

# Provincial government lays out a roadmap for potential digital ID

JEREMY SIMES

REGINA The Saskatchewan government is looking into whether it should adopt digital ID for residents, a measure the province says will make accessing services easier.

However, some have raised privacy concerns with the technology — fears that were recently allayed by Jim Reiter, the minister responsible for SaskBuilds and Procurement.

He said the digital ID won't be mandatory after the issue was raised earlier this week at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities convention in Regina.

"Obviously we realize we live in uncertain times and people are concerned about their privacy, rightly so," Reiter told delegates. "That's why the privacy commissioner is engaged and will continue to be engaged all along every step of the way with this."

According to government documents obtained by Postmedia, the government is aiming to launch the service in 2023 for use with provincial services should it decide to move forward.

The province is currently in the process of selecting a vendor to potentially initiate digital ID, which is meant to replace the need for physical ID cards. Users would log in with their cellphone or laptop camera. The service would check for "liveness" through facial recognition software to prove someone's identity.

People would be able to register for services conveniently, according to the government, rather than having to go to an office in-person or wait for a mailed-in PIN.

"One of the things in government



Jim Reiter, minister responsible for SaskBuilds and Procurement, has tried to allay privacy concerns over the possibility of digital ID to access government services, which is under study right now. **MATT SMITH FILES**

we hear is complaints in delays of signing up for government programs," Reiter said. "You've all experienced sitting on hold waiting for a call back and waiting for someone to talk to you. The intent of this is to merely expedite that process so we're moving more online as technology improves."

SaskBuilds said in a statement it could not replace the cost of rolling out the service because the province is reviewing vendor applications.

According to RFP documents, the selected vendor would work with SGI for facial verification, though how this is achieved is still under exploration.

The province is considering two options. In one scenario, SGI would receive a photo and then match that photo against its data-

base. SGI has its own facial verification software called Cognitec. The second option would see the province pass a "facial blueprint" to SGI. It would then install its own facial verification software behind the SGI firewall.

This facial verification would be run against the SGI database, and the photo would not leave the user's device.

The province said it's open to other options, but added any option must mitigate privacy and security risks.

The documents say SGI is the owner of the province's facial verification database, covering roughly 95 per cent of the population.

SGI has this database because people must have their photo taken when receiving a driver's licence or ID card.

digital ID.

There were 802 responses from March 17 to 22, 2021. Demographics were weighed to reflect the population.

No margin of error was reported in the poll.

It found 41 per cent of respondents were somewhat or extremely familiar with the service, and 54 per cent said they were interested in learning more.

It stated 53 per cent of respondents were somewhat supportive of the concept of digital ID and establishing a framework. Twenty-one per cent reported they were very supportive.

Forty-two per cent said they were somewhat comfortable with photo ID verification, and 25 per cent said they were extremely comfortable.

As well, 42 per cent stated they would like the government to partner with the private sector when developing the service. Twenty-nine per cent answered "not sure."

Eighty-five per cent of respondents said they trust health-care providers in keeping their personal information secure, and 75 per cent trust government agencies in doing so.

However, only 18 per cent reported they trust social media sites in keeping personal information secure.

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## EGADZ help app upgraded

AMANDA SHORT

"You are not alone. EGADZ is here to help."

New users of the I Am Not 4 Sale phone app are greeted with that message when they open it for the first time.

The app, designed by youth for other youth to help connect them with services and support, was first launched in 2015. The organization announced on Friday that it's relaunching with a handful of new features.

The latest iteration replaces a pink background with more inconspicuous navy blue, and comes with close to \$50,000 in Ministry of Social Services funding. EGADZ executive director Don Meikle said the underlying purpose remains the same — to protect young people in Saskatchewan.

"We're gonna ask that all young people download this app and if they're in trouble, or they want to self-harm, or if they end up in a bad situation, call us. We'll respond," he said.

A Saskatoon company, Push Interactions, was involved in creating the app. CEO and founder Chad Jones conducted a demonstration of the new features at the EGADZ building on Friday.

The app allows young people to discretely and anonymously have emergency services sent to their location. They can also connect with EGADZ counselors on a 24/7 basis and see the real-time loca-

tion of the EGADZ Street Outreach vans.

One new important feature is the Help Me Now button. Once activated, it asks for consent before sharing the user's location with EGADZ staff and starting a live chat with them.

If required, staff can locate the person and provide help. In cases where staff deem police should become involved, EGADZ can contact them and share the location.

Youth can also access the live chat function to connect with counselling. The app also has a feature that will play ringtone so they can simulate being on a call if they feel unsafe, plus a list of emergency contacts for communities across Saskatchewan.

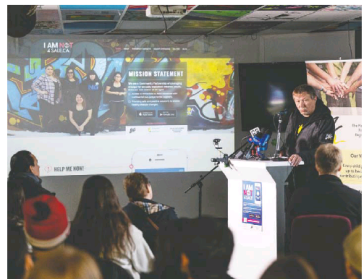
The EGADZ approach has always been about the creation of youth-driven initiatives, Meikle said, and I Am Not 4 Sale is no different. The designers of the original app were present at Friday's announcement.

"We've done this for a lot of our projects over the last number of years, and ... I'm so honoured to have these kids at the table," he said.

The day before the relaunch, Meikle said he passed information about the app to a youth engaging in one of the organization's Operation Runaway support circles. After 29 years of doing such front line work, the app is a step in the right direction protecting youth from exploitation, he said.

"Human trafficking is here, and we see it on TV all the time. We constantly lose kids, and hopefully this will save one kid. If we can save one kid, this has been worth it. "We want to save hundreds."

The I Am Not 4 Sale app is available for download on Apple and Android devices.



EGADZ executive director Don Meikle speaks at a demonstration of EGADZ's newly relaunched I Am Not For Sale app. **MATT SMITH**



**City PAGE**

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### PUBLIC MEETINGS

(\*Closed meetings will be noted if there are any scheduled, otherwise all meetings are open to the public.)

Submissions providing comments and/or requesting to speak will be accepted for public meetings using the online form at [Saskatoon.ca/write-letter-councilcommittees](http://Saskatoon.ca/write-letter-councilcommittees). If your submission includes a request to speak, you will be contacted by a representative from the City Clerk's Office with further information.

**MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022**

Governance and Priorities Committee

Teleconference meeting hosted in Council Chamber, City Hall at 9:30 a.m. (live streamed at [saskatoon.ca/meetings](http://saskatoon.ca/meetings))

\* Closed session included as part of agenda.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022**

Board of Revision

Held via teleconference at 9:00 a.m.

Development Appeals Board

Held via teleconference meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022**

Board of Revision

Held via teleconference at 9:00 a.m.

The next Regular Business and Public Hearing Meetings of City Council are scheduled for Monday, March 28, 2022 beginning at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. respectively.

Regular and Public Hearing meetings of City Council are broadcast live on Shaw TV - Channel 10 and Shaw BlueSky - Channel 105 starting at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., respectively. Public meetings of City Council, including public meetings of the Governance and Priorities Committee and Standing Policy Committees are also live streamed on the City's website as well as archived for future viewing. Go to [saskatoon.ca/meetings](http://saskatoon.ca/meetings).

Agendas for public meetings may be viewed by visiting our website at [saskatoon.ca/meetings](http://saskatoon.ca/meetings).

For further information regarding these meetings or information on communicating with City Council or its Committees, visit our website at [saskatoon.ca](http://saskatoon.ca) and look under City Hall.

### \*CLOSED MEETINGS

Closed meetings may be held but are not open to the public because they deal with issues that are sensitive in nature and meet the requirements of Part III of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. No final decisions may be made at closed meetings. If there are closed meetings they will be noted in the above listing.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### INTENT TO BORROW

City Council will be considering a report from the Administration at a City Council meeting to be held on Monday, March 28, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., via teleconference, hosted in the Council Chamber, Saskatoon City Hall, recommending:

- That City Council authorize the following planned borrowing:
1. up to \$9,833,200 for the Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing Program (Capital Project P1956) from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and internal borrowing (which includes \$2,500,000 in previously approved borrowing and \$7,333,200 in new borrowing);
  2. an allowable 10% variance on the borrowing requirements for the project identified. Any variance greater than 10% of the borrowing amount identified would require a new public notice.

The *Cities Act* and the *Public Notice Policy Bylaw No.8171* require that City Council give public notice before borrowing money, lending money or guaranteeing the repayment of a loan.

For more information, contact the City Clerk's Office: 306-975-3240

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