

Riverside Trail Realignment

Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study

Recommendation

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the Riverside Trail Realignment Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study, as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 of the November 10, 2020, Integrated Infrastructure Services report CR_8444, be approved.
2. That the river valley locations of the Riverside Trail Realignment infrastructure, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the November 10, 2020, Integrated Infrastructure Services report CR_8444, be deemed essential and approved pursuant to Section 3.5.1 of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, Bylaw 7188.

Executive Summary

The Riverside Trail is a well used, granular trail that runs between the Riverside Golf Course and the North Saskatchewan River. The trail is damaged in several locations due to high water events and has been closed to the public for several years. The proposed trail realignment and rehabilitation work in seven locations will ensure that Edmontonians will be able to enjoy the trail safely into the future.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (Attachment 1) and a Site Location Study (Attachment 2) have been prepared for the project.

The Environmental Impact Assessment concludes that with mitigation measures applied most impacts were reduced to negligible levels. The Site Location Study concludes that the proposed locations for the realignment of existing trail sections are located within the boundaries of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.

Report

The Riverside Trail is a well used, granular trail that runs between the Riverside Golf Course and the North Saskatchewan River. It connects Dawson Bridge and the paved multi-use trail leading to Capilano Bridge.

In recent years, the Riverside Trail has been damaged in several locations due to high water events, which caused bank erosion, top-of-bank trail instability and slumping. As a result, the trail has been closed to the public for several years. Pedestrians and cyclists have continued using the trail despite closure signage being in place.

It is anticipated that future high water events will further limit trail functionality in the affected areas. The proposed trail realignment and other rehabilitation work will address the trail impacts resulting from the erosion activity and ensure that Edmontonians will be able to enjoy the trail safely into the future.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (Attachment 1) and a Site Location Study (Attachment 2) have been prepared for the seven rehabilitation locations to meet the requirements of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 7188).

The Environmental Impact Assessment concludes that with mitigation measures applied, most impacts will be reduced to negligible levels, including loss or alteration of native forest. One impact related to wildlife alienation due to construction noise could not be fully mitigated. Mitigation measures, including a restoration plan developed through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, will be implemented during detailed design and construction.

The Site Location Study reviews the seven locations, the proposed rehabilitation work and the social, financial, environmental and institutional opportunities and constraints that informed the selection of preferred alignments. The study concludes that the proposed locations for the realignment of existing trail sections will be located within the boundaries of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan.

Construction of the seven realigned or otherwise rehabilitated sections of trail is scheduled to commence in spring 2021.

Budget/ Financial Implications

This work is funded through capital profile CM-31-0000, Open Space: River Valley System Renewal.

Legal Implications

The North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan Bylaw 7188, requires City Council to approve the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Site Location Study before the proposed development can proceed. Further, Bylaw 7188 requires the new site locations of the Riverside Trail Realignments to be deemed essential and approved by City Council prior to construction.

Public Engagement

The City held two stakeholder engagement events for the Riverside Golf Course leagues in September 2019 and June 2020 to advise them of the proposed realignment of the Riverside Trail locations. No concerns regarding the realignment of fencing or screening were raised.

The project team will continue to collaborate with the Riverside Golf Course and the golf leagues as the trail realignment project advances to the next phases.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living	City Park Usage (percent of survey respondents who report using a City park in the last 12 months)	89% (2017)	83% (2018)
Parks, green spaces, natural areas, river valley are available and accessible	Availability: Residential open space access (current amount of public open space per 1,000 residents)	7.6 hectares (2016) city-wide average	TBD through Breathe implementation
	Accessibility: Park space proximity (% of dwelling units within distance and time to open space)	94% within 400m or a 5 min walk (2016) 99% within 800m or a 10 min walk (2016)	

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
Public Liability (Public Safety)	If not approved, the trail realignments will not be completed and the community will continue to use dangerous paths as the trail continues to slump and deteriorate.	2 - Unlikely	3 - Major	6 - Low	Approval is recommended. Ensure current trail information and project information is available to the public and stakeholders.	Set up physical barriers and re-naturalize the sites to address access.

Environmental	If not approved, use of the trails will persist and unmitigated impacts will continue due to informal detours.	2 - Unlikely	2 - Moderate	6 - Low	Approval is recommended. Ensure current trail information and project information is available to the public and stakeholders.	Set up physical barriers and re-naturalize the sites to address access.
Construction Impact	If approved, construction activity will result in temporary negative impact to the trail users and environment.	4 - Likely	2 - Moderate	8 - Medium	Establish construction limits and adequate public safety controls prior to starting construction. Limit noise and impact to trees.	During construction, delineate and fence the project work area to minimize disturbance.

Attachments

1. Riverside Trail Realignment Environmental Impact Assessment
2. Riverside Trail Realignment Site Location Study

Others Reviewing this Report

- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor