



The Heart of Saskatchewan **Wascana Centre**

Building the Future —
the Next 50 Years and Beyond

2014

Wascana Centre

the heart of the province and our capital city



Natural beauty, a window to the past, community pride, and family adventure – Wascana Centre embodies the spirit of Saskatchewan.

Even Saskatchewan's visionary first Premier, Walter Scott, could not foresee that when he set aside 68 hectares of land more than 100 years ago for what would one day serve as the home to the province's Legislative building, that Wascana Centre would become the symbolic heart of the province and its capital city.

From its humble beginnings as a barren piece of land on the outskirts of Regina, the area quickly grew into an urban oasis when the City of Regina set aside more land on the opposite shore of the lake and named it Wascana Park. The University of Regina became a founding

partner when the Authority was formed in 1962 — at that time a very unique collaboration. Today, the Centre is 2,300 acres of natural and recreation area that complements one of the most majestic architectural structures in the Commonwealth, the Saskatchewan Legislative Building.

It's difficult to imagine an attraction that offers more to the thousands of daily visitors and tourists that flock to the Centre each year. On any given day, Wascana Centre is filled with activities. Visitors and residents alike can be seen running or strolling along its many trails, taking in the natural and man-made features throughout the Centre. Home to an abundance of flowers, greenery, and a waterfowl park, the Centre is the perfect destination for bird watchers and nature lovers.



Wascana Lake itself is ideal for rowers and other water sports enthusiasts, while facilities are plentiful for family picnics or just letting your cares drift away as you listen to the water gently lapping against the shore. Even the winter months are filled with fun at the Centre, with ice skating and cross country skiing among the favourite activities of its visitors.

While the everyday charms of the Centre are what make it so enduring, the park has also become famous for events on a grander scale. Every year thousands of people visit the park to celebrate Canada Day or other events like the annual dragon boat races. Over the years, the Centre has even played host to prestigious national happenings like the Canada Summer Games, and has become recognized as one of the premiere sites for

water sports in Canada.

In addition, Wascana Centre offers arts and cultural activities, and presents visitors with a wide-array of learning opportunities that can be fun and inspiring for all ages. Visitors can view the displays at the MacKenzie Art Gallery, take in a show at the Conexus Arts Centre, or take home some of the works of Saskatchewan's own artisans, who sell their wares at the many arts and craft sales like Bazaart. They can also expand their minds in entertaining ways at the Saskatchewan Science Centre and the Museum of Natural History, or take in the history highlighted by architectural features such as the Trafalgar Fountain and Speakers' Corner. Paying tribute at the Saskatchewan War Memorial to the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure

the Centre is here for generations to enjoy, is always a moving and humbling moment. The Centre is also the site of permanent centres of higher learning, like the University of Regina.

The park is truly a place that the province's people and visitors to this prairie jewel have come to love and treasure. Every day Wascana Centre lives up to its motto of "a place for you".

Top: Children experience the wonders of nature in the Centre's natural habitat area.



Creating a legacy

A vision for the next 50 years and beyond

In 2011, the Board of Wascana Centre Authority undertook a Comprehensive Review project with the goal of establishing a strategic direction that would ensure a sustainable future for this treasured natural retreat. Constraints of the current governance and funding model include the declining condition of infrastructure, inability to meet day-to-day obligations and concern that the Centre will deteriorate if the status quo is maintained.

It is estimated that an additional \$54 million will be needed over the next 22 years for repair, replacement and enhancements. Annual operating costs are also expected to rise from \$6.5 million to \$10 million over the next 25 years.

The project was directed by the Strategic Planning Committee of Wascana Centre Authority's Board of Directors and their work examined the vision, mission and mandate of Wascana Centre through consultations with the public, along with professional, third party assessments of all assets, infrastructure and landscapes within the Centre. The project also included a review of best practices of other jurisdictions.

Of all these aspects, the most important element of the review, was the views of the many stakeholders with interests in Wascana Centre as it now exists, and their visions for the future. There was hearty endorsement for the Centre and a clear desire to have it remain as an important and enhanced public space in Saskatchewan.

The end goal of the study was to determine sustainable and realistic governance and funding models that would ensure that the Centre remains an urban retreat for Saskatchewan people to enjoy for many years to come and remains the site of Saskatchewan's legislative building — the seat of government.

The following describes the details of the review and the findings of professional, third party assessments of the Centre, along with recommendations for a model for the future.

Left: Pink roses in the Queen Elizabeth II Gardens bring vibrant colour to Wascana Centre.

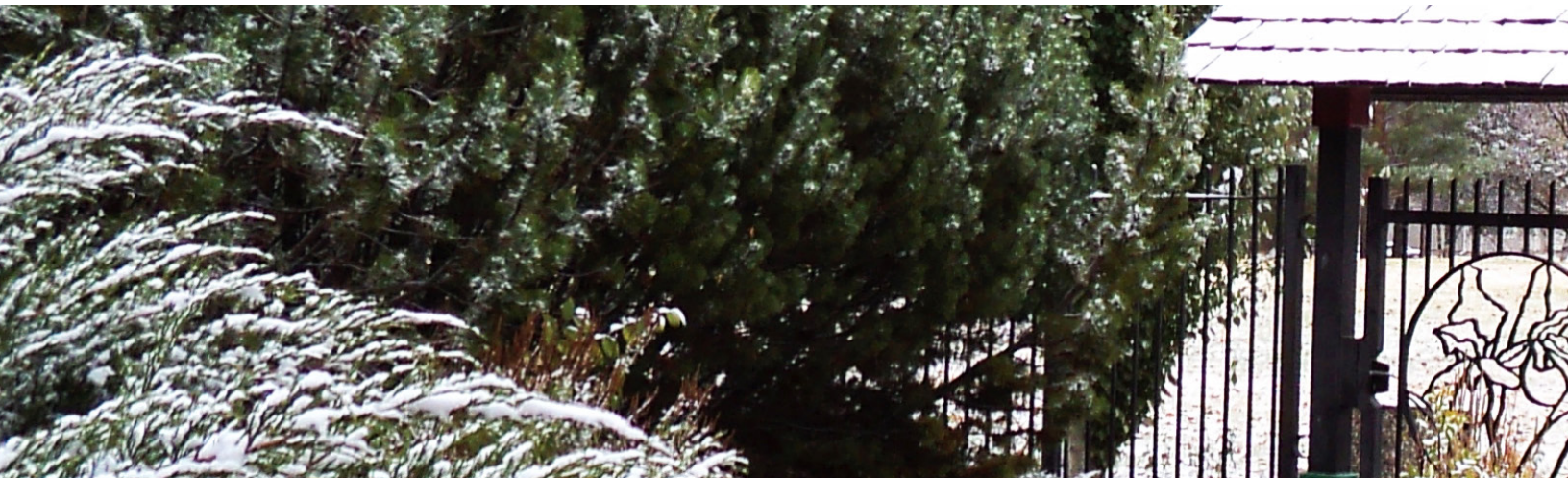
Current **governance** of Wascana Centre — Wascana Centre Authority

With the establishment of the *Wascana Centre Act* in 1962, an authority governed by a Board of Directors was created to provide oversight and guide the future of Wascana Centre.

Wascana Centre Authority's duties include the day-to-day operations and stewardship of the Centre's 2,300 acres, including the upkeep of buildings and landscaping, and regulating events within the Centre. It is accountable and responsible for reporting back to the public, and overseeing any outdoor or external decisions related to the structures and landscapes within the Centre's boundaries.

Bottom: Wascana Centre provides vast green space to the people of the province, right within the heart of the capital city.

The founding partners of Wascana Centre Authority help to fund the Centre and its required upkeep. The partners/landowners include the Province of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, the City of Regina and Wascana Centre Authority.



Current **challenges** of the Authority

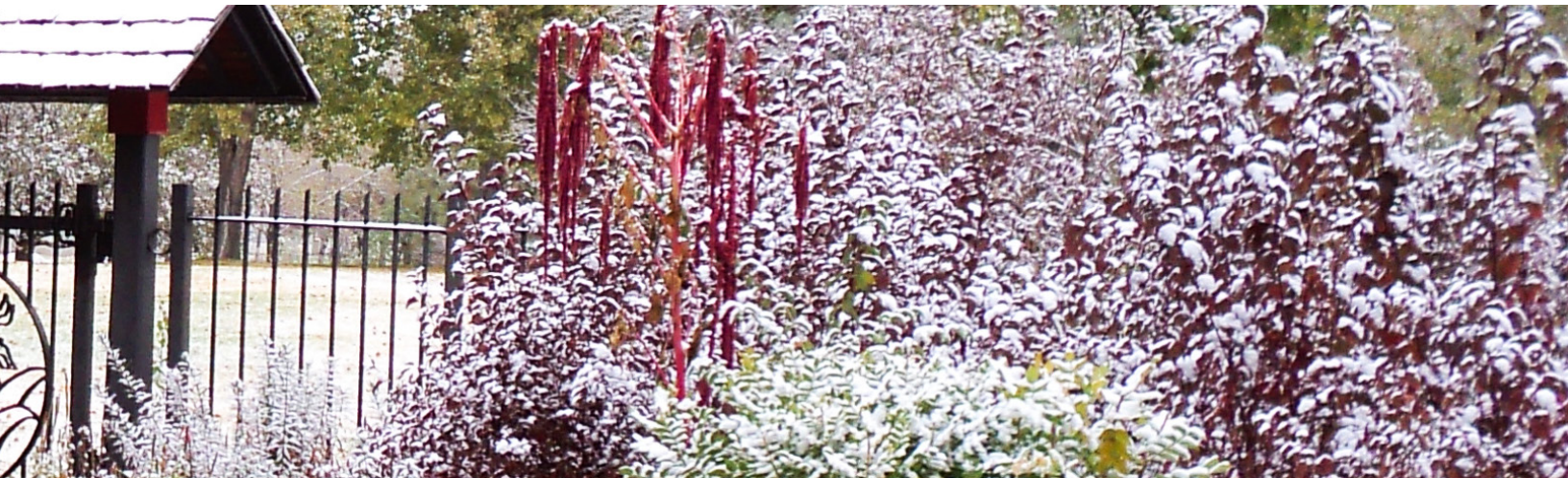
With an urban park of this size, challenges and funding decisions are required regarding the operation, upkeep and everyday grooming of the park to keep it looking its very best.

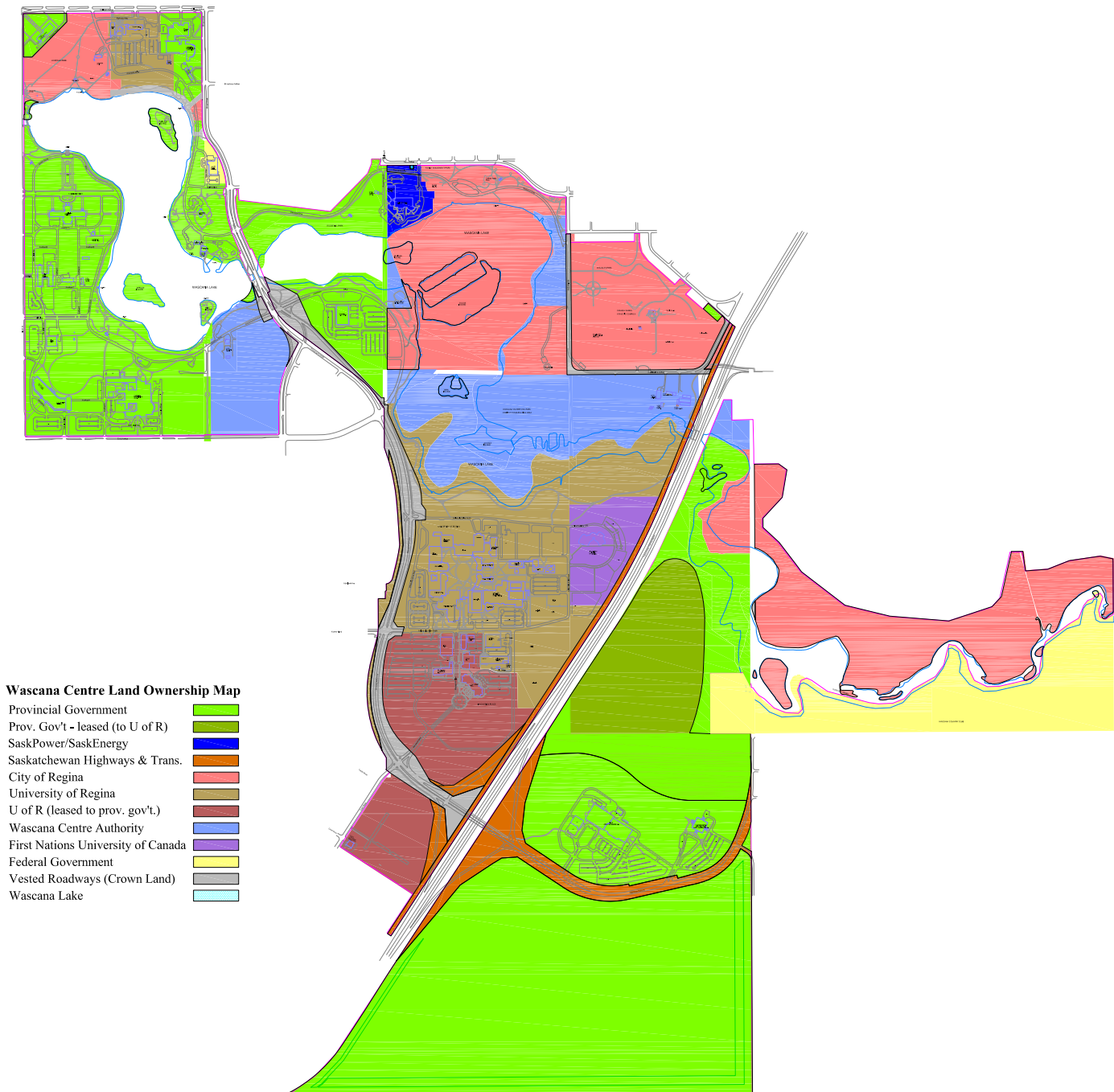
Currently, the park's infrastructure (buildings, roadways, sidewalks, etc.) needs extensive maintenance, renovation or even replacement. Necessary maintenance dollars and capital have not kept pace with current and future needs.

There is also a lack of clarity amongst the funding partners about who is responsible for maintenance and capital investments in the Centre, resulting again in the Centre's upkeep being underfunded.

The fiscal challenges faced by the Authority have resulted in investments being scaled back and limited to routine operations (grass cutting, snow clearing, etc.), managing and regulating activities, and making capital investments only when

infrastructure failure occurs or public safety is at risk. This has created a problem of needed maintenance in the Centre being delayed.





Course of **action**

After determining the challenges the Authority faced to properly fund the Centre, the Wascana Centre Authority board chair and vice chair met with the appropriate provincial officials to discuss Wascana Centre's strategic direction for the next 50 years.

The result of a series of meetings was that the Authority was directed to engage in a comprehensive professional review of Wascana Centre's core services, available assets, potential risks/challenges, overall operations, organizational structure, and related legislation.

The aim of the review was to build on the achievements of the last 50 years and to find a sustainable funding model for the Centre, so it continues to benefit

all Saskatchewan residents and serve as a beautiful legislative grounds in the capital city for years to come. The review was conducted by third party professionals over the course of two years. The scope of the review included:

- Wascana Centre Authority and all lands and other assets currently under its stewardship.
- The future purpose of Wascana Centre or a new entity relative to the funding partners and overall community.
- The strategic direction of the Centre for the next 50 years.
- The governance model, operations model, organizational structure and supporting legislation of the Centre.

- The review and development of a sustainable funding model.

The review was split into two parts – (i) the strategic direction for the next 50 years, including the mandate, vision, and purpose, and (ii) the infrastructure and asset assessment that would identify the infrastructure deficit and propose a model for remediation, maintenance and capital investment.

Professionals were hired to conduct the review through an open and transparent, qualifications-based selection process.

Key findings

and analysis

Strategic planning, public engagement, vision

Intelligent Futures, a firm specializing in collaborative approaches to community sustainability, was engaged to gather stakeholder and public input to the vision, mission and mandate for Wascana Centre over the next 50 years.

The outcomes of the public engagement process revealed the passion Saskatchewan people have for the park. They view it as a unique and valued part of the province and living in Saskatchewan. They also expressed concern about the watershed in the area and the need to protect the environment. By engaging the public, a vision for the Centre for 2063 was devised:

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

The vision set the strategic direction of the Centre, and concluded that the Centre's current governance and funding model would not provide the necessary platform to achieve that vision.

Building and infrastructure

Associated Engineering performed condition assessments of the buildings owned by the Authority.

They reviewed two commercial buildings, eight depots and maintenance shops,





eight washrooms and four miscellaneous facilities within the Centre. The results highlighted the following:

- 35 per cent of building assets met or surpassed their lifecycle.
- 13 per cent of buildings have less than 10 years of remaining life.
- 15 per cent of buildings have less than 20 years of remaining life.
- Four buildings were in good condition. Four were in adequate condition and 14 were in poor condition.
- The capital required to repair or update the building portfolio would cost \$4.64 million immediately and \$27 million over the next 20 years to replace or update buildings.

Landscape assessment

Crosby, Hanna & Associates conducted a review of the landscapes, including soft landscapes (plant materials), bollards (lighting, traffic posts, etc.), site furniture (benches, etc.), irrigation, art features, monuments and memorials, and play areas.

The results showed:

- Many trees are at the end of their lifecycle and require replacement.
- Pruning is required to preserve older trees and prolong the life of younger trees.
- Invasive plant species should be removed over time.

- The irrigation is well past its lifecycle and certain lines contain asbestos.
- More pathways would reduce the wear and tear on the turf, even though the turf is healthy.
- Capital required to upgrade the landscape to an acceptable level over 10 years would be about \$22 million.

Top: Diverse wildlife can be spotted from atop a bridge.



Left: Wascana Centre serves as the scenic backdrop for the University of Regina.

Infrastructure assessment

Associated Engineering conducted infrastructure assessments on assets that Wascana Centre Authority is responsible for maintaining.

The results showed:

- 32 per cent of the roads are in very good condition.
- 19 per cent of the roads are in poor or very poor condition.
- 79 per cent of parking lots are in fair to very good condition.
- 1 per cent of sidewalks and pathways are in poor condition, the rest were deemed in very good condition.
- The capital required to repair or replace infrastructure over the next 10 years would be \$16.76 million.

Summary – Building, Infrastructure and Landscape Review

The result of these assessments was to identify the following required expenditures to repair, replace and maintain the structures, landscape and the infrastructure.

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

This does not include up to \$27 million in building replacement costs. The assessment provided information to evaluate the present and projected future infrastructure needs and costs for Wascana Centre forecasted to 2036 – a forecast beyond that was thought to be unreliable.

Alternate sources of revenue

Froese Consulting Inc. performed a feasibility study on potential revenue generating activities on the lands owned by the Authority.

Two opportunities were explored, including coffee shops and cafes, and redevelopment of the nursery area for residential-type use – hotels or high density residential development.

The results showed:

- Coffee shops, cafes and kiosks were aligned to what the public would like to see in the Centre, but not considered to have significant revenue generating potential.
- Services like a physiotherapy clinic near Douglas Park were considered feasible and in the public's interest, but not considered to have significant revenue generating potential.
- Housing or hotel development would generate one-time revenue of between \$5.2 million to \$11.7 million.
- None of the options could be expected to add significant dollars to the ongoing operating, repair, and maintenance costs of Wascana Centre.

Forecasted operating costs

Conroy Ross Partners conducted research and worked with Wascana Centre employees to assess operational costs, examine

possibilities for efficiencies, and determine future operational costs.

The results showed:

- Consolidation and other operational measures have the potential to produce efficiencies, without a drop in service to the public.
- Operational costs are expected to rise from the current \$6.5 million annually to more than \$10 million annually over the next 25 years.

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



Governance and operating model options

Governance and operating model options were reviewed in relation to 10 other parks and cultural agencies worldwide.

Conroy Ross Partners completed a benchmarking and best practice review, examining: strategic positioning, use of resources and procurement, organizational structure, accountability, and development orientation of the organization related to building construction and future expansion and development. The strategic planning committee agreed to four principles that would inform the future governance and management model for Wascana Centre:

- Landowners must be accountable for the operation and maintenance of their land.
 - Wascana Centre's vision must encapsulate what the Province, City and University strive to achieve together.
 - There is a need to be open and transparent to the public.
 - A precinct approach (i.e. nature, recreation, sports, etc.) can help inform uses for different sections of the land area within Wascana Centre.
- The results of this review further showed:
- Simplification of the governance and operation of Wascana Centre would provide opportunities to advance the vision.
 - Securing statutory protection of the lands and the land use should be pursued.
 - Being open to the pursuit of revenue opportunities should be encouraged.
 - The citizen experience matters.
- Five alternative scenarios were provided to the strategic planning committee for consideration for the future governance of Wascana Centre Authority. The two key recommendations were:
- Maintain the status quo with increased funding.
 - Wind down Wascana Centre Authority, with the responsibility for stewardship falling to each of the landowners.

Top: Children looking over the bridge to the waters below.



The **future** governance **model**

After much review and analysis, the option that provided the best opportunity to preserve the legacy of Wascana Centre as the legislative grounds in the province's capital city was determined to be the Government of Saskatchewan leading the development of Wascana Centre and assuming responsibility for the Centre.

The government would also develop a model for advisory input with common architectural, engineering and landscaping standards, by the original Wascana Centre Authority partners, and each landowner would be expected to assume stewardship and responsibility of their owned lands through an overarching agreement. The partners would also work out some land swaps to simplify future operating requirements and to consolidate the required lands for Wascana Centre.

The four key outcomes of the comprehensive review project are:

- 1.** A clear understanding of the depth of passion the people of Saskatchewan feel for Wascana Centre came through the public and stakeholder engagement.
- 2.** The full extent of the financial investments required to properly maintain the Centre now and into the future was realized.
- 3.** A new governance model was determined where the Government of Saskatchewan would assume responsibility for the Centre and the development of the Centre, which continues to involve the partners in an inclusive periodic Master Planning process.

- 4.** The Government would develop a plan for advisory input by the original Wascana Centre Authority partners and stakeholders, and the partners will remain responsible for the stewardship of land and structures they own within the Centre. The partners would agree to common architectural, engineering and landscaping standards and have an overarching agreement to that effect.

The four descriptions of success for the future of Wascana Centre include that it:

- is a beautiful place;
- reflects a thriving watershed;
- provides a diversity of activities; and
- is accessible to everyone.

Left: A hockey event gets media coverage at Wascana Centre in winter.

Conclusion

Wascana Centre has become a celebrated, beloved piece of Saskatchewan that has been enjoyed by generations of its people and visitors to our great province. The time has come to secure and expand that legacy for the people of Saskatchewan's future.

It's hard to imagine what the province and especially our capital City of Regina would be like without its magnificent

centerpiece. The natural features and wildlife, the impressive architecture, its cultural and educational amenities, the family-oriented activities, and the sense of community and pride Wascana Centre instills in everyone who visits, are the essence of what Saskatchewan and its people are all about. We have an obligation to the future of our province and its children to maintain and build upon a heritage that has been more than a hundred years in the making.

A new partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan leading the development and stewardship will ensure the vision and a legacy for our capital.

Right: The setting sun casts a striking palette of pinks and purples on the lake.

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



**Cover: The Saskatchewan
Legislative building is a
major landmark in beautiful
Wascana Centre.**