City of Edmonton
Valley Line Stage 1 – Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project
Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update

Final Report

Prepared for:
LRT D and C
Transportation Services
City of Edmonton
Edmonton, Alberta

Prepared by:
Spencer Environmental Management Services Ltd.
Edmonton, Alberta

Under Contract to:
AECOM
Connected Transit Partnership
Edmonton Alberta

Project Number EP - 576

February 2015
Glinis Buffalo  
Ecological Planner  
Sustainable Development  
City of Edmonton  
1200 HSBC Bank Place  
10250 - 101 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3P4  

23 February 2015  
Our file: EP-576

Dear Ms. Buffalo,

Re: City of Edmonton River Valley Light Rail Transit (LRT)  
Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Update - Final Report  
Your file: 131150741-011 | GB15-02

On behalf of LRT D and C and as part of ConnectEd Transit Partnership, enclosed please find nine (9) hard copy and five (5) electronic copies (CDs) of the above-mentioned report for your files. This final report reflects the draft report comments received from all city reviewers.

Please contact the undersigned if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Spencer Environmental  
Management Services Ltd.

Chris Rudge, B.Sc., B.A., EP, CPESC  
Project Biologist

Vice President, Science Practice

cc: Waqar Syed, LRT D and C, City of Edmonton  
Mark Perry, AECOM, CTP
## Distribution List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Hard Copies</th>
<th># CDs Required</th>
<th>Association / Company Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C of E LRT D and C- Waqar Syed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C of E Sustainable Development- Glinis Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Connected Transit Partnership – Mark Perry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, pursuant to the City of Edmonton’s *North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan* (*Bylaw 7188*), LRT Design and Construction prepared an Environmental Impact Screening Assessment (EISA) for the portion of the Valley Line Stage 1 that will be situated within the North Saskatchewan River Valley (NSRV). City Council approved that report in September 2013. Subsequent project planning, including ongoing community group consultation, has identified eight proposed changes to Valley Line, NSRV project components. Most of these changes are minor in nature and scale; one is more substantial. Assessment of these proposed changes is required because the changes involve previously unassessed activities or require adjustments to the approved 2013 Project Area. Consequently, LRT D and C has prepared this EISA Update to assess of the following eight proposed changes:

- Development of a temporary, primary construction access route through the west side of Louise McKinney Riverfront Park (LMRP). This access route will replace the use of Cameron Avenue and the future permanent portal maintenance access route (in the east side of LMRP), which will now be utilized only as a secondary construction access route.
- Modifications to the west boundary of the Project Area, within Henrietta Muir Edwards Park (HMEP). This will include the exclusion of two small parcels of land to reduce impacts on the abandoned Mill Creek channel, and the addition of one small parcel to include all lands occupied by an existing picnic shelter that, through consultation with Community Services, was identified in the 2013 EISA as available for demolition.
- Inclusion of a small parcel of land at the entrance to HMEP to allow for more flexibility in providing required temporary pedestrian access to the 98 Avenue Pedestrian Bridge during LRT construction.
- Explicit recognition of potential for installation of ground anchors as a means of supporting retaining walls at two locations, and, potential for those ground anchors to extend underground beyond the previously defined project boundaries but within City-owned lands.
- A minor extension of the Project Area to allow for local slope re-grading and relocation of ski hill infrastructure as mitigation for project impacts on one Edmonton Ski Club run.
- Closure/demolition of a 200 m long, one-way road connecting northbound Connors Road to the Muttart Access Road.
- Locating the replacement Muttart Conservatory storage building and associated yard slightly southeast of the previously-approved location. This new location will overlap with the 2013 Project Area boundary. This component is no longer part of the P3 project and will be undertaken by the City as early work.
- Construction of a temporary, short connecting trail in LMRP, outside the Project Area, to provide for improved internal pedestrian circulation during the LRT construction period. As mitigation, the trail will be constructed by the City, prior to Valley Line construction.
The EISA Update describes the above-noted changes and assesses their potential to affect river valley resources. This EISA Update identifies some new, component-specific impacts and sets out specific mitigation commitments that will also be City or Project Co requirements and will be incorporated into the Project Agreement. Important among these is the need for the City and Project Co to do some additional geotechnical investigations and to follow all resulting recommendations. Most new mitigation measures are directed at reducing impacts associated with the temporary, primary construction access route through the west side of LMRP. For that project component, despite application of mitigation measures, the presence of an active construction access route will temporarily and adversely affect park user experience, park visual resources, park vegetation and, to a lesser extent, wildlife habitat movement through the west park. With mitigation, these effects were rated as minor. All of these impacts are temporary, and most of them will be eliminated in short order upon completion of construction. The residual impact of clearing of woody vegetation in the park will be longer-lasting as mitigation will be a longer-term native forest restoration effort.

Finally, the EISA update also describes four other minor adjustments to the Project Area that are required to implement previously-approved activities and mitigation measures. These components are described for documentation purposes but not assessed.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Background and Need for an EISA Update</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Changed Project Components</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Spatial Clarifications</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>EISA Amendment Objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Report Organization</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td><strong>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Changed Project Components</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>North Valley Primary Construction Access - Project Co Component</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>West Project Boundary Modifications at HMEP - Project Co Component</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>HMEP Entrance - Project Co Component</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4</td>
<td>Retaining Wall Ground Anchors - Project Co Component</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5</td>
<td>Ski Club Infrastructure Relocation - Project Co Component</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6</td>
<td>Muttart Access Road Partial Removal - Project Co Component</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.7</td>
<td>Muttart Storage Building Replacement- City Component</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.8</td>
<td>LMRP Temporary Trail Connector - City Component</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Spatial Clarifications</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>LMRP Rose Garden and SUP Tie-in</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>98A Avenue Trail Tie-in to SUP</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Reconfigured Trail, Muttart Stop to 98 Avenue</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>96A Street Parking Lot</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT METHODS</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>General Methods</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Issue Identification</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Selection of Valued Environmental Components</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Assessment Spatial and Temporal Scope</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Description of Existing Conditions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Impact Analysis</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>Potential Impacts</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2</td>
<td>Residual Impacts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Public Engagement Process</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td><strong>NORTH VALLEY PRIMARY CONSTRUCTION ACCESS</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Key Issues</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Existing Conditions by VEC</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1</td>
<td>Geology/Geomorphology</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2</td>
<td>Soils</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3</td>
<td>Hydrology</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4</td>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Context

- **4.4.5** Wildlife .......................................................... 62
- **4.4.6** Habitat Connectivity ........................................... 67
- **4.4.7** Recreational Land Use ......................................... 69
- **4.4.8** Visual Resources .............................................. 72
- **4.4.9** Utilities ......................................................... 75
- **4.4.10** Historical Resources ........................................ 77

### Summary Assessment

- **4.5** Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures ................. 77
  - **4.5.1** Geology/Geomorphology ..................................... 77
  - **4.5.2** Soils .......................................................... 78
  - **4.5.3** Hydrology .................................................... 79
  - **4.5.4** Vegetation ................................................... 81
  - **4.5.5** Wildlife ...................................................... 82
  - **4.5.6** Habitat Connectivity ........................................ 83
  - **4.5.7** Recreational Land Use ..................................... 84
  - **4.5.8** Visual Resources ........................................... 89
  - **4.5.9** Utilities ...................................................... 89
  - **4.5.10** Historical Resources ..................................... 90

### Monitoring Requirements

- **4.6** Summary Assessment ........................................... 90
  - **4.6.1** Summary of Residual Impacts ............................. 90
  - **4.6.2** Monitoring Requirements .................................. 91
  - **4.6.3** Resolution of Key Environmental Issues ............... 91

### West Project Boundary Modifications at HMEP .......... 94

#### Existing Conditions

- **5.1** Context .......................................................... 94
- **5.2** Assessment Methods ........................................... 94
- **5.3** Key Issues ....................................................... 96
- **5.4** Existing Conditions ............................................ 96
  - **5.4.1** Geology/Geomorphology and Soils ....................... 96
  - **5.4.2** Vegetation ................................................... 98
  - **5.4.3** Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity ....................... 102
  - **5.4.4** Recreational Land Use .................................... 102
  - **5.4.5** Utilities ...................................................... 104
  - **5.4.6** Visual Resources ........................................... 104
- **5.5** Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures ............... 104
  - **5.5.1** Soils and Geotechnical Stability ......................... 104
  - **5.5.2** Vegetation ................................................... 105
  - **5.5.3** Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity ....................... 106
  - **5.5.4** Recreational Land Use .................................... 106
  - **5.5.5** Utilities ...................................................... 106
  - **5.5.6** Visual Resources ........................................... 107

#### Summary Assessment

- **5.6** Summary Assessment ........................................... 107
  - **5.6.1** Summary of Residual Impacts ............................. 107
  - **5.6.2** Monitoring Requirements .................................. 107
  - **5.6.3** Resolution of Key Environmental Issues ............... 107

### HMEP Entrance .............................................................. 109

#### Context

- **6.1** Context .......................................................... 109
6.2 Assessment Methods .......................................................... 109
6.3 Key Issues ............................................................................. 110
6.4 Existing Conditions by VEC .................................................. 111
  6.4.1 Soils and Geotechnical Stability ....................................... 111
  6.4.2 Vegetation & Wildlife Habitat ........................................... 111
  6.4.3 Residential Land Use ....................................................... 114
  6.4.4 Recreational Land Use ..................................................... 114
  6.4.5 Visual Resources .............................................................. 114
  6.4.6 Utilities ........................................................................... 114
6.5 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures .............................. 114
  6.5.1 Soils ............................................................................. 114
  6.5.2 Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity ..................... 115
  6.5.3 Recreational Land Use ..................................................... 115
  6.5.4 Visual Resources .............................................................. 116
  6.5.5 Utilities ........................................................................... 116
6.6 Summary Assessment ............................................................ 116
  6.6.1 Summary of Residual Impacts ............................................ 116
  6.6.2 Monitoring Requirements ............................................... 116
  6.6.3 Resolution of Key Environmental Issues ............................ 116

7.0 RETAINING WALL GROUND ANCHORS .................................. 118
  7.1 Context ............................................................................. 118
  7.2 Assessment Methods ........................................................... 118
  7.3 Key Issues ......................................................................... 119
  7.4 Existing Conditions .............................................................. 120
    7.4.1 Geomorphology and Geotechnical Stability ....................... 120
    7.4.2 Residential Land Use ..................................................... 120
  7.5 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures .............................. 120
    7.5.1 Geomorphology and Geotechnical Stability ....................... 120
    7.5.2 Residential Land Use ..................................................... 120
  7.6 Summary Assessment ............................................................ 120
    7.6.1 Summary of Residual Impacts ............................................ 120
    7.6.2 Monitoring Requirements ............................................... 121
    7.6.3 Resolution of Key Environmental Issues ............................ 121

8.0 SKI CLUB INFRASTRUCTURE RELOCATION .......................... 122
  8.1 Context ............................................................................. 122
  8.2 Assessment Methods ........................................................... 122
  8.3 Key Issues ......................................................................... 124
  8.4 Existing Conditions .............................................................. 124
    8.4.1 Geomorphology/Geotechnical Stability and Soils ............... 124
    8.4.2 Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity ..................... 125
    8.4.3 Recreational Land Use ..................................................... 126
    8.4.4 Visual Resources .............................................................. 126
  8.5 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures .............................. 127
    8.5.1 Soils ............................................................................. 127
    8.5.2 Impacts to Slope Stability ............................................... 127
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.5.3</td>
<td>Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5.4</td>
<td>Recreational Land Use</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5.5</td>
<td>Visual Resources</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Summary Assessment</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6.1</td>
<td>Summary of Residual Impacts</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6.2</td>
<td>Monitoring Requirements</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6.3</td>
<td>Resolution of Key Environmental Issues</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>MUTTART ACCESS ROAD PARTIAL REMOVAL</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Key Issues</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Existing Conditions</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4.1</td>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4.2</td>
<td>Transportation Land Use</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5.1</td>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5.2</td>
<td>Transportation Land Use</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Summary Assessment</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.1</td>
<td>Summary of Residual Impacts</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.2</td>
<td>Resolution of Key Environmental Issues</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>MCSB REPLACEMENT</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Key Issues</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Existing Conditions by VEC</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.1</td>
<td>Geology/Geomorphology and Soils</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.2</td>
<td>Hydrology – Surface Water/Groundwater</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.3</td>
<td>Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.4</td>
<td>Recreational Land Use</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.5</td>
<td>Visual Resources</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4.6</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.1</td>
<td>Geology/Geomorphology and Soils</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.2</td>
<td>Hydrology – Surface Water/Groundwater</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.3</td>
<td>Vegetation, Wildlife and Habitat Connectivity</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.4</td>
<td>Recreational Land Use</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.5</td>
<td>Visual Resources</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.6</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Summary Assessment</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6.1</td>
<td>Summary of Residual Impacts</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6.2</td>
<td>Resolution of Key Environmental Issues</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>LRMP TEMPORARY TRAIL CONNECTOR</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.3 Key Issues .................................................................................................................. 153
11.4 Existing Conditions ..................................................................................................... 154
  11.4.1 Soils and Geotechnical Stability ................................................................. 154
  11.4.2 Hydrology – Surface Water ........................................................................... 154
  11.4.3 Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat ................................................................. 154
  11.4.4 Recreational Land Use ............................................................................... 155
  11.4.5 Visual Resources ...................................................................................... 155
  11.4.6 Utilities ........................................................................................................ 155
11.5 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures ............................................................. 155
  11.5.1 Geotechnical Stability and Soils ................................................................. 155
  11.5.2 Hydrology – Surface Water ........................................................................... 156
  11.5.3 Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity ............................................... 156
  11.5.4 Recreational Land Use ............................................................................... 156
  11.5.5 Utilities ........................................................................................................ 156
  11.5.6 Visual Resources ...................................................................................... 157
11.6 Summary Assessment ................................................................................................. 157
  11.6.1 Summary of Residual Impacts ..................................................................... 157
  11.6.2 Monitoring Requirements ............................................................................ 157
  11.6.3 Resolution of Key Environmental Issues ...................................................... 157

12.0 CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................................................... 158
  12.1 Summary of Public Engagement Response ......................................................... 158
  12.2 New Potential Impacts and Mitigation Commitments ........................................ 158
    Summary of Changed Project Components ........................................................... 159
  12.3 ................................................................................................................................. 159
    12.3.1 North Valley Primary Construction Access Road ........................................ 160
    12.3.2 West Project Boundary Modifications at HMEP ........................................ 160
    12.3.3 HMEP Entrance – Project Co Component ................................................. 160
    12.3.4 Retaining Wall Ground Anchors – Project Co Component ........................ 161
    12.3.5 Ski Club Infrastructure Relocation – Project Co Component ..................... 161
    12.3.6 Muttart Access Road Partial Removal – Project Co Component .............. 161
    12.3.7 Muttart Storage Building Replacement – City Component ...................... 162
    12.3.8 LMRP Temporary Trail Connector – City Component .............................. 162

13.0 REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 163
  13.1 Literature Cited ................................................................................................... 163
  13.2 Personal Communications ................................................................................. 165

APPENDIX A: ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS FOR CONSTRUCTION ACCESS ROUTE ........ A1

APPENDIX B: TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION ACCESS ROAD – GEOTECHNICAL AND SLOPE STABILITY ASSESSMENT (THURBER ENGINEERING 2014) – SEE COMPACT DISC ........................................ B1

APPENDIX C: VEGETATION DATA ............................................................................. C1

APPENDIX D: WILDLIFE SPECIES POTENTIALLY FOUND IN THE STUDY AREAS .......................................................... D1
APPENDIX E: SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE SPECIES POTENTIALLY FOUND IN THE STUDY AREAS ........................................................................E1
APPENDIX F: LMRP SUBSURFACE UTILITIES (T2 UTILITY ENGINEERS 2013) .................................................................F1

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Valley Line Stage 1 Location ................................................................. 2
Figure 2.1a. Project Components Assessed in EISA Update .................................. 8
Figure 2.1b. Project Components Assessed in EISA Update ............................ 9
Figure 2.1c. Project Components Assessed in EISA Update ............................ 10
Figure 2.1d. Project Components Assessed in EISA Update ............................ 11
Figure 2.2. Excerpt from HMEP, 70% Landscape Drawing .............................. 15
Figure 2.3a. Retaining Wall Ground Anchor, Typical Description .................... 20
Figure 2.3b. Retaining Wall Ground Anchor, Typical Construction Sequence .... 21
Figure 2.4. Muttart Access Road Partial Removal ................................................ 24
Figure 2.5a. MCSB, Replacement Site Plan ......................................................... 26
Figure 2.5b. MCSB, Replacement Site Plan ......................................................... 27
Figure 2.5c. MCSB, Replacement Site Plan ......................................................... 28
Figure 2.6. LMRP Temporary Trail Connector, Landscape Drawing .................. 30
Figure 2.7. Spatial Clarifications ........................................................................... 32
Figure 2.8a. LMRP SUP Tie-in, Landscape Drawing .......................................... 34
Figure 2.8b. LMRP SUP Tie-in, Landscape Drawing .......................................... 35
Figure 2.9. 98A Avenue SUP Tie-in, Landscape Drawing ................................. 37
Figure 2.10. Reconfigured Trail at 98 Avenue, Landscape Drawing ................... 40
Figure 4.1. Geotechnical Investigations Undertaken for the Access Road ......... 50
Figure 4.2. Estimated Boundaries of Former Grierson Nuisance Grounds ........ 52
Figure 4.3. Existing Plant Communities in LMRP ............................................. 55
Figure 4.4. Wildlife Survey Locations in LMRP .................................................. 63
Figure 4.5. Location of New Accessible Trail in LMRP ...................................... 73
Figure 5.1. West Project Boundary Modifications at HMEP, Contours .............. 97
Figure 5.2. HMEP West Project Boundary Modifications, Existing Plant Communities ................................................................. 101
Figure 9.1. Naturalization at Former Road Location ........................................... 133
Figure 10.1. Muttart Storage Building Replacement Site Plan ......................... 136
Figure 10.2. Muttart Grading Plan ................................................................. 143
Figure 10.3. Muttart Storage Building Elevations ............................................. 149

List of Tables

Table 4.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – North Valley Primary Construction Access ........................................................................... 47
Table 4.2. Bird species recorded during point count and meandering surveys conducted during the breeding season of 2014 in LMRP .............................................. 65
Table 4.3. Select special status species with a moderate probability of occurrence in the study area ......................................................................................... 66
Table 5.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – West Project Boundary Modifications at HMEP ................................................................. 95
Table 6.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – HMEP Entrance ..................... 110
Table 7.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – Retaining wall ground anchors .... 119
Table 8.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – Ski club infrastructure relocation 123
Table 9.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – Muttart Access Road Partial Removal ................................................................. 131
Table 10.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – MC SB replacement ................. 137
Table 11.1. Justification for the selection of VECs – LMRP temporary connector trail 153

List of Plates

Plate 2.1. Segment of proposed Louise McKinney Riverfront Park Construction Access Road using existing maintenance road, looking northeast ........................................ 12
Plate 2.2: Trans Canada SUP to be used as Primary construction Access Route in LMRP. ................................................................. 13
Plate 2.3. HMEP west project boundary modifications, looking west; picnic shelter and paving stone area (Sept. 2013). ................................................................. 16
Plate 2.5. Area of proposed boundary changes at HMEP entrance (98 Ave and 96A St), looking northeast (June 2014) ................................................................. 17
Plate 2.7. Manicured lawn of proposed MC SB replacement and parking area (hill to be re-graded in foreground, existing building will be situated mid-ground), view to northeast (Sept. 2014) ................................................................. 29
Plate 2.8. Approximate area of proposed LMRP temporary trail connector, looking south (Jan. 2015) ................................................................. 31
Plate 2.9. Existing “World Walk” SUP and Rose Garden (June 2014) ..................... 33
Plate 2.10. Site of trail tie-in work required at HMEP and 98A Avenue, behind the no-stopping sign, see in the foreground (Jan. 2015) ................................................................. 36
Plate 2.11. Site of trail tie-in work required at HMEP and 98A Avenue, looking north from within HMEP (April 2013) ................................................................. 38
Plate 4.1. The west portion of LMRP is characterized by landscaped parkland, including manicured lawn, gardens and paved pathways (July 2014) ................................................................. 56
Plate 4.2. Naturalized (unmanicured) grassland communities on the slopes of Louise McKinney Riverfront Park (July 2014) ................................................................. 57
Plate 4.3. Open understorey in a Manitoba maple community in Louise McKinney Park (July 2014) ................................................................. 58
Plate 4.4. The margins of the PMM community, adjacent to along the existing access road typified Edmonton river valley forest edge communities, view looking south (July 2014) ................................................................. 59
Plate 4.5. Dense understorey in the interior of the PMM community along the west edge of LMRP (July 2014) ................................................................. 60
Plate 4.6. Manicured areas and paths, including columnar poplar, adjacent to the proposed access road alignment (July 2014) ................................................................. 61
Plate 4.7. A typical planted bed along a staircase intersecting with the to the proposed access road alignment (July 2014) ................................................................. 61
Plate 4.8. LMRP supports numerous programmed and un-programmed activities, including passive and active uses.

Plate 4.9. Maintenance/service vehicle road turn-around, looking north (July 2014). This road does not provide vehicular park access or parking for the general public.

Plate 4.10. Riverfront Plaza, looking northwest: River Valley Adventures operates a Segway rental service that relies on the connection to the paved Trans Canada Trail and the broader river valley SUP network (July 2014).

Plate 4.11. Paved fully accessible trail leading south to the Riverfront Promenade, looking east (July 2014).

Plate 4.12. West End of proposed primary construction access road, looking southeast along the maintenance vehicle access road, from the Shaw Conference Centre (June 2014).

Plate 4.13. West End of proposed primary construction access road, looking northeast towards the maintenance vehicle access road and the Shaw Conference Centre, from the Riverfront Plaza (June 2014).


Plate 4.15. Several utility panels/boxes are located along the vehicle access road turnaround, looking north.

Plate 4.16. A subsurface holding tank, an associated sanitary line and a monitoring cable are located west of the Riverfront Plaza building.

Plate 4.17. An informal trail that connects to the maintenance access road from the LMRP parking lot, looking north (July 2014).

Plate 4.18. Three pathways (from west, south and east) connect to vehicle maintenance access road (July 2014).

Plate 5.1. HMEP west project boundary modifications looking west; manicured lawn and mature poplars dominate this area, looking west (Sept. 2014).

Plate 5.2. HMEP west project boundary modifications looking east; several planted choke cherry are situated in this area, looking east (Sept. 2014).

Plate 5.3. HMEP west project boundary modifications looking southwest; Manitoba maple borders the west edge of the project component area and transitions to balsam poplar forest (Sept. 2014).

Plate 5.4. The northernmost area is immediately adjacent to the east bank of abandoned Mill Creek (June 2013).

Plate 5.5. The southern parcel also contains a section of abandoned Mill Creek, with a sparse understory (April 2013).

Plate 5.6. Picnic Shelter situated in the proposed changes to the west boundary of the project area, looking southwest (Sept. 2014).

Plate 5.7. Benches, picnic tables, garbage cans and a drinking fountain are also situated in this area (Sept. 2014).

Plate 5.8. The picnic shelter and hard surface appear to be in disrepair and public fireplaces installed as part of the picnic shelter structure have been boarded over (April 2013).

Plate 6.1: Bridge abutment fill in the parcel to be added to the Project Area, looking northeast (June 2014).

Plate 6.2. HMEP near the north end of the 98 Avenue Pedestrian Bridge looking northeast; planted bed with park entrance sign, looking southwest (Sept 2014).
Plate 6.3. HMEP entrance looking northeast; mature poplar and Manitoba maple stand, (Sept. 2014). ................................................................. 113
Plate 6.4. HMEP entrance looking northeast; unmowed grasses on the pedestrian bridge embankment (Sept. 2014). ................................................................. 113
Plate 8.1. Sloping terrain of existing T-bar run to be re-graded. (Jan. 2015). ........... 122
Plate 8.2. Southeastern portion of lands required for ski club infrastructure relocation, looking west from Cloverdale Hill Road. Mature planted spruce on right are within the original Project Area. Deciduous stand of native vegetation shown on right is situated outside of the Project Area and will be undisturbed (Jan. 2015)............. 125
Plate 8.4. The existing T-bar terminus is clearly visible from Connors Road, dominating views at the crest of the hill, looking northwest (Jan. 2015). ............................... 126
Plate 10.1. MCSB replacement lands are situated on an existing bench and extend south into a shallow hill situated in Gallagher Park, looking southeast (July 2014)....... 139
Plate 10.2. Vegetation in the MCSB replacement site consists entirely of manicured lawn, looking north (09 July 2014). ................................................................. 140
Plate 10.3. View of MCSB Replacement site (in foreground) looking northwest; the existing slope provides passive recreation and one informal trail. Views from the site currently include the existing building (July 2014)............................... 141
Plate 10.4. Alternative view of existing storage building and surrounding grounds (July 2014). ........................................................................................................... 142
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Need for an EISA Update

City of Edmonton (the City), led by Transportation Services LRT Design and Construction (LRT D and C), is expanding Edmonton’s Light Rail Transit (LRT) network by constructing the Valley Line Stage 1, connecting Downtown to Mill Woods (Figure 1.1). This new line necessarily involves a crossing of the North Saskatchewan River Valley (NSRV) (Figure 1-1). Planning for the project began in 2008 and preliminary design was completed in 2013, culminating in a Reference Design for a new, urban-style, low-floor system. The project will be delivered through a Public Private Partnership (P3) and is now in the proponent procurement phase. The procurement schedule includes awarding a contract to the successful bidder, referred to as Project Co, in January 2016.

In 2012/2013, as part of the preliminary planning exercise and pursuant to the City of Edmonton’s North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 7188), LRT D and C prepared an Environmental Impact Screening Assessment (EISA) for the portion of the project situated within the NSRV. The report, City of Edmonton Valley Line-Stage 1 Light Rail Transit (LRT), Project Environmental Screening Impact Assessment (Spencer Environmental 2013), hereafter referred to as the 2013 EISA, addressed all identified Valley Line project components situated in the river valley, as described in the Reference Design. The 2013 EISA report acknowledged that the selected P3 delivery model influenced the level of design detail available for assessment and also the potential for some additional change to occur during the design and construction phase by Project Co. It was clear that the environmental review process must acknowledge some tolerance for minor, future design variance. To facilitate impact assessment and ensure that all unexplored potential project impacts were assessed moving forward, the 2013 EISA delineated an absolute boundary for construction-related activities, the “Project Area”, and assessed the impact associated with disturbance of all of the Project Area. Included in the 2013 EISA was a commitment to subject any future proposed works that would require modification of the Project Area or facilities situated outside of the approved Project Area and within the Bylaw 7188 lands, to further Bylaw 7188 review. City Council approved the EISA in September 2013, but instructed LRT D and C to continue to work with select community groups into the next project phases to mitigate select impacts, particularly as they affect community groups.

Project planning, including ongoing community group consultation, refinement of select mitigation measures and preparation of P3 procurement documents, has progressed since summer of 2013. Through this planning, several changes to select river valley project components have been made that require adjustment of the Project Area shown in the 2013 EISA. Most changes are considered to be minor, both in terms of the nature of the change and the area affected; one is considered more substantial. Through summer of 2014, consultation with City of Edmonton Sustainable Development and Community Services determined that LRT D and C should prepare an amendment to the 2013 EISA addressing these known changes and that the amendment should be brought back to Council for approval.
Figure 1.1 Valley Line Stage 1 Location

City of Edmonton LRT Valley Line - Stage 1
EISA Update

Legend
- Valley Line LRT Alignment (Reference Design)
- Bylaw 7188 Boundary

Aerial Photograph Date: May 2012
Date Map Created: 10 February 2015
The proposed changes were grouped into two categories: 1) *Changed Project Components* – changes having potential to result in previously-unassessed impacts, in most cases by expanding an activity into newly added lands; and 2) *Spatial Clarification* – minor adjustments of work limits required either as a result of a closer examination of the components; or design refinement of previously-described and assessed activities; or advancement of mitigation measures. In essence, this is a clarification of previously described required lands. It was agreed that while changes of this nature should be included in the update exercise, treatment would be limited to documentation of changes in the update report, rather than assessment of impacts.

### 1.2 Changed Project Components

As of October 2014, LRT D and C have identified the following eight discrete project component changes that require adjustment of the previously-approved Project Area boundaries and have potential to result in previously-unassessed impacts:

1. Designation of Cameron Avenue and the Shared Use Path (SUP) in east end of Louise McKinney Riverfront Park (LMRP) as the secondary rather than primary, north valley construction access route and identification of a temporary, primary construction access route through the west side of LMRP.

2. Modifications to the west boundary of the Project Area, within Henrietta Muir Edwards Park (HMEP). This will include the exclusion of two small parcels of land to reduce impacts on the abandoned Mill Creek channel, and the addition of one small parcel to include all lands occupied by an existing picnic area that, after consultation with Community Services, was identified in the 2013 EISA as available for demolition.

3. A minor expansion of the Project Area in HMEP to allow for more flexibility toward provision of temporary pedestrian access to the 98 Avenue Pedestrian Bridge during LRT construction.

4. Explicit recognition of potential for installation of ground anchors as a means of support for the previously identified retaining walls at two locations and potential for ground anchors to extend, below ground, beyond the previously-defined project boundaries but remaining within City-owned lands.

5. A minor expansion of lands at the top of Connors Hill to allow for slope regrading for relocation of ski hill infrastructure as mitigation for project impacts on an existing Edmonton Ski Club run.

6. Removal of a one-way connector road between north Connors Road to the Muttart Access Road. (Note: This does not require a boundary adjustment but removal was not previously assessed).

7. Shifting the replacement Muttart Conservatory storage building to the southeast of the previously identified location and slightly beyond the 2013 Project Area boundary, and, having the City undertake construction prior to commencement of P3 work.

8. Construction of a temporary, connecting trail in the Chinese Gardens, in advance of the project, to provide for improved internal pedestrian circulation through LMRP during the Valley Line construction period.
Items seven and eight, construction of a new Muttart Conservatory storage building and a temporary connector pedestrian trail, are required to mitigate Valley Line project impacts and will be undertaken by City of Edmonton, Community Services prior to commencement of Valley Line construction to reduce the impact of LRT construction on park facilities and operation. This distinction is relevant to construction timing and development of mitigation measures since these components will not be governed by mitigation clauses included in the final Valley Line Project Agreement.

1.3 **Spatial Clarifications**

Adjustments to individual recreational trails and their reconnections to the larger network were one of the ‘major facilities’ approved by Council in 2013. The 2013 EISA identified the need to: restore disrupted trails within the Project Area; reconfigure some trails to accommodate new infrastructure and re-landscaping; and seamlessly tie realigned and restored trails into the existing, undisturbed trails at the project boundaries. All of these activities were discussed in the 2013 EISA in the context of mitigation of project impacts. Since then, as committed to, several specific mitigation measures have been refined or further developed, some to a relatively advanced state. Importantly, through consultation with Community Services, LRT D and C have developed 70% landscape drawings (known as River Valley Landscape Drawings) to ensure full mitigation of project impacts to park resources in a manner consistent with existing and future plans for these important public spaces. These drawings are intended to provide the City with more control and certainty over the post-construction landscaping of the Project Area in LMRP, HMEP and at Muttart Conservatory grounds by providing Project Co with detailed guidance. These landscaping plans represent a refinement of several mitigation measures that were previously only generally described in the 2013 EISA. Importantly, the plans explicitly acknowledge how Project Co is to tie the re-landscaped Project Area into surrounding, unaffected, existing park landscaping and how much land will be required to achieve a seamless tie-in at critical locations. For Project Co to implement those newly-developed plans, the 2013 Project Area must be adjusted in a minor way at three manicured park locations. Work in these specific areas will be restricted to that required to realize the landscaping plans. General construction use will not be allowed. The following are the three components:

- **Tie-in of remnant World Walk and Rose Garden in LMRP to gardens and the SUPs that were re-landscaped by Project Co within the Project Area.**
- **Installing a new HMEP trail connecting to the SUP at 98A Avenue and HMEP parking lot.**
- **Reconfiguration of a trail connecting Muttart Gardens to 98 Avenue and Cloverdale Neighbourhood.**

Since these trail activities are mitigation measures and were previously committed to in the 2013 EISA, further *assessment* of these activities is not warranted, but documentation is desirable.
In addition, planning during the last year identified a required modification of the Project Area in the vicinity of the HMEP parking lot at 96A Street. The 2013 EISA text identified that parking lot as included in the Project Area and available for use as a general construction area. The parking lot is critical to Project Co achieving feasible access from 98 Avenue to the south river bank work area. However, in 2013 the Project Area boundary drawn did not quite capture the entire parking lot as was intended. Accordingly, this boundary has now been adjusted slightly to follow the parking lot west boundary and include the whole of the parking lot. This adjustment is the fourth spatial clarification element.

Because undertaking the four above-noted components in this category requires an adjustment of the Project Area delineated in the 2013 EISA there is a need to document and explain these project aspects for record keeping purposes. To that end, each of these Spatial Clarification components is described in detail in Chapter 2 along with the rationale for the change and placement in the category of Spatial Clarification, but these components are not then further assessed.

1.4  EISA Amendment Objectives

Considering the above, following are the primary objectives of this EISA Update:

- Meet the commitment to ensure Bylaw 7188 review of Valley Line project changes affecting lands or facilities outside the Project Area.
- Document minor Project Area adjustments required to accommodate the refinement of previously-approved activities or mitigation measures.
- Prepare a publicly-available report for consideration by City Council.

1.5  Report Organization

This EISA Update consists of 13 chapters. Chapter 1 provides context and background on the need for the EISA Update and describes the focus of this report. Chapter 2 describes each project component addressed in this document, the motivation and rationale for the change, and the resulting changes to the previously-approved boundary. Chapter 2 also describes, in more detail, the spatial clarification components and the lands involved. Chapter 3 outlines the impact assessment methods specific to this EISA Update. Chapters 4 through 11 assess each of the described project components, describing specific methods used, existing conditions, impacts and mitigation, and includes a summary assessment for that component. Chapter 12 summarizes results from the public engagement process and major conclusions and commitments for all component changes. Chapter 13 provides all references and personal communications cited in the report.

This report includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Alternatives Analysis for North Valley Construction Access Route
- Appendix B: Temporary Construction Access Road – Geotechnical and Slope Stability Assessment (Thurber Engineering 2014)
• Appendix C: LMRP Vegetation Data
• Appendix D: Wildlife Species Potentially Found in the LMRP Study Area
• Appendix E: Special Status Wildlife Species Potentially Found in the LMRP Study Area
• Appendix F: LMRP Subsurface Utilities (T2 Utility Engineers 2013)