











Assiniboine Park Governance Study

February 2006 (Revised)



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Overview

In April, 2005, Assiniboine Park Enterprise ("APE") mandated The Acumen Group in collaboration with Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram, and their team ("the Project Team") to complete a governance review regarding Assiniboine Park ("the Park") and make recommendations on options for its future leadership and organization.

This report is organized into nine sections, the principal seven of which include:

- ***The Compelling Case for Change:*** while an attractive physical presence, the Park is long overdue for an updated strategic plan, contemporary fundraising program, and modernized organizational structure to revitalize its luster and status as a tourist destination for the city and the province.

- ***Current Governance Reality:*** a summary of how the Park is organized now, including the role of the City of Winnipeg ("the City") and its various functional contributors, the different not-for-profit organizations and their leadership roles within the Park, and a strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats ("SWOT") analysis of the present governance situation.

- ***Methodology:*** our work was divided into two primary activities:
  - an initial research phase, that entailed understanding the current Park context, assessing existing operations, benchmarking the Park's experience against other parks in transition, and reviewing the legal/regulatory authority within which the City operates; and
  - two successive interview rounds with many key stakeholders (listed in the Methodology section), seeking their input and feedback on possible new models for governing and creating new organizational administration for the Park.

- ***Lessons Learned from Other Parks:*** on the basis of research conducted through interviews or secondarily with parks across North America, we have provided a summary of lessons most applicable to and adaptable for the Park. A more detailed reporting of sources and information uncovered is found in the Appendix to this report.



"Duck Pond at Assiniboine Park"
by Roman Swiderek

- ***Principles and Criteria for Good Governance:*** throughout the course of this assignment – and expressly through discussion with stakeholders – principles and criteria were confirmed that can become the barometer for measuring the success of any new governance structure.

- ***Governance Options:*** discussion with multiple stakeholders (including users, union representatives, leadership from within the non-profit organizations operating within the Park, City staff working in the park and its attractions, and senior management from across the City), and the presentation and review of distinctive potential future options satisfying the governance principles and criteria led the Project Team to short-list three primary options for ultimate consideration. All are discussed in detail in this report, including their respective opportunities, limits and risks. Strong alignment across stakeholders groups was found around the following core features:

  – The need for a "one-entity" reorganization of all civic functions pertaining to the Park;

  – The need for a chief executive officer, who would have principle authority to develop and execute a multi-year business plan for the Park, based on a strategy developed in concert with the organization's senior management team;

  – The need for a governance structure that ensured:
    a) the expertise of each of the non-profit organizations currently operating within the Park be represented;
    b) public interests were reflected and represented on this new structure;
    c) this new entity have over-arching responsibility for the "new Park" as a single entity;
    d) annual financial support from the City would continue; and
    e) this board be responsible for working with the chief executive officer to ensure the monitoring of and support for the rolling business plan.



- ***Recommendations:*** the report concludes that the "Conservancy" model (described in detail below) is the most appropriate evolution in the Park's governance and management at this point. Arguments for why are set out in the Recommendations section. Additionally, it concludes that:
  - The Conservancy should be established by Special Act of provincial legislature, as contemplated under the *City of Winnipeg Charter*;
  - The City open discussions with the Province as soon as is convenient regarding the feasibility of and timetable for the proposed non-profit structure; and that
  - Time be considered of the essence in establishing the new governance and administrative model.



In 2003, over 50,000 people attended the annual Teddy Bears' Picnic in Assiniboine Park



A Pedestrian Bridge links Assiniboine Park to Portage Avenue, 1932

Nature of the Assignment

This study follows a recently-completed consultative process to develop a plan ("the Framework Plan") for the future restoration and enhancement of all things in the Park. Many aspects of Park operations had already been studied exhaustively on an individual, group or venue basis. The Project Team had access to that information during this assignment.

Given the work to date, we determined early on that it was critical to focus on higher order governance issues. In particular to ensure the Framework Plan's vision could be achieved in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective manner – without losing the benefit of the passion that stakeholders of all forms – bring to this living entity. To do this, everyone involved had to join in, accept and become part of the governance study process, to create any opportunity for consensual thinking to emerge.

The Project Team set out to determine and recommend a governance model for the entire Park. A model that streamlined decision making, established where authority for day-to-day decision making would reside, defined what a new "whole park" structure might look like, identified where synergies might exist horizontally across departments and across volunteer organizations – all with a view to creating a strategic, proactive approach to thinking about future needs and management.

Considerable work preceded this study: other outside analyses; opinion papers; stakeholder representations to Winnipeg City Council; and more. The timing of this study was therefore able to leverage off that fore-thought by all interested parties. The end result was an obvious interest from the outset – across participant groups – to embrace a new, creative approach to governing the Park. While individual group or departmental interests differed, a natural alignment progressively emerged throughout the roundtables as to how Park leadership should evolve.

The Project Team's task, therefore, became less one of choosing between a range of competing options, and more defining a model that drew on good governance principles, operations experience hoping to achieve the clear direction articulated by the Framework Plan.

Assiniboine Park in Retrospect

The Park has been a special part of Winnipeg since 1904, when 283 acres of woodland and prairie were purchased by the City of Winnipeg and set aside as parkland. The same year the land was purchased, Frederick G. Todd, a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted who designed New York's Central Park, was commissioned to develop plans for Assiniboine Park. He created a park layout consistent with the English Landscape Style, popularized throughout North America at the turn of the last century. This landscape style remains a legacy to the present day, presenting a distinctive appeal in the Park. Today, the Park's 403 acres of woods and meadows, the Assiniboine River, the Zoo, Conservatory, Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, the English Garden, the Lyric Band Shell and Pavilion Art Gallery and restaurants provide for diverse, rich and enjoyable park experiences, services and attractions. A portion of the Assiniboine Forest and its extensive trail system has been added to the Park. Today it is one of the leading and largest urban parks in Canada with over 1100 acres to be governed and managed for community benefit. (Figure 1) The Park land has been owned by the City since inception and will be in perpetuity.



Footbridge circa 1912



River Trail 1920



For nearly a century, the Palm House has served as one of the Park's key meeting places



Palm House 1914

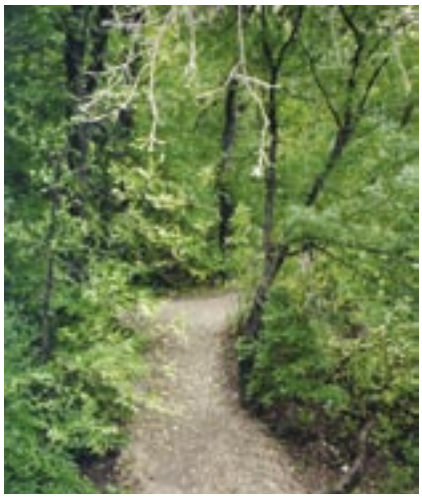


Figure 1
Assiniboine Park Map



Figure 2
Assiniboine Park & Forest Map

The Compelling Case for Change



Monkey Trail

The Park is at a critical juncture. It is a great city and provincial destination, attracting high volumes of visitors and users. And over the past decade in particular, it has attracted tremendous levels of private community-based investment, in addition to the annual financial commitment from the City. The combination of partnering has already resulted in great leveraging for Park programming.

At the same time, the Park as it's currently structured and financed is in a dramatic state of decline. Without significant new funding in infrastructure in the coming years, segments of the Park – which are either unsafe or otherwise deteriorating – will be forced to close. Clearly the organization has need for capital investment and redevelopment, beyond the one-off initiatives taken by the City and key stakeholders. The reality, however, is that the City faces a range of infrastructure demands, of which the Park is just one. Relying on local government alone for the infusion of necessary capital for Park refurbishments and growth will inevitably be an extended process.

Adding to these challenges is the Park's diffuse organizational/leadership structure. Three primary civic departments (Community Services; Public Works; and Property Planning & Development) all have Park spending and staffing responsibilities. But while each is instrumental in the Park's current operations, the evidence of any common planning, budgeting and skill/knowledge leveraging is loose, at best.

While the focus of this analysis has been on developing a model for "governing" the Park, it also examined opportunities for park-wide contracting and service delivery. Becoming more "horizontally integrated" across Park functions will enable management to identify leverage opportunities for savings and internal expertise in such areas: restaurants and concessions; operations and management; financial administration; human resource management (staff and volunteers); education and programming; the development of future service level agreements; and perhaps most importantly, through outside partnerships and in the execution of more sophisticated fundraising strategies.

The Park has been the beneficiary of inordinately generous contributions of time, energy, expertise and money from three principal non-profit entities (Zoological Society of Manitoba, Partners in the Park, Friends of the Conservatory and the Charleswood Rotary), who are critical to the delivery of programming and services. But here too, the lack of integration between City functions and Park partner organizations – and between the partner agencies themselves – results in inefficiencies, wasted expenditures, poor planning and missed opportunities for coordination and leverage.

For the Park to sustain (and ideally remodel) itself, a more contemporary leadership and administrative structure is required. One that:

- Creates a unified leadership group providing overall strategic direction;
- Understands the critical role for a combination of private and additional public sources of fundraising to augment the City's funding;
- Promotes an integrated administrative structure focused specifically on the Park, under the leadership of one senior administrator;
- Establishes a senior management team that operates the Park in a horizontally integrated fashion, focussing on "whole Park" tasks, rather than by venue or by departmental function.

While the challenge in these proposed changes would be significant, all stakeholders stand to benefit by:

- Creating one governance group will focus the Park's policy making, fundraising, planning and strategic direction setting;
- By establishing an authorized chief administrator to oversee Park operations day-to-day;



Assiniboine River

- Park staff (already deeply committed to the entity) would be working directly for the organization for which they feel strongest;

- By generating a more cohesive, coordinated opportunity for Winnipeggers to volunteer in the Park;

- By developing more integrated educational programming across Park venues; and

- By building a modern-day organization that anticipates the growth of upgraded and expanded Park services over a period consistent with the Framework Plan.



Bear Pit circa 1946

Methodology

Arriving at a recommended governance option for the Park was the culmination of a five-part process:

1. a review of current operating practices;

2. an analysis of "lessons learned" from other park transition models in North America;

3. the creation of governance criteria, which would be used as the foundation in any future governance model;

4. the development of draft models for consideration by stakeholders in a two-step facilitated process; and

5. the selection of a preferred model based on the three inputs referenced above, along with our own insights and expertise as a multi-disciplinary Project Team.

Stakeholders had two opportunities to formally participate in the process. During the initial interview stage, twelve meetings of varying size were staged where participants were invited to comment on distinct options for: a) governing; and b) administering and operating the Park. The impetus behind keeping the components separate at the outset was to allow stakeholders the most unimpeded look at possible new configurations.

The second formal process was the roundtable sessions staged from early to mid-June. In advance of meeting, participants were sent briefing materials which included, among other things, a short-list of three combined governance/organizational options, proposed Principles and Criteria of Good Governance, along with a matrix where the Project Team offered for discussion its views on how the criteria matched against each model.

In addition to the formal group work, participants were encouraged to directly contact the Project Team with ideas, questions, and/or analysis they felt would contribute to the study's objectives.



We were pleased to have had the chance to consult with more than 150 individual stakeholders, representing a wide spectrum of interests. Groups met with included:

- Park staff, notably from the Zoo, Forest and the Conservatory;
- Representatives from Partners in the Park, Friends of the Conservatory, the Zoological Society of Manitoba, and the Charleswood Rotarians;
- Senior staff from the Departments of Community Services, Planning, Property and Development and Public Works;
- Representatives of CUPE Local 500 as well as WAPSO;
- Various senior management personnel from the City; and with
- APE staff and management
- Park user groups and other park leaders.

We want to thank all those who brought their insights, energy and expertise to bear on this study.



"Late Afternoon in Assiniboine Park" by Roman Swiderek

Current Governance Reality

APE was created in April 2000 and charged with the responsibility to plan, manage and operate the Park as a business unit, including physical and financial planning. This mandate includes maintaining working relationships with four not-for-profit organizations (venues) within the Park – the Zoological Society, Friends of the Conservatory, Partners In The Park and the Charleswood Rotary Club.

A Chief Operating Officer ("COO") was appointed to lead APE in 2003. In early 2004 – with the benefit of broad participation among Park stakeholders – the Framework Plan was received by City Council. The Framework Plan is intended to guide an ambitious physical evolution of the Park in its second century.



Leo Mol Sculpture Garden

The Framework Plan identifies principles for revitalization, given the aging and deteriorating infrastructure. Development criteria are set forth for specific planning areas and opportunities. For the Framework Plan's ambitions to be realized, the web of existing governance structures within the Park would need to be streamlined into a more unified leadership model.

The present governance of the Park might well be characterized as a loose collection of services and operations within a complex bureaucracy that plans, administers, supports and delivers the Park programs. Three different City departments administer at least 20 different operational and service functions. APE is situated in the Department of Community Services and the COO reports to the Director of Community Services. The four private non-profit boards play important but separate roles, none of which report or relate directly to the COO:

- The Zoological Society employs staff and manages the Zoo concessions, gift shop, membership and education programs. The Society has a number of trust funds that support the education programs. The Society is also responsible for a volunteer program. The Society plans the advertising program for the Zoo in conjunction with the City and facilitates all media placement. It plans and conducts special events such as Boo at the Zoo during the Halloween period. In total the Zoological Society of Manitoba brings in revenue of over $1,000,000 per year and contributes to the City a percentage back to the City of Winnipeg.
- The Friends of the Conservatory provide the Park's largest

and most active volunteer base, contributing approximately $500,000 in staff time. In addition, The Friends manage the Conservatory Gift Shop, conduct major fundraising and special events, and market the Conservatory as well as the Park.

- The main responsibilities of Partners in the Park (PIP) are to coordinate the staffing, operations, marketing, fundraising, education, programming, and financial management of the three organizations it supports – the Pavilion Gallery Museum Inc., including the lease for Tavern in the Park restaurant; the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden; and the Assiniboine Park Bandshell. PIP has successfully undertaken community fundraising in excess of $20 million, which was instrumental in the creation of the facilities noted above. PIP is also responsible for setting the strategic vision and future direction to be pursued by the three venues, as well as new ventures that would attract more visitors to the Park. A key attraction coordinated by PIP is The International Friendship Festival.

- The Charleswood Rotary helps to financially support the Assiniboine Forest component of the Park.

All of these groups have been active in fundraising for their respective organizations and programs. Figure 3 depicts the as-is structure and the multiplicity of players.

The current governance reality reflects an evolution of working practices over many years through iterative growth. The City continues to provide an on-going contribution to maintaining operations in all areas of the Park. Current fiscal realities, however, have led to increased reliance on the not-for-profit organizations for volunteer resources and fundraising. Each governing entity has its own set of by-laws, rules and culture, which developed concurrently but not in concert. Achieving the objectives of the Framework Plan will require more creativity and resourcing than is currently available to the partner organizations individually or collectively. Given the current context and future demands, it becomes increasingly important that the Park speak with one voice – to the civic administration, to the public, to prospective funders and within its own ranks.



The Lyric 2003

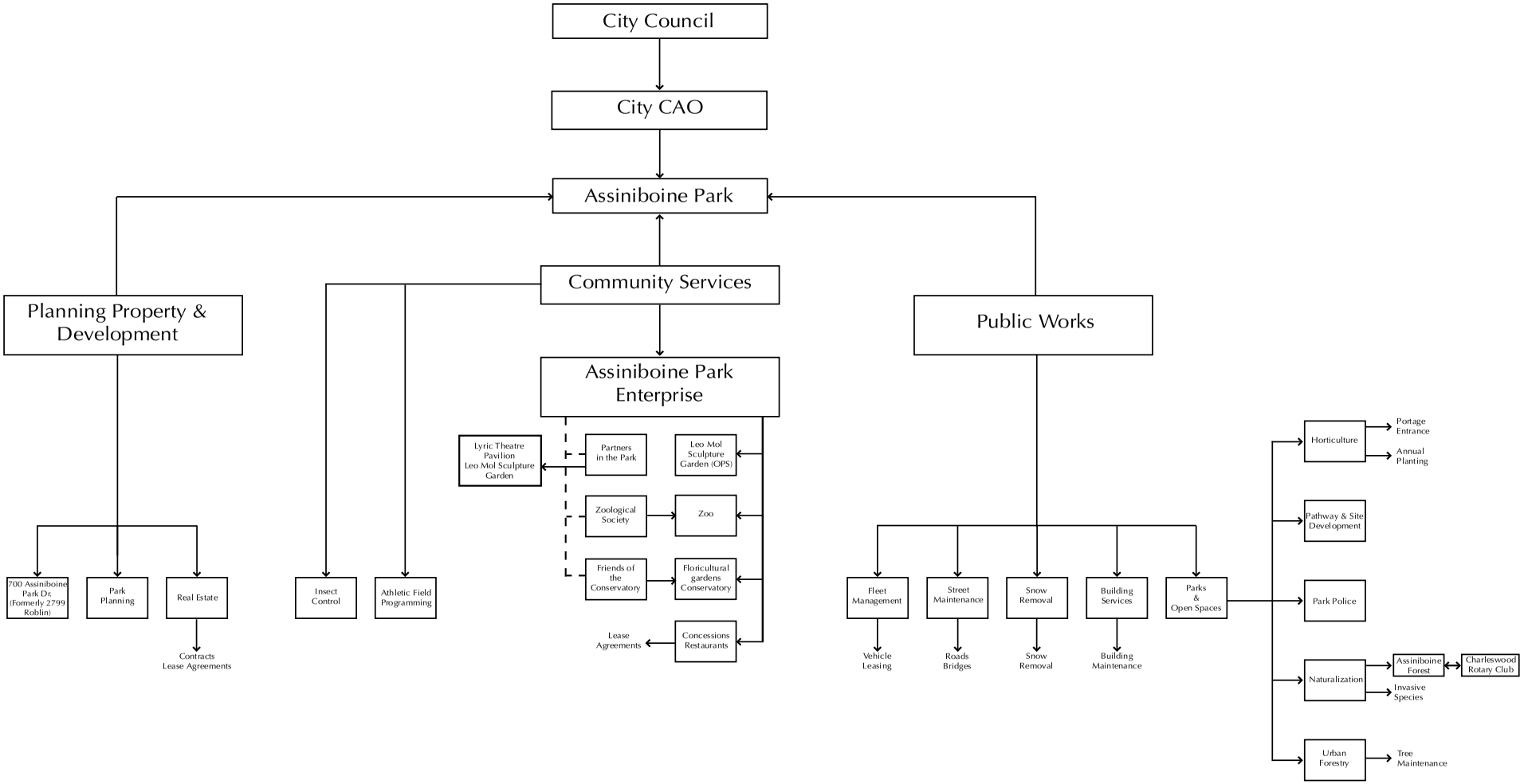


Figure 3
Assiniboine Park Current Organizational Structure

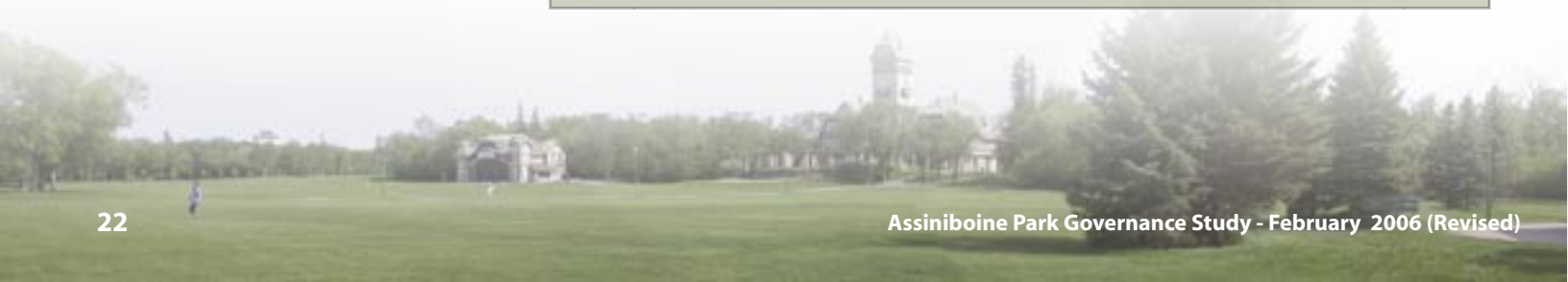
The SWOT Process

The Project Team, as an early step in the study process, held a team workshop to complete a preliminary situation analysis for the Park. This work was refined and elaborated based upon the first round of the interviews with various stakeholders and the best practices/ lessons learned research undertaken for other parks. The resultant SWOT analysis presents factors and considerations being accounted for in defining the governance models and recommendations.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT - Strengths

- The Park has a strong identity with the City's history. It is "City Park", and is much cherished and used by Winnipeggers. It represents a 'signature address' for Winnipeg.
- The parkland is owned by the City and is to be accessible to all Winnipeggers.
- Volunteerism is a key strength that has been respected, nurtured and recognized. Committed and supportive volunteerism is strongly evident in all venues
- Philanthropy has had a remarkable impact on the provision of both large and small-scale park attractions and facilities (*e.g.* the Pavilion restoration, the Lyric Theatre, the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, Zoo buildings and displays, Park benches). Philanthropy must be fully recognized, encouraged and sustained.
- A skilled, dedicated and professional staff has demonstrated strong commitment to the Park and its place in the City. The skilled professional staff must be fully acknowledged, sustained and empowered to innovate, deliver and grow Park programs.
- The Park boasts a diversity of program and venue mix (*e.g.* the Conservatory, meadows, Zoo, Assiniboine River/riparian environment, Lyric Theatre, The Pavilion). The Framework Plan presents a strong vision for building upon and enhancing this diversity.



- There is strong potential to link, theme and brand Park attractions and facilities as well as linking flora and fauna relationships between venues – *e.g.* an animal display at the Zoo can be coordinated with a habitat and food exhibit at the Conservatory, a performing arts event(s) to celebrate the species at the Lyric Theatre, and/or a fundraising campaign focussed on conservation of wild populations of the species. Additionally. there are possibilities for arts and cultural facilities within the Park to compliment and enhance park amenities – *e.g.* current public art project on the pedestrian bridge.

- The Park is already an important tourism attraction for the City and indeed, the Province, and presents future opportunities for growth.

- There is strong existing or potential connectivity with other recreation attractions and facilities including: The Forks, the Exchange District, Fort Whyte Nature Centre, and the Winnipeg Airport. Linkages and packaging of programs and events represents an important opportunity for future growth.

- High standards and an affordable range of public services are already well established (*e.g.* Tavern in the Park, Conservatory restaurant, food concessions in the Zoo).

- A strong Park vision is in place, as represented by the Framework Plan.

- The recent APE/COO initiatives and the present governance study reflect a commitment by the City to innovate and strengthen management of the Park as a distinctive and special place.

- The Park currently attracts more than 2 million visitors per annum.



SWOT - Weaknesses

- Reporting and functional relationships are unclear and as a result, unpredictable, as between volunteer organizations and APE.
- Partner organizations, City staff and City departments each conduct their own planning, budgeting and running operations and fundraising.
- Lack of clarity on the governance and operational policies/ practices of individual venues, the Park as a whole and volunteer organizations working in the Park.
- APE and its relationships with other civic departments require greater clarity; also increased investment is required in joint policy development, budgeting and planning for the Park.
- City staff roles and functionality are not strongly related to the Park as an entity. Services therefore tend to be uncoordinated and discordant with one another.
- Planning, accountability and reporting relationships are ill-defined.
- The Park's infrastructure is aging and in some cases, crumbling. Maintenance and upgrading can be characterized as a 'band-aid approach'.
- The Park has yet to be fully accessible, most notably to persons with disabilities.
- There is a weak to non-existent maintenance management system for Park assets and facilities. For example, Park trees have not been pruned for decades and grounds/gardens maintenance is not coordinated or managed to defined standards.
- The various venue programs are not well linked within an entity framework or common Park vision (*e.g.* by signage, by marketing and promotion, by program planning and implementation).
- The delivery of Park services is diffuse, with redundancies and inefficiencies.
- Park policy setting, branding, budgeting and fundraising are not well coordinated and aligned to be mutually reinforcing.

SWOT - Opportunities

- The Park is already an established destination in the City – it has 'good bones' and there is a lot to build on.
- There are skilled, knowledgeable and diverse stakeholders who have the experience and capacity to cooperate in achieving a common vision. Indeed, there is a strong sense of the need to promote and manage the Park as an entity – "the whole being greater than the sum of its parts."
- Philanthropy on both small and large scale will continue to be a contributing force in the Park's development.
- There is tremendous opportunity for enhanced and better-organized volunteer participation across the Park.
- There are many and diverse ways to increase public use access; to grow Park programs and realize a 'New Assiniboine Park'.
- There are recognized opportunities to strengthen linkages among and between venues, including program integration, signage, education and overall attendance.
- There is a strong sense of commitment to matching Park governance to its vision, as articulated in the Framework Plan.
- There is a widely acknowledged need for, and opportunity to, enhance/coordinate planning and accountability across the Park.



SWOT - Threats

- Deeply vested interests at both individual venue and City department levels may attempt to derail or resist needed changes.
- The Park updated vision represents high aggregate costs – capital / sustainable operation and maintenance.
- Inaction threatens the Park's future sustainability, even at current program levels, including the on-going support of key stakeholders.
- Present ad hoc actions could preclude future opportunities.
- Failure to invest in decaying infrastructure will lead to further decline in use and future viability of Park programs.
- Reactive, project-driven approach to planning and opportunities.



Principles and Criteria for Good Governance



Assiniboine Park Zoo Polar Bear Enclosure
Concept by Torre Design Consortium LTD.
Sketch By Dennis Appler

As a backdrop to the consultation process, the Project Team drew on a definition of modern park governance, developed by the Fifth World Parks Congress 2003, which was circulated in advance to participants. We felt the boundaries, standards and expectations set out in this definition merited repeating in our final report:

> *The interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say.*

Part of knowing whether the City, the non-profit leadership groups, and users of the Park in general are heading in an appropriate direction with any new governance model, is to be clear about the criteria. More specifically, how is the applicability and ultimate success of any new governance model to be assessed?

The criteria noted below are the end result of dialogue with stakeholders at each of the roundtable sessions. While drawn in part from the "best practice" experience in other jurisdictions, these eleven criteria are intended to reflect the nature of the Winnipeg market and this Park in particular.

The criteria noted below were used to assist with the evaluation of structural alternatives for Park governance. The criteria's function was to provide a rational and consistent approach when comparing the final draft models that emerged and became known as – Conservancy Option I, Conservancy Option II and SOA. The objective was to analyze the options presented in terms of the stated criteria. These criteria reflect input from the first round of stakeholder interview sessions held in May 2005.

Core Criteria:

The new governance structure should be designed around the following principles:

- Governing the whole Park as one entity;
- Operating cross-functionally within the Park;
- A high level governance capability of any new structure to:
  i. Set direction,
  ii. Delegate authority to the people doing the work,
  iii. Monitor (check) progress;
- Clarity of accountability in terms of board governance work versus Park operations;
- Successful execution of the Framework Plan;
- Private fundraising and an annual City contribution;
- Retention of revenue raised by Park related activities;
- Independent and streamlined processes for board governance and operational decision making;
- Respect for current labour agreements;
- Volunteerism throughout the Park;
- External and internal partnerships.





Conceptual Drawings of New Proposed Conservatory
Design by Stechesen Katz Architects
Sketches By Dennis Appler

Lessons Learned

An important early step in the governance study process was reviewing the experience of other parks and park systems in North America that have undergone or are considering transitions in governance. A total of ten park programs were reviewed, with direct interviews conducted with seven senior park managers. The details of these reviews and interviews are reported in the Appendix. Figure 4 presents a summary matrix of key findings. This summary was reviewed with stakeholders as part of this study. The presence of Doug Blonsky, President of the Central Park Conservancy, New York on the Project Team added a deep and substantive dimension to the best practices review. Doug's 20 years of hands-on experience with Central Park was insightful during the early work on best practices. He then came to Winnipeg and conducted a series of meetings where interactive and substantive exchanges produced detailed insights for how Central Park's experience could be relevant to Winnipeg's future planning.

No two parks are alike, and while the results of best practices research were useful, the Project Team made every effort to ground them in the particular needs, opportunities and constraints of the Park. Prevailing lessons learned and best practices features from other parks include:



Redeveloped Duck Pond
Sketch By Dennis Appler

- An overall governance function for a major and distinctive park entity such as Assiniboine Park is important. Typically, a Board of Directors has been created for overall governance, reflecting the political and social context of the community. The most effective boards avoid involvement in day-to-day park operations, have members who care about and are committed to parks, concentrate on providing policy oversight, are accountable to the community, effectively fund raise and foster partnerships.

- Political accountability is required; political interference breeds reactive and disjointed program management and delivery.

- A CEO position, where operations, program coordination and accountability are clearly fixed at the park entity level.

- A strategic planning framework for park capital development, programming and operational decision-making is critical.

Park/ Park System and Key Governance Characteristics	Resource Characteristics			
	Partnerships	Financial Resources	Human Resources	Facilities
Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), Saskatoon, SK				
Created by Provincial Act 3 Party Authority - Province, City, U. of Sask. 12 member board - 4 from each party General Manager Reports to Board Development Review Committee reviews and Recommends development to MVA MVA holds public forums for development review	3 Main Partners	Statutory funding from each partner - 33% each Fund raising for projects Meewasin Foundation Inc. No User Fees	General Manager and Staff	40 kms. of paved trails River access nodes 2 Interpretive Centres No maintenance mandate Developments turned over to landowners with maintenance agreements
Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC				
Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation 7 Commissioners elected for 3 year terms when City Council is elected Features Community Consultation Mandate Uses Plebiscites for Major Projects General Manager and District Managers Report to Board - Stanley District Manager	Not for Profit Stanley Park Ecological Society delivers environmental education & interpretive programs	60% city funding 40% revenue retention from concessions, gift shop, parking (6% of gross sales of venues) Parking fees a big revenue source 3 Year Capital Referendum Vote	General Manager Part of Stanley District of Vancouver park system Highly unionized Uniformed Ranger force Eco-rangers give nature tours, serve as advisors Volunteer parking patrol	Seawall, Forest, Aquarium Lawn bowling, trails
Calgary Zoo, Botanical Garden & Prehistoric Park, Calgary, AB				
Land and Property owned by City of Calgary Calgary Zoological Society (CSZ) created under provincial society act, not for profit and they run everything under an operating agreement The Board is strictly governance - elected by the members of the society . Members serve 3 year term, for no more than 3 terms CEO Hired by Board to manage and operate Calgary Zoo Foundation - fund raise, set investment policy CZS Board elects members	Not emphasized Engage community through programs, attractions and services CZS runs everything No contracting out No partner run entities	$5 million operating Grant from city $7.5 million in admissions $2 million memberships $5 million food and beverage $2 million in gifts, Merchandise $1 million in fund raising $ 1 million from Education programs	Flat Organization CEO and 6 Directors Director of Business Ops. Director of Corporate Affairs and Finance Director Education, Conservation & Scientific Research Director of Development Director of Live Collections Director of Facilities Planning & Maintenance	Zoo, Botanical Gardens, Prehistoric Park, Open Space Complete Facilities Mgmt Program - Management Info System -
Parks Canada				
Parks Canada Agency A federal SOA with an Executive Board of Civil Servants reporting to Minister > 5000 federal employees in H. Q. , regional & park units Public Charter Statement of Mandate, Role and commitments	Many partners (e.g. NCC), some co-management agreements Friends of Associations under agreements	75% federal appropriations 25% direct revenue retention No active donor program	Federal civil servants under separate collective bargaining Co-management agreements contract out selected services e.g. food concessions	Diverse trails, parkways Campgrounds, day use Interpretive programs/facilities Maintenance management systems vary
Royal Botanical Garden, Burlington, ON				
Registered charitable organization : transfer agency Governed by volunteer board of directors comprised of community members and appointed representatives of four levels of government, McMaster University and the Garden's Auxiliary Board's responsibilities: • to ensure that the Gardens fulfills its legislated mandate • to ensure that its mission, policies & strategies are appropriate and current • to ensure financial responsibility in asset management, future resources & capital spending • advocates the Garden's interests to the political & corporate sectors and community Currently undergoing major reorginization in board structure and operational management Chief CEO put in place in 2004 to turn around organization & management	termed a 'trandfer agency' receive 30% of funding from government, must be sustainable to function number of endowment funds and trusts RBG Crown Foundation	2003 Annual Report Operating grants Province of Ontario $1.6 million City of Hamilton $575,610 Reg Municipality of Halton $544,460 total: $2.7 million Other sources: def. Capital contributions investment income admissions donations from Auxiliary membership fees & donations user fees & other income total: $5 million	CEO and 6 Directors Director, Planning, Policy & board Coordination Director, Financial Services & Business Development Director, Human Resources Director, Public Affairs Director, Physical Plant & Oper. Director, Enterprise Initiatives Director, Horticultural Services Director, Research & Natural Lands	Canada's largest botanical garden cultural, education & scientific institution 1,100 hectares (2,700 acres) 120 ha (297 a) are cultivated remaining: managed natural area consisting of marshland, woodland, meadow, Niagara Escarpment, agricultural land Arboretum Mediterranean Garden 30 k trail system Cootes Paradise Sanctuary Nature Interpretive Centre

Figure 4
Best Practices/Lessons Learned

Park/ Park System and Key Governance Characteristics	Resource Characteristics			
	Partnerships	**Financial Resources**	**Human Resources**	**Facilities**
Central Park, New York, NY				
Central Park Conservancy public/private partnership with City of New York contract with New York City for maintenance, public programming and capital restoration of Central Park management agreement since 1998	public/private partnership with NYC City commissioner sits on Conservancy Board	Annual budget: $3.5M NYC $23M Conservancy • private donations • volunteer labour	160 full time Conservancy employees 25 City employees Conservancy employees are non-unionized City employees being phased out through attrition 150 fulltime volunteers assist gardeners	843 acre park • pedestrian paths • water reservoir and lakes • running track • 21 playgrounds • carousel • open air theatre • gardens, meadows, etc.
Parks Systems - USA				
San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department				
7 person unpaid Parks Commission appointed by mayor General Manager appointed by Mayor Parks Commission approves annual city funding Parks, Open Space Advisory Comm (Prosac) – 23 members appointed by city provides community oversight, input and plan reviews	Partner with a local parks advocacy group The Neighbourhood Parks Council who run a citizen driven park inspection program ParksScan - in turn funded by a foundation	33% from City 23% from open space fund - dedicated property tax revenue to parks 23% from program revenue retention 6% parking revenues 16% capital - bond issues	City staff, partnerships, volunteers	Diverse parks, recreation, open space system, citizen inspection program for park facilities maintenance
Chicago Park District (CPD)				
CPD is overseen by a Parks Superintendent who is appointed by Mayor (Mayor has championed parks) CPD is a separate taxing authority for dedicated parks funding CPD can issue bonds for capital funds	Multiple Partnerships with Community Groups	Dedicated Funding Taxing Authority Bond issues	City Staff Partnerships, private companies Volunteers in Parks Program	Diverse parks, recreation, open space system Parks maintenance under separate department System wide repairs on 1-5 scale Electronic tracking of maintenance All CPD parks pruned every 5 years 24 hour graffiti response
Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPR)				
BPR and Boston Centres for Youth & Families (BCYF) BPR - maintenance and beautification BCYF services delivery and youth advocacy BPR headed by Commissioner appointed by Mayor BCYF headed by Executive Director and amalgamates several earlier separated programs - community centres, community partnerships, recreation division	BPR has several private partners BCYF builds partnerships	Department budgets not disaggregated by funding source External Funds Budget receives grants from other levels of government & private contributors	City Staff Partnerships Volunteers	Diverse parks, recreation, open space Boston Parks Inspection Program (BPIP) Condition: 8 indicators pathways, play courts, play equipment fountains, benches, fences, scrubs, ball fields) 75% pass: acceptable 6 of 8 indicators Appearance: 5 indicators litter/glass, signage, graffiti, weeds, grass) Two inspections /year
Manitoba Provincial Parks Business Planning				
Obtained Best Practices from 3 other systems: Ontario Provincial Parks, Alberta Provincial Parks, and the Parks Canada Agency	Partnership development proactive Dedicated position to partnership development Exclusive rights agreements important for successful partnerships	Pricing Policies Merchandizing Revenue Generation Policies Financial Targets Revenue retention is key Capital infrastructure investments/ re-investments	Training and Skills development Competitive Remuneration Reward and recognition Volunteers recruitment, development, recognition, management	Inspections Tracking and Annually Aggregated Life cycle policies and replacement Safety and security Clear Maintenance and Service Standards

Figure 4
Best Practices/Lessons Learned

Park/ Park System and Key Governance Characteristics	Strategic & Business Planning • Environmental Stewardship • Public Education / Interpretation • Recreation / Visitor Services	Marketing & Communications	Comments/Observations
Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), Saskatoon, SK			
Created by Provincial Act 3 Party Authority - Province, City, U. of Sask. 12 member board - 4 from each party General Manager Reports to Board Development Review Committee reviews and Recommends development to MVA MVA holds public forums for development review	5 year strategic plan reflects 3 mandates: Environmental Stewardship Conservation of River Valley Recreation Access and Development	Distinctive Logo MVA Signage Special Events - Pelican Watch	**Interpretive programs in both natural and cultural heritage well integrated with schools** **River component has made province major partner** **Maintenance clearly separate**
Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC			
Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation 7 Commissioners elected for 3 year terms when City Council is elected Features Community Consultation Mandate Uses Plebiscites for Major Projects General Manager and District Managers Report to Board - Stanley District Manager	No Strategic Framework	Don't proactively market & promote at park level Provincially marketed as tourism attraction 7,000,000 visitors/annum	**Maintenance a major challenge, e.g. old roadways, no maintenance mgt system** **Reactive, Politicized Mgmt** **Elected Commissioners have assisted project fund raising** **Parking fees noteworthy funding source** **Rangers on bikes, roller blades, & foot highly visible/available**
Calgary Zoo, Botanical Garden & Prehistoric Park, Calgary, AB			
Land and Property owned by City of Calgary Calgary Zoological Society (CSZ) created under provincial society act, not for profit and they run everything under an operating agreement The Board is strictly governance - elected by the members of the society . Members serve 3 year term, for no more than 3 terms CEO Hired by Board to manage and operate Calgary Zoo Foundation - fund raise, set investment policy CZS Board elects members	Five and Twenty Year Strategic Plans Mainly capital focus 3 year operational budget - revolving	Marketing and Promotion Active Innovations to generate revenue & engage community e.g. banquet halls Major events Marketing Strategy managed by Director of Development	**Non Profits Need to Make Money** **Innovations in Revenue Gen.** **e.g. banquet halls, conferencing, seminar and meeting functions transitioned away from unionized staff avoiding "friends of" and society types of relationships** **Very entrepreneurial, self sufficient approach** **Zoo becomes significant asset for entire community** **Governance stays away from operations** **Avoid punch clock mentality**
Parks Canada			
Parks Canada Agency A federal SOA with an Executive Board of Civil Servants reporting to Minister > 5000 federal employees in H. Q. , regional & park units Public Charter Statement of Mandate, Role and commitments	Five year Corporate Plan and Annual Reports Ecological Integrity Public Benefit, Education and Enjoyment Partnerships	Distinct Logo, Branding Efforts, Consistency in Signage Actively Promoted in Canadian Tourism literature	**Don't underestimate costs of setting up separate management systems, e.g. collective bargaining** **Don't go this route to save dollars** **autonomy has produced creativity and better customer service development and training needed** **Revenue retention a key**
Royal Botanical Garden, Burlington, ON			
Registered charitable organization : transfer agency Governed by volunteer board of directors comprised of community members and appointed representatives of four levels of government, McMaster University and the Garden's Auxiliary Board's responsibilities: • to ensure that the Gardens fulfills its legislated mandate • to ensure that its mission, policies & strategies are appropriate and current • to ensure financial responsibility in asset management, future resources & capital spending • advocates the Garden's interests to the political & corporate sectors and community Currently undergoing major reorginization in board structure and operational management Chief CEO put in place in 2004 to turn around organization & management	2003 25 year Strategic Vision & capital expansion plan focused on: • increasing visitation • creating year round programs, display gardens & events Key components of 25 Year Vision: conservatory & rental garden at Hendrie Park Gardens major conservatory at the Arboretum with gift shop, book store, food services, rental facilities & demonstration & heritage gardens expanded special events program RBG Centre to become enterprise "hub" of The Gardens with a convention & conference centre, improved retail & food services, a science & education centre & the Gardens' administration		**RBG has been in serious trouble for some time** **in process of governance restructuring going from Board of 24 members,** **many gov't appointees and all w/ no particular skills going to a borad of 12 members to be recruited through a recruiting firm** **will require an act of legislation** **current CEO is a 'turnaround specialist' hired to bring RBG to financial stability** **"getting rid of sacred cows"** **RBG running smoothly now focus back on gardens and management and maintenance of gardens**

Figure 4
Best Practices/Lessons Learned

Park/ Park System and Key Governance Characteristics	Strategic & Business Planning • Environmental Stewardship • Public Education / Interpretation • Recreation / Visitor Services	Marketing & Communications	Comments/Observations
Central Park, New York, NY			
Central Park Conservancy public/private partnership with City of New York contract with New York City for maintenance, public programming and capital restoration of Central Park management agreement since 1998	1980 to 1984 Master Plan for Central Park • privately commissioned • conservancy works on developing separate sections of plan 8 year old Strategic Plan in process of being updated City participates in the strategic planning process Conservancy does not require City approval for Strategic Plan	Conservancy responsible for public programming, marketing, and fundraising Very strong volunteer base - treated like employees Since Conservancy has taken over responsibility, it has transformed image of Central Park	**Success of Central Park is Conservancy initiated** **Zoo Management Plan** **Park is divided into 49 zones** **Each zone is managed by a gardener who works with a crew of staff (Conservancy & City employees) & volunteers** **Gardener and crew are responsible for complete management and maintenance of their zone** **Crews have sense of ownership and pride** **Central Park mission- to be litter & graffiti free 24 hours a day**
Parks Systems - USA **San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department**			
7 person unpaid Parks Commission appointed by mayor General Manager appointed by Mayor Parks Commission approves annual city funding Parks, Open Space Advisory Comm (Prosac) – 23 members appointed by city provides community oversight, input and plan reviews	Comprehensive Strategic Plan covers communications, facilities, funding and revenue generation, maintenance, partnerships, programs, services & use Performance measures tied to each Operational Plans for each sector, 5 year time frames with measurable performance standards	Not researched	**Dedicated funding** **ParkScan Inspection Program** **GIS/GPS , citizen driven** **Strong strategic & operational planning framework, performance measures** **Diverse funding base**
Chicago Park District (CPD)			
CPD is overseen by a Parks Superintendent who is appointed by mayor (Mayor has championed parks) CPD is a separate taxing authority for dedicated parks funding CPD can issue bonds for capital funds	City space is a comprehensive open space plan Funded	Not Researched	**Dedicated funding** **Focus Parks Maintenance Noteworthy** **Keeper of the Park - specific staff person works with community patrons on issues & concerns** **Clean and Green - one day** **Spring cleanup blitz**
Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPR)			
BPR and Boston Centres for Youth & Families (BCYF) BPR - maintenance and beautification BCYF services delivery and youth advocacy BPR headed by Commissioner appointed by Mayor BCYF headed by Executive Director and amalgamates several earlier separated programs - community centres, community partnerships, recreation division	Not researched	Not researched	**Maintenance Management Noteworthy** **BPIP** **PARK customer service line** **Assesses performance annually** **Against defined levels of service**
Manitoba Provincial Parks Business Planning			
Obtained Best Practices from 3 other systems: Ontario Provincial Parks, Alberta Provincial Parks, and the Parks Canada Agency	Strategic Planning an Essential Best Practice Parks should link to their government's priorities e.g. education, health Staff involvement key in strategic planning - right to front-line staff Communicate strategic plan widely Measures outcomes, not outputs Use partnerships for environmental stewardship Inventory resources and environmental assets Hook education/interpretation to schools Use multi-media approach in public awareness & education programs Standards must be set for services provisions Avoid overuse	Use websites as marketing devices Service provisions like reservations Park branding important Consistency in signage, uniformed Staff key for branding Invest in marketing - key to growth Sound market research required	

Figure 4
Best Practices/Lessons Learned

- A fundraising focus at all functional levels – board, CEO, and within individual program operations. Public and private funding is aggressively and creatively pursued in successful parks. Private philanthropy and donations are important funding sources. Memberships in various programs and park-based organizations can be important revenue sources. Partnerships have also proven important.

- Revenue retention from concessions, events, and various user fees for attractions and services, such as parking, is essential.

- A long-term maintenance management strategy is critical. Degraded facilities and services quickly spawn further deterioration and reductions in park use. Clear maintenance standards and service level agreements are required. Efficiencies and effectiveness in building maintenance, grounds and infrastructure maintenance, horticulture and tree pruning/forest management are hallmarks of successful parks.

- A professional, dedicated, and empowered park staff. Where transitions have occurred from unionized to non-unionized workforces, they have respected existing collective agreements and integrated workforces, within comparable standards of compensation and performance. Effective, empowering management is key, with clear lines of authority, reporting, accountability, performance expectations and "room to move".

- A pre-eminent role for volunteers. Volunteerism should be promoted and supported. Volunteers require recognition, effective integration with the professional and technical staff, and management.

- Staff and volunteers that are smartly uniformed. They are trained to be accessible, friendly and helpful to park visitors, with a focus on client satisfaction – seven days a week.

- There are a wide range of innovations in park marketing and promotion, volunteerism, maintenance management systems, program linkages and citizen information and program access. Such features are documented in the Appendix.



Assiniboine Park Zoo Polar Bear Enclosure
Concept by Torre Design Consortium LTD.
Sketch By Dennis Appler

Governance Options



Assiniboine Park Zoo - Proposed Gateway to the Arctic Exhibit
Concept by Torre Design Consortium LTD.
Sketch By Dennis Appler

At the end of the initial round of stakeholder interviews, two trends emerged. First, the level of input, interest and idea-generation from nearly every group was exceptionally high. The level of engagement conveyed both deep commitment and that now was the right time for change in Park structure and management.

Second was the exceptional degree of alignment across groups as to which combination of attributes made most sense for governing the "New Assiniboine Park". In particular, there was virtual unanimity on four key elements:

- The Park needs to be re-organized into a single delivery unit, with all staff serving primarily Park-related functions being moved from their existing departments into a dedicated Park "enterprise".

- There should be one person (referred to here as the CEO) responsible for the revamped Park organization. This person would lead a restructured senior management team, and have the principal role in implementing the organization's annual business plan. The CEO would also be responsible for strategic planning with the new board, and for ensuring the monitoring and ongoing evaluation of both the plan and the associated budget.

- The need for one overarching board that takes a "whole Park" view. The feedback we received was that the Park needed a cohesive leadership structure going forward which spoke to the interwoven program, facility, financing and strategic needs of the entity as one operation, rather than as a series of stand-alone activities. In response to models from the Project Team, there was also agreement that the new board should initially be comprised, at least in part, by representatives of the not-for-profit organizations currently operating in the Park to ensure a high level of collaboration.

- Regardless of its relative independence from City Council, the Park and its board would need to continue receiving an annual budget stipend from the City. That amount, while subject to City Council approval on a year-by-year basis, would be established by formula (*e.g.* $/Winnipeg resident) rather than negotiated from a zero balance point each year.

In the second round (the Roundtable Sessions), participants were invited to comment on three integrated models, each of which tied together options for Park governance, senior administrative leadership, with functional organization. Those sessions were equally productive, with participants focusing in on the implications of the "vertically integrated relationships", running from operations to Park governance.

The Options

What appears below is a detailed description of the models on which alignment was greatest, with variations made to the reported version reflecting stakeholder input.

Participants were invited to consider three models, the two options illustrated below (Figures 5 & 6), as well as the Special Operating Agency ("SOA") model currently being utilized by the City in a number of other areas. In reaching a shortened list, the SOA option was eliminated from consideration because:

- unlike the other SOA's which focused on single-purpose functions, the Park is considerably more diverse at each the public, not-for-profit and user/volunteer levels;
- the SOA's governance model as presently structured is advisory only, which wasn't felt to be sufficient for the leadership challenge in this particular instance; and
- the SOA model is ultimately tied quite closely to City operations. For the Park to evolve, meet the challenges set out in the Framework Plan and raise money from new sources, more independence was felt to be essential

Again, through the Roundtable sessions an even higher degree of alignment was identified around the capacity for multi-source funding and a relative degree of proposed independence for the new board from the City.

The three short-listed models are presented in a three part format: a) a visual representation of key reporting relationships; b) a discussion of the intended operating characteristics; and c) an assessment of the Benefits/Limits and Risks to be Managed elements of each model.

Conservancy Option I - Key Characteristics



Conceptual Drawing of Proposed New Conservatory
Design by Stechesen Katz Architects
Sketch By Dennis Appler

The foundation of this model would be characterized as follows:

- One over-arching board for the Park, reporting directly to EPC.
- The board would function in an "advisory role" since Council is prevented from delegating its policy setting authority to a non-autonomous body
- Continuous support for the "new Park" by EPC and Council in the form of an annual operating grant (based on a formula for long-term support, to be approved annually), that also anticipates an enhanced civic leadership role from the newly-revamped board.
- The founding board would be comprised of equal representation from each the three existing Park venues, from other Park stakeholder groups (including from the Charleswood Rotarians), and independently appointed directors.
- Subsequent board appointments would be premised on expertise and background (*e.g.* fundraising; zoological; horticultural; marketing; etc.), as determined in the founding by-laws.
- The existing non-profit boards would have four core roles going forward: a) initially a role in appointing representatives to the founding board of Park; b) a continuing role as part of Advisory Council in their area of interest (*e.g.* Friends of the Conservatory) if demand and interest warrant ; c) a commitment to supporting the transition process through to completion; and d) assistance in supporting the devolution of the current board in favour of the new model.

- The establishment of a Chief Executive Officer position, with responsibility for day-to-day operation of a newly-created Park organization. The CEO would initially focus on four core functions:
  - Establishing, leading and coordinating the new operation;
  - Facilitating the selection of the new board, supporting the recruitment function, as well as board member training, integration and early stage planning;
  - Developing an organizational strategic plan for consideration by the board;
  - Crafting a budget as a companion to the strategic plan.

In terms of staff re-alignment reflecting this new holistic management model, a small team of functional leaders who would provide leadership on a "horizontal" basis across the Park. The task assignments of each functional leader would be cross-organizational, encompassing each of the current activities and/or venues to the extent possible.

There will also be need for leaders to run more specialized functions within the Zoo and Conservatory in particular. Curatorial, operational and facilities management will all need to be addressed as leadership functions. Whether economies can be found between roles and across entities will need to be the subject of further analysis.

Much of the anticipated staff compliment likely exists within the current civic organization. How those positions will be filled, at what cost, through what process are all to be determined. Several positions noted above would likely be new, with requisite skills/resources to be confirmed.



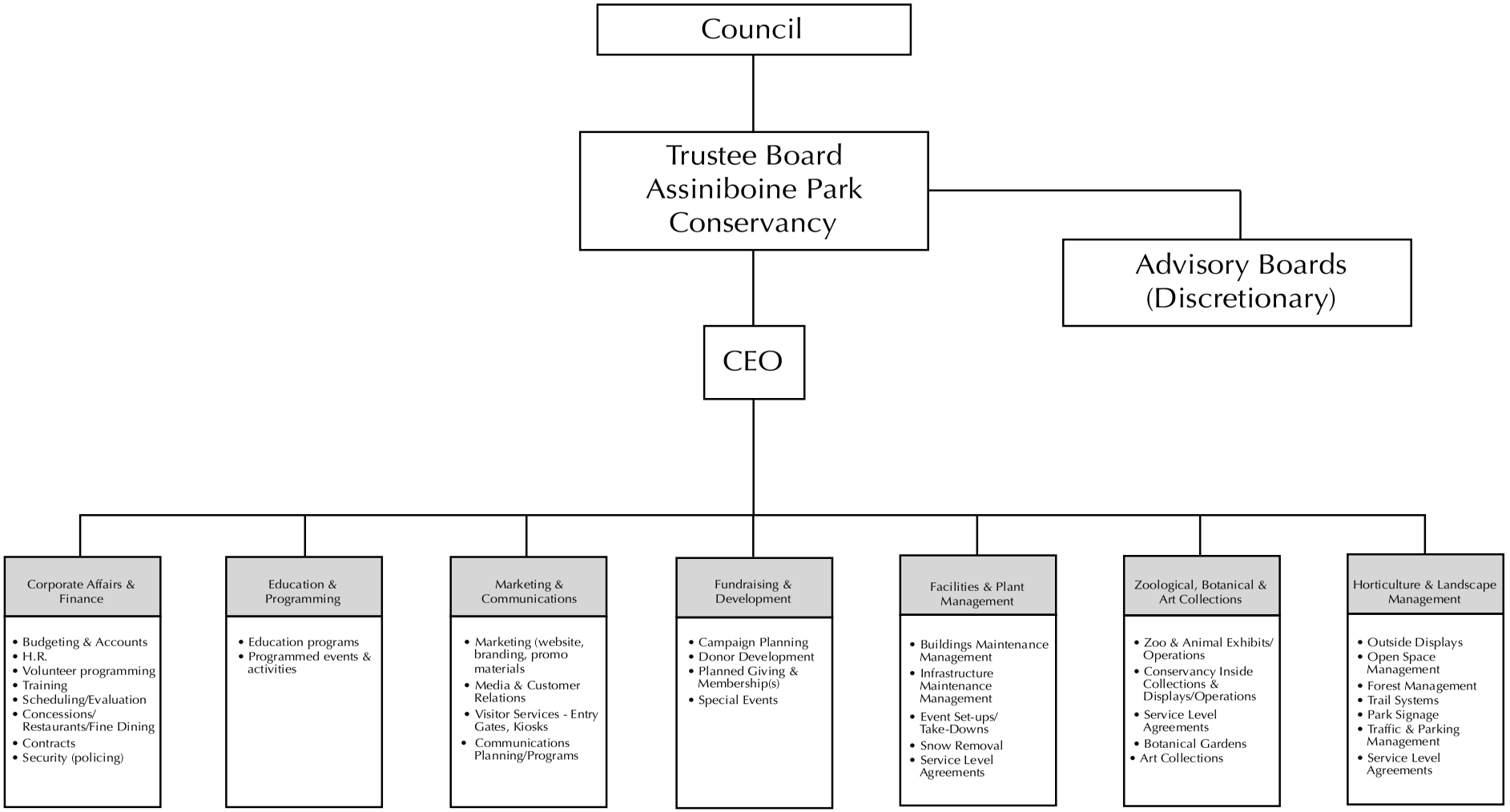


Figure 5
Conservancy Option I - Assiniboine Park Governance

Benefits	Limits	Risks
Opens up new opportunities for financing the Park (both public and private)	The proposed conversion of the not-for-profit boards into Advisory Councils will reduce the distinct voice of each of the four established entities.	The transition process will be time consuming and inevitably frustrating at points, as change unfolds at the board, operational and strategic levels.
Restructuring will put renewed emphasis on an updated financing and investment model, including options for revenue retention and generation.		There is no assurance what Council will do with respect to the annual granting process, or with regard to revenue retention/growth opportunities.
The notion of "whole Park management" would enable new governance synergies and in turn, fewer barriers in leveraging knowledge, expertise, networks, etc.		More in-depth calculations are required regarding which cost and revenue centres (staff; equipment; etc.) would be fully transferred, and which in-kind services would continue to be provided by the City on a charge-back basis (*e.g.* legal).
From an organizational service delivery perspective, this "whole Park" model would allow for greater coordination in programming, volunteer management, fundraising, facilities and operations management, producing a range of economies of scale.		In the event not all of the existing not-for-profit boards become Advisory Councils, whether and how to ensure their "interests" are reflected in future board composition.
An integration of this nature would create a new dynamic in stakeholder engagement in the Park, not only for staff and board volunteers, but also for prospective volunteers, current and future users and potential funders.		
This change in governance and administration will facilitate the timely introduction of lessons learned from other park transitions across North America.		
The model allows for a transition in leadership, from a current format that is both diffuse (civic administration), and siloed (at the individual non-profit board level), to one that is integrated, cross-functional and enterprise oriented.		





Conceptual Drawing of Proposed New Conservatory
Design by Stechesen Katz Architects
Sketch By Dennis Appler

Conservancy Option II - Key Characteristics

This second model is intended to share all the attributes of Conservancy Option I, with the following notable exceptions:

- The new organization under Conservancy Option II would be established as a provincially incorporated not-for-profit company under the City of Winnipeg Charter.
- The board – and the organization – would operate at arm's length from the City.
- The new board would enter into a long-term agreement with the City to operate the Park, with ownership of the land remaining with the municipality.
- The composition of the board would be as described in Conservancy Option I, with the exception that additional appointees would also be made from the City and the Province of Manitoba. As indicated for Conservancy Option I, subsequent board appointments would be premised on expertise and background (*e.g.* fundraising; zoological; horticultural; marketing; etc), as determined in the founding by-laws.
- Under this option the board would look to the City for an annual grant as part of a rolling three year plan, reviewable on a year-over-year basis
- This new organizational model would place more onus on the Park board to raise special funds; at the same time, freeing the board to establish committed, cohesive civic leadership in support of the Park.
- The founding board would have venue representation as indicated in Conservancy Option I. As directors' terms expire, only those organizations retaining advisory councils would be assured a role in future boards (apart from seats set aside by legislation for the public-at-large, the City and the Province).
- The City, in concert with the Province, would need to determine the details of indemnifications, insurance, directors' liabilities and other corporate obligations that would otherwise have fallen to the City under the management model now in place.

- All other features noted regarding Conservancy Option 1 above (including board composition and the re-design of a senior management team) would apply to Conservancy Option 2.

Many of the Benefits and Limits noted in Conservancy Option 1 would apply for Conservancy Option 2. In addition, we add the following:



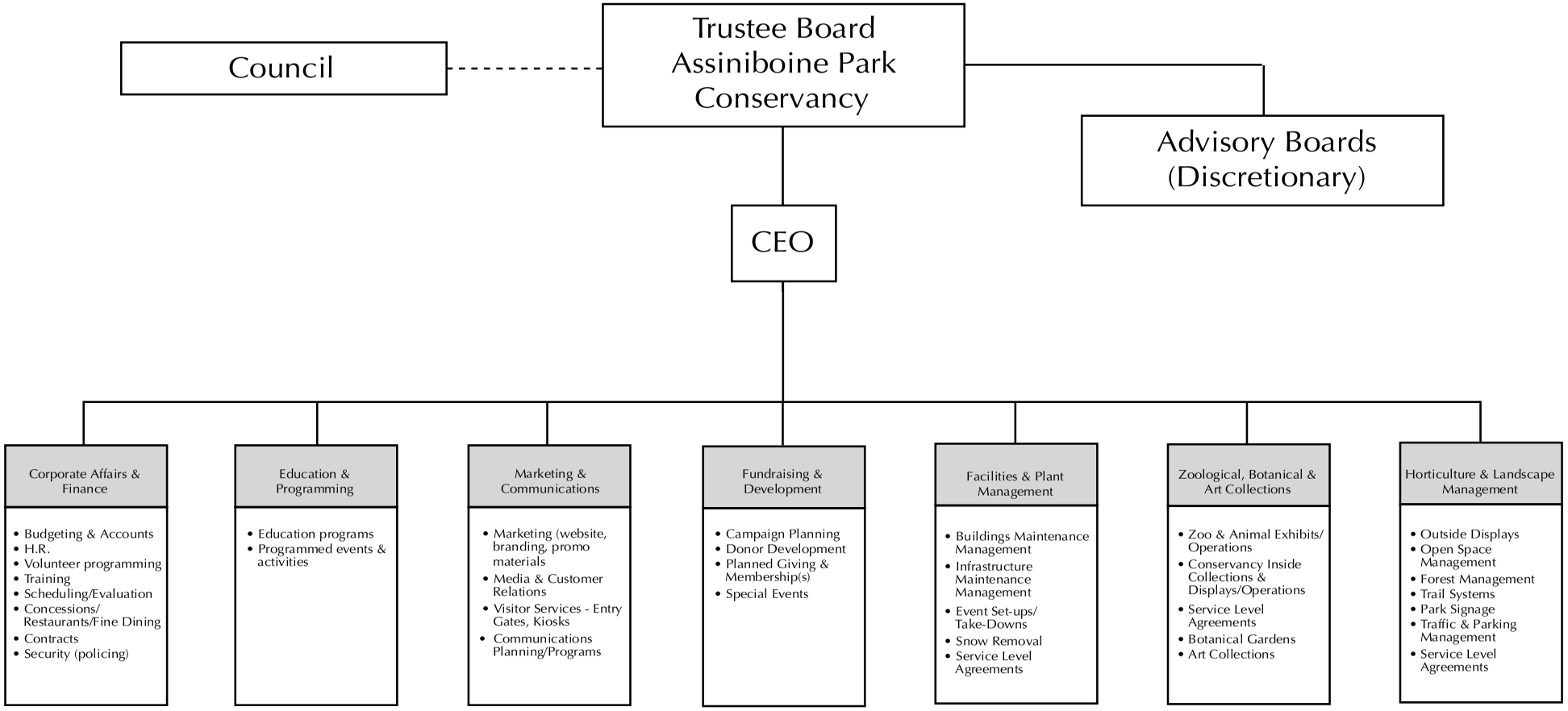


Figure 6
Conservancy Option II - Assiniboine Park Governance

Benefits	Limits	Risks
This more independent board would create new opportunities (and pressures) for civic leadership from the community-at-large (as with other North American parks in transition)		Under this model, the Province would have a role in creating the statute, and potentially in board participation
Under this arrangement the board would be more assertive about finding and orchestrating a new revenue retention/ revenue generation model for the Park		As part of the transition process, further analysis would be required to determine the City's indemnification obligations under the proposed new legislation
Subject to legislative drafting, this model allow for more specific participation by the City and the Province at the board level		
By removing the Park from City line responsibility, opportunities are created for new sources of fundraising and sponsorship		



Criteria	Conservancy Option 1	Conservancy Option 2	SOA Model	Current Status
Governing as one entity	◑	●	◑	○
Operating cross-functionality	◑	●	◑	◔
High Level governance capability to: • set direction • delegate authority • monitor progress	◕	●	◑	○
Clarity of accountability • board governance v. park operations	◕	●	◕	◔
Successful execution of Framework Plan	◕	◕	◑	◔
Private fundraising plus annual City contribution	◕	●	◕	◑
Revenue retention within Park	◑	◑	◑	◔
Independent processes for board governance and operational decision-making	◕	●	◕	◔
Respect for current labour agreement	●	●	●	●
Volunteerism throughout the Park	◑	◑	◑	◑
External and Internal partnerships	◕	●	◑	◑

LEGEND

○ **Least Likely to Fulfill Guideline Principles**

◔

◑

◕

● **Most Likely to Fulfill Guideline Principles**

Figure 7
Criteria/Models Matrix

Recommendations

a) The City and the existing not-for-profit venues adopt Conservancy Option II as the most appropriate leadership/organizational model for the Park going forward;

b) The founding board should be comprised of individuals knowledgeable and committed to the overall success of the Park;

c) Subject to both City Council and individual venue response to this report, that detailed governance reviews may be necessary for the Zoological Society, the Friends of the Conservatory, and Partners in the Park identifying what follow-up steps are required from each organization in light of a consensus agreement to move toward one of the new Conservancy Options. In particular, to set a schedule for devolution for each organization, along with its planned inclusion/integration as part of the new option selected;

d) The new over-arching entity be given the name "Assiniboine Park Conservancy". Conservation represents the wise and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage resources. Its aim is to provide benefits for environment, public education and recreation, and economy. An organization dedicated to conservation is appropriately called a conservancy. The Park commemorates and conserves a rich natural and cultural heritage in Winnipeg, sustaining public use, enjoyment, recreation and education. The Assiniboine Park Conservancy is dedicated to these objectives;

e) The City open discussions with the Province regarding the proposed plan, including considering a timetable for legislative drafting and approval, possible impediments and mitigation strategies;



The Meadows of Assiniboine Park
Nearly 57 acres of mowed grassed open space comprise the most memorable feature within the Park.

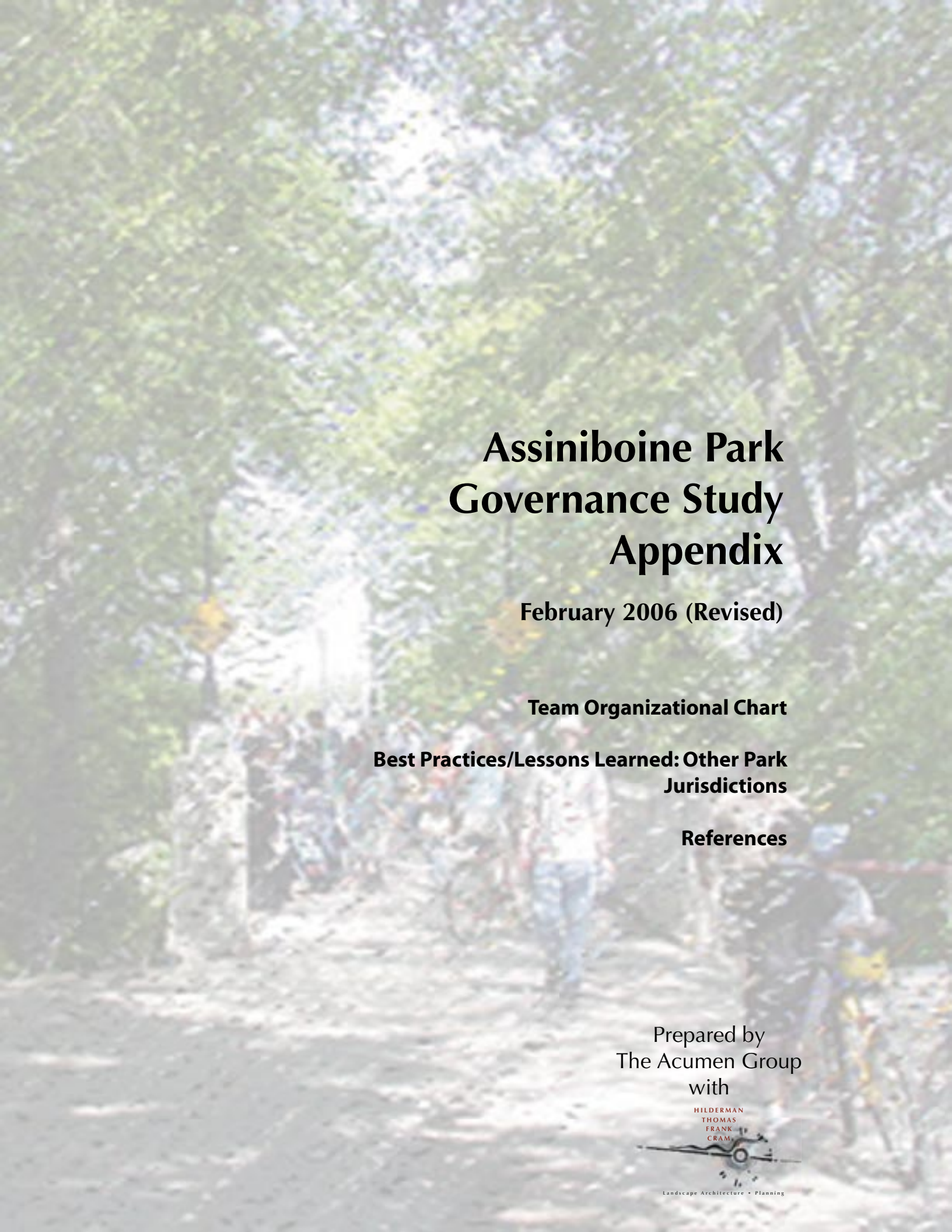
f) Upon granting policy approval for further analysis to proceed, the City authorize preparation of a high level business plan. While subject to revision, developing the draft business plans concurrent with the organizational re-design will enable the new board to significantly shorten its start-up time;

g) Each of the non-profit boards move to: i) determine their nominees to the new board; and ii) review its current role to assess the viability of maintaining the organization in an Advisory Council capacity as described by both Options I and II (both tasks to be completed within six months of Council's adoption of the Governance Study Report). Each of the other organizations to be represented on the new board take steps to select their nominees within that timeframe;

h) All participants agree that time is now of the essence, in light of the following:
   - current fiscal challenges,
   - current and projected state of Park infrastructure,
   - public expectations, and
   - collector stakeholder expectations given the time and energy invested in both the framework plan and the governance study; and

i) Assiniboine Park is a valued legacy of the City of Winnipeg. The park land has been owned by the City since inception, and should be in perpetuity.





Assiniboine Park Governance Study Appendix

February 2006 (Revised)

Team Organizational Chart

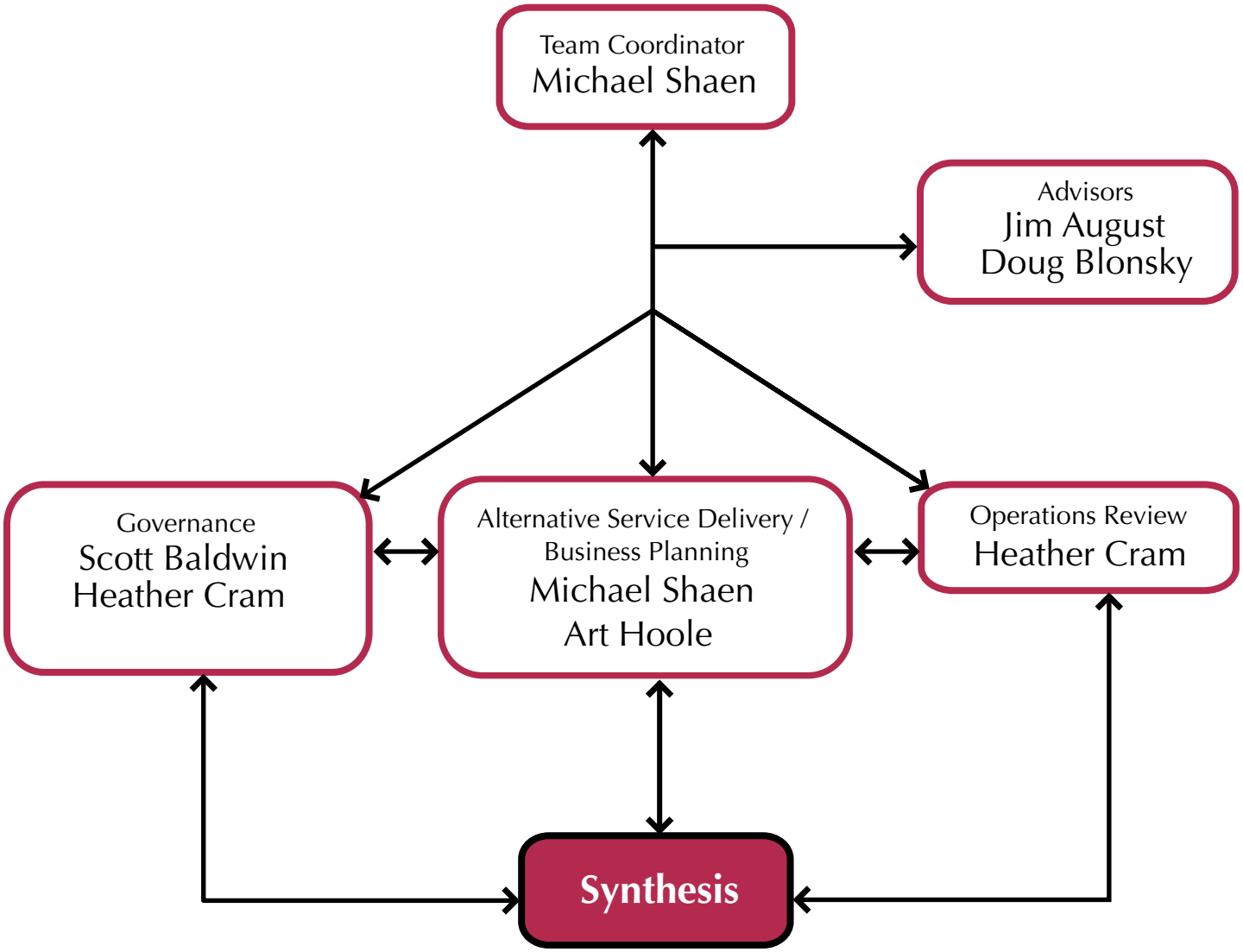
Best Practices/Lessons Learned: Other Park Jurisdictions

References

Prepared by
The Acumen Group
with

HILDERMAN
THOMAS
FRANK
CRAM

Landscape Architecture • Planning



Team Organizational Chart

Best Practices/Lessons Learned: Other Park Jurisdictions

Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), Saskatoon

Interview with John Gerstmar, Resource Planning Manager
The MVA is a conservation organization dedicated to protecting the resources of the natural and cultural heritage of the South Saskatchewan River Valley in Saskatoon and immediate area. The City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan are partners. The MVA was created by provincial statute and there are 12 board members, four from each party. The Rural Municipality of Corman Park, which surrounds Saskatoon, was a founding partner but dropped out.

Objectives and Funding
The MVA receives statutory funding from each party – the Province, the City and the University and is a non-profit organization

Three main objectives:
- environmental education
- conservation
- recreation development

Programs
There are two major interpretive centres: a natural history centre; and a cultural history centre. These centres are very well programmed with schools: Grade 3 curriculum and program ties for cultural centre; Grade 5 for the natural heritage centre.

The MVA has developed over 40 kilometres of paved trails along the river and several access nodes. At the same, the MVA carries no maintenance responsibilities. Capital developments are planned and built, then turned over to landowners. A maintenance agreement forms a part of this handover.

The MVA strives to achieve a balance between development and natural habitat. A development review committee is a statutory body working on behalf of the MVA comprising architects, planners, engineers, landscape architects, and a “seasoned practitioner”. They review and recommend developments to the MVA, which in turn holds public forums before approving developments.

The MVA turned over land to a First Nation band to develop and operate the Wanuskewin Heritage Park Inc.

There are no user fees for MVA facilities.

Marketing and Promotion
There is a mix of City and MVA signage along the river. The logo is common but little promotional work is done in tandem.

Stanley Park, Vancouver

(Source: Tate, A. 2001. *Great City Parks*. Spon Press. London, pp.157-167)

Stanley Park was designated as a public park in 1886. Its character derives mainly protection of the mature coniferous coastal forest. The Seawall is the dominant feature.

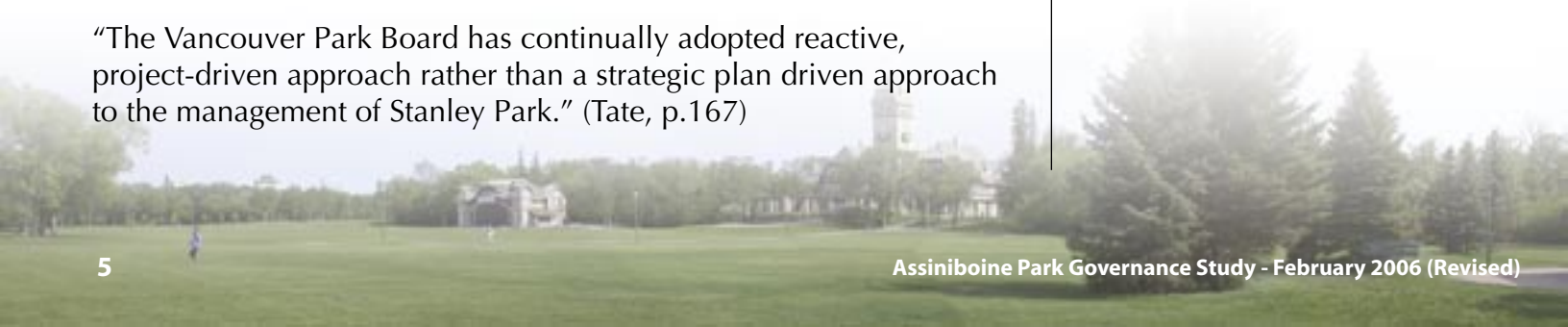
There never has been an overall design for the Park. Management has been characterized as reactive and as a series of unrelated decisions.

History of the Park has been a story of building the Seawall, resolving conflicts over its use, ongoing debate over forest management and trying to resolve different transport/access issues.

A variety of facilities have been added or subtracted over time – the Zoo, Aquarium, Rose Garden, golf course, miniature railway, beach development. Major decisions have been by plebiscite: *e.g.* closing the zoo in 1993. Facilities in Stanley Park today include: the Vancouver Aquarium (operated by a non-profit organization under lease), various gardens, pitch and putt golf course, miniature railway, beach development, Lost Lagoon Nature House, heated ocean-side swimming pool, Theatre Under the Stars, Children's Farmyard, a children's water park, restaurants, and the 5.5 mile Seawall pathway.

Park management is through an elected board – the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Park Commissioners are elected every 3 years as part of the elections for Vancouver City Council. The Board oversees the entire city parks and recreation system. The Board follows a consultative approach and continually uses plebiscites to resolve controversial matters.

"The Vancouver Park Board has continually adopted reactive, project-driven approach rather than a strategic plan driven approach to the management of Stanley Park." (Tate, p.167)



Interview with Jim Lowden, Director of Stanley District, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Governance

The elected commissioners approach is the only one of its kind in Canada. The commissioners are elected for a 3-year term, concurrent with elections to City Council. This model has strengths and weaknesses.

This has proven beneficial for sourcing funds from both city council and private sector, given political contacts and profile. A major downside is that there is a highly reactionary decision-making and management environment.

Funding for parks is about 60% from city and 40% from revenue generation and retention. At election time there is a capital referendum that provides most of the capital budget for parks. Public parking is a major source of revenue. Other sources include 6% gross revenues from restaurants, a pitch and putt golf course, concessions, and gift shops.

There are no trust funds or foundations – private donations are project driven.

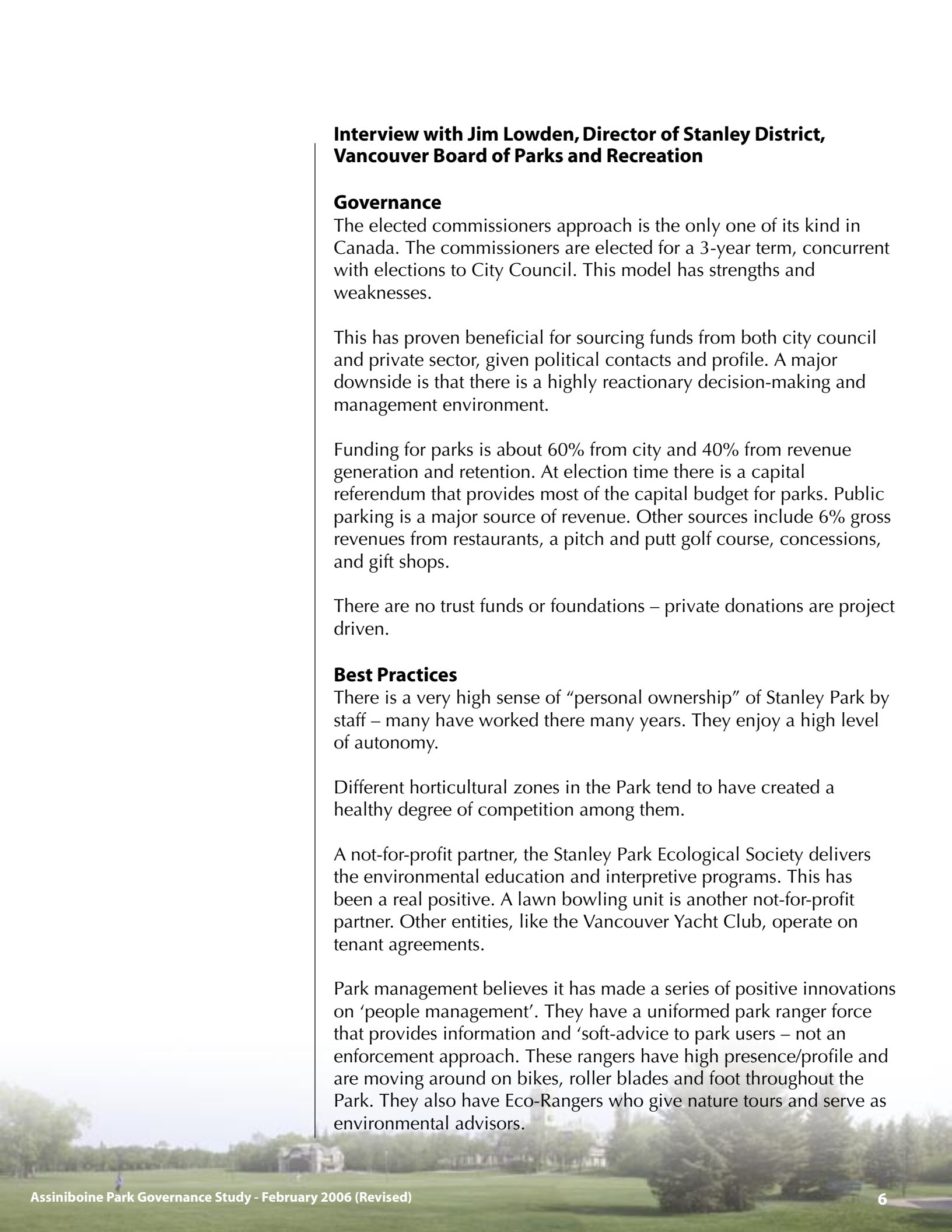
Best Practices

There is a very high sense of "personal ownership" of Stanley Park by staff – many have worked there many years. They enjoy a high level of autonomy.

Different horticultural zones in the Park tend to have created a healthy degree of competition among them.

A not-for-profit partner, the Stanley Park Ecological Society delivers the environmental education and interpretive programs. This has been a real positive. A lawn bowling unit is another not-for-profit partner. Other entities, like the Vancouver Yacht Club, operate on tenant agreements.

Park management believes it has made a series of positive innovations on 'people management'. They have a uniformed park ranger force that provides information and 'soft-advice to park users – not an enforcement approach. These rangers have high presence/profile and are moving around on bikes, roller blades and foot throughout the Park. They also have Eco-Rangers who give nature tours and serve as environmental advisors.



The Park is now trying to respond to user demand for high quality leisure services. Part of this effort is minimizing user conflicts and providing for improved security. In parking areas, a volunteer lot patrol provides surveillance against theft from parked vehicles.

Maintenance Management

This is a major challenge for the Park. Many of the roads were built along time ago and were essentially poured asphalt on grade. Heavy traffic (*e.g.* tour buses) has worn out these running surfaces – yet higher fees for bus entries will prove politically unattractive. There are also major forest management and wildlife management issues (*e.g.* great blue heron rookeries, pelagic cormorants nesting along Seawall, Canada geese, coyotes etc.)

The Park has many policies and procedures of various vintages and formats. There is no systems/IT based maintenance management in place – at least three years away and they have little cost assessment at present.

Other Notes

Stanley Park offers no real guidance for Winnipeg in the areas of marketing and promotion. The Stanley Park receives over 7,000,000 visitors per annum and has not considered it necessary to promote/ target market. This is a recognized weakness in their program.

BC is a highly unionised environment. Stanley Park therefore avoids contracting out services; even partnerships stir political unease at the board level



Calgary Zoo, Botanical Gardens And Prehistoric Park

Interview with Alex Graham, President and Chief Executive Officer

The Calgary Zoo is operated by a non-profit, charitable organization, the Calgary Zoological Society (CZS). Its mission, in partnership with the City of Calgary and its citizens, is *to develop, operate and promote an integrated zoological, botanical and prehistoric park and a conservation centre for the combined purposes of recreation, education, conservation and scientific study.*

Founded in 1929 and located in the city core, the land (282 acres) and property is owned by the City of Calgary. To continue to maintain the high quality facilities and programs the CZS has developed partnerships with universities, post-secondary institutions, other wildlife organizations, corporations and community groups and has developed a strong business focus and actively fund raise to help support all of the Zoo's worthwhile efforts.

Governance

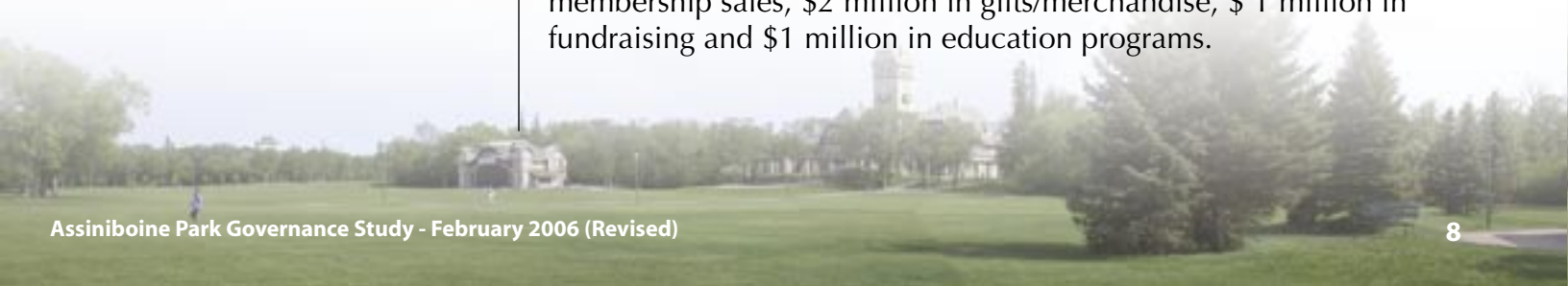
The entire operation is run by the CZS under an Operating Agreement. The CZS is a registered not-for-profit society under provincial societies legislation.

The Board of Directors is elected by the members of the society for 3-year terms and can serve for a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

The Board provides governance oversight, approves annual budgets and capital programs and stays completely out of operations. It has ultimate oversight, without recourse to the City. The CEO is hired by the Board to manage and operate the park. A Calgary Zoo Foundation is appointed by the Board and has a fundraising and investment advisory role.

Funding

This is a very entrepreneurial operation. They receive an annual operating grant from the City of Calgary of $5 million, with the view to keep entry and user fees down. The rest of their revenue derives from memberships and the operations – $ 7. 5 million in admission gate fees, $5 million in food and beverage sales, $ 2 million in membership sales, $2 million in gifts/merchandise, $ 1 million in fundraising and $1 million in education programs.



It has a 20-year and five-year strategic planning framework, mainly focused on capital. It uses a 3-year revolving budget for operations.

Staffing

The CEO has been in place for 6 years and over that time has all but eliminated middle management, and is transitioning out of a unionised work force, some of whom are still employed in the Zoo. A senior management team of six directors manage the following units:

- Business Operations – Gates, Food and Beverage, Venue Admissions,
- Corporate Affairs and Finance – HR, IT, Communications/PR, Financial Management
- Education, Conservation, Scientific Research – community outreach, environmental stewardship
- Development – capital fundraising
- Live Collections – animals, habitats, botanical gardens and all live displays
- Director of Facilities Planning and Maintenance

Key Lessons/Best Practices

- Overcoming the mentality that a not for profit society is not in the business of making money.
- Governance is high level and completely separated from operations.
- A broad and diverse range of opportunities and services that are fully linked within the overall entity is key to success.
- Work hard at building community relevancy and access …and obtaining revenue for same – *e.g.* banqueting, seminars, business meetings.
- The CZS approach has been to transition away from a unionized workforce to one which is recruited and compensated directly by the CZS, within its fiscal capacities. This transition is well advanced and ongoing.
- They try to maintain a streamlined operation of management and workforce, avoiding cooperating associations and "friends of" type organizations. Community relevancy and access are promoted through the services offered.
- They have a strong and sophisticated commitment to maintenance management. There is a full management information system in place and concerted building-by-building maintenance management to standards for cleanliness, wear, etc..



Parks Canada Agency

Interview with Dawn Bronson, Superintendent, Manitoba Field Unit, Parks Canada Agency – reports to Director-General, Western/Northern Region, Parks Canada Agency, Calgary.

Interview with Michael Fay, Chief Administrative Officer, Parks Canada Agency, Ottawa.

Since 1885, the Government of Canada has played a role in protecting and providing opportunities to experience Canada's natural and cultural heritage. This is expressed in Parks Canada's (the federal agency within the Department of Canadian Heritage) mandate: *on behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations*. With transitions from departmental branch to an agency, partnerships with other agencies and organizations, and contracting out services, the Parks Canada Agency continues to manage the National Park system. National Parks are a country-wide system of representative natural areas of Canadian significance. There are currently 38 terrestrial National Parks and National Park Reserves in the system. They are protected for public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment, while being maintained in an unimpaired state for future generations.

Why an agency model?

This was part of a move by the Government of Canada to experiment with Alternative Delivery Systems (ADS) in the late 1990s that spawned the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Food Inspection Agency and Parks Canada Agency. The aim was to achieve greater efficiencies, more responsiveness to public

Parks Canada has an atypical workforce from bureaucracy generally; land base and program delivery characteristics such as 24/7 requirements define Parks Canada as a front-line organization. They needed an HR regime more appropriate to their workplace(s).

Funding

They are able to retain revenues and re-invest. About 75% of annual budget comes from Parliamentary appropriation; 25% from direct revenues. Policies on user fees have to conform with the overall government financial and policy frameworks.

The way this funding is differentiated fundamentally: those programs that are broad public serving like ecological integrity and environmental education are funded from the vote; those services to a particular group *e.g.* campground entry fees, nor represent direct revenue to the agency.

In terms of reporting, a CEO heads up an executive board, and the CEO reports to the Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency

Lessons Learned

The Agency Model has worked well. It has provided more autonomy, encouraged some risk taking and creativity and made for bolder decision-making and operations. The feeling is that the Agency is more mature.

There was a transition period moving from a departmental branch to an agency. Development and training were required and there are still personnel who have tended to do things as in the past and not learned and taken advantage of new opportunities

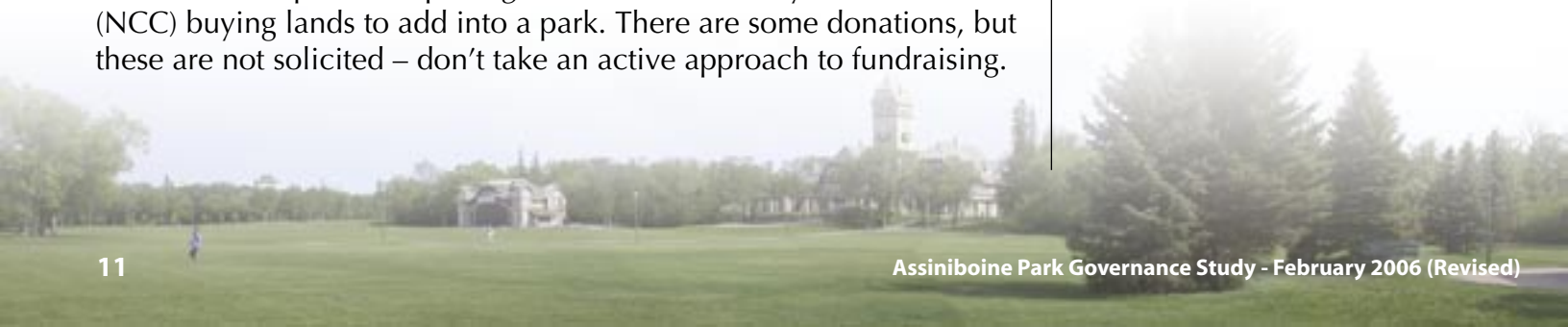
The cost of creating a new management systems (*e.g.* HR Management and Collective Bargaining, Financial Management Systems) should not be under-estimated. This is not a money-saving venture.

Notwithstanding a separate collective bargaining capacity, the terms and conditions for collective bargaining do not vary much from the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

Staff morale is good. Some early fears of lost opportunities have dissipated with time.

There are many contracting out approaches under the Parks Canada Agency structure – described as tools to manage the business as needed – but these fall under the Financial Administration Act of Canada and are not that distinctive from the many contractual arrangements that preceded agency status.

Has facilitated partnerships –*e.g.* Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) buying lands to add into a park. There are some donations, but these are not solicited – don't take an active approach to fundraising.



Employee takeovers were tried at an earlier stage. This didn't work. It was considered and reacted to by the workforce as downsizing in another guise.

A lot of policies, plans and procedures simply carried over to the agency structure and this helped the transition.

A biannual Ministers' Roundtable brings public stakeholders together to advise the Minister, as a public accountability measure. This has proven very useful.

Moves to more public accountability through formal reporting have overwhelmed the Agency's capacity to keep up. Annual performance reporting, State of the Parks reporting every two years and other legislated reporting requirements have not been met on time.

Central Park, New York City, NY, USA

Interview with Doug Blonsky, President and Central Park Administrator

Located in the centre of Manhattan, 843 acres were set aside and became the first landscaped park in the United States in 1857. The Central Park Conservancy (founded in 1980) is a private, not-for-profit organization that manages Central Park under a contract with the City of New York/Department of Parks and Recreation. Since its founding, the Conservancy has prescribed a management and restoration plan for the Park; funded major capital improvements; created programs for volunteers and visitors; and set new standards of excellence in Park care.



Governance

Central Park is owned by the City of New York. The Central Park Conservancy (CPC), under a management contract with the City of New York/Department of Parks and Recreation, runs the Park. Board members are recruited, based upon their love of Central Park, their fundraising skills, as well as other qualities that would assist in Park development. The Board is a policy board. It supports but does not direct Conservancy staff – staff reports to the Board but the Board does not set the management agenda.

A Parks Commissioner, who sits on the Board, fills City representation and there is an administrative reporting line from the Central Park Administrator to the Parks Commissioner for policy direction.

Funding

Similarly to Calgary Zoo, this is a very entrepreneurial operation. Their overall annual budget is comprised of $ 3.5 million received from the City of New York and the Conservancy raises the remaining $ 23 million.

Park development is based upon a 1980 – 1984 Master Plan that includes a management and restoration plan for the Park. About 8 years ago, the CPC completed a Strategic Plan. That Plan is currently being revisited and they are completing a new Strategic Plan. The City participated in the planning process but the Conservancy does not require City approval to implement the Plan. They do, however, require City approval for individual capital projects.

Park Concessions generate over $8,000,000 in revenue and the CPC does not retain any of this at present. The CPC is hoping to redress this situation in the next master agreement.

A Women's Committee is a very strong and important advocate organization with its own board. This committee has been a significant fund raiser for the park - $ 4.5 million last year.



Staffing

The Park is managed by the CPC with its own staff of 160 full time staff, 25 NYC employees plus additional seasonal staff. The CPC is responsible for all aspects of Park management and staff does all of the work required, except in specific circumstances, when they contract out to private contractors or consultants. For example, on-going Park design and planning is done by CPC staff but major capital projects are designed by consultants or major maintenance contracts, such as tree pruning or removals, would be contracted out.

Key Lessons/Best Practices

In 1995, CPC started a Zone Management Program. The Park is divided into 49 zones, with a head gardener responsible for each zone. Each head gardener works with a crew of CPC staff and City Parks & Recreation staff. As well, each gardener is assigned volunteers, who come to work on a daily basis and work alongside the paid staff. Labour is considered a team effort and volunteers are treated as staff. They are covered by Workmen's Compensation, so are protected against any liabilities. The head gardener and his/her crew are responsible for all aspects of management and maintenance of their zone. Tasks include gardening, litter pick-up; graffiti clean up, community relations, etc.. Special crews do specialty work, such as tree removals, and are contacted by the head gardeners as required. Crews are supplemented in summer with seasonal staff and additional volunteer help.

There is a special crew for evening litter and graffiti clean up, at the end of each day, to supplement the work of the zone gardening crews. The CPC motto is: Central Park – litter free and graffiti free 24 hours a day.

Volunteers are taken very seriously. Besides working on zone crews, they are integrated into other programs. They receive special training and the head gardeners also receive special training to learn to work with volunteers. Volunteers are recognized through various perks such as, regular potluck lunches and other events. There is a gala event (formal party) each year and volunteers are treated like high level donors.



The Zoo is on Park property but is a totally separate entity from the Conservancy or the City of New York and is a quite small element or footprint in the Park. It is run by the Wildlife Conservation Society. CPC and the Zoo coordinate their activities but all Zoo management is internal. The Zoo charges a small entry fee. This relationship is working quite well to date.

Notes:
Comment from D. Blonsky regarding the park maintenance and improvements:
"The more beautiful you make it, the more respect people have for it."
This approach has encouraged volunteer participation at all levels of interaction.

Policing the Park
There is an NYC police precinct in Central Park. Zone crews are the eyes of the park. They report any unusual activity and would-be crimes to the police. There is an expectation that gardeners will take a proactive approach and deal with quality of life issues, such as dogs off leashes, but otherwise, the police handle crime. There are also Park Rangers, who are more proactive than the police but their numbers are small. They report to the City (Parks & Recreation). If the Conservancy had the funds, it would hire staff to police the Park.

Challenges
The biggest challenge lies in attracting more grass roots members. Currently, the volunteer base consists of 150 regular participants (who work a few days/week) and 3,000 event related volunteers
.
The goal for the Conservancy is to grow the zone gardening volunteer base.

The City contribution is too low and needs to move more towards a 50:50 split, including a capital contribution – more stable base funding is needed for 10 capital development plan.



Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton/Burlington, Ontario

Interview with Stephen Oliver, Acting Executive Director

Located in Burlington, Ontario on over 1,100 hectares of land, the RBG has the mission 'to be a living museum which serves local, regional and global communities while developing and promoting public understanding of the relationship between the plant world, humanity and the rest of nature.'

RBG facilities include a mix of natural lands, display gardens, interpreted collections, and rare and endangered plant and animal species. It operates with a mandate legislated by the Province of Ontario and is very aware of maintaining cash flow by depending on revenues from admissions, facility rental fees, retail, food and beverage, trail donations, program registrations and other services. A 25-member board of directors is comprised of appointed representatives from the City of Hamilton, Regional Municipality of Halton, Province of Ontario, Canada, McMaster University and the RBG Board. To achieve their vision of 'achieving and sustaining a position of recognized global excellence in the world of botanical gardens' a new 25-year innovative Strategic Vision was created (2003) with a focus on increasing visitation as the key to increasing sustainability.

Governance

The RBG is legislated by Ontario and classified as a transfer agency, independent of municipal or provincial government. They are currently in the process of developing a new governance structure. Their original board was made up of 25 members, who were primarily government appointees and didn't have skills related to park turn-around or park governance. The new governance model will require an act of provincial legislature. The plan is for a board of 12, to be selected for their distinct skill sets. In the interim, RBG is being governed through an executive committee.

Stephen Oliver was brought in, as director, a year ago. He is a "turn around" specialist, who has been restructuring the organization.



Funding

RBG funding is received in the following ways:

- operating grants from the Ontario Government, Ministry of Culture ($1.6 M range),
- the City of Hamilton ($600,000 range)
- Regional Municipality of Halton ($550,000 range)
- admissions ($426,000)
- donations from the Auxiliary of the RBG ($275,000)
- membership fees and donations ($850,000)
- user fees ($2.5 M range)

The RBG was in great financial trouble up until a year ago. They are operating smoothly now but it has required major operational changes.

Key Lessons/Best Practices

Stephen Oliver commented on the problems of the RBG and how they had fallen onto hard times. He said that ailing organizations suffer from functional blindness. They don't see their problems. He was brought from outside of the organization as a 'turn around' specialist to take them through an exercise in cultural change. This has been a very difficult process as they had been operating under the premise that "this is how we've always done it" and now they must change their ways of doing things and start thinking from a sustainable viewpoint.

Challenges

Fundraising has been very difficult because no one wants to give to an organization, no matter how wonderful it is, that is going under. They are now moving into a good news position and, with a new governance structure based upon a more sustainable business model, they hope to be able to start a new fundraising strategy.



Issues

Stephen Oliver commented on public perception. He said that many people feel the RBG should be taken over by the Province, but as in most places, Government is divesting itself of places like this. It would not be a desirable change, in any case, as it would then end up as a low government priority. Others feel it has national stature and should be designated a National Historic Site. This designation would not necessarily help its operational problems as can be seen in other facilities that have that designation.

Selected USA Park Systems

(Source: Price M., J. Krebs and M. Lout. No date. *Comparative Park Management Models,* New Yorkers for Parks. New York)

San Francisco: San Francisco Recreation And Park Department (RPD)

The RPD (formed in 1949) is a mayoral agency that is guided by a seven-member unpaid Recreation and Park Commission and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC) a 23-member group providing community oversight and facilitates public input and review.

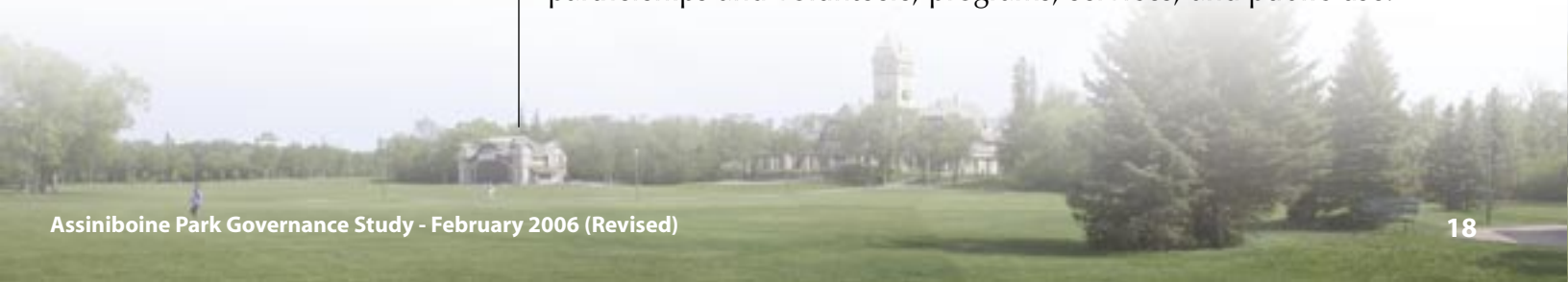
The mission of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) *is to rejuvenate the human spirit by providing safe parks, quality programs and employees that demonstrate our commitment to customer satisfaction.*

Governance

The General Manager is appointed by the Recreation and Parks Commission. The Commission is appointed by Mayor and hold final departmental appropriations approval.

Planning and Programming

They have a strategic plan – communications, facilities, funding and revenue generation, maintenance, organization development, partnerships and volunteers, programs, services, and public use.



There is a series of performance measures tied to each – *e.g.* department wide equipment inventory database with data to track inventory, purchases, repairs and items removed from service.

They also prepare an operational plan with a 5 year time frame prepared by operational teams in each of the above-noted sectors. The Operational plan will have measurable performance standards: (*e.g.* public safety, detailed maintenance plans and standards for each facility - cleanliness (*e.g.* restrooms) and graffiti removal;
Maintenance of signage, furniture).

Presently partnered with a local advocacy organization The Neighbourhood Parks Council (NPC) in a citizen driven parks inspection program called Parks Scan – use volunteer teams and this is a public /private partnership funded by a foundation – use handheld computers, GIS, GPS.

Indicators for park conditions and cleanliness have been developed with the RPD to maximize the efficacy of citizen inspections. RPD has also a Community Catalyst volunteer program to assist with park cleanups and maintenance.

Funding

The RPD's revenue sources include:

- 33% from City
- 23% from Open Space Fund – property tax revenue dedicated to parks
- 23% from programs and a yacht harbour
- 6% from parking revenue
- 16% is Capital expenditures funded from bond issues

New revenue such as grants and foundation support must be used solely for park and recreation program enhancement, including capital and facility maintenance
Department expenditure savings can be retained for one-time expenditures



Chicago Park District (CPD)

The Chicago Park District (formed in 1934) manages over 220 facilities, 7300 acres of parkland, 552 parks, 33 beaches, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, 10 bird and wildlife gardens and thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs. In addition, the CPD contracts out management of nine harbours; over 100 concessions; seven golf courses; two driving ranges; three underground parking garages; and Soldier Field, a multi-use recreation facility. The CPD's mission *is to enhance the quality of life throughout Chicago by becoming a leading provider of recreation and leisure opportunities; provide safe, inviting and beautifully maintained parks and facilities; create a customer focused and responsive park system.* The Mayor of the City of Chicago appoints the Chicago Park District's seven-member board. The Board is the governing body of the Chicago Park District. The Board has three standing committees under which business is done: Administration, Programs and Recreation, and Capital Improvements. The Office of the Secretary serves as the coordinating staff to the Board. The CPD is an independent taxing authority, as granted by law, so they are assured of a certain level of revenue each year.

This is widely recognized as one of the most progressive programs in USA.

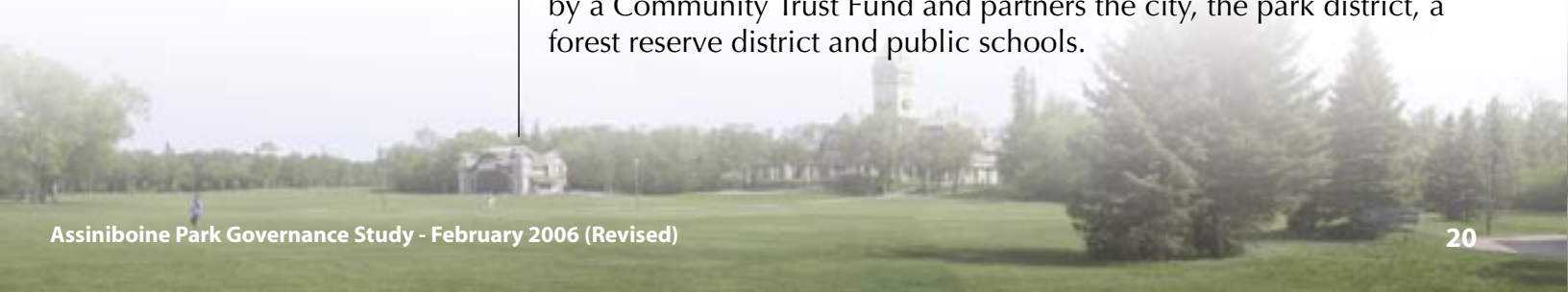
Applies system wide service and maintenance guidelines based on those of the Professional Grounds Management Society.

Funding and Governance

CPD funding is statutory and CPD is a separate taxing body for dedicated parks funding. It can also issue bonds for capital projects. Allows funds to be allocated where needed most, free of political interference or historic precedent. Bond issues allow control of capital expenditures instead of annual city appropriations for multi-year projects.

The Mayor has championed parks.

CitySpace – a comprehensive open space plan for the city, is funded by a Community Trust Fund and partners the city, the park district, a forest reserve district and public schools.



CPD oversight is by a Parks Superintendent, appointed by the mayor. The mayor also appoints a 7 person Board Of Commissioners

Maintenance Management
Parks maintenance is under a separate city department – an award winning maintenance management program.
System wide repairs are rated on a 1-5 scale. Electronic tracking system is being installed, with a public website.

All CPD properties receive pruning every 5 years and regular basic services – graffiti 24 hour response, garbage, turf care

Keeper of the Park Program – a specific staff member assigned to work with community patrons to resolve issues and concerns.

Elevated Landscape Maintenance (ELM) – uses private companies to maintain certain parks. Private companies train in house staff in maintenance, horticultural and arboricultural practices. Goal is to raise the standard of care in every park and establish performance measures.

A Focus Parks Program directs that managers focus trades and landscape crews on all components of a designated park in the overall system. The designated park remains in program until its capital and maintenance needs are addressed. – produces significant holistic upgrades for an entire park.

Programs and Partnerships
A Parks TV station raises park profile and features events and park activities

CPD Partnerships with Community Groups.

Clean and Green – Mayor's initiative, one day spring cleaning event – plantings, painting, sweeping and trash collection
Floral Contact/Welcome Gardens = flower filled planters at entrances maintained by volunteers
VIP – Volunteer in Parks – encompasses all ages and interest levels. Organize nature stewardship workdays and post volunteer opportunities on website



Boston: Parks And Recreation Department (BPR)

Boston's Park and Recreation Department (BPR) and the new Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) maintain the parks and recreation facilities for the City of Boston. The BPR focuses on landscape maintenance and beautification while the BCYF builds partnerships and secures additional resources to expand programs beyond city funding. The BPR oversees 2,200 acres of public parkland, 1,000 acres of which comprise Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. BPR properties include 215 parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields, 65 squares, 17 fountains, three active cemeteries, 16 historic burying grounds, and two golf courses. The BPR is a Mayoral agency, consisting of a Commissioner and five reporting divisions: Maintenance, External Affairs, Cemetery, Policy and Administration. The mission of the Department of Parks and Recreation is to maintain clean, green, safe, accessible and well programmed park land for the City's residents.

Governance

The BPR focuses on landscape maintenance and beautification; BCYF focuses on service delivery and youth advocacy. BCYF also builds partnerships and secures additional funding beyond city funding. Each has mission statements. The BPR is a mayoral agency headed by a Commissioner.

The BCYF is headed by an Executive Director and is an amalgamation of several previously separate programs – community centres, community partnerships, and recreation division.

Maintenance

Boston Parks Inspection Program (BPIP):

Appearance: measured by 5 indicators – litter/glass, signage, graffiti, weeds, and grass areas.

Condition: measured by 8 indicators – pathways, play courts, play equipment, fountains/spray units, benches, fences, trees/shrubs, ball fields.

A pass on appearance > 60% acceptable on 3 of 5 indicators
A pass on condition > 75% acceptable on 6 of 8 indicators

Two inspections per year.
Inspection records are kept as internal tracking measures and



aggregated annually to evaluate past acceptability and set future targets.

Partnerships
BPR – has a number of different private organization partners.

BPR operates a PARK customer service line to volunteer, report complaints, request trees etc..

Funding
Department wide budgets are not disaggregated by funding source.

An External Funds Budget is also maintained at city level to receive grants from other levels of government or private contributors.

- consolidation of duplicative programs is instructive in Boston Approach
- promote and foster interagency collaboration

The conclusions that New York drew for its parks program from these other cases:

- long term planning and needs assessment valuable
- greater public accountability
- assess park performance annually against a defined minimum level of service
- dedicated and consistent funding streams
- revenue retention important



Manitoba Conservation, 2004. *Report Of Best Practices Workshop For Manitoba's Provincial Parks*. Winnipeg

Manitoba Parks and Natural Heritage Branch, as part of a business planning process, looked at best practices of 3 other jurisdictions – Parks Canada Agency, Alberta Provincial Parks and Ontario Provincial Parks

Highlights of the best practices framework and advice that emerged are:

Strategic Planning

A strategic plan is necessary – vision, mission, goals, objectives etc..
Revenue retention is key to self-determination
Parks should link to government priorities
Comprehensive staff involvement is critical in strategic planning
Communicate strategic plan widely
Measure outcomes, not outputs

Environmental Stewardship

Define environmental stewardship/integrity and demonstrate accomplishment of same
Use partnerships in environmental stewardship
Conduct inventories of resources and environmental assets

Public Education/Interpretation

Hook education/interpretation into schools curricula – focus on youth
Multimedia approach required interpretation and public education/ awareness
Seek corporate sponsors for educational programming

Service Provision: Recreation

Cost allocation models needed for cost recovery
Standards must be set and adhered to
Controls to avoid overuse are important

Marketing and Communications

Increase importance of functional website as marketing vehicle; reservations, links
Park branding important and consistency
Consistency in signage and uniformed staff important for brand identity
Investment in marketing is needed for growth
Sound market research required

Partnership Development
Needs to be proactive; look for win-wins
Dedicate position for partnership development, fundraising
Exclusive rights agreements necessary to provide value

Financial management
Pricing policies and structures
Merchandising
Revenue generation policies
Financial targets
Revenue retention
Capital infrastructure attended to

HR Management
Training and skills development
Competitive remuneration
Reward and recognition
Volunteers recruitment, development, recognition and management
Service levels/customer focus

Facilities Management
Life cycle policies and replacement
Safety and security
Maintenance and service standards.

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