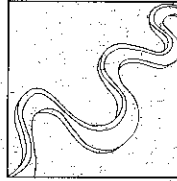
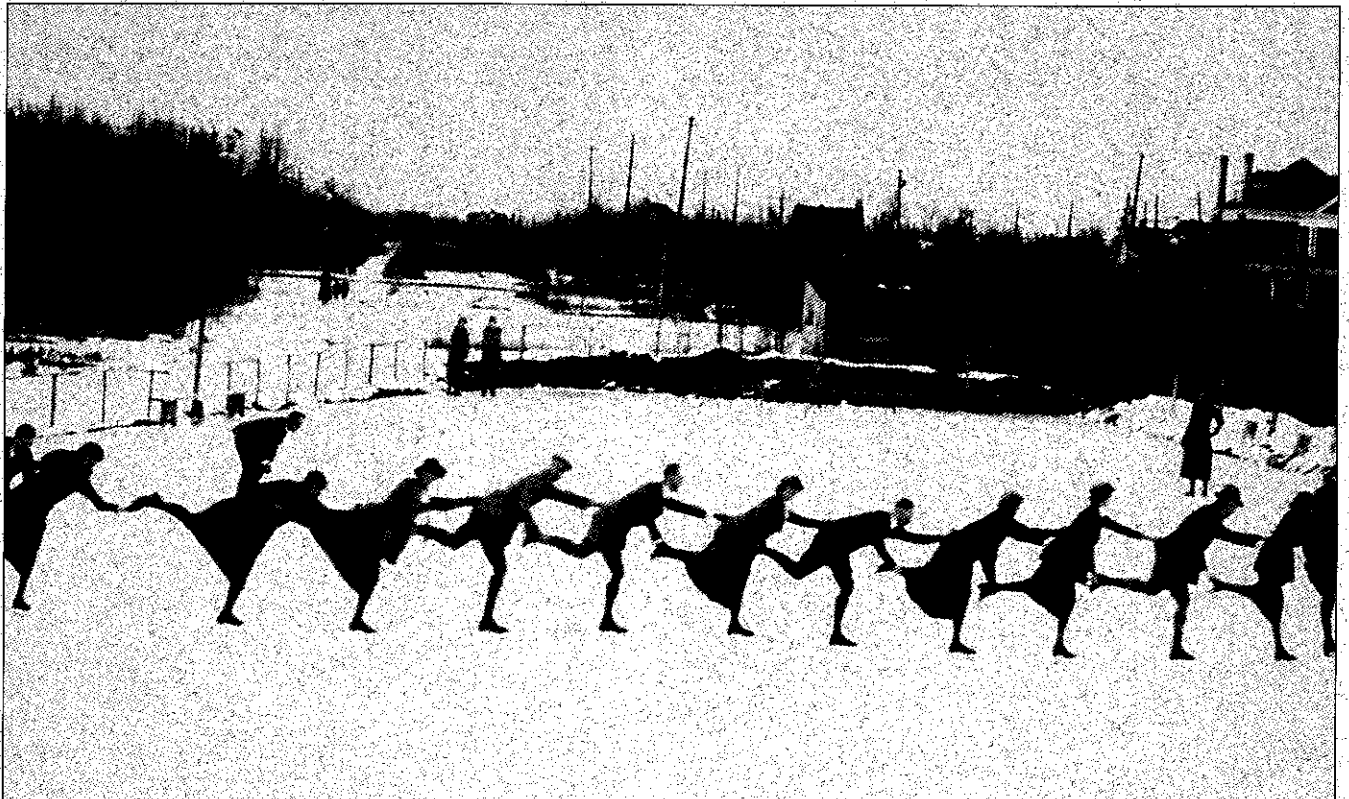


CHAPTER I



Introduction

THE 1989 announcement by the Provincial Government of Phase II of the Urban Parks Program and the eligibility of the City of Edmonton for up to \$15 million over a ten year period has provided Edmonton with the opportunity to consider the river valley system as a whole and to establish publicly accepted goals for its development and management.



A. BACKGROUND

1. LOCATION

The North Saskatchewan River is a ribbon of green winding through the City of Edmonton.

The North Saskatchewan River winds its way through the City of Edmonton from the agricultural southwest quadrant for 48 kilometres in a southwest-northeast direction. The river valley system also includes three major ravines, 19 secondary ravines and numerous tributaries for a total length of over 103 kilometres of ravines. It flows through residential districts, the commercial core of downtown, through areas bounded by residential and industrial lands and on into the rural landscape of Alberta. It is the largest and most continuous area of urban parkland in North America, encompassing over 7400 hectares of land. It is the most dominant physical feature of the City of Edmonton and surrounding area.

2. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RIVER VALLEY

The River Valley: the first center of activity in historic Edmonton

The North Saskatchewan River was once an important transportation and trade route. The City of Edmonton developed along the banks and particularly in the river flats. Indian encampments were common along the river and became more numerous and regular once Fort Edmonton was established. Ferry crossings attracted businesses and residences to the valley and settlements occurred on both sides of the river.

Edmonton is one of the few prairie cities which can trace its beginning back to a fur trade post. The first post was established in 1795 and its subsequent moves to various sites led to the development of the river valley.

The discovery of the North Saskatchewan River is credited to Brothers Chevalier Pierre and Francois Gaultier de Vorenes, who entered the river from Lake Winnipeg in 1741. In 1795 the Northwest Company (Fort Augustus) and the Hudson's Bay Company (Edmonton House) established fur trading posts near the junction of the Sturgeon and the North Saskatchewan Rivers, near the present Fort

Saskatchewan. The two forts were moved upstream some time around 1802-06 to a site considered more secure and also more convenient to the fur trade, somewhere in the vicinity of the power plant in Rosedale.

In 1821, after the amalgamation of the two companies, the fort was renamed Fort Edmonton. The floods of 1825 and 1830 convinced the Hudson's Bay Company to move away from the river flats to higher grounds. The new site selected was south of the present Legislative Building. The fort, stockade, barracks, and residences in this complex stood on this location from 1831 to 1915 until the fort was dismantled.

During this time Woodland Cree Indians camped on the north side of the river while Blackfoot Indians camped on the south shore. Trade was active among the Indians, settlers, and the Hudson's Bay Company. Edmonton was the key to the North Saskatchewan - Athabasca system. The growing settlement outside the Fort occupied an area close to the river and became the settlement's commercial center (Rosedale).

The establishment of the 'Belle of Edmonton' ferry in 1882 joined Edmonton on the north side of the river to the Strathcona area on the south.

A graveyard used by the early white and native Edmontonians from approximately 1820 to the 1880's was situated just to the east of the Fort, near the North end of the Walterdale Bridge.

The Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific Railway line crossed the hillside below the Fort and Fort Edmonton was the terminus of a wagon road which stretched to Stony Plain and on to Rocky Mountain House.

The area now known as Walterdale was a bustling and growing industrial and residential area at the turn of the century until it was destroyed by the disastrous 1915 flood. It was along this portion of the river that ferries and steamboats landed. Indians and settlers forded the river on a ridge where the High Level Bridge spans the river and prospectors panned for gold. Riverside Park (now Queen Elizabeth Park) was a popular recreation area and the adjacent Strathcona Power Plant generated electricity for that young settlement.

Rosedale, the level land on the riverbank east of Fort Edmonton, was as much a neighbourhood as an industrial and service area. It contained the station for the Edmonton, Yukon, and Pacific Railway, the Donald Ross (Edmonton) Hotel, Edmonton's first race track and exhibition grounds, schools, apart-

ments and several industries including an oil well, a power station and two ice plants.

Coal companies mined the easily workable river bank and valley sides and sunk numerous shafts into 'underground Edmonton'. Dredges were used in the search for gold. Gold was found near the Beverly Bridge in 1865 and attracted many settlers and augmented the pattern of residential, commercial and industrial land use in the growing settlement.

After 1891, when the railway reached Strathcona from Calgary, the river lost a great deal of its transportation function and became primarily a recreational area. Ice skating and horse racing were popular during the winter and excursions on the paddle steamer 'City of Edmonton' were popular during the summer. The steamer cruises between Big Island and Fort Saskatchewan ended in 1914 but canoeing remained a popular means of river travel.

In 1902 an Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific train crossed over the Low Level Bridge (built in 1900) from Strathcona and entered the town of Edmonton for the first time. In 1904 Edmonton achieved city status and a year later it became the capital of the newly established Province.

In 1912 Edmonton and Strathcona amalgamated; the Legislative Building officially opened and the High Level Bridge and the Dawson Bridge were completed. In 1915 the Walterdale Bridge (105 Street) was constructed. With the opening of the new bridges and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway it was no longer necessary to use ferries or to scale the steep slopes and hills of the river valley. Traffic was now able to bypass the valley and go directly to the core of Edmonton, which initiated a land use pattern change in Edmonton from a valley to an upland orientation. Commerce moved to Jasper Avenue and the valley industries were phased out. Residential communities developed on the uplands and the focus was drawn away from the river valley, the first centre of activity in historic Edmonton.

3. PROTECTIVE POLICIES

The river valley is on loan from future generations.

The river valley to a large degree is an open green and 'natural' space amidst a growing urban centre. It has and will continue to experience pressures from many sectors to relinquish its finite resources of space, aesthetic quality, flora and fauna habitat. To maintain the valley system in perpetuity will require wise

and capable management.

For seventy-five years, municipal, regional and provincial authorities have sought to protect the valley's natural open space from urban development and provide a park system suitable for a metropolitan area. Some key events in protection of the valley were:

- Protection of the river valley was first proposed by Frederick C. Todd, a Montreal landscape architect, in 1907.
- In 1915 the Province of Alberta adopted a report prepared by Mr. Todd which established policy for the protection of the valley and ravines for recreation purposes.
- In 1933 a Zoning Bylaw was prepared by the City which regulated land use by preserving river valley lands as parkland.
- In 1970 Council adopted a 'top of the bank' policy which defined the limit of the river valley and ravine system, introduced principles governing development in proximity to the valley and prescribed regulation for development permits/zoning certificates in areas adjacent to the limit of the valley and ravine system.
- Also in 1970 the Edmonton Parks Master Plan (1970-1980) set forth policies for long term purchase of river valley lands for parks and environmental protection.
- In 1971 the General Municipal Plan provided river valley policy objectives with respect to environmental protection and designated lands for long-range acquisition for future park use.
- The 1972 Edmonton Regional Plan designated large portions of the river valley as 'Metropolitan Recreation' land.
- In 1975 City Council directed the City Planning Department to prepare a 'Development Scheme Bylaw' and adopted the main objectives identified in the River Valley Study (1974).
- In 1976 the Province began passing Orders-in-Council applying Restricted Development Area legislation to most of the river valley from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan.
- The 1980 General Municipal Plan reaffirmed principles, guidelines and policies for the preservation of the river valley.
- In 1983 Edmonton City Council directed the Administration to prepare a revised North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.

- In 1985 Edmonton City Council approved the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan Bylaw which established the major portion of the system as an environmental protection area and for use as an urban and natural park. This plan initiated a process for more effective future management of the river valley and ravine system.

4. REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Without the North Saskatchewan River Valley, Edmonton is just another prairie city.

The North Saskatchewan River originates at the Saskatchewan Glacier on the southwest slope of Mt. Saskatchewan (3,333 meters) in the Rocky Mountains. The Baptiste, Nordegg and Brazeau Rivers are major tributaries in the foothills. It enters the Province of Saskatchewan north of Lloydminster and is met by the Battle and South Saskatchewan Rivers before flowing into Lake Winnipeg just southeast of The Pas, Manitoba. The catchment area providing river flow at the Edmonton area is approximately 29,775 square kilometres.

The North Saskatchewan River bisects the City of Edmonton on the southwest - northeast diagonal. The valley is incised 45 to 60 meters below the level of the former glacial Lake Edmonton and within this valley the various levels of river terraces and major meanders have high natural scenic and recreational value.

The topographic relief provided by the North Saskatchewan River Valley greatly enhances the basically flat nature of the Edmonton area. Physical, biological, climatic and scenic variation increases the recreation potential to a level rarely found in major metropolitan areas.

Also unique in Edmonton is the natural condition of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System. Few other people can boast as can Edmontonians of their river valley. The backdrop it provides emphasizes the downtown core and the natural state is as close to wilderness as any city can speak of within its boundaries. Other river systems in other cities have been subjected to heavy industrial use over the years. The North Saskatchewan River, partially due to the steepness of the slopes and largely due to the farsightedness of Edmonton's City Fathers, has been successful in retaining its 'park like' image. There are few

other cities that can match this record as tested against the critical factor of time.

5. CAPITAL CITY RECREATION PARK - AN ALBERTA HERITAGE

River valleys and ravines are a valuable heritage. It is appropriate that Alberta Heritage Trust Fund dollars be used to protect them and make them accessible to the public.

On April 26, 1974 the Province of Alberta and the City of Edmonton jointly announced the development of a 16 kilometre long urban park (Capital City Recreation Park), financed through the Alberta Heritage Savings Fund. The park begins at the High Level Bridge and extends to Hermitage Park, two kilometres downstream of the Beverly Bridge. This project saw a 1215 hectare portion of the river valley in central and east Edmonton developed and rehabilitated for parkland and recreation use.

The urban park provides for 29 kilometres of paved and 26 kilometres of gravelled trails linked to three major activity centers via four pedestrian bridges across the river, three public use amenity facilities, boat launching and raft recovery, shoreline stabilization and parking. Viewpoints and rest areas were installed at locations where the sweep of the river valley and the city skyline provides a most pleasing panorama. Where grades allowed, sections of the trail system were constructed for use by the disabled.

Development at the three major activity centres included: Rundle Park with an 18-hole par 3 golf course, a dressing room building for the sports field area, fresh water lagoons, a family recreation building and a geological interpretive centre as well as sports fields and picnic areas; Goldbar Park, which includes a maintenance building, a major playground area and picnic facilities, a dressing room building and sports fields; Hermitage Park, which includes a maintenance and public washrooms building, a pond system and picnic facilities.

The City of Edmonton considers itself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to develop 16 kilometres of the 48 kilometres of river valley through the original urban parks program. That legacy of trail and park development is greatly enjoyed and used by Edmontonians. Recent surveys indicated an estimated 1,600,000 people visited the park in 1989.

The development of CCRP has deepened citizen's love and appreciation for the area and it has raised their awareness of what happens in the valley. The result of this increased awareness is the public now recognizes the valley can be easily damaged as well as conserved. Citizens of Edmonton have clearly indicated they want assurance the valley will be protected and subsequently expect development and management to be conducted in an appropriate manner.

B. PLAN PROCESS

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DECISION MAKING

Three types of plans will be required to complete river valley and ravine planning. This section concentrates on the first of these plans, the Concept Plan. The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System Concept Plan has been prepared using the staff and resources of the City of Edmonton, Parks and Recreation Department. This approach was selected as the most acceptable because of the wide variety of experience and expertise existing in the Department. The team assembled for the project was responsible for all aspects of preparation of the Concept Plan including meeting requirements of the Urban Parks Program, Phase II.

In the Concept Plan preparation the responsibility of the planning team was to:

- gather data from relevant sources
- identify issues and concerns
- confirm the views and preferences of Edmontonians
- synthesize information from all sources
- develop publicly supported plans based on this data
- recommend a plan to City Council for consideration

The public role in the development of the Concept Plan was to:

- share concerns and issues with the planning team
- assist in formulating the Vision and Principles
- identify where plans did or did not meet their expectations

The role of City Council was to review, endorse planning processes, provide overall direction and make all decisions related to the philosophy, content and implementation of the plan.

2. PLAN PREPARATION STRUCTURE

On June 26, 1990, City Council granted approval 'to proceed with preparation of a conceptual plan for the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System to meet the requirements of the Provincial Urban Parks Program, Phase II'.

On August 22, 1990 a process was presented to the Executive Committee for their consideration. That process is illustrated in Figure 1. The plan preparation was composed of three streams of work which occurred simultaneously:

- A **vision stream** which developed and confirmed a publicly supported philosophy for the river valley.
- An **environmental stream** which examined the opportunities and constraints imposed by the valley's physical characteristics and adjacent land uses.
- A **resource management stream** which established a model for how the park will be operated.

These three streams were combined to develop a draft Concept and Management Plan for public review.

3. PLAN PRODUCTS AND OUTPUTS

Products and outputs of each of the three required Plans are shown in Figure 2.

The products of the Concept Plan are:

- A statement of Vision and planning principles.
- A general program statement for the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System.
- Overview of proposed or potential development opportunities.
- Criteria for priority setting.
- Identification of future planning processes.

4. PUBLIC INPUT MODEL

Each of the three required plans must contain an appropriate public input process, which is specific to the decisions needed in each plan.

A conceptual model of the public input process is shown in Figure 2. This figure illustrates the relationship of public input to the planning detail required at the Concept, Master and Site Plan levels. Each successive plan builds from the previous plan in an iterative process, refining proposals from general intent to specific detail. Because the planning time-frame is over a three-year period the overall public input process and its products have been designed specifically to minimize the possibility that public expectations of immediate development could be raised prematurely.

In the Concept Plan development the public input was of a broad scope and general nature. The input

was targeted to all Edmontonians for the purpose of confirming a philosophy and collective public vision for the river valley. The draft vision was based on existing policy, recent surveys and studies. The level of planning detail needed was low.

At the Master Plan level scheduled for 1991, planning will concentrate on specific areas and the range of stakeholders will narrow, but the depth of participation will increase. On completion of the Master Plan specific development priorities will be selected and preliminary budgets prepared. It is at this level that specific public expectations will begin to develop. When funding has been secured the priority areas will proceed to the site plan level to ensure that development is closely tied to the final planning stage leading to construction.

At the Site Plan level, it is anticipated the range of stakeholders will narrow to those specifically affected by the proposals while the level of planning detail and depth of public participation will increase.

5. PUBLIC INPUT METHODS

Public input to the Concept Plan was of three types:

The first type, participation information, was derived from the 1988 Provincial survey (Edmonton sample) which created a picture of the types of activities, frequency of participation and barriers to recreation participation perceived by Edmontonians.

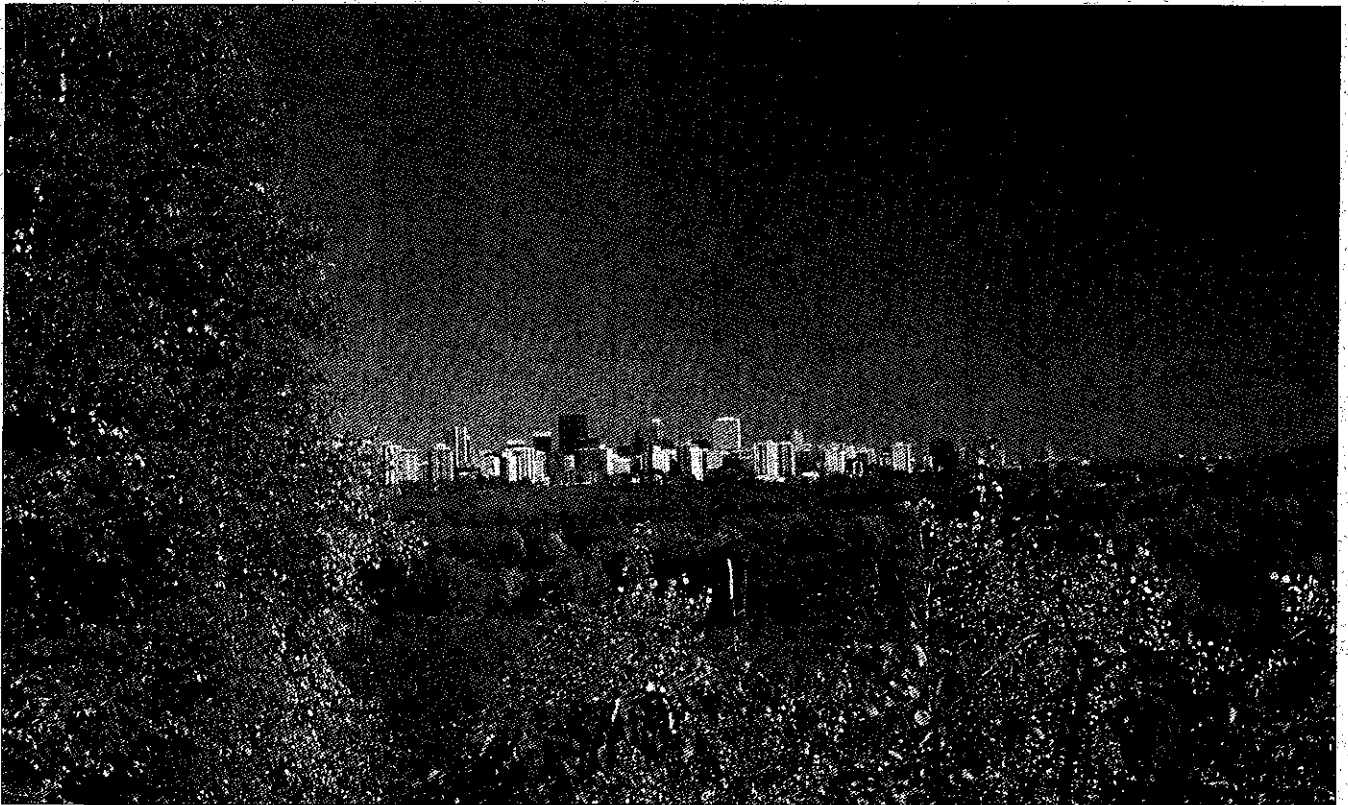
The second type was from the 1989 Leisure Survey which identified relative values Edmontonians placed on selected recreation facilities and opportunities and provided information on public attitudes about the importance of the river valley. These studies are further discussed in Chapter II Section A.

The third type of public input was the River Valley Vision Survey. Information from the two city-wide surveys was combined with policy statements already adopted by City Council to develop a draft vision statement and principles for the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System. This survey, reproduced in Figure 3, was distributed to all households in Edmonton through the Parks and Recreation Department's Fall Community Program Guide on August 26, 1990. Announcements were placed in the Edmonton Sun, Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Examiner to draw attention to the survey instrument. The survey was again reproduced in the Edmonton Examiner on September 9, 1990 to ensure the best coverage possible of the City-wide target audience.

The project time lines required public input to begin during the summer, normally a time avoided for public participation. To overcome the demands on residents' time the response mechanisms were intentionally designed to be 'user friendly' by providing accessible and convenient options for response. Two telephone response techniques were developed in cooperation with EdTel to provide equal opportunity for touch tone and rotary dial telephone customers. Phone lines were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for a three week period between August 26 and September 16, 1990. A mail in/drop off response technique was provided for those who preferred. A summary of the response is shown in Figure 4, and further detailed in Chapter II, Section C.

Responses from the survey were used to confirm whether the draft Vision & Principles accurately represented the views of Edmontonians. Comments from the survey were used to identify in greater detail the issues or concerns residents felt about each of the statements. The responses were used to determine whether the statements should be revised and were used to develop draft Program Objectives.

The revised Vision and Principles and Program Objectives were presented to the public at Open Houses on October 15 and 16, 1990. The Open Houses were advertised in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun and Edmonton Examiner and by mail-out announcement to more than 600 citizens who had requested to be kept informed.



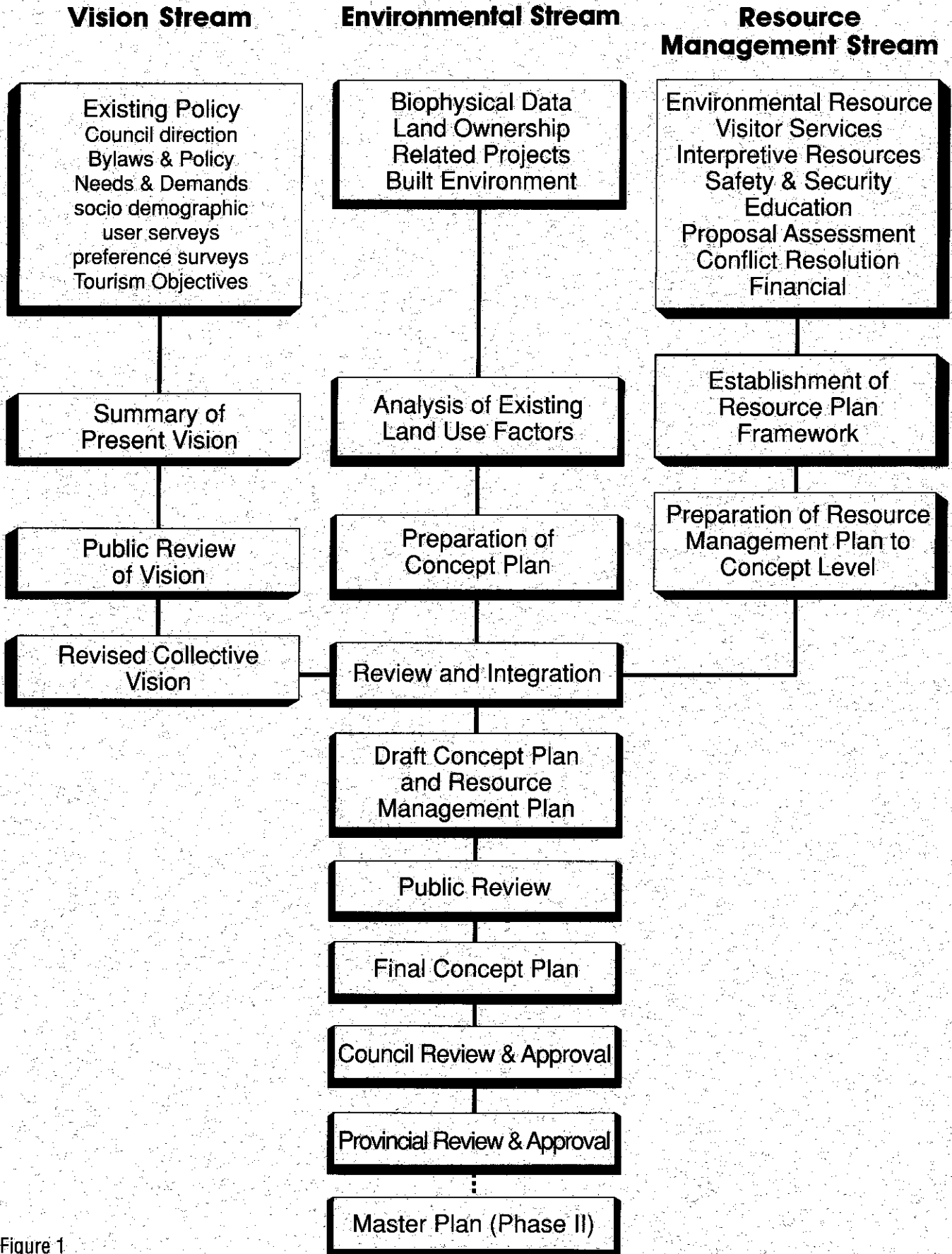
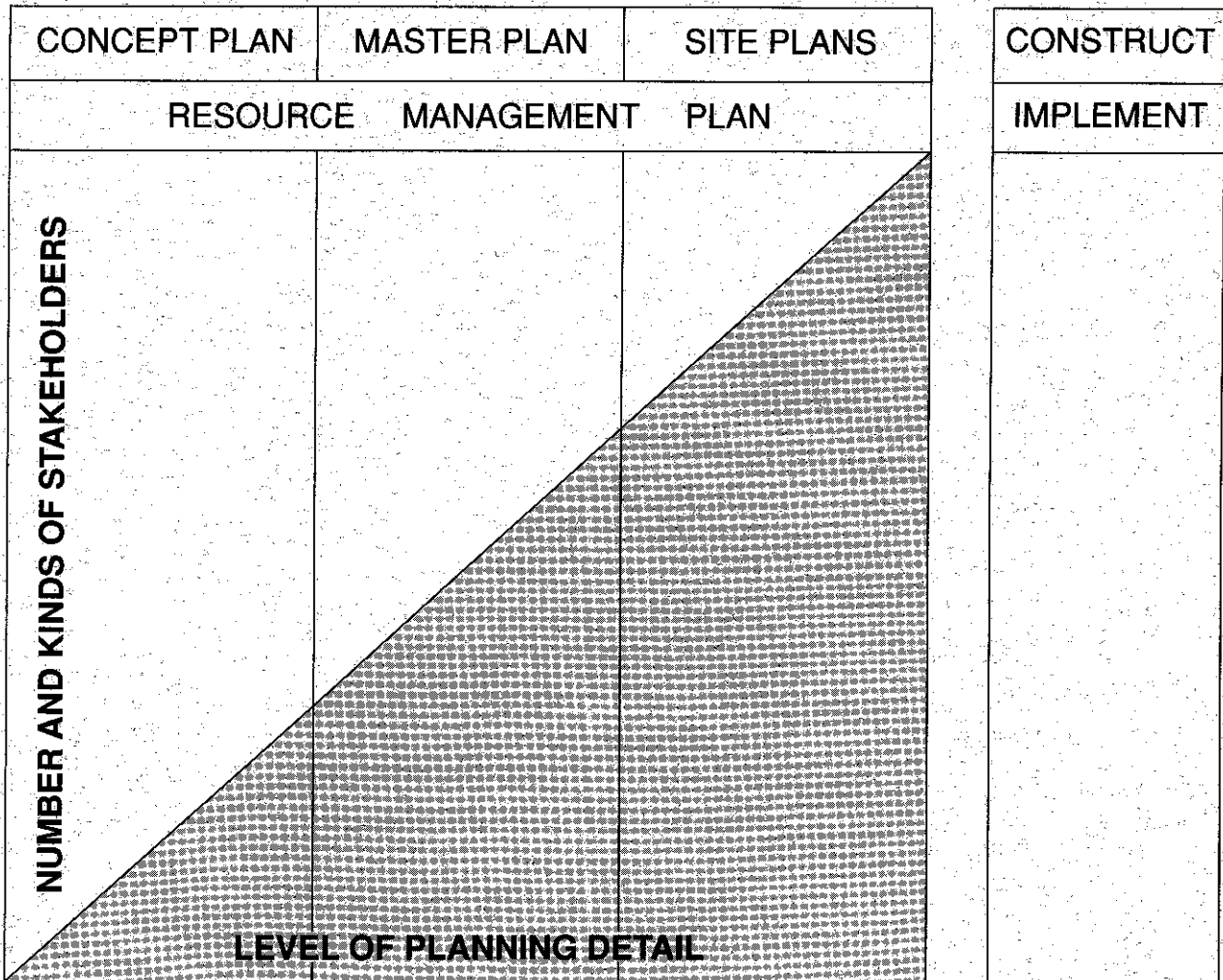


Figure 1

RELATIONSHIP OF PUBLIC INPUT TO PLANNING DETAIL



1990	1991	1992 - 93
PRODUCTS : Program Statement for Whole Valley	Refinement of Program for Specific Areas	Detailed Program for Approved Priorities
Overview of Proposed / Potential Development Opportunities	Selection of Development Alternatives	Detailed Design
Criteria for Priority Setting	Refine Priorities	
Future Planning Processes		

1993 - 99

Figure 2

RIVER VALLEY — VISION SURVEY

Edmonton's most dominant physical feature is the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System. As the City continues to grow the valley and ravines come under pressure from competing uses (i.e. preservation versus development). It is clear the valley cannot be all things to all people.

During the next year Edmonton Parks and Recreation will be working with the public to develop a plan for the River Valley. This plan will provide

long term direction for the valley's use and care. This is the first of a number of opportunities for the public to become involved in the planning process.

We have developed a "vision" for the future of the valley based on existing policy and recent surveys. We need to know if these statements reflect your vision for the future of the valley and how you feel it should be managed.

To complete this survey follow the instructions below.

VISION STATEMENT:

The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System will be a ribbon of green running through the City. The natural features, the wildlife and the cultural heritage of Edmonton will be conserved for present and future generations by management of these resources to prevent exploitation, destruction or neglect. Continuous threads of trails, paths, and parks tie Edmonton together providing opportunity for recreation in the tranquillity of nature and a change from urban living.

COMMENTS:

RATINGS				
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	2	3	4	5

The following basic principles will be used as a guide to achievement of the vision for the future of the valley:

1. CONSERVATION:

The major portion of the river valley will remain in a natural state. Certain areas of habitat will be highly protected to ensure existence of native vegetation and wild life communities and to limit the intrusion of man.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
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2. RECREATION:

Recreation activities must be compatible with conservation of existing natural areas and must require the valley's natural setting.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. DEVELOPMENT:

(a) New or expanded facilities will be those which enhance recreation opportunities and are compatible with conservation.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(b) New or expanded facilities will be located in areas which are already disturbed or where environmental impact is low.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. TRAILS:

(a) Trails will provide continuous access through the valley.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(b) Trail width, surface and location will be selected to minimize impact on the environment.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. EDUCATION:

Programs will increase awareness of natural and human history; encourage an environmentally responsible attitude toward the valley and promote respect for other valley users.

COMMENTS:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

If you wish to be notified of future participation opportunities, please provide your name, address and postal code.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- There are three ways you can respond to this survey. PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE. Telephone lines are available 24 hours a day between Aug. 26 and Sept. 16.
- If you are a "touch-tone" telephone customer, please dial the 493-9000 "Talking Yellow Pages" when requested enter code 5700.
 - If you are a rotary dial telephone customer, please call 491-6000 or 491-6020. Please refer to the questions on this page. State question number and then your answer. For example "Question number one — I strongly agree." You will have 2 minutes to leave your complete message.
 - You may complete the survey and mail/deliver it to any office or facility of Edmonton Parks and Recreation or to Box 2359, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J-2R7.

RIVER VALLEY - VISION SURVEY

Total Respondents - 1527

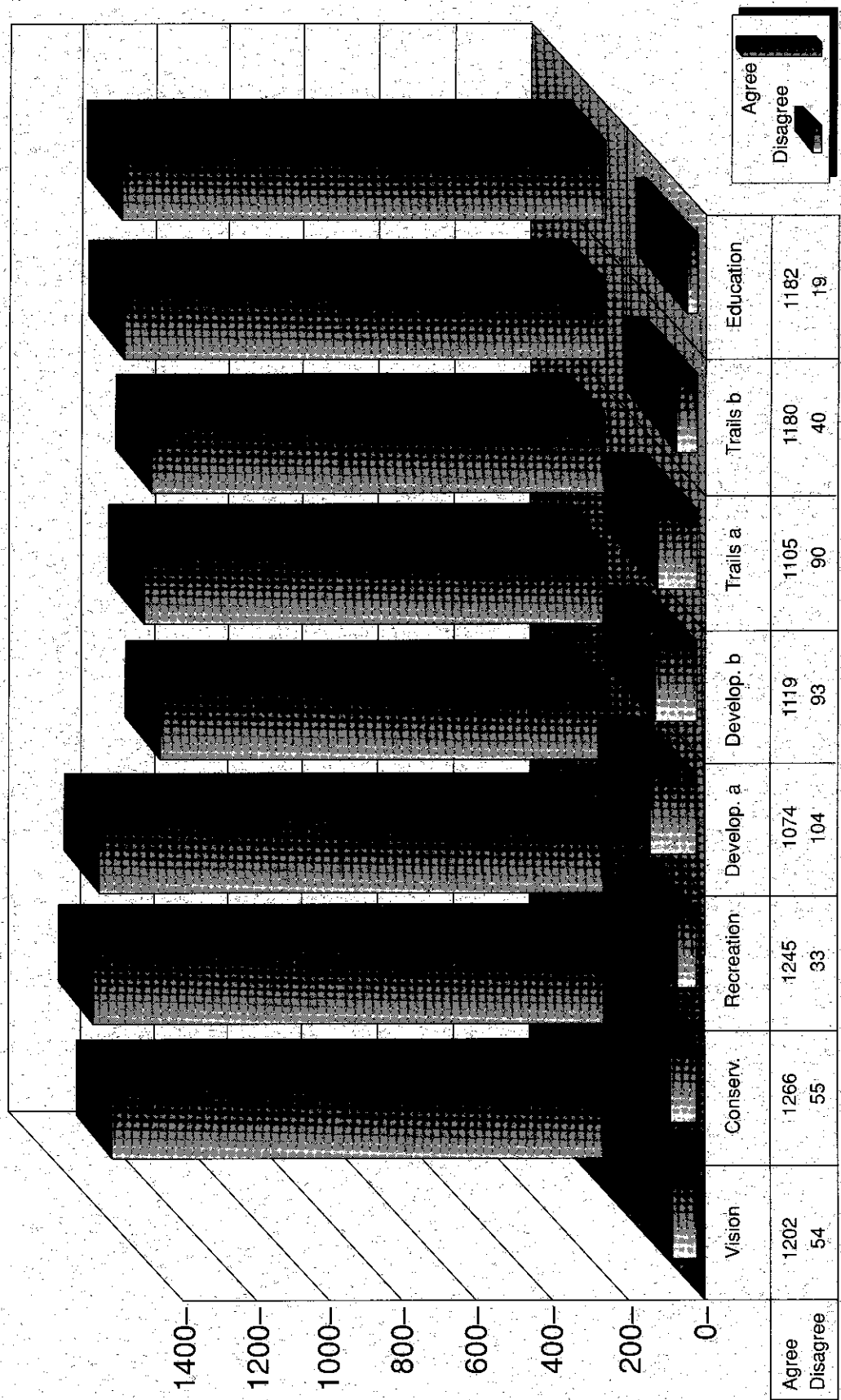


Figure 4