



# RIBBON *of* GREEN

**PLAN GUIDE** | May 2025

Edmonton

Overview	3
Ribbon of Green Purpose	4
Ribbon of Green	5
How the Ribbon of Green will be used	6
Plan Section 1: Introduction, Vision + Principles	9
Plan Section 2: System-Wide Policies	10
Plan Section 3: Site Direction – Land Management Classifications	12
Plan Section 4: Site Direction – Program Guidance	14
Plan Section 5: Implementation	15

# Overview

Edmonton's River Valley and Ravine System is the backbone of the ecological network and provides spaces for recreation, gathering, and celebration year-round.

The entire River Valley and Ravine System (the System) is Edmonton's Ribbon of Green. Based on *Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy*, the *Ribbon of Green Plan* will sustain ecological health and responsible recreational use by providing strategic guidance for the System.

This primer document has been created as a guide to the Plan. As a comprehensive plan, the *Ribbon of Green* is divided into five main sections:

1. Introduction: Vision and Principles
2. System-Wide Policies
3. Site Direction: Land Management Classifications
4. Site Direction: Program Guidance
5. Implementation

Together, these elements ensure that the City and its partners can work together to protect and enjoy the System. This document summarizes these five sections and includes text on how each section will be used by the City and its partners.



The Quarry

# Ribbon of Green Purpose

The Ribbon of Green provides strategic direction to guide the protection and responsible use of Edmonton's River Valley and Ravine System to Edmonton's 1.5 million population horizon.

As the City of Edmonton grows, the System faces increasing pressure from urban development and use. The *Ribbon of Green Plan* helps support and sustain an interconnected System that meets the needs of the environment while providing diverse recreational and cultural experiences for those who work, play and/or live in Edmonton. The Plan provides direction to the acquisition, management, programming, and development of publicly owned land within the System.

Specifically, the *Ribbon of Green*:

- + Contains policy direction to guide decision making, further planning, monitoring and management of the System.
- + Informs collaboration, public engagement and partnerships with communities, institutions and other orders of government.
- + Defines and applies Land Management Classifications to outline the protection and level of programming appropriate for different locations within the System.
- + Provides program direction to inform future site-specific planning.

The Ribbon of Green does not change the development rights of private landowners, as per the Land Use Bylaw, Statutory Plans, and City Policy.

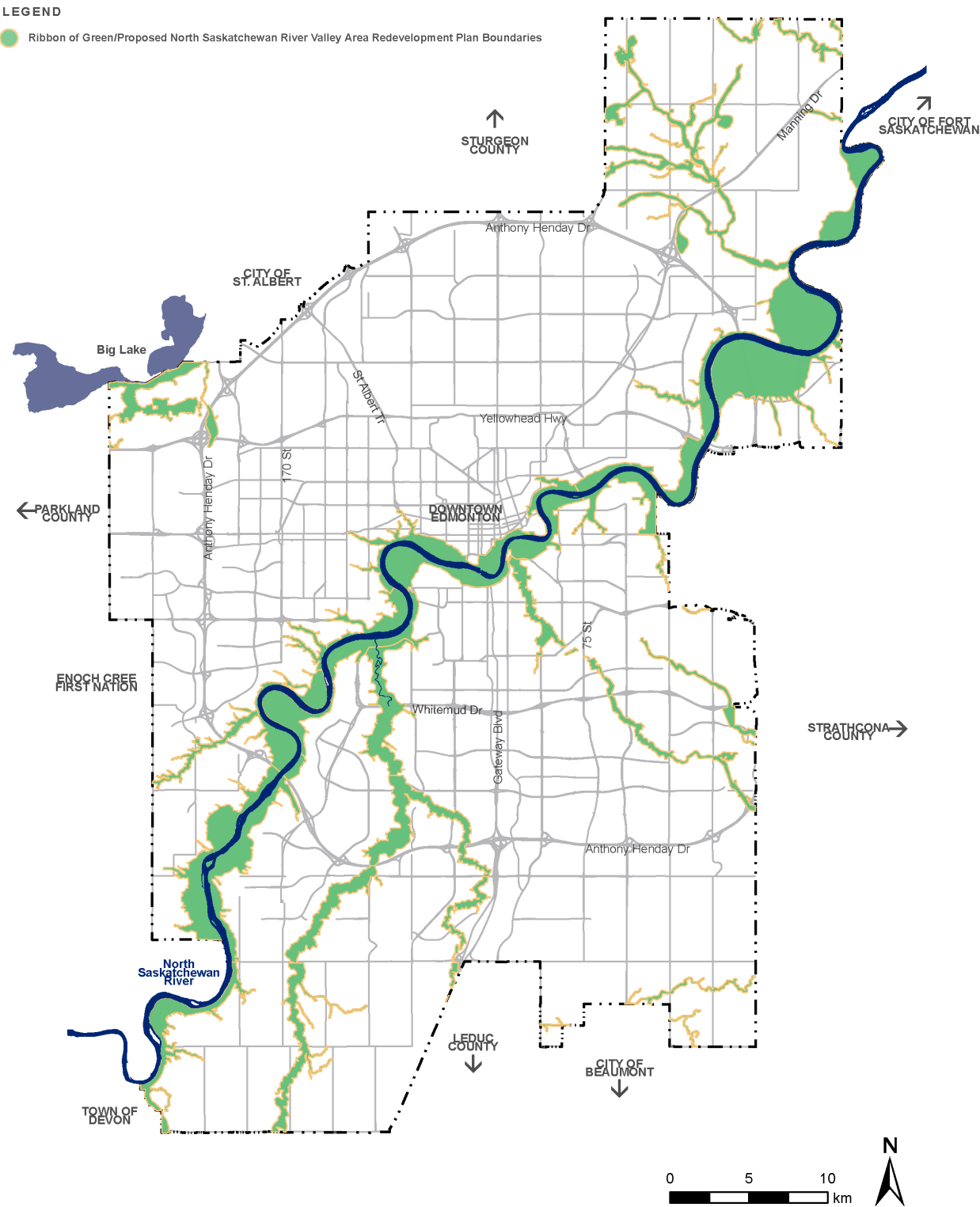
It is important to note that the policies and recommendations within the Plan do not supersede Federal or Provincial regulations and laws, and should be implemented in accordance with other City policies and bylaws.



The Quarry

# Ribbon of Green

The *Ribbon of Green* provides strategic direction to guide the protection and responsible use of the Edmonton's River Valley and Ravine System over the next 20 years.



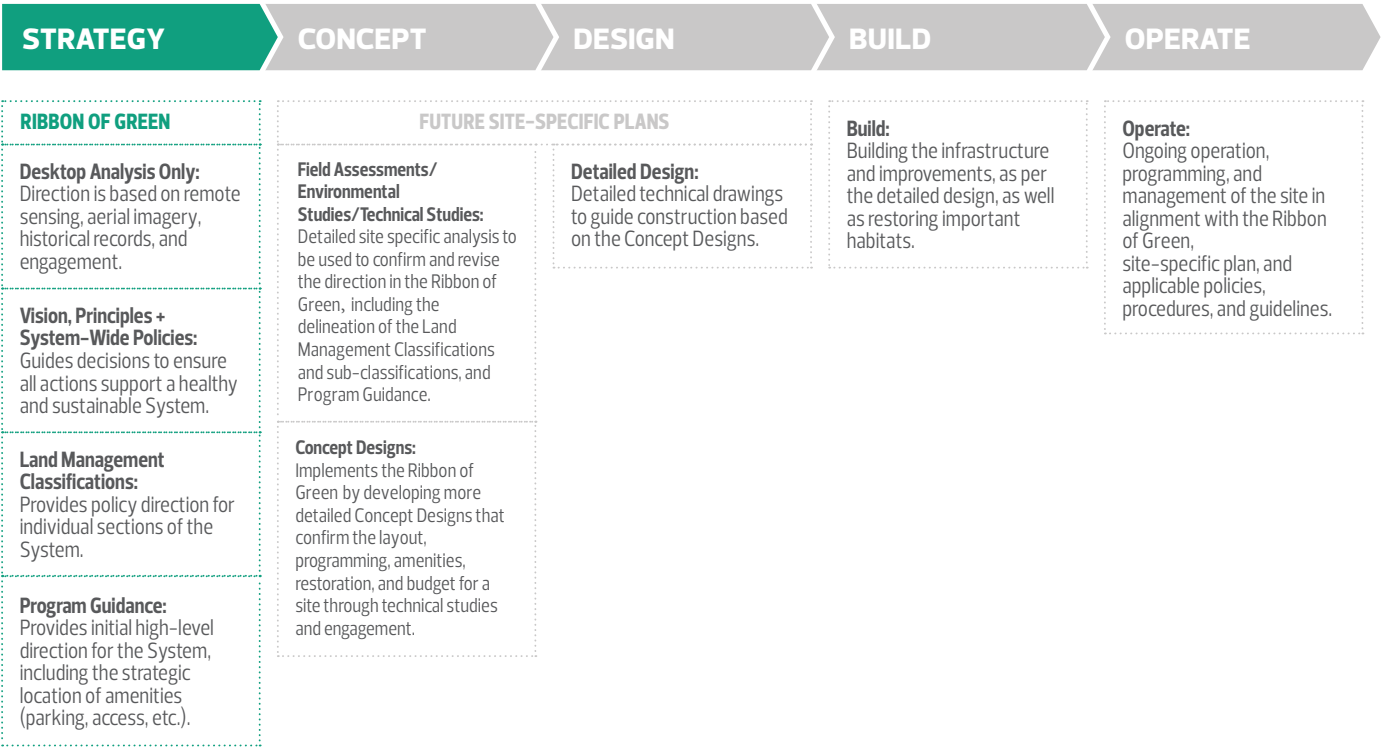
# How the Ribbon of Green will be used

The *Ribbon of Green* applies the City of Edmonton's high-level open space strategies, plans, and policies (e.g., *Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Plan*) to guide River Valley and Ravine System management, site-specific planning, and design. The Plan's directions will be used by the City and its partners to guide further, and more detailed System planning. This future planning will take many forms including, but not limited to, the design and program for a single park, a management strategy for controlling erosion on a vulnerable slope, a trail alignment study, or a natural area management plan.

The diagram on the following page illustrates how the *Ribbon of Green* aligns with River Valley open space planning in Edmonton.

The diagram below shows how the direction provided by Ribbon of Green will lead future System planning. **The Plan is the start of a continuum of System planning** that includes concept and design phases, building infrastructure and improvements, and ongoing operations and maintenance.

## CONTINUUM OF RIVER VALLEY AND RAVINE PLANNING





## RIVER VALLEY OPEN SPACE PLANNING IN EDMONTON

This diagram illustrates how the *Ribbon of Green* relates to other plans and policies approved by City Council.



## PLAN STRUCTURE

The *Ribbon of Green* is divided into five sections, each with a different intent:

### INTRODUCTION VISION + PRINCIPLES

#### Section 1

This section provides background and outlines the **Vision** and **Principles** for the *Ribbon of Green*

### SYSTEM-WIDE POLICIES

#### Section 2

This section contains policies to guide decision making and direct the planning, design and management of the River Valley and Ravine System. The direction here ensures a consistent approach is applied throughout the System.

### Site Direction: LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

#### Section 3

This section divides the River Valley into three main Classifications:

**PRESERVATION**  
– Ecosystem Protection  
– Trail-based Recreation

**CONSERVATION**  
– Trail-based Recreation  
– Natural Recreation

**ACTIVE/WORKING LANDSCAPES**  
– Intensive Recreation  
– Agriculture and Horticulture  
– Urban Services and City-wide Attractions

Program Guidance provides the following:

**A vision for each reach:**  
(river valley or ravine segment)

**Program and ecological guidance for each reach:** This includes spatial direction that functions as a starting point, and will be refined and confirmed during future site-specific planning processes.

**Amenity Node and Primary Trailhead direction:** This section includes program statements, design ideas, and circulation direction for areas of activity within each reach.

### Site Direction: PROGRAM GUIDANCE

#### Section 4

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### Section 5

This Plan concludes with an implementation section that provides direction to expand, monitor, evaluate and realize the *Ribbon of Green* over time.





# Plan Section 1: Introduction, Vision + Principles

## VISION

*The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is a protected, connected, ecologically resilient landscape that honours our collective history and promotes healthy living through diverse opportunities for recreation, active transportation, learning, and gathering in the tranquility of nature.*



### Purpose

The Vision and Principles will guide future decisions to ensure all actions are working towards a shared goal for the Ribbon of Green. The vision defines the ideal state of the River Valley and Ravine System and the principles add further detail about the elements required to achieve the vision.

## PRINCIPLES

- 1. Ecological Integrity:** 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.
- 2. Low-Impact Amenities:** Any new or expanded amenities will support opportunities for people to gather and recreate in nature or provide essential urban services, and will be located and designed to minimize environmental impact and promote ecosystem function.
- 3. Access and Connectivity:** A continuous trail system and access points will connect neighbourhoods, the city, and the region to the River Valley and Ravine System and provide safe and accessible opportunities for recreation and active travel.
- 4. Collaboration:** Through education, engagement and partnerships, meaningful opportunities will be provided to contribute to the planning, design, and stewardship of the River Valley and Ravine System.
- 5. Heritage:** 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.
- 6. Indigenous Perspectives:** Indigenous cultural values will be recognized and supported throughout the River Valley and Ravine System, and Indigenous communities will be meaningfully engaged as active participants in the planning, stewardship and use of the River Valley.



# Plan Section 2: System-Wide Policies

## THE SYSTEM-WIDE POLICIES ADDRESS:

Strategic Direction	Policy Areas
Ecological Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Respecting the Ecological Network</li><li>+ Protecting the Ribbon of Green</li><li>+ Indigenous Stewardship</li><li>+ Buffering Sensitive Sites</li><li>+ Mitigating Ecological Impacts</li><li>+ Restoring and Remediating</li><li>+ Site-specific Planning and Environmental Reviews</li><li>+ Monitoring Ecological Health</li></ul>
Safe + Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Improving Safety through Education + Enforcement</li><li>+ Improving Safety through Design</li><li>+ Improving Trail Safety</li><li>+ Creating Inclusive and Accessible Spaces</li></ul>
Vibrant Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Experiencing the River Valley and Ravine System</li><li>+ Experiencing the North Saskatchewan River</li><li>+ Celebrating in the System</li><li>+ Allowing Commercial Uses</li><li>+ Facilitating Year-round Use</li><li>+ Incorporating Public Art + Heritage</li></ul>

### Purpose

System-Wide Policies guide decision making and direct the planning, design, and management of areas within the River Valley and Ravine System. The direction here ensures a consistent approach is applied throughout the system, including protecting the ecological network, providing educational and recreation opportunities, and improving accessibility for all.



Larch Sanctuary



## Strategic Direction

## Policy Areas

### Education + Awareness

- + Recognizing Indigenous Traditional Use
- + Promoting the System through Interpretation
- + Building Awareness of Appropriate Behaviour in the System
- + Providing Educational Opportunities
- + Wayfinding

### Distribution + Supply

- + Expanding the Ribbon of Green
- + Providing Recreational Opportunities
- + Managing Heritage, Cultural + Traditional Resources
- + Developing Buildings, Urban Services + Facilities

### Public Access + Connectivity

- + Accessing the System
- + Creating a Trail Network
- + Facilitating Trail Experiences
- + Planning Trails
- + Designing Trails
- + Maintaining Trails
- + Monitoring Trails
- + Implementing Stairs + Decking
- + Planning Pedestrian Bridges
- + Parking

### Adaptive Management + Flexible Spaces

- + Management Practices
- + Maintenance Standards
- + Creating Flexible Spaces

### Community Engagement

- + Engaging the Public
- + Collaborating with Indigenous Communities

### Collaborative Planning

- + Partnering
- + Coordinated Planning

### Sustainable Funding

- + Sustainable Funding



# Plan Section 3: Site Direction – Land Management Classifications

## THE LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS ARE:

### Purpose

Land Management Classifications define the physical site conditions, operations, activities, and amenities appropriate to locations within the River Valley and Ravine System.

PRESERVATION		CONSERVATION		ACTIVE/WORKING LANDSCAPES		
Protect the integrity of the natural environment and restore natural functioning with limited access and recreational opportunities.		Connect people to nature by allowing people to enjoy and appreciate the System while minimizing environmental impact and restoring ecological functioning, when possible.		Facilitate gathering and recreation within the System, recognize existing uses and encourage restoration.		
ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION	PRESERVATION TRAIL – BASED RECREATION	CONSERVATION TRAIL–BASED RECREATION	NATURAL RECREATION	INTENSIVE RECREATION	AGRICULTURE + HORTICULTURE	URBAN SERVICES + CITY-WIDE ATTRACTIONS
Protect the highest value and most sensitive ecosystems and features, ensuring that these systems continue to thrive as the city's population grows.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include conservation and stewardship activities.	Provide a network of trails in Preservation areas to support low-impact trail recreation opportunities while minimizing ecological impacts.  <b>Trail type:</b> non-paved narrow width trails (natural surface).  <b>Compatible uses</b> include a variety of low-impact trail uses. Foot-based travel and biking are considered compatible unless explicitly prohibited (e.g. through signage).	Facilitate access to and regional connectivity through the System in harmony with the natural environment.  <b>Trail types:</b> non-paved variable width OR paved variable width.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include all types of trail use.	Provide opportunities to rest, linger and enjoy nature.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include all types of trail use, plus picnicking, unstructured play and river access.	Provide a wide-range of recreational opportunities tailored to the River Valley setting.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include events and festivals, fitness courses and boat launches.	Recognize existing agricultural and horticultural uses.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include farms and supporting uses.	Support city-wide attractions while acknowledging the importance of urban services to accommodate a growing city.  <b>Compatible uses</b> include existing development, golf courses and city-wide attractions.

## LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS APPLICATION

The Land Management Classifications have been applied throughout the System, as shown in the diagram to the right, and will be refined through field assessments and more detailed planning.



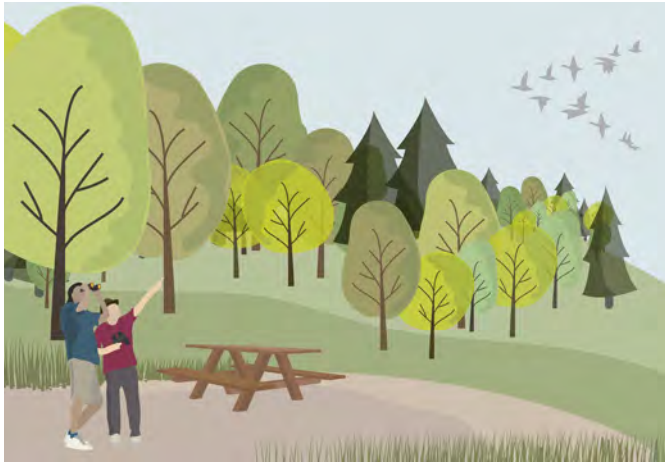
### LEGEND

- Preservation
- Conservation
- Active / Working Landscapes

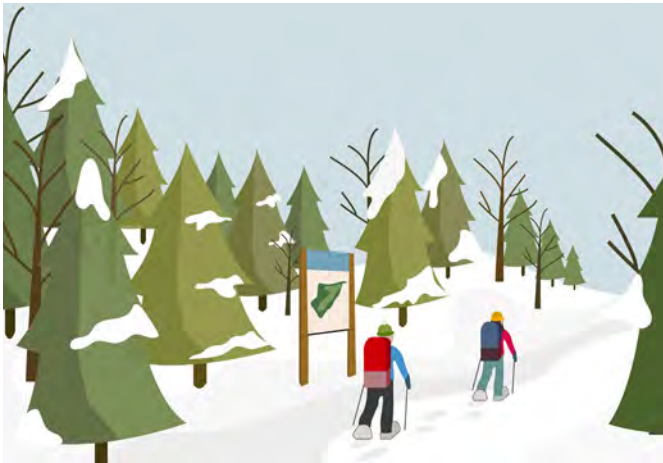




Preservation: Ecosystem Protection and Trail-based Recreation



Conservation: Natural Recreation



Conservation: Trail-Based Recreation



Active / Working Landscapes: Intensive Recreation



Active / Working Landscapes: Agriculture + Horticulture



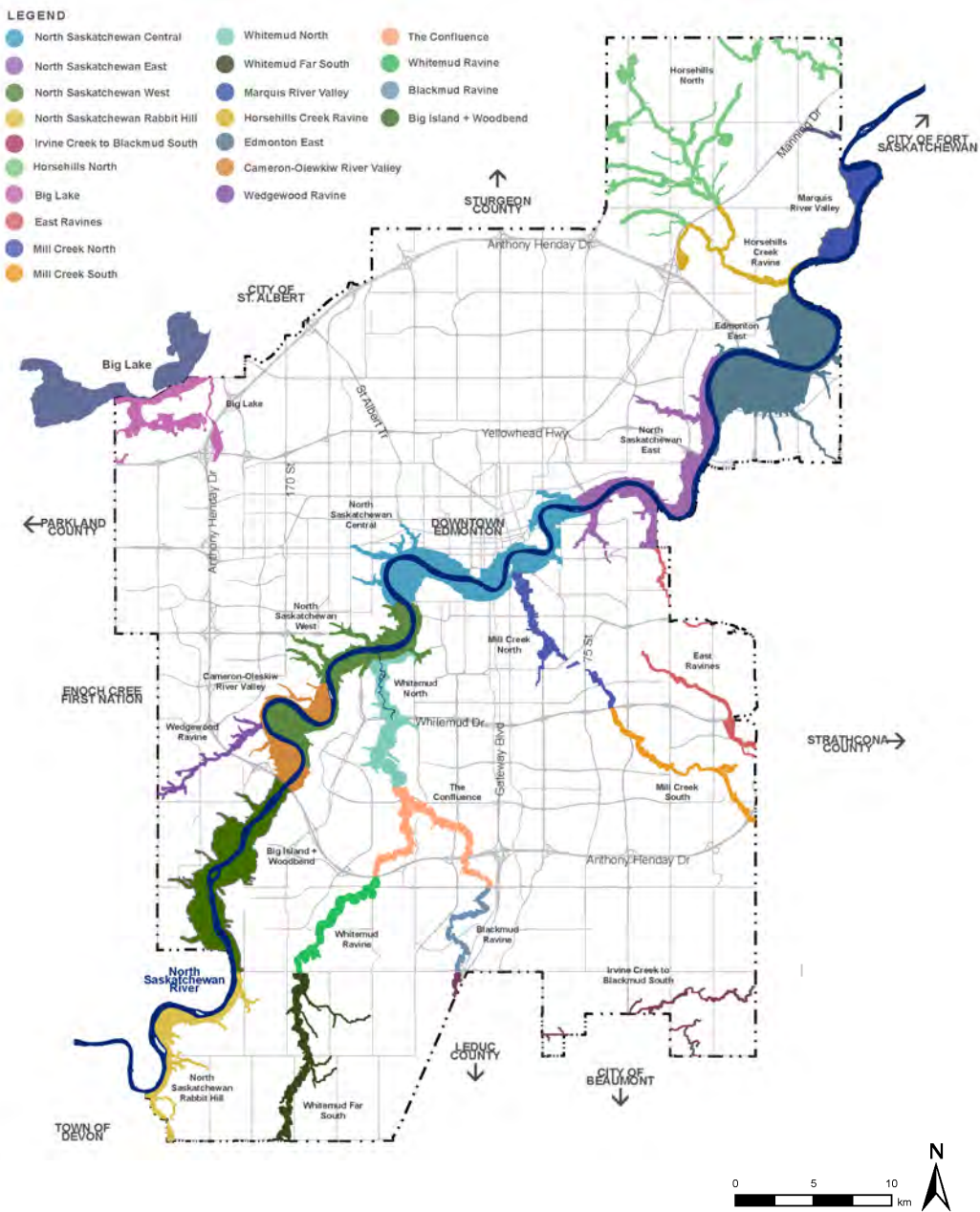
Active / Working Landscapes: Urban Services + City-Wide Attractions



# Plan Section 4: Site Direction – Program Guidance

This section divides the *Ribbon of Green* area into reaches. Each reach is small enough to provide clear spatial direction while remaining at a high-level scale to show how this spatial direction relates to the larger ecological and recreational networks.

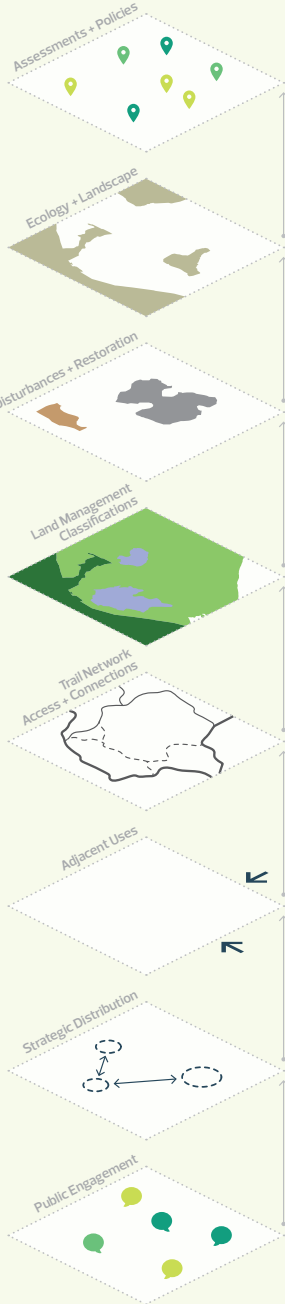
## THE REACHES INCLUDE:



### Purpose

Program Guidance includes direction for specific locations throughout the System, including protecting and restoring natural features, locating new facilities like washrooms and boat docks, and key trail accesses and connections.

### Program Guidance Inputs





# Plan Section 5: Implementation

## THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM ADDRESSES:

### Program Guidance Implementation Principles

- + Land Assembly
- + Site-Specific Planning + Development
- + Prioritization
- + Emerging Opportunities

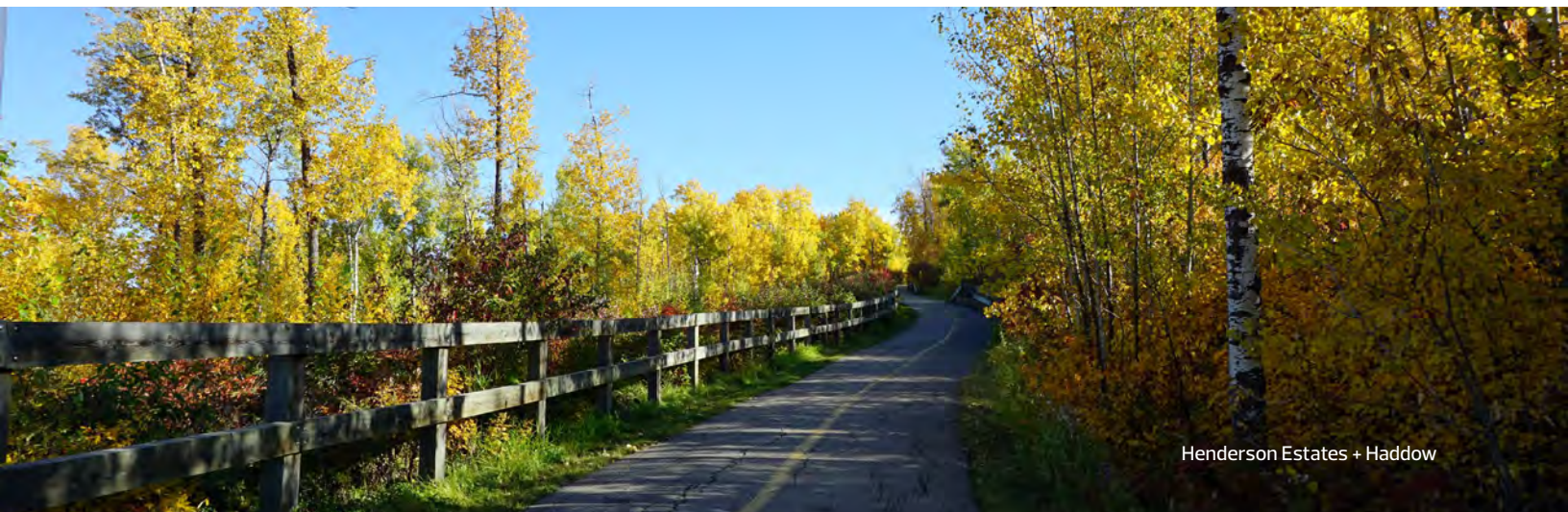
### Plan Monitoring, Evaluation + Review

- + Plan Monitoring + Evaluation
- + Plan Review + Amendments



### Purpose

The Ribbon of Green provides a vision, principles, and policies that outline a consistent approach to River Valley and Ravine System management, planning, and development. To do this effectively, a comprehensive implementation program is required. The City will also establish a baseline, develop indicators, and monitor indicators upon approval of the Plan.



Henderson Estates + Haddow