

RIVER VALLEY PLANNING MODERNIZATION

Ribbon of Green & River Valley ARP

Phase 2 Public Engagement
Public Survey

Winter 2022

The Edmonton logo, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a dark blue square background. A decorative green ribbon graphic runs diagonally across the page from the bottom left to the top right.

Please return this survey by **February 14, 2022**.

Scan and send to
ribbonofgreen@edmonton.ca or mail to:

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City of Edmonton
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If you are able to participate online,
please visit **edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen**
to complete the survey digitally.

Introduction

The River Valley Planning Modernization project (including both the Ribbon of Green Plan and the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan) will renew our strategic planning for the River Valley and the processes and tools for evaluating and regulating development that is proposed within the system.

The core purpose of this project is to ensure that the River Valley, the backbone of our open space network, remains vibrant and ecologically resilient as the city grows.

Phase 1 explored what Edmontonians value about the River Valley, helped refine the overall vision and guiding principles, and confirmed the Land Management Classifications.

Now in Phase 2, we want to confirm preliminary vision and direction for each of the twelve River Valley planning areas, which are called "reaches". We are also seeking feedback on how decisions are made regarding project proposals in the River Valley.

Vision & Principles

The vision statement and principles below were developed through multiple phases of public input, including engagement in the spring of 2021. These foundational statements will guide all steps in the River Valley planning process. At this time, we are inviting input to help us to finalize the vision and principles.

VISION:

The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is a protected, connected, ecologically resilient landscape that honours our collective history and promotes healthy living through diverse opportunities for recreation, active travel, learning, and gathering in the tranquility of nature.

PRINCIPLES:

- + **ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY:** Ecosystems will be protected, connected, restored, and managed to preserve ecological integrity and resiliency, minimize the impacts of human use and respond to changing conditions.
- + **LOW-IMPACT AMENITIES:** Any new or expanded amenities will support opportunities for people to gather and recreate in nature or provide essential urban services, and will be located and designed to minimize environmental impact and promote ecosystem function.
- + **CONNECTED TRAILS:** A continuous trail system and access points will connect neighbourhoods, the city, and the region to the River Valley and Ravine System, and provide safe and accessible opportunities for recreation and active travel.
- + **COLLABORATION:** Through education, engagement, and partnerships, meaningful opportunities will be provided to contribute to the planning, design, and stewardship of the River Valley and Ravine System.
- + **HERITAGE:** The natural and cultural heritage of the River Valley and Ravine System will shape the places, experiences, and connections within it. Natural and historical sites, features, and landscapes will be protected and, where appropriate, interpreted.
- + **INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES:** Indigenous cultural values will be recognized and supported throughout the River Valley and Ravine System, and Indigenous communities will be meaningfully engaged as active participants in the planning, stewardship, and use of the System.

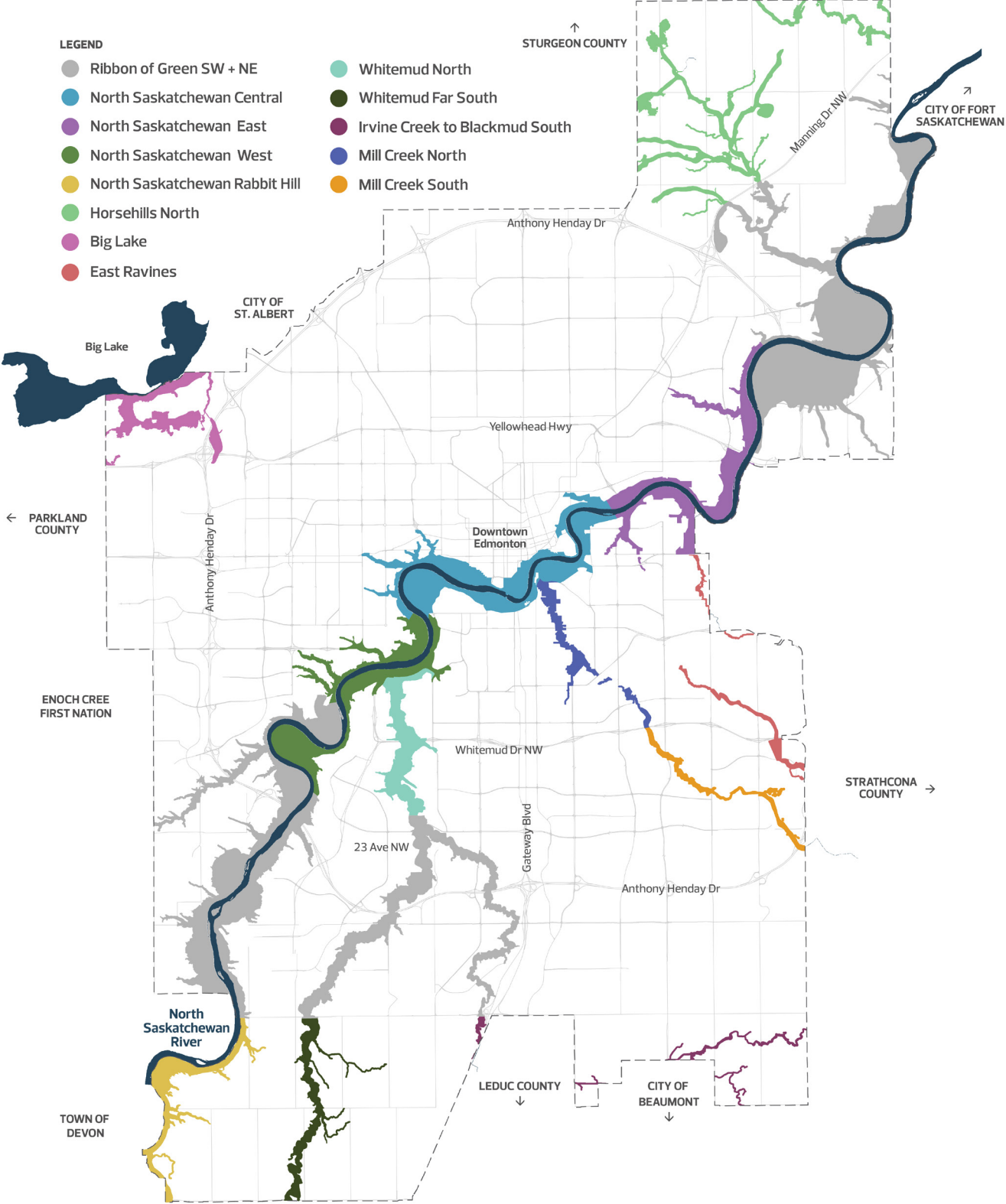
Do you support the revised Vision and Guiding Principles?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

What is the reason for your answer?

River Valley Reaches

Within the Ribbon of Green, the River Valley and Ravine System is divided into twelve planning areas, or "reaches". Identifying these reaches makes it easier to plan for smaller segments of the River Valley while still considering them as part of the overall network.



North Saskatchewan Central Reach

Proposed Vision: The North Saskatchewan Central Reach is a vibrant recreational destination and gathering place for the city, providing a diverse range of experiences from large event spaces to natural spaces. Valued cultural spaces are honoured and appropriately interpreted. A well-connected network of sustainable trail connections promotes active travel and recreation while protecting the River Valley's natural features. Restoration efforts and designated preservation areas improve ecological connectivity to and through the reach and provide habitat for the City's biodiversity, while protecting unique landscapes within existing parkland.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

North Saskatchewan West Reach

Proposed Vision: The North Saskatchewan West reach is an important destination for diverse recreational experiences, while also providing important wildlife connectivity corridors along both sides of the river. Unique attractions such as the Valley Zoo, John Janzen Nature Centre and Fort Edmonton Park provide valuable opportunities to gather and learn about River Valley history, cultural value, natural systems, and are managed to minimize their impact to natural systems. Improved trail connections provide important recreational and active transportation eastwards into the Central reach, and westwards as the Southwest reach is further developed.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

North Saskatchewan East Reach

Proposed Vision: The North Saskatchewan East reach provides a well-connected trail network and amenities that support diverse recreation and gathering opportunities for residents of surrounding neighbourhoods and users from across the city. Pathway connections provide excellent access through the River Valley and eastwards into Strathcona County. Wildlife connectivity is strengthened through restoration efforts along the riparian edge of the river and the valley slopes.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Whitemud North Reach

Proposed Vision: The sensitive lands of the Whitemud North Reach form a well-protected natural area, while providing Edmontonians with a space for relaxation and learning. Preservation remains the overriding priority for the area, ensuring that the creek remains healthy, that surrounding irreplaceable native habitats and unique geological features are protected, and that the area remains a high-functioning wildlife corridor. The creation of Indigenous cultural spaces and interpretive opportunities provides people with the chance to learn and celebrate the long history of these lands, and foster a continued tradition of stewardship.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Whitemud Far South Reach

Proposed Vision: The lands surrounding Whitemud Far South Reach will see development in the coming decades. As industrial development occurs to the east and residential development to the west, effective setbacks and restoration of native riparian vegetation will be prioritized to ensure that this significant natural area continues to function without disturbance. This important natural corridor is the source of much of the native biodiversity found throughout the River Valley and Ravine system, and care must be taken to ensure developments in surrounding lands do not impact the watercourse. A well-designed, connected pathway system will provide low-impact access to these lands from surrounding neighbourhoods, and into the rest of the River Valley and ravines system.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Mill Creek North Reach

Proposed Vision: Mill Creek North is a vibrant connection from south Edmonton to the downtown core, supporting wildlife connectivity, active transportation, recreation and unique events. Potential daylighting of the creek provides exceptional opportunities to re-establish native habitat, foster learning and enable the community to connect with nature.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Mill Creek South Reach

Proposed Vision: Mill Creek South reach is a valued recreational destination for residents of surrounding neighbourhoods. Restoration of riparian vegetation along the creek banks will help mitigate impacts of use, while strengthening wildlife connectivity. As the city continues to develop, important wetlands will be maintained, and natural connections out of the city will be improved. Strong connections with Jackie Parker Park provide an important staging area for use of the ravine, and for larger community events.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

North Saskatchewan Rabbit Hill Reach

Proposed Vision: The North Saskatchewan Rabbit Hill reach will serve as an increasingly popular recreation destination for the city as a whole, and an important regional connection. As the surrounding lands are developed, the important natural areas along the valley slopes will be preserved, providing significant wildlife connectivity to support the biodiversity of the River Valley. The existing recreational amenities will be supported through a top-of-bank trail that will connect the city with the municipality of Devon. Development will be appropriately set back to provide a buffer for the river, while supporting wildlife and pathway connections.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Horsehills North Reach

Proposed Vision: The development of the lands surrounding the Horsehills North reach provide an opportunity to restore riparian vegetation along the creek banks currently dominated by agriculture. The tributary system provides water protection to the overall Horsehills Creek area, and the River Valley downstream. As adjacent development takes place, care will be taken to ensure that the hydrologic function continues to support the creek and surrounding wetlands. A top-of-bank trail system supported by small footprint access nodes will provide nearby residents with access to the natural creek system, while connecting to the city's pathway network.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Big Lake Reach

Proposed Vision: This reach borders on the highly important Big Lake natural area, a regionally important ecosystem. This creates an important recreational draw that must be supported by pathway infrastructure to ensure sustainable use of the area. Increasing demand for access resulting from ongoing residential development to the south will be managed to protect the natural functioning of this landscape.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

East Ravines Reach

Proposed Vision: Fulton and Gold Bar Ravines will see improved riparian vegetation along existing watercourses, providing better water filtration of overland runoff into the creeks. A well-connected greenway pathway system will provide commuter access, and amenity development will support better recreational access to the surrounding lands.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

Irvine Creek to Blackmud South Reach

Proposed Vision: This locally important natural area will see increased importance as the lands around it are developed. Restoration of riparian areas lost due to agricultural activities will improve the water quality of the creek, while providing an important natural amenity to surrounding communities. A natural connection with Cawes Lake will help establish a more natural system in this area. Connectivity corridors will help connect these lands to important natural areas to the south and east. Development of a top-of-bank pathway network will promote this reach as a recreational destination.

Do you think this vision is appropriate for this reach area?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

What is the reason for your answer?

River Valley ARP

The City receives proposals for various projects in the River Valley – from new trails to large scale visitor attractions and developments. Project proposals can come from the City itself (for example, park amenities) or from community groups, business owners, and private landowners (for example, a tourism opportunity). In every case, the City decides whether or not the proposal is appropriate for the River Valley.

The River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) provides the rules for decision-making in the River Valley. As part of the modernization of the River Valley ARP, the City is looking for feedback on how decision-making in the River Valley can be more consistent, transparent, and efficient.

Environmental Impacts

Current Process: The ARP requires that an Environmental Impact Assessment be completed as part of proposals for major facilities in the River Valley.

The assessment looks at the following impacts:

- + Water
- + Soils and risk of landslide
- + Plants
- + Wildlife habitat
- + Noise, odour, visual
- + Cultural and heritage sites
- + Adjacent land uses

Updated Process: The City is considering updating the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment to include other environmental considerations, such as:

- + How wildlife moves through the area
- + Climate change impacts
- + Ecosystem services, such as improving water quality
- + Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Do you agree with adding the following considerations to Environmental Impact Assessments for projects in the River Valley?

Check the ones you think should be considered.

- Wildlife corridors
- Climate change impacts
- Ecosystem services
- Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

What is the reason for your answer?

Are there any other environmental considerations that should be added to the Environmental Impact Assessment?

Strategic Alignment

Current Process: The current River Valley ARP does not have a process to formally evaluate how individual projects align with the long-term vision set out in the Ribbon of Green.

Updated Process: The City is looking at how we can better assess how well project proposals align with our long-term vision for the River Valley. This could mean evaluating impacts and benefits not currently included in the Environmental Impact Assessment process. For example:

- + Environmental benefits (e.g. climate change mitigation and habitat restoration)
- + Culture and heritage
- + Tourism
- + Recreation
- + Alignment with the vision, principles, and policies set out in the Ribbon of Green

What other impacts and benefits should the City consider when deciding on a proposed project?

- Environmental benefits (e.g. climate change mitigation and habitat restoration benefits)
- Cultural heritage
- Tourism
- Recreation
- Alignment with the vision, principles, and policies set out in the Ribbon of Green

What is the reason for your answer?

Are there any other environmental considerations that should be added to project assessments?

Decision Makers

Current Process: The River Valley ARP lists a wide variety of projects that must go to City Council for approval.

There are both benefits and drawbacks to this approach. Decisions that go to City Council have a formal public hearing process, but these decisions often have long timelines and may prevent the City from responding to minor or routine project proposals quickly.

Updated Process: The City is considering whether some project decisions can be made by City Administration, without a formal City Council public hearing process. Technical reports and assessments, and public engagement, would continue to be required.

Note: In this phase of the project, we are evaluating some general criteria for which decisions go to Council. In future project phases, we will explore potential criteria in more detail.

If a decision about a small scale project (e.g. trail maintenance, new washroom facilities, new picnic shelters) was made by City staff without the involvement of City Council, what would you need to be confident in that decision?

- A formal engagement process
- Clear identification of impacts
- Technical review by an expert
- Publicly available data or reports
- Some way of appealing or challenging the decision
- Other (please specify below)

None of the above

What other impacts and benefits should the City consider when deciding on a proposed project?

- Major public facilities and infrastructure (roads and large facilities such as recreation centres and LRT stations)
- Minor public improvements and infrastructure (maintenance or small improvements to trails, stairs, and other amenities)
- Trails and trailheads
- River access points
- Public park facilities (e.g. washrooms, water fountains, picnic shelters)
- Major private facilities or development on City land (commercial development, tourist attractions)
- Minor private facilities or development (food trucks/ kiosks, equipment rentals)
- Temporary infrastructure for festivals and events

What else do we need to think about when we decide what should or should not go to City Council for approval?