

# RIVER VALLEY PLANNING MODERNIZATION

## Ribbon of Green & River Valley ARP

What We Did Summary Report

November 2024

Edmonton

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of this Summary

This What We Did Summary Report was created to show the public what was decided as a result of the River Valley Planning Modernization Phase 4 public engagement process in 2024, to ensure that those who participated in the process know what decisions were made and how their input shaped decisions.

## Background

The River Valley Planning Modernization (RVPM) project provides direction for the protection, management, programming, and development of publicly owned land within Edmonton’s North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System (the River Valley) through the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (River Valley ARP) and the Ribbon of Green.

The River Valley ARP is the City’s main tool for regulating development within the River Valley. The River Valley ARP is focused on providing high level land use policy, in particular for development and development proposals.

The Ribbon of Green provides strategic direction to guide the protection and responsible use of the River Valley. It ensures the environmental protection of the River Valley while providing diverse recreational and cultural experiences to Edmontonians and visitors.

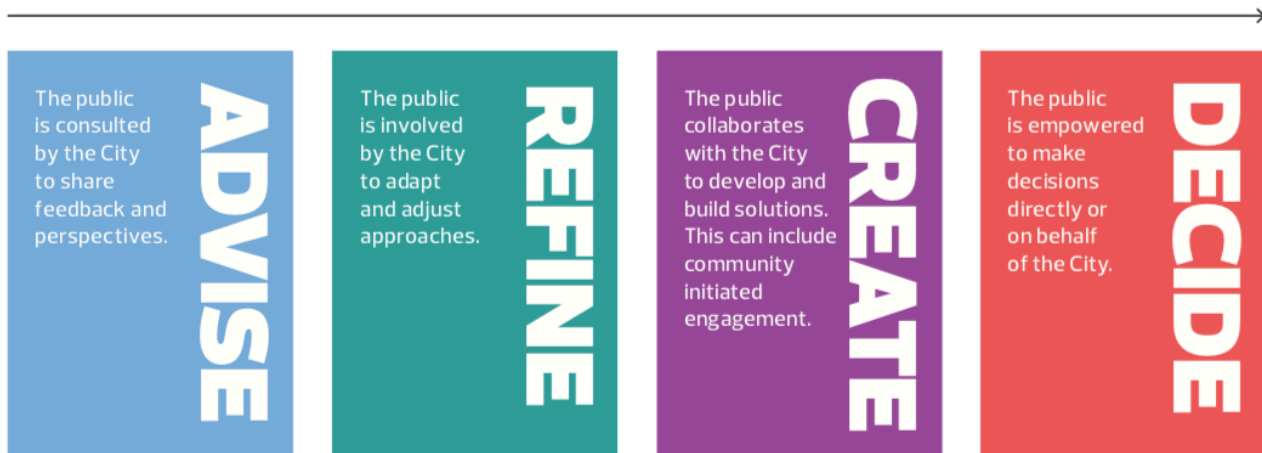


## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Public engagement for the RVPM project was completed over four phases, beginning with Phase 1 in spring 2021 and continuing to the completion of Phase 4 in summer 2024. More information on the engagement opportunities can be found [on the project website](#).

All public engagement opportunities were at the **ADVISE** position on the City of Edmonton Public Engagement Spectrum, while some engagement with stakeholder groups was at the **REFINE** level. Information gathered from engagement is one of several inputs to decision-making for the project, alongside policy direction and technical assessments.

### Increasing influence of the public



## ENGAGEMENT PHASES

### Phase 1 Engagement

In Phase 1 engagement, we invited input to help us refine the Ribbon of Green vision and guiding principles, and the Land Management Classification definitions and associated uses. We also asked about challenges and opportunities to help inform draft planning guidance for different areas in the River Valley, and invited early input to inform changes to the existing Area Redevelopment Plan.

[Phase 1 What We Heard Report](#)

### Phase 2 Engagement

In Phase 2 engagement, we invited input to help us confirm preliminary visions and direction for each of the 12 reaches within the River Valley and how the Land Management Classifications are applied. We also invited feedback on how decisions are made regarding project proposals in the River Valley.

[Phase 2 What We Heard Report](#)

### Phase 3 Engagement

In Phase 3 engagement, we invited input to help us finalize our vision and guiding principles for the River Valley, and the refined Land Management Classifications, which provide direction for appropriate uses in different parts of the River Valley. We also invited feedback on draft planning guidance for the study area, including opportunities for ecological protection and restoration, access, gathering and enjoyment in the River Valley. Finally, we shared refined draft direction for River Valley decision-making and public involvement in those decisions.

[Phase 3 What We Heard Report](#)

### Phase 4 Engagement

Phase 4 engagement invited input to help finalize the Ribbon of Green system-wide policies, Land Management Classifications, and Program and Ecological Guidance. We also invited feedback to help refine the draft River Valley ARP land use concept, land use policies, and decision-making process for future River Valley development proposals. For a detailed summary of how we engaged, what we asked and what we heard, see the [Phase 4 What We Heard Report](#).

### Indigenous Engagement

Public and Indigenous engagement were delivered in parallel, connected streams, and there were opportunities for input in each phase of the project. The City invited 32 regional Indigenous Nations and Communities with historical, cultural and environmental interests to engage in each phase of this project, in addition to inviting Indigenous peoples living within Edmonton to participate through stakeholder and public engagement activities.

## WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE RESPONDED

While each engagement phase provided unique insights and perspectives, there were several themes that we heard throughout engagement for each of the two plans. This section summarizes key themes for both the Ribbon of Green and the River Valley ARP, and how that input has been addressed in the plans. Where input will be addressed through next steps in our work, including where relevant actions have been included in the [draft RVPM Action Plan](#), we have included some notes in the “Next Steps / Action Plan” column.

## Ribbon of Green

### Heritage, Reconciliation and Indigenous Collaboration

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
Ensure the protection of heritage sites and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A Cultural Resources Overview completed in Phase 1 identified sites of known or likely historical and</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Through site-specific planning, the City will work with Indigenous Nations</li></ul>

<p>traditional gathering areas.</p>	<p>archaeological significance. Where not already developed, these places were designated Preservation to ensure protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with Indigenous Nations and Communities identified some conditions that could make a site appropriate for gathering and ceremony (captured in policy - see below).</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Principle: “The natural and cultural heritage of the River Valley and Ravine System will shape the places, experiences, and connections within it. Natural and historical sites, features, and landscapes will be protected and, where appropriate, interpreted.”</li> <li><a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.8.2 b) “Work with Indigenous peoples and communities, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers to identify areas of interest and the best methods for collaboration, feedback, and review.”</li> <li><a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 3.4.9.2. j) “Work with Indigenous communities to identify appropriate Indigenous gathering spaces that should consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Clean soil</li> <li>+ Not previously cultivated or disturbed</li> <li>+ Offers privacy</li> <li>+ Can accommodate river access, and close to natural areas”</li> </ul> </li> <li><a href="#">River Valley ARP</a> Policy 4.1.10: “Indigenous engagement for proposed development on lands identified for River Valley Open Space or Public Utilities, as shown on Map 1, shall be undertaken in accordance with The City Plan.”</li> </ul>	<p>and Communities to identify and protect heritage sites, and to create spaces for gathering and ceremony.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item E - <b>Indigenous Partnerships:</b> “Work with Indigenous communities to explore: opportunities for co-creation and co-stewardship in the River Valley; opportunities for traditional knowledge to be incorporated.”</li> </ul>
<p>Honour ecological and cultural values while fostering meaningful partnerships with Indigenous people.</p>	<p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.8.2 a) “Identify opportunities to advance reconciliation and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and peoples through River Valley planning, programming and stewardship, in keeping with the City’s Indigenous Framework commitments.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item E - <b>Indigenous Partnerships:</b> “Work with Indigenous communities to explore: opportunities for co-creation and co-stewardship in the River Valley; opportunities for traditional knowledge to be incorporated.”</li> </ul>

<p>Increase opportunities for land-based learning throughout the River Valley.</p>	<p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.1 d) “Work with Indigenous communities, Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, as well as organizations, archaeologists, historians and education institutions, to explore opportunities to advance reconciliation through traditional practices and educational opportunities for all Edmontonians.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.1 e) “Work together with Indigenous communities to identify and protect valued places for harvesting of traditional foods. As appropriate, provide education and interpretation for Edmontonians and visitors to convey the importance of these places.”</li> </ul>	
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## Protecting and Preserving Ecological Integrity

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Desire to keep the River Valley wild, providing spaces for connecting with nature and quiet reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large areas of the River Valley have been designated Preservation, with the intent to protect habitat, wildlife corridors and ecological processes, while providing opportunities for people to be immersed in these wild spaces</li> <li>• In other areas, designated Conservation or Active / Working Landscapes, restoration opportunities have been identified, as well as simple amenities to support enjoyment of nature (e.g. trails, seating areas, interpretive opportunities)</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Principle: “Ecosystems will be protected, connected, restored, and managed to preserve ecological integrity and resiliency, minimize the impacts of human use and respond to changing conditions.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.1 b) “Protect a contiguous, ecologically functional network of habitats and wildlife connectivity corridors by classifying them as preservation, restoring critical areas, and limiting human activity.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.2 c) “Minimize fragmentation and linear disturbances through important core</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item A - <b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting Plan:</b> “Establish and measure selected indicators on a continuous basis to provide a meaningful understanding of the condition of the River Valley and Ravine System, including ecological health, recreational use, and equity measures.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item B - <b>River Valley Trail Strategy:</b> “Working with partner organizations and experts in trail planning and ecological management, and building off the direction for trails within the Ribbon of Green, identify an approved trail network (including paved, granular and natural surface /single-track trails) to support many different types of trail experiences,</li> </ul>

	<p>and habitat areas, thereby maintaining the integrity of the natural ecosystem.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.2 i) “Implement a high level of protection for sensitive habitats and landscapes, rare or at-risk species, and wildlife movement areas by limiting human access.”</li> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.4 a) “Establish a no net loss/net gain approach to protecting and restoring ecosystem function in the System.”</li> </ul>	<p>and develop trail management recommendations for the River Valley and Ravine System.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item G - <b>Guidelines and Best Management Practices:</b> “Develop or update guidelines and best management practices to support River Valley land use planning, management, and stewardship, including, but not limited to:</li> </ul>
<p>Concern about potential impacts associated with development, commercial activity and recreational use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The River Valley ARP now sets clearer limits on intensive or high impact uses; updates assessment requirements, including a requirement to consider cumulative impacts; and introduces use of a “mitigation hierarchy” to avoid or limit development impacts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.5.4 a) “Locate new or expanded urban services in disturbed areas, where environmental impact will be low, and where they will have the least impact to ecological and trail connectivity. Identify and mitigate any negative impacts to ecological systems and recreational uses.”</li> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.1 c) “When determining the location of amenity nodes, trailheads, and the amenities provided, evaluate... potential environmental impacts (short-term and cumulative).”</li> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.6 e) Outline tactics to mitigate negative ecological impacts in site-specific plans such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Defining the disturbance area</li> <li>+ Providing recommendations on construction timing (e.g. avoiding nesting season)</li> <li>+ Avoiding sensitive areas, as defined during the environmental review</li> <li>+ Implementing erosion control measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.2 j) “Employ dark sky principles throughout the System to minimize the impacts of light pollution.”</li> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.1.2 s) “Encourage the relocation of existing impactful uses to the tablelands...”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Floodplain management</li> <li>+ Buffers and setbacks</li> <li>+ Recreational activities</li> <li>+ Wildlife corridors and connectivity</li> <li>+ Restoration and naturalization</li> <li>+ No net loss and cumulative impacts</li> <li>+ Top of bank stewardship”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.3 a) "Implement programs and services to... develop awareness about the impacts of reckless or destructive human activity."</li> <li>● <a href="#">River Valley ARP</a> Policy 4.1.4/4.3.4 "Development of new or significantly expanded intensive open space facilities / intensive utility facilities shall be discouraged."</li> <li>● <a href="#">River Valley ARP</a> Policy 4.1.16 "Development in the floodplain, as defined in District Plans and the Zoning Bylaw, shall be discouraged."</li> <li>● <a href="#">River Valley ARP</a> Policy 4.3.2 "Opportunities to mitigate the impacts of existing utilities, and restore lands used for utility infrastructure to open space use, shall be evaluated as part of infrastructure lifecycle management and renewal."</li> <li>● <a href="#">River Valley ARP</a> Policy 5.1.2 "All development proposed on lands designated for River Valley Open Space or Public Utilities, as shown on Map 1, shall be subject to a Strategic Assessment and Environmental Assessment in accordance with Appendix 1."</li> </ul>	
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## Creating Inclusive and Accessible Spaces

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Specifically identify and support additional/enhanced infrastructure to improve accessibility within the River Valley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Measures to improve accessibility (e.g. trail upgrades, seating areas, inclusive washrooms, wayfinding, parking areas and universal design of new amenities) is identified in Program Guidance for individual reaches.</li> <li>● A continuous network of primary trails and trailheads is identified through the River Valley to ensure accessibility from neighbourhoods and between key destinations.</li> <li>● Accessible river access points are identified at regular intervals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.2.4 a) "Create welcoming spaces at strategic and appropriate locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item D - <b>Capital Program:</b> "Develop a long-term capital program to prioritize and fund the site-specific plans, designs, and studies required to implement the Ribbon of Green. The Capital Program will be updated in alignment with the City's capital budget cycle in order to inform capital investment priorities...The Capital Program will address both ecological guidance (e.g., nature-based solutions, naturalization and restoration initiatives, etc.)</li> </ul>



	<p>for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.2.4 d) “Strategically locate facilities and amenities close to parking areas and access points to facilitate universal access.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.2.4 e) “Adhere to the City’s Access Design Guide and Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy when developing or renovating public structures, buildings, and facilities in the River Valley and Ravine System.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 3.4.6.2 k) “Provide a well-connected trail network that supports active transportation connectivity and accessibility within the System.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 3.4.9.2 j) “Ensure that the design of celebration and gathering spaces... address topography, maintenance and operation costs, sustainability, and accessibility in their design.”</li> </ul>	<p>and guidance on built form (e.g., facilities, infrastructure, etc.), and will address both growth and renewal components.”</p>
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## Addressing Environmental Pressures of Growth

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Include strategies for managing pressures and maintaining ecological balance amidst growing use of River Valley open spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the planning guidance in the Ribbon of Green, from the system-wide policy to the land management classification framework and mapping to the program and ecological guidance, was developed with a significant future increase in River Valley use in mind</li> <li>• Consideration has been given to anticipated growth in the population of communities adjacent to the River Valley and elsewhere in the city, and to anticipated growth in demand for River Valley-based recreation, learning, stewardship and celebration opportunities.</li> <li>• The land management classifications, amenity nodes and primary trail network are intended to focus use in the parts of the River Valley and ravines that are least ecologically sensitive.</li> <li>• Indicators will be defined through the Monitoring and Reporting Plan to help us assess whether we’re achieving our</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item A - <b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting Plan:</b> “Establish and measure selected indicators on a continuous basis to provide a meaningful understanding of the condition of the River Valley and Ravine System, including ecological health, recreational use, and equity measures.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item E - <b>Indigenous Partnerships:</b> “Work with Indigenous communities to explore: opportunities for co-creation and co-stewardship in the River Valley; opportunities for</li> </ul>

	<p>desired outcomes/conditions for different parts of the River Valley.</p> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.5.2 f) Develop a framework to evaluate and manage conflicting uses, including the impact of recreational development on the ecological network, while recognizing the benefits for community health, access, and enjoyment.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.7.1 a) “Adopt an adaptive management framework (e.g., a cycle of monitoring, evaluation and adjustment) to allow management practices to adapt to changing conditions and ensure the ongoing relevance of the Ribbon of Green.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.9.1 g) “Collaborate with local Indigenous communities to gather and preserve traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about the System, and explore ways to incorporate TEK into the monitoring, management and decision making of culturally and historically significant areas.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.1 e) “Monitor the use and attendance of areas and events within the System (e.g., amenity nodes, the trail system, recreation programming, boat docks and hand launches) through a variety of methods (e.g., trail counters, parking counts, and intercept surveys) to inform future planning.”</li> </ul>	<p>traditional knowledge to be incorporated.”</p>
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## Commercial Uses and Activity

What We Heard	How We Applied Input
<p>Incorporate small commercial opportunities within certain segments of the River Valley to increase vibrancy, particularly adjacent to downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land management classifications and program guidance provide direction on locations in which commercial activity may be appropriate.</li> <li>• System-wide policies provide guidance on the types of commercial activity considered appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.4 a) “Develop or permit limited commercial activities (as per the relevant Land Management Classification) which align with the Plan’s vision and principles. Prioritize commercial activities that support open-space services (e.g., equipment outfitters, watercraft and bicycle rental shops, food and beverage kiosks).”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.4 c) “Within Active/Working Landscapes, consider limited commercial development to allow for additional year-round use.”</li> </ul>
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## Trail Planning

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Address trail user conflict.</p> <p>Create a trail system plan to address gaps or barriers in the existing trail system, and to support trail continuity and connectivity throughout the River Valley.</p> <p>Provide better information to trail users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On terrain types and amenity locations (e.g., washrooms, rest areas), to support users of all ages and abilities</li> <li>• On trail status, including closures and detours, to support trip planning (e.g., comprehensive online map)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive policy has been included in the Ribbon of Green to guide trail planning, design and management.</li> <li>• The creation of a River Valley trail strategy is a priority implementation item (see Next Steps / Action Plan).</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.6.2 a) “Develop a trail strategy that identifies an approved trail network (including paved, granular and natural surface trails) and trail planning and management recommendations for the River Valley and Ravine System.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.6.2 b) “Implement a trail network that, where feasible, provides a connected regional trail system that ties together destinations, neighbourhoods, and adjacent municipalities. The trail network will also provide a range of recreational trail opportunities throughout the System, while respecting ecological sensitivity.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.6.2 d) “Plan the trail network strategically to provide access to nature and prevent the creation of further user-created trails while minimizing trail density as much as possible.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.6.5 e) “Investigate separated paved and non-paved trails in circumstances such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Locations with existing or potential high rates of use by both cyclists and pedestrians</li> <li>+ Trails adjacent to densely populated areas and major destinations</li> <li>+ Major active transportation commuter routes with higher than average speeds</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item B - <b>River Valley Trail Strategy:</b> “Working with partner organizations and experts in trail planning and ecological management, and building off the direction for trails within the Ribbon of Green, identify an approved trail network (including paved, granular and natural surface /single-track trails) to support many different types of trail experiences, and develop trail management recommendations for the River Valley and Ravine System.”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Areas with multiple complaints of conflicts</li> <li>+ Signs of wear/or damage next to the trail"</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.5 a) "Maintain and apply a wayfinding signage standard that is based on best practices, is updated regularly and promotes: a consistent approach to wayfinding throughout the system; visitor understanding of where they are, where they can go, how they can get there, and how far it is to key destinations; safety and accessibility; and sign design and content that respect the River Valley setting."</li> </ul>	
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## Planning for Greater Interaction with the River

What We Heard	How We Applied Input
<p>Support new/enhanced waterfront and river experiences through small commercial ventures (e.g., non-motorized equipment rentals)</p>	<p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.4 a) "Develop or permit limited commercial activities (as per the relevant Land Management Classification) which align with the Plan's vision and principles. Prioritize commercial activities that support open-space services (e.g., equipment outfitters, watercraft and bicycle rental shops, food and beverage kiosks)."</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> <i>NEW POLICY: Support new or enhanced waterfront and river experiences through small commercial ventures that are appropriate for a river valley setting (e.g., non-motorized equipment rentals).</i></li> </ul>
<p>Improve access, wayfinding and safety information for recreational river users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.2 c) "Support access to, and use of the North Saskatchewan River for fishing, boating, and other river-based activities in locations with good access, parking, and lower ecological sensitivity."</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.6.1 a) "During future site-specific planning processes... consider demand for on-river activities and the infrastructure required to support them (e.g., washrooms, waste receptacles, parking, beach access, boat docks and hand launches)."</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.3.2 a) "Encourage the use of North Saskatchewan River as a water trail through signage and communications, and by providing supporting amenities (e.g., parking, washrooms and storage) at boat and hand launch locations, in alignment within the designated Land Management Classification."</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.3 c) Post signs to identify water-recreation routes, distances to other river access points, and relevant river safety advice/precautions.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 2.4.3 d) Post signage at boat launches related to the appropriate use of river, and potential ecological impacts associated with boating (e.g., riparian damage from wakes, invasive species).</li> </ul>

<p>Include infrastructure to support responsible overnight camping for recreational river users traveling along the North Saskatchewan River through the Edmonton River Valley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Low-impact camping” is included as a compatible use in the <i>Conservation: Natural Recreation and Active/Working Landscapes: Intensive Recreation</i> land management classifications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of relevant policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a> Policy 3.4.7.2 j) Determine which areas are appropriate for low-impact camping (e.g., walk-in or canoe/kayak-in) and how they would be operated through site-specific plans.</li> </ul>
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## Sheltering in the River Valley

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Outline a comprehensive approach to supporting unhoused community members who seek shelter in the River Valley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on input received through engagement with Indigenous communities, we are proposing the following new policy for the <a href="#">Ribbon of Green</a>: “Consider how planning efforts and programs can support people who live or shelter in the River Valley, including outreach and stewardship programs with cultural components.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support related City of Edmonton and community partner organization initiatives and programs underway.</li> </ul>
<p>Address the ecological impacts of encampments in the River Valley.</p>		
<p>Ensure the safety of both unhoused community members and River Valley visitors.</p>		

## Implementation

What We Heard	How We Applied Input	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Develop clear objective statements within the Ribbon of Green to support an understanding of the plan’s intended future state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desired conditions are addressed in a number of different ways in the plan, including through the system-wide policies, land management classifications (LMC) and program and ecological guidance. In particular, they are broadly defined in the “Visitor Experience” and “Impact of the Visitor Experience” subsections at the beginning of each LMC section, and also through the list of compatible activities and infrastructure that the plan provides for each LMC class/sub-class.</li> <li>• Identifying more specific targets and indicators for these goals will be part of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item A - <b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting Plan</b>: “Establish and measure selected indicators on a continuous basis to provide a meaningful understanding of the condition of the River Valley and Ravine System, including ecological health, recreational use, and equity measures.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a> Item B - <b>River Valley Trail Strategy</b>: “Working with partner organizations and experts in trail planning and ecological management, and building off the direction for trails within the Ribbon of Green, identify an approved trail network (including paved, granular</li> </ul>
<p>Tie monitoring and evaluation of the plan’s success back to the plan vision.</p>		
<p>Identify the strategies that may follow ROG through implementation (e.g., trail strategy or visitor management strategy).</p>		

	<p>Monitoring and Reporting Plan, which is an important implementation item for this work (see Next Steps / Action Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other planned strategies are outlined in the <a href="#">RVPM Action Plan</a></li> </ul>	<p>and natural surface /single-track trails) to support many different types of trail experiences, and develop trail management recommendations for the River Valley and Ravine System.”</p>
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## River Valley ARP

### Strength and Clarity of Language

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Reduce flexibility in language to ensure that ARP goals are not undermined, which could allow unwelcome developments in the future.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP directs the City of Edmonton’s intended land use pattern for the River Valley and its intentions with regard to land uses. An ARP cannot remove: the possibility of a development being proposed, the ability of a development planner to approve a use permitted by existing zoning, or City Council’s authority to vote in favor or in opposition to a proposed rezoning or plan amendment.</p> <p>Direction within the River Valley ARP guides the Development Planner in any exercise of discretion under the Zoning Bylaw as well as City Administration’s recommendations to City Council regarding any rezoning in the plan area or plan amendment.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional information on how development proposals are evaluated, and will help clarify the types of development proposals that are likely to receive support from City Administration based on their alignment with River Valley plans and policies.</p>
<p>Retain flexibility to allow for review of unique developments and to enable adaptive responses to different situations.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP provides decision-making guidance to City Administration and City Council for development proposals in the plan area. Development proposals are assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policies of the ARP and other factors such as existing zoning and development rights. Unique developments may be proposed in the River Valley, and are to be evaluated using the same framework that applies to all development.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional information with regard to how development proposals are evaluated, and will help clarify the types of development proposals that are likely to receive support from City Administration based on their alignment with River Valley plans and policies.</p>

## Council Involvement

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Establish clear guidelines regarding the role of City Council.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP identifies a number of scenarios in which City Council approval is required. The River Valley ARP also identifies the Strategic Assessment as a tool to inform City Administration's and City Council's decision making, as well as criteria City Council should consider when reviewing Strategic Assessments.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional details and examples of development proposals that are likely to trigger City Council approval requirements as identified in the River Valley ARP, as well as the types of information that should be included within Strategic Assessments to support City Administration and City Council in decision-making.</p>
<p>Require City Council review of any potentially high-impact projects, not just major developments.</p>	<p>City Council approval is required in a variety of situations, including proposals for the following types of development on lands identified as River Valley Open Space or Public Utilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● intensive open space facilities;</li> <li>● intensive transportation facilities;</li> <li>● intensive utility facilities; or,</li> <li>● any development likely to result in permanent, adverse environmental or community impacts that cannot be mitigated, as determined by the department responsible for River Valley strategic planning</li> </ul> <p>As well as an application anywhere in the plan area that necessitates an amendment to the River Valley ARP, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● any rezoning that is in conflict with any objective or policy of the Plan;</li> <li>● any development that proposes to change the boundaries of the Plan; or,</li> <li>● where directed by Council.</li> </ul>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional details and examples of development proposals that are likely to trigger City Council approval requirements as identified in the River valley ARP, as well as the types of information that should be included within strategic assessments to support City Administration and City Council in decision-making.</p>

## Engagement Requirements

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Include a more specific commitment and clearly outlined process for public and Indigenous engagement.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP references the City's existing <a href="#">Public Engagement Policy (C593C)</a>, which applies to all City policies, programs, projects, and services.</p> <p>The City's <a href="#">Public Engagement Framework</a>, based on Policy C593B, describes how the City's 6 Step Public Engagement Process is used to deliver meaningful, consistent, and outcomes-driven public engagement at the City. It identifies that public engagement should be determined on a project-by-project basis.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Public Engagement Policy (C593C)</a> is reviewed every four years and its next round of review is scheduled for 2025.</p>
<p>Require broad communication about engagement opportunities, including to associations and groups with a vested interest in the River Valley (not just nearby neighbourhoods) to ensure informed decision-making.</p>	<p>The City's <a href="#">Public Engagement Framework</a> indicates a commitment to provide transparent and timely communications on public engagement. It states that communication activities should happen before, during, and after public engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Before public engagement so that potential participants know about the upcoming opportunities and have the background information and context they need to meaningfully engage.</li> <li>● During public engagement so that participants know what is happening in the process and hear back about how their input is being incorporated.</li> <li>● After public engagement so that participants hear back about what was done with their input as well as how the overall process went</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders are identified during the <a href="#">6 Step Public Engagement Process</a> to ensure that those interested or impacted are involved in public engagement.</p> <p>The City typically shares information about engagement opportunities on</p>	<p>As part of River Valley ARP and Ribbon of Green implementation, Administration will review current information sharing practices and opportunities to reach a broader audience.</p>



	its website, newsletters, and social media channels. As the River Valley is a shared public resource for Edmontonians and visitors from the region and beyond, targeted notifications for all proposed development, programming, or management matters to all organizations and individuals with an interest in the River Valley is not feasible.	
Make engagement mandatory for any potentially high-impact and/or large-scale project, not just major developments.	The need for public engagement is evaluated on a project-by-project basis, in compliance with the <a href="#">Public Engagement Policy (C593C)</a> , specifically in the Identification and Strategy steps of the <a href="#">6 Step Public Engagement Process</a> .	The <a href="#">Public Engagement Policy (C593C)</a> is reviewed every four years and its next round of review is scheduled for 2025.

## Implementation and Oversight

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
Include more comprehensive requirements for supporting documents within the ARP, including strategic assessments, environmental assessments, budgets, and timelines.	The River Valley ARP includes the key information requirements that form part of the Strategic Assessment and Environmental Assessment. The policy statements of the River Valley ARP are generalized in order to be applicable to the wide variety of site conditions, development types, and planning contexts that occur in the River Valley. Specific processes, procedures, and technical guidelines beyond the level of information provided are more appropriate as part of implementation documentation than policy.	Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will include terms of reference for Strategic Assessments and Environmental Assessments, as well as guidance for development proponents with regard to the timing of the assessments relative to related processes and approvals.
Clarify the role of Administration throughout the ARP, particularly at key decision points.	<p>The role of Administration versus City Council depends on the type of decision being made; this follows standard decision-making authority for rezoning, plan amendments, development permits, and technical review.</p> <p>Council is the established authority for rezoning and plan amendments, while Administration is the decision maker on</p>	Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will include additional resources (e.g., flowcharts, reference tables, etc.) identifying the roles of City Administration and City Council in decisions regarding proposed development in the River Valley.

	<p>development permits and technical reporting.</p> <p>In cases where the decision maker is not legally prescribed by the Municipal Government Act, the River Valley ARP identifies the relevant decision maker (e.g., City Council approval requirements of the strategic assessment for certain development types) or the reviewing agency (e.g., department responsible for River Valley strategic planning).</p>	
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## Decision-Making Criteria

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Clarify decision-making criteria and process, including the circumstances that would trigger different development approval processes. Include decision-making frameworks and evaluation processes, data to be requested, policies enacted in case of conflict, and appeals processes. Clearly outline the standards a project must meet to proceed through the ARP's development evaluation stages.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP includes a number of policies that influence decisions regarding proposed development in the River Valley. The policy statements of the River Valley ARP are generalized in order to be applicable to the wide variety of site conditions, development types, and planning contexts that occur in the River Valley.</p> <p>The River Valley ARP includes the key information requirements that form part of the Strategic Assessment and Environmental Assessment. The policy statements of the River Valley ARP are generalized in order to be applicable to the wide variety of site conditions, development types, and planning contexts that occur in the River Valley. Specific processes, procedures, and technical guidelines beyond the level of information provided are more appropriate as part of implementation documentation than policy.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will include information about approval processes and the primary considerations that will guide decision making by City Administration or recommendations made by City Administration to City Council. This guidance will also include terms of reference for Strategic Assessments and Environmental Assessments, as well as guidance for development proponents with regard to the timing of the assessments relative to related processes and approvals.</p>

## Future Development

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Prohibit private golf courses, large-scale infrastructure projects, and other forms of development that could lead to irreversible damage to the ecosystem.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP directs the City of Edmonton's intended land use pattern for the River Valley and its intentions with regard to land uses. An ARP cannot remove: the possibility of a development being proposed, the ability of a development planner to approve a use permitted by existing zoning, or City Council's authority to vote in favour or in opposition to a proposed rezoning or plan amendment.</p> <p>Direction within the River Valley ARP guides the Development Planner in any exercise of discretion under the Zoning Bylaw as well as City Administration's recommendations to City Council regarding any rezoning in the plan area or plan amendment.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional information on how planning guidance provided through the Ribbon of Green, as well as approaches such as application of the mitigation hierarchy, should be used to guide decisions about the scope and scale of appropriate development in the River Valley, particularly on lands directly stewarded by the City of Edmonton.</p>

## Protecting and Restoring Nature

What We Heard	How We Used It	Next Steps / Action Plan
<p>Provide clear guidelines and examples of the specific types of mitigation efforts that would be considered acceptable, to ensure effective implementation.</p>	<p>The River Valley ARP directs that the mitigation hierarchy be considered as part of development proposals. The River Valley ARP also identifies environmental assessment requirements, including the need to assess and mitigate environmental impacts.</p>	<p>Administration will develop additional documentation to support interpretation and implementation of River Valley ARP policies. This guidance will provide additional information on how planning guidance provided through the Ribbon of Green, as well as approaches such as application of the mitigation hierarchy, should be used to guide decisions about the scope and scale of appropriate development in the River Valley, particularly on lands directly stewarded by the City of Edmonton.</p>

## NEXT STEPS

- The draft River Valley ARP will advance to Council through a public hearing in December 2024. The Ribbon of Green Strategic Plan will be included with that package, given the direct connection that now exists between the two plans.
- Administration will develop funding requests as part of the next City of Edmonton budget cycle to support delivery of the items outlined in the [RVPM Action Plan](#).
- The City will continue to engage the public, partners and community organizations through the implementation of the Ribbon of Green and the River Valley ARP, including:
  - Through site-specific planning, which will include the refinement of land management classifications and program/ecological guidance;
  - Through larger, system-wide strategies like the Monitoring and Reporting Plan and the River Valley Trail Strategy; and
  - Through the development of other processes, guidelines and best management practices.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact us at [ribbonofgreen@edmonton.ca](mailto:ribbonofgreen@edmonton.ca) and visit [edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen](https://edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen).