

# All-Season Adventure/Activity Park Concept Plan

## Recommendation

That the December 2, 2020, Citizen Services report CR\_7837, be received for information.

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 4, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee the following motion was passed:

That Administration further engage with the community and develop a concept plan for an all-season adventure/activity centre at Rafter's Landing and/or Dawson Park, and provide a report to Committee.

## Executive Summary

The North Saskatchewan River and the adjacent parkland and trail system support a variety of recreational opportunities and programs. Administration explored the idea of an all-season adventure/activity centre but due to a number of factors such as emerging financial constraints, limited staff resources, and reduced public engagement opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was put on pause. Future work would need to align with the Reimagine work looking at levels of service in Parks and Open Spaces, the priorities identified in the capital plan, and the Ribbon of Green Master Plan update.

## Report

There are eight hand launches, six docks, and two vehicular launches that serve as river access points in Edmonton. These access points enable the general public, non-profit organizations, commercial operators, and emergency responders to access the river. There are also a number of partner groups that provide programming opportunities for citizens to access the river.

In 2018, the Edmonton Paddling Centres Association, a group of non-profit paddle sport clubs, requested that the City explore increasing canoe, kayak, and paddling access to the river, including disabled access and storage. This request evolved into a concept plan for an all-season adventure/activity centre that would support a variety of river-based activities.

### Policy and Strategic Alignment

Several policies and plans provide guidance to recreational uses and activities on parkland, including:

- Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy (2017)
- Ribbon of Green SW & NE (2020)
- the Ribbon of Green Concept Plan (1990) and Master Plan (1992)
- North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (1985)

Planning for an adventure/activity centre will be informed by the upcoming work on:

- Reimagine Parks and Open Spaces, which may provide guidance on park use and service provision.
- Ribbon of Green, which establishes policy guidelines for the long-term programming, development, use, and care of the entire river valley. Specifically, the next phase of work includes the central river valley and will align with City Policy C586 - River Access Guiding Principles.
- The River Access Strategy will inform the programming, operation, and infrastructure improvements that support access to the river and activities associated with the river.
- North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan which protects the river valley and ravine system as part of Edmonton's valuable open space heritage. The plan establishes the requirement that proposed major public facilities be deemed essential by City Council through the evaluation of an environmental impact assessment and site location study. Administration is advancing the modernization of the plan concurrently with the next phase of the Ribbon of Green to ensure alignment with the City's planning framework.

### All-season Adventure/Activity Centre Update

Administration has been developing the business case for the project, which would be required to move this project into the concept phase per the Project Development and Delivery Model and City Policy C591 - Capital Project Governance. The following has been completed:

- Project plan to Checkpoint 1
- Strategy alignment
- Environmental scan
- Draft public engagement survey

### COVID-19 and Budgeting Priorities

The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in reduced resources and impacts to public engagement and therefore the project has been put on pause. Currently, there is no external partner with the financial resources to advance this project further. If the City were to advance the project, once the strategy work and business case are completed, additional resources would be required to get the project to Project Development and Delivery Model Checkpoint 3 (development design). Administration estimates the costs

to do this would be between \$500,000 and \$750,000. No funding source currently exists for this work.

Significant work remains to be completed before capital funding is required. Next steps include:

1. Explore alternatives for what an adventure/activity centre would include with input from the paddling groups, other river-based stakeholders, internal stakeholders, and the public.
2. Public engagement to find the level of support from the general public.
3. Determine high level options for potential locations that could support these activities, including Dawson Park and Rafter's Landing.

Any future work would need to align with Reimagine, the 10 year capital priority plan, and the Ribbon of Green Master Plan update.

### Partnerships and Public Support

While there is strong support from the paddling partner groups, a partner has not come forward with the capacity or the financial commitment to begin the community-led construction process to develop this type of facility. A new community group or commercial operator may come forward to continue this work in the future.

Public engagement has been impacted by COVID-19, including public health guidance (e.g., physical distancing requirements making workshops impractical), community readiness, and public opinion. Before advancing this project any further, it is recommended that public engagement be conducted to understand the public support and demand for an all season adventure/activity centre.

### Update on Paddling Storage

A driver of the initial motion in 2018 was the loss of paddling storage facilities at Queen Elizabeth Park due to the demolition of the decommissioned wastewater treatment plant. This storage facility had been in use by the Ceyana Canoe Club for 30 years before it was demolished.

In 2020, the City and the Edmonton Paddling Centres Association (which represents many paddling groups, including Ceyana Canoe Club) identified options for the expansion of existing storage at Buena Vista Park and Rundle Park to meet the demand. This project is currently in the design phase of the community led construction process and expected timelines to meet their storage needs is Spring 2021. Administration currently maintains agreements with four Edmonton Paddling Centres Association organizations to support their storage and operational needs in the River Valley. This expanded storage at Rundle and Buena Vista Parks will be included within two of these existing agreements.

**Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management**

<b>Corporate Outcome:</b> Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living			
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Target</b>
Boat launch, dock and storage facilities are accessible and appropriate for community needs	Overall facility and attractions customer satisfaction	2018: 89 percent	Ongoing: 90 percent
Facilities are designed consistent with City priorities for accessibility and sustainability	Recreation facility and attractions attendance	2019: 9,090,462	Ongoing: 9,000,000

**Others Reviewing this Report**

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- M. Persson, Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- J. Meliefste, Acting Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor