

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Strategic Conservation Plan Development Process
(Phase III)

Office of Natural Areas
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Stakeholder Involvement Plan*: Strategic Conservation Plan Development Process (Phase III)

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This stakeholder involvement plan has been developed for the third component of a 4-part Conservation Plan currently being created by the City of Edmonton's Office of Natural Areas. The Conservation Plan as a whole involves the development of:

1. a *State of Natural Areas Report* (completed by Spencer Environmental in the fall of 2006), which updated the City's existing natural areas map and integrated North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System information with that of Table Lands natural areas;
2. a *Conservation Framework* for the City, including vision and mission statements, guiding principles for the Plan, and high-level conservation goals; and
3. a ***Strategic Conservation Plan*** identifying desired conservation outcomes, and strategic directions and strategies for the achievement of these outcomes.
4. a *Conservation Implementation Plan* that will expand on the identified strategies by outlining key actions to support each, as well as responsible parties, timelines, budgetary forecasts and additional system indicators.

This document pertains to Phase III, the development of a *Strategic Conservation Plan*. It will be followed by the development of a *Conservation Implementation Plan*, beginning in the fall of 2007.

The first component of the Conservation Plan process was the completion of a *State of Natural Areas Report* for the City of Edmonton. The second phase of process involved members of the public – including representatives of industry, academia, government and non-governmental organizations and other community members – in the development of a Conservation Framework for the City of Edmonton and a series of high-level conservation goals.

The next phase of the project, the development of a Strategic Conservation Plan, will flesh out the Conservation Framework developed during Phase II. The Strategic Plan will identify a series of desired conservation outcomes for the City, based on a) the conservation science outlined in the State of Natural Areas Report (Phase I), and b) feedback obtained from the public, other City departments, the development industry and academia during Phase II. Proposed strategic directions and strategies will also be identified for each outcome, but more detailed implementation will not be part of this document. Finally, the Plan will include a description of the key elements of Edmonton's ecological network.

The development of the Strategic Plan will involve key stakeholders – the public, the development industry, key internal departments, conservation organizations, the media, etc. – in a number of

* While this document has been developed to meet the requirements of the City's *Public Involvement Policy C513*, the Office has entitled the Plan a "Stakeholder" Involvement Plan rather than a "Public" Involvement Plan, because we are seeking to engage not just the general public, but also industry, academia, the media, and representatives of internal City departments.

ways: an internal Solutions Working Group, several Natural Areas Advisory Committee workshops, an inventory of conservation initiatives currently underway both internally and externally, and a public workshop in the spring of this year.

The Office of Natural Areas will seek the endorsement of Senior Management Team on the Strategic Conservation Plan in late spring of this year. In July, the Office intends to take a revised Natural Areas Policy to Council, and the Strategic Plan will serve as a companion document to the Policy.

B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN PRINCIPLES

- **OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY:** Keep participants and other stakeholders informed throughout (newsletters, website) – share the entire process and show how the components fit together; clarify how participant input will be used; seek feedback on “final” products – focus on 2-way communication
- **DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES:** Use diverse consultation approaches to hear from as many as possible – not just the conservation community

C. INPUT BEING GATHERED

The input being gathered through this process is what key stakeholders feel should be included in a Strategic Conservation Plan for the City. This includes the identification of key conservation outcomes – what future state stakeholders envision regarding natural areas conservation, management and education in Edmonton. In addition, the Office is seeking feedback on strategic directions and strategies to pursue in order to achieve identified outcomes.

The input gathered from stakeholders during the public engagement process in Phase II will serve the basis for a “test” strategic plan. This test plan will then be taken to the Natural Areas Advisory Committee (NAAC) in early March for review, and to the internal Solutions Working Group (SWG) in mid-March.

Concurrent to this consultation, the Office will also be carrying out an inventory of conservation initiatives currently underway in Edmonton. This will include internal initiatives that contribute in some way to the protection and management of or education about natural areas, as well as similar initiatives taking place in the community. This will allow the Office to identify gaps in effort and activity, and to gain a better understanding of where the City’s efforts and resources are best directed, and how community organizations might be supported in their activities. This information will also be integrated into the Strategic and Implementation Plans (Phases III and IV).

The first iteration of the Plan will be revised based on the input of NAAC and the SWG, and will take into account the results of the conservation initiatives inventory, and a Draft Strategic Plan will be developed by April 1st of this year. The Draft Plan will also be reviewed by NAAC and the SWG, and a public workshop will be held in early May to gather final input on the proposed Plan. The

Office will then finalize the Plan, and prepare it for circulation to management and Senior Management Team in May.

The media will also be kept abreast of the Office's progress on this project, and the final Strategic Plan will be formally released in May.

In addition, the Office of Natural Areas' website will be regularly updated with the outputs of this process, and electronic newsletters will be developed and circulated to all stakeholders at key points in the process.

D. PROJECT OUPUTS

The output of this component of the project will be a forty-page document that:

- provides a clear **context** for the plan, including: an overview of loss and protection trends for natural areas in Edmonton; existing internal and community conservation initiatives; and a description of the key elements of Edmonton's **ecological network**;
- includes a conservation **vision** for the City;
- outlines **guiding principles** for both the Plan and the Office;
- outlines several broad conservation **goals**;
- lists desired system-level **outcomes** and **indicators**;
- outlines key **strategic directions** and **strategies** for the achievement of each outcome; and
- is endorsed by Senior Management Team.

E. DECISION-MAKERS

The Office of Natural Areas (with approval from Transportation and Public Works Committee and Senior Management Team and support from key stakeholders) will be the decision-makers for this project.

F. SCOPE OF THE DECISION

The vision will guide all future decisions and actions of the City as concerns natural areas. It will affect all natural areas within the City of Edmonton, both in the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System and in the City's tablelands. As such, it will impact (directly or indirectly) all branches of the City with some conservation responsibility, as well as all citizens of Edmonton.

G. TIMELINE FOR THE DECISION

The following provides an outline of the Office's next steps in the process, as well as target dates for completion of key components of the plan. These dates are only estimates.

In preparation for the development of *Natural Connections*, the Office of Natural Areas held a process to engage Edmontonians in a conversation about natural areas issues in the fall of 2006.

- Exit reports for all public events (which included an online survey, several open houses and a facilitated workshop) will be released **March 5, 2007**.
- A Consolidated Report addressing the complete results of the public engagement process will be released **March 12, 2007**.

Building on the public engagement process, the Office is aiming to complete and circulate:

- a "Test" Strategic Plan and Natural Areas Policy on **April 1** (internal circulation only);
- a Draft Strategic Plan and Natural Areas Policy on **May 1** (internal circulation only); and
- a Final Strategic Plan and Policy on **May 21** of this year.

A public workshop will be held **May 7** to seek final input on the Draft Strategic Plan in advance of preparing the Final Strategic Plan. The Final Plan will go to Transportation and Public Works Committee on **June 26** and to City Council on **July 4**.

H. REASONS STAKEHOLDERS BEING INVOLVED

Stakeholders are being involved in the preparation of this Plan because:

- they will be directly or indirectly impacted by it;
- because the City is accountable to the taxpayers and citizens of the broader Edmonton community; and
- because all City departments must be supportive of the Plan if it is to be successfully implemented.

Stakeholders will be involved at the Consultation level of the Involvement Continuum (Information Sharing → Consultation → Active Participation). The goal will be *collaboration* to develop solutions to build commitment.

Why involve academia/conservation community?

- Scientific expertise re. connectivity, habitat value
- Knowledge of local/regional significance of natural features/systems
- Understanding of current "gaps" – need/potential for restoration

→ Ability to identify an interconnected system of natural areas and prioritize conservation/restoration of specific natural areas and ecological linkages, based on the graphic products generated by Spencer Environmental (State of Natural Areas Report)

Why involve local/provincial/federal government stakeholders?

- Understanding of policy context, knowledge of existing plans/regulations/acts
- Familiarity with strategic planning, wording of strategic goals/objectives and creation of vision statements – knowledge of what is practical/"implementable" vs. what is not

→ Ability to word an appropriate vision statement and develop a set of effective, achievable and measurable goals and objectives, based on ONA internal review of conservation plans (April's summary report) and model Vision Framework Document

Why involve the general public?

- City of Edmonton accountable to all Edmontonians (tax dollars used for conservation); Edmonton residents have a right to understand City's approach to conservation; City's conservation activities should reflect values of Edmontonians
- Much local knowledge held
- Conservation activity in the City affects all individuals (directly or indirectly)
- Public buy-in at early stages of project will facilitate implementation of goals/objectives at later date
- Opportunity for public education, garnering of public support for conservation activity generally
- Understanding of value of protection of natural areas and associated ecological function/services may encourage landowners to partake in conservation of own volition on private lands

→ Ability to share with ONA their values, vision for conservation activity within City; to identify specific natural areas of value to individuals/community; to share with ONA information about current/desired use of natural areas

I. HOW INFORMATION WILL BE USED IN DECISION-MAKING

The input gathered from stakeholders during Phase II will be used to develop the Test Strategic Plan. Following circulation of the Test Plan, input gathered at Natural Areas Advisory Committee meetings, internal Solutions Working Group meetings and at the public workshop, as well as any written feedback, will be integrated into the Draft and Final Strategic Plans by the Office of Natural Areas. The development of all iterations of the Plan will be done in *collaboration* with key stakeholders.

J. TYPE OF PROCESS SOUGHT

We are seeking an inclusive stakeholder involvement process that seeks alignment with the vision and goals of conservation non-government organizations operating in the Edmonton area, and with the policies, strategies, plans and legislation of the provincial and federal governments that affect the City of Edmonton. In addition, the process will address the issues and goals of the City of Edmonton, and will include the Natural Areas Advisory Committee and internal Solutions Working Group throughout.

K. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODS STRATEGY

Potential Participants	Proposed Level of Involvement	Involvement Strategy
1. All participants	Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out regular newsletters updating on process Keep website updated with information on Conservation Plan project Encourage submission of written comment on drafts
2. City Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Areas Advisory Committee (NAAC) Natural Areas Policy Implementation Committee (NAPIC) TPW SMT 	Active Participation (plan development) Information Sharing Information Sharing Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration at monthly NAAC meetings – input on plan dev't Approval on PPP Approval Approval
3. Government Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Departments (Drainage, Parks, Office of the Environment, Planning and Development, Emergency Services) Provincial Departments (AB Environment; Agriculture, Food & Rural Development; Community Development; Sustainable Resource Development) Federal Departments (Environment – EcoGifts, CWS, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency) 	Information Sharing/ Collaboration Information Sharing Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Solutions Working Group Newsletter/Website Public Workshop Newsletter/Website Public Workshop
4. Business/Development/Construction Industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Development Institute – Greater Edmonton Chapter 	Information Sharing/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter/NAAC representation Public Workshop
5. Non-Governmental Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Capital Region Alliance Alberta Conservation Association Alberta Fish and Game Association Alberta Industrial Heartland Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Canadian Federation of University Women – Edmonton Chapter Canadian Parks & Wildlife Society – Edmonton Chapter Ducks Unlimited Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Edmonton Nature Club Environmental Law Centre Land Stewardship Resource Centre of 	Information Sharing/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter/Website Public Workshop Earth Day – information sharing about Plan

Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy Lands Conservation Society • Living World Nature Trust • Nature Conservancy of Canada • River Valley Alliance • Sierra Club of Canada – Prairie Chapter 		
6. Academic Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Alberta • King's University College 	Information Sharing/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter/Website • Public Workshop
7. Other Community Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leagues • Children/youth (schools, community centres) • Elderly people (retirement homes, churches) • People with disabilities • Homeless community • People of different ethnic backgrounds (churches, cultural groups) 	Information Sharing/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter/Website • Public Workshop • Earth Day – information sharing about Plan
8. Media	Information Sharing/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter/Website • Public Workshop