



Meewasin Trail Enhancements

Thompson Belvedere

Meewasin is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We humbly acknowledge the traditional caretakers of the land and honour the First Nations and Métis people of this place

Meewasin Valley Authority
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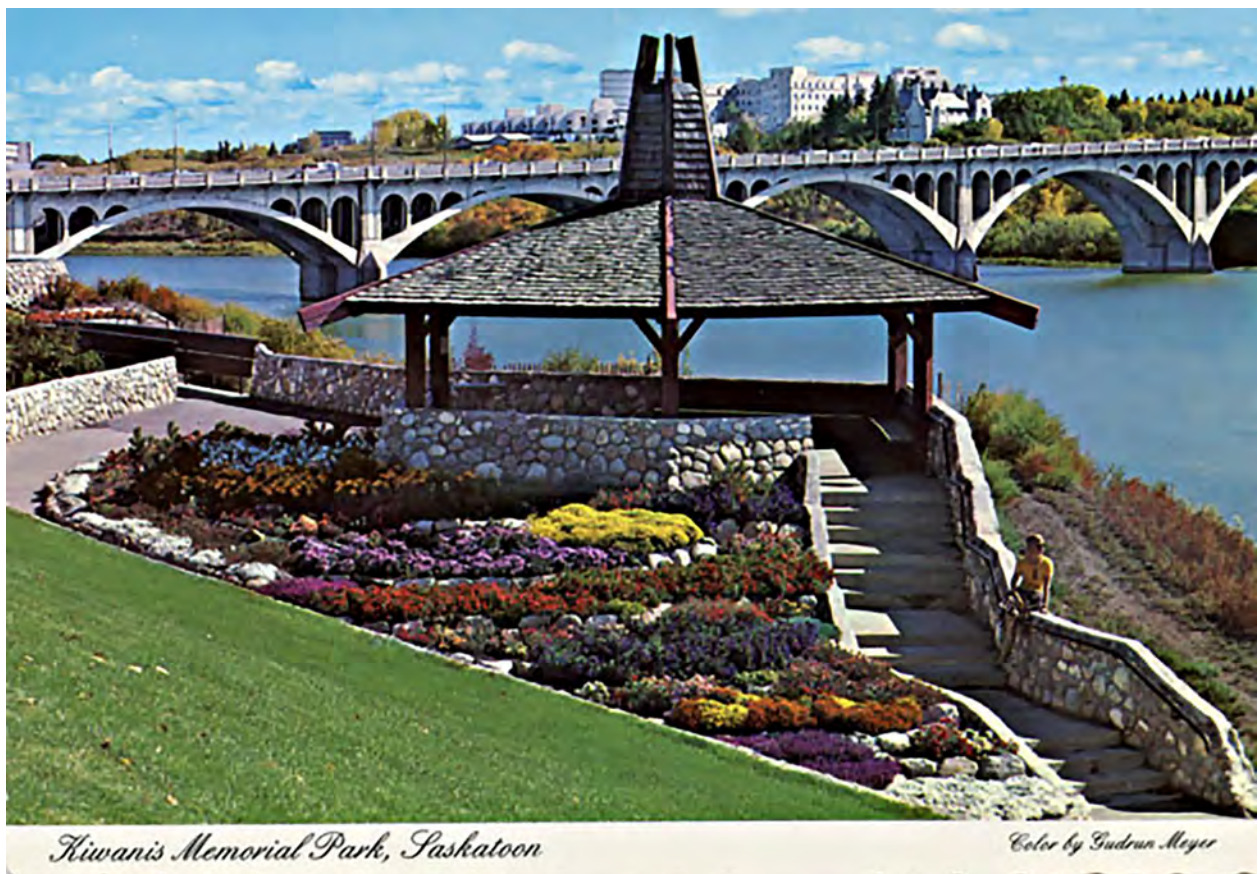
Meewasin 

Frequently Asked Questions

As part of Meewasin's Downtown Trail Enhancements from River Landing to the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan site, significant design updates were made to the section of trail at the Thompson Belvedere in Kiwanis Memorial Park. These recent updates were a significant departure from the original approved concept for the area, developed in 2020.

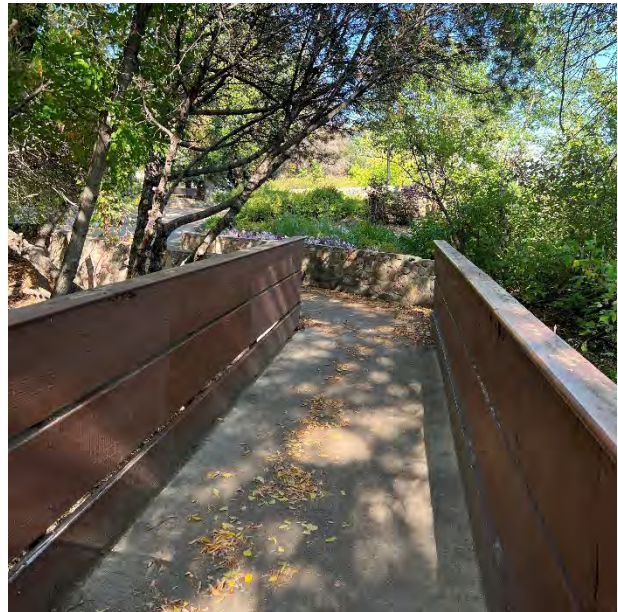
What is the history of the Thompson Belvedere?

The Thompson Belvedere was built in 1971 to commemorate Royal Canadian Air Force veteran Commander R.W. (Bobby) Thompson. It was intended as a gateway and north entrance to Kiwanis Memorial Park. An additional bypass trail west of the bridge was added in 1994 to reduce conflict between different users of the site and plantings were pruned and updated in 2010 to improve sightlines.



Why are enhancements being undertaken here?

The existing trail is narrow with walls, steep grades (up to 10%) with tight, blind corners and poor sightlines. Traffic flow through the area is generally poor. There is inconsistent lighting with dark and uninviting spaces. The existing infrastructure is ageing, and the vegetation has become overgrown in many areas. The area frequently sees illegitimate usage, including encampments that can conflict with trail users and lower perceptions of safety.



What is the goal of the project?

The goal is to enhance the trail network, including widening and improved flow, to improve user experiences and access, accommodate high user volumes, and mitigate safety risks, while enhancing natural features as much as possible. Given the significant visibility, usage and programming through this area, new feature nodes and amenities are incorporated to provide a high level of programming potential and unique user experiences. Visual and physical connectivity, access and flow into the Belvedere from the trail will be significantly improved.

How will the goal be accomplished?

- Widening and re-grading the existing bypass trail (5.0m wide, 5% maximum slope),
- Improving sightlines with improved traffic flow, including a more direct trail connection heading north,
- Removal of the pedestrian bridge and adjacent stone walls, revegetating the area,
- Improving visual and physical access into and out from the building by removing building walls and existing benches, incorporating an adjacent plaza, and re-grading the slope from the street,
- Replacing the existing lookout with a new larger lookout,
- Removing and / or pruning overgrown vegetation,
- Adding new plantings of low vegetation in disturbed areas,
- Upgrading all trail lighting and including additional feature lighting to reduce dark areas and make lighting more consistent,
- Upgrading existing and adding new site amenities including benches, signage, trash units, and a drinking fountain.

What will the completed trail look like?

Similar to upgrades completed in previous years, the proposed trail will be:

- Built to current accessibility standards,
- Built to City of Saskatoon construction standards,
- Wider to accommodate user volumes and improve safety,
- Fully lit,
- Incorporate updated amenities such as lighting, benches, signage, drinking fountain and trash receptacles,
- Provide direct access to new seating / view nodes and plaza spaces,
- New nodes will incorporate pavers and concrete bands.

How will existing vegetation on site be impacted?

Overall, the Downtown Trail Enhancement project will result in a net gain in vegetated areas, significantly greater than what is planned for removal. At the Thompson Belvedere existing high value trees have been assessed and will remain if possible. Due to significant re-grading and adjustments to trail alignment, removal and/or pruning of shrubs is necessary. Disturbed areas will be re-planted with suitable species that will not impact overall visibility and sightlines in the area.

What plans are in place for new plantings?

New planting areas will provide an overall increase in vegetated areas. New planting areas will provide the opportunity to:

Increase biodiversity. Replanting will be a mixture of native shrub and tree species and ornamental species where appropriate. This includes the removal of non-native / invasive species where possible.

Plant edible berries and native plants with local cultural significance.

Improve the habitat and integrity of the existing vegetated zone between the trail and the river by planting open areas, while maintaining river views.

What impacts will there be on other park amenities?

Adjacent amenities including the Thompson Belvedere building and streetscape elements will remain in place. The Ray Hnatyshyn Statue will not be impacted by the work. Some stone walls and the pedestrian bridge will be removed, including some of the perimeter walls at the belvedere.

What impacts will there be on the rest of the park?

- Existing irrigation systems will be adjusted as needed,
- Construction access routes will cross the park - disturbed areas will be repaired,
- Existing trees will be protected during construction.

When will this work be done?

This overall downtown project will be undertaken in phases, continuing from the south and heading north. There are four phases planned, with the belvedere work expected to happen in 2026 (subject to funding). This first phase (Kiwanis Memorial Park South) was substantially complete in 2023 and is now open to the public. Subsequent phases will proceed as funding becomes available.

Will the trail or any part of the site be closed?

Closures and detours will be necessary to allow construction to proceed while maintaining public and contractor safety. The work zone will be fenced off. Trail users will be directed to detour around the work zone, utilizing adjacent trails and sidewalks. Trail users are asked to respect the construction activity and use designated detours outside of the work zone.

How is this project funded?

Meewasin relies on a number of funding sources including its own capital fund and reserves, project funding from the City of Saskatoon, grants (public and private sector), corporate donors and individuals. As most of these streams are not consistent in timing or value, projects proceed in phases as funding allows.

About the Meewasin Valley Authority

The Meewasin Valley Authority exists to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley, with a balance between human use and conservation by:

- *Providing leadership in the management of its resources;*
- *Promoting understanding, conservation and beneficial use of the Valley; and*
- *Undertaking programs and projects in river valley development and conservation,*

for the benefit of present and future generations..

There are 67 square kilometers of land and over +105km of established trail, which has seen up to 2.32 million trail visits per year, in the Meewasin Valley. The area also features sites that help people to connect to nature through experiences such as, the Beaver Creek Conservation Area, the Northeast Swale, Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, the River Landing Spray Area, and the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza. Meewasin is a non-profit organization that relies on donations and volunteers for sustainability. To get involved with Meewasin or learn more visit www.meewasin.com

Meewasin Downtown Trail Enhancements - Kiwanis Thompson Belvedere



Existing

- Narrow trail
- Steep slopes (10%)
- Blind corners
- Poor sightlines
- Inconsistent lighting
- Overgrown vegetation



Updated Concept

- Updated Plantings
- Widened trail without Bridge
- Slopes at 5% or less
- Addition of outdoor plaza
- Larger lookout
- Added amenities
- Better lighting
- Improved sightlines and flow
- Improved access to Belvedere
- Removal of Interior Seating

LEGEND

PROPOSED

- TREES
- SHRUBS
- ASPHALT PATHWAY
- PAVERS
- CONCRETE
- LIGHTS
- BENCH
- CHAIR
- PRIMARY TRAILHEAD SIGN
- TRAIL COUNTER
- TRASH RECEPTACLES
- WATER FOUNTAIN

EXISTING

- BENCH
- TRASH RECEPTACLES
- PRIMARY TRAILHEAD SIGN

Meewasin Downtown Trail Enhancements - Kiwanis Thompson Belvedere

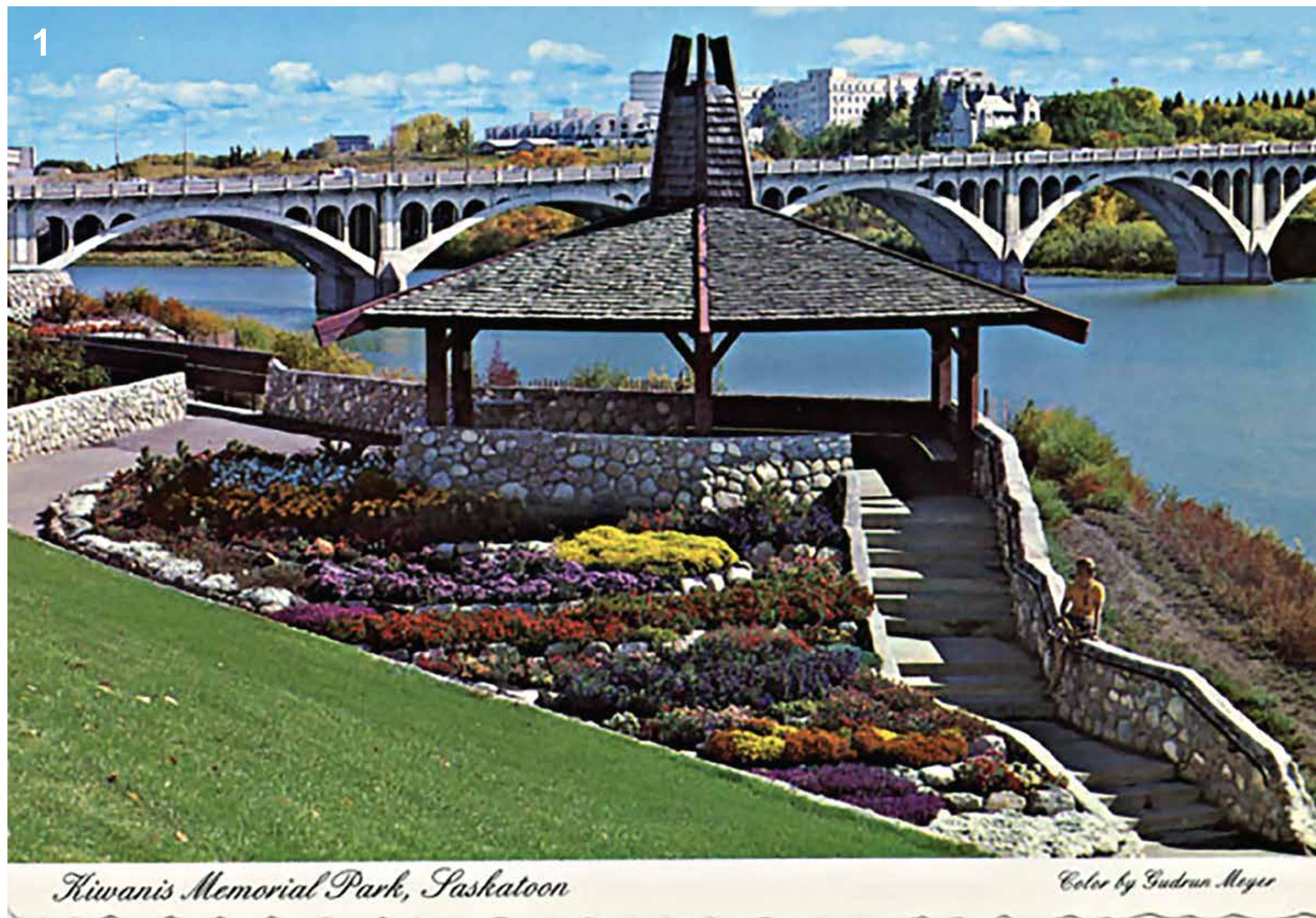


Photo Descriptions: 1. Image of Thompson Belvedere on postcard 2. Panoramic view of Thomson Belvedere and surrounding area 3. Looking North towards the Thompson Belvedere 4. Looking South from the Thompson Belvedere 5. View of pedestrian bridge North of the Thompson Belvedere 6. Black fencing adjacent to the Thompson Belvedere 7. View of inside the Thompson Belvedere 8. View of the Meewasin Trail on the North side of the Thompson Belvedere 9. View of the Meewasin Trail adjacent to the Thompson Belvedere looking South