

TERWILLEGAR DRIVE STAGE 2 EXPANSION

Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study Amendment

RECOMMENDATION

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the amendment to the Terwillegar Drive Stage 2 Expansion Environmental Impact Assessment, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the June 23, 2023, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01838, be approved.
2. That the Site Location Study for the Rainbow Valley Road Parking Lot expansion, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the June 23, 2023, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01838, be approved.
3. That the location of the proposed Rainbow Valley Road Parking Lot expansion, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the June 23, 2023, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01838, be deemed essential and approved pursuant to Section 3.5.3 of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188.

Requested Council Action		Decision required	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		N/A	
City Plan Values	N/A		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	N/A	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Conditions for service success
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the corporation (Environmental Stewardship)		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188 		

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Related Council Discussions

- IIS00839, Terwillegar Drive Stage 2 Expansion - Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study, City Council, March 14, 2022

Executive Summary

- This report requests City Council's approval of an amendment to the Terwillegar Drive Stage Two Expansion Environmental Impact Assessment to account for the expansion of the Rainbow Valley Road parking lot within the River Valley (Attachment 1). Subsequent to the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment at the March 14, 2022, City Council meeting, the expansion of the existing parking lot was added to the scope of the project to address construction disruptions and stakeholder needs, requiring an amendment of the previously approved assessment.
- This report also requests City Council's approval of the Site Location Study for the parking lot expansion (Attachment 2) and that the planned location of the expanded parking lot in the River Valley be deemed essential by City Council.
- The expansion of the Rainbow Valley Road Parking Lot will provide temporary overflow parking for Snow Valley Ski Club during Stage Two construction and will serve as a permanent facility for River Valley patrons.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment amendment describes the project's potential environmental impacts on surface water, fish habitat, soils, vegetation and wildlife. Given that the parking lot expansion area comprises maintained grasses with limited environmental sensitivities, the negative impacts are anticipated to be minimal given the implementation of mitigation measures through design and construction, as well as restoration of the area around the parking lot following construction.
- The Site Location Study concludes the parking lot is dependent on its location within the River Valley and if located elsewhere would not serve its intended purpose. Financial, social, environmental and institutional factors limit the feasibility of the location of the expansion project outside of the River Valley. Therefore, the location in the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188, boundary is considered essential.
- Approval of this report demonstrates the City's commitment to environmental reviews, environmental permitting, environmentally sound design, and ensuring the City's environmental stewardship objectives are met during the construction of this project.

REPORT

Construction of the Terwillegar Drive Stage Two Expansion commenced in April 2023. As described in the March 9, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00839, Terwillegar Drive Stage 2 Expansion - Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study, many components of Stage Two fall within the boundaries of Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan and, require an Environmental Impact Assessment pursuant to

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that Bylaw. At the March 14, 2022, City Council meeting, City Council approved the Environment Impact Assessment for the upgrades within the River Valley.

Subsequent to the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment, the expansion of the existing Rainbow Valley Road parking lot within the River Valley was added to the scope of the project. The expansion of the parking lot was recommended to provide temporary overflow parking, at the request of Snow Valley Ski Club, while the designated overflow parking lot, located north of the Rainbow Valley Bridges, is closed to facilitate bridge renewal. As the parking lot expansion must be constructed to the same standards as a permanent facility, the expansion will remain in place following Stage Two construction to serve the parking high demand from Whitemud Park patrons.

The parking lot expansion area is located along the south side of Rainbow Valley Road, southeast of the Rainbow Valley bridges, within the River Valley. As a result, an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this upgrade. The location of the parking lot expansion falls within the area examined as part of the previous assessment but did not consider the parking lot design. Therefore, an amendment outlining additional environmental impacts and mitigation measures is required.

The existing gravel Rainbow Valley Road parking lot is approximately 51 metres (east/west) by 22 metres (north/south) in size and comprises about 28 parking stalls, including four barrier-free spots. The expansion will be located south of the existing parking lot and will result in a total of 64 stalls, including four barrier-free stalls (a net increase of 36 stalls). The surface will be gravel, however, a concrete pad will be constructed for the barrier-free stalls.

This report also seeks City Council's approval of the Site Location Study included in Attachment 2 for the parking lot expansion and that the planned location of the expanded parking lot in the River Valley be deemed essential by City Council.

The amendment to the Environmental Impact Assessment in Attachment 1 outlines baseline environmental conditions in the parking lot expansion area and identifies adverse environmental impacts and how they can be eliminated, minimized, or mitigated through design or construction measures.

The Environmental Impact Assessment describes the land in the parking lot expansion area which consists of maintained grasses, as well as adjacent treed areas east of the site. The area is located away from a waterbody, but the topography directs surface water towards the Whitemud Creek which supports fish habitat. Key environmental features include the presence of native topsoil and subsoil and habitat with the potential to support wildlife features such as bird nests. There is also the potential to encounter contamination from existing uses.

The potential impacts and mitigation measures identified in the March 9, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00839, remain applicable to the parking lot expansion. Some of the additional impacts and mitigations identified in the amendment report, related to the permanent parking lot expansion, include:

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Surface water and fish habitat:

- Potential impacts include changes to local drainage patterns due to the increase in the size of the parking lot.
- Mitigation measures include managing additional stormwater runoff by incorporating permanent measures such as grading, erosion and sediment control, and if possible Low Impact Development (LID) drainage, as well as including temporary erosion and sediment control measures as part of the project Environmental Construction Operation (ECO) plan. Construction work must also follow all applicable regulatory requirements and the City of Edmonton contractors' environmental responsibilities. Impacts and mitigation measures for sedimentation or contamination of Whitemud Creek from construction activities are addressed in the March 9, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00839.

Soils and salt contaminated soils

- Potential impacts include loss and contamination of soil from construction, exposure of contaminated soils located within the existing parking lot area, as well as the transfer of salt contaminated soils.
- Mitigations include adhering to the measures outlined in the assessment during construction, such as minimizing the extent and duration of soil exposure and managing soils with indications of potential contamination, including mitigation measures such as erosion and sediment control as part of the project ECO Plan, as well as following all measures in the project's Contaminated Soils Management Strategy. Construction work must also follow all applicable regulatory requirements and City of Edmonton contractors' environmental responsibilities and conditions in the City's environmental review.

Vegetation

- Potential impacts include loss of maintained grasses, potential damage to trees, shrubs and maintained grasses, as well as introduction and/or spread of weed species. No tree removals are anticipated to facilitate this parking lot expansion.
- Mitigations include developing a restoration plan that includes native species, requiring the contractor to include this area in the project's Tree Preservation Plan including obtaining a Public Tree Permit, coordinating with City groups regarding landscaped vegetation removal and restoration, as well as following the protocols outlined in the assessment as part of the construction such as the cleaning requirement. Construction work must also follow all applicable regulatory requirements, the City of Edmonton contractors' environmental responsibilities and conditions in the City's environmental review.

Wildlife

- Potential impacts include disturbance of active bird nests due to construction activities and sensory disturbance to wildlife from construction noise and lighting.
- Mitigations include designing temporary lighting to minimize light spills, following the measures outlined in the assessment during construction such as limiting construction activities to the daytime and directing lighting to the project area, as well as following recommendations in the project's Tree Preservation Plan to avoid incidental damage to

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trees. Construction work must also follow all applicable regulatory requirements and City of Edmonton contractors' environmental responsibilities. The parking lot expansion will maintain similar overall conditions as exist today and are not anticipated to significantly impact wildlife habitat and connectivity.

The Site Location Study in Attachment 2 contains a summary of the location analysis and justification, as well as a review of financial, social, environmental and institutional constraints that make the parking lot expansion area inside the River Valley essential. The Site Location Study highlights that the parking lot is dependent on its current location in the River Valley as it is intended to serve patrons of Snow Valley and Whitemud Park. Locations outside of the River Valley were not considered as they would not reasonably function and serve their intended purpose. Alternative configurations for expanding the parking lot at its current location were considered. Expanding the parking lot to the south was recommended to avoid an existing tree stand to the east of the facility.

The expansion of the Rainbow Valley Road parking lot will allow for improved access for recreational and active transportation uses in the River Valley while minimizing adverse environmental and user impacts, in alignment with the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy, Ribbon of Green, The City Plan, and other plans and policies.

Considering financial, social, environmental and institutional constraints, the Site Location Study highlights that a River Valley location is essential because:

- Constructing a new parking lot outside of the River Valley would cost significantly more;
- Social and institutional benefits of the parking lot are tied to its location in the River Valley. It is intended to serve patrons of Snow Valley and Whitemud Park, supporting local businesses and enhancing access to recreational, ecological and cultural uses; and
- Expanding the current parking lot avoids disturbing another area. While some environmental impacts are anticipated, they are anticipated to be minimal with the application of the measures outlined in the amending environmental assessment.

Budget/Financial Implications

The parking lot expansion is funded along with Stage Two of the Terwillegar Drive Expansion through Capital Profile 19-22-9006 - Terwillegar Drive Expressway Upgrades - Alternate Staging, currently part of the 2023-2026 Capital Budget.

Legal Implications

Section 3.5.3 of Bylaw 7188 requires City Council to approve the amendment to the Terwillegar Drive Stage Two Expansion Environmental Impact Assessment (Attachment 1) before the expansion of the Rainbow Valley Road parking lot can proceed to construction.

In addition, Section 3.5.3 of Bylaw 7188 requires City Council to approve the attached Site Location Study (Attachment 2) for the parking lot expansion and that the location of the expansion be deemed essential by City Council.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

As noted in the March 9, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS00839, the planning and design of Stage Two of the Terwillegar Drive expansion was informed by public and stakeholder input gathered at the “advise” level of engagement through several engagement opportunities. Input was considered alongside City plan and policies, technical requirements and funding availability, providing the project team with local and contextual knowledge that was considered when completing the detailed design.

Following the above noted engagement, communications and information sharing were conducted with members of the public, area residents and stakeholders. This included additional focused stakeholder meetings and a pre-construction information drop-in event that was held in April 2023 to share the final designs for Stage Two, including the parking lot expansion area, and to outline what Edmontonion can expect during construction.

Through the engagement, Snow Valley Ski Club shared concerns about a lack of parking as a result of the required closure of their currently designated overflow parking lot, specifically citing concerns about impacts to their operations and business. Through discussions with this directly-impacted stakeholder, the project team committed to looking at options to expand the existing Rainbow Valley Road parking lot. The project team also committed to reviewing other concerns related to noise, visual impacts and site access. Members of the public in attendance at the event did not share any significant concerns about the parking lot expansion from an environmental perspective.

Information about the parking lot expansion scope and findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study was also shared via email in April 2023 with environmental groups, including Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition, North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society, River Valley Alliance and Sierra Club. The groups were offered the opportunity for a meeting to learn more about the environmental considerations and share additional feedback. A response was received from the River Valley Alliance and they did not express any concerns. At the time of writing this report, an acknowledgement was received from the North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society noting that they were reviewing the information shared with them. The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition responded with a number of questions and concerns, which are addressed in this report. No response was received from Sierra Club at the time of writing this report.

Administration is committed to ensuring communications and information sharing continue with members of the public, area residents and stakeholders during construction. A project webpage has been set up with contact information and regular construction-related communications are planned.

GBA+

The planning process for the Terwillegar Drive Stage 2 Expansion identified a diverse range of stakeholders, including area residents, roadway users and community organizations potentially impacted by the project. This work included providing a range of communication tactics and

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public engagement strategies to mitigate or remove barriers to equity and to support equality of outcomes during the engagement process. Opportunities included an online event, one-on-one stakeholder meetings, direct contact with the project team and a drop-in pre-construction event. This allowed the project team to gather feedback from different perspectives to identify additional design considerations to mitigate or remove barriers to equity and support equality of outcomes such as connection points for active transportation.

The parking lot expansion will include four barrier-free parking stalls with a concrete surface to ensure access for users with mobility challenges.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Environmental Impact Assessment Amendment - Rainbow Valley Road Parking Lot - Revision 001
2. Site Location Study - Terwillegar Drive Stage 2 Rainbow Valley Road Parking Lot Expansion - Bylaw 7188/18889 Amendment