

TREE MANAGEMENT FOR THE WILLIAM HAWRELAK PARK REHABILITATION PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION

That the May 2, 2023, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01731, be received for information.

Requested Council Action	Information only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	PRESERVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Greener as we grow	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Climate adaptation and energy transition
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw 7188 - The North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan • Bylaw 18825 - Public Tree Bylaw • City Policy C456C - Corporate Tree Management Policy • William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Project 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIS00670 Executive Committee, March 23, 2022 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the January 31, 2023, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Committee with lessons learned on changes to the scope of the environmental impact on mature trees and share the plan for tree management for the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project.

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Executive Summary

- In alignment with Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Site Location Study (SLS) were completed and approved by Council for the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation.
- Related to trees, a condition of approval of the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation EIA was that an update to the tree removal inventory be completed and a tree preservation plan and restoration plan be submitted prior to construction. The scope of work did not change. In March and April 2023 both plans were submitted by Integrated Infrastructure Services and approved by Administration through Urban Planning and Economy, meeting the intent and scope of the EIA.
- The community's tree canopy is an asset that is carefully and respectfully stewarded. Tree removals are guided by City Policy C456C - Corporate Tree Management Policy, Bylaw 18825 - Public Tree Bylaw and deemed to be a technical decision based on the requirements of the reconstruction work.
- Lessons learned related to the EIA process and tree management include:
 - Provide information on tree removals when tree preservation and restoration plans are finalized.
 - Ensure clear communication about the EIA process and key milestones with the public and stakeholders.
 - Engage arborists early.
 - Allow adequate scheduling for sequential tree preservation planning.

REPORT

The William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project will address the lifecycle replacement or rehabilitation of the utility, transportation, open spaces and facility infrastructure within the park boundary to better support the site's existing varied and intensive uses and existing park goals and objectives. To complete this project, the work will be phased as follows:

- 2023: Full park closure effective March 13, 2023. Mobilization; trenching and deep utilities; backfilling; shallow utilities. Note: River valley trails around the park perimeter remain open during construction.
- 2024: Roadways and pathways; hard landscape surfaces; trees, shrubs and grass; final grading of turf areas; start of facility work.
- 2025: Seasonal deficiencies; facility work; establishment of soft landscaping.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

In alignment with Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (River Valley ARP) an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Site Location Study (SLS) were required for the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation.

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An EIA ensures that the City's environmental stewardship outcome is met during the duration of a project. It outlines current conditions in the project area, evaluates potential risks and identifies adverse environmental impacts that must be eliminated, minimized or mitigated through design, landscaping and construction measures.

EIAs are completed early in the design process to meet the requirements of the River Valley ARP, which requires Council approval prior to committing funds for the capital expenditure of the construction work. As a result, most River Valley ARP reviews include conditions that must be met and approved by Administration as a project progresses. Some conditions relate to construction and best practices. Others include reporting requirements and further review at detailed design. When subsequent information through reporting is required as a condition, any new impacts must align with those identified in the original Council approved EIA. Where impacts are significantly different, Urban Planning and Economy as the regulatory body, in consultation with Legal Services and other City departments may determine that a project needs to return to Council for further review and discussion as an addendum or revision. Ultimately, an EIA must align with the final built conditions at Construction Completion.

Specific to tree management, City Policy C456 - Corporate Tree Management Policy, Bylaw 18825 - Public Tree Bylaw and Corporate Tree Preservation Guidelines provide the parameters for an EIA to identify impacts and mitigation measures for trees.

William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation EIA

The EIA for William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation was completed during design development and approved by City Council on April 4, 2022, IIS00670 William Hawrelak Park - Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study.

Related to trees, the EIA identified the loss of open space trees, loss of native plant communities and potential for incidental tree damage during construction. In response, the EIA proposes a number of mitigation measures to be completed during detailed design and construction to minimize negative impacts. These are further supplemented by conditions of approval by Urban Planning and Economy Department. The project's scope of work did not change following the submission and approval of the EIA, but approval to proceed with the project is conditional on meeting these requirements.

Key mitigation measures and conditions of the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation EIA approval included:

- Complete updated Tree Removal Inventory at end of Design.
- Complete Tree Preservation Plan, along with restoration and landscaping plan, to be reviewed and approved by Urban Planning and Economy Department. A Tree Preservation Plan includes critical details about site conditions, work activities and recommendations and actions that will take place on site prior to and during post work activities to preserve City trees. This Plan must be written or reviewed and signed by a person with an approved professional designation including, but not limited to, ISA Certified Arborist, Consulting Arborist, Landscape Architect or a professional designation in a related field in Forestry, Horticulture or Agriculture.

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Currently, a tree preservation plan to support the first scope of work to be undertaken, utility works, was submitted by Integrated Infrastructure Services mid March 2023 for review by Urban Planning and Economy Department. Within the tree preservation plan, there is an updated tree inventory, including removals, and a tree protection action detailed for every impacted tree. The Tree Preservation Plan for the remaining scopes and a Restoration Plan for the project were subsequently submitted at the end of March 2023. Review of these submissions by Administration through Urban Planning and Economy Department is underway to confirm alignment with the original scope and intent of the EIA and anticipated to be complete in May 2023. The updated plans are provided in Attachments 1 to 2 and will be made available on the City website.

Continuous Improvement and Lessons Learned

To optimize long-term planning and decision making for the River Valley, the City is currently undertaking the River Valley Planning Modernization (RVPM) project which includes expanding the Ribbon of Green strategic plan to cover all areas of the river valley, and a review of the River Valley ARP, including the EIA process. The RVPM project will develop a comprehensive regulatory framework for the River Valley that aligns with the City's strategic direction, reflects Edmonton's current planning and development context, and strengthens the City's climate resilience and to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. The RVPM project will also include additional public and Indigenous consultation, planned for the summer of 2023.

Documenting and applying lessons learned is embedded within the City's project management requirements. This exercise is completed at key project milestones as part of the City's commitment to project management excellence and is an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve.

For the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Project, some key learnings about the EIA and tree management include:

- Provide information on tree removals once the preservation and restoration plans are finalized.
- Project communications to stakeholders and the public should include information about the EIA process, its intent and objectives, key findings, approval milestones and the level of detail to be expected. This will include sharing updated information and pertinent subsequent reports such as the tree preservation plans when available.
- For phased projects, early engagement of an external arborist was found to be beneficial. It provided for the development of a tree preservation plan for the overall project first, followed by a detailed preservation plan for each phase of the work. For the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project, some of this work happened concurrently to meet the construction timeline. Allowing for these plans to be developed sequentially will provide greater clarity of anticipated impacts and the mitigation strategies implemented.

Lessons learned are captured for every major infrastructure project and shared with appropriate staff for application in existing and future projects. In the case of the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project, the key learnings outlined above will be incorporated into the overall lessons learned documentation and shared with staff in project management, communications

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and engagement, and planning and environment, and will be valuable when planning future projects that fall within the River Valley ARP.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

The William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project considered which project aspects and decisions residents and stakeholders could meaningfully contribute to. Extensive engagement was conducted with the general public, as well as targeted festival and event organizers, beginning in 2018, which included gathering feedback on:

- improvements to the existing services and programs
- accessibility, safety and security
- access and circulation
- schematic design options
- impacts of park closure

The public input gathered was considered alongside condition assessments, City Policies, operational requirements and technical standards (such as building codes and regulations). Together, these informed the development of the plan and identified project priorities. The 'What We Heard' reports (2018 and 2021) are available on the City's website.

The community's tree canopy is an asset that is carefully and respectfully stewarded and that contributes to making Edmonton a more climate resilient city. Tree removals are guided by the City Policy C456C and Bylaw 18825 and deemed a technical decision based on the requirements of the reconstruction work. The City engages in decisions where there is a meaningful way for the public to influence the outcome; tree removal was not one of those decisions.

GBA+

GBA+ analysis is an ongoing aspect of the project that influences the planning and design. In summary, the William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project has included a four lens approach: consideration of cultural celebrations, world class recreation, honours history and ecological enrichment. All four lenses contribute to working towards equity by:

- removing barriers and inspiring more opportunities
- integrating a diversity of uses and accommodating a diverse demographic
- ensuring opportunities are available to everyone

The rehabilitation project identified two key areas to remove barriers and address equity:

- **Accessibility for People with Disabilities:** The project targeted improving accessibility, examples include a connected and accessible pathway system throughout the park, gender-neutral washrooms to accommodate care providers and family supports. Changes to the Amphitheatre include pathways resloped, additional accessible seating, an auditory listening loop installation and improved lighting. The park completed an accessibility audit and has been designed to meet the City of Edmonton Access Design Guide, which included engaging an Accessibility Consultant.
- **Safety:** The Project improves safety, including separating vehicles and active mobility traffic around the park's perimeter and improving lighting throughout the park. Crime Prevention

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through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles were applied to the park renewal design to enhance safety measures.

In addition to mitigating extreme heat, trees also help provide cleaner air, capture carbon dioxide, contribute to greater wildlife biodiversity and mitigate flood risk, all of which help to build resilience to climate change impacts. Marginalized communities are less likely to have trees in their neighborhoods, thus designating tree canopy cover as an equity concern.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Tree Preservation Plan
2. Restoration Plan