



Assiniboine Park Conservancy

The Transformation of Assiniboine Park – Imagine a Place…




January 12, 2011

The Transformation of Assiniboine Park – Imagine a Place…

This 10 Year Development Plan is being presented to Council in keeping with APC's obligations under the Term Sheet approved by Council in July 2010. Any revisions to this plan would also be brought to Council for approval.

The main components of the Plan are the same as those presented to EPC and unveiled to the public in June 2009. APC has been making significant progress in implementing this plan.

I. The Journey to Where We Are

Recognizing the importance of one of Manitoba's most cherished assets, the need for significant focused commitment and reinvestment in the Park and the value of working closely with the private sector, the City of Winnipeg led the establishment of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy. Established in 2008 as a private/public not-for-profit, charitable organization, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy (APC) has a mandate to develop, govern and manage the overall Park and its amenities. APC is finalizing a 50-year lease and funding agreement with the City of Winnipeg which owns the property and assets. The Assiniboine Park Conservancy has been charged with driving the most significant development in Assiniboine Park in the past 80 years and integrating the functions and operations of four distinct entities that have been operating relatively autonomously.

There has been significant consultation over the past few years with the Park's major stakeholders, Manitoba citizens, about the important aspects and characteristics of the Park, needs and wants for refurbishment and new development and opinion about potential development ideas. Common themes were identified and formed the foundation for the comprehensive planning for the future of Assiniboine Park:

- The deteriorating state of the Park infrastructure is a significant concern, particularly the Zoo;
- The Park is important for walking, cycling, holding gatherings and hosting recreational activities and events;
- The Park enhances the quality of life and is a valuable tourist attraction;
- The greenspace is a critical draw to the Park and it is expected to be protected and enhanced;
- The Conservatory, Zoo and gardens are considered to be the 'best things' about the Park and there is an expectation that they will remain part of the Park; and
- High dissatisfaction with food services and the condition and availability of washrooms and play areas.

In late 2008/early 2009, the existing senior management team (represented by the new Chief Executive Officer and the senior team members of the then partner organizations) and the Board of Directors initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process for Assiniboine Park. This resulted in the development of a vision and mission for the Park, guiding principles and key strategic directions and objectives approved by EPC. Subsequently a business plan was established to define the development priorities for the Park and outline the structure, systems, processes, practices and resources required to ensure the vision is realized and a revitalized Assiniboine Park is sustainable for decades to come. This was presented to EPC in June 2009.

In the past 18 months:

- The executive, management and operational teams have been developed;
- Individuals from the former partner organizations have transitioned to the new organization;
- The 'Imagine a Place' capital campaign in its 'quiet phase' has been overwhelmingly successful;
- Two major development projects: The Nature and Adventure Playground and Duck Pond and Plaza are ready for opening in the spring;
- The new toboggan hill and skating rink are available now for winter recreation;
- The Family Centre has begun construction aiming for a fall 2011 opening; and
- Phase 1 of the zoo development is progressing faster than originally planned.



II. The Vision

Assiniboine Park will be a place of pride for *all members of our community and a magnet for visitors*; an exciting year round destination for enjoyment, adventure, discoveries and unique experiences in an environment of exceptional natural beauty.

Key Principles and Beliefs

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy also established key principles and beliefs to guide all decisions as they move forward on defining the future of Assiniboine Park:

- Status quo is not an option.
- A vibrant, busy park is integral to a healthy city.
- Assiniboine Park is a place for all.
- Long-term sustainability of the infrastructure is paramount.
- Assiniboine Park must be a leader in conservation and environmental education.
- The character of the Park will be preserved and enhanced.
- Development and enhancement will be guided by the collective views of the community.
- Revenue generation opportunities are a means to fund the primary purpose of the Park and must integrate with all other elements of a renewed Park.

The Conservancy understands that meeting this vision requires the commitment and passion of numerous organizations, groups and individuals and that with dedication and authority comes responsibility and accountability. APC established clear accountability statements to its stakeholders:

Public - We will protect, nurture and enhance Assiniboine Park in the best interests of Winnipeggers.
Employees - We will create and sustain the culture and environment that will allow our employees to do their jobs well, grow and develop and contribute to the success of Assiniboine Park.
Volunteers - We will create and sustain the culture and environment that provides a fulfilling volunteer experience and recognizes their contribution to the success of Assiniboine Park.
Private Funders - We will pursue and fulfill the objectives for which the gift was intended and be responsible stewards of the gifts.
Government as Funders - We will pursue and fulfil the objectives for which the funding was intended and be responsible stewards of the funds.
Accreditation, Licensing and Regulatory Bodies - We will meet and exceed the standards set by professional, licensing and regulatory bodies.

The APC Approach

Transformation of this magnitude requires a dramatically different approach to the development, management and operation of Assiniboine Park:

- 'One Park' with various attractions, amenities, services and programs;
- Goal of a 'signature park' worthy as a major tourist attraction;
- 'Best in class' surroundings to support 'best in class' development;
- Maintenance practices reflective of a 'signature park'; and
- Intensive focus on fundraising and marketing.

Strategic Directions

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy has established seven strategic directions that will ensure it can achieve the compelling vision for the Park:

- **High performance organization** that ensures all members are working toward the same goals.
- **Renewed and expanded basic Park features** that enhance the Park experience.
- **Exciting new developments and programs** that will attract community members and visitors from around the world and ensure year round enjoyment**.**
- **A sustainable funding model**.
- **Model of contemporary conservation practices**.
- **Widespread awareness and excitement** of Assiniboine Park and what it offers
- **Long-term partnerships** with other organizations that will allow for mutual achievement of goals**.**



III. The Transformation of Assiniboine Park- Restore, Enhance, Preserve

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy has created a 10 year re-development plan that pays tribute to the many existing features of the Park and its position in the community. In the process of planning this development the following guidelines and criteria were adopted:

- All attractions will have a 'best in class' component and unique design;
- The Park will be a unique and engaging, dynamic laboratory for life-long learning;
- The Park will become a model for contemporary conservation practices;
- The Park will be a truly year-round destination, enhancing winter activities and supporting amenities; and
- Natural attractions such as gardens and green spaces will be further enhanced to reinforce the Park as Canada's most spectacular representation of the Olmsted park model.

There will be three major phases of change and renewal:

- **The "Heart of the Park"** - the Children's Nature and Adventure Playground, expanded Duck Pond and Family Centre;
- **The Transformed Assiniboine Park Zoo** - including the signature "Journey to Churchill" exhibit and the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre; and
- **The Iconic Conservatory and Conference Centre** - including the Welcome Centre, banquet halls and a variety of uniquely-themed gardens.

To complement this exciting new development, an **Active Learning Zone** will provide multiple interactive activities for youth citizens and site improvements to gateways and entrances, roads, parking lots and people movers, walkways and promenades and washrooms will enhance the visitor experience throughout the Park.

1. The Heart of the Park

The "Heart of the Park" represents an area of approximately 30 acres dedicated to recreation for a range of users including children, youth, seniors, families and persons with disabilities. This area will reflect a wide variety of unique zones in which structured and unstructured play can occur, challenging children's cognition, imagination and creativity. Activities and play apparatuses will include ice-skating, tobogganing, slides, swings, forts, willow tunnels, climbing, games areas and nature interpretive features.



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The Children's Nature and Adventure Playground

Children and their parents and grandparents will delight in this space designed for play and adventure. Unlike anything in North America and offering the experience of "just playing outside" the playground is whimsical, with a garden themed around the children's game of 'snakes and ladders'. Recreational opportunities include a children's garden with topiaries and mazes, rolling and gently contoured hummocks and hills nestled between existing trees, water and sand play features, a tree fort, willow tree tunnels, bird's nest swings, and summer and winter slides. The Children's Garden will be a dynamic space changing from season to season. During winter months, the Toboggan Run, outdoor fire pits, ice sculptures and snow forts will ensure the area continues to engage, educate and entertain.





The Family Centre

Designed to sit in visual harmony with its natural surroundings, the Family Centre will be the local meeting place. It will be fronted by a large open public plaza, and provide an indoor and outdoor eating area situated toward the Duck Pond. Child, runner and dog friendly, the plaza will be a great place to meet friends, relax and watch the ducks or just enjoy the beauty of the adjacent gardens.



A centrally located lounge with a fireplace and an outdoor deck on the west side of the building will be a popular spot for relaxation. An area dedicated to the 'Winnie' story featuring a Winnie the Bear exhibit will be housed just inside the Centre's entrance. A 200-seat event room, nestled among the trees, will be home to weddings, family events, parties and celebrations. The catering kitchen will provide food services for these events as well as for the adjacent café and take out window.

The activity room will move the adventure of the 'outdoor classroom' to the indoors, providing a location for education, exploration and creativity.







The Expanded Duck Pond

The new Duck Pond will provide the important marsh habitat needed to sustain the Park's duck population as well as interactive opportunities for families and school groups to learn about biology, ecology and water conservation. More than double its current size, it will also feature a distinct recreation area with small bridge to an island in the summer and expanded opportunities for outdoor skating in winter.

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2. The Transformed Assiniboine Park Zoo

Informed by years of research and guided by the themes of education and conservation, the redeveloped zoo will be integrated zoo/botanical/cultural displays organized into themed bio-geographic areas. A new main entrance at the south end of the Zoo with a restaurant and expanded retail will be the starting point for an adventure, reflective of the trek from Winnipeg to Churchill. Beginning the journey, interpretive exhibits in the **Prairie Landscape** and **Boreal Forest** will tell the story of life on the Canadian prairie. These open vistas will be populated with prairie dogs, bison, pronghorn, moose, wolves, river otters, migratory waterfowl, limestone garter snakes and a variety of amphibian species.

Through the woodlands of the Boreal Forest and across the tundra, the **Journey to Churchill** will culminate in the world class and signature exhibit, the **Polar Bear Encounter** which will provide dramatic encounters with Polar Bears and other northern animals including: caribou, arctic fox, snowy owls and seals. Polar bears will be featured in three zones. It will be a three dimensional, four-season, six senses educational classroom like no other, inviting exploration, challenging thinking and promoting personal action in the fight to conserve the habitat of this magnificent animal.

Underwater and above ground viewing opportunities will enable visitors to come face to face with iconic polar bears. The arctic exhibit building is a primary viewing point for both polar bears and harbour seals, providing stunning underwater and split viewing from an acrylic tunnel. A family restaurant and unique event space will be included in the building.



The **International Polar Bear Conservation Centre** will conduct and coordinate academic research on the Arctic environment and polar bear conservation, host public education programs and operate a polar bear rescue and relocation network that will permanently place orphaned or injured animals in qualifying zoological parks.

The long-term plan will see the ‘Journey to Churchill’ exhibit area linked physically and thematically to Asia by the **Beringea Land Bridge**, a representation of the historic land bridge that joined Asia to North America. This area will be a highly themed, educational area containing a small collection of animals such as tigers, Stellar’s Sea Eagles and Takin and the **Asian Endangered Species Pavilion** with primates, leopards and reptiles. Cultural and botanical exhibits will be carefully selected to clearly represent the inter-relationship between humans, plants and animals.

The **Tropical House**, a favourite destination for over 40 years, is being extensively renovated to emulate ‘New World Tropics’ including a new animal group and colourful birds within an environment of a high rock wall, waterfalls and streams.

Complementing and integrating with these spectacular exhibits, will be an **Education Campus**, revitalized **Aunt Sally’s Farm** and **Heavy Horse Exhibit**. As part of the programming, there will be classes for preschoolers to seniors, school field trips, free interpretive programs and improved use of the animal collection for university research. A new **Animal Contact Area** and **Animal Care Centre** within Aunt Sally’s Farm will let visitors interact with some species and showcase staff tending to the health needs of zoo animals or providing for orphaned species. Majestic horses will be harness-trained to draw wagons and sleighs for transportation in the Park and will have a home in new horse paddocks where visitors can observe as they are trained, cared for and worked.

A new **Animal Hospital** will ensure the Zoo is able to provide optimal animal care and meet required accreditation standard.





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3. Escape to Another World - The Assiniboine Park Conservatory and Conference Centre

Envisioned to be a signature piece of architecture for the City, the stunning new glass Conservatory will be an icon for the Park. Housing the Park's official **Welcome Centre**, the new Conservatory will comprise two distinct climatic areas that will contain plant species from around the globe, each in a unique garden emulating a natural ecological community.



The **Rainforest Garden**, exhibiting tropical plants from the rainforest biome, will be home to orchids, ferns, climbing vines and ginger plants as well as fruiting banana trees, star fruit, papaya, coconut palms, coffee, rubber, cinnamon and giant bamboo. The contrasting **Mediterranean Garden** will exhibit temperate, desert and arid region plants and crops from similar climates around the world and a wide diversity of species such as succulents, olives, cork oak, grape vines, vegetables, herbs, citrus fruits, date palms, grains and pomegranates. These species tell a story of adaptability to drought, to environmental pressures or ecological disasters and communicate how plants are used for food, medicine, spirituality or commerce.



Showcasing elaborate, aesthetically rich displays, the **Floral Hall** will provide changing thematic exhibits that connects visitors to a geographic region, ethnic or regional event, holiday or celebration. A unique food service area will offer guests a quiet meal while they take in the floral artistry around them.

The Conservatory will also house a magical Butterfly Garden to enchant and entertain visitors, surrounding them with hundreds of exotic butterflies in flight.

This beautiful serene setting will house a unique **conference centre/executive retreat**. With meeting rooms and state-of-the-art event supports, this facility will attract those who appreciate the special environment and the access to so many activities in the Park and in the city. By providing a catering facility and utilizing the food services of the restaurants of Assiniboine Park and both indoor and outdoor spaces, the Conservatory will become 'the place' to have ceremonies such as weddings and celebratory events.

4. Additional Development

<u>Enhanced Site Development</u>

While the above major development concepts are exceptional draws to Assiniboine Park, incorporated in the master plan are significant enhancements to the Park experience for everyone including the casual user and those who simply want to enjoy the outdoors. These include:

- Park Gateways and Entrances
- Road Revitalization, Parking and People Movers
- Walkways, Pathways and Plazas







The Active Learning Zone

A clearly marked Gateway will delineate where high energy, active learning begins. Nestled in a swath of native forest, a Rock Climbing Wall and an Aerial Park featuring a zip line and rope ladders will engage youth in confidence-building activities and promote physical activity. These facilities will be open to individual visitors or through a **Community Outreach Program** which can be targeted at specific populations (segmented by age, gender, ethnicity, grade level or by common experiences such as chronic illness or bereavement). A **Youth at Risk Program** will use the apparatuses to promote teamwork, trust, patience and perseverance. APC intends to pursue a third party operator for the design, build and operation of this exciting installation.







IV. Driving Success

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy continues to develop and implement the plans, structure, organization, system and processes that will ensure it can establish the environment critical to its success:

- The ability to drive unprecedented growth;
- Capability and capacity to raise significant capital;
- Elevated standard of care and maintenance throughout the Park;
- Optimization of revenue from existing and new attractions, amenities and services; and
- A long-term sustainable funding model.

The projects planned for the Park are large and complex with aggressive timelines. Relying on the City's operating funding, APC has spent the last year building its internal capacity to manage the development projects. The Park now has the appropriate skill sets to maintain tight fiscal control and ensure value for money, while creating top quality attractions on schedule.

APC's desire is that Assiniboine Park, in its transformed state, will showcase Manitoba's proven talent and expertise in architectural design, engineering and construction. In areas where highly specialized experience is required, such as zoo or conservatory design, APC will reach out to world-wide industry leaders, while retaining significant leadership roles for local experts. Industry standard systems and processes are used for the recruitment and contracting of design, engineering and construction expertise.

In keeping with its commitment to conservation, APC is striving to achieve LEED Gold standards in all major park projects. The zoo development will involve some unique facilities which do not have applicable LEED standards, in which case the principles of LEED design and construction will still be respected. Where actual LEED certification is not pursued, LEED Gold standards will still be applied.

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1. 'Imagine a Place' Capital Campaign

Development at the level envisioned by the Assiniboine Park Conservancy plan has a capital requirement unprecedented in the history of the Park. A multi-faceted resource development strategy, led by the Vice-President Resource Development and team, has been developed including a capital campaign, sponsorship, ongoing individual and corporate donations, memberships and grants. Appendix A outlines the capital requirements and timelines for the new development:

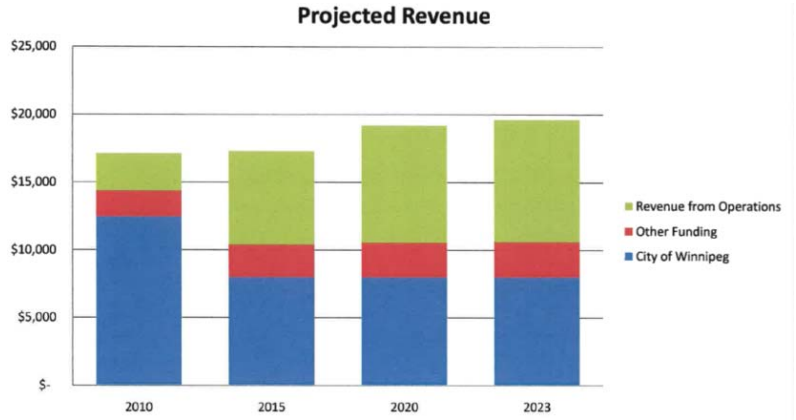
The go-forward plan anticipates the following funding scenario:

Province of Manitoba	25%
Government of Canada	25%
City of Winnipeg	25%
Community	25%

2. Sustainable Funding Model

It is extremely important that sufficient operating funding is available to support the new development and the enhancements envisioned in the long-term plan. The level of care of existing facilities and grounds must be raised to a level reflective of a flagship or 'signature' Park.

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy has developed a realistic sustainable funding model that incorporates revenue from an annual City of Winnipeg contribution, fundraisers and special events, grants, donations, and sponsorships as well as ongoing operational revenue. A combination of revenue from expanded food services, retail operations, programming, rental income, events and admissions will continuously increase as the new attractions, amenities and services are completed. APC has designed each project with the intention of creating value-added revenue opportunities while maintaining a high level of accessibility for all park features and full accessibility to all green space and gardens. The following depicts the projected revenues over the next 15 years from the City of Winnipeg, other funding and ongoing operational revenue



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Please note: The estimates are in 2010 dollars. It is expected that the actual costs will be impacted by construction costs at the time of development and inflation.

Appendix A

		Major Capital Expendiures Inception to Date 2010	Proposed Major Capital Budget 2011	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2012	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2013	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2014	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2015	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2016	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2017	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2018	Forecasted Major Capital Budget 2019	Total
Masterplan Phases:												
Phase 1-Heart of the Park:		$ 7,500,000	$ 3,500,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 11,000,000
Nature Playground												
Duck Pond Expansion												
Family Centre												
Phase 2-Arctic Initiatives:		$ 4,600,000	$ 13,550,000	$ 23,300,000	$ 18,240,000							$ 59,690,000
International Polar Bear Conservation Centre												
Journey to Churchill												
Animal/Building Relocations, Amenity Upgrades												
Service Upgrades and Site Preparations												
Phase 3-Major Site Development and Infrastructure:		$ 620,000	$ 2,700,000	$ 4,300,000	$ 2,865,000	$ 2,000,000	$ 1,515,000	$ 2,500,000	$ 5,100,000	$ 4,400,000		$ 26,000,000
Park Amenities												
Park Gateways and Entrances												
Park Survey, Environmental Assessment												
& Utility Upgrades												
Phase 4-Conservatory			$ 400,000	$ 750,000	$ 1,800,000	$ 9,500,000	$ 21,050,000	$ 16,500,000				$ 50,000,000
Phase 5-Zoo Temperate Zones:		$ 73,000	$ 1,120,000	$ 2,270,000	$ 8,370,000	$ 5,288,000	$ 2,619,000	$ 500,000	$ 4,250,000	$ 2,750,000		$ 27,240,000
Asian Complex												
Aunt Sally's Farm												
Education Complex												
Heavy Horse Barn												
Prairie and Boreal Forest Exhibits												
Phase 6-Animal Health Centre									$ 1,000,000	$ 4,500,000	$ 4,500,000	$ 10,000,000
**** Program Contingency & Escalation Allowance***									$ 5,359,000	$ 5,359,000	$ 5,352,000	$ 16,070,000
		$ 12,793,000	$ 21,270,000	$ 30,620,000	$ 31,275,000	$ 16,788,000	$ 25,184,000	$ 19,500,000	$ 15,709,000	$ 17,009,000	$ 9,852,000	$ 200,000,000
Projected Funding Commitment:												
City of Winnipeg Share @ 25%		$ 2,849,000	$ 5,316,000	$ 7,655,000	$ 7,819,000	$ 4,197,000	$ 6,296,000	$ 4,875,000	$ 3,927,000	$ 4,253,000	$ 2,813,000	$ 50,000,000

* To provide for construction cost escalation and unforeseen adjustments to the master plan

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