

RIVER ACCESS GUIDING PRINCIPLES POLICY C586

Approved by City Council on September 9, 2015

The purpose of this policy is to:








Ensure the provision, development and management of river access and river-based activities in the City of Edmonton is responsible, orderly, equitable and environmentally appropriate, while providing opportunities for recreation, education and learning, in accordance with the following guiding principles:

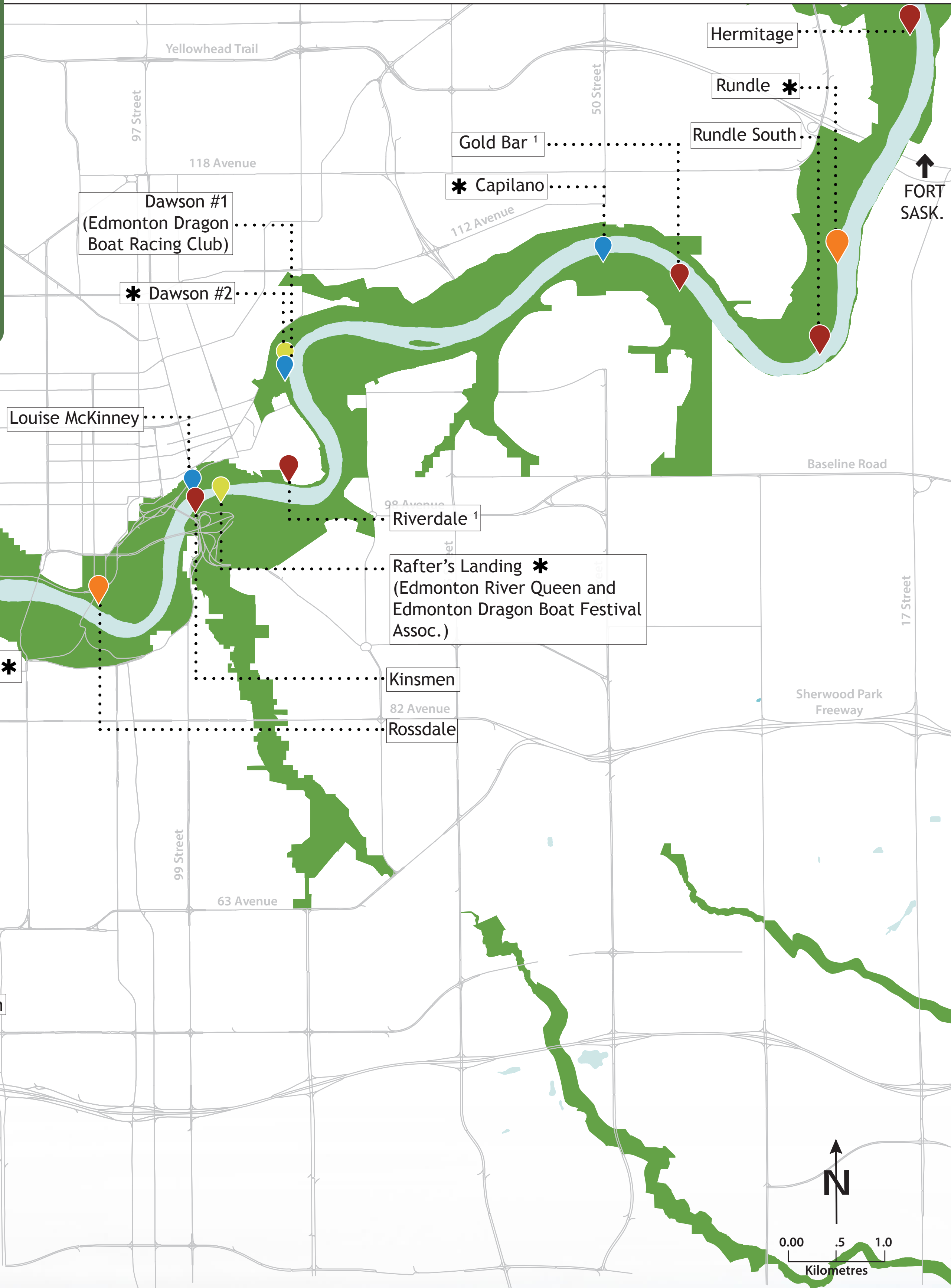
1. **Ensure public access** to the river and riverside infrastructure as public domain.
2. **Value and protect** the unique character and environment in the river valley by stewarding, protecting conserving and restoring the integrity.
3. **Educate and engage** Edmontonians to build lifelong skills, as well as awareness and appreciation of the river and its natural surroundings in order to nurture stewardship of a valued resource.
4. **Foster collaboration** and partnerships so that infrastructure and facilities are shared and programming is coordinated.
5. **Promote public safety** and responsible use to communicate safe water recreation behaviours, emergency response and bylaw enforcement.
6. **Provide and support** a range of river recreation opportunities to enhance Edmonton's unique quality of life.
7. **Celebrate** the cultural, historical and social role of the river in our city to build awareness and appreciation of our river.



DRAFT RIVER USE PLAN

Legend

-  Existing River Access Site
-  Existing River Access Site Potential for expansion
-  Future River Access Site
-  Sites not suitable
-  North Saskatchewan River
-  River Valley Park System
-  Priority Sites for Universal Accessibility (located within 2 hours distance from each other)
- ¹ Sites identified in the Capital City Region Plan (1974)



River Access Site Assessments

EXISTING RIVER ACCESS SITE

EXISTING RIVER ACCESS SITE POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION

SITES	CURRENT STATE	FUTURE (PLANNED & POTENTIAL)
Terwillegar #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing informal hand launch shared with an informal 'dog beach' Staging area for river based events (eg. Sourdough Raft Race) Parking within 200m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: No changes recommended for this site
Fort Edmonton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing informal gravel hand launch accessed via a steep gravel path Drop-off location adjacent to the road at the top of the gravel path Parking within 130m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: No changes recommended for this site
Whitemud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing informal hand launch Trailer turn-around and parking within 200m Washroom within 360m City is currently reviewing alternate nearby locations for a proposed River Valley Alliance dock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: No changes recommended for this site
Laurier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing vehicular and hand launch Vehicular and trailer parking available adjacent to the site Washroom within 280m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: Viewing deck and River Valley Alliance dock approx. 20m downstream (currently under development) A new washroom adjacent to site is approved as per the Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan (currently unfunded) Priority site for universal accessibility
Buena Vista #1 (Edmonton Rowing Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing concrete approach ramp and dock Two existing storage structures within 80m Parking and training facility within 220m Seasonal washroom for club members Primarily utilized by Edmonton Rowing Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: Construction of a new washroom (within 180m of the site) is underway as part of Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan implementation. Potential: This site has opportunity for partner-led site improvements
Buena Vista #2 (Edmonton Whitewater Paddlers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing gravel trail and stairs to hand launch Storage structure and fenced compound within 80m Parking within 260m Primarily utilized by the Edmonton Whitewater Paddlers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: Construction of a new washroom (within 200m of the site) is underway as part of Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan implementation
Hawrelak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently undeveloped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: River Valley Alliance dock to be installed (currently under development)
Louise McKinney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing metal dock with gangway Vehicular turn-around within 110m Vehicular parking within 300m Staging area for river-based events (eg. Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: New accessible switchback trail from parking lot to lower promenade (currently under development) Potential: Consider dock relocation to decrease the distance between the vehicular turn-around and the dock
Dawson #1 (Edmonton Dragon Boat Racing Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing gravel trail to dock Parking within 200m Washroom within 370m Primarily utilized by Edmonton Dragon Boat Racing Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential: Recommendations for this site are being considered through the Dawson Park Master Plan (currently under development)
Capilano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing concrete vehicular launch and hand launch Trailer turn-around in proximity to site Parking within 40m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: River Valley Alliance dock to be installed (currently under development) Potential: Consider reconfiguration of the Capilano Park parking lot to accommodate trailer parking Priority site for universal accessibility
Emily Murphy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing gravel hand launch Trailer turn-around adjacent to the site Parking within 60m Washroom within 370m Staging area for river-based events (eg. Mountain Man) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: River Valley Alliance dock to be installed nearby Potential: Central location, existing supporting amenities and limited competing uses support expanded use at this site. Priority site for universal accessibility
Rafter's Landing (Edmonton River Queen, Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival Association)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rafter's Landing (Edmonton River Queen, Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival Association) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential: Central location and available space support expanded use at this site. This site has opportunity for partner-led site improvements. Priority site for universal accessibility
Dawson #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing gravel hand launch Trailer turn-around and parking within 110m Washroom within 60m Primarily utilized by RiverWatch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned: River Valley Alliance dock to be installed (currently under development) Potential: Central location, existing supporting amenities and available space support expanded use of this site Recommendations for this site are being considered through the Dawson Park Master Plan (currently under development) Priority site for universal accessibility

River Access Site Assessments

FUTURE RIVER ACCESS SITE

SITES	CURRENT STATE	FUTURE (PLANNED & POTENTIAL)
Terwillegar #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently undeveloped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned: The Council approved Terwillegar Park Concept Plan includes a new hand launch located downstream from the current informal hand launch/dog beach, as well as a dock, access road, turn-around and parking area and supporting amenities for boating (currently unfunded) • Priority site for universal accessibility
Rossdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently undeveloped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential: As part of the River Valley Alliance docks and launches project, an opportunity to engage with the river is intended for this location. Plans are still in development.
Rundle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently undeveloped • Currently an informal 'look out' point • Parking within 100m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing supporting amenities, available space and limited competing uses support development of a hand launch at this site. • Priority site for universal accessibility

SITES NOT SUITABLE

SITES	REASONS NOT RECOMMENDED
Government House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the outside bend of the river therefore susceptible to scouring • High water velocity • Steep banks • Competing uses (eg. heavily used trail)
Kinsmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor access • Lack of space for supporting amenities • Competing uses (eg. heavily used parking lot)
Riverdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential development has since occurred in close proximity to the site leaving insufficient space to support a river access point
Gold Bar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of disturbance that would be required to accommodate river access • Distance to supporting amenities • Proximity of upstream water treatment plant
Rundle South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to outfall infrastructure • Distance to supporting amenities
Hermitage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within a high pressure gas line right-of-way • Distance to supporting amenities (parking, road access) • Competing uses (eg. heavily used dogs-off leash)



DRAFT SITE CRITERIA

Site criteria was developed and informed by best management practice research and administrative review. They informed the site assessment of each river access point in the draft River Use Plan. Future assessments should evaluate strengths and weaknesses based on the site criteria and include appropriate mitigation strategies. The criteria will also identify potential river use nodes or launch sites in unplanned study areas within the Northeast and Southwest Ribbon of Green studies.

SITE CRITERION	
Land Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites must be owned by the City • Private sites may be considered where the City has the opportunity to enter into a long term land use agreement. • Sites that are owned by the City, but leased long term to another party are not considered unless the lease expresses interest. • Sites that will eventually be turned over to the City, but are currently held by another party will be given future consideration.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid environmentally sensitive sites in regards to wildlife habitat, vegetation, species at risk, or geotechnical risks, as identified through the Ribbon of Green or River Valley Master Plans. • Avoid infrastructure that would encourage motorboat activity around sensitive fish habitats (e.g. class A waterbodies, creek confluences). • Discourage locations that require significant vegetation clearance or significant geotechnical work. • Discourage sites that are prone to siltation, flooding, scouring, and ice damage (if conditions known).
Vehicular Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for sites in parks (activity nodes) with safe collector/arterial road access and public transit. • Sites with potential for universal accessibility should consider provision of DATS services (e.g. identified drop off points, etc).
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space is available for parking infrastructure in close proximity to the launch (except where a drop-off location can be provided)
Launch Slope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorboat launch sites should be able to accommodate a 10-14% slope ramp with minimal disturbance to the natural grade. • Lower slopes are preferred for hand launches. Note: 6.75% slope is preferred for accessibility, however given the River Valley context it is difficult to achieve.
History of Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites that are currently utilized as a river access point would be favorable as citizens expect these sites to be available.
User Conflict (Pathway Interface, other users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch sites should limit pathway conflicts and impacts on existing/planned park uses/programming, particularly if there is a high intensity of use. • Vehicular launch and dock sites should minimize conflict with known fishing areas.
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch sites should provide an adequate water depth to support safe launching and minimize hazards for boat users. • Hazard considerations include high water velocity, rocks, river currents, bridge piers and utilities (eg. outfalls), etc.
Site Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites must be able to accommodate a portable washroom, garbage and recycling facilities, and seating. • Sites with potential for universal accessibility should also be able to accommodate trails less than 10% in slope (including level resting areas) and accessible washroom facilities. • Where connections to drainage infrastructure are feasible, some sites may accommodate boat cleaning stations to remove invasive species attached to boats. • Some sites may accommodate storage to support on-site programming and uses. Storage facilities to comply with planning criteria stipulated in <i>Storage and Accessory Structures on Parks and Open Space</i>.