

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT

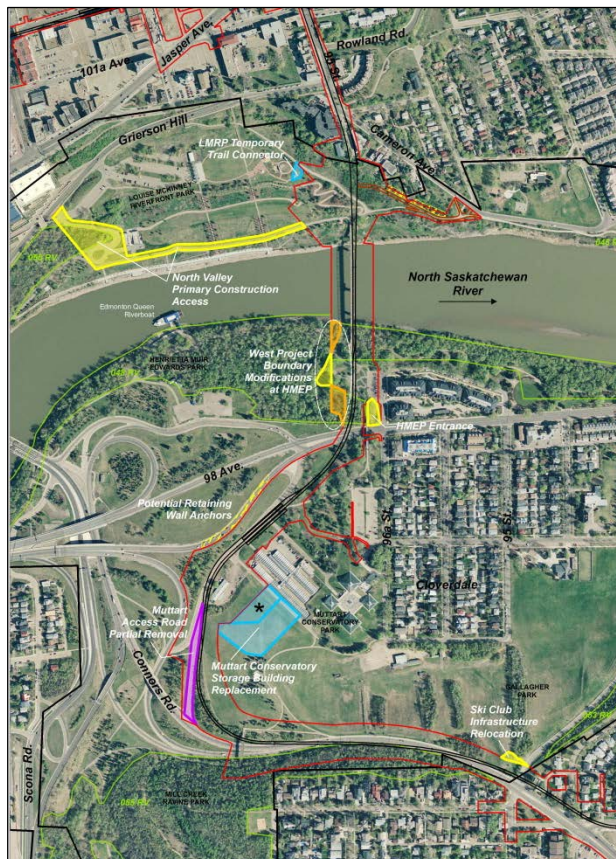
## Valley Line LRT Project - Stage One

### Open House

### Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update and Site Location Study Update

February 3, 2015

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Prepared by:

LRT Design & Construction

February 19, 2015

## Background

Public input has played an essential role in shaping the Valley Line LRT, from the identification of the corridor in 2009 through the development of the concept plan to the completion of preliminary design in 2013. Thousands of Edmontonians have been engaged through meetings, presentations, open houses and online. This commitment to public involvement, mandated by City policy, is ongoing, and has extended to the consideration of potential environmental impacts, particularly in the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

An Environmental Impact Screening Assessment (EISA) and associated Site Location Study (SLS) were conducted pursuant to Bylaw 7188 (the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan) by Spencer Environmental Management Services Ltd in 2013. This work, applied to the Project Area in the river valley as established in the early stages of design, included consideration of public input received throughout the concept development and preliminary design phases.

## Situation Analysis

Since the EISA and SLS were completed and approved by City Council in 2013, there have been a number of mostly minor adjustments to the project and its boundaries, primarily in response to issues and concerns identified by stakeholders during the preliminary design process. These boundary changes have triggered the need for an update to the EISA and SLS, to be the subject of a non-statutory hearing at the Transportation Committee before consideration by Council.

Reinforcing the City's commitment to public involvement on the Valley Line Project, the City's Guide to Environmental Review Requirements in the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine Systems requires that an Environmental Impact Assessment "include public participation as appropriate to the scope and scale of the project" and that concerns of affected groups should be taken into account. The guide offers the following as some methods of public participation:

1. Letters of notification - to affected landowners and interest groups to solicit input;
2. Surveys of public opinion - can provide development options early in the process;
3. Newspaper advertisements - can provide project information to a large audience;
4. Open House - concept drawings are presented for public review and comment;
5. Public Meeting - concept drawings are presented for public review and comment, presentation by consultant, question and answer period.

## Public Engagement Objectives

- Satisfy the requirements of Bylaw 7188 by:
  - Creating awareness of the project adjustments
  - Providing an opportunity for public input
- Ensure project adjustments and the context of EISA update are understood
- Exhibit responsiveness to public issues and concerns
- Demonstrate process transparency

## Target Audience

- River valley users and residents
- City Council
- General public
- Media

## Engagement Strategy

### *Considerations*

Factors considered in ensuring the approach to public participation would be appropriate to fulfil the project's obligations under the Bylaw and to achieve public engagement objectives include:

- The significance of the river valley and the community's interest in any plans in which it is involved
- The relatively minor nature of the Project Area changes triggering the need for the update
- The exhaustive assessment (with public participation) that has previously taken place and does not require revisiting
- Public expectations with respect to engagement
- Schedule

### *Approach*

Given the above context, the adopted approach to support the sharing of information and collection of input to be considered in completing the updates to the EISA and SLS was to:

- Stage a public open house
- Notify stakeholders and the public in advance of the open house via a range of methods
- Post information and feedback materials on the City's website

## Open House

Information describing the changes to the 2013 EISA and SLS was presented to the public at a drop-in open house held February 3, 2015, at the Old Timer's Cabin at 9430 Scona Road. Representatives from LRT Design and Construction and Spencer Environmental Management Services Ltd. were present to engage attendees.

The session featured ten main display panels:

- Welcome / Purpose and Objectives
- The EISA and the Update
- Past Environmental Impact Assessment /2013 EISA Highlights (2 panels)
- Project Changes Being Assessed (4 panels)
- Next Steps
- Comments, Please

There were also supplementary panels unrelated to the EISA/SLS update, illustrating:

- Trail Detours – Keeping River Valley Trails Accessible
- Ongoing Engagement

A fact sheet and a comment form were made available as printed handouts, along with the 64-page detailed Valley Line detailed information booklet published in fall 2013 and other project information materials. The display panels and an online version of the comment form were posted on the City’s website the day following the open house to allow additional information-sharing and feedback.

## Publicity and Notification

A multi-channel approach was taken to raise awareness of the open house:

<u>Method</u>	<u>Detail</u>
Web notice	The project web page at <a href="http://www.edmonton.ca/valleyline">www.edmonton.ca/valleyline</a> was updated with information about the EISA update and the open house on January 16, 2016
Public engagement calendar	Event details were shared on the City’s online public engagement calendar
Direct mail	Announcements were sent by mail to more than 2,300 households in the river valley area on January 16, 2015
Roadside signs	Signs were placed in four high-visibility locations along heavily-travelled routes through the river valley on January 19, 2015
Newspaper advertisements	Advertisements were placed in the Journal, Sun and Examiner newspapers, with a total of five appearances between January 21 and January 31, 2015
Subscribed email	An email bulletin was broadcast to more than 900 Valley Line email subscribers on January 21, 2015
Public Service Announcement	A public service announcement, which also served as a media advisory, was issued on February 2, 2015
Twitter	Notice of the open house was tweeted on February 2 and 3, 2015
Facebook	A notification was posted on the City of Edmonton Facebook page on February 3, 2015

## Attendance and Results

### *Attendance*

Attendance was moderate, with a total of approximately 108 visitors. Comment forms were completed and returned by 22 people at the venue, which is a moderately-low on-site written feedback rate of 20%. Following the information session, as of February 19, 2015, three online submissions were also received.

Table 1

<b>Attendance and Written Feedback Summary</b>		
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Feedback Forms on Site</b>	<b>Total Feedback Submissions</b>
108	22 (20%)	25 (23% of session attendance)

## ***Feedback***

Attendees' questions and topics of discussion indicated that the interest of many visitors extended well beyond the EISA update and its catalysts, which were the focus of the session, to such previously-established design elements as alignment (including the replacement of the Cloverdale footbridge), the supporting infrastructure near the Muttart Conservatory and methods of maintaining wildlife passage.

This had been anticipated in the feedback questionnaire, which, in addition to soliciting input specific to the EISA update, sought consequential feedback (to determine if views had changed as a result of the City's response to issues identified in preliminary design consultations) and provided an opportunity for respondents to highlight other issues or concerns.

## **Questionnaire & Results**

The first question on the comment form dealt specifically with the Project Area changes leading to the EISA and SLS update. The three questions and comment opportunities that followed addressed the project changes less directly, but provided some insight into respondents' perspectives. Subsequent questions dealt with the effectiveness and clarity of project communications and other issues.

1. *In your opinion, will the changes to the Valley Line Project Area described at this Open House help achieve the desired result of addressing the identified concerns and mitigating related impacts to the river valley? (Yes/No, with opportunity to elaborate)*

As shown in Figure 1, those responding were fairly evenly divided in their views, with nine of the 21 responses to this question indicating that the changes were positive and nine indicating they would not help address concerns. Three others were unsure.

Accompanying written comments were provided most often to elaborate on "no" responses, with the prevailing theme being that the changes to the Project Area were minor in nature and not significant enough to address more general concerns about the overall impact of the LRT and related infrastructure to the river valley.

Figure 1

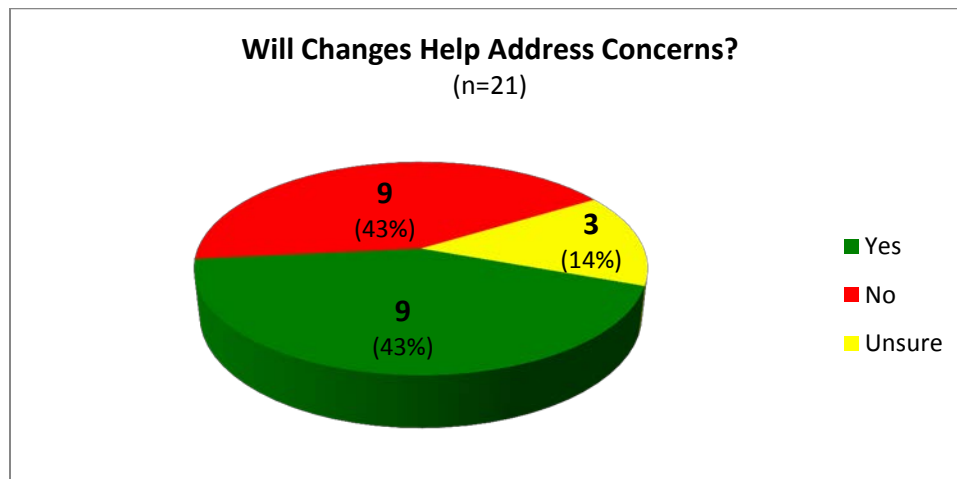


Table 2

Comments – Will Changes Help Address Concerns?
Nobody made themselves available to discuss the route - the impact on communities or the parkland.
Still vague. Many areas still to be determined. Dates. Impact
It seems to me that eventually the river valley will be returned to its beautiful, useful self! The trail detour in Riverdale will make hard work for cyclists.
Maybe
Some, not all. 1. Why tear down a building (Muttart) and construct another on parkland. Why not relocate out of the valley. Don't use valuable green space. 2. Why have a siding in a river valley. Use a parking lot (Bonnie Doon) instead. This would allow the saving of a valuable 2 way road to get into SKI CLUB. 3. Add a snowshed over Connors Road and push the road in more to get SKI park area on north part of Connors Road. Reduce Noise.
Concerns re: the large siding area situated @ service road area by Muttart, also want to house spare LRT trains etc using large amount of additional space - this could be located out of Green / River valley space (i.e. Bonnie Doon)
Please keep the river valley as a green space with minimal impact, so few cities have kept their river valley as parkland and it adds a lot to Edmonton.
I feel concerns about the river crossing location have never been fully addressed.
Although minor changes have been made this does not mitigate the overall effect this

project will have on the river valley.
Although I don't oppose the taking down of the footbridge, it will inconvenience me and many others for a long time. This is one concern that doesn't seem to have been addressed.
I do feel that the city entrenched in a course without enough input - input came in delayed & so better ideas were not entertained. This is the biggest concern - shut down by Iveson. ("it's done deal")
I am very happy about the plan
More of the same old "PR" for predetermined decisions without listening to "People" concerns over logical design instead of the "Environment" which will go on and heal itself as the Valley has done for a hundred years!!
I did not notice any significant changes.
The line is to go up Conners Rd which skirts the hill. No one could tell me if the uphill park, which is a wildlife corridor, would be cut into or it would be into a cantilevered to the downhill side.
Yes and No. The changes related to construction staging on the north bank and around Edwards park are good. Ditto for regrading to mitigate ski club impacts. However, the changes associated with the Muttart access road and storage building do not address the longstanding concern of river valley stakeholders that the storage building and rail siding (which necessitates the access road reduction to one-way) are peripheral LRT infrastructure which is inappropriate in the river valley parklands and will inhibit the future recreational potential of the affected lands, including the proposed ski club redevelopment.

2. *What is your level of confidence that the City will stand by its commitment to ensure minimization and mitigation of project impacts in the river valley? (High/Moderately High/Neither High nor Low/Moderately Low/Low, with opportunity to elaborate)*
3. *Is this level of confidence: higher, lower or about the same as before?*

About one-third of respondents to this question expressed confidence in the City's commitment to ensure minimization and mitigation of project impacts in the river valley (Figure 2). Fewer than half the respondents indicated a low or moderately low level of confidence, while nearly one-quarter did not feel strongly either way. Figure 3 shows that views of the vast majority (78%) were unchanged from previously; two respondents were more confident and two were less confident in the City's commitment than in the past. Many of those lacking in confidence appeared to base their views on the Valley Line alignment choice.

Figure 2

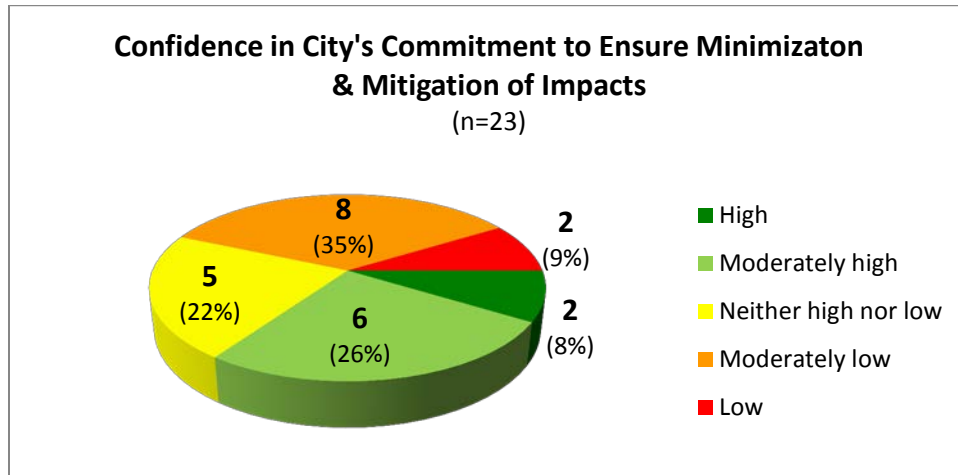


Figure 3

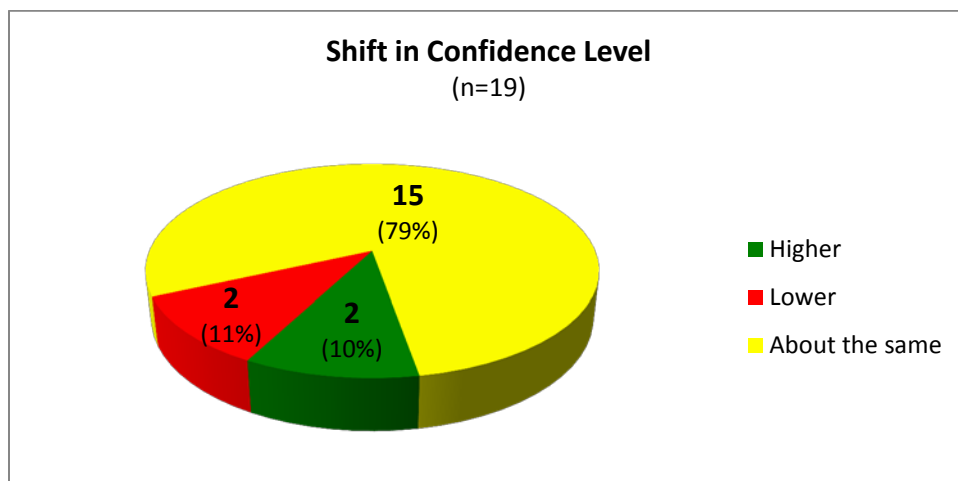


Table 3

<b>Comments – Confidence in City’s Commitment to Minimize &amp; Mitigate Impacts</b>
I live above the route, literally. The city has done an extremely poor job of keeping people in the neighbourhood aware of this project.
Many variables to be considered. Contracts not awarded. In final decisions contractors will have most influence.
In the early 20th century Edmonton's city fathers said the river valley & river valley vistas belong to the citizens. We have sometimes deviated from that building houses/apartments on the edge of the bank or in the river valley too close to the river. Commitment to the valley wavers from time to time! I hope this council's commitment is strong.



Given the first 2 above. <i>[refers to “moderately low” response and 3-item response to #1]</i>
The Cloverdale Area has already had to face & accept a great deal of impact to the area; seeing some efforts @ minimizing it while alternatively having little in satisfactory solution for typical use of River Valley by residents & other users. Concern re: foot travel to work in downtown. Low Level Bridge crossing alone is NOT satisfactory.
Is construction around the Muttart necessary? e.g. added building and can the extra track close to the Muttart be relocated.
Because alternate routes for the river crossing seemed to never be considered (e.g. crossing near 99 St bridge instead of footbridge) I have little confidence in the city's commitment to minimize impacts.
Because this is a P3 project the city's commitment to valley preservation is subject to the needs of the consortium that will eventually build the project.
I'm really not sure what the city's track record has been on such things, so I have neither a high nor low level of confidence. I certainly hope it does because the river valley is very important to the city.
The problem here is that the city needs to show their "due diligence" (the slant of Env. Imp. Study). Once everyone is shut up, the 3P's will unfold about how A. Henday did. I'm skeptical.
I am worry about the footbridge over the river and the trails below Convention Centre. I hope the footbridge stay open before they build the new bridge. I hope they keep the trails open so the walker, runners and riding the bike. I am sorry that the trails are going close for awhile. It's o.k.
A second bridge would be of negligible impact to the environment!!
To often the is much distruction of trees, gardens with the comment "Oh they will be replaced". They cannot be replaced in my lifetime.
As above, the positioning of peripheral infrastructure in the central valley parklands violates the commitment to minimize project impacts in the region, and is further a violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the River Valley Bylaw. It is understood that the storage building is a Parks/Muttart project, which has been dumped on Transportation to defend and execute. The refusal of Parks/Muttart to take responsibility for public engagement on this is inexcusable.

4. *Are there any specific issues you wish to draw to our attention?*

Specific issues raised were wide-ranging, including park and neighbourhood impacts, detours for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, disappointment over the replacement of the Cloverdale footbridge, the design on Connors Hill, the public-private partnership arrangement, general alignment and adequate ridership concerns.

Table 4

Specific Issues
Vehicle traffic detours & impacts on Folk Festival access
It is still not very clear how a pedestrian would get from the top of Connors Road to the Low Level Bridge and up the hill from there. Eva showed me an interesting option tonight. It should be highlighted better in your presentations.
Why was this route chosen? Which were the other routes voiced? Why tunnel on an old coal mine? The impact on the parkland after construction
Impact on Cameron Ave. Proposed temporary access to south at Cameron - impact on vegetation. Impact of vibrations of LRT to homes along the way.
Nothing you have not already considered like reinforcing the bank on the south side of Connors Road where the road will be moved closer to the bank.
Previously the city talked about 3 options for Connors Road depending how far they would move into the bank below the houses. I understood one assumption would cost \$13 million more & result in total road closure. I cannot tell if this option was rejected as previously or compromised.
No other ones. Great work done, let's look after these easy fixes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- minimize effect of structures on an area meant to be a green/recreational river valley (meant for biking/walking to work as well).</li> <li>- Keep the area as usually unaffected as possible</li> <li>- River crossing replacement / ferry</li> <li>- consider actual use of Muttart storage bldg. – if Parks uses it primarily, this use should be housed elsewhere</li> </ul>
I have heard about a small ferry connecting to the north and south shore. This could be a useful way of crossing the river during construction of the bridge and a tourist attraction if it is advertised. There is landings on both sides.
As a resident and owner at "The View" condominium, I have ongoing concerns about the city's commitment to the integrity of our building during construction and with many years of the LRT running under the building. I have little faith that the city intends to protect the many homeowners should be building be adversely affected.
When it comes to the movement of Connors Road, the geotechnical study of the south bank needs to consider the fact that the former garbage dump has underground roots all the way up the hill.
Yes. The city's commitment to river valley preservation has not stopped a planned route through natural areas. The administration was instructed to use an existing

transportation corridor. It chose a footbridge. And although the footbridge was identified as a transportation corridor the city did not identify the amount of usage until after the route was chosen.

Just perhaps more clarification about the length of time the Cloverdale footbridge and environs will be inaccessible - I've heard everything from 2 years to 4 years. If possible, please attach specific dates that that phase of construction and inform bridge users of their possible trail alternatives e.g. Dawson bridge, James McDonald, the new Walterdale etc. not just the Low Level.

The so called "Valley Line" is not aptly named. It makes it sound like it's a good idea to run a concrete train track through Edmonton's much heralded river valley. Section 3.2.12 of Bylaw 7188 (N.S.R.V. ARP) states "it is the policy of this Plan...to restrict vehicular penetration through recreational and park area."

A second bridge.

I find it troubling that the City is proceeding to give even more more contract to a LRT Project than the Nait line, when experience has shown that contractor do not have the ability to deliver a LRT Project on time.

Why are you running this line at all? Currently there are 2 busses going to millwoods after 6 PM from downtown. Do you want to go through all of the expence and disruption just to have a LRT Line to run empty for essentially 12 hours a day. If there is a need why not have more busses running to millwoods. Why go surface downtown? Stop this Project now before more money is wasted.

Conners Rd. see #1

Oversight of P3 contracts (to my knowledge) is generally done by contractor.

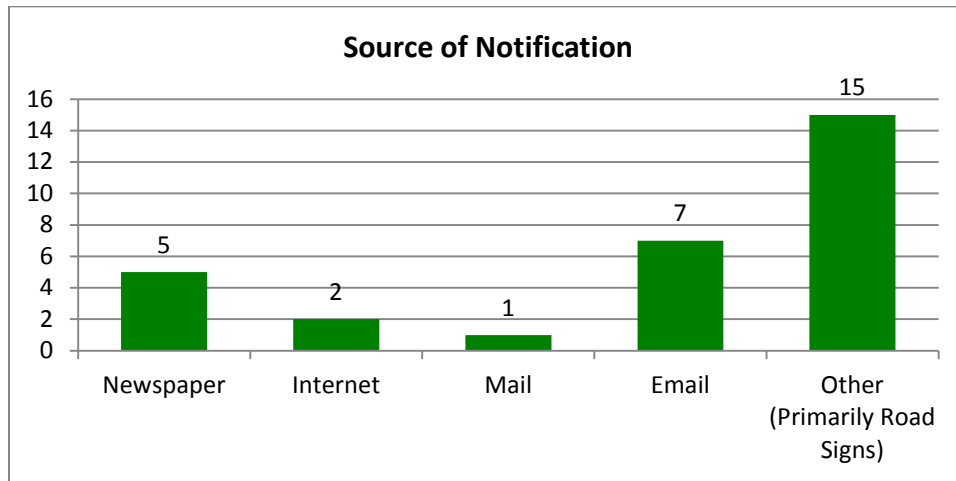
This may open the door to laxity or short cuts. I hope City staff will be "on the ground" & will build w rigorous oversight of the sensitive areas to be performed by city, not contractor, staff into the DBFO contract documents.

The detour strategy during the footbridge closure was decided without adequate public engagement or consultation. Beyond the survey taken last spring, there was no public discussion of detour options, and the Low Level Bridge solution was announced at the EISA updates event as a fait accompli, even though it is not part of the EISA updates, and therefore not subject to formal consideration and approval by city council.

5. How did you learn about the open house?

Road signs appeared to be particularly effective.

Figure 4



6. Was the material clearly presented and explained?

Most respondents found the information materials and explanations understandable. Some expressed a desire for more project background information.

Figure 5

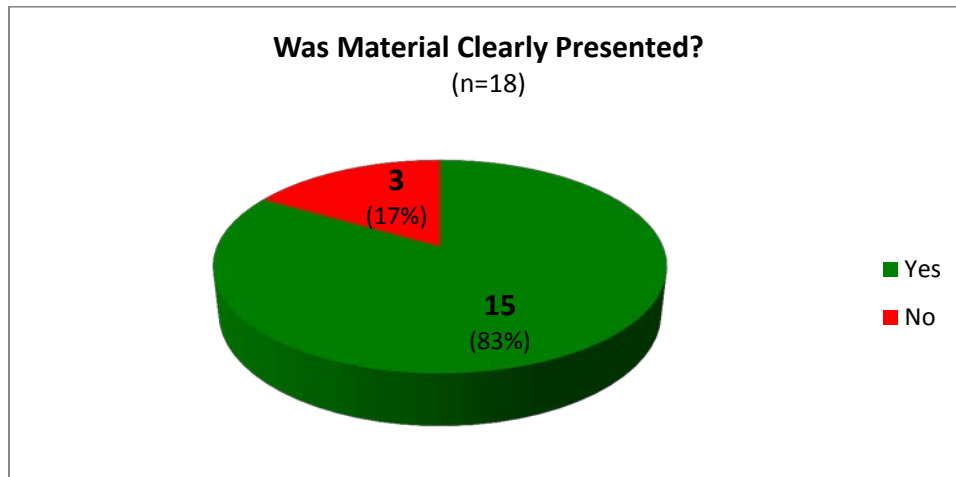


Table 5

Comments – Clarity of Material
Small maps of area south of river.
Awareness via roadside sign
Would have been nice to have a 1/2 presentation to fully understand it. Drawings don't really explain a great deal.

Although light is not great in Cabin.
The information did not address my concerns about our building.
Having city staff available to explain the maps was helpful.
In some ways, I thought what is happening is laid out well...but the questions of how layout came to be....
Not sure of the point of tonight, it did not say anything
See #1
Seems strange to bring 2013 material instead of up to date brochures.
Reasonably so, although the maps provide no detail on the exact position of the Muttart storage building or the size of its driveway and parking lot.

6. *Do you have any additional comments?*

In many cases, additional comments tended to reinforce comments made elsewhere on the response form.

Table 6

<b>Additional Comments</b>
I might consider being on your community consultation committee.
I think it is important to know that not everyone believes LRT is the future of a city like Edmonton. You will never change the fact that the city was built for car transportation. Unless you curb urban growth and actually take driving options away - this will not change the number of cars on the road - making the LRT a niche project at the expense of the river valley.
This project is vital to Edmonton - currently big car country. Hopefully more people will be encouraged to use public transit.
Would be nice to listen more to the community members about what they would like to see in their areas. Some consideration has been listened to but others have just basically done what the city wants seen. Also having LRT committee deal more with the renewal neighbourhood committee because the 2 committees are doing different things & will not address certain issues & blame the other as to why they aren't listening to community members.
I worry about the stability of the bank and house above Connors Road.
I have great concerns with how the city is dealing with our building (The View) during this project. It feels like the building is "in the way" and I hold little hope that our building will hold its value, or the city will compensate us if anything goes wrong.
Parkland should not be sacrificed for mass transit. A route could have been chosen that

would have had far less impact on the North Saskatchewan River Valley.
More information about specific construction dates would be useful, once dates are more final. - thanks.
Section 4.3 Transportation of Bylaw 7188 states "Future transportation uses follow the intent of the General Municipal Plan Bylaw 6000 which limits...transportation facilities to direct crossings of The River Valley..." The current alignment meanders & hangs around in the Valley (i.e. rail siding etc). The current alignment, to the loss of all of us, goes against the spirit of 7188, put in place to protect what it too generations of Edmontonians to build. Use the low level corridor instead.
- confused as to why the city spent all the time/money in 2013 on the design drawings when it is being left to the contractor to do what they want, within guidelines. - So, can we fire the city of edmonton design department, as contractors are now doing it
I would think it far more necessary to run a line to West Edm Mall / Lewis Farms before millwoods, unless there is a reason that City Hall doesn't want us to know. Perhaps councilor Sohi should talk to us about thisngs of this nature. I want to hear in the news, this project is stopped now!
Would like to know what sophistication the City has in dealing with the P3 model of work. Without significant experience at the management levels you may find things could quickly spiral out of control once the contract is let.
We are generally supportive of the project and appreciative of Transportation's public engagement efforts and responses to concerns like the track positioning on Connors Hill Road, the mitigation of negative impacts on the ski club, and the public commitments to ensure the ongoing operations of the club and the folk festival.  Our only significant remaining unresolved design concerns are the storage building and the siding. Neither seems insurmountable and we implore you to reconsider the positioning of these peripheral infrastructures in the valley as part of your commitment to minimize impacts here.

## Media

The open house was attended by several representatives of the media including: CTV, CBC, Global, NAIT News and 630CHED.

## Next Steps

Environmental impacts and impact reductions arising from the project adjustments will continue to be assessed. The results of the assessment, as well as the public input received at

the open house, will be included in the EISA and SLS update report to the Transportation Committee and City Council.

Beyond the environmental assessment process itself, all environmental protection and mitigation commitments will continue to be captured in the Project Agreement. In addition, issues and concerns identified at the open house are being reviewed, and opportunities to address these matters are being explored.

The City is committed to continuous improvement in all of its operations, including public engagement, and citizen feedback related to all aspects of the Valley Line project will be considered in pursuit of this goal. As the Valley Line project proceeds through procurement and preliminary design to construction, public involvement will continue to have a high priority. Methods of engagement will include five new community-based Citizen Working Groups, which will provide a platform for ongoing information-sharing and dialogue.