
100 Year Conceptual Master Plan
of The South Saskatchewan River Environment in
The Rural Municipality of Corman Park and The City of Saskatoon,
The Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

The Meewasin Valley Project

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On March 10th, 1978, the selection of our firm as architects/planners of the 'Saskatoon River Edge Study' and the appointment of Mr. Roland Muir as the Secretary to Committees 'A' and 'B' and as On-Site Project Co-ordinator were announced jointly by the Province, the University of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and the Rural Municipality of Corman Park.

Timing

We were instructed to complete our study by the third week in August, 1978, that is, within a period of five months. Such rigid time constraints, dictated by circumstances and budget limitations, required careful organization and scheduling of each phase of the study.

Process

Briefly, the process included:

1. Collecting existing information and data;
2. Discussing with and receiving inputs from:
 - a) community groups,
 - b) clients,
 - c) client staff and others;
3. Analysing existing information and data;
4. Identifying new and supplementary information required;
5. Pursuing additional information;
6. Generating new information;
7. Analysing:
 - a) opportunities and constraints,
 - b) possibilities and probabilities,
 - c) land capabilities;
8. Exploring ideas;
9. Synthesizing ideas and concepts;
10. Testing ideas and concepts:
 - a) within the project team,
 - b) with community groups, clients and client staff;

11. Developing concepts and recommendations;
12. Testing and refining concepts, control zones and recommendations;
13. Testing concepts for feasibility and implementation;
14. Analysing options for the organization and functions of an implementation authority;
15. Drafting report;
16. Reviewing draft report with community groups, clients and client staff;
17. Preparing final plans, sketches and report;
18. Producing final report, presentation drawings, and 2 models.

University Involvement

The University of Saskatchewan provided us with a committee/work room on campus. The location and the assistance and co-operation of the university staff were of great importance in our study of research papers and archival material. As project co-ordinator, Mr. Roland Muir was indispensable. His organizational ability, his knowledge of the area, the people, and sources of information saved countless man-hours.

Direct Experience—the Land and People

We traversed the study area by car and on foot. We flew over the city and the river several times. We travelled by canoe from the Moon Lake area into the City and along the northern section of the river.

We examined archeological sites, slumps, sloughs, coulees, potholes, and creeks. We studied the extent of filling operations and studied the effects of sewage disposal and indiscriminate dumping.

We walked the streets of Saskatoon speaking to people, taking part in the life and activities where possible. We held meetings with as many local groups as time would allow, to learn as much as we could of their character and needs.

Work Sessions

We worked closely with Committees 'A' and 'B', separately and in joint meetings, reporting and obtaining reactions and criticisms. A similar series of meetings with the local community groups and organizations were equally valuable. Working sessions were held with the Saskatoon City Council, the Council of the Rural Municipality of Corman Park, the Board of Governors and officials of the University of Saskatchewan, and members of the Provincial Legislature who represent the study area.

Briefs

Additional information was provided in briefs received from interested community groups.

The Name, Meewasin

The Cree word, *Meewasin*, means 'lovely', 'beautiful', 'happy'. Time and usage have associated the word with the wider meaning of 'happy meeting place'. The names, *The Meewasin Valley* and *The Meewasin Valley Authority*, were approved by votes of the Committees 'A' and 'B'.

Appendix Materials

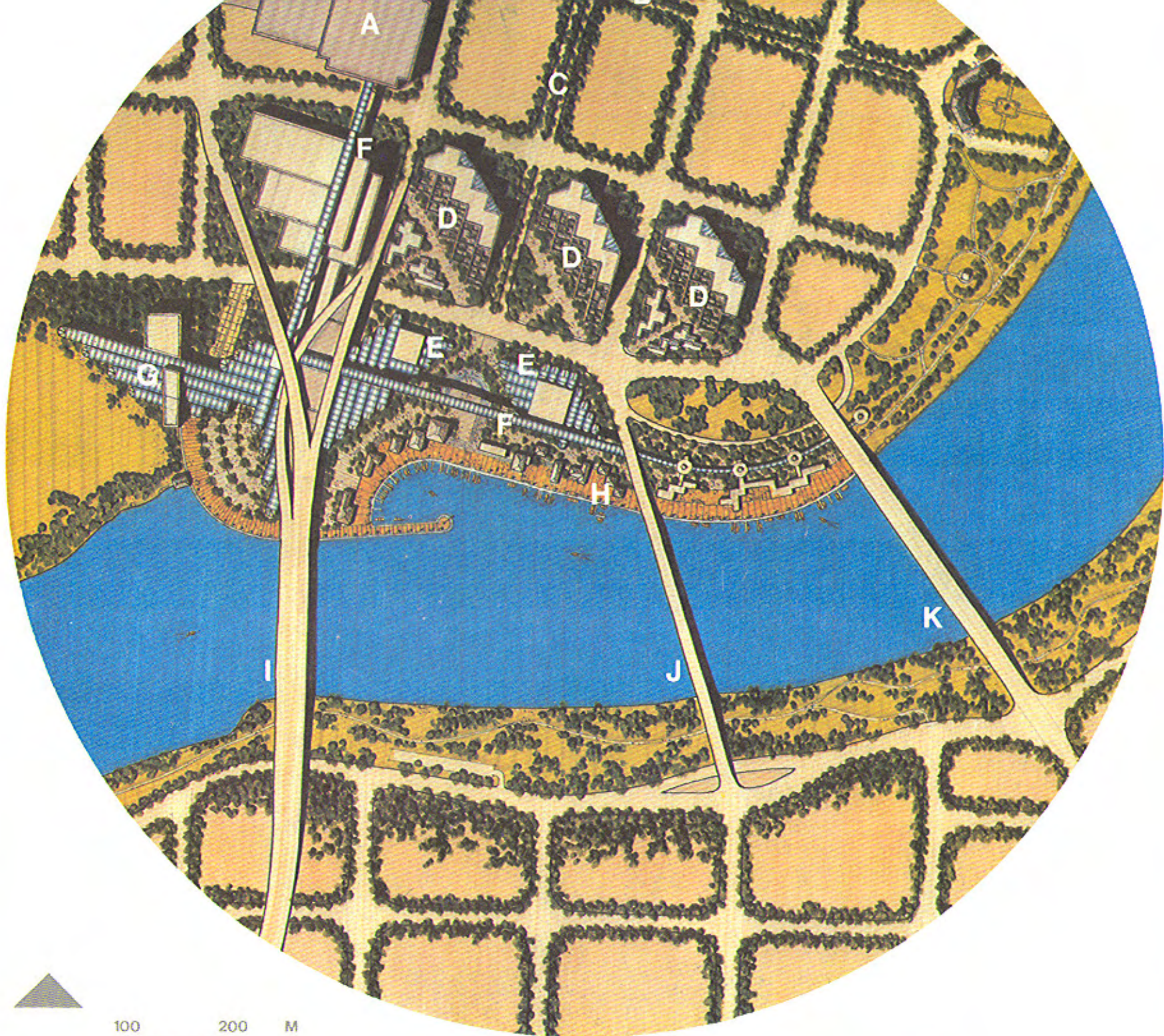
This report is a summary. The bulk of the study and background materials, tape recordings of meetings, new geological information, presentations and correspondence is in safe keeping with the University of Saskatchewan and will be turned over to the new Meewasin Valley Authority.

4. Saskatoon City Core Link

One of the long-term aims of the 100-year conceptual plan is to achieve in the City Core a continuous open space providing access and pedestrian links along both sides of the river. Another, continuing with the tradition established by the original temperance colony settlers, and to quote the words of John Lake in 1883, is to "bring the good character of the countryside – open space, grassland and trees – into the town". In the South Downtown Concept that follows, we wish to demonstrate that these aims and those of new development and greater density of people in the downtown area can be mutually supportive if carried out with clarity, sensitivity, and skill.

Before outlining the concept we should make two observations. First, Saskatoon is fortunate to have many buildings of architectural and/or historical significance. Many of these are within the study areas. These buildings should be studied and catalogued, and those judged worthy should be retained to help present and future generations understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.

Second, historical sites, such as the original (1883) headquarters of the Temperance Society (now demolished) at Broadway and Main and the original downtown commercial area at 1st Avenue and 20th Street, suggest certain character, planning and design inspirations that can add another depth of meaning and feeling to the area. They should be important influences on the design of new developments.



South Downtown Concept

Legend

- A Midtown Mall
- B 21st Street
- C 2nd Avenue
- D Commercial/Residential Development
- E Civic and Cultural Complex
- F Enclosed Walkway
- G Winter Garden
- H Riverside Promenade
- I Idylwyld Bridge
- J Traffic Bridge
- K Broadway Bridge

A) South Downtown Concept

This is a sample concept dealing with the South Downtown area. It does not exclude other balanced development of the 'East Downtown'.

The South Downtown area can become a major activity focus within the City and balance the office development north of the commercial core.

In the concept we see two continuous river edge pedestrian linkages extending from Victoria Park to Kiwanis Park and forming a clear east-west axis. The one along the river is an open air, riverside promenade; the other is at a higher elevation and is enclosed. It provides a clear view across the river and down to the river's edge. The enclosed linkage offers a comfortable alternative for pedestrians in winter.

The riverside promenade has an atmosphere of gaiety and some of the bustle of a wharf. There are marinas, boat-launching and service areas, small shops, restaurants, boutiques and marine equipment stores. Bollards, banners, colourful signs, flags and traditional street lights will help make this an attractive place for people and activities.

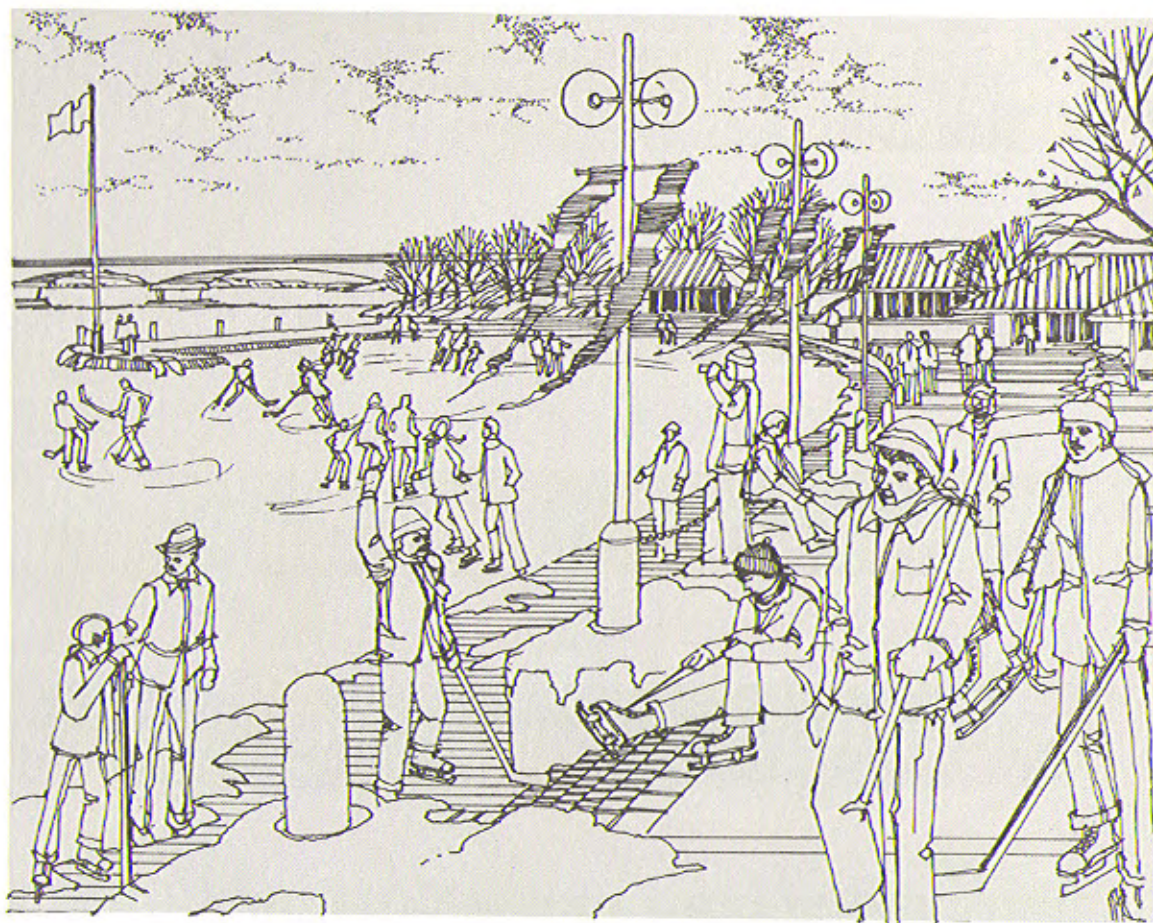
In summer, there should be music in the air, bands playing and the laughter of children. The ambience recalls Ghiardelli Square and Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco and the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen.



The Riverside Promenade

In winter, it is a place for skating, and a gathering place for cross-country skiers, joggers, hikers and shoppers. North of the enclosed walkway are public, civic, cultural and recreational facilities – a small theatre, playhouses, a community hall and an amphitheatre/garden. The new City Hall could be located on one side of this garden, with views overlooking the river and marina. The City Hall can be a catalyst to accelerate this development and associated commercial development by the private sector.

Both east-west pedestrian linkages extend under the Idylwyld Bridge and connect, immediately to the east of it, into a terraced riverside horticultural garden.

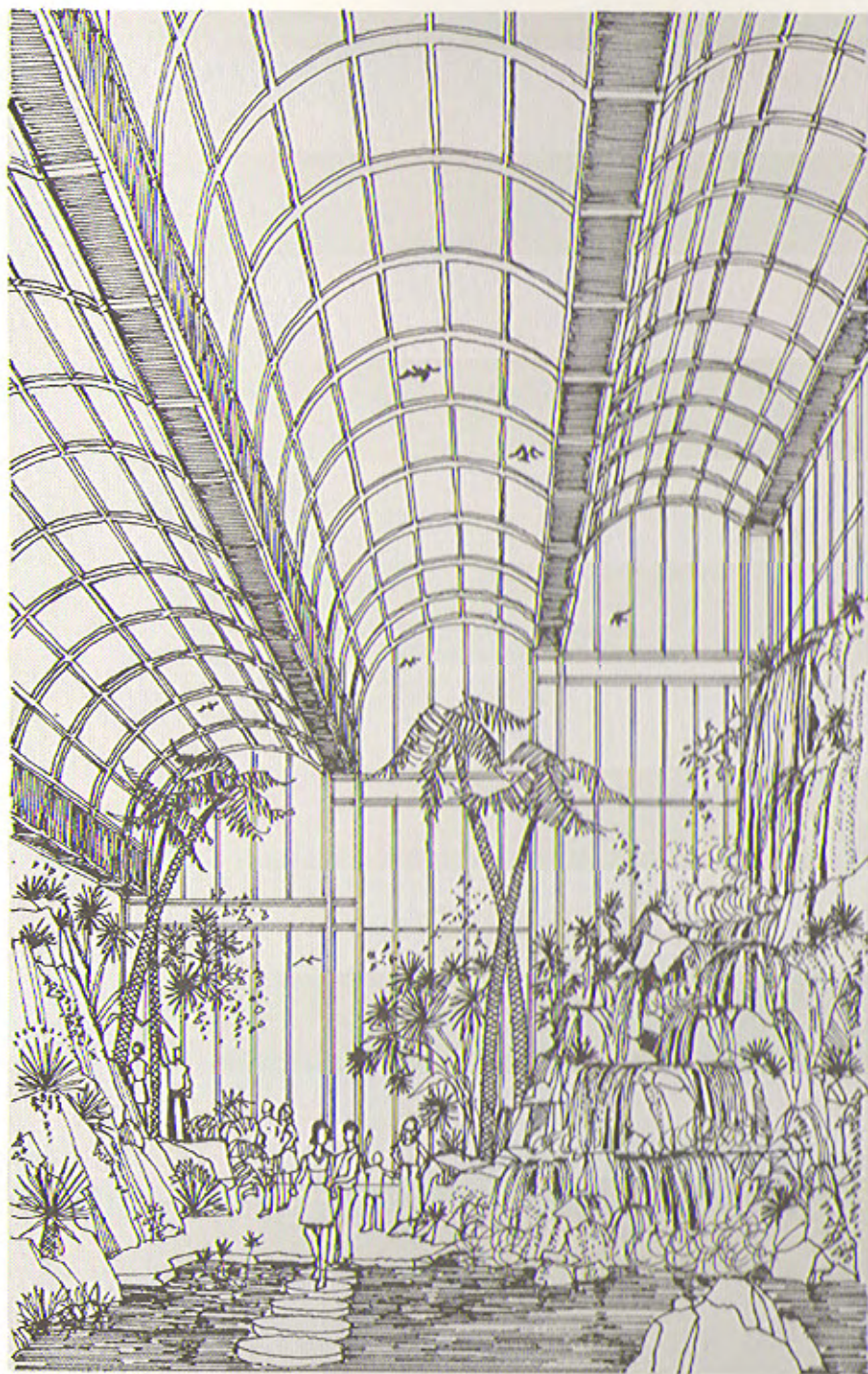


Adjacent to this tiered garden stands the Winter Garden. Like the original Crystal Palace, this structure of glass rises out of the river edge in a series of vaults to integrate into the converted A. L. Cole Plant. Viewed from Diefenbaker Park and the river, the Winter Garden shimmers and sparkles in the sun and moonlight. Within it is a multi-tiered tropical garden and a "forest" of tall tropical trees interspersed with walks, streams and waterfalls – a joy in summer and an elevating experience in winter. This and other structures in the area are heated by recycled waste heat from the Queen Elizabeth Plant. Parts of the A. L. Cole Plant are demolished, some of it continues to be used as a switching station, while other parts are renovated for active indoor sports and community activities.

From the Winter Garden, people can walk northward, again having a choice of walking indoors or in the open. On the block immediately north of the A. L. Cole Plant they can walk into or through a new shopping centre, perhaps a new convention or trade centre, before entering the present Midtown Plaza.

To the north and east of Idylwyld Bridge, between 19th and 20th Streets, is a high-density complex of commercial and residential development, nestled in and rising from tree-lined streets. We see buildings tiered upward from the south to the north, taking advantage of the sun for heating, and for growing flowers and vegetables on balconies. All the structures in this area are tiered upward and away from the river. Diagonal landscaped walkways within each block give passersby and residents greater freedom of access to the river.

The higher density of people in the downtown adds life and greater economic potential to the downtown before and after five o'clock. It assists greatly in the self-policing of the area, especially by those people who own apartments. This kind of development and the Meewasin Valley project are mutually beneficial. Together they will encourage a flowering of the Downtown Core.



The Winter Garden