

Partnerships for Success

Government partnerships with positive outcomes for Indigenous people, businesses and communities

Fostering Positive Collaboration: Urban Reserve Creation in Saskatchewan

As of October 2023, more than 99 properties located in urban municipalities or northern communities across Saskatchewan are in various stages of the reserve creation process.

The creation of urban reserves generates economic opportunity in Saskatchewan.

With the support of the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Government Relations, the creation of urban reserves results from municipalities and First Nations working together to support shared goals of development and economic growth.

"Supporting a creation of a new urban reserve is a sign of strength for our province," Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs Don McMorris said. "Saskatchewan's 65 urban reserves provide a platform for First Nation communities to meaningfully engage in the economy through initiatives that fuel economic growth and make urban reserve projects beneficial for all partners."



Saskatoon signed an agreement with Lac La Ronge Indian Band establishing a 10th urban reserve in the city. (Tyler Barrow / CTV News)

An urban reserve is created when a First Nation with a Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) or Specific Claims Agreement purchases an approved piece of land in or near an urban centre. TLE agreements ensure First

Nations receive the reserve land they were promised by the federal government when Treaties were signed in Saskatchewan between 1871 and 1907. Learn more about TLE by visiting - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/first-nations-citizens/treaty-land-and-entitlements>

Urban reserve projects increase employment opportunities and economic benefits for both the urban centre and the First Nation. An excellent example of this in action is Muskeg Lake Cree Nation's urban reserve in Saskatoon, home to dozens of commercial and industrial developments including Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority's (SIGA) new head office, Pristine Carwash, Cree Way Gas and Muskeg Media.

In recent years, several significant agreements have been negotiated and lands transferred to establish new urban reserves. In September 2018, Star Blanket First Nation's transfer of the First Nations University of Canada (FNU) in Regina and Yellow Quill First Nation's transfer of Canterbury Towers in Saskatoon marked significant milestones. More recently, Cowessess First Nation transferred properties in Yorkton and Prince Albert, and developed a Tim Horton's location in Regina, while Piapot First Nation transferred property in Prince Albert for Cree-Land Mini-Mart II.



A teepee was raised at the grand opening of the restaurant. The building and the land it sits on are owned by Cowessess First Nation. (Mah Noor Mubarik/CBC)

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In September 2023, Saskatoon's city council and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB), Saskatchewan's largest First Nation, formalized a service agreement to establish an urban reserve in Saskatoon. This reserve will be a landing place for LLRIB members who complete their post-secondary studies in STEM

fields. Work is currently underway between the province, LLRIB and the federal government to bring this project to fruition.

“The goal is to have these urban reserves provide our community the opportunity for economic development including commercial, residential and industrial activities. The intention is to establish the urban reserve in Saskatoon to ensure the LLRIB members who are studying science, technology, engineering and math at the post-secondary level have a landing place upon completion of their degree.” - Chief Tammy Cook-Searson.

Urban reserves symbolize partnership, understanding, and shared aspirations. They demonstrate the success that can be found through positive relationships between local governments, Indigenous communities, and businesses. The Government of Saskatchewan is proud to play a role in supporting the creation of urban reserves.