

River Valley Alliance

Capital Program 2017 – 2022

Recommendation:

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the preliminary list of Edmonton-based projects identified in the River Valley Alliance Draft Capital Program 2017-2022, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the August 17, 2016, Sustainable Development report CR_3778, be approved, subject to a report on finalization of cost agreements, proof of concept studies and setting of project priorities.
2. That the City Manager reply to the three questions asked by the River Valley Alliance (with responses as outlined in this report) and indicate that City Administration will continue to work with the River Valley Alliance to determine a cost-shared formula for the projects and to refine the project list, costs and schedules.

Report Summary

This report provides information on the River Valley Alliance Draft Capital Program 2017 - 2022. The River Valley Alliance Board of Directors has requested that the City of Edmonton approve Edmonton's portion of the Program in order to advance discussions for additional funding support.

Report

The City of Edmonton and the River Valley Alliance (a not-for-profit entity comprised of seven municipalities) have worked in close partnership since 1996 to support common goals in promoting the preservation, use, and carefully considered development of the North Saskatchewan River Valley from Devon, through Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan. The current River Valley Alliance priority has been to advance connectivity and accessibility within, and to, the river valley. Most recently the River Valley Alliance and the City worked together to implement the River Valley Alliance Capital Plan 2012 - 2016, which resulted in \$72.9 million of capital construction being advanced, with funding split evenly between municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Elements include:

- Terwillegar Park pedestrian bridge
- west end trails
- boat docks and launches
- east end trails
- mechanized river valley access and the Touch the Water promenade.

These projects are currently at varying stages of development with a completion target of end of 2017.

In February 2016, the River Valley Alliance submitted to its members a Draft Capital Program 2017-2022, which contained an overview of proposed projects across all municipalities. This program would build on the existing trails system in each municipality and complete a continuous trail from Devon, through Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan by adding additional trails, bridges, docks, and launches (see Attachment 1 - Draft River Valley Alliance Projects List 2017-2022). These projects would complete a trail through the region and also complete the main trail. The proposed projects align with the River Valley Alliance priority of improving access and connectivity. The southwestern most portion of the proposed trail would complete Edmonton's portion of the Trans Canada Trail connection.

The projects as listed by the River Valley Alliance have been identified in either the Ribbon of Green Concept Plan or the River Valley Alliance Plan of Action, both of which have been approved by City Council and been reviewed publicly. The status of the projects is considered to be at a strategic planning level and therefore Administration requires further review to confirm the proposals before proceeding with concept design.

In the River Valley Alliance proposal, the total projected cost to complete the proposed River Valley Alliance trail system from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan is estimated at \$200 million, of which close to \$100 million of the proposed capital spending would occur within Edmonton's municipal boundaries (see Attachment 2 - River Valley north east and River Valley south west). These costs and projected time lines have been prepared by the River Valley Alliance and require further refinement by Administration. If the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 is supported by City Council, Administration will work with the River Valley Alliance on a proposed cost-sharing agreement for the portion of the program within Edmonton's municipal boundaries. The River Valley Alliance plans to seek funding support for this next phase of development and views City Council support of the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 as a vital component of the proposals it will present to potential funders, which may include the Provincial and Federal governments, corporate entities, and the public.

The River Valley Alliance requested feedback on the Capital Program and specifically asked each municipality to respond to three questions. Administration has reviewed the proposed program, evaluated it to ensure strategic alignment with broader City priorities and planning goals related to river valley development, and offers the following discussion and recommendations:

Question One: Does the municipality support these projects?

The Edmonton-based projects identified in the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 align with the River Valley Alliance's Plan of action for the Capital Region River Valley Park (2007) adopted by Edmonton City Council in 2007, and are consistent with current City of Edmonton planning and policy documents. The projects represent a broad-based vision for completing a river valley trail system from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan.

Administration supports this proposal at a strategic level, as it allows the River Valley Alliance to advance funding discussions with potential partners. Administration believes that additional study is required before it can finalize a recommendation of appropriate staging of the Edmonton-based projects in the River Valley Alliance Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 (as identified in Attachment 2) and associated costing. Private property acquisition requirements, technical feasibility and a comprehensive understanding of the commitments made by neighbouring municipalities with projects that would link to the proposed City of Edmonton infrastructure must be considered in order to establish a sound rationale for the staging of capital investment.

The River Valley Alliance has indicated that this list is a preliminary plan for the next phase of development and that the City will retain the ability to decide which, if any, of these projects proceed, subject to finalization of cost, schedule, cost sharing agreements, proof of concept studies, and setting of priorities. In addition, Administration will need to examine the current and future proposed development in the river valley to determine if alternate projects may be of higher strategic priority, and propose these for consideration.

Next Step:

If City Council supports the Draft Capital Program 2017 - 2022, Administration will continue to work with the River Valley Alliance to confirm alignments, land acquisitions, cost sharing agreements, phasing of construction and determination of alternate priorities (if required). At this time City Council would only be providing its tentative support for these projects with formal approval being subject to further work with the River Valley Alliance to identify a mutually agreed upon final list of projects based on better understanding of City and partner municipality priorities, project costs, schedule and logical project phasing.

Note that the River Valley Alliance has informed Administration that its current funding agreement with the Government of Alberta has been modified to allow feasibility, proof of concept studies and land acquisition. The River Valley Alliance is proposing that the funds be used to advance trail and bridge studies and that this would form part of their cost-sharing contribution. Administration has advised the River Valley Alliance that it would be proceeding at its own risk if it chose to contribute funds for planning studies in advance of any City Council approved cost-sharing agreement. These feasibility and proof of concept studies would be managed by City of Edmonton Administration and would begin in September of 2016. These studies include north east trail component #13a The Last Mile, and south west trail component #8 Ellerslie Road to Henday (see Attachment 2).

Question Two: Will the municipality continue to support these future projects on a cost-shared basis?

Partnering to fund construction of the river valley parks has been the preferred means to advance the addition of trails and amenities in the river valley. This began with the inception of the Capital City Recreation Park in the 1970s and has continued to the current projects which are cost shared between the River Valley Alliance (partnered with

the Provincial Government), the Federal Government, and the City of Edmonton (in a one third, one third, one third funding arrangement).

Administration will continue to work with the River Valley Alliance on a proposed cost-sharing agreement for the portion of the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 within Edmonton's municipal boundaries, which is currently estimated to have a total cost of approximately \$100 million. Administration will also work with the River Valley Alliance on determining an appropriate staging plan for the Edmonton-based projects in the draft program. The proposed cost-sharing agreement, revised project costs and schedules and the recommended staging plan will be returned to City Council for approval.

Next Step:

Administration will continue to work with the River Valley Alliance to develop a proposed cost-sharing formula for the portion of the Draft Capital Program 2017 - 2022 within Edmonton's municipal boundaries, which will be brought back to City Council for approval.

Question Three: Will the municipality continue to manage and maintain these future river valley projects?

The City develops, manages and maintains all public infrastructure constructed within its corporate limits (unless directed by City Council to enter into a maintenance agreement with a third party). Administration would retain all future maintenance responsibilities for the projects in the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 within Edmonton's municipal boundaries that are ultimately approved by City Council. The cost to manage and maintain new infrastructure will be considered over the term of the capital plan and operating impacts will be brought forward for City Council approval as a part of the supplementary operating budget adjustments.

Next Step:

Administration will confirm with the River Valley Alliance that the City will continue its role in planning, operating, designing, building, operating and maintaining any future river valley capital projects within Edmonton's municipal boundaries as described in the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022.

Conclusion

The River Valley Alliance Board of Directors has requested that the City of Edmonton approve Edmonton's portion of the River Valley Alliance Draft Capital Program 2017 - 2022 (comprised of trails, bridges, docks and launches). The River Valley Alliance views this approval as a vital component to advancing discussions for additional funding support.

At this time, Administration recommends the City provide its conditional support for these projects and that formal approval be subject to further work with the River Valley Alliance to identify a mutually agreed upon final list of projects based on better understanding of City and partner municipality priorities, project costs, schedule and logical project phasing.

Administration will continue to work with the River Valley Alliance to complete the technical studies required to determine a priority list of Edmonton-based projects and return to City Council with a finalized list for approval. Administration will also return to City Council with an equitable cost-sharing proposal based on future discussions with the River Valley Alliance, pending the outcome of the Alliance’s funding investigations. Alternate projects may be proposed if the projects listed are not attainable or if City Administration determines alternate or additional priority projects should be considered.

Policy

The Edmonton-based River Valley Alliance projects in the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 are supported by many current planning and policy documents including:

- *The Way Ahead*, Municipal Development Plan
- *North Saskatchewan River Valley Bylaw Area Redevelopment Plan* - Bylaw 7188
- North Saskatchewan and Ravine System Protection Overlay - Section 811 of the Zoning Bylaw 12800
- Floodplain Protection Overlay, Section 812 of Zoning Bylaw 12800
- *Urban Parks Management Plan*
- *Urban Forest Management Plan*
- Parkland Bylaw 2202
- *Natural Connections Strategic Plan*

Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the corporate outcome “Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living” as it proposes to explore options for expanding the City’s river valley amenities.

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
Funding	Uncertainty regarding future funding for projects or inability to arrive at an equitable cost-sharing proposal with the River Valley Alliance.	3-Possible (Can we adjust this so that words are not split?)	4-Severe	12-Medium	Administration has discussed uncertainty regarding funding with the River Valley Alliance.	Continue discussions with the River Valley Alliance to ensure collaborative solutions. All proposals will be returned to City Council for approval.

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Project Management	Potential lack of accuracy with cost estimates in the River Valley Alliance document.	4-Likely	3-Major	12-Medium	Projected costs are consistent with recent projects of a similar nature.	Continued work with the River Valley Alliance to refine estimates and ensure feasibility of projects that will be returned to Council.
Project Management	No planning work has been done to verify scope of work, which results in uncertainty regarding the City's ability to implement projects within the prescribed timeframe.	2-Unlikely	2-Moderate	4-Low	Administration has assessed the proposed River Valley Alliance projects to ensure strategic alignment with other City initiatives and to avoid potential conflicts that may hinder implementation.	Continued work with the River Valley Alliance to complete "Proof of Concept" studies and to ensure a sound planning rationale for proposals returned to Council.
Public Perception	City may be perceived as unresponsive to the River Valley Alliance or other member municipalities if it does not support the River Valley Alliance's capital program.	1-Rare	2-Moderate	2-Low	Administration has worked with the River Valley Alliance and representatives from its member municipalities to understand regional priorities and remain responsive to overarching goals.	Maintain collaboration with the River Valley Alliance and its members to ensure a collaborative, holistic approach to priority setting.

Budget/Financial Implications

Capital projects are considered for funding as part of the City of Edmonton's four year capital budget. Once the proposed project list and cost-sharing funding formula are finalized and approved by City Council, a Capital Budget Submission, along with operating impacts of capital, will be created and submitted either as part of the 2019 - 2022 capital budget or through the supplementary capital budget adjustment process.

Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City park usage (tracked and reported via Citizen Dashboard)
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2018 target: 83% of respondents to the Edmontonians' Perception Survey report using a City park in the past 12 months 88% of respondents have used a park in the past 12 months according to the 2015 survey
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, green spaces, natural areas, river valley are available, accessible and used

Justification of Recommendation:

1. Approving the preliminary list (subject to conditions outlined in the report) of Edmonton-based projects in the Draft Capital Program 2017-2022 allows the River Valley Alliance to advance discussions with partners to obtain project funding and allows the City of Edmonton to further refine the priority, project costs and schedules, as well as potential phasing of these projects.
2. The responses provided in this report in response to the specific questions posed by the River Valley Alliance will allow Administration to continue working with the Alliance to determine an equitable cost-sharing proposal and long-term maintenance strategy for the next phase of projects.

Attachments

1. Draft River Valley Alliance Projects List 2017-2022
2. Map - Edmonton, River Valley north east and River Valley south west
3. Comprehensive List of River Valley Alliance Projects 2017-2022

Others Reviewing this Report

- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- G. Cebryk, Acting Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- C. Campbell, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Public Engagement