

84 Street (98 Avenue to 106 Avenue)

Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study for the 84 Street (98 Avenue to 106 Avenue) Rehabilitation project, as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 of the June 28, 2021, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00560, be approved.
2. That the river valley components of the 84 Street project, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the June 28, 2021, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00560, be deemed essential and approved pursuant to Section 3.5.1 of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188.

Executive Summary

This report requests City Council's approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study included in Attachments 1 and 2 for a new shared-use path connection between 101 Avenue and 105 Avenue (the Project) planned to be constructed as part of the rehabilitation of 84 Street between 98 Avenue and 106 Avenue in 2022, and that the location of the shared-use path in the River Valley be deemed essential by City Council.

The Environmental Impact Assessment for the Project concludes that any potential adverse effects related to the construction of the shared-use path can be mitigated by applying appropriate mitigation measures during construction. The project will contribute to a net gain to the City's open space tree inventory by planting additional trees as part of the project.

The Site Location Study for this Project concludes that the proposed shared-use path would address specific path connectivity needed at this location, capitalizing on the opportunity to address a need for enhanced north/south connectivity identified in the City's *Bike Plan*. If proposed at another location, the shared-use path would achieve a different purpose and could not be funded as part of the planned rehabilitation of 84 Street. The Project location in the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (NSRV ARP) is, therefore, considered essential.

Approval of this report demonstrates the City's commitment to project environmental reviews, environmental permitting, achieving an environmentally sound design, and achieving the City's environmental stewardship outcome to ensure the City of Edmonton's environmental objectives are met during the construction of this project.

Report

The 84 Street (98 Avenue to 106 Avenue) Rehabilitation project includes the addition of a shared-use path on titled land on the west side of the roadway between 98 Avenue and 105 Avenue. The project also includes rehabilitation of pavement, replacement of curbs, sidewalks and bus stops, upgrade of street lights and signals, and addition of a new pedestrian crossing signal at 103 Avenue in the road right of way. Construction of a 4 metre wide landscaped boulevard with approximately 55 new trees and new street lights will also be completed as part of the project. Construction is currently planned for summer 2022.

The west side of 84 Street (the Site), from 101 Avenue to 105 Avenue, where the shared-use path is proposed, is located on tablelands east of the North Saskatchewan River Valley. The Site is bounded to the west by the manicured lands of Forest Heights Park and east by 84 Street. The area is within the limits of the NSRV ARP (Bylaw 7188), as shown on page 26 (Figure 1) of Attachment 1 and is therefore subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that outlines current conditions in the project area, evaluates potential risks, and identifies adverse impacts, focused on construction activities, that must be eliminated, minimized or mitigated through design, landscaping and construction measures.

The construction of the shared-use path is also subject to a Site Location Study (SLS) that details the cost, social, environmental and institutional constraints which make a River Valley location essential. The location of the shared-use path is shown on page 26 of Attachment 1 and in more detail on pages 28-32.

The EIA describes the site as currently comprising manicured lands, open space trees and low quality wildlife habitat for commonly occurring urban-tolerant wildlife species. The EIA contains a summary of potential impacts (Attachment 1, Section 5) on the physical and biological environment. The potential impacts focus on shared-use path construction activities and provide mitigation measures to ensure the construction will not significantly impact the environment. The EIA also highlighted a positive aspect of the project: the planned planting of 55 new trees. These trees are anticipated to increase the City's overall tree inventory and increase urban wildlife habitat. Some of the potential impacts and mitigations include:

- Loss to Manicured Areas/Open Space Trees and Incidental Open Space Tree Damage:

- All vegetation changes, which will be restricted to loss of sod, will be confined to the lands affected by the installation of the shared-use path. Removal of existing open space trees is not anticipated. All sod areas temporarily disturbed during construction will be repaired. Some of the open space trees are located close to the site; the proximity creates the potential for tree damage. All construction activities will be expected to follow the City's Corporate Tree Management Policy and the City of Edmonton Tree Preservation Guidelines, including preparing a Tree Protection Plan and regular consultation with the City's urban foresters.
- Establishment of Invasive or Weedy Species:
 - Weed control may be required until the sod repairs are fully established, following City protocols during construction.
- Loss of Terrestrial Habitat due to Clearing Activities:
 - Loss of habitat is expected to be limited to grassed areas, with all existing trees remaining. This impact is expected to be minor and no mitigation is recommended.
- Breeding Wildlife Mortality:
 - Clearing or pruning of vegetation, if required, could cause bird mortality, particularly during spring and summer. Mitigation will include clearing that can be scheduled outside of the nesting period. If this is not possible, nest sweeps will be conducted before tree clearing/pruning work.
- Historical Resources:
 - The site is located in an area with a high potential for containing historic resources. Since the preparation of the EIA, a Historical Resources Act Approval was issued by Alberta Culture (08 April 2021). The approval indicated no further investigation is required.
- Project Incidents:
 - The potential exists for spills/release of hazardous material during construction (fuel, etc.). The contractor will be required to comply with the City of Edmonton's Enviso system during construction, including managing hazardous materials and reporting spills.

The SLS (Attachment 2) contains a summary of the location analysis and justification, as well as a review of social, financial, environmental and institutional constraints that make the proposed shared-use path location inside the NSRV ARP essential. The SLS highlights that the location is specific to this project and generally aligned with City plans and policies. Building out the shared-use path capitalizes on the opportunity to address a need for enhanced north/south connectivity identified in the City's *Bike Plan*, and is in alignment with the *City Plan, Breathe – Edmonton's Green Network Strategy*, and the NSRV ARP. Constructing a new shared-use path using funding specifically available for the 84 Street Rehabilitation project addresses social and institutional constraints without adversely impacting the environment.

Budget/Financial Implications

The rehabilitation of 84 Street, including the shared-use path, is funded through the City's Goods Movement Arterial Renewal Program (CM-22-0000) as part of the 2019-2022 Capital Budget. The overall construction cost estimate is \$1.2 million.

Legal Implications

Section 3.5.3 of the NSRV ARP requires City Council to approve the attached EIA (Attachment 1) and SLS (Attachment 2) for the planned construction of the shared-use path and deem the River Valley location essential before the development can proceed to construction.

Public Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was conducted with three stakeholders along the corridor, including École Michaëlle-Jean, McNally High School, and Edmonton's Catholic Archdiocese. Administration reached out to these stakeholders to provide an overview of the project and gathered feedback to inform the project design. These stakeholders did not flag any environmental concerns during the stakeholder meetings. They expressed support for constructing the shared-use path on the west side of 84 Street between 101 Avenue and 105 Avenue. The project team will follow up with these stakeholders to share the final design and communicate how their input contributed to the project decisions.

Communications and information sharing with residents will further raise awareness prior to construction. Details of the pre-construction communication plans will be developed closer to construction.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

| Corporate Outcome(s): The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure. | | | |
|--|--|------------------|------------------|
| Outcome(s) | Measure(s) | Result(s) | Target(s) |
| The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure. | Edmontonians' Assessment: access to infrastructure, amenities and services that improve quality of life (percent of survey respondents who agree/strongly agree) | 68% (2017) | 70% (2018) |

Risk Assessment

| Risk Element | Risk Description | Likelihood | Impact | Risk Score (with current mitigations) | Current Mitigations | Potential Future Mitigations |
|---|--|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| EIA / SLS are denied or delayed | Construction of the shared-use path would not occur | 2 - unlikely | 2 - moderate | 6 - low | EIA study has been completed, and the potential impacts are negligible. | None |
| Environmental regulatory requirements are not met | Environmental requirements are not met during construction | 2 - unlikely | 2 - moderate | 6 - low | The EIA provides recommended mitigation measures during construction. The construction contractor will be contractually obligated to meet all environmental requirements. | None |

Attachments

1. Environmental Impact Assessment
2. Site Location Study

Others Reviewing this Report

- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Planning and Economy
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- K. Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor