



Governance and Operational Assessment of the Meewasin Valley Authority

FINAL

Private & Confidential

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MEEWASIN VALLEY AUTHORITY OVERVIEW

MVA History

Throughout most of the 1950s and 1960s, the City of Saskatoon had an unofficial policy that development in the vicinity of the South Saskatchewan River (“the river”) should be controlled. In the early 1970s, City Council became concerned that the unofficial policy was not sufficient enough to maintain the riverfront ecology. In 1974, City Council passed a resolution requesting the Province to enter into an agreement for the development of the river within and adjacent to the City of Saskatoon. This request resulted in a joint project funded by the Provincial and Federal Governments to undertake a preliminary study of the potential partnership. The consulting firm of Long, Maille, and Associates presented a final report in 1976 which included a recommendation that a river edge authority be established similar to the Wascana Centre Authority which would exercise stewardship over the river edge land.

In 1977, the Provincial Government allocated \$200,000 to develop a 100-year master conceptual plan. The Canadian architect Raymond Moriyama was hired in March 1978 to prepare the master plan. This led to the development of legislation that would create the river edge authority. In 1979, the government passed *The Meewasin Valley Authority Act, 1979* (“The Act”) to establish the Meewasin Valley Authority (“MVA”) and set the framework for the funding model in place today. As noted above, The Act was modeled on *The Wascana Center Act* passed 17 years prior, with two notable exceptions: the MVA jurisdiction included land that was privately owned at the time, and the presence of the river through the heart of the MVA area required collaboration with the Federal Government.

MVA Governance Structure

The current MVA Board of Directors consists of twelve members; four are Government of Saskatchewan appointees, four are University of Saskatchewan appointees, and the remaining four are City of Saskatoon appointees. The MVA Board of Directors is advised on matters of policy by the following five committees:

- **Development Review Committee** – Provides professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of proposed improvements within the Meewasin Valley.
- **Conservation Advisory Committee** – Advises the MVA Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley and the conservation of the natural and cultural assets.
- **Design Advisory Committee** – Provides recommendations regarding design policies, standards, and art placements.
- **Education Advisory Committee** – Advises the MVA Board on policy development in education.
- **Fund Development Cabinet** – Delivers a fund development plan to generate philanthropic revenue in support of the mission and mandate of the MVA.

Responsibility for day-to-day operations of the MVA falls under the CEO and management staff. The current CEO, Lloyd Isaak, has a management team consisting of the following six positions: Director of Operations, Community Development Manager, Design & Development Manager, Planning & Conservation Manager, Fund Development Manager, and Executive Secretary.

MVA Programs and Services

Geography

The MVA's area of responsibility encompasses approximately 60 kilometers of river valley through the City of Saskatoon and the Municipality of Corman Park, from Pike Lake to Clarke's Crossing. It contains 6,278 hectares (15,513 acres) of land, 60 kilometers of trails, and several city parks. It is important to note that 1,647.24 ha (4,070.42 acres) are classified as "waterbody" on land titles, meaning that river bed and banks account for a quarter of Meewasin's total land area. The following outlines key conservation areas contained within the Meewasin River Valley.

- **Peggy McKercher Conservation Area** – The MVA purchased 9.26 ha (22.88 acres) of land in 2007 with plans to remediate the site and link it to the Meewasin Trail.
- **Meewasin Northeast Swale** – The Swale consists of native prairie grasslands and offers high-quality biodiversity, proximity to urban areas, economic benefits for recreation and education, and a natural filter for air and water. The Swale contains wetlands that provide a means of flood control for the surrounding community.
- **Cranberry Flats Conservation Area** – Cranberry Flats Conservation Area is a scenic area with a large sandy beach and a wheelchair accessible trail leading to a valley lookout.
- **Beaver Creek Conservation Area and Interpretive Centre** – The Beaver Creek Conservation Area contains sheltered creek, river valley, and prairie habitat with four nature trails.

Areas of Focus

The MVA has three main areas of focus:

- **Conservation** – Through The Act, the MVA coordinates and controls development, conservation maintenance, and improvement of land development within the conservation zone.
- **Development** – The MVA designs, builds, and manages the natural environment and public open space with projects ranging from significant park and trail developments, to minor projects such as bench and sign replacements.
- **Education** – The MVA offers hands-on activities to schools and the general public to provide them with the opportunity to learn more about Saskatchewan's wildlife.

Key Services

The MVA currently provides the following services:

- Protection of the river valley ecosystem which includes the steep slopes of the river valley and sensitive swales.
- Offers natural surroundings and amenities that provide both environmental and mental health benefits to the residents of the City of Saskatoon and surrounding area, as well as visitors.
- Offers a trail system, promoting physical activity and community engagement.
- Conducts educational programs for individuals and groups throughout the year such as interpretive canoe tours, cross-country skiing, and ice skating.

MVA Funding

The original funding formula in the Act was based on the City of Saskatoon mill rate. The total annual funding amount from the funding partners was designed to be a sum equal to five mills on the assessment of land and buildings in the City, which was equivalent to approximately \$1.75M in 1978. The three funding partners originally provided funding to the MVA with the following allocation:

- **Provincial Government** – 40.33%
- **City of Saskatoon** – 30.33%
- **University of Saskatchewan** – 29.33%

The funding mechanism has been changed over time. In 1983 the formula was reduced from five mills to four mills. The statutory funding amount was frozen between 1986 and 1992 and then again in 1994. In 1998 the government amended the Act to include a prescribed funding amount rather which is similar to the current Act.

The current funding model is outlined in section 56(1) of the Act. Although the original funding model required each of three funding partners to provide a certain percentage of funding to the MVA based on the City of Saskatoon mill rate, the current model now stipulates that each of the three funding partners are required to provide the following amount of annual funding:

- **Provincial Government** – \$740,169
- **City of Saskatoon** – \$556,700
- **University of Saskatchewan** – \$574,000

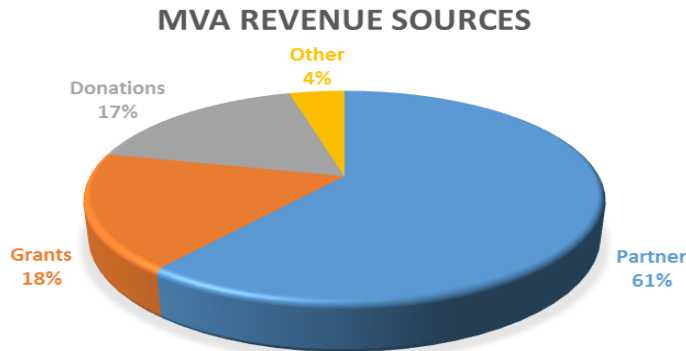
This amount is referred to as the “statutory funding” as it is a specific amount of funding prescribed by legislation. The Act states that the three funding partners shall review the statutory funding amounts at least once every five years.

In addition to the statutory funding, each of the three funding partners have the ability to provide additional funding annually to the MVA under section 56(2) of the Act. Any funding provided under 56(2) of the Act is referred to as “supplementary funding” as it is provided in addition to the annual statutory funding amount.

The following table provides an overview of the statutory and supplementary funding provided by each of the three funding partners in 2015-16.

Statutory and Supplementary Funding to the MVA, 2015-16			
Funding Partner	Statutory	Supplementary	Total
City of Saskatoon	556,700	417,900	974,600
Ministry of Parks, Culture, and Sport	740,169	169,000	909,169
University of Saskatchewan	574,000	110,273	684,273

In addition to the ongoing partner funding, MVA receives other types of revenue from a variety of sources including donations, grants, and earned income (e.g. interest). The current breakdown of MVA revenue is as follows:¹



Percentage Based Funding to MVA

Although the funding mechanism in the Act has moved to a prescribed funding amount and away from having each of the funding partners provide funding on a percentage basis (e.g. having the provincial government provide 40.33% of funding), the Act does still include two references to the original percentage based funding mechanism. The following two sections of the Act are relevant:

Section 56(6) of the Act states that the funding partners should provide funding for several specific purposes such as acquiring land, or for paying interest for loans, bonds, debentures, or any security obtained by the MVA. These expenses are paid for by the three funding partners with the following allocation:

- **Provincial Government** – 40.33%
- **City of Saskatoon** – 30.33%
- **University of Saskatchewan** – 29.33%

However the MVA is required to obtain a special resolution from all three funding partners prior to committing to the expenses outlined in 56(6). The MVA has indicated that this special resolution last occurred in 1983.

Section 58 of the Act also includes the same percentage based allocation outlined in 56(6), however it only occurs in the event that total funding from all three funding partners falls below \$500,000. It is not applicable given the current aggregate funding from the funding partners exceeds the \$500,000 threshold.

¹ Meewasin Valley Authority, Audited Financial Statement (Year ended March 31, 2016).

JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON

Overview

MNP conducted an environmental scan of urban/conservation parks across Canada for the jurisdictional comparison with the MVA. The process outlined below highlights how the eight comparators were selected. The assessment of the MVA included the review of governance, organizational structure, and funding mechanisms. A challenging aspect of this jurisdictional comparison was identifying urban/conservation parks across Canada that had available information in these three areas of assessment. Of the eight core comparators, MNP identified three parks that could be assessed against the MVA in the areas governance, organizational structure, and funding mechanisms.

Through the environmental scan, MNP found that the majority of urban/conservation parks across Canada are municipally owned and operated, and belong to a department of that municipality. Therefore, there is no governance and the organizational structure is that of the municipality. Identifying individual funding mechanisms for parks under municipalities is not easy as the funding amounts for each park are rolled up into an aggregate total for all parks across the municipality or region.

Process and Findings

MNP chose a broad selection of eight comparator urban/conservation parks in order to evaluate best practices in the areas of governance, organizational structure, and funding mechanisms. The eight comparator urban/conservation parks were selected based on the following characteristics:

- Park size
- Park location
- Population of that location
- Conservation activities of the park

The following parks formed the core group of comparators:

Comparator Overview				
Park Name	Location (CMA Population 2011)	Park Size	Conservation Activities and Governance	Ownership and Operation
Meewasin Valley Authority	Saskatoon and RM of Corman Park (268,954)	6,278 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MVA has three main foci: conservation, development, and education 60 km of trails and several city parks Governed by MVA Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three funding partners: Provincial Government, City of Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan MVA CEO and management staff responsible for day-to-day operations
Assiniboine Park	Winnipeg (730,018)	450 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assiniboine Park Conservancy – public/private, not-for-profit, charitable organization with a mandate to develop, govern, and manage the overall park and its amenities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assiniboine Park Conservancy.
Nose Hill Park	Calgary (1.2 million)	1,127 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated by City of Calgary. Friends of Nose Hill Society – incorporated society dedicated to the protection of the park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Calgary – Under Community Services and Protective Parks/Calgary Parks.
North Saskatchewan River Valley parks system	Edmonton (1.2 million)	18,000 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consists of municipal parks, city-operated public facilities and provincially-owned sites. North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society – protect and enhance biodiversity. Edmonton has a natural areas conservation plan (Natural Connections). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the size, there are various stakeholders involved in the ownership/operation.
High Park	Toronto (5.6 million)	161 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owned by the City. High Park Nature Centre – non-profit promoting awareness and respect for nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry and Recreational Development.
Mt. Royal Park	Montreal (3.8 million)	200 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Les amis de la montagne – charitable organization; advocacy, education, awareness-raising, enhancement and improvement projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Montreal.

Comparator Overview				
Park Name	Location (CMA Population 2011)	Park Size	Conservation Activities and Governance	Ownership and Operation
Beacon Hill Park	Victoria (344,615)	200 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained and preserved by the City of Victoria. Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society – non-profit founded for the purpose of preserving and maintaining the park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Victoria – Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.
Waskasoo Park System (Trail system connecting Red Deer's urban parks)	Red Deer (90,564)	Over 110 kilometres of soft and hard surface trails that help to connect the City parks and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waskasoo Environmental Education Society operates two interpretive centres, develops and run programs, and engages the community in park issues, resources, and activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaetz Lake Sanctuary – The Federal Government does not own the Sanctuary; however, it is legally designated and protected as the Red Deer Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The City owns it, and it is part of the Gaetz Lakes Park which is part of the Waskasoo Park system. There is no special municipal protection of the Sanctuary, apart from the usual park bylaws. The Waskasoo Environmental Education Society (WEES - formerly the Normandeau Society) manages the Sanctuary on contract for the City. The Federal regulations are mostly "status", rather than any real protection. They make people realize it is a special place, rather than doing anything above and beyond what the City does or does not do. The Red Deer River Naturalists Society provides various conservation activities for parks in the Red Deer and Central Alberta area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Red Deer Park Facilities section of Recreation Parks and Culture is primarily responsible for trail maintenance and operations. Some duties are also performed by the Parks Maintenance division. The recreation department has an annual trails budget of approx. \$300,000 of which \$250,000 is for repairs and maintenance and \$50,000 is for overlays (2008).
Maskepetoon Park	Red Deer (90,564)	30 ha parcel of land within the Waskasoo Park System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Deer River Naturalists (RRN) and City of Red Deer have an informal partnership to maintain the park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: RRN in coordination with the Red Deer Parks Department installs and maintains snow fence and signage at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City owns the park and is responsible for funding operations. In 2008 the City developed a Maskepetoon Park master plan for improvement and development. All costs for this were indicated to be

Comparator Overview				
Park Name	Location (CMA Population 2011)	Park Size	Conservation Activities and Governance	Ownership and Operation
			<p>commonly used ATV access points to decrease ATV use in the park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration: The City would like to partner with RRN in an arrangement where the City provides the funds and/or materials and the volunteers construct and maintain restoration works. 	<p>paid for through the City Recreation Amenity Fund.</p>

Summary of Comparator Overview

While park size differs greatly among the eight comparators, one key consistency among the majority (six) of the comparators is that they are owned and operated by the respective cities. Many of the parks have a volunteer organization/not-for-profit that is responsible for the providing educational and preservation services for the park.

Of the eight comparator urban/conservation parks, MNP was able to find funding and governance model information for the following three parks:

Funding Models				
Park Name	Funding Trend	Funding Sources and % Breakdown	Funding Allocation	Other
MVA	Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of March 31, 2016 - \$4,329,511 As of March 31, 2015 - \$4,220,292 	Revenue by Source As of March 31, 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding partner contributions \$2,631,587 Grants \$772,475 Donation \$745,758 Other \$179,691 	Expenditures and Allocations As of March 31, 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction – 54.1% Public Program and Facilities – 19.9% Administration – 14.1% Fundraising Programs – 5.3% Planning and Conservation – 5.1% Other Expenditures – 1.5% 	

Funding Models				
Park Name	Funding Trend	Funding Sources and % Breakdown	Funding Allocation	Other
Assiniboine Park	Total Revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 - \$32,140,980 • 2014 - \$28,269,505 • 2013 - \$18,675,658 	Revenue by Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City of Winnipeg – \$11,376,000 (35%) ○ Other operating grants – \$230,028 (1%) ○ Gifts and sponsorships – \$809,998 (2%) ○ Amortization of deferred contributions – \$7,648,476 (24%) ○ Park revenue – \$12,076,478 (38%) <i>*Information gathered from Annual Reports</i>	Expense by Category <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wages, Benefits and contract services – 29% ○ Direct cost of park revenues – 21% ○ Administration – 5% ○ Interest – 1% ○ Amortization of capital assets – 22% ○ Insurance – 1% ○ Operations – 8% ○ Utilities – 3% <i>*Information gathered from Annual Reports</i>	List of Government Funding (2014/2015 Financial Years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canadian Heritage (PCH) - \$10,148 ○ City of Winnipeg - \$11,376,000 ○ Environment and Climate Change Canada - \$2,153 ○ Province of Manitoba - \$7,500 ○ Service Canada - \$3,210 • 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canada Manitoba Infrastructure Secretariat - \$19,834 ○ Canadian Heritage (PCH) - \$31,599 ○ City of Winnipeg - \$12,207,000 ○ Environment Canada - \$84,120 ○ Province of Manitoba - \$42,819 ○ Service Canada - \$2,748 <i>*Information gathered from Lobby Canada.gc.ca</i>
Mt. Royal Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014-15 - \$2,801,234 • 2013-14 - \$2,404,345 • 2012-13 - \$2,182,125 <i>* The provision of programs and services by Les amis in Mt. Royal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014-2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Private Funding - \$1,238,320 (44%) ○ Self-Funding - \$1,317,367 (47%) 	Expenses by activity sector (\$2,770,479 total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and public programs - 27% 	Fundraising Campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events at the Park - Donors and sponsors (corporate and individual), financial contribution, gift in kind, sponsorship, or instalment on pledge towards a major gift to

Funding Models				
Park Name	Funding Trend	Funding Sources and % Breakdown	Funding Allocation	Other
	<i>Park is governed by an official agreement with the City, which comes with an annual subsidy – City of Montreal funding accounted for 9% revenue of Les amis in 2014-2015.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Funding - \$245,547 (9%) Total - \$2,801,234 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and community engagement - 23% Development – 5% Administration – 8% Mount Royal Park Visitor Services – 37% 	<p>one or more projects, programs, or benefit events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy work led by Les amis driven by the goal of bringing government, institutional and business stakeholders, and citizens together City of Montreal oversees management, landscaping, and maintenance of Mt. Royal Park Les Amis offers education, cultural, and outdoor activities and services
North Saskatchewan River Valley Parks System	<p>River Valley Alliance Capital Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2012-2017 - \$90M: \$30M Federal Building Canada Fund, \$30M Government of Alberta, \$30M RVA municipalities 	69% of contributions from Plan of Action (Federal and Government of Alberta)	Information not publicly available	<p>River Valley Alliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three primary roles: coordinate river valley planning and development within the seven member municipalities Ensure plans respond to and balance social, recreation, environment, and economic needs of capital region residents; raise funds to bring plans to reality

It is important to note that when comparing the funding model of MVA to Assiniboine Park that 38% (highest funding source) comes from park revenue. When comparing funding allocation breakdowns, one noticeable difference between MVA and the majority of the comparators is that the allocation to the administration of MVA is significantly higher (14.1% vs. 5% and 5%).

Governance Models						
Park Name	Board Size	Method of Appointment and Term	Board Type <i>i.e. Skills-Based or Representative Board</i>	Board Membership Breakdown <i>i.e. # of private persons, corporate representatives, government representatives, etc.</i>	Board Role/Responsibilities	Committees
Meewasin Valley Authority	12 members	Appointed	Representative Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Provincial Government Appointees • 4 University of Saskatchewan Appointees • 4 City of Saskatoon Appointees 	MVA Board of Directors is advised on matters of policy by the five committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review Committee • Conservation Advisory Committee • Design Advisory Committee • Education Advisory Committee • Fund Development Cabinet
Assiniboine Park	12 members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 – Executive • 10 – General Board members 	Appointed for a one-year term which expires December 31.	Mixed – All representatives also have a strong skill level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Corporate Representatives • 2 Government Representatives (1 Provincial, 1 City) • 2 Education Representatives • 3 Private Persons • 1 Unknown 	A new governance structure for Assiniboine Park as a not-for-profit corporation which operates under a Management Agreement with the City of Winnipeg with a mandate to lead, manage, fundraise, restore, and develop the overall park and its amenities.	Imagine a Place Campaign Cabinet – Redevelopment plan to revitalize Assiniboine Park and Zoo
Mt. Royal Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 officers • 21 administrators 	Information not publically available.	Information not publically available.	21 Administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 education professionals • 17 private/corporate 	Information not publically available.	Five Committees of the Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Strategic Orientations • Finance • Communications

Governance Models						
Park Name	Board Size	Method of Appointment and Term	Board Type <i>i.e. Skills-Based or Representative Board</i>	Board Membership Breakdown <i>i.e. # of private persons, corporate representatives, government representatives, etc.</i>	Board Role/Responsibilities	Committees
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties and Preservation
North Saskatchewan River Valley Parks System – River Valley Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 voting members 	Information not publicly available.	Information not publicly available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 elected municipal • 7 directors at large and advisory and committee chair 	Information not publicly available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Advisory committee (18 municipal appointments) • Admin (Ex. Director) • Implementation • Governance

Summary of Governance Models

The governance model of the MVA is highly comparable in regards to Board size (the average across all four models is 11.5 members), and areas of governance for committees. Only one comparator had publically available information regarding the method of appointment and term (Assiniboine) which was an appointed method and the same as MVA. The main difference between MVA and the three comparators' governance models is the area of membership diversity. Both Assiniboine Park and Mt. Royal Park have corporate/ private representation on their Board as well as educational and provincial and municipal government representatives.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of the research and analysis conducted by MNP throughout the course of the review. It stems from one-on-one discussions with the MVA management team and Board of Directors, our jurisdictional comparison of comparable organizations across Canada, as well as our review of the MVA's operational and financial information. The information in this section has been categorized into three main areas: jurisdictional comparison, operations, and governance.

Jurisdictional Comparison

The jurisdictional comparison revealed that most comparable parks and nature conservation areas within municipalities appear to be funded primarily by the municipalities, with partner funding provided in the form of donations, user fees, and government grants. The MVA appears to be an outlier in that the Provincial Government is the primary funder for an organization that is largely municipal focused.

Preliminary analysis did not reveal whether the municipality-funded parks also contain a planning and development review and regulation function similar to the MVA; however, it appears as though this is not the case. Similar control functions may be found within other areas of the municipal government.

Operations

Park Structure and Crown Land

The MVA is commonly referred to in the press as an urban park, similar to Wascana Centre Authority. Preliminary discussions with MVA Board members revealed that this is a point of contention for the Board. One primary differentiator appears to be the fact that MVA jurisdiction consists of a large portion of Crown land. Although the majority of the MVA's jurisdiction consists of land in the City of Saskatoon and adjacent area, approximately 41% of the MVA area is Crown land.

It should be noted that if there are changes to the funding level from the Provincial Government, the MVA may scale back operations to focus on the City land, to the exclusion of the Crown land. In addition, if the Province eliminates funding to the MVA completely, the Provincial Government may incur costs to maintain conservation activities for the Crown land.

MVA Crown Land Overview

Crown land within the MVA conservation area amounts to 2,609.9 hectares, approximately 41% of the MVA's total land. The Crown land is owned by a mixture of Ministries and Crown Corporations; however, the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the vast majority (over 95%). The Crown land holdings include land within the City of Saskatoon and the RM of Corman Park, as well as the surrounding area within the river valley. See Appendix B for an overview of Crown land ownership. About a quarter of Meewasin's land area is river bed and banks, which accounts for over 60 percent of the Provincial Crown Land.

Conservation Activities

The MVA currently provides conservation and resource management services within the Meewasin conservation zone. In this report, conservation activities do not include educational and interpretive type activities (e.g. nature program run at Beaver Creek). The MVA describes these services largely as “measuring, monitoring, and maintaining the natural landscape within the conservation zone”. This includes two primary types of activities on Crown land:

- **Site Visits** – Regular visits to sites which include clean up, maintenance of signage and fencing, and monitoring conservation outcomes; and,
- **Resource Management** – This includes grazing, prescribed burning, mowing, cultivating, seeding, and chemical applications to invasive alien plant species based on management practices identified within scientific literature and resource management plans.

The MVA management team indicated that the activities outlined above are frequently done in order to comply with Federal and Provincial legislation. The following table provides a summary of relevant conservation activities and the legislation these activities correspond with.

Summary of MVA Conservation Activities and Corresponding Legislation		
Activity	Summary of Work	Corresponding Legislation
Invasive Species-Plants	Provincial legislation mandates a duty to control Provincially-designated prohibited, noxious, and nuisance weeds. The MVA manages these and other invasive species throughout the MVA's jurisdiction through integrated management methods such as prescribed burning, conservation grazing, hand weeding or digging, mowing, bio-controls, and herbicides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Weed Control Act</i> (Provincial)
Invasive Species-Aquatic	The MVA conducts site monitoring to look for invasive species (including plants and animals), species at risk, wildlife, and infrastructure issues. Of particular interest are aquatic invasive species such as Zebra and Quagga Mussels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Fisheries Act</i> (Provincial) • <i>Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations</i> (SOR/2015-121) (Federal)
Species at Risk	The MVA regularly submits Geographic Information System (GIS) data to the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre documenting Species at Risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Wildlife Act</i> (Provincial) • <i>Species at Risk Act</i> (Federal)
Water Quality Monitoring	The MVA's Citizen Science Water Quality Monitoring Program collects water quality data at various sites throughout the MVA's jurisdiction in both the R.M. of Corman Park and the City of Saskatoon. Water quality data collected is submitted to the Water Security Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Water Security Agency Act</i> (Provincial)

*See Appendix C for additional insight into the MVA's conservation activities by Crown land area.

It should be noted that the MVA has a limited budget and team to provide services for all land within the conservation zone including Crown and non-Crown land. The following table provides an overview of the MVA's expenses for environmental conservation between 2010 and 2015.

MVA Expenses for Environmental Conservation (2010 – 2015)						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Environmental Conservation Costs	\$233,572	\$247,491	\$216,425	\$222,463	\$186,321	\$131,643
Conservation Person Years*	3.7	2.3	2.3	4.6	2.8	2.2

**This does not include educational or interpretive type activities, or capture the work of volunteers, which the MVA estimates to be between 700 to 2,500 hours annually.*

The MVA also undertakes planning and development review for land in the conservation zone. The design and development work is performed by a design team, construction crew, and a horticulture crew at the MVA, who are responsible for implementing projects identified in the Meewasin Development Plan, and maintaining landscape and architectural standards design that are aligned with public need and suitable for the natural environment and heritage resources.

The development review function of the MVA is required for any proposed improvement in the Meewasin conservation zone that is in the river channel, or that has an aggregate cost greater than \$25,000. The MVA defines an improvement as an addition or alteration of a building, structure, or service facility, or a landscape construction within Meewasin Valley, but does not include the ordinary care, maintenance, or repair of a building, structure, or service facility, or of landscape construction.

MVA Expenses for Development Review (2010 – 2015)						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Expenditures	\$63,172	\$62,724	\$65,185	\$75,653	\$83,395	\$84,320
Conservation Person Years	0.85	0.85	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

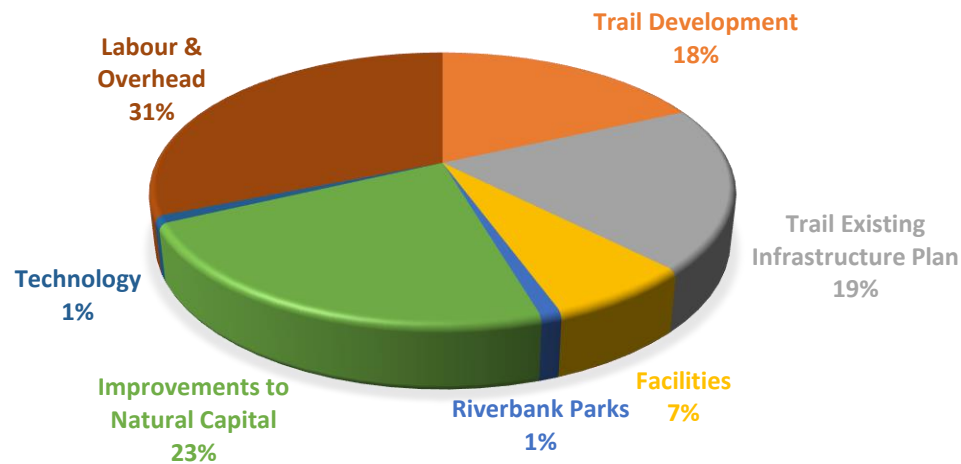
Infrastructure

The MVA's infrastructure includes brick and mortar facilities, a trail system, and land holdings. The primary brick and mortar facilities include the following: Meewasin Valley Centre, Beaver Creek interpretive centre, the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink building, a utility shop, and the Maple Grove trailer park.

The trail system runs from 2.5 kilometers south west of Diefenbaker Park to approximately 2.5 kilometers north east of the City limits, and includes approximately 65 kilometers of trails. The size of the trail system has grown over time with recent expansions including the addition of six kilometers of trails within Wanuskewin Heritage Park in June 2015. This expansion is notable as the trail addition does not follow the river valley. The MVA considers the trail system to be of particular importance and priority with respect to the overall capital plan and has moved back other construction priorities to focus on the trail system. As shown in the chart below, trail-related capital expenses (i.e. Trail Development and Trail Existing

Infrastructure Plan) represent the MVA's largest budgeted capital expenses between 2015 and 2019 at 37% of total costs. The MVA has also projected capital projects between 2015 and 2019 which are not yet budgeted for. The largest of the projected capital projects includes \$15M for upgrades to facilities including a new Meewasin Valley Centre, and \$13M in trail development and repair costs.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES - BUDGETED 2015-2019



The MVA management team indicated that there is no formal assessment of infrastructure currently; however, MVA staff do a monthly safety assessment and visual inspection of infrastructure and are in the process of implementing a more formal facility assessment. As a result, the MVA management team does not have access to a facility condition index that would benchmark the condition of the MVA's facilities.

Governance

Mandate

The MVA has not had a clear mandate historically; instead, the mandate appears to have gradually evolved over time. The direction provided to Raymond Moriyama in the 100-year master plan for the South Saskatchewan River Area included the following broad objectives:

- Enlarge educational and research activities,
- Advance cultural arts,
- Conserve nature,
- Improve recreational opportunities, and
- Further rural-urban relations.

The Act outlines a series of powers of the MVA rather than a specific mandate. These powers, which include the ability to coordinate or control the use, development, conservation, maintenance, and improvement of public land, are intended to be used in accordance with the development plan. The development plan includes a wide array of policy documents ranging from the Moriyama Plan (1979) to the Land Use Policy (2016). In effect, the mandate of the MVA is established via policy rather than through legislation.

The MVA's current mission, as described in the MVA's strategic plan, consists of three primary activities: conserve, develop, and educate. The vision for the future is to become a "world-class corridor" by 2024. It is unclear as to whether the original objectives from the master plan are still applicable to the MVA, or are still relevant priorities for the funding partners in 2016. As a result of this uncertainty, it is difficult to determine what the MVA's primary objectives are. Preliminary discussions with the MVA Board resulted in a variety of answers; however, the most common responses involve conservation, education, and development. The main focus appears to be conservation of the river-edge ecology by protecting public access and preventing unencumbered development.

One potential consequence of having a broad mandate and vision for the organization is that there is a tendency for scope creep and an increase in service offerings. As an example, the MVA has a goal in its 2015-16 efficiency report of adding 156 hectares of land within the City of Saskatoon to the conservation zone. This includes land that is currently privately owned.

Future growth of the MVA is guided by the organization's Land Use Policy, which serves as a framework for defining land to be included in the Meewasin Valley, provides guidance for determining the jurisdictional boundaries of the Meewasin Valley, and outlines the criteria for accepting MVA-held conservation easements. The MVA indicated that it has a greater level of interest in acquiring land that directly impacts the river valley and a lesser degree of interest in land that is impacted in an indirect manner. The organization is concerned about fragmentation between parcels of land and may acquire new land that is not directly connected to the river in order to increase continuity and minimize fragmentation.

Board Structure and Composition

Governance of the MVA is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, which consists of 12 members. The terms of reference for Board members is outlined in Section 5 of The Act. Under The Act the Board is to consist of four members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, four members appointed by the Saskatoon City Council, and four members appointed by the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan. Presently, the composition of the Board is as follows:

Current MVA Board of Directors		
Funding Partner	Appointee	Background
Government of Saskatchewan	Roger Parent ²	MLA
	Carmen Campbell	Local businessperson
	Leanne Nyirfa	Local businessperson
	Tracy Arno	Local businessperson
University of Saskatchewan	Peter Stoicheff	President, U of S
	Toddi Steelman – Board Chair	Professor, U of S
	Colin Tennent – Vice Chair	Associate Vice President, U of S
	Fran Walley	Associate Dean, U of S
City of Saskatoon	Charlie Clark	Mayor, City of Saskatoon
	Zach Jeffries	Councillor, City of Saskatoon

² Roger Parent participated in the review process as a Board member and was the current MLA representative on the Board during the development of this report. He passed away on November 30, 2016.

Current MVA Board of Directors		
Funding Partner	Appointee	Background
	Mairin Loewen	Councillor, City of Saskatoon
	TBD	TBD – This position was previously held by a councillor

The MVA CEO provides an orientation for the Board members. This consists of an overview of The Act, the mandate of the MVA, and the operations and finances of the organization. The orientation session ensures that each Board member receives a similar introduction to the organization's function, services, challenges, and goals for the future. During MNP's one-on-one discussions, Board members often spoke about the strategic direction of the MVA and its core services using very similar terms and phases, indicating that the orientation process is effective in providing a framework of knowledge and understanding of the MVA.

Although the process for appointing members to the Board is outlined clearly in The Act, Section 5 does not include a mechanism for coordinating or communicating between funding partners during the appointment process. There does not appear to be a process for identifying gaps in skill sets at the Board level, and then strategically ensuring that future appointees have the necessary training and competencies to address these gaps. This serves as a potential barrier to ensuring the MVA has a skills-based Board in the future.

Board members identified an opportunity for ensuring a greater balance of members at the Board level by reviewing who is appointed by each funding partner. Examples include greater representation from the Government of Saskatchewan's public service and elected officials (e.g. the Minister responsible for the MVA, the Executive Director of the Parks Division, etc.), and the potential to include more diversity among City appointees by appointing additional members rather than having representation from City Council exclusively.

Funding Implications for the City

In its July 21, 2016 submission to the Saskatoon City Council, the Community Services Department estimated the financial impact of eliminating provincial funding from the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport ("PCS" or "the Ministry") and the University of Saskatchewan. This amount, which includes partner funding, was estimated to be \$1,579,300. A mill rate increase of 0.78% would be required in order to backfill this lost revenue.

It should be noted that one of the key assumptions in the City report was that the lands currently held or managed by the MVA outside the City limits would be assumed and managed by the Province. The City did not quantify the cost associated with this.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MNP was engaged by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport to conduct a review of the MVA's purpose, vision, mission, mandate, and core services, including an operational and organizational model review and a legislative review. The aim of the review was to establish a sustainable funding model to effectively deliver the identified core services. MNP had a mandate to provide findings and recommendations in four areas: Sustainable Funding Model, Organization and Governance Structure, Park Assets, and Transparent Process for Implementing Changes. These have been provided in the sections that follow.

Sustainable Funding Model

Findings

- Municipalities are the principal funders of the urban parks in Canada studied. The MVA funding model is relatively unique. Often urban parks may supplement municipal funding through fundraising, sponsorships, and via social enterprises. Urban parks may also benefit from targeted grants from Provincial and Federal Governments in order to provide specific services or for capital projects.
- The MVA is currently undertaking conservation and resource management activities in the conservation zone that are required by various Provincial and Federal legislation. This includes activities on Crown land within the conservation zone.
- The final responsibility for complying with the legislated responsibilities for Crown land in the MVA conservation zone remains with the Government of Saskatchewan. The conservation and resource management activities outside of the City of Saskatoon constitute core services from the perspective of the strategic objectives of Government and the mandate of the Crown land holders.
- The City of Saskatoon has conducted analysis of the financial implications associated with serving as the primary funder of the MVA. This has been estimated at \$1.579M annually, or approximately .78 mills.

Recommendation

- There is rationale to transfer responsibility for primary funding of the MVA to the City of Saskatoon and to remove funding from the Ministry.
- The one exception may be Crown lands. The Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport has an interest in ensuring that Crown land within the conservation zone is maintained in compliance with the Government's legislated responsibilities.
 - The Ministry could explore providing a funding on an agreement basis with the MVA to continue to provide conservation and resource management activities on Crown land within the current conservation zone located outside the City of Saskatoon's boundaries. It is unclear from information made available during the review what the actual direct cost is for completing these services, and it is fair to assume that these services will be quantified, negotiated, and agreed to between the Province and the MVA.
 - Another alternative would be to enter into negotiations with the City of Saskatoon or another third-party service provider, or to transfer responsibility back to the various Crown land owners (e.g. Ministries, Crown Corporations, etc.).

Organization and Governance Structure

Findings

- MNP found that the majority of urban/conservation parks across Canada that were part of the review are municipally owned and operated, and are operated or report to a department of that municipality. It is difficult to conduct comparisons to the MVA executive team to assess the appropriateness of the MVA's staffing complement and compensation levels without reasonable comparators.
- The current Board appointment mechanism includes sufficient coordination amongst the funding partners. As a result, the Board appears to be representative rather than skills-based.
- Board members have indicated that the processes and expectations for reporting back to the funding partners are not always clear.

Recommendation

- The MVA should pursue a Board renewal process that aligns with any changes made to the funding model. Consideration may be given to the Board's structure and membership, including developing a skill set matrix and providing broader participation from other segments of the community. The Board will likely need to consider a series of important questions including:
 - The requirement for a Provincial authority and whether a non-profit corporation with charitable status may achieve similar objectives,
 - The potential role for social enterprise to support revenue generation in the long term,
 - Possible future inclusion of strategic donors on the Board, and
 - Incorporating a skills-based gap identification and candidate selection mechanism to ensure Board diversity and depth.

Park Assets

Findings

- The MVA's infrastructure holdings consist of buildings, a trail system, and land.
- There appears to be an emphasis at the management level on expanding the trail system in accordance with the growth of the City of Saskatoon.
- The plan for the trail system is not linked to the financial plan of the MVA. There are sections of the trail's capital plan that are currently unfunded, and additional requests for funding are likely to be made to the three MVA funding partners.
- The MVA does not have a formal infrastructure assessment process in place to systematically evaluate existing infrastructure.

Recommendation

- MVA capital and operating budgets should be linked to ensure the MVA is planning for growth in a realistic and achievable manner that is aligned to the strategic goals of the organization, its available resources, and the objectives of its funding partners.
- The MVA should continue plans to develop a formal infrastructure assessment process and evolve toward an organizational facility condition index that allows for regular assessments and benchmarking.

Transparent Process for Implementing Changes

Findings

- The three funding partners indicated that they have a constructive and ongoing dialogue with respect to the funding of the MVA.
- There is a solid foundation at the funding partner level for having open discussions about the future funding of the MVA and ensuring that the expected outcomes of each funding partner are met.

Recommendation

- The Ministry should develop a strategic communications plan to discuss the future funding of the MVA in a systematic manner. This may include:
 - Discussions between the Minister of PCS and the Mayor of Saskatoon,
 - Discussions between the Deputy Minister of PCS and the City Manager of Saskatoon,
 - Discussions between the Assistant Deputy Minister of PCS and the heads of each owner of Crown land within the MVA conservation zone, and
 - Identification of a liaison person to report back to the Board and keep the MVA apprised of potential changes.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

MNP's consultation process consisted of the following one-on-one interviews, which were either conducted in person or over the telephone.

MVA Board Members

Name	Date
Dr. Peter Stoicheff	October 14, 2016
Leanne Nyirfa	September 29, 2016
Roger Parent	October 6, 2016
Dr. Toddi Steelman	October 5, 2016
Carmen Campbell	October 21, 2016
Colin Tennent	September 28, 2016
Dr. Fran Walley	October 7, 2016
Mairin Loewen	October 3, 2016
Charlie Clark	October 18, 2016
Tracy Arno	September 27, 2016

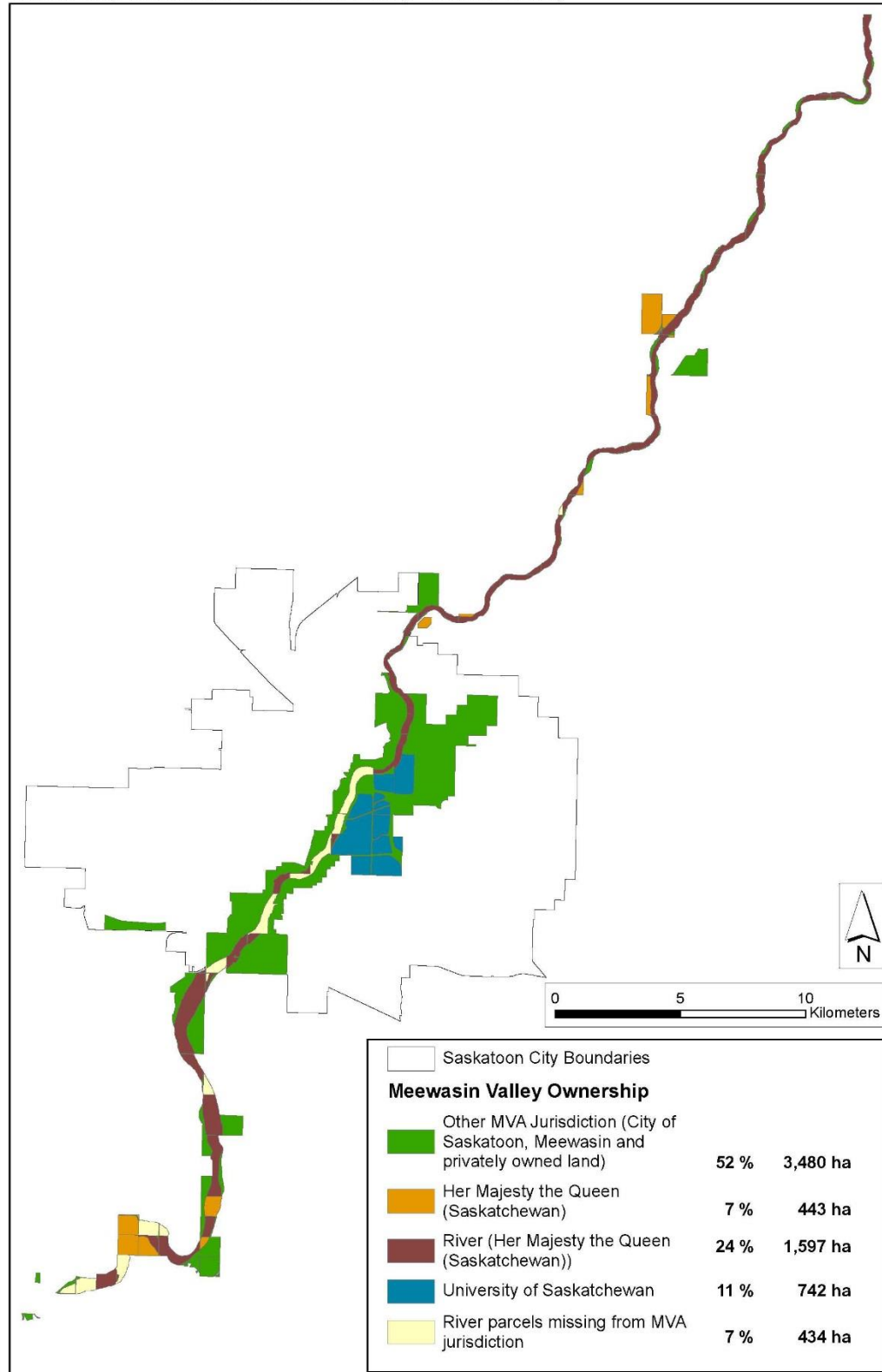
MVA Management

Name	Date
Lloyd Isaak	October 4, 2016
Mike Velonas	October 19, 2016 and October 25, 2016
Andrea Ziegler	October 20, 2016

APPENDIX B: MEEWASIN VALLEY AUTHORITY LAND OWNERSHIP

Meewasin Valley Authority Ownership Parcel Portions		
Owner Name	Hectares	Crown Land
Ministry of Agriculture	2,471.68	2,471.68
City of Saskatoon	1,569.39	-
Private	1,174.78	-
University of Saskatchewan	767.30	-
Sask Power	102.85	102.85
Meewasin Valley Authority	99.35	-
Agriculture and Agri Food Canada	53.00	-
Vested MHI Administered City	45.71	-
Ministry of Highways	22.35	22.35
Board of Education	16.32	-
Board of Education College	11.84	-
Sask Housing	5.92	5.92
Saskatoon Health Board	4.92	-
RM of Corman Park	4.54	-
Ministry of Government Relations	4.03	4.03
Ministry of Central Services	2.18	2.18
Unknown	1.42	-
Sask Energy	0.78	0.78
HMQ Canada	0.40	-
Yellow Quill First Nation	0.20	-
St. Andrews College	0.35	-
St. Thomas More College	0.15	-
SaskTel	0.11	0.11
Total	6,359.57	2,609.9

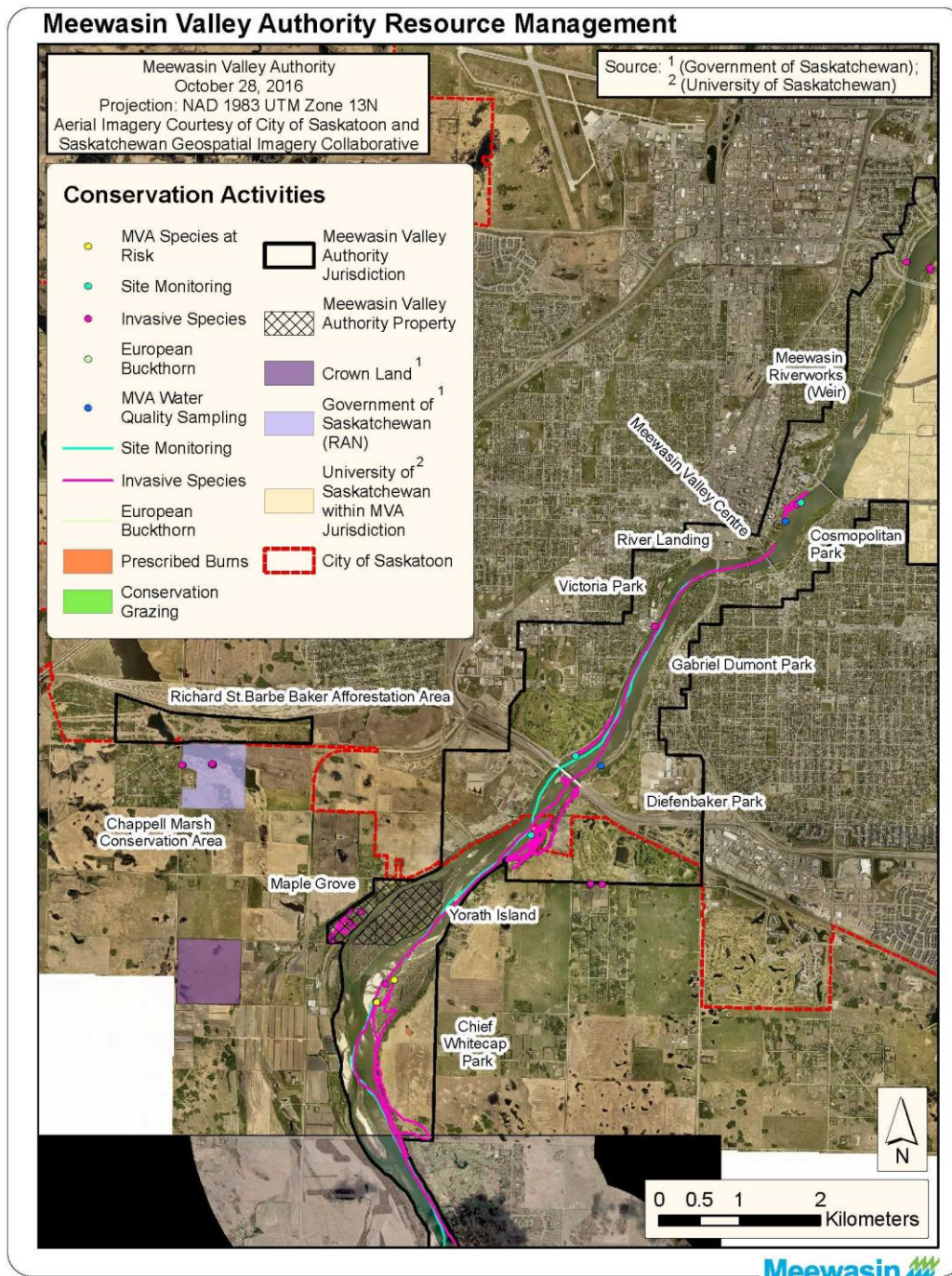
Ownership within the Meewasin Valley - Whole Valley



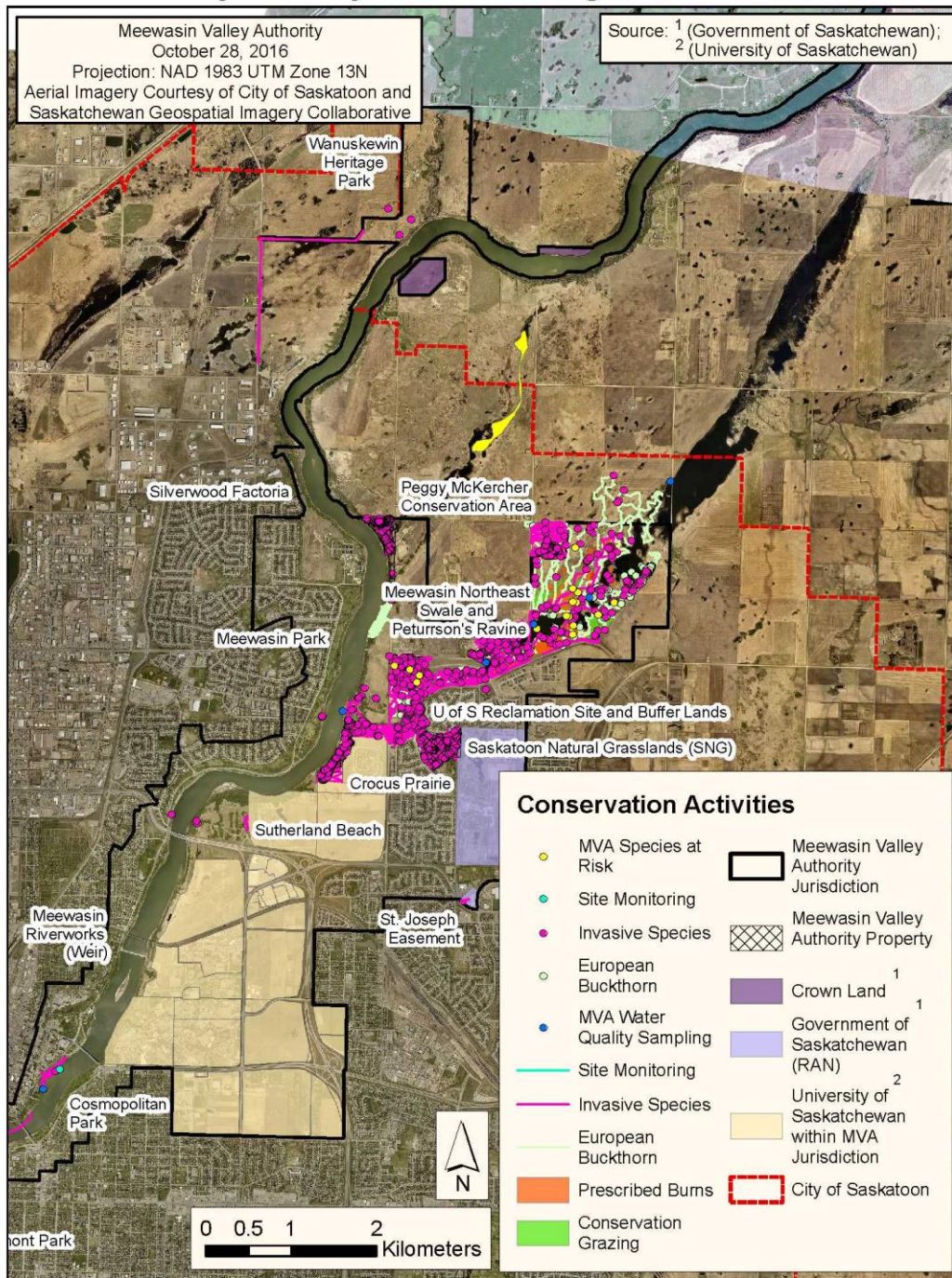
July 12, 2016 Meewasin Valley Authority Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N
 Source: Approximate ownership of land within the Meewasin Valley based on 2008 jurisdiction

Meewasin

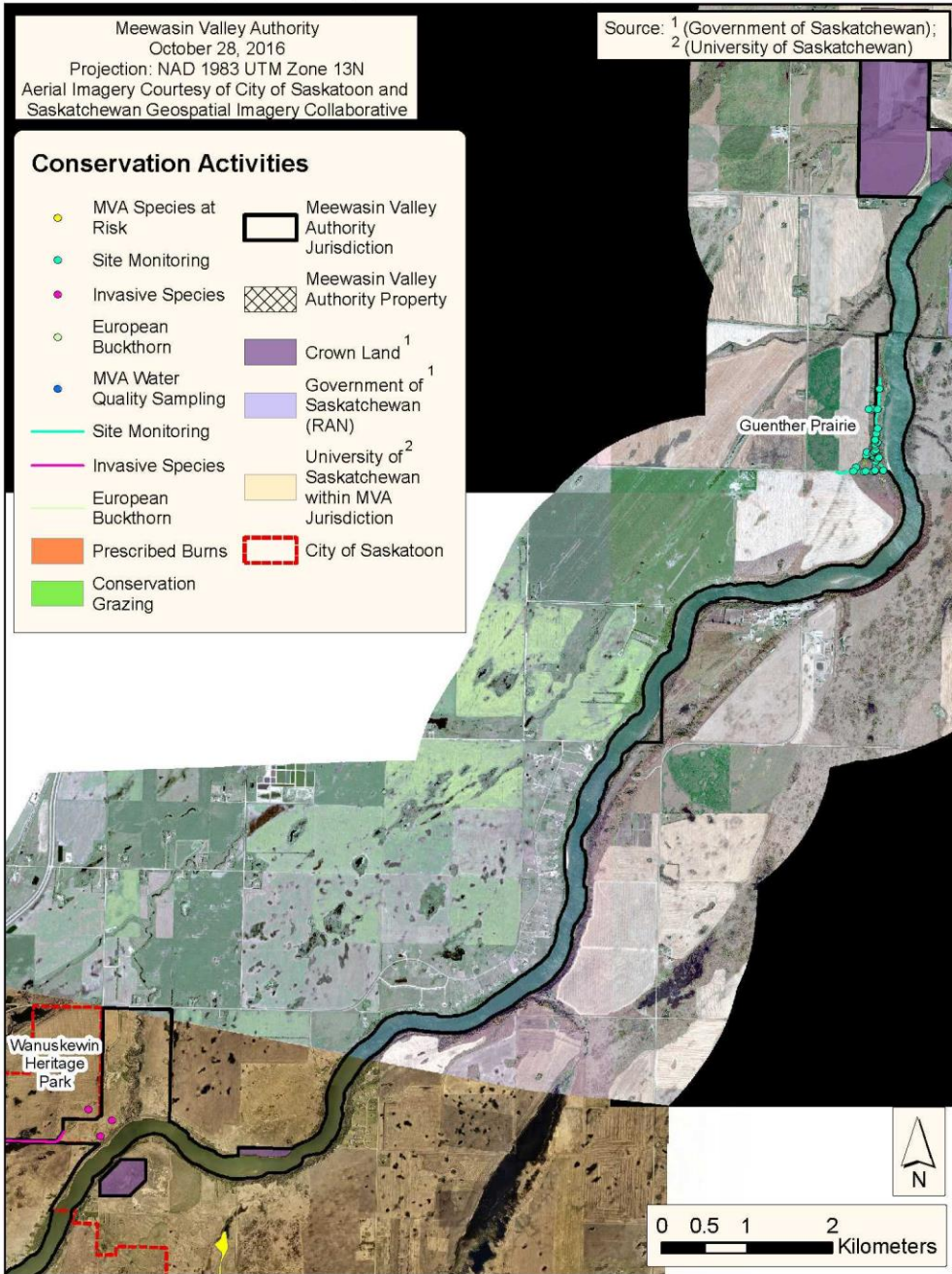
APPENDIX C: CURRENT MVA CONSERVATION ACTIVITY



Meewasin Valley Authority Resource Management

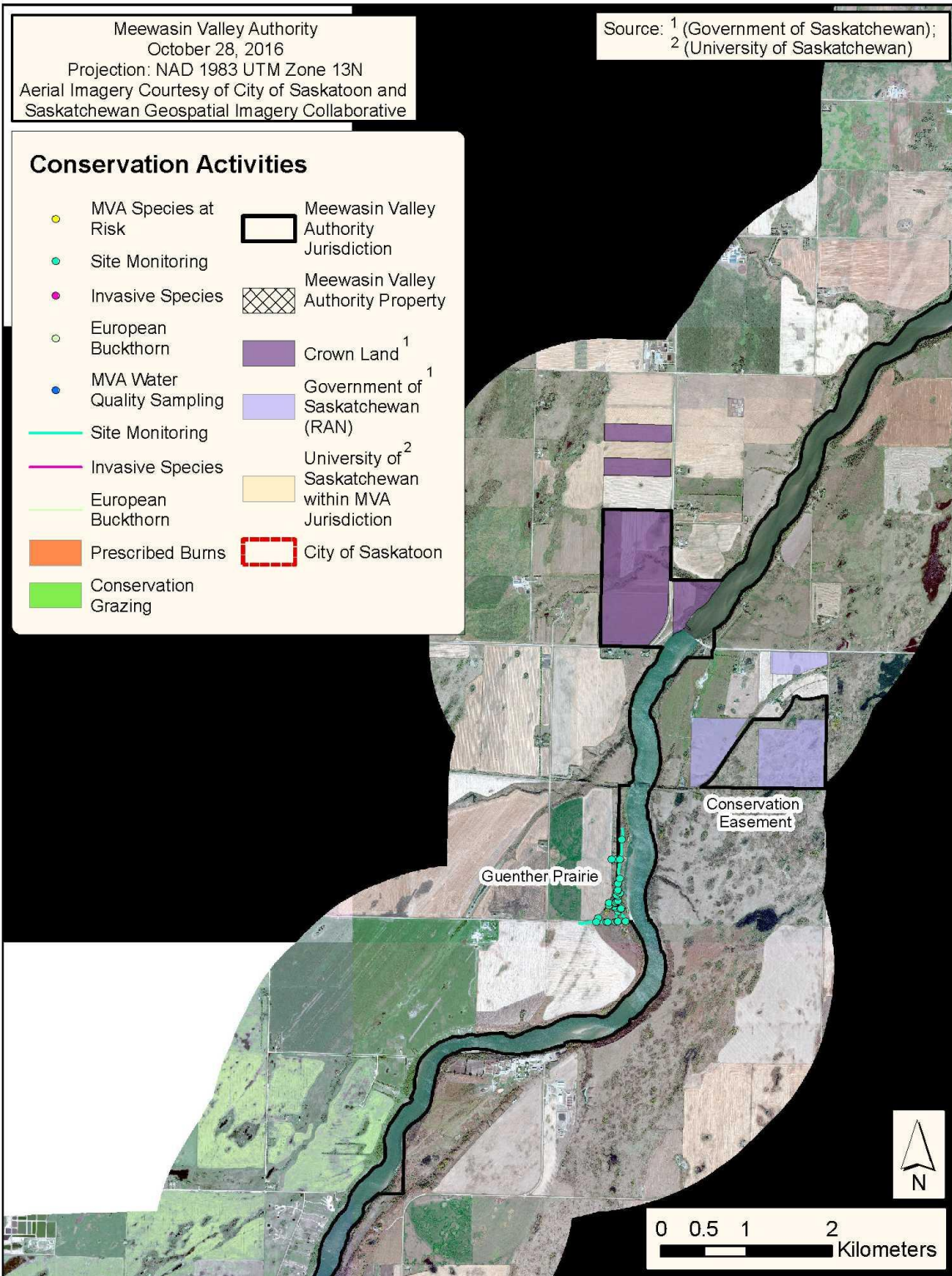


Meewasin Valley Authority Resource Management



Meewasin

Meewasin Valley Authority Resource Management



Meewasin



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