



2019 Report–Volume 2: Provincial Auditor Identifies Need for Strengthening Provincial Capital Commission Processes for Major Developments in Wascana Centre

REGINA, SK., December 5, 2019: In her *2019 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 10, Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan, Judy Ferguson, calls on the Provincial Capital Commission to improve its approval processes for major developments in Wascana Centre, and to increase transparency. The audit found the following.

The Commission's unique mandate requires collaboration from the various landowners (i.e., the provincial government, the City of Regina, and the University of Regina) to administer and manage Wascana Centre. *The Provincial Capital Commission Act* places an onus on the Commission and its Board to ensure major developments in Wascana Centre are consistent with the Master Plan.

The Commission has not established expectations and procedures for consulting with the public about major developments in Wascana Centre. Having written, public consultation expectations and procedures would give proponents a clear understanding of what is expected of them when proposing major development projects. Also, sharing established processes with the public would show the Commission's commitment to obtaining public input, and help ensure it receives sufficient public input when making decisions about major development proposals or amendments to the Master Plan.

While the Commission appropriately shared details about its review and approval procedures with two recent, major development projects' proponents, it neither gives the public sufficiently understandable information about these procedures nor provides clear information about each project's status (e.g., stage in its review process). Not making adequate information about required steps and procedures for major developments publicly available can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Similarly, having a set of well-defined, accessible and understandable review steps and procedures for major developments would promote awareness and understanding by potential proponents and the public.

The Commission could not demonstrate how the Board-approved conceptual designs of two major development projects in Wascana Centre comply with the Act. Under the Act, major developments are to conform to the Master Plan. For one of two major development projects tested, the new building was Board approved at the conceptual design stage despite knowing the project did not conform to the Master Plan. For the other project tested, the Board's packages and minutes neither contained information on the Architectural Advisory Committee's views at the design concept stage nor whether, or how, the Board was satisfied that the proposed major development aligned with the Master Plan prior to granting its approval at this stage. Clearly documenting in its Board minutes how major developments conform to the Master Plan as required by *The Provincial Capital Commission Act* is essential to demonstrating compliance.

Finally, the Commission has not set, or communicated, requirements for building owners in Wascana Centre or their tenants to ensure ongoing conformity of a building and its use with the Master Plan. Under the Act, the Commission may control the use of land in Wascana Centre in accordance with the Master Plan. Having formal mechanisms (like agreements) to approve changes to buildings in Wascana Centre and their tenants would give the Commission mechanisms to confirm conformity with the Master Plan. Agreements provide a basis for common understanding, and monitoring of performance, as well as provide an opportunity to outline consequences of non-compliance.

Effective financial- and compliance-related controls are the underpinnings for strong management, and effective decision making.

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The full Provincial Auditor's 2019 Report – Volume 2 available online at www.auditor.sk.ca.

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Additional issues highlighted in the Provincial Auditor's 2019 Report – Volume 2 include:

- Chapter 21: Sustainable Fish Population Management
- Chapter 22: Co-ordinating the Appropriate Provision of Helicopter Ambulance Services
- Chapter 23: Providing Safe Drinking Water in Provincial Parks
- Chapter 24: Treating Patients at Risk of Suicide in Northwest Saskatchewan
- Topics from 44 other chapters

Accompanying news releases and backgrounder give further details regarding these key topics.

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