

# Valley Line Stage 1 Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study Update

## Recommendation:

That Transportation Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and the Site Location Study Update for the Valley Line Stage 1, as set out in Attachments 1 and 2 of the March 25, 2015, Transportation Services report CR\_2201, be approved.
2. That the Major Facilities listed in Attachment 3 of the March 25, 2015, Transportation Services report CR\_2201, be approved as “Major Facilities” within the River Valley, and the location of the Major Facilities within the River Valley be deemed essential and approved pursuant to Section 3.5.1 of Bylaw 7188 – North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.
3. That the proposed upgrades for the construction access route through the west side of Louise McKinney Park as set out in Attachment 1, be approved pursuant to Section 3.4.3 of Bylaw 7188 – North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.

## Report Summary

This report requests City Council’s approval of the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and the Site Location Study Update for the Valley Line Stage 1 and the western construction access route, and that the location of the proposed major facilities be deemed essential and approved.

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 25, 2015, Transportation Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That a non-statutory public hearing be held at the March 25, 2015, Transportation Committee meeting at 9:30 a.m., on the Valley Line Stage 1 Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study.

At the September 18, 2013, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

1. That the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment and Site Location Study for the Southeast to West LRT (Valley Line) Stage 1 as shown in Attachments 1 and 2 of the August 21, 2013, Transportation report CR\_75, be approved.

**PLEASE RETAIN THIS REPORT FOR  
FUTURE MEETINGS.**

2. That the Major Facilities listed in Attachment 3 of the August 21, 2013 Transportation Services report CR\_75 be approved as "Major Facilities" within the River Valley, and that the location of the Major Facilities within the River Valley be deemed essential and approved pursuant to section 3.5.1 of Bylaw 7188 – North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.
3. That the direct river crossing be deemed essential and approved pursuant to section 3.4.1 of Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.

## Report

Bylaw 7188 - North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, (the "Bylaw") sets out transportation policies in Section 3.4 and the major facilities policies in Section 3.5.

The Valley Line Stage 1 is in the P3 procurement process and the Request for Proposal document was issued to three short-listed proponents in September 2014. The process will culminate in the City entering a Project Agreement with the selected P3 proponent. The 2013 Environmental Impact Screening Assessment acknowledged the potential for some project changes to occur during the project procurement phase, and beyond. To protect against unassessed impacts, the 2013 Environmental Impact Screening Assessment delineated a Project Area, which is an absolute boundary for construction-related activities. The 2013 Environmental Impact Screening Assessment report committed the City to subject any future proposed works that would require modification of lands or facilities outside of the approved Project Area, and within Bylaw 7188 limits, to further review.

Project planning, including public engagement, refinement of mitigation measures, and preparation of P3 procurement documents has progressed since September, 2013. This process has resulted in eight discrete project component changes that require adjustment of the Project Area boundaries and/or have potential to result in previously unassessed impacts. Attachment 1 details each project component, the rationale for changes, the required adjustments to the Project Area, identifies associated impacts and required mitigation commitments for all components.

Honouring the 2013 commitment, an Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and a Site Location Study Update were performed for these proposed eight discrete changes. These documents are included in Attachments 1 and 2. The Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update also documents four other minor adjustments to the Project Area required to accommodate refinement of previously approved activities, primarily previously approved mitigation measures.

The measures and recommendations set out in the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update will assist the City in the P3 process and will permit many of the potential impacts to be mitigated as discussed in Attachment 1.

### Residual Impacts and Monitoring Requirements

Of the eight project component changes, the North Valley Primary Construction Access Road has residual adverse impacts. There were residual impacts associated with other project component changes, but they were rated as positive or no adverse residual impacts.

For the North Valley Primary Construction Access Road, the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update determined that during construction, after the mitigation, there will be five residual, adverse, minor impacts to native vegetation, habitat connectivity during construction, the recreational pathway network, general park use and visual resources. Residual impacts associated with the removal of native vegetation (forest communities) will be evident until restoration efforts realize mature vegetation leading to a long-term, but not permanent, residual vegetation impact.

The assessment identified no ongoing monitoring requirements specific to these project components.

### Government Regulations

In addition to the Bylaw, several additional City bylaws and policies apply, including the Parkland Bylaw, Natural Area Systems Policy and Corporate Tree Management Policy.

These proposed changes do not alter the project's previously identified need for various Federal and Provincial environmental permits or approvals, pursuant to, but not limited to, the Federal *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and *Fisheries Act*, Alberta's *Public Lands Act* and *Water Act*. Clearance pursuant to *Alberta's Historical Resources Act*, considering the changes set out in the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update, was issued in December 2014.

### Timeline and Next Steps

Timely approval of the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study Update will allow administration to adjust the limits of work within the boundaries of the Bylaw during the Request for Proposals stage of the P3 procurement process. Approval of the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study Update is also required to advance works to be completed in 2015, including relocation and construction of the replacement of the Muttart Conservatory storage building and associated yard slightly southeast of the previously-approved location and a temporary trail connection in Louise McKinney Riverfront Park, to improve circulation during major construction.

### **Policy**

Bylaw 7188 – North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan

### **Corporate Outcomes**

This report contributes to the corporate outcomes “The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure” and “Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation” as the Valley Line Stage 1 LRT project will provide more sustainable transportation alternatives

### **Public Consultation**

A public open house was held on February 3, 2015, to inform the public of the changes, including the updated Project Area, and to provide an opportunity to comment on the changes and the assessed impact. The input received has been considered and reflected in the completion of the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study Update documents, particularly in the development of the final impact analysis and the mitigation strategy for these impacts. The input received from the open house will also be considered during the refinement of the Project Agreement, which will continue to capture all environmental and mitigation commitments made by the City.

The Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and the Site Location Study Update have been posted on the City’s Valley Line project website since early March 2015. Public awareness of the March 25, 2015, Non-Statutory Public Hearing was initiated through the open house notifications and the open house itself. The hearing was also promoted on the project’s webpages and through a public service announcement, newspaper advertisements, social media and a bulletin to email subscribers.

### **Legal Implications**

Section 3.4 of the Bylaw sets out the requirements for transportation corridors and facilities that fall within the boundaries of the Bylaw.

Compliance with Section 3.4.3 of the Bylaw requires City Council to approve the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update with respect to the western construction access route.

Negative impacts of transportation facilities and environmental impacts thereof must be eliminated, minimized or mitigated through design and landscaping measures, pursuant to Section 3.4.2 of the Bylaw.

Section 3.5 sets out the requirements for Major Facilities, that fall within the boundaries of the Bylaw.

Compliance with Section 3.5 of the Bylaw requires City Council to undertake a two part process:

1. The Major Facilities must be deemed essential.
2. If essential, the Major Facilities must be approved.

Proposals for the development of a major facility that is publicly owned or is developed on public lands shall be subject to an environmental impact screening assessment and a detailed site location study detailing costs, and social, environmental and institutional constraints which make a River Valley location essential must be prepared for Council approval, pursuant to Section 3.5.3. of the Bylaw.

### Justification of Recommendation

1. Approval of the Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and the Site Location Study Update is required to meet the requirements set out under the Bylaw.
2. Section 3.5.1 of the Bylaw states: "It is a policy of this Plan that major public facilities shall not be constructed or expanded unless their location within the River Valley is deemed essential and approved by City Council."
3. Section 3.4.3 of the Bylaw states: "It is a policy of this Plan that proposals for the upgrading of approved transportation corridors and attendant facilities be subject to an environmental impact screening assessment (Schedule D) and that the identified adverse impacts be eliminated, minimized or mitigated through design and landscaping measures".

### Attachments

1. City of Edmonton - Valley Line Stage 1- Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project - Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update (including Executive Summary) (**Attachment 1 has been provided on a CD**)
2. City of Edmonton - Valley Line Stage 1- Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project - Site Location Study Update (including Executive Summary)
3. List of Major Facilities
4. Public Engagement Report

**\*\*Note:** Attachment 1 has been provided on a CD. Due to its size Administration has not printed individual copies but will have copies available for public viewing at the Office of the City Clerk. Attachment 1 is available on the website at: [www.edmonton.ca/meetings](http://www.edmonton.ca/meetings)

### Others Reviewing this Report

- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services
- K. Rozmahel, General Manager, Corporate Services
- R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development