



# RIBBON *of* GREEN

## WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

*Phase 3: Plan Our Ribbon | July 2018*

Prepared for  
City of Edmonton

Prepared by  
O2 Planning + Design Inc.

|                                  |           |
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## Ribbon of Green Plan (2018) Project Overview

The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is the Edmonton region's greatest natural asset and a significant contributor to the quality of life of Edmontonians. Long established as a gathering place for Indigenous Nations and then fur traders, Edmontonians continue to value the conservation and celebration of the natural and cultural heritage of the River Valley.

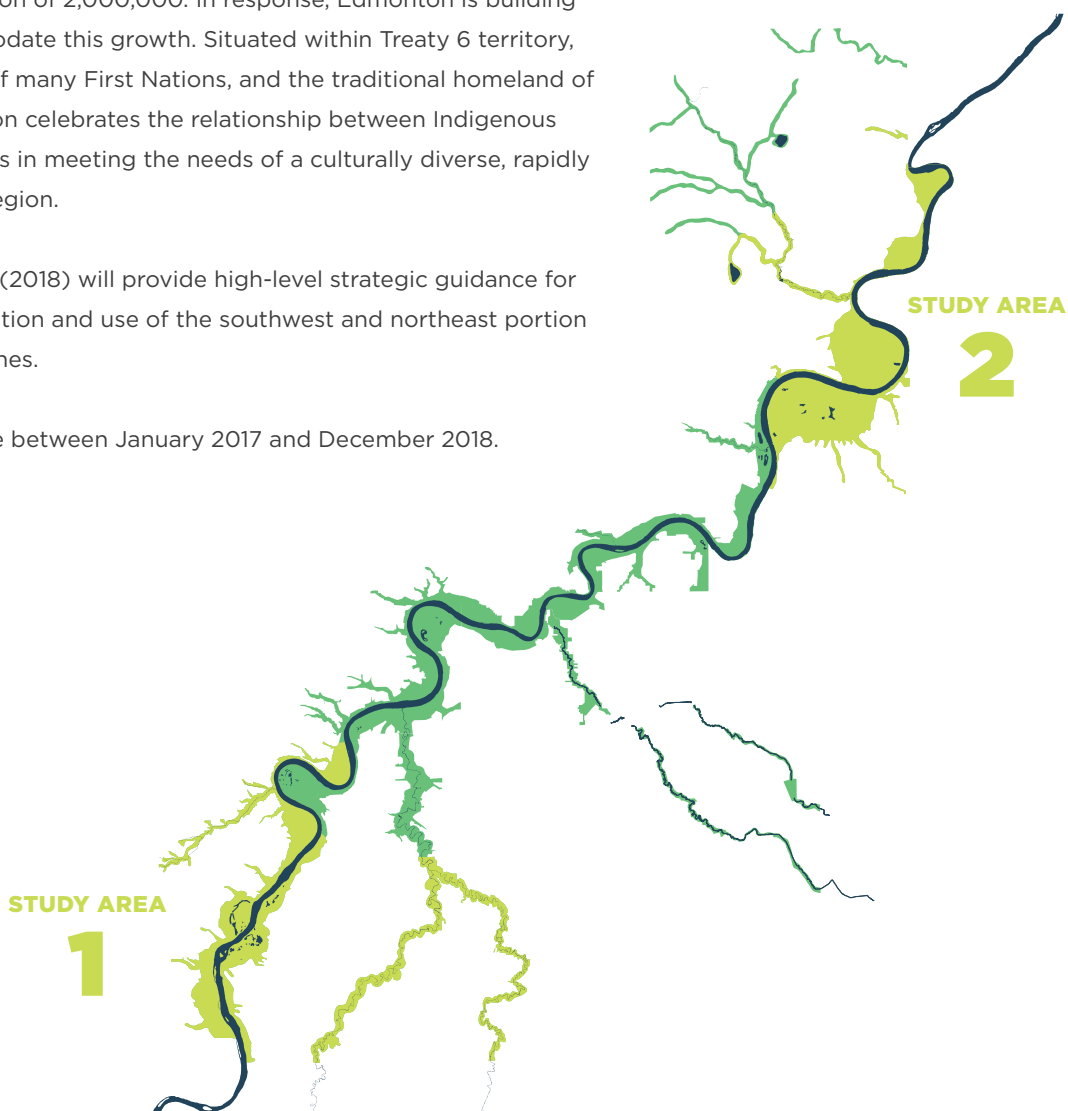
In 1990, The Ribbon of Green Concept Plan provided a foundation for the planning, management and prioritization of park development within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System.

In 1992, The Ribbon of Green Master Plan divided the system into three different areas based on their priority for planning and infrastructure (identified as Priority 1, Priority 2 or Priority 3 areas). It laid out a decision-making framework for Priority 1 and 2 areas and guided the completion of master plans.

Since the completion of the original 1990 and 1992 Ribbon of Green plans, the city has also dramatically grown. What was then a city of just over 600,000 is projected to service a region of 2,000,000. In response, Edmonton is building up, in and out to accommodate this growth. Situated within Treaty 6 territory, the traditional territories of many First Nations, and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation, Edmonton celebrates the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Edmontonians in meeting the needs of a culturally diverse, rapidly growing, thriving Metro Region.

The Ribbon of Green Plan (2018) will provide high-level strategic guidance for the conservation, preservation and use of the southwest and northeast portion of the river valley and ravines.

This project is taking place between January 2017 and December 2018.



# BACKGROUND



# INTRODUCTION

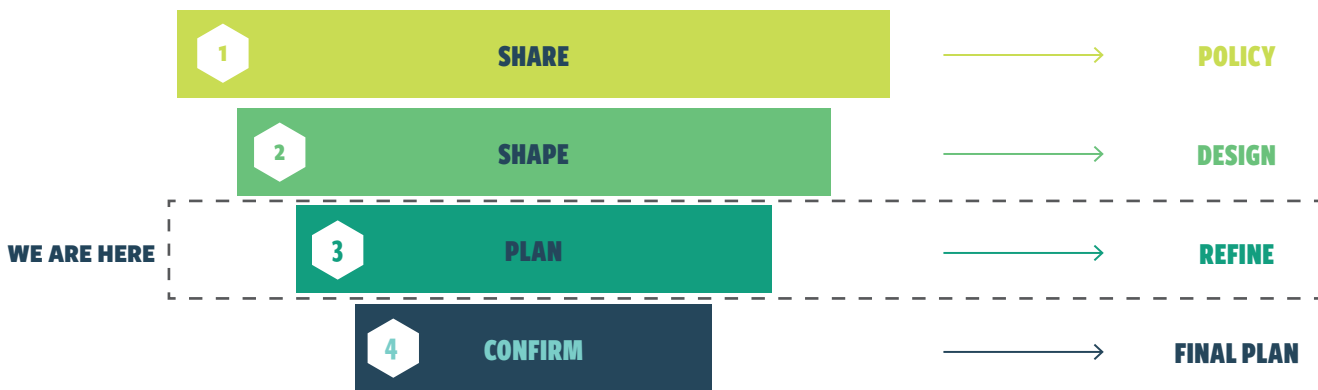
A robust public engagement results in stronger, better-informed projects and the City of Edmonton is committed to excellence in public engagement.

Due to the city-wide scale, regional impacts and timeframe of this project, setting up a network of interlinking engagement activities from the project start is fundamental to the project's success. Specifically, there are four audience streams of engagement: stakeholders, public (online and in-person) and Indigenous. These different groups will be engaged at various times throughout the four stages of active engagement of the project.

The engagement process for Ribbon of Green will take place throughout 2017 and 2018. The engagement is being implemented during four active engagement stages as shown below.

The third stage of public engagement for the Ribbon of Green (2018) project took place in May 2018 to review and provide feedback on the visions, program statements and spatial program and policy guidance for each reach within the two study areas. Feedback gathered at this stage will inform revisions to the Plan. Specifically, the policies and program guidance will be revised and updated to reflect what we heard during the engagement.

This report is intended to be a high-level summary of the ideas and priorities that were collected during the third stage of engagement. While detailed comments and meeting minutes have not been included in this document, they have been recorded and will be used by the project team throughout the upcoming project stages.



## ENGAGEMENT VALUES

The values below guide the engagement process for the public, stakeholders, and Indigenous communities.

**Respect**  
**Honesty**  
**Openness**  
**Inclusion**  
**Cooperation**  
**Learning**

## ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

These principles will anchor our actions and thinking as we engage with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples:

- > Be open, timely and responsive
- > Listen and share stories to understand
- > Support informed engagement
- > Follow through on commitments

The Ribbon of Green Public Engagement Plan is available at [edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen](http://edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen)

The City of Edmonton Engagement Policy is available at [edmonton.ca/documents/policiesdirectives/c593.pdf](http://edmonton.ca/documents/policiesdirectives/c593.pdf)

## STAGE 3 ENGAGEMENT GOALS:

- > Present draft concept plan and policies for feedback.
- > Consult with stakeholders and public to obtain feedback that will guide concept plan revisions, including river access opportunities, uses for amenity nodes, infrastructure and site requirements, multi-modal travel, and protecting the ecological network
- > Consult with stakeholders and public to understand how draft policies could be refined

## STAGE 3 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH:

The public and stakeholder engagement events and activities were structured into five key areas to share information about the work to date and the collect feedback to inform the next phase of the Ribbon of Green process:

- > **Vision + Priorities:** A vision statement and list of priorities to guide the planning of each study area
- > **System-wide Policies:** An overview of policy directions to include in the Ribbon of Green plan
- > **Land Management Classifications:** Classification descriptions to define the physical site conditions, operations, activities and amenities throughout the entire River Valley and Ravine System
- > **Program Guidance:** An initial spatial direction for each reach within the study areas to functions as a starting point for future site specific planning.
- > **Implementation:** Outlines the principles and actions that direct Ribbon of Green implementation.

# ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

## OPEN HOUSES

Two open houses were held at community recreation centres in close proximity to each study area and one open house was held at Edmonton Tower for City staff and members of the public.

### City Staff and Public

**May 2 | 11:30am - 1:30pm**

Edmonton Tower, Meeting Centre



### Southwest Public Open House

**May 2 | 4-8pm**

Terwillegar Recreation Centre



### Northeast Public Open House

**May 3 | 4-8pm**

Abbotsfield Recreation Centre



## PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey link was posted on the Ribbon of Green project website and an opt-in link was also provided through the Insight Community Mixed Topic Survey for the public to provide their feedback.

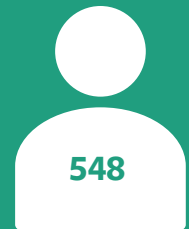


## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

For the stakeholder workshop, representatives from multiple diverse organizations were invited, continuing on from their involvement in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 stakeholder workshop. In total, representatives from 14 organizations attended. See appendix for the list of organizations that attended.

**May 5 | 10am - 12:30pm**

McKernan Community League Hall



Total Participants

# COMMUNICATION TACTICS

The City of Edmonton employed various communication forms, in both print and online, to reach and inform as many residents as possible about the Ribbon of Green engagement events and opportunities. The engagement was advertised through the media outlined below.



## Newsletters

- > Ribbon of Green
- > Breathe in Action
- > Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Link Letter
- > NextGen
- > Indigenous Relations Community Bulletin
- > Food in the City
- > Great City News (internal newsletter)



## Twitter

- > @CityofEdmonton — 4 tweets



## Facebook

- > City of Edmonton — 4 posts



## Ribbon of Green Project Website

- > Ribbon of Green Project Website
- > Communications and Engagement Events Calendar



## Road Signs

- > 7 total
  - > 2 North
  - > 2 Central
  - > 3 South



## Media

- > Public service announcement
- > 1 ad in the Edmonton Journal
- > 1 ad in the Edmonton Metro



## Posters

- > Posted in all City of Edmonton Recreation Centres and Public Libraries and on 11 floors at Edmonton Tower



## Postcards

- > Distributed at Public Libraries



## Landowner Mailouts

- > 909 mailouts sent inviting landowners in and adjacent to the study areas to the stakeholder workshop and open houses.



# JAMIESON PLACE

I'm very concerned about dependency on local parking in Wedgewood - there is NO space appropriate. Problem greater if bus service is cancelled as is proposed! 17

RD RD NW

DONSDALE

This tributary ravine into Wedgewood Ravine is already heavily used by local population. How is it going to be managed? 17

WEDGEWOOD HEIGHTS

CAMERON HEIGHTS

ANTHONY HENDAY DR



# INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT



# INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

## FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS WORKSHOPS

In January 2018, bulletins summarizing the results of the First Nations and Métis Workshops that were held in Summer 2017 were sent to all participating and non-participating Indigenous communities. This information was also distributed to organizations and interested attendees at Edmonton's Indigenous Peoples Festival. The project team will continue to provide opportunities throughout the project to collaborate, understand how issues and concerns can be addressed, and seek to incorporate input into the policies and recommendations. Another bulletin outlining policies relevant to the seven Indigenous themes will be sent out to communities in Fall 2018.

### Recognition of Indigenous Peoples:

First Nations and Métis history, culture and traditional knowledge contributes to the diversity of Edmonton and helps improve the quality of life for all Edmontonians.

### Significant Cultural/Historical Sites:

Future park development and construction should plan for the possibility of finding cultural sites, such as burial sites, archaeological remains, and modified/ marked trees.

### Gathering Places:

Edmonton needs Indigenous gathering places to practice ceremonies, celebrate, teach and promote culture.

### Protection of Natural Areas:

Rivers, streams, wetlands and natural areas are environmentally/culturally significant to Indigenous people.

### Environmental Stewardship:

Care of the environment (e.g. monitoring, management, restoration, environmental awareness and education) is important and should involve Indigenous peoples.

### Traditional Plants:

There are many natural and undeveloped areas throughout Edmonton that contain traditional plants that are important and sacred to Indigenous peoples and should be protected.

### Engagement:

Indigenous communities are interested in early, meaningful in-person and on-site engagement, to share traditional knowledge, identify issues and concerns and collaborate on possible recommendations.

*The City of Edmonton is committed to keeping First Nation and Métis (Indigenous) communities informed and engaged when projects intersect with Indigenous interests and concerns.*

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS







**THE CONFLUENCE REACH**

Map showing the Confluence Reach, detailing the river system and surrounding areas. Includes a legend and descriptive text.

**WHITING RAINWATER REACH**

Map showing the Whiting Rainwater Reach, detailing the river system and surrounding areas. Includes a legend and descriptive text.

**BLACKHILL RAINWATER REACH**

Map showing the Blackhill Rainwater Reach, detailing the river system and surrounding areas. Includes a legend and descriptive text.

**MARQUEE RIVER VALLEY REACH**

Map showing the Marquee River Valley Reach, detailing the river system and surrounding areas. Includes a legend and descriptive text.

Informational table with various documents, maps, and a person writing on a notepad.

Informational table with various documents, maps, and a person writing on a notepad.

# VISION + PRINCIPLES

The Ribbon of Green Vision and Principles were informed by input received during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Public and Stakeholder Engagements. In this phase, participants were presented with the overarching vision and principle statements for the River Valley and Ravine System. They were asked to provide their thoughts and feedback. This input will further clarify the statements and guide the plan.





## VISION + PRINCIPLES

### VISION

The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is a protected, connected landscape that supports ecological resilience and promotes healthy living through opportunities for recreation, active transportation and gathering in the tranquility of nature.

### PRINCIPLES

- » The **ecological system** will be protected, connected, restored and managed to preserve its integrity and resilience and to minimize the impact of human use.
- » New and/or expanded **facilities, infrastructure and programming** will provide opportunities for users to gather and recreate in nature, or provide essential urban services, and will be located and designed to minimize the environmental impact.
- » A **continuous trail system** and access points will connect neighbourhoods, the city and the region to the River Valley and Ravine System and provide safe and accessible opportunities for recreation and active transportation.
- » Through **engagement and partnerships**, meaningful opportunities will be provided to contribute to the planning, design and management of the River Valley and Ravine System.
- » The **natural and cultural heritage** of the River Valley and Ravine System will shape the places, experiences, and connections within it. Natural and historical sites, features and landscapes will be protected and, where appropriate, interpreted.
- » **Traditional uses** will be recognized and supported throughout the River Valley and Ravine System, and Communities will be meaningfully engaged in the planning, management and use of the system.

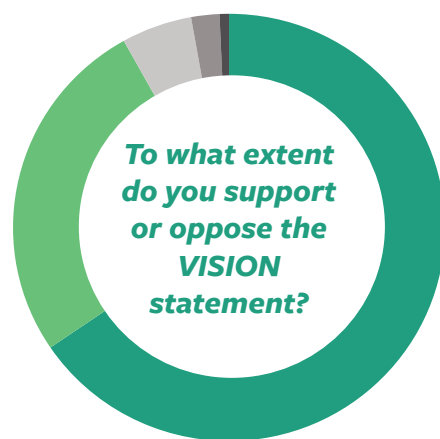
## GENERAL FEEDBACK

**Support:** Majority of the participants strongly support the vision and principles. Particularly, the protection of ecological system received extremely strong support.

**Tensions:** While some people are interested in some development along the river valley for recreational opportunities and activities, others prefer the river valley to be as natural as possible with no or minimal development. This includes commercial opportunities and trail development.

**Opportunities:** Ensure that the principles are not conflicting with one another. The vision and principles could be revised to be written in plain language.

## ONLINE SURVEY SUPPORT



● Strongly Support ● Somewhat Support ● Neutral ● Somewhat Oppose ● Strongly Oppose

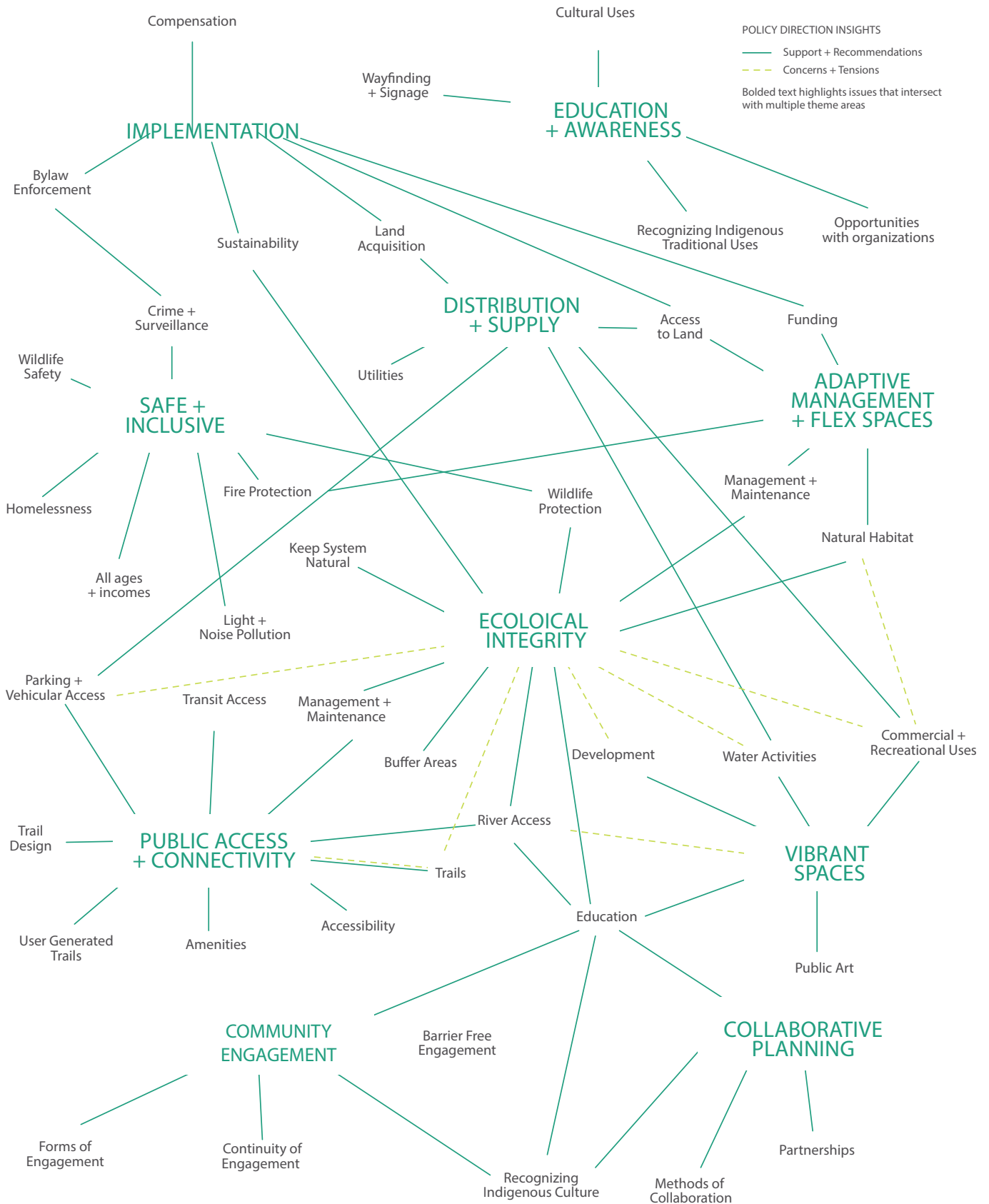
# SYSTEM-WIDE POLICIES

General policies will direct the protection and use of the river valley and ravine system by guiding decision making, further planning, design, programming and management. These system-wide policies and key directions respect and implement the Strategic Directions outlined in Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy for the southwest and northeast portion of the River Valley and Ravine System.

**The complexity of the key factors, ideas, and concerns identified by participants about the policy directions are outlined in the diagram on the following page.** Overall, the general policy direction was highly supported by participants. However, tensions arise between maintaining and protecting the ecological integrity of the river valley and the and desire for increased access and recreational activities within the river valley. Addressing these tension points and developing appropriate policies that support these varied intentions will be essential in the development of the Ribbon of Green plan.







## FEEDBACK

Summarized below, are key points made by participants for each policy direction during Phase 3 engagement.

### **ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY |**

Protecting and preserving the ecology of the river valley and ravine system continues to be the number one priority of the Ribbon of Green.

Define the ecological health of the river valley and monitor it accordingly, while publicly reporting on its health. Meanwhile, manage, maintain and improve the state of the river valley.

Maintain and preserve the native species of flora and fauna while eliminating the weeds, old and dead trees.

Habitat and wildlife connectivity, as well as ecological integrity, is crucial. The desire to leave the river valley and ravine system as natural as possible is a re-occurring theme throughout the feedback.

Be mindful of the development that occurs within the river valley ensuring that it is not conflicting with the ecological integrity of the system.

### **COLLABORATIVE PLANNING |**

Collaborate and partner with local organizations and cultural groups including the Indigenous community.

Identify how collaboration within city departments and other partners will take place.

### **VIBRANT SPACES |**

One major tension between the public is that commercial uses are conflicting with the ecology of the system. It is important to ensure that the ecology is not degraded while people utilize the river valley for commercial and recreational purposes. However, there is still strong support for vibrant spaces at some points in the river valley.

Those that support water activities, have requested for more boat launches, and rental spaces.

Commercial uses should be tied with long term funding while ensure that the fees to utilize the facilities are affordable for all.

Activities should be multi-seasonal.

There is some tension between those who want increased water access for motorized and non-motorized activities and others that do not support motorized boats.

Many appreciate public art throughout the river valley and suggested allowing the public to have some input in the types of installations. Some suggested utilizing creative lighting for art and safety. However, others are against public art.

Those in support of recreational uses have suggested several amenities such as cook ovens, high tech spaces, areas for cannabis smoking, tourist attractions, and ski areas.

### **EDUCATION AWARENESS |**

Teaching the public how to respect and use the river valley is crucial. To do this, people have suggested partnering with stakeholder in the education industry. Additionally, educating marginalized populations and people living rough is also important as they spend time in the river valley.

The content to educate people should be holistic, including ecological, archaeological, geological and historical elements.

Wayfinding and signage is important in inform people about the river valley. People have suggested updating these regularly as required, keep them simple and user friendly.

While some people feel that too many signs can be overwhelming, others suggested adding more signs throughout the system.

There have been issues with littering, therefore educating people and managing garbage is crucial.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT |**

In engaging the people, it is important to listen to those providing feedback.

Community engagement should be accessible for all, which means that it should be delivered through a variety of forms. The process should be kept as simple as possible.

Ensure that there is some continuity in project planning so that progress is made when internal staff is moved around.

**PUBLIC ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY |**

People agree that there is a need for more access to the system for water activities. Considerations for access points should include storage, cleaning and rental facilities.

Trails should be well connected to the surrounding communities and neighbourhoods.

While designing trails, consider its different uses, and potential conflicts. Trails should be accessible to all ages and abilities. Tensions arise as some want developed trails for active transportation and accessibility, other prefer the trails to be left natural.

Sufficient amenities should be provided at regular intervals including washrooms, lighting, seating, garbage cans.

There should be sufficient parking in specific access points. It is not necessary that these lots be large, but rather be more frequent and close to the river.

Transit access should be frequent during popular times.

**IMPLEMENTATION |**

Include more bylaw enforcement.

Clearly define policies and guidelines for new communities that are developer at the top of bank.

Compensate land owners fairly.

Monitor and evaluate the changes in implementation and make decisions appropriately.

**SUSTAINABLE FUNDING |**

Consider how the project would receive additional funding through different streams and funding models.

Complete ongoing projects before starting new ones.

Develop a plan for long term funding and the timing of the funds to contribute to the Ribbon of Green.

Remove unpopular programs to regain some funds and allocate it to other parts of the system.

Promote and market the Ribbon of Green for tourists for funding revenue.

**DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLY |**

To expand the Ribbon of Green, it is important to buy more land throughout the river valley, while managing expectations.

There should be a variety of recreational opportunities scattered throughout the river valley so people do not have to travel too far for amenities.

There is some tension between having more development in the valley, versus less development to protect the environment.

**SAFETY AND INCLUSIVITY|**

There needs to be more information on how the public can report issues to the authorities on potential hazards or other concerns along the river valley.

Consider the materials and design of trails during the design phase. Ensure wayfinding is clear.

Install adequate lighting throughout the trails by being mindful of its impacts during the dark hours.

Improve the river accessibility through universal design, including access for emergency vehicles.

Monitor crime through surveillance, patrols and installing emergency technology.

Water safety and fire protection has not been considered in the plan as of yet, which should be included.

# LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Land Management Classifications define the physical site conditions, operations, activities and amenities within the entire River Valley and Ravine System. These management classifications outline the level of protection or permitted development within each area.

## PRESERVATION

The intent of the Preservation Classification is to protect the integrity of the natural environment and restore natural functioning with minimal disturbance to wildlife and vegetation. Protecting and improving ecological health is the Preservation area's primary objective.

## CONSERVATION

The Conservation Classification's intent is to connect people with nature. This Classification offers more recreational opportunities to enjoy and explore nature than the Preservation Classification; however, maintaining and restoring ecosystem health remains important.

The Conservation Classification is divided into two Sub-classifications:

- » Trail-based Recreation
- » Natural Recreation

## ACTIVE/WORKING LANDSCAPES

Active/Working Landscapes facilitate gathering and recreation within the System, recognize existing uses and encourage restoration. They are located regularly throughout the River Valley and Ravine System and accommodate the highest intensity of uses while limiting ecological impact, when possible. This Classification applies to existing uses, such as farms, industry, recreational facilities, utilities and attractions. It also applies to new areas to focus and concentrate recreational activities; these areas were placed in locations with existing access, site disturbance and lower ecological value.

Active/Working Landscapes have three Sub-classifications:

- » Intensive Recreation
- » Agriculture and Horticulture
- » Urban Services and City-wide Attractions

During Phase 2 of engagement, participants provided feedback on the spatial arrangement of the Land Management Classifications and appropriate compatible uses, infrastructure and facilities. Since then, policies had been written to help with the planning and management of each classification and sub-classification for review. These policies fall under the following categories:

- › Compatible Uses
- › Compatible Infrastructure
- › Ecological Protection
- › Restoration and Rehabilitation
- › Heritage + Cultural Resources
- › Recreational Uses
- › Access + Trails
- › Other Uses
- › Education + Awareness
- › Maintenance + Operations
- › Monitor + Study

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the policies within each classifications and sub-classification.

## FEEDBACK

### LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS |

In general, people agreed with the direction of the Land Management Classifications. However, most people identified that protecting and preserving the ecology of the river valley and ravine system should be the number one priority of the Ribbon of Green. Some suggest that no intensive recreation should be permitted in the river valley at all, others are agreeable to activities, while setting aside the ecologically sensitive areas as restricted.



# PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Participants were provided the opportunity to provide direction for both the southwest and north east study area, including:

- › Program guidance for each reach within the study areas
- › Design ideas and trail connections for areas of activity within each reach

Illustrated in the following maps are spatial comments made by participants on their level of agreement on the programs within each reach. Larger dots on the maps indicate that the same comment was made by more than one person.

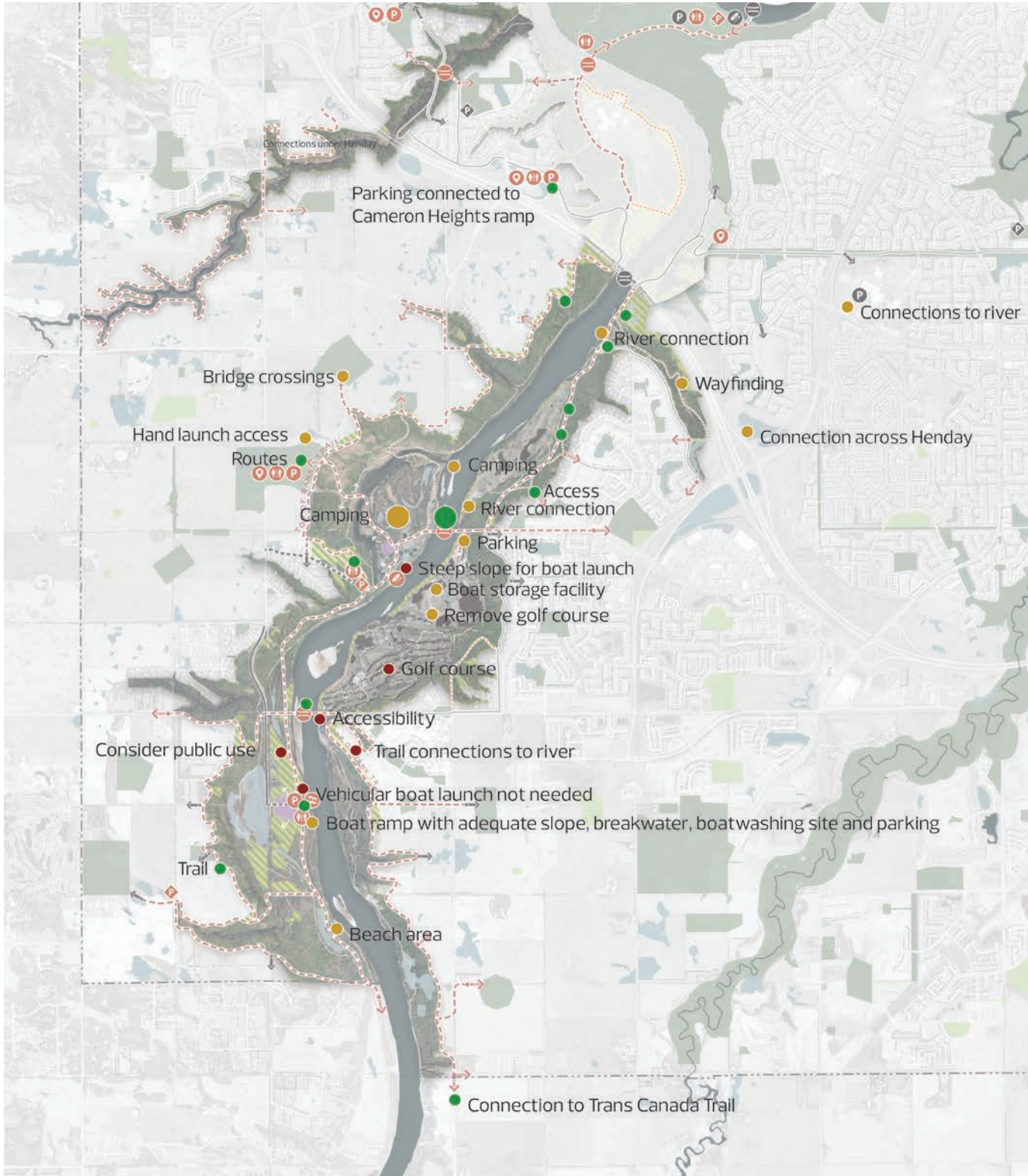


# STUDY AREA 1: SOUTHWEST (RIVER)

## LEGEND

- Agree
- Disagree
- Additional Comments

### SOUTH UNIT



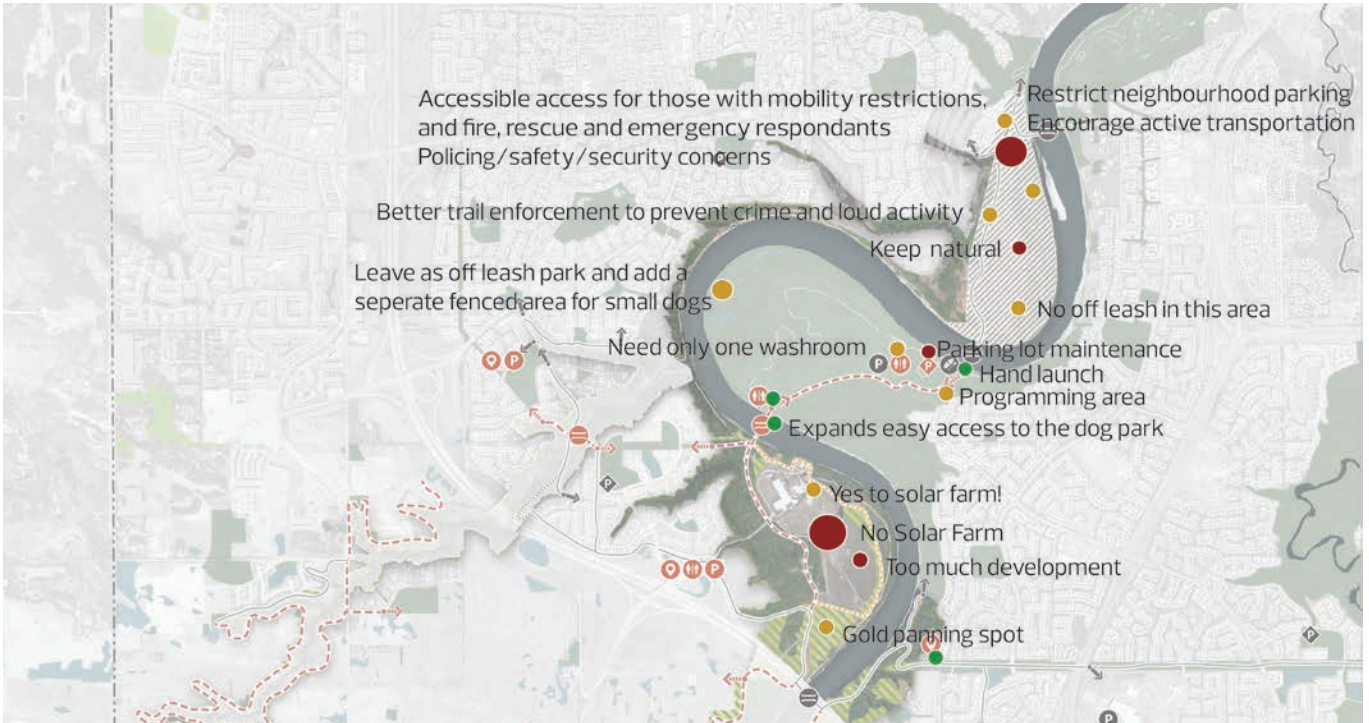


# STUDY AREA 1: SOUTHWEST (RIVER)

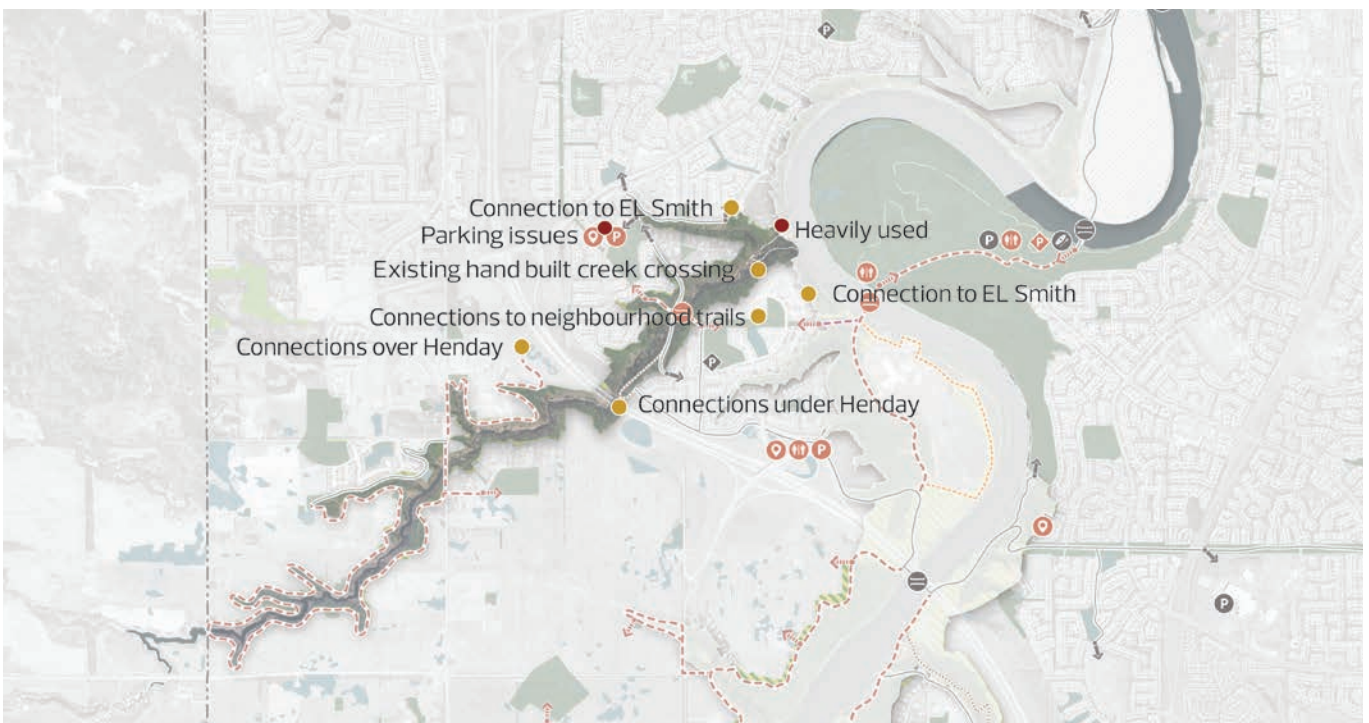
## LEGEND

- Agree
- Disagree
- Additional Comments

### NORTH UNIT



### WEDGEWOOD



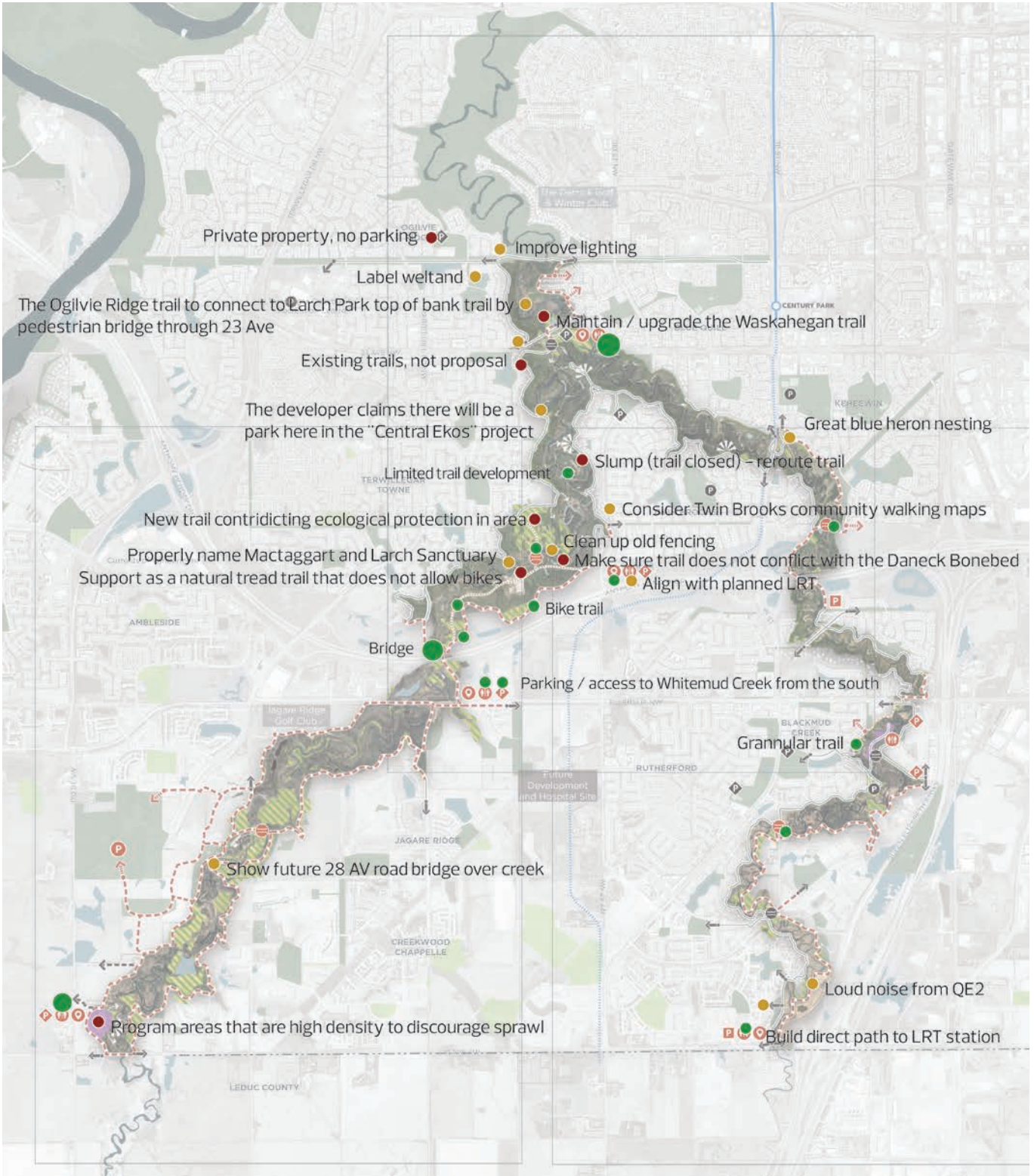


# STUDY AREA 1: SOUTHWEST (RAVINES)

## LEGEND

### BLACKMUD UNIT, WHITEMUD UNIT + MACTAGGART UNIT

- Agree
- Disagree
- Additional Comments



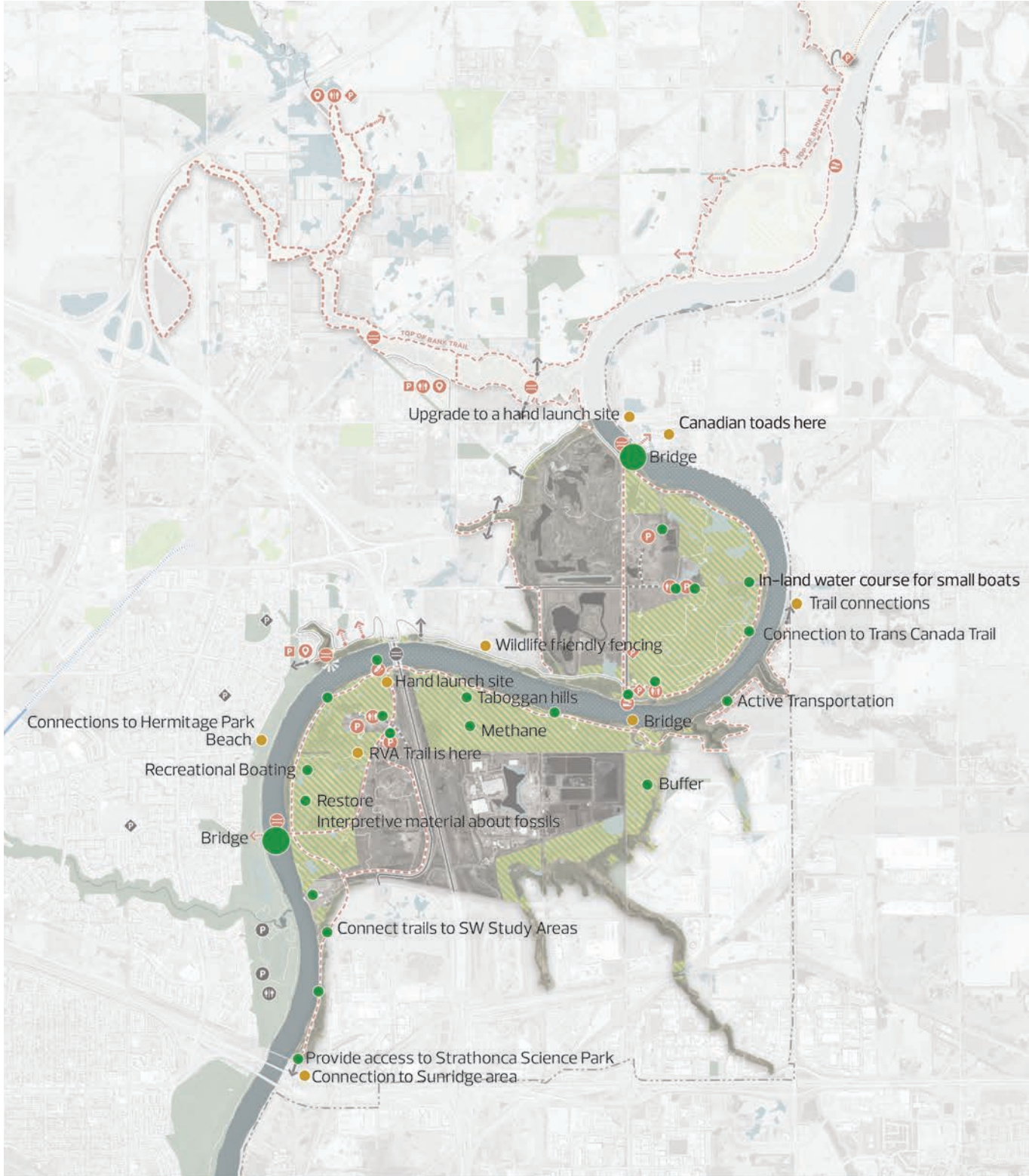


# STUDY AREA 2: NORTHEAST

## LEGEND

- Agree
- Disagree
- Additional Comments

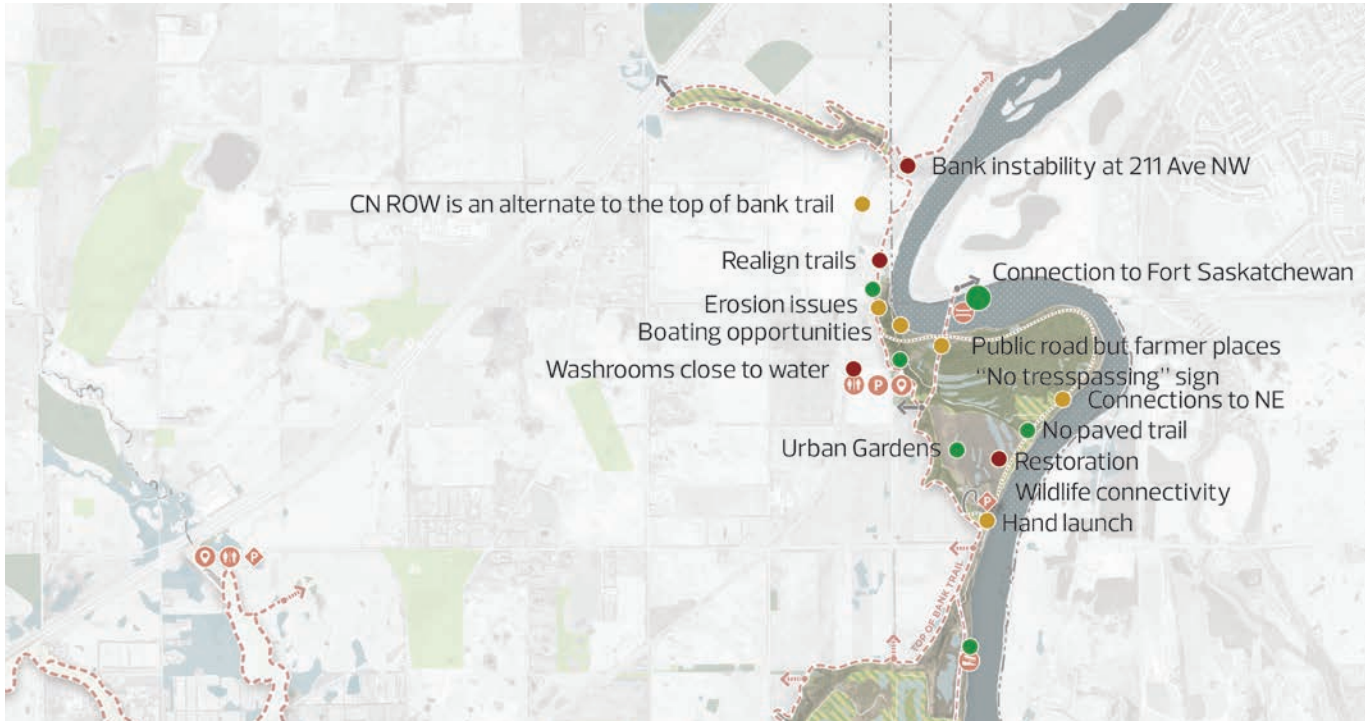
### CLOVERBAR



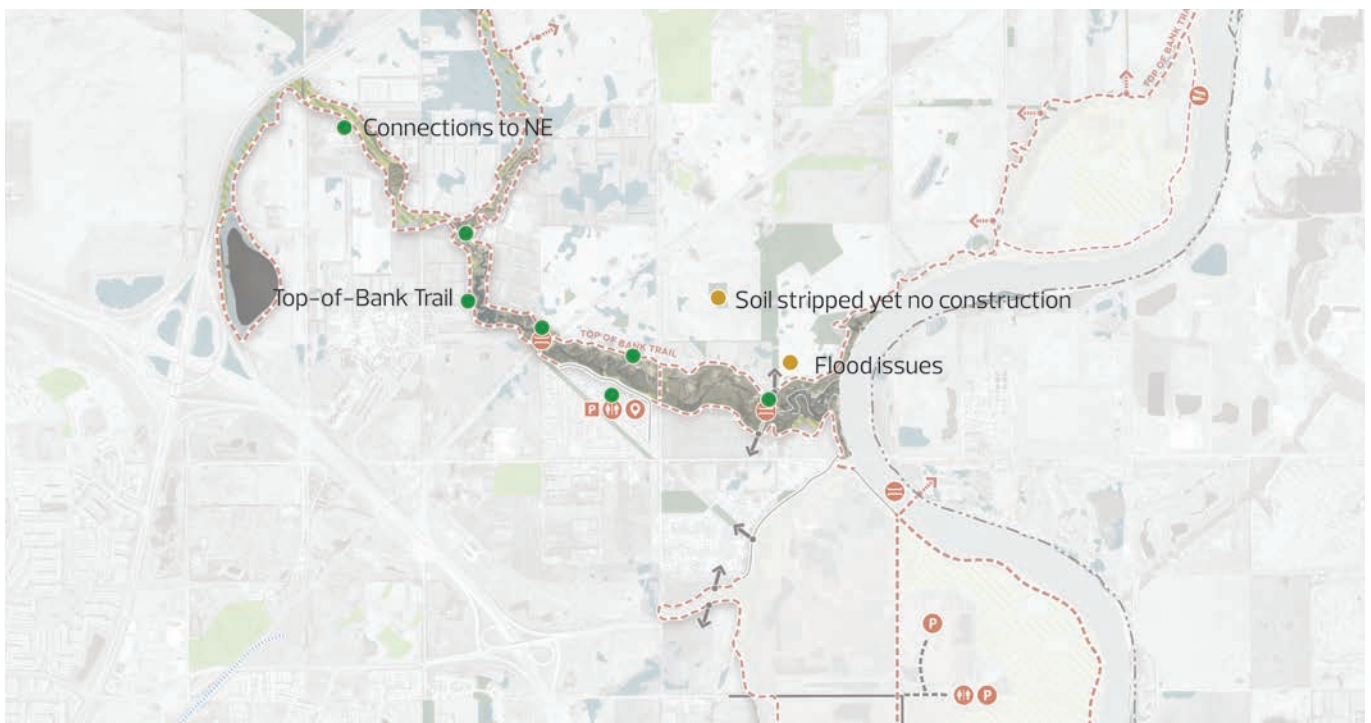
## LEGEND

- Agree
- Disagree
- Additional Comments

## FARMSTEAD



## HORSEHILLS





**Quotes from Phase 3 Public Engagement:**

*“I think the use of the river valley by the vulnerable/homeless populations needs to be considered. It is important that the river valley be enjoyed by everyone. There has to be a solution where certain camping is allowed as well as conventional day use. It is important that the traditional uses of the river valley are explored and considered.”*

*“Be sure that ecological protection is top priority.”*

*“In order to be a true Winter City, year round accessibility and safety needs to be considered. This will allow for all users to use the network year round.”*

*“I like that the focus will be on using existing disturbed areas for improvement rather than disturbing areas that are still natural. Limiting development to minimize damaging sensitive areas should be a priority.”*

*“Funding for upkeep and redevelopment needs to be considered in program decisions and prioritization.”*



## SUMMARY

Overall, this phase of engagement received support from the public on the direction of this plan and collected valuable insights regarding the draft plan. The recommendations will be used to refine the existing policies and contribute to the addition of several new policies and adjustments to programming direction throughout the plan.

Participants expressed that river access and water activities are highly desired with supporting amenities for such recreation. Additionally, trail access should be well connected to the surrounding neighbourhoods, be accessible and safe. While access to the Ribbon of Green is highly desired, similar to previous engagements, the recurring message received throughout this stage of engagement identified ecological integrity as the highest priority throughout the river valley and ravine system.

**Thank you for your participation!**

## NEXT STEPS

The feedback from Phase 3: Plan our Ribbon will help us to refine the Plan.

The next draft of the Ribbon of Green will be shared with stakeholders and the public in Fall 2018 for feedback during the fourth stage of public engagement — ‘Confirm our Ribbon’.

Stay up to date with the project and future opportunities for engagement at [edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen](http://edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen)

# APPENDIX

## **LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS**

The following organizations were formally engaged throughout the course of the second stage of engagement.

### **Stakeholder Workshop:**

- › Ceyana Canoe Club
- › Edmonton Nordic Ski Club
- › Edmonton Nature Club
- › Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance
- › River Valley Coalition
- › River Valley Alliance
- › Ceyana Canoe Club
- › Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council
- › Edmonton Golf and Country Club
- › Twin Brooks Community League
- › Wolf Willow Ridge Homeowners Association
- › Northwest Voyageurs Canoe and Kayak Club
- › Edmonton Native Plant Group
- › Horse Hill Berry Farm

### **Stakeholder Meetings:**

- › North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society
- › Sierra Club
- › Landowners
- › Government of Alberta
- › River Valley Alliance