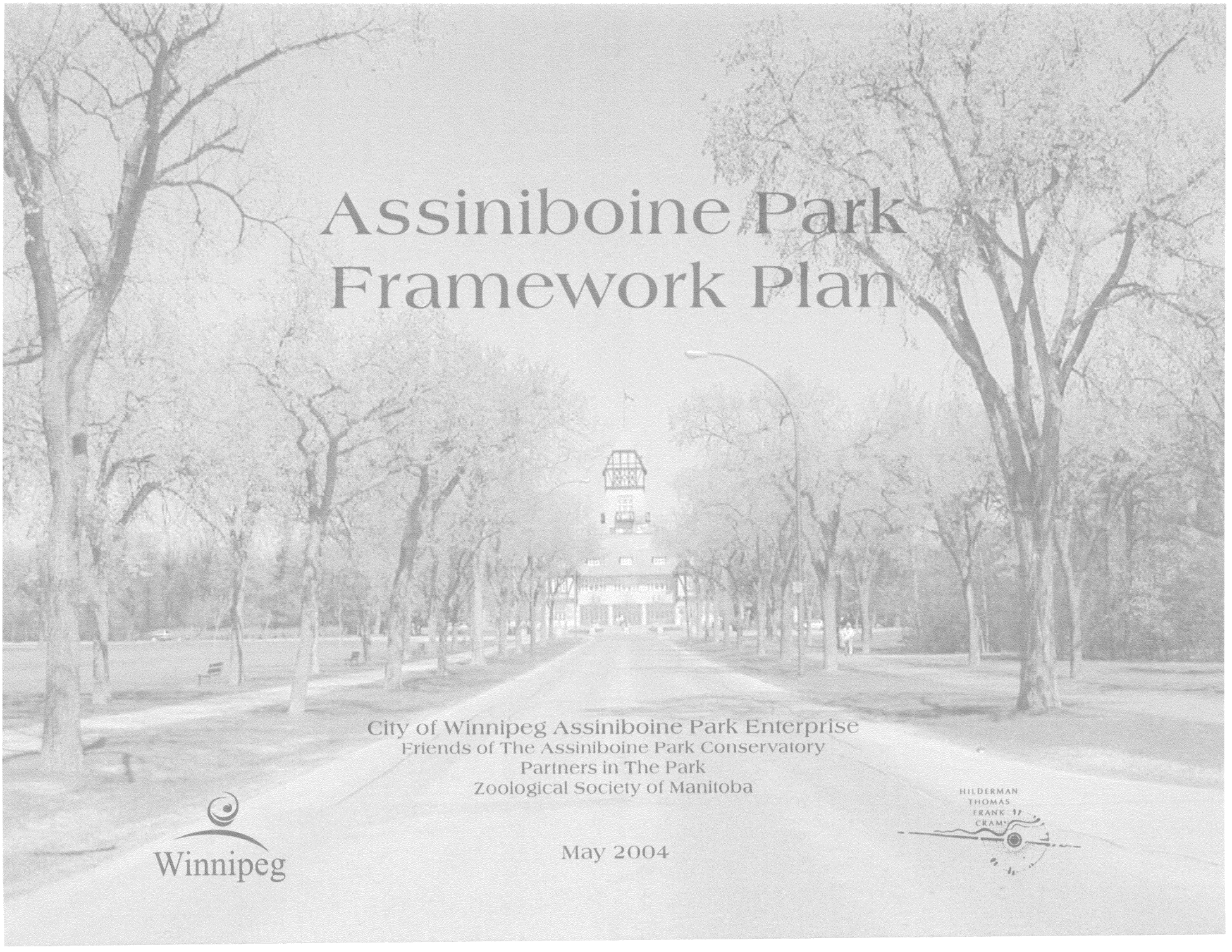


Assiniboine Park Framework Plan

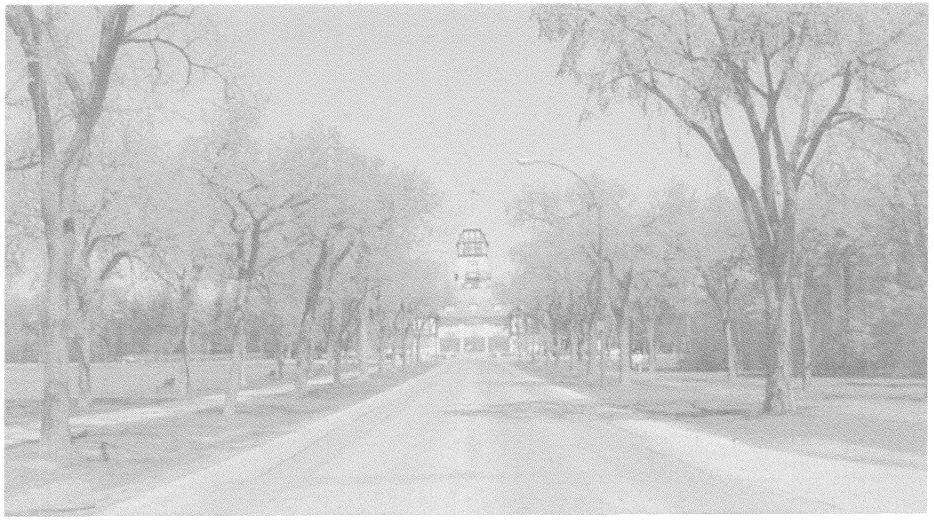
City of Winnipeg Assiniboine Park Enterprise
Friends of The Assiniboine Park Conservatory
Partners in The Park
Zoological Society of Manitoba

Winnipeg

HILDERMAN
THOMAS
FRANK
CRAM

May 2004

Assiniboine Park Framework Plan



Prepared for
City of Winnipeg Assiniboine Park Enterprise

By
Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram
with
Park Plan Advisory Committee
edited by
Janet Walker

May 2004

Winnipeg

HILDERMAN
THOMAS
FRANK
CRAM

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Assiniboine Park is one of Manitoba's signature destination parks – an urban best. Through a shared vision and with shared investment, the park will grow its unique attractions and sense of place.

Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision 5C-01
Policy: Maintain and Expand the System of Public Parks
"developing a strategic parks and open space management plan through public participation to meet emerging community needs."



"Duck Pond at Assiniboine Park"
by Roman Swiderek

INTRODUCTION

Assiniboine Park Enterprise was created by City Council in April 2000 to oversee an eleven-hundred-acre site including Assiniboine Park, the ZOO and Assiniboine Forest. Its mission is to develop and manage the site as a major urban destination and economic generator.

PURPOSE

This Assiniboine Park Framework Plan defines an integrated structure of land uses and development intended to guide the physical evolution of the Park in its second millennium. The Framework Plan provides Park Values to guide long-term direction and management of the Park, Guiding Principles to protect and enhance the historical integrity and characteristics of each area of Assiniboine Park, and Development Proposals to illustrate opportunities and actions for revitalization. The Framework Plan is intended to maximize the inherited assets of Assiniboine Park for the citizens of Winnipeg and visitors to the City.

PROCESS

Building upon community resident and visitor survey information about Assiniboine Park, the City of Winnipeg Community Services Department held a series of strategic consultations between January and March, 2003. Input and recommendations were received from a wide range of park users and interest groups including Manitoba Eco-Network, Universal Design Institute, Shaftesbury High School Youth, Manitoba Society of Seniors, Sport Manitoba, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Charleswood Rotary Club, the Folk Arts Council, Kite Festival and Teddy Bears' Picnic event representatives, as well as numerous others.

Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram was commissioned in March 2003 by the Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department to undertake a planning process, which would "establish a long range vision for Assiniboine Park". A Park Plan Advisory Committee was formed to identify issues, assist in generating the "vision" and act as a sounding board to test proposed development principles and specific development ideas. The ideas documented herein are truly a result of creative collaboration by dedicated individuals.

PARK PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Winnipeg

Frank Caldwell	Manager Assiniboine Park Enterprise Division, Community Services
Norm Fear	Superintendent of Park Services – South Area Parks and Open Space Division, Public Works
Cheryl Heming	City Naturalist Naturalist Services Branch, Community Services
John Kiernan	Design & Project Implementation Coordinator Planning, Property & Development, Planning & Land Use Division
Frank Kowalski	Coordinator of Park Services Assiniboine Park Enterprise Division, Community Services
Wendy Mackie	Coordinator of Horticulture Horticulture Branch, Community Services
Doug Ross	Assiniboine Park Zoo Coordinator Assiniboine Park Zoo Branch, Community Services
Patti Sullivan	Chief Operating Officer Assiniboine Park Enterprise, Community Services

The Friends of the Assiniboine Park Conservatory

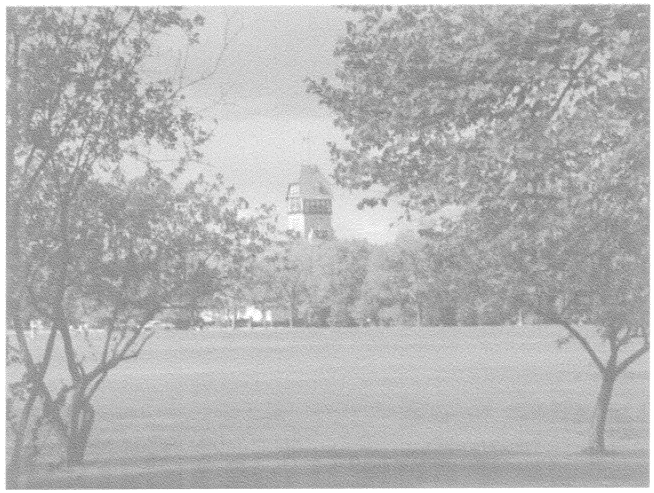
Darlene Golinoski	President
Kim Chipman	Executive Director
Chris Pederson	Director of Development

Partners in the Park

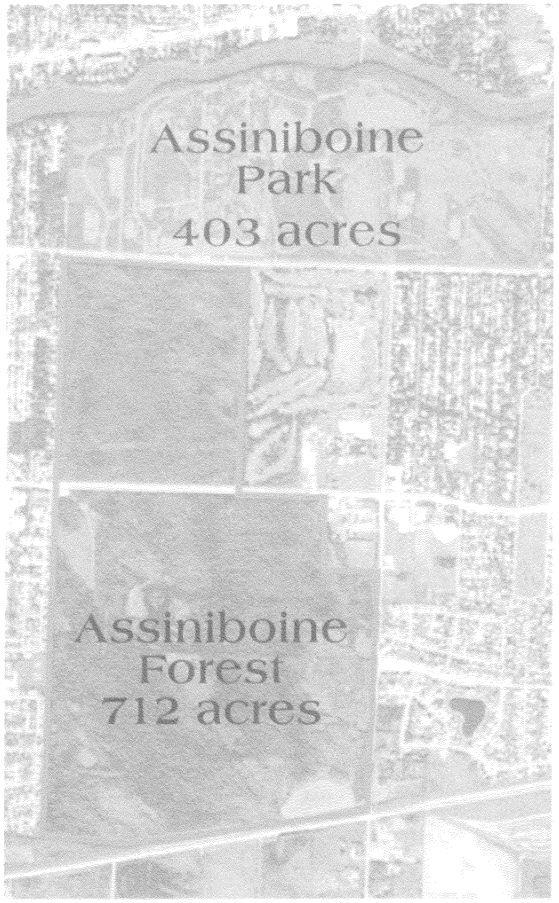
Donna Hicks	Executive Director

The Zoological Society of Manitoba

Kerry Renaud	Executive Director



Children's Meadow and Pavilion 2003



At 1,1000 acres, Assiniboine Park and Forest exceeds the size of Vancouver's Stanley Park (1,000 acres) and New York's Central Park (843 acres).

PREAMBLE

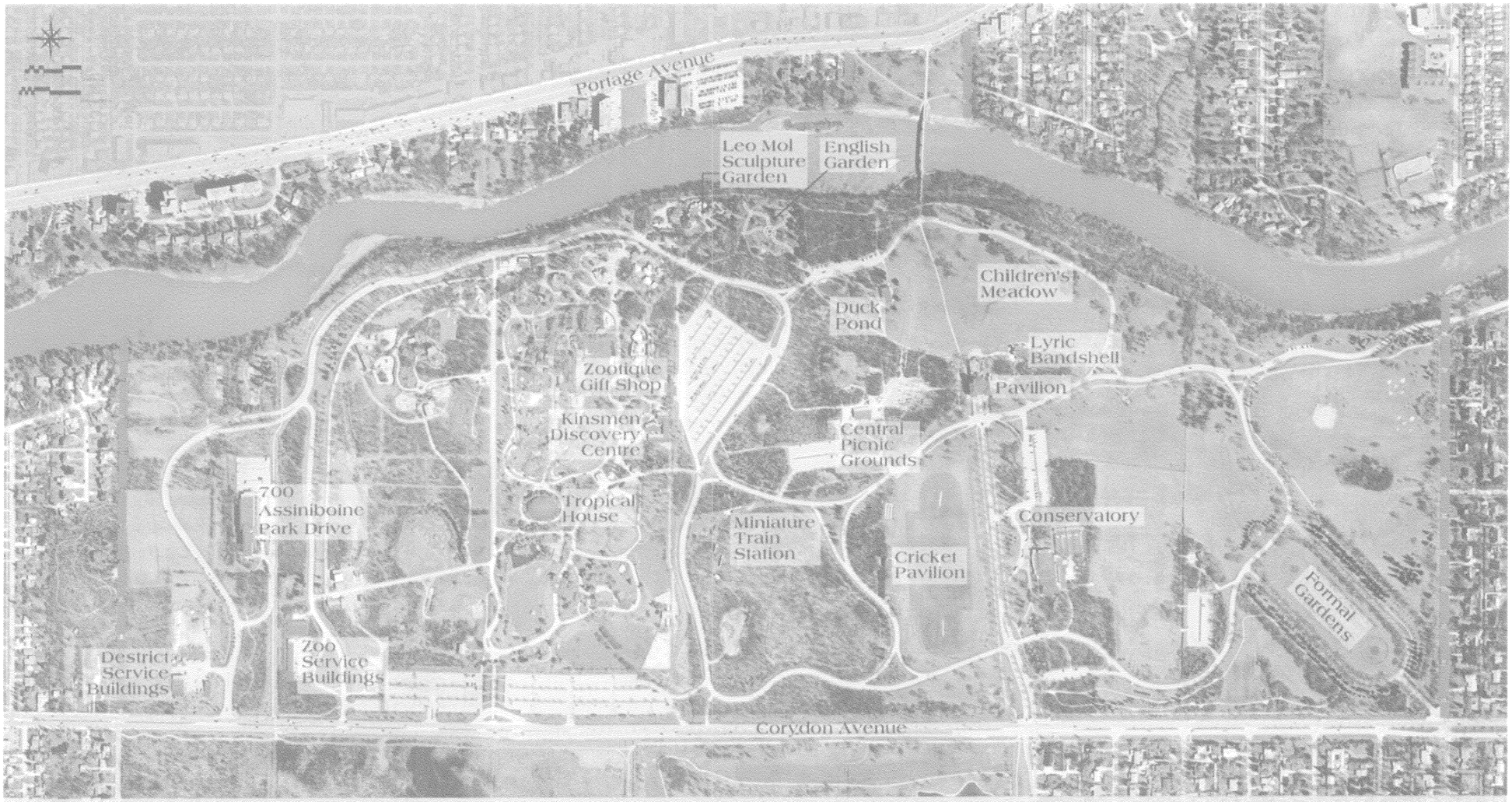
Home to a conservatory, pavilion, gallery museum, zoo, sculpture garden, outdoor theatre and 700 acre Forest, Assiniboine Park boasts distinctive qualities that position it as a cherished civic asset and premier Winnipeg attraction.

The Park plays host to international, provincial and local visitors with more than a million annual visits. It is a tremendous source of pride for citizens of Winnipeg and Manitoba and stands as a civic destination that rivals any in Canada.

Widely known as "City Park", this eleven-hundred-acre site – which includes the traditional Park, ZOO and Assiniboine Forest – exceeds the size of Vancouver's Stanley Park and New York's Central Park.

Assiniboine Park has long provided a verdant backdrop for social interaction, family recreation, community events and education. Today, through this Framework Plan, we envision profound ways to guide, nurture and enrich this inheritance for the well being of future generations.

Future development of Assiniboine Park will maximize the opportunities for experiences and activities afforded by the local characteristics of climate, native landscape, and Winnipeg's population. Special effort has been taken to plan Assiniboine Park's strategic development to take advantage of the four seasons with an emphasis on recognizing opportunities associated with our being a winter city.



Existing Conditions

INFORMATION SOURCE:

- Assiniboine Park airphoto flown May 14, 2002 ATLIS Geomatics, Winnipeg, Manitoba

A



River Trail 1920

Riparian *adj.* of or on a riverbank.

VISION

Assiniboine Park is time-honoured space for the rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit.

Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park is a celebrated and enchanting park borne of 19th century dreams. It features scintillating grassy spaces and long sightlines with rhythmic repetition of interconnected trees and hedges. It is Olmsted's classic pleasure-ground greenery woven among unremitting riparian roots to the north and prairie forest to the south. This melding of souls stands in tribute to the Park's venerable ecological and historic past.

This is a place where the spirit is compelled to dream endlessly amid the sunlight. It is, in part, a traditional park where the tranquility provided by simple lines and spatial structure is as intended as the park's circulation system and elegance of character; a park where the land has been thoughtfully arranged by the human hand to offer respite and relief from the vagaries of the urban environment.

The customary meadows of Assiniboine Park were rooted in a time where man's domination over nature was a decided virtue. Where the industrial revolution and its mechanistic repetition threatened to lock its workers in an endless grid where relief was unimaginable. Here lay the purpose of the park – to 'lift people out of their everyday lives'.

But the true charm of the Park lies in the fact that it is securely enveloped by River and Forest to form an eleven-hundred-acre acknowledgment to Manitoba's roots and prairie parkland. This natural riparian and woodland environment offers a heavenly bookend to early European concepts. The River, Park and Forest unite to extend nature's powerful spiritual effect. Together these distinctive elements have the incredible capacity to strengthen the body, stir one's thoughts and entertain one's heart.

Assiniboine Park is an environment designed for long-term public enjoyment. This means that its perennial offerings must be maintained and enhanced to respond to the public's complex requirements for recreation, arts, entertainment and leisure activity.

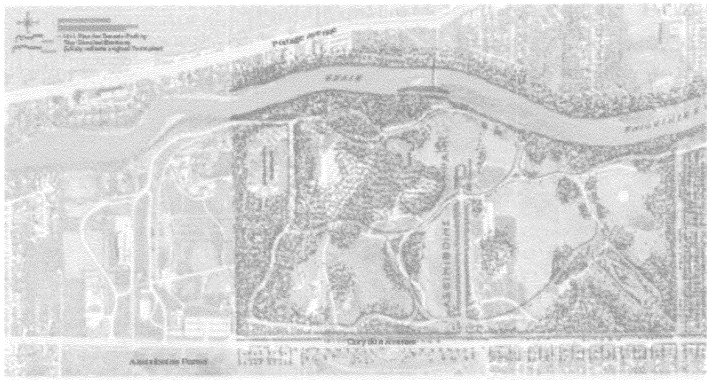
We must seek ways to connect and support the public's growing thirst for hands-on knowledge and contemplation of the environment.

This is a park poised to offer a new and more extensive system of walking and bicycle trails that link all parts of the River, Park and Forest. It is a park ready to flower as a public classroom devoted to diverse learning experiences. Home to a new Conservatory and contemporary ZOO, Assiniboine Park will capitalize on its current success and serve as a distinctive destination for all ages to engage in educational adventures associated with the earths precious living systems.

The Conservatory's future will be devoted to education about the plant kingdom and botanical and horticultural endeavours of Manitoba. It will demonstrate and encourage environmental stewardship and conservation of our natural environments and it will be further developed as a treasured refuge and visitor attraction.

The ZOO will be recognized as a living conservation education centre and feature a zoological park and cultural museum. The ZOO will promote understanding of animals as part of living systems and link ZOO exhibits with opportunities for genuine experiences in the Canadian wilds and in cold climates.

Visitor enjoyment is fundamental to the Vision and to the Park's appeal as a destination. This Framework Plan recommends that the following Park Values, aimed at enhancing visitor enjoyment, be embraced.



1905 Master Plan
By
Frederick G. Todd

City or urban parks are areas specifically allocated for public recreation and are one of the principle products of the design discipline known as landscape architecture. It has been suggested that the title landscape architect was first used with respect to the work of Frederick Law Olmsted (1872-1903).

Olmsted successfully adapted the English pastoral urban park to the specific conditions of rapidly expanding cities of the United States. Together with Calvert Bowyer Vaux, Olmsted designed New York's Central Park and its younger sibling Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Olmsted had 'unusual skill at harnessing the efforts of others' and 'his brilliance as an administrator…guaranteed the quality of his completed parks'.

One of Olmsted's protégés was Frederick G. Todd. It was Todd who created the original layout for Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park.



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

***Pedestrian** n. a person on foot rather than in a vehicle.*
The term pedestrian is used throughout this document to refer to persons travelling on foot as well as those travelling on roller blades and bicycles.

PARK VALUES

Assiniboine Park is a Park for All.
Sustained and enhanced with public and private support, the Park is a cherished place for physical activity, learning and timeless adventures among river, meadows and forest.

A. Inclusiveness and Accessibility
Assiniboine Park shall be accessible to all citizens and visitors

B. Park Heritage
The Park's unique landscape heritage shall be respected and will include the preservation and protection of the River, Meadows and Forest

C. A Place for Walking
Assiniboine Park shall be a place where pedestrians take precedence over automobiles

D. Learning Opportunities
The Park shall provide inspired educational experiences as a distinctive venue for life-long learning

E. Public Involvement and Investment
Assiniboine Park is a major civic asset worthy of sustained public support and private investment. Community participation shall be deemed essential to successful stewardship and development

A. Inclusiveness and Accessibility:

Assiniboine Park shall be accessible to all citizens and visitors

This includes responsibility to...

- ensure that every community, every age and every cultural demographic will find the Park easy to reach, enter, appreciate and understand
- ensure that financial capacity is not a factor in preventing individuals or families from accessing and using the Park
- meet a wide range of arts, entertainment, recreation and leisure needs – today and tomorrow
- manage, preserve, protect and enhance traditional respite, recreation and leisure activity
- develop well-conceived, well-designed and well-managed entertainment opportunities to ensure the widest possible enjoyment by local citizens and our provincial, national and international visitors

B. Park Heritage:

The Park's unique heritage shall be respected and will include the preservation and protection of the River, the Meadows and the Forest

This includes responsibility to...

- respect, preserve and enhance the heritage landscape and architectural components of Assiniboine Park that have been traditionally expressed with formality, axial entrances, building focal points and long vistas
- preserve and enhance views and vistas related to the Pavilion, the pedestrian bridge over the Assiniboine River, the open grassed meadows, and the formal gardens
- respect avenue plantings of elm trees along Conservatory Drive and around the Formal Garden
- preserve and protect the Park's riparian environment

The Assiniboine Park Planning Framework Values:

- **Inclusiveness and Accessibility**
- **Park Heritage**
- **A Place for Walking**
- **Learning Opportunities**
- **Public Involvement and Investment**



A Pedestrian Bridge links Assiniboine Park to Portage Avenue, 1932

Current concepts for Innovative internal transportation systems within Assiniboine Park include:

- tracked and rubber wheeled trains with sustainable and non-polluting technologies
- Park-and-Ride programs
- limits on time and place for auto travel and parking (eg. existing park road systems might be closed periodically to auto traffic while still allowing access to all venues)
- the reclaiming of paved roads and parking wherever possible for walking, bicycling and greenspace



- provide for both passive and informal uses of the Park so that visitors are compelled to experience the River, Meadows and Forest
- preserve the riverbank "monkey trail" experience and limit the trail's negative impact on the natural environment
- maintain the Park as an "English Landscape" using practices that are "nature" compatible

C. A Place for Walking:

Assiniboine Park shall be a place where pedestrians take precedence over automobiles

This includes responsibility to...

- design and manage transportation to and within the Park to encourage and accommodate the joy and benefit of walking, roller blading, cycling and physical activity
- plan, program and market the Park to include initiatives aimed at positioning pedestrians ahead of automobiles
- promote less reliance on cars and reduce the impact of the automobile on the Park by improving public transportation to the Park and developing an innovative internal transportation system within the Park

D. Learning Opportunity:

The Park shall provide inspired educational experiences as a distinctive venue for life-long learning

This includes responsibility to...

- develop the Park as a unique and engaging, dynamic laboratory for life-long learning and for the development of enhanced public knowledge and an enlightened community
- develop partnerships with the education system and others to advance opportunities for interpretative programming and guided touring in support of individual and group travel interests
- encourage and support the Conservatory's commitment to education

about the plant kingdom; botanical and horticultural endeavours of Manitoba; and environmental stewardship and conservation of our natural environments

- encourage and support the development of the ZOO as a living conservation education centre that promotes understanding of animals as part of living systems and links zoo exhibits with opportunities for genuine experiences in the Canadian wilds and in cold climates

E. Public Involvement and Investment:

Assiniboine Park is a major civic asset worthy of sustained public support and private investment. Community participation shall be deemed essential to its successful development and operation.

This includes responsibility to...

- develop cooperative relationships with individuals, other governments, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector to shape an effective plan for service delivery and the leveraging of resources to maximum advantage
- provide opportunities for public participation with the City of Winnipeg in the development, enhancement and operation of the Park
- strengthen community connections and effectively communicate with community stakeholders
- create an appropriate environment for and develop Public-Private Partnerships to support the identification, cultivation and development of strategic initiatives and opportunities that advance the successful execution of the Assiniboine Park Framework Plan
- encourage legacy, endowment and bequest opportunities as a means to manage and support the sustainability of the Park



Leo Mol Sculpture Garden

Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision

Principle: Partnership and Collaboration

"...working cooperatively with people, other governments, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector. The intent is to leverage resources to maximum advantage and to provide the most effective and efficient services to citizens and businesses."

Our Commitment:

Assiniboine Park and the Assiniboine Forest will be tied together thematically and programmatically. They shall be managed, operated, viewed and developed as a single unified entity with a design review process to apply to the entire site. Any new development will be assessed according to the values and principles of this Framework Plan.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARK DEVELOPMENT

Assiniboine Park is an eleven hundred acre site including Assiniboine Park, the ZOO and Assiniboine Forest. With the creation of the Assiniboine Park Enterprise, the intent is to develop and manage the entire eleven-hundred-acre site as a single entity. As such, Assiniboine Park will serve as a principal attraction for Winnipeg and Manitoba Residents as well as a destination for visitors to this City and Province.

Our strategic approach involves the following:

- The City of Winnipeg is committed to working collaboratively with Assiniboine Park's strategic partners and key - groups in accordance with the Park Values and Guiding Principles of this Framework Plan
- The City of Winnipeg will assess all new development proposals according to the Park Values and Guiding Principles of the Framework Plan
- The City of Winnipeg will actively seek public-private partnership opportunities in all aspects of future Park development
- The City of Winnipeg will require that strategic initiatives within Assiniboine Park, including new development opportunities, are subject to approved Business Plans
- Physical planning within Assiniboine Park will be guided by principles developed for each of the eleven distinct areas of the Park:

1. **Assiniboine Forest**
2. **Park Entrances and Adjacent Streets**
3. **Commemorative Area**
4. **Picnic Grounds and Playground**
5. **The Formal Gardens**
6. **Assiniboine River and Riparian Forest**
7. **Informal Gardens**
8. **The ZOO**
9. **Meadows**
10. **700 Assiniboine Drive**
11. **Park Maintenance Yard**