

Municipal Tools for Watershed Protection

The tools downstream municipalities have to influence upstream water protection and watershed management are limited, but include:

- Continued advocacy for action to protect Edmonton's source water and for integrated land and water planning and management. The approval of the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan and Management Frameworks established under that Plan are important to various municipalities' long term interests, including Edmonton's. Approval of the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan could put in place site specific water quality objectives and a water quality management framework for managing cumulative effects.
- If coal mine development projects are subject to a Federal environmental impact assessment the City of Edmonton could apply for intervenor status, which if granted, would allow Edmonton to participate in the proceedings. On June 16, 2021 the Government of Canada announced that the federal government will conduct an environmental review of any new coal project that has the potential to release selenium. This includes the metallurgical coal exploration projects underway in Alberta on Category 2 lands. The option to apply for intervenor status is not available under Provincial environmental impact assessments.
- Continued collaboration and partnerships to influence and support voluntary best management practices in the watershed. A key partnership would be collaboration with upstream municipalities who regulate land use within the watershed. One example is the recent collaboration with upstream municipalities on considering designating the North Saskatchewan River as a heritage river. Working with EPCOR, the City of Edmonton can also collaborate with other upstream users and landowners and organizations such as the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the North Saskatchewan River). Another example is the City of Edmonton's work with ALUS Canada, an organization that works with agricultural landowners to enhance land management for watershed health. ALUS Canada is developing a model that could identify locations and agricultural actions (not industrial actions, such as coal mining) that would help protect and manage parts of the watershed upstream of Edmonton.
- Dedicated staff resources and funding for upstream actions. Some cities in Canada, such as the City of Calgary, have watershed managers on staff whose job duties include working with land users outside of City boundaries on managing water, a transboundary resource. Although the City of Edmonton does not have a similar resource, EPCOR does have these resources and performs those functions. Some cities have used innovative options such as paying to protect portions of their upstream

watershed. The City of Edmonton does not have dedicated funding for upstream water protection, however EPCOR has a funded Source Water Protection Plan that includes a comprehensive monitoring program for the North Saskatchewan River.