

# OUR WASCANA

Building the Future –  
the Next 50 Years  
and Beyond

December 6, 2013

Prepared by Stantec



“

Wascana Centre is a masterpiece on the prairies, a legacy that is a cornerstone of our capital city, our region and our province – a place welcoming to everyone.”



# Introduction

Wascana Centre (the Centre) is a treasured legacy and a valued space within Regina and Saskatchewan. Over its history, the Centre has provided the citizens of Saskatchewan and visitors with a space for reflection and recreation while providing a home to many of Saskatchewan's important institutions and the pageantry associated with an important place. Every poll and every engagement with the public confirms their fierce attachment to this place and the great pride in what has been created here.

The Vision: "Wascana Centre is a masterpiece on the prairies, a legacy that is a cornerstone of our capital city, our region and our province – a place welcoming to everyone".

The Wascana Centre Comprehensive Review Project – the Vision for the Next 50 Years and Beyond (the Project) responds to the constraints current funding circumstances place on Wascana Centre, its ability to fund day to day operations, and the mounting challenges of deferred maintenance of the infrastructure and assets Wascana Centre is responsible for.

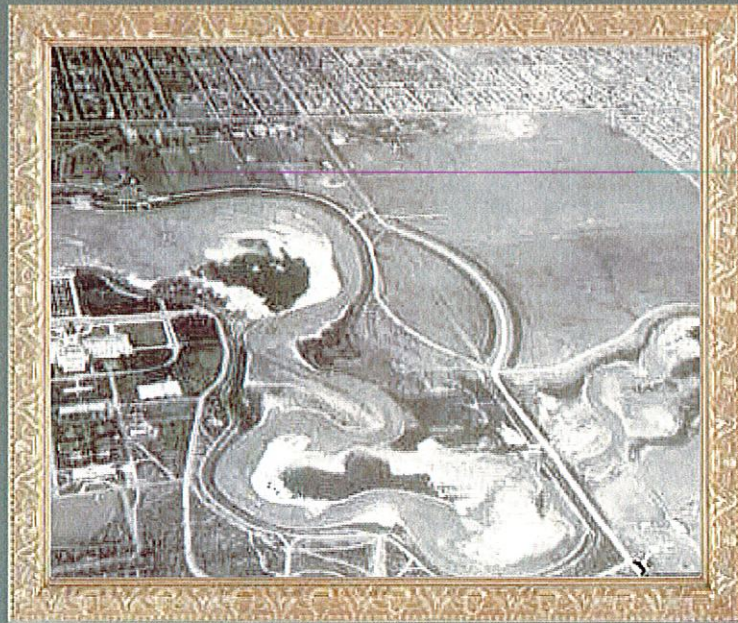
Between now and 2036 the need for investment is estimated at \$54.5M for repair and replacement, excluding enhancements or building replacements. Annual operating costs are estimated to rise from \$6.5M to \$10M over the next 25 years.

The Project, directed by the Strategic Planning Committee of Wascana Centre Authority Board of Directors, examined the future Vision, Mission and Mandate for Wascana Centre using extensive public engagement, asset assessments by third party professionals, and best practices review of other Canadian and International institutions.

The result of the two years of work is a clear understanding of the passionate attachment the public has for Wascana Centre, the extent of the investment required to achieve those expectations, and options for an institutional design and governance model that is most likely to be successful in achieving a refreshed Vision.

The recommended model is for each partner: the Government of Saskatchewan; the City of Regina; and the University of Regina to take responsibility for the management and care of their owned lands and the assets contained therein while remaining within the boundaries and part of the Wascana brand. The Government of Saskatchewan will lead the continued development of the Centre and assume responsibility for the Authority.

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# Background

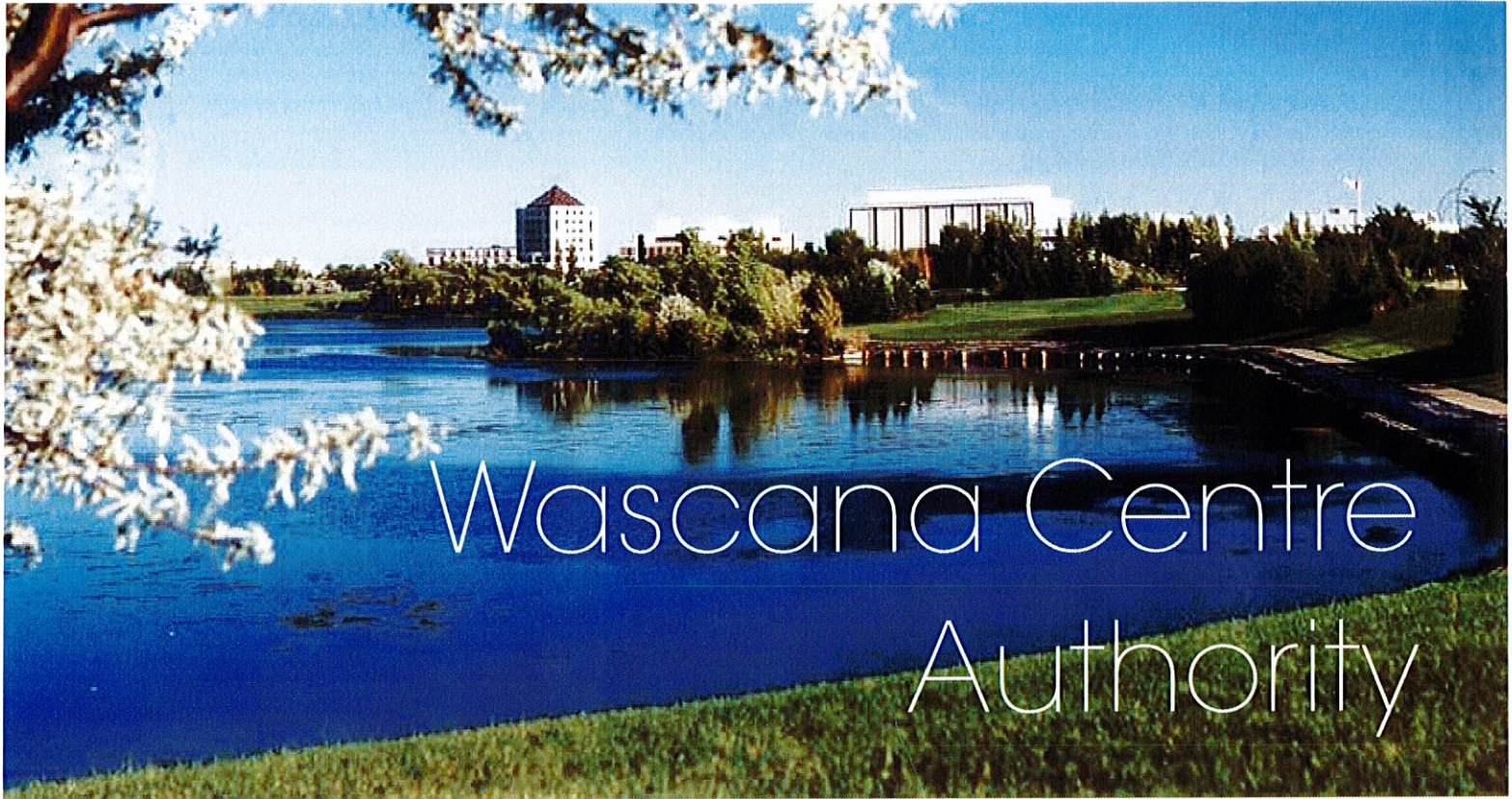
The origins of Wascana Centre date back to 1905 when Saskatchewan's inaugural Premier Walter Scott set aside the first 68 hectare site for the new legislative grounds. The following year, the City of Regina set aside land directly across the lake and named it Wascana Park (the Park). The Park was created at a time of growth and optimism in the newly established Province of Saskatchewan.

In 1913, the Mawson plan described a grand vision for the park rivaling the great urban landscape plans elsewhere in the world. This Master Plan has been renewed on a mandated regular schedule ever since. It currently describes the character of Wascana Centre – changes are accommodated; however, the spirit of the original grand vision is respected and preserved.

In 1962, the Province of Saskatchewan created Wascana Centre Authority as an entity through The Wascana Centre Act (the Act). The mandate set out in the Act is: “to be devoted to the development of the seat of Government, the enlargement of educational research and development opportunities, the advancement of the cultural arts, the improvement of recreational facilities and the conservation of the environment”.

The Centre experienced significant development and expansion from 1962 to the mid 1980's, meeting its mandate under the Act. The Centre is home to the seat of Government as well as home to significant educational and research facilities, facilities for the cultural arts, and is a treasured recreational area where conservation of the environment is a key focus. Besides being the seat of Government and its legislative and other buildings, Wascana Centre is also home to:

- the University of Regina Campuses;
- the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology;
- the Royal Saskatchewan Museum;
- the Conexus Arts Centre;
- the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre;
- the MacKenzie Art Gallery;
- the Saskatchewan Science Centre;
- Federal Lands and wildlife sanctuary; and
- is Saskatchewan's largest outdoor multi-functional recreational facility.



# Wascana Centre Authority



The Wascana Centre Act created Wascana Centre Authority as a partnership between the Province of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and the City of Regina with a mission to: “Enhance Wascana Centre by creating and fostering community/ corporate partnership, promoting and facilitating opportunities, and providing stewardship of the land”.

The partners formed Wascana Centre Authority Board to provide oversight and direction to the Authority. In addition, the Partners provided the funding to enable the Authority to perform its function. The lands administered by the Authority include lands owned by:

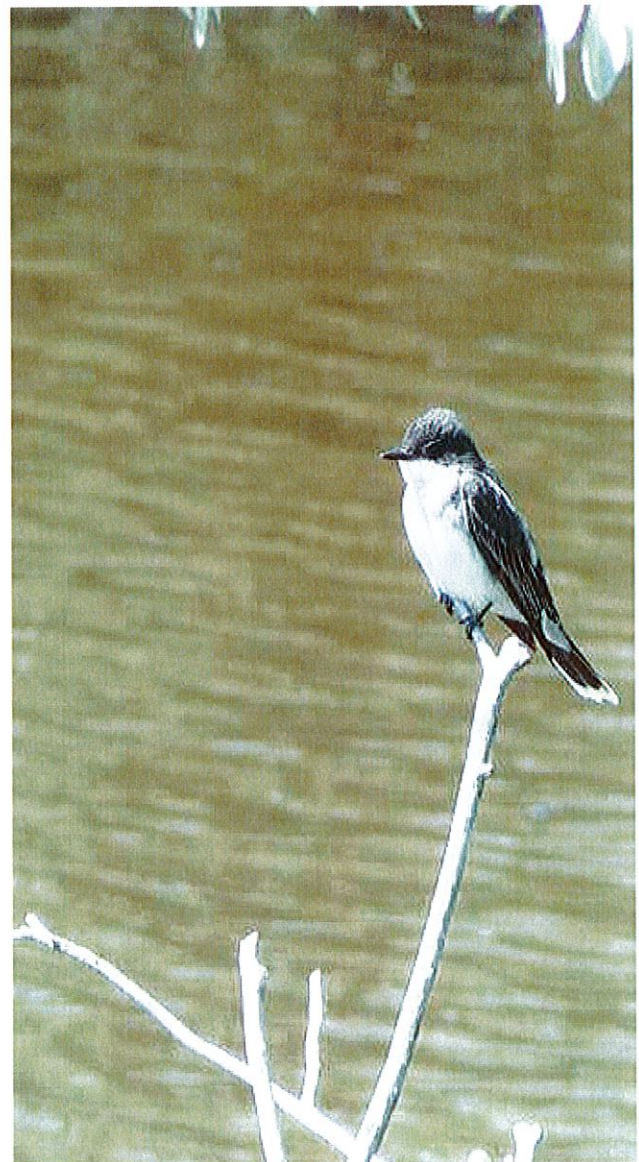
- The Province of Saskatchewan
- The University of Regina
- The City of Regina
- Wascana Centre Authority

“

Within the 2300 acres comprising the Centre, there are fully developed landscapes, access roads, parking spaces and pathways, building sites and buildings, and the utilities to serve the developed lands. There are also lands that are less developed that serve conservation and protection of the environment purpose.”

The function of Wascana Centre Authority requires it to:

- Be the steward of the 2300 acres under its responsibility by providing routine operations such as landscaping, snow clearing, and other maintenance activities;
- Be responsible for capital upkeep and renewal of the buildings, utilities, surface improvements and developed landscape improvements within Wascana Centre;
- Be responsible for the Master Plan, its mandated updates, and be responsible to evaluate new development in the context of the provisions of the Master Plan;
- Respond to the public in regard to Wascana Centre and manage or regulate events within Wascana Centre.
- Be responsible for the design and architectural standards for any outdoor or external elements for any structures of landscapes within the Centre's boundaries.







# Opportunities & Challenges

Wascana Centre experienced significant development and expansion from 1962 to the mid-1980s. However in the mid-1980s a period of fiscal restraint by the funding partners began as they responded to provincial economic conditions. Funding for the Centre did not keep up with yearly cost of living increases.

There is a deferred maintenance and capital renewal problem that needs to be resolved. As well, the existing statute was not clear on who is responsible for infrastructure maintenance and capital investments. The result is the Authority does not have the fiscal capacity of the Authority to meet its obligations.

Fiscal challenges faced by the Authority presented difficult choices. The Authority chose to:

- Continue routine operations of “cutting the grass and clearing the snow”;
- Engage the public, manage and regulate activities within the Centre; and,
- Manage the Master Plan updates at a reduced frequency.

Investment in the capital maintenance and renewal of Wascana Centre’s built infrastructure was curtailed – only those investments required by imminent failure or public safety were made. As a result, the value of deferred maintenance has continued to grow.

Periodic enhancements such as the Broad Street pedestrian bridge or the “Big Dig” were funded as one-time special projects.

The Wascana Centre Board of Directors determined in January 2011 that the level of funding provided was insufficient for the Authority to perform its mandate and the following would result:

- The Authority would be required to reduce levels of service to undertake routine operations and maintenance to the extent that the mission and mandate for the Authority under The Wascana Centre Act could not be achieved;
- Deferred maintenance of the built assets within Wascana Centre, many of which are at or nearing their service life, likely could not be managed;
- Given the great attachment and value the public places on Wascana Centre, the public would find any diminishment of a place they treasure to be unacceptable.



# Vision

On March 2, 2011 Wascana Centre Authority's Board Chair and Vice Chair met with Minister to discuss Wascana Centre's Strategic direction for the next 50 years.

The result of the meeting was that Wascana Centre Authority's Strategic Planning Committee would engage in directing and leading a Comprehensive Professional Review of Wascana Centre's core services, a sustainable funding model, including an asset/risk assessment evaluation, and an operational/organizational and a legislative review. The aim of the Comprehensive Review Project was to build on the last 50 years, but more importantly, to establish a sustainable model to take Wascana Centre progressively into the next 50 years. The review by third party professionals, working with the Board of Directors, the Partners and Wascana Centre staff, was to be completed within 2 years.

## **Mandate/Scope:**

The review included and addressed the following:

- Wascana Centre Authority only, which includes all lands and other assets currently under its stewardship;
- Wascana Centre's future purpose, vision, mission and mandate – clean slate approach;
- The role of Wascana Centre or new entity relative to the funding partners and the overall community;
- The Strategic Direction for the next 50 years.
- The governance model, operations model, organizational structure and supporting legislation; and,
- Sustainable funding models.

## Terms of Reference/Key Elements

The Comprehensive Review included two parts:

- The examination of the future 50 year Strategic Direction – which included the Mandate, Vision, and Purpose of Wascana Centre – resulting in a recommendation for an efficient and effective governance and organizational structure with supporting legislation, sustainable funding, a multi-year funding model, and documented operating agreements;
- An Infrastructure/Asset Assessment review of all levels of infrastructure to determine the deficit and propose a model for remediation, maintenance and capital investment. This is required to support the strategic direction, facilitate informed decisions, and establish future plans for the funding partners and land owners.

Each part of the review was conducted by professional independent experts, directed by the Strategic Planning Committee and supported by Wascana Centre Staff. There was no internal capacity to conduct the review.

Wascana Centre is highly valued by the community. This led to Public Consultation being included in part one of the review.

## Timelines

The schedule for the Comprehensive Review Project was two years overall, anticipating a final draft report by the end of June 2013. This end date was subsequently amended to Fall 2013.

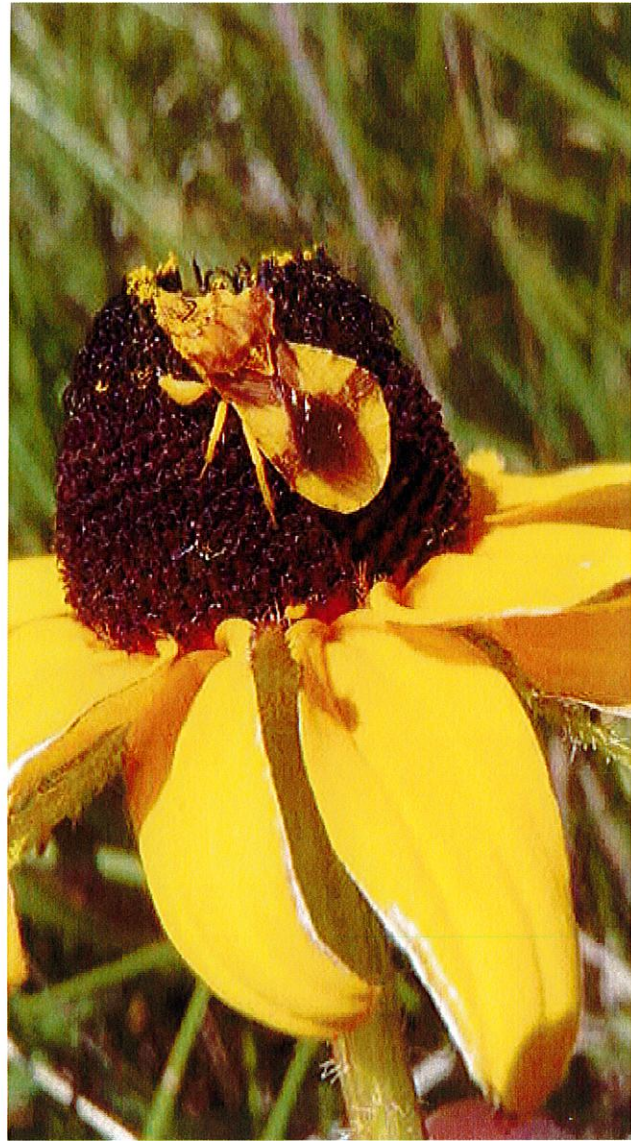
### Milestones

April 2011	Board Meeting: Initial mandate and terms of reference reviewed;
June 2011	Board Meeting: Mandate, terms of reference and funding approved;
Fall 2011:	Part one and Part two initiated;
January 2012:	Interim report to Board;
June 2012:	Draft final report for Part one to Board;
January 2013:	Comprehensive proposal to Board for feedback;
Fall 2013:	Final Draft report to Board and funding partners.

(The review stayed within budget, however, to ensure proper diligence a draft report was provided to the Board in November 2013.)



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## Professional Consulting Team Assembly

The Strategic Planning Committee assembled a team of consultants to conduct the Comprehensive Review Project by selecting the best available professionals through an open and transparent qualifications-based selection process. The process included the issuance of publicly advertised Request for Proposal (RFP) documents resulting in multiple proponent submissions. The proposals were reviewed using pre-determined selection criteria resulting in a shortlist for each category. Short-listed candidates were invited to an interview with the Strategic Planning Committee, and selections of candidates were made by the Strategic Planning Committee were best suited to the assignment.

The consultant contracts were within the \$800,000 budget allowed for the Project.

### Team Composition

- Project Management:** Stantec Consulting Ltd.
- Strategic Planning, Public Engagement / Vision:** Intelligent Futures
- Buildings Asset Assessment:** Associated Engineering
- Infrastructure Asset Assessment:** Associated Engineering
- Landscape Assessment:** Crosby Hanna & Associates
- Uses of Land Assessment:** Froese Consulting Inc.
- Governance, Institutional Design & Financial Modeling:** Conroy Ross Partners

What We Heard:

What do you love about Wascana Centre?

(larger words appeared more frequently in responses)



What We Heard:

What changes would you like to see in Wascana Centre?

(larger words appeared more frequently in responses)



What We Heard:

What are your hopes and dreams for Wascana Centre in the next 50 years?

(larger words appeared more frequently in responses)



# Findings & Analysis

## **Strategic Planning & Public Engagement:**

Intelligent Futures was tasked to engage stakeholders and the public for the purpose of gathering input to the Vision, Mission and Mandate for Wascana Centre over the Next 50 years. The public was engaged through events, message boards, meetings with individuals and identified groups, and social media. , Four specific elements were looked at:

- The current reality: a realistic snapshot of Wascana Centre in 2012;
- Trends for the Future: trends that highlight the potential new reality Wascana will need to address and adapt to in coming decades;
- Vision: a picture of the desired future for Wascana Centre; and,
- Measures of Success: tangible metrics towards achieving the Vision.

The public engagement process revealed the passionate attachment the public holds for Wascana Centre. The public believe they “own the Park” and view it as a unique and necessary part of their environment.

It is clear that a growing population views it is imperative to protect the environment and to safeguard the watershed even beyond the current Wascana Centre boundaries and as a result the quality of a limited precious water resource.

The Public Engagement led to a Vision for Wascana Centre in 2063:

“Wascana Centre is a masterpiece on the prairies, a legacy that is a cornerstone of our capital city, our region and our province – a place welcoming to everyone”.

The Public Engagement process provided the Committee with information to prepare the following aspirational descriptions of success.

The Strategic Planning and Public Engagement process allowed a Vision for the future to be articulated as described above. This vision when compared to the analysis of Wascana Center at present allowed for the gaps to be analyzed and the opportunities and challenges to be assessed.

"Wascana Centre reflects a thriving healthy watershed. Wascana Centre embodies our collaboration and our commitment to preserve and enhance the natural systems we all depend upon".

"Wascana Centre is a beautiful place; Wascana Centre is a beautiful oasis in the city".

"Wascana Centre is accessible to everyone. Wascana Centre is a democratic space. It is Regina's back yard; Saskatchewan's Capital and is open to us all".

"The design and maintenance of a variety of natural spaces provide opportunities to connect with nature".

"Wascana Centre provides a diversity of activity. Wascana Centre has a wealth of year-round community activities. Celebrations, cultural events, quiet reflection, debate and decision-making, education and recreation are all found here".

"The buildings and infrastructure complement the park setting, adding to the beauty of the Centre and reflecting the highest design standards".

## Building and Infrastructure Review

### Building Assessments

Associated Engineering was contracted in March 2012 to perform condition assessments of Wascana Centre Authority's buildings. The results are included in the companion detailed report and in the attached appendices. Condition assessments were performed on 22 facilities. These 22 facilities included:

- 2 commercial buildings;
- 8 depots and maintenance shops;
- 8 washrooms; and,
- 4 miscellaneous facilities.

The buildings were assessed by visual inspection, discussion with Wascana Centre Authority staff, document review, and engineering judgment. The repairs were prioritized using the Facility Condition Index (FCI). The assessment revealed the following key information:

- 35% of building assets have already met or exceeded their theoretical life cycle;
- 13% of the buildings have less than ten years of remaining life; and,
- 15% have less than 20 years of remaining life.
- 4 buildings were considered to be in good condition;
- 4 in adequate condition; and,
- 14 in poor condition.

### Buildings Analysis

The capital investment required to repair and/or update buildings was estimated by Associated Engineering to be:

- \$4.64M required for immediate repairs and updates; and,
- \$27.0M anticipated for replacing or updating buildings over the next 20 years.

### Landscape Assessment

Crosby, Hanna & Associates conducted an assessment of the Wascana Landscapes including soft landscape, bollards, site furniture, irrigation, art features, monuments and memorials, and play areas. A

database of park components and their condition was included for park staff usage in the future.

Crosby, Hanna & Associates found that overall:

- The turf is healthy;
- Larger pathway systems could be utilized to reduce wear and tear on the turf;
- Many trees are at the end of their respective life cycles and need to be replaced;
- A pruning program to preserve older trees, and prolong younger trees life is desirable;
- Within the natural areas, evasive plant species should be eradicated over time;
- The irrigation system lines are well over their expected life cycle; and,
- Certain lines contain asbestos.

### **Landscape Analysis**

The capital investment required to upgrade the landscape to an acceptable standard over the next 10 years was estimated by Crosby Hanna to be \$22.1M.

### **Infrastructure Assessment**

Infrastructure assessments were performed by Associated Engineering. Only assets that Wascana Centre Authority is responsible for maintaining were evaluated. Assessments included detailed desktop reviews of available information, interviews with Wascana Centre Authority staff, and visual inspections. Roads, parking lots, sidewalks, pathways, retaining walls, pedestrian bridges, pump houses, overlooks, dock systems, lake overlooks, and aeration systems and foundations were assessed.

Associated Engineering found:

- 32% of the roads are in 'Very Good' condition;
- 19% of the roads are in 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' condition;
- Parking lots are in decent condition with 79% being in 'Fair' to 'Very Good' condition;
- Sidewalks and pathways were also deemed to be in 'Very Good' condition with only 1% rated as 'Poor'.

### **Infrastructure Analysis**

Capital investments were estimated at \$16.76 M to repair or replace the infrastructure within the next 10 years.





## Summary Building, Infrastructure & Landscape Review

Estimated minimum costs for current and future maintenance and repairs are estimated to be:

2013 to 2018	\$ 20,708,000
2019 to 2024	\$ 18,719,000
2025 to 2030	\$ 12,213,000
2031 to 2036	\$ 2,729,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 54,219,000</b>

(The foregoing does not include up to \$ 27 million in building replacement costs.)

The assessment portion of the review provided the necessary information to evaluate the present and projected future infrastructure needs and costs for Wascana Centre forecasted to 2036. A forecast beyond that horizon was thought unlikely to be reliable.





## Potential Additional / Alternate Sources of Revenue

### Use of Land

Froese Consulting Inc. was engaged to perform a feasibility study on the revenue generation potential of the lands owned by the Authority. Based on a preliminary overview of possibilities, two opportunities were selected for potential revenue generation; a coffee shop and/or cafés, and redevelopment of the nursery area for residential-type use.

The public identified a desire for more services within the Park. These possible services could sensitively be included in locations within the park where users could relax and treat themselves to a coffee or a sandwich. Potential locations are those easily accessible by public and where enough traffic would make them economically viable.

A second opportunity for revenue generation exists in the possible redevelopment of the area currently used for the 'Tree Nursery' within Wascana Centre. Potential options include hotels and/or high density residential development. Retail, Office, or (Industrial uses were not considered appropriate or feasible.)

Other possible revenue generating opportunities were examined by Conroy Ross Associates and include:

- Corporate Sponsorships
- Volunteer Program Formalization
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Charitable Foundation, WCA lottery, Permits and Fees, Events, Retail, and Enhanced Education Programming Warrants further study – Incremental Revenue Opportunity

### Use of Land Analysis

Coffee Shops, Cafés, Kiosks:

- Considered to be feasible and responsive to public interest but not considered to have significant revenue generating potential

Services

- Services like a Physiotherapy clinic possibly near Douglass Park considered to be feasible and responsive to public interest but not considered to have significant revenue generating potential

Development

- Development on Nursery Lands possibly could generate one time revenue of between \$5.2M to \$11.7M

None of the revenue generating opportunities examined could realistically be expected to make a significant contribution to the operating and repair/maintenance cost requirement for Wascana Centre.

## Forecasted Operating Costs

Conroy Ross Partners conducted research and worked with Wascana Centre staff to assess operational costs, examine possibilities for efficiency, and forecast costs of operations. The expenses analyzed included:

- General maintenance of capital assets (roads, buildings, landscape and infrastructure)
- Engineering services, utilities, horticulture, forestry, community relations and administration.

### Analysis

Operating costs are expected to gradually rise from the current about \$6.5M annually to over \$10M annually over the next 25 years. A forecast beyond 25 years could not be reasonably be made.

Consolidation and other operational measures have the potential to produce efficiencies, however these were not assumed to be the result of reduced levels of service.

A summary of the forecasted costs for current and future maintenance/repairs and operating costs is as follows:

The Strategic Planning and Visioning work helped the Committee understand the expectations the citizens of Saskatchewan have for the future of Wascana Centre. It also put the importance of Wascana Centre as a cultural resource for the future into sharp focus.

The evaluation of the current state of Wascana Centre land, landscape, building and infrastructure assets provided valuable information to assess the commitment required to maintain the current asset base. The additional forecast for operating costs provides context for the level of investment necessary to operate Wascana Centre at a current level of service into the future. The opportunity and challenge now is to define an operating model most likely to secure Wascana Centre' future.

Years	Maintenance Costs	Operating Costs	Total
2013 to 2018	\$ 20,708,000	\$ 37,500,000	\$ 50,208,000
2019 to 2024	\$ 18,719,000	\$ 42,500,000	\$ 61,219,000
2025 to 2030	\$ 12,213,000	\$ 47,500,000	\$ 59,713,000
2031 to 2036	\$ 2,729,000	\$ 50,000,000	\$ 52,729,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 54,369,000</b>	<b>\$ 177,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 231,869,000</b>

## Governance and Operating Model Options A

The options for governance and operating models for Wascana Centre are focused on five key areas in relation to ten other parks and cultural agencies worldwide. The Benchmarking and Best Practices professional review completed by Conroy Ross Partners focused on the enterprise (vision, mission, and mandate) and the ways in which governance, management and organizational structure reflected and facilitated this strategic intent. Areas examined included:

- Strategic positioning of the organization;
- Development orientation of the organization having to do with construction of facilities, further development of the Park or expansion of the overall land area;
- Resource procurement / usage;
- Organizational Structure of the Entity; and,
- Accountability.

Based on information gained from Strategic Best Practices review, the Strategic Planning Committee agreed to the following principles that would inform the future governance and management model for Wascana Centre:

“Land owners must be accountable for the operation and maintenance of their land”;

“Wascana Centre vision must inform what the Partners strive to achieve together”;

“There is a need to be open and transparent to the public”;

“A ‘precinct’ approach can help inform uses for different sections of the land area within Wascana Centre”;

Additional findings include:

- Simplification of the governance and operation of Wascana Centre provides opportunities in advancing the vision;
- Securing statutory protection of the lands and the land use should be pursued;
- Openness to the pursuit of revenue opportunities is encouraged; and,
- Citizen experience matters.

Based on the findings the Partners want to ensure effective coordination of Wascana Centre so that Citizens can continue to benefit from use of the Park.



### **Governance Structure Alternatives**

Three fundamental findings influence the future model for governance, management and operation of The Wascana Centre. These are:

- The Vision for Wascana Centre is to continue and enhance the services provided;
- To achieve the Vision major capital and operating investments will be required; and,
- Commercial land development and enhanced revenue generation opportunities do not have the potential to by themselves meet this funding gap.

### **Analysis**

Five alternative scenarios were proposed to the Strategic Planning Committee to be considered for the future governance of Wascana Centre Authority. These options include:

- Maintain the status quo with increased funding; to,
- Dissolution of Wascana Centre Authority and responsibility for stewardship falling to each of the land owners.

The advantages and disadvantages for each option were carefully examined and the revenue opportunities were modeled.

### **Conclusion**

The preferred recommended option deemed to provide the best chance to preserve the legacy Wascana Centre was arrived at:

- A new governance model that would see the Government of Saskatchewan lead the continued development of Wascana Centre and assume responsibility for the Authority;
- The Government of Saskatchewan would develop a model for meaningful advisory input by the original Wascana Centre Authority Partners;
- Each land owner be responsible for their Owned Lands and Assets under an overarching agreement; and
- The Partners would agree to various land swaps in order to simplify future operating requirements and to consolidate the required lands for Wascana Centre.

A photograph of a large body of water, likely a lake, during sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and pink, with the sun low on the horizon. The water reflects these colors. In the foreground, several ducks are swimming in a line. The background shows a dark line of trees and a building on a hill.

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To help guide the work towards the Vision for the future the Committee arrived at the following “Descriptions of Success”:

- Wascana Centre is a beautiful place
- Wascana Centre reflects a thriving watershed
- Wascana Centre provides a diversity of activities
- Wascana Centre is accessible to everyone”



# Conclusions

The terms of reference for the Wascana Comprehensive Review Project have satisfied and as a result four key findings are:

1. A clear understanding of the passionate attachment the people of Saskatchewan have for this 'masterpiece on the Prairies';
2. The extent of the financial investment required to bring the infrastructure and lands into proper condition both in the near term, and into the future;
3. A new governance model that would see the Government of Saskatchewan lead the continued development of Wascana Centre and assume responsibility for the Authority;
4. The Government of Saskatchewan would develop a model for meaningful advisory input by the original Wascana Centre Authority partners (who remain responsible for the lands/structures they own within Wascana Centre) and future key stakeholder groups.

In the half-century since Wascana Centre Authority was created by an Act of the Saskatchewan Legislature, much has been achieved in developing, protecting and expanding this magnificent urban park.

However, current and future challenges required Wascana Centre Authority to conduct this sweeping review of where we stand today, and what needs to be done to maintain and grow Wascana Centre into the future.

- Hard questions were asked, and valuable answers were returned.
- Meeting the future requires change.
- Wascana Centre must be preserved and enhanced to continue the legacy.
- The people of Saskatchewan demand no less!

## Recommendations

The result of the work is a clear understanding of the challenges ahead in order to successfully achieve a refreshed vision for Wascana Centre. This refreshed vision leads to three core recommendations:

Wascana be preserved and enhanced as a place for people respecting the wonderful legacy achieved over the past 100 years (including protection of the watershed);

The Government of Saskatchewan lead the continued development of Wascana Centre and assume responsibility for the Authority;

Each Land Owner be responsible for their Owned Lands and Assets under an overarching Agreement.

To help guide the work towards the Vision for the future the Committee arrived at the following "Descriptions of Success":

Wascana Centre is a beautiful place;

Wascana Centre reflects a thriving watershed;

Wascana Centre provides a diversity of activities; and

Wascana Centre is accessible to everyone.

This report is a companion to a more detailed project report prepared by Conroy Ross Partners and individual technical reports prepared by: Intelligent Futures, Associated Engineering, Crosby Hanna and Froese Consulting Inc.



