

Hindu Society of Saskatchewan- Discretionary Use Application- Hindu Heritage Hub Additional Information

Background and Current Situation

The Hindu community in Saskatoon has a temple located on a 2-acre property at 107 La Ronge Road, which was established around 1985 to serve a community of approximately 50 members. Over the years, the Hindu community has grown significantly. This population continues to increase as more people from other provinces and international regions migrate to the Saskatoon area on a weekly basis. While major expansions have taken place at the current site, with the most recent expansion completed in 2020, the community now feels the need for a dedicated Hindu Heritage Hub. The proposed location has garnered support from a large group of individuals within our community who see the potential for Aberdeen to be recognized on the Canadian map, especially as we anticipate a significant influx of visitors interested in experiencing the new Heritage Hub.

Funding and Accessibility

The proposed Hindu Heritage Hub will be primarily funded by the Hindu community itself, with contributions from local members and supporters. However, the Hub will be open and accessible to people of all religions, races, and backgrounds, in accordance with the bylaws and principles established by the governing board. Our vision is to create a space that fosters cultural exchange, understanding, and unity among diverse communities.

In summary, this proposal aims to provide the necessary foundation for the development of a vibrant, inclusive Hindu Heritage Hub that will serve as a cultural and spiritual center, not only for the Hindu community but for all visitors interested in learning more about the rich heritage and traditions of Hinduism, and the functions of the proposed development are as follows:

- **Sunday Services:** The core purpose of the building is to host weekly Hindu services every Sunday, which form the spiritual foundation for the congregation. These services typically involve prayer, hymns, meditation, religious discourses, and free communal meals for all the attendees.
- **Religious Festivals:** The building will host 2-3 religious festivals each month, which are significant occasions in the Hindu calendar. These festivals include both large-scale celebrations and smaller, more intimate observances that may involve rituals, communal meals, and cultural programs.
- **Community and Cultural Events:** Beyond religious observances, the building will also serve as a hub for community gatherings, such as educational workshops, cultural performances, and social events aimed at bringing together members of the local community, regardless of their religious background.
 - Local medical facilities have joined forces with Hindu society to host health camps for the benefit of the local population, thanks to the extensive network of Hindu doctors. Similar services are expected to be conducted at our new location in the RM of Aberdeen.
- **Benefit to local community:**
 - Cultural and heritage promotion: The temple can help to strengthen the RM's cultural identity by promoting local businesses and tradition. This can boost interest in cultural tourism, which benefits craftspeople and local businesses.
 - Investment in the Local Economy: Increased visibility and tourism can draw investment in a variety of industries, including retail, hospitality, and services, promoting the overall economic development of RM of Aberdeen.

- Real Estate Development: Increased tourism and infrastructure can boost demand for real estate, resulting in growth in the home and commercial property markets. Hindu practitioners prefer to live close to a place of worship.

Expected Traffic to the Building:

1. Regular Traffic (Sunday Services):

- The congregation typically gathers for Sunday services that run for approximately 2-3 hours, beginning in the morning and sometimes extending into the afternoon, depending on the occasion.
- The expected attendance for weekly Sunday services is approximately 200-300 individuals, with variations for special services or holy days.
- Traffic during these times will largely consist of come-and-go visits as individuals arrive and depart at different times, with an average of 200 vehicles parked at the site. This is expected to have a peak traffic volume during the arrival and departure times, typically from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

2. Religious and Cultural Festivals:

- The building will also host 2-3 Hindu festivals per month, each of which could draw a larger crowd due to the festive nature of the events.
- During major festivals, such as Diwali, Holi, or Navaratri, attendance may increase to 500 to 600 people or more as families, extended relatives, and other community members participate.
- These festivals may involve both indoor and outdoor activities (e.g., outdoor processions, cultural performances), which could result in increased vehicle traffic and on-site parking demand. However, the primary focus of these celebrations remains indoors, and the impact on the surrounding area is generally limited to increased traffic around the festival's start and end times.

3. Scattered Usage and "Come-and-Go" Traffic:

- Anticipated scattered usage refers to the casual or informal visits to the building for activities such as individual prayer, community meetings, or cultural workshops, often outside of the main Sunday services or festivals. These visits will result in lighter, scattered traffic throughout the week.
- The building is expected to have a constant but moderate flow of visitors, with individuals or small groups coming and going throughout the day. These events will generate minimal additional traffic compared to the peak times during religious services or festivals.
- It is anticipated that parking demand during these times will not exceed the building's designated parking capacity, as most visitors will arrive at varied times throughout the day.

4. Community Events:

- In addition to religious services and festivals, the building will host community gatherings, such as educational talks, social events, and cultural performances. These events typically attract between 500 and 1200 attendees, leading to moderate increases in traffic and onsite parking demand.
- As with the Sunday services and festivals, these events are primarily focused on indoor activities, and any outdoor events will be conducted with due respect for the surrounding environment and community.

Noise and Environmental Considerations:

- The Hindu community follows the city and RM noise by-laws and takes extreme care to ensure that noise from events and services does not exceed permissible levels.

- Most congregation activities, including worship, cultural programs, and festivals, take place indoors, minimizing external noise impact. Noise associated with events is typically limited to brief periods during arrival and departure times, with outdoor processions or cultural performances being conducted with due consideration for neighbours.
- The building will continue to adhere to all local noise ordinances to ensure minimal disturbance to the surrounding area.

Traffic Management and Parking:

- The building is being designed with an emphasis on efficient parking and traffic flow, with a proposed 200 parking spaces available on-site to accommodate regular attendance during services and special events.
- Given the nature of the location's proximity for larger gatherings, the building complex will coordinate with the local community to ensure that parking demand is managed effectively. This may involve:
 - Directing additional parking to our own open space if the on-site spaces reach capacity.
 - Working with local authorities to manage traffic flow and reduce congestion during peak event times, especially during festivals or large-scale community events.

The building is designed to support both the spiritual and cultural needs of the local Hindu community while being respectful of the surrounding neighborhood. The anticipated traffic and event-related activities are expected to follow a consistent pattern of regular, scattered visits for weekly services and larger gatherings during festivals. All activities will be conducted in a manner that complies with local noise and traffic regulations, with most congregational activities happening indoors to minimize any external disruption.

The community is committed to managing traffic and parking efficiently and will take necessary measures to ensure that the building serves as a positive, contributing space to both the local Hindu community and the broader neighbourhood.