

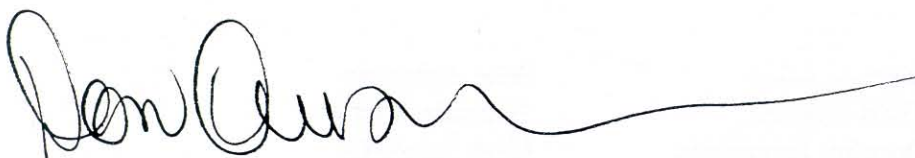
December, 1992

To the Citizens of Edmonton:

We are very pleased to provide the "Ribbon Of Green" North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System Master Plan for your information. This document provides the planning framework for open space development in the river valley into the year 2000.

The Master Plan emphasizes the continuation of an integrated trail system and the development of natural parks utilizing existing or restored resources to their best advantage. The plan is to recreate a natural preserve and re-establish a viable ecology while minimizing any additional development which may be contrary to the parks' primary use.

Preparing a plan of this magnitude requires the dedication, knowledge and efforts of many people. Edmonton Parks and Recreation wishes to thank all those Edmontonians who participated in preparing this Master Plan. We welcome your continued involvement as the site plans are finalized, and as projects are constructed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.S. Ausman', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends across the page.

D.S. Ausman  
General Manager

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Provincial Urban Parks Program Phase II (an Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund program) identified the City of Edmonton as being eligible for up to \$15 million in grant funding to develop its' urban parks. This provided Edmonton with an opportunity to consider the North Saskatchewan River Valley System as a whole and to establish publicly accepted goals for how it should be developed and managed. In 1990 the Parks and Recreation Department established a project team to prepare the required documentation to access the grant. This process involved preparation of a Concept Plan, Master Plan, and Site Plans.

The Ribbon of Green Concept Plan was subsequently prepared and approved by Council on November 27, 1990. It presented a collective public vision for the valley and established the general framework for the Master Plan.

The Master Plan expands on the Concept Plan and establishes policy guidelines for the long-term development, use and care of the entire valley. It provides a data base and criteria on which decisions can be made. It provides standards and guidelines, thereby encouraging a consistent management approach to the entire river valley system. It presents a sequence for planning to synchronize public input, public expectation and construction. It establishes the urban park boundary, with site plans to be completed as development funds come available.

The grant program allocates funding until 1998/99. The Parks and Recreation Department prepared a public consultation process designed to avoid encouraging premature public expectation for development. A sequential process was developed with each level of input building on the previous, refining proposals from general intent to specific detail, and narrowing the scope of target public from the very broad general citizenry to a more local community stakeholder-user.

Over 1000 citizens participated in the preparation of the Master Plan, and 900 citizens placed their name on a "to be kept informed" mailing list. Six public meetings were held during the master plan development process as well as a number of meetings with special interest groups.

The Master Plan, while an extension of the Vision Statement and the Concept Plan, bases decision making on the environmental sensitivity and resource constraints of an area. Through analysis of the biophysical resources three Land Management Units were identified (Extensive Use Areas, Conservation Areas, Preservation Areas). The biological sensitivity of an area (vegetation and wildlife habitat) was overlayed on the physical resource factors of an area (slope, hydrology, geology, etc.) to create a Resource Classification System, which supports the Land Management Unit

classifications. Suitable recreation activities, construction practises, and management practises within each of the units was also identified.

With the exception of identified park nodes, the Master Plan limits development to an integrated trail system, which makes the river valley accessible to the public, yet protects the natural landscape and wildlife habitat areas. The plan outlines general planning objectives and specific area planning objectives. It identifies the current state and the desired future state of each area. It identifies the potential impacts of development projects and the type of environmental review required for each project.

The Master Plan funding for development of the urban park will come over a seven year time frame (1992 through 1998). Construction cost is estimated to be \$13.25 million (1990 dollars), with financing coming from the province. The development priorities have been proposed, based on a number of criteria. This will be reviewed annually by City Council as part of the normal capital budget review process. Should financing not meet projected annual requirements, projects will be recommended in their rank order of priority to the level of available funding.

The Urban Parks Program Phase II has established an Operations and Maintenance Fund (3% of Planning & Design and Construction funds expended). A detailed estimate and strategy will be prepared to best access these funds, as the availability of operating funding will be determined for five year periods, commencing in 1990.

More and greater demands are being placed on the river valley. Recognizing this, the Department recently identified the River Valley Parks unit to operate and maintain the river valley and ravine system. This will ensure the valley is managed in a holistic and consistent manner throughout the City.