

QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK – INTEGRATED BIKE SKILLS PARK

Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study

Recommendation

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the Queen Elizabeth Park - Integrated Bike Skills Park Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the June 17, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS03004, be approved pursuant to the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188.
2. That the location of the Integrated Bike Skills Park, in the river valley, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the June 17, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS03004, be deemed essential, pursuant to the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188.

Requested Action		Decision required	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City Urban Places Climate Resilience	
City Plan Values	BELONG. LIVE. THRIVE. ACCESS.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A Community of Communities Greener as We Grow Inclusive and Compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Mobility Network Community Safety and Well-being 15-minute Districts
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the Corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan● C544 - Active Transportation Policy		

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Related Council Discussions

- August 28, 2013, Community Services report CR_376, Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan

Executive Summary

- Through the Community-Led Construction process, the Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance is currently completing planning and design for an integrated bike skills park located at Queen Elizabeth Park. A bike skills park is a component of the Council approved 2013 Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan.
- The North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188, requires City Council approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study (Attachment 1) for the proposed development before construction can start. It also requires the location of the proposed bike skills park within the River Valley be deemed essential.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Attachment 1 reviews the project scope at Queen Elizabeth Park and suggests options to minimize potential impacts to the existing open space natural areas.
- The Site Location Study (SLS) in Attachment 1 confirms the proposed location for the bike skills park and trails will not cause significant environmental impacts, largely due to it being located on the site of a former wastewater treatment facility that has since been demolished and reclaimed.

REPORT

The Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA) is completing planning and design for an integrated bike skills park located in Queen Elizabeth Park (Attachment 2), utilizing the Community-Led Construction Project Process. Construction activities by EMBA are planned to begin in 2025 and conclude in 2026. The bike skills park is planned to be constructed within the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan boundary area and, therefore, requires certain City Council approvals and that City Council deem the location in the river valley essential before construction can proceed.

As part of the Community-Led Construction Project Process, EMBA will enter into a Municipal Improvement Agreement (MIA) to govern the construction of the project. Delineation of roles and responsibilities regarding operating and maintenance will be outlined in a Maintenance/Operational Agreement between EMBA and the City of Edmonton.

The bike skills park was identified in the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan¹ and will include flow trails, a skills trail, a pump track and a jump park:

- Flow trails - utilize existing city-maintained bike trails in combination with new trail development within the natural treed area.
- Skills trail - a new trail surrounding the pump track and jump park will be constructed, with newly planted vegetation and the placement of wood and rock materials.

¹ [Queen Elizabeth Park - Link to Master Plan under Related Documents](#)

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- Pump track - designed to accommodate a variety of wheeled sports - including mountain bikes, BMX, skateboards, inline and quad skates, scooters (non-motorized) and balance bikes. The pump track will consist of an asphalt surface laid directly on a prepared, raised base, surrounded by landscaping, drainage features and Low Impact Development (LID) elements.
- Jump Park - a circuit track where users can develop their mountain bike skills over diverse and challenging terrain. The jump park will be constructed using imported soil/granular material over existing grades.

Some of the potential impacts and mitigations identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment include:

- Surface water and hydrology
 - Potential short-term and seasonal impacts to surface water during construction may occur due to erosion of exposed soils. In the longer term, seasonal impacts to surface water may result due to site drainage.
 - To mitigate these potential impacts, a sedimentation and erosion control plan will be implemented during construction. Vegetation will be reestablished on exposed soils as soon as construction is complete. Best management practices will be employed to construct and maintain the trails. Further appropriate stormwater management will be implemented through the use of LID measures in coordination with EPCOR.
- Geology and soils
 - Potential impacts related to seasonal soil disturbance and erosion of exposed soils have been identified. With year-round use, there is potential for shallow landslides.
 - To mitigate these potential impacts, a sedimentation and erosion control plan will be implemented during construction and vegetation will be reestablished on exposed soils as soon as construction is complete. Best management practices will be employed to construct and maintain the trails. Trail construction will avoid unstable slopes, per the recommendations outlined in the geotechnical reports. Regular maintenance and prompt repairs will be required to manage surface water flows to avoid soil erosion and restabilize affected areas.
- Historical resources
 - No excavation is required to develop the bike skills park; therefore, no interaction with historical resources is expected.
 - A *Historical Resources Act* Approval with Conditions was granted by the Province on January 15, 2025 for construction activities associated with this project.
- Vegetation (non woody)
 - In the short-term, vegetation clearing will be required in the main area of the bike skills park, including the removal of existing grassy vegetation and isolated small shrubs. Vegetation clearing will occur in two rounds. The first round will include hand removal of noxious weeds and the second round will include stripping using small equipment.
 - To mitigate impacts, vegetation clearing will be minimized and weeds will be removed and actively managed during and after construction. To ensure vegetation reestablishment onsite, a restoration plan that includes native vegetation and follows the City of Edmonton's Design and Construction Standards (Volume 5 Landscaping) will be developed and implemented by EMBA.

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- With the implementation of these mitigation measures, no permanent adverse impacts are expected and it is anticipated there may be a net positive impact as the project will address noxious and prohibited noxious weeds currently located on-site.
- Trees
 - There are potential short and long-term impacts due to construction, seasonal loss of selected trees and disturbance to root systems. The project will remove hazard trees, as identified by City of Edmonton Urban Foresters, that pose a risk to public safety, as well as small saplings and underbrush to facilitate the development of the flow trails and skills park area.
 - To mitigate the potential impacts, the flow trails and skill trail features will be sited to avoid tree removal and impacts to tree roots. Bylaw 18825 - Public Tree Bylaw requires a Public Tree Permit for construction within 10 metres of public trees, which will be supported by a Tree Preservation Plan. In conformance with the City Policy C456C - Corporate Tree Management Policy compensation will be provided for any tree loss or damage as a result of project construction. Efforts will be made to increase the density and diversity of native trees and shrubs within the bike skills park through landscaping.
 - Construction fencing will be erected outside the boundary of the tree stand and EMBA will ensure all vehicles, equipment, construction supplies and debris are located a minimum of five metres from any trees. A Parkland Access Permit may be required under Bylaw 2202 - Parkland Bylaw to grant temporary access during construction.
 - Following construction, proper pruning techniques to prevent disease and promote overall tree health will be undertaken by the City.
 - During operation, efforts will be made to protect tree root systems that become exposed by using appropriate remediation measures (e.g., covering roots with clean fill material).
 - No permanent adverse impacts are expected, however, there are possible net positive impacts as the park landscaping design includes tree and shrub planting within the footprint of the former wastewater treatment facility.
- Wildlife
 - There are some anticipated seasonal and year-round impacts to habitat use and movement expected during construction and longer term.
 - To mitigate these impacts, a pre-disturbance wildlife sweep will be conducted within seven days of the start of any construction work to check for denning wildlife and/or nesting birds (owls and migratory songbirds) and establish species-appropriate restricted activity buffers if nesting/denning activity is detected.
 - Standing dead and dying trees will be maintained and managed for wildlife use. If trees containing cavities must be removed, they will be checked by a qualified professional prior to removal to ensure the cavities are not being used by pileated woodpeckers for nesting.
 - Once the bike skills park is operational, if active coyote dens are observed within or near the bike skills park, temporary trail or facility closures may be required to protect wildlife and park users. Wildlife-friendly lighting will be installed to minimize sensory disturbance and efforts will be made to proactively manage beaver activity within the area.

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- Species of special status (local, provincial, federal)
 - There are potential short and long-term impacts related to seasonal impacts on cavity nesters.
 - Should construction activity occur within 100 metres of an identified pileated woodpecker nest cavity between April 8 and August 24, the nest must be checked by a qualified professional to determine if it is occupied. If the nest is occupied, appropriate mitigation measures will be established to minimize impacts to the nesting bird. Further, if trees with visible cavities are to be removed as part of the construction or maintenance of the facility, the tree must be inspected by a qualified professional to ensure pileated woodpecker nests are not being destroyed.

Overall, the proposed bike skills park's cumulative impacts are estimated as low to moderate at larger geographic and temporal scales, primarily due to the area's limited potential for additional development. While increased localized human use is anticipated, particularly in winter, the area has already experienced increased activity from other nearby projects. The risk of cumulative impacts from ad hoc trail proliferation is considered low. The bike skills park is expected to reduce unsanctioned trail creation through its well-designed network, maintenance, monitoring and by providing an opportunity to educate users on proper trail etiquette and ecological impacts of biking activities.

Budget/Financial Implications

As a Community-Led Construction Project, EMBA is responsible for securing funding to plan, design and construct the project. The bike skills park is fully funded through a grant from the provincial Community Facilities Enhancement Program (CFEP), a grant from the City's Recreation Partnership Facility Investment Program (RPFIP) and contributions from EMBA.

Administration is working with EMBA to identify operating requirements and the scope of ongoing work and service levels required of City operations staff and external service providers.

Legal Implications

Section 3.5.3 of Bylaw 7188 requires City Council to approve the attached Environmental Impact Assessment (Attachment 1) before the proposed bike skills park can proceed to construction.

In addition, Section 3.5.3 of Bylaw 7188 requires City Council to approve the attached Site Location Study (Attachment 1) for the bike skills park and that the location of the bike skills park within the river valley be deemed essential by City Council before construction can proceed.

Community Insight

The bike skills park was approved by City Council in 2013 as part of the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan. Throughout the Master Plan's design process, public consultation workshops, open houses, Indigenous community meetings and online surveys were conducted to gather input. Feedback from these efforts revealed a strong desire for bike amenities that align with current River Valley trail networks and City policy fostering improved bike culture. This process

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demonstrated general support and consensus for a bike skills park amenity within Queen Elizabeth Park.

Through the Community-Led Construction Project Process for projects undertaken on public parkland, the partner group is responsible for providing notification and obtaining public input. In late 2021, EMBA administered an online survey questionnaire which received a total of 1,663 responses. Through this process, strong support was received for the proposal which also provided valuable feedback on desired amenities, design preferences and anticipated usage.

EMBA initiated engagement with Indigenous communities through an Expression of Interest sent to contacts from Treaties 6, 7 and 8. This initiated lines of communication and provided Indigenous Nations and representatives the opportunity to:

- Offer feedback on the project direction and design
- Participate in site visits
- Engage in site monitoring at their discretion (once construction begins)
- Provide guidance and education to those performing work onsite

This engagement sought to foster respectful collaboration, integrate Indigenous knowledge and support cultural awareness throughout the project lifecycle.

In addition to these opportunities, the project team is advancing efforts to honour the relationship with the land through initiatives related to Indigenous planting, public art and milestone ceremonies. These elements are being developed in partnership with Indigenous communities to celebrate cultural connections and ensure meaningful representation of Indigenous presence and perspectives in the renewed site.

GBA+

The bike skills park is a recreational amenity designed to support both event programming with no charge for public access to users representing a broad range of abilities and ages. During the concept design phase of the project, EMBA utilized a diverse range of communication tactics and engagement strategies to promote equitable access and reduce barriers for interested parties to learn about the project and to share input. Together with an online survey, broad community awareness was achieved through city-wide rider events, local festivals and coverage from local news outlets.

Environment and Climate Review

The EIA report details pre-construction environmental conditions and planned mitigation measures to address potential impacts related to the project at Queen Elizabeth Park. These mitigation measures, applicable to both the construction phase and post-construction operation of the bike skills park, have been summarized in a previous section of this report. The following environmental aspects are also of note:

- The project site is located on the grounds of a former wastewater treatment plant. The EIA projects minimal soil disturbance during construction in this area; therefore, specific mitigation

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measures and notification requirements in the event that buried infrastructure or associated materials are discovered, will be addressed through the MIA.

- The EIA references the migratory bird nesting period for the Edmonton region extends from April 8 to August 24 and lists mitigation measures that include conducting a pre-disturbance wildlife sweep seven days prior to the commencement of any construction. The potential need to conduct multiple sweeps will be clarified through the MIA as the schedule for the work is confirmed.

EMBA is responsible for obtaining all necessary municipal, provincial and federal approvals or completion notifications before construction, and for ensuring ongoing compliance with all applicable environmental regulations and best practices as outlined in the EIA.

Attachments

1. Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study - Queen Elizabeth Park - Integrated Bike Skills Park (Version 4)
2. Project Location and Plan