration when drafting the potential amendments to the Manual. SAMA receiving sound company reporting will be beneficial in this regard because it will allow for the efficient application of appropriate primary industrial land rates.

MOTION by Jim Angus, SAMA Board Member, to receive the Oil and Gas Land Site Valuation Issue report.

Carried

9b. 2025 Revaluation

1. Assessment Trends

PowerPoint presentation by Shaun Cooney, SAMA TS&P

Comments/Questions

Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada: The GIS maps generated by SAMA should provide excellent information for municipalities ahead of the upcoming revaluation.

SAMA Administration: Alongside benefits to municipalities, these GIS maps should also enhance the ability for SAMA appraisers to audit models and review assessment information more efficiently.

MOTION by Darren Hill, City of Saskatoon, to receive the 2025 Revaluation Assessment Trends report.

Carried

2. Quality Coordination Program

PowerPoint presentation by Darwin Kanius, SAMA TS&P

Comments/Questions

No comments or questions.

MOTION by John Wagner, SAMA Board Member, to receive the 2025 Revaluation Quality Coordination report.

Carried

10. Future Developments

10a. Provincial Assessment System
Review by International Property Tax
Institute (IPTI)

PowerPoint presentation by Shaun Cooney, SAMA TS&P

Comments/Questions

SAMA Board Member: The rural sector is in favour of several of the changes proposed by SUMA's working group such as the potential to limit appeals to one per cycle and having high value appeals go directly to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board.

However, the removal of percentages of value is not ideal as rural municipalities are unable to create subclasses of property like the cities in the province.

The rural sector supports the existing revaluation cycle due to its cost effectiveness and due to the budgetary and resource increases that would be required to facilitate a shorter cycle.

Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada: Does SAMA requisition the same amount of money per property type?

SAMA Administration: SAMA has an established price per property that is updated to consider the property type by municipality. For example, agland is \$4.90 per quarter versus commercial at \$37.42 per property.

MOTION by Jim Angus, SAMA Board Member, to receive the IPTI Update report.

Carried

11. Other Business

11a. Next City and Commercial Advisory
Committee Meeting

The next City and Commercial Advisory Committee meeting is currently scheduled for November 28, 2024.

11b. SAMA 2024 Annual Meeting

The SAMA Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 10th and will be held at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. All Advisory Committee members are welcome to attend the meeting. Registration forms are available on SAMA's website: [2024 Annual General Meeting](#).

MOTION by Grace Muzyka, Saskatchewan Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada, to adjourn the meeting at 2:21 pm.

Carried



Darwin Kanius
Commercial Advisory Committee, Secretary



Dallas Pitt
City Advisory Committee, Secretary