

2.0 Program Statement

The following program statement serves as the guide for the preparation of the concept plan options and the final concept plan for the future development of Terwillegar Park. The program statement was prepared by the design team with input from the City project team, the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee and stakeholders through a one day workshop.

A program statement is a concise, descriptive list of the potential features and outcomes that are envisioned for a development project. The development program should be based on an overall vision, should respond to site opportunities and constraints, and should reflect the experiential and physical needs of current and future users. There are three key parts to the program statement for Terwillegar Park:

- **Starts with a Vision** - in this case, 'A Vision for Terwillegar Park', which defined the vision for Terwillegar Park as *"Unique Natural Park within the City of Edmonton's River Valley Park System"*.
- **Design Themes** – these provide the overall framework for the design as they provide a point of reference for evaluating and selecting specific program elements.
- **Program Elements** – the 'Program' is a descriptive list of the features, uses, experiences, support infrastructure and management requirements. It is the 'palette', 'menu', 'shopping list', or 'kit of parts' that fit with the overall vision ("a unique natural park"), and support the overall design themes.

2.1 A "Unique Natural Park"

So what is a "unique natural park"? "A Vision for Terwillegar Park" provides direction in terms of key values, preferred activities and required infrastructure for the park. In terms of context for making design decisions, the concept plan design team provides the following three-part definition:

- Terwillegar Park is, and will be, **unique** in Edmonton's River Valley Park System in terms of its size, environmental richness, diversity of settings, and mix of activities.
- The **natural** environment of Terwillegar Park is to be preserved and enhanced, and the natural setting provides for a diversity of recreational and educational experiences.
- Terwillegar **Park** shall continue to be a public place that supports recreational activities that are nature based; individual, family or group oriented; accessible and safe for all.

2.2 Design Themes

Building on the public input received during “A Vision for Terwillegar Park”, and considering specific direction and ideas from City staff, the City project team, the Advisory Committee, and stakeholder group representatives, a number of strong design themes were identified. The design team considered these themes during the selection of the specific program elements and as concept plan alternatives were prepared.

- **Keep it Simple** – this has been one of the strongest messages: to keep development unobtrusive and minimal both in extent and in visual presence, i.e. design to compliment and blend in to the natural setting.
- **Connectivity** – a multiuse asphalt trail (MUT) through the park with connections across the river is necessary to provide connectivity to future development in and around the park. This trail must be included if the overall vision for Edmonton’s river valley is to be achieved as defined in the Ribbon of Green Master Plan and the River Valley Alliance ‘Capital Region River Valley Park’. The location and alignment of the trail will need to be carefully selected to minimize impacts to the site environment and the activities of users.
- **Quality of Place** – the design of all features and amenities in the park must be of a high standard, sustainable, fit with the natural setting and be aesthetically pleasing to promote a sense of pride and ownership for users.
- **Not all things to all people** – while it is recognized that the size and open space available in the park may make it suitable for a wide range of recreational activities, it is also clear that many activities may not fit within the vision for the park and should be located in other city parks to meet the recreational needs of Edmontonians.
- **Design for all Seasons** – one of the unique aspects of Terwillegar Park is that it supports a high level of use in all seasons. The design of features and amenities and the park management program must reflect this four season use.
- **Recognizing that use will increase** – concerns over increasing levels of use are well founded (population growth, active lifestyles, better access etc.) and improved infrastructure and management will be needed to ensure that the Park environment is sustainable and that user needs can be met.
- **Additional uses must fit the Vision** – the current uses in the park are to be maintained and improved infrastructure and management will be proposed to better meet the needs of those users. Any additional uses or activities that are proposed for the Park must be compatible with the vision of a “unique natural park”.

2.3 Program Elements

The following is the final list of program elements that were selected and that the design team believes fit within the vision of a “unique natural park” and also support the key design themes. The program elements have been organized into seven categories. The final category is management and maintenance which begins to identify some of the activities that will be required to manage the park and provides an outline for the management guidelines defined in Section 5.1.

It is important to note that all of the program elements listed below are included in the final concept plan. A broader list of program elements was used by the design team in developing and analyzing the alternative concept options. As the concept plan evolved through input by the City project team, the Terwillegar Park Citizen’s Advisory Committee and the public, some program elements were removed because it was agreed that they did not fit within the vision for the park.

2.3.1 Natural Environment

One of the key values expressed in “A Vision for Terwillegar Park” was the need to preserve the Park’s natural attributes, as well as its ability to regenerate naturally over time regardless of the recreational activities which occur. In terms of program, it is recommended that the concept plan include provisions for not only preserving the natural environment, but enhancing, interpreting and managing it as the key feature of Terwillegar Park. Some of the potential user experiences resulting from the provision of these program features includes nature education and appreciation, discovery, quiet enjoyment and contemplation. The following are the natural environment program elements:

- Naturalization and Habitat Enhancement – selective planting of native plant species to increase the extent and enhance wildlife habitat diversity in some parts of the Park.
- Open Space – designated areas of the park (central open space and along main trails) should be mowed one to two times per year to manage weeds and maintain conditions for users and for event use. Other open space areas could be managed for weed control and restored to a native prairie. Formal, mowed (manicured) lawn area will not be proposed and the overall mowed area may be reduced in support of the overall vision.
- Buffer Planting – planting of native tree and shrub species in large beds in different areas of the park will be used to create visual or physical buffers between use areas and in the parking lot to reduce the scale and improve the fit with the natural environment.
- Ponds – the ponds could be enhanced as natural features within the Park by reducing some of the side slopes, planting upland and riparian vegetation around the perimeter and by developing formal viewing/interpretive opportunities.
- River – river’s edge disturbance should be limited to a few designated locations to protect sensitive areas and provide users with physical and visual access. To protect the river, all other existing informal access locations should be reclaimed and further impacts should be discouraged through signage and maintenance.



- Education – there are tremendous environmental education and interpretive opportunities in the Park that should be formalized to enhance the park experience for all users.
- Weed Control - there are noxious and nuisance weeds throughout the Park; total eradication would be virtually impossible and it may not be desired or necessary. Some selective weed control may be desirable to allow native plant succession to occur.



2.3.2 Trails

An extensive network of informal trails of varying widths exists within the Park and is well used by a broad range of users. There are also approximately five informal trails providing access into the Park. To ensure that the trails can meet the long term needs of users, to provide for a broad range of experiences and to direct use so as to minimize impacts to the natural environment, a formal trail network should be established, constructed and maintained to City standards. Some of the potential user experiences resulting from the provision of these program elements includes family fun, nature appreciation, quiet enjoyment, exercise, fitness, skill development, socializing, challenge, thrill seeking, and four season enjoyment. Several categories of trails are recommended:

- Regional Trail – the development of a regional trail running through the Park and linking it as part of the overall ‘Capital Region River Valley Park’ vision, has been identified in a number of approved plans. Recognizing this as a critical link, a paved multiuse trail through the park with connections to proposed pedestrian bridges has been included. The regional trail would not be constructed until the bridges are in place. The trail alignment has been carefully selected to minimize impacts to the environment and other user activities and experiences.
- Enhanced Walking Trails – walking trails will be formalized and improved on some of the existing paths using compacted granular placed at 3.0 m wide for the main trails and at current widths for other informal trails, through forested and to access viewpoint and interpretive node locations. Some existing informal trails may be left as is or phased out and reclaimed based on management and/or habitat enhancement recommendations. Some new walking trails have been proposed to increase the range of trail experiences available to users or to provide a modified trail route in support of other proposed development.



- Universal Design Trail – trails developed using universal design principles provide barrier free access for users with all degrees of sensory awareness, all types of movement and all levels of physical and intellectual function. To ensure that people with all levels of ability have access to a range of the Parks unique environmental features, a universal design trail has been included from the parking lot through some of the forest at the east end of the site and along the river. Universal design principles should also be applied to the detailed design and construction of the enhanced walking trails so that some of these trails can also be designated as barrier free/universally accessible.



- Designated Dog Off/on-leash areas – the use of the Park by off-leash dogs will continue to be one of the primary program elements. Some areas of the Park (approximately 16% of the total Park area) will be designated for permanent restrictions requiring dogs to be on-leash to support a wider range of park activities and uses, minimize user conflicts and support habitat protection or restoration measures.

- Enhanced Mountain Bike Trails – the majority of existing single track trails will be retained and a designated route will be enhanced to improve mountain bike user experience, to make the trail sustainable, for safety reasons or to mitigate against environmental impacts. The enhancement of the trails should be assessed through a partnership between the City and users, and locations identified for enhancements to the surface, width, drainage, turns, and sightlines. These enhancements will be carefully designed and implemented through user consultation to ensure that user experience (challenge) is not reduced, while at the same time ensuring protection and management of the natural environment. Some existing single track trail routes may be phased out and reclaimed based on management and/or habitat enhancement recommendations.



- Cross Country Ski Trails – the designated cross country ski trail route will be maintained and modified to better meet the needs of cross country skiers. Signage will be provided to encourage walkers to respect the track that have been set. With the development of a program building in the park, an area could be designated for a teaching area.



- Trail Amenities – a range of trail amenities including benches, trash receptacles, viewpoints, water fountain and signage are recommended.

2.3.3 Infrastructure

“A Vision for Terwillegar Park” identified the need to provide basic infrastructure upgrades to the Park including a washroom, improved access and parking. All of these infrastructure improvements have been recommended to meet the long term needs of park users:

- Road – the access road has been evaluated (See Access and Servicing Review – Appendix B) and upgrading and paving of the road is recommended. Issues related to retaining walls, barriers, minor widening, drainage and storm water will all need to be addressed during detailed design. Provision for school bus access and turnaround has also been provided. A secondary emergency access will be provided by maintaining the ‘old road’ connection to Rooney Crescent as an enhanced walking trail. A secondary paved access road (shown in image as viewed from the north towards paved entrance road) has been recommended to provide access to the ‘Activity Area’ for program elements such as the canoe/kayak launch and the picnic area. Storm water from the entrance road and paved parking area will need to be managed to reduce potential impacts on the site and river and a small retention area or wetland has been proposed.



- Parking – expanding the parking area from approximately 80 stalls (includes parking on road) to 150 stalls (shown in image as viewed from west towards paved entrance road) to meet current needs and short term growth has been recommended based on an evaluation of past traffic counts, current use estimates and projected visitation (Appendix C). Additional parking (65 stalls) to support other park features is proposed using small satellite parking lots. A designated overflow and event parking area (300 cars) has also been proposed. The area would be graded, compacted and seeded with a durable low maintenance grass mix. The area would be defined by temporary fences during events only.



- Program/Washroom Building – a program building has been proposed to assist the City and other groups with the provision of outdoor education/recreation programs and events within the park. This building will provide externally accessible washrooms that will be open for use at all times when the park is open.



The program space may include flexible office and meeting space for event organizers, a flexible multipurpose room, as well as interior and exterior storage space. This space would be particularly valuable as a place for small groups to gather (eg. marshalling of a school groups). The program building would not be designed to support social bookings such as weddings. The building should be designed as a state-of-the-art ‘green’ building that is safe, vandal resistant and fits with the natural character of the site.

- Remote Toilets - small, pump-out tank style or composting toilets have been proposed at the west end of the Park and close to the canoe/kayak launch to meet the needs of both park users and those using the river.



- Maintenance Building and Yard – to better support management within the Park a small maintenance building and yard has been included with access off of the secondary access road (shown in image below). The maintenance building would support a full time Parks operation staff person as well as a seasonal crew for maintenance in the park and perhaps the district. The building and yard will be “tucked” into the forest edge

and will be well screened so as to fit into the park and should be designed as a state-of-the-art ‘green’ building. One of the benefits of the maintenance building would be to improve safety and security in the Park by having the regular presence of parks staff working with the Park – the concept of “eyes on the Park”.



- Utility Services – as indicated in the Access and Servicing Review (Appendix B), water, natural gas, and power service into the Park will be required in support of the proposed program/washroom building and the maintenance garage. These services could be provided within a public utility lot connecting the Park with Rooney Crescent, and/or they could be constructed within a corridor adjacent to improved access road. Street lighting (dark sky compliant) is recommended along the main access road and parking lot and should be considered along the secondary park road and satellite parking lots. A sanitary service into the site is not recommended (due to the requirement for a lift station) and so washrooms will be serviced through septic tanks that will require pumping. A water line would be provided to service the buildings and a looped water line would be provided for water fountains. During detailed design, sustainable design technology should be evaluated as part of the LEED design objectives. The use of high efficiency electrical fixtures combined with photovoltaics, high efficiency/waterless or composting toilets, rainwater harvesting and reuse, and in-floor space heating are all potential options for reducing or potentially eliminating some of the service requirements.

2.3.4 Amenities

The provision of proper amenities will enhance the experience of all users. Current amenities are limited to trash receptacles, dog bag dispensers, benches, minimal signage and a portable toilet.

- Park Entrance Node – a central location adjacent to the parking lot is recommended to provide a place where all users can pass through to gather or post up-to-date information on the park. This node would expand on the current notice board by providing a Park map(s), user information directed at the various user groups, current conditions, and environmental information. This node could also be the staging area for Park interpretation by providing details and directions for individuals or groups wishing to learn about the Park.



- Sheltered Viewpoints – sheltered viewpoints have been located at a few key points along the main walking trails to provide destinations where users can meet, rest, view the Park and river valley, find protection from the weather, and get interpretive information on the park.



- Seating – seating should be provided at key locations throughout the Park to provide places for rest, contemplation or at key view locations. Seating can be provided with benches or picnic tables, or through the use of natural materials such as large logs or boulders.



- Trash and Recycling – ‘oil drum’ style trash receptacles are provided throughout the Park primarily to meet the needs of the dog walking community. The City will replace some trash receptacles with in-ground style receptacles which are designed to hold more waste and reduce odors. Trash receptacles that are located where truck access is not feasible are to be replaced with metal containers with lids that better fit with the natural setting of the park. Additional trash receptacles should be added where necessary based on input from users. Bins for recycling should also be provided by the parking lot to allow users a place to deposit beverage cans and bottles.
- Dog Bag Dispensers – dog bag dispensers are located at key access points in the park. Additional dispensers should be added where necessary based on input from the off-leash dog community.

- Picnic Sites – to meet the needs of a potential user group (i.e. families), individual and group picnic sites have been proposed within the Park. To best support this activity, the sites are located in close proximity to parking and in an area separated from off-leash dog activities. The picnic sites would include picnic tables on gravel pads with available trash and recycling receptacles close by.



- Nature Playground – related to the provision of picnic sites in the Park a nature-based playground is proposed to meet the needs of families. The nature playground would be designed to blend into the site and would utilize natural materials and features such as logs, boulders, trails, and vegetation to provide a range of play, imaginative and physical challenges for children of all ages.



- Bluphones – additional Bluphones should be added at primary trail access locations (eg. Pedestrian bridges) to increase safety and security within the Park.
- Signage – a formal signage program based on City of Edmonton standards will be recommended to provide users with a range of information including interpretive, directional, safety and regulatory. To fit with the vision of the Park the signage program should not result in a proliferation of signs throughout the Park but should be designed for the specific user groups, provide for universal design, encourage appropriate and shared use and enhance rather than restrict user experiences. The trail signs for the mountain bike trails should also provide information on the type/difficulty of the trail and should be developed to International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards



- Use and Management Signs – education includes knowing how to properly use and enjoy the Park and how to respect the activities of other users. To meet this need, and to ensure that the ‘shared resource’ value remains strong as activity increases, use and management signage will need to be provided in the Park.
- Drinking Fountain – a drinking fountain and “doggy” fountain are proposed on the outside of the program/washroom building to meet the needs of users. A water fountain will also be provided in the Amenity area and would be serviced with a looped water line.

2.3.5 Ponds, Lake and River

As identified in the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis, the ponds present a range of opportunities related to improved water fowl habitat, nature interpretation, access for off-leash dogs and for paddling. Due to the size, shape and access from all sides, not all of the program activities can occur without impacting the others and as such a constructed recreation lake has been proposed as a new feature of the park. Surrounding the Park on three sides, the North Saskatchewan River is a significant feature of the Park and supports a range of activities and experiences for users. Access to, and protection of, the river's edge are critical to the long term vision for the Park.

- Restoration – modification of some of the pond shoreline slopes is proposed to promote the growth of riparian vegetation and improve the ponds as waterfowl habitat. The addition of topsoil and planting using native riparian and upland species is proposed for the proposed restoration area.
- Pond Shoreline Access – improved, designated access for people and/or dogs has been proposed by formalizing some of the trail access points, improving edge conditions (eg. gravel or boardwalk) and removing steeper slopes. Providing formal and directed access locations could work in conjunction with habitat restoration by encouraging users to only access specific locations which will in turn minimize the extent of impacts and disturbance along the shoreline.
- Paddling Lake - a new designated lake is proposed to provide a facility for teaching canoeing and kayaking and providing flat water recreational paddling opportunities as a new use within the Park, while maintaining the existing ponds for habitat. The paddling lake would not be open to off leash dogs and a combination of boulders, native planting and rock/rip-rap would define the shoreline to ensure that it fit with the Park but wasn't attractive to waterfowl. Material excavated from the construction of the lake would be placed in locations within the Park and fine graded to look like natural landforms. It is important to note that the Concept Plan Study did not include any geotechnical or hydrogeological studies related to the construction of a lake, and so assumptions have

been made regarding construction and lake management. Two options have been discussed for the construction of the lake. In the first option the lake would be excavated to below river water elevation and it has been assumed that the lake



would function hydraulically in the same manner as the existing ponds (ie. rise and fall with the river level). In the second option, the lake would be excavated to a suitable depth (approx. 3.0m) and size (approx. 2.0 ha), a pvc liner would be installed, and the lake would be filled with either river water or from a well that would be drilled in the Park. With both options there are regulatory and public health issues related to water quality which at times may place restrictions on the direct water contact programs such as kayaking.

- River Shoreline Access and Restoration – informal access locations along the river bank which are dangerous or are causing erosion issues should be restored using a combination of erosion control materials (boulders, rip rap, ecoblankets) and naturalization planting. These locations should be identified by Parks operation staff on an ongoing basis and temporary access control measures (fencing) combined with signage may be needed to allow the restoration to succeed. Popular existing river access locations at the “beach”, at the west end of the park and opposite EL Smith should be maintained and improved to allow safe access to the rivers edge.



- River Access Infrastructure – a formal canoe/kayak launch is proposed to provide a suitable location for river access/egress and in support of the Voyageur Canoe program. The access would be graded, protected (from river action) and maintained, and a seasonal dock will be provided to facilitate safer loading and tie-up for park users. To better support this use, a gated access road with turn around as well as a satellite parking area has also been proposed.

- The ‘Beach’ – the ‘beach’ area is a heavily used area of the Park and should be retained to provide good access to the river’s edge. The slopes and river edge will require ongoing maintenance to allow safe and reasonable access to the rivers edge and gravel bars that are downstream. The Edmonton River Queen was dry docked in the ‘Beach’ area for maintenance in 2007 which closed the ‘Beach’ to users. The River Queen ownership group is being encouraged to evaluate other options outside of Terwillegar Park for dry docking.



2.3.6 Interpretive, Events and Programs

One of the key values identified in “A Vision for Terwillegar Park” was the development of Terwillegar Park as an outdoor classroom. The users and stakeholders did not identify the need to provide a formal educational/interpretive facility, but rather, to provide opportunities throughout the Park for all users to combine their recreational/social activities with opportunities for seeing and learning about the natural features of the Park.

- Interpretive Signs – a comprehensive interpretive signage program should be developed and implemented. The final concept plan identifies potential locations and themes throughout the Park.



- Interpretive Viewpoints – formal interpretive viewpoint areas have been proposed within the Park as well as along the river to provide designated and controlled locations for viewing the Park and learning about its features.
- Events – the Park already supports a number of significant events including the Klondike Raft Races, sanctioned mountain bike races (Alberta Biking Association and Corporate Challenge), and orienteering competitions (Edmonton Overlanders Orienteering and Corporate Challenge). Any additional events proposed for the Park should fit within the context of the natural setting, require minimal infrastructure or manicured open space, and minimize impacts activities of users.
 
- Programs – programs in the Park are currently limited to public schools grade 4 Voyageur canoe trip from Terwillegar Park to Fort Edmonton, as well as other small scale school use activities. With the network of trails and diversity of natural features, the Park is well suited to host a range of City, school, community, and recreational user group programs which would have an environmental or outdoor education focus. All season, active programming within the Park should be developed following the implementation of support amenities and infrastructure such as interpretive signage, a program building, washrooms, and bus access.
 
- Infrastructure – events that utilize the Park make do with temporary infrastructure and facilities such as signage, tents, parking, additional power and controls (eg. barriers, fencing). Improved road access and parking, a washroom building and a program building would better support event and programs within the Park.

2.3.7 Management and Maintenance

The management and maintenance of Terwillegar Park will be the responsibility of the River Valley Parks unit of the City of Edmonton Parks Branch. Under the new Urban Parks Management Plan (June, 2006), Terwillegar Park is classified as a River Valley and Ravine Park and will be managed based on the guidelines for that category. In support of the proposed program and concept plan for Terwillegar Park management guidelines have been prepared (See Section 4.3). The following are some of the management considerations that will be addressed through guidelines and ultimately operational practices.

- Natural Environment - management activities may include ongoing restoration planting, seasonal access restrictions for habitat protection, weed control, and mowing. Grass in the open field and along the walking trails would continue to be mowed twice per year.
- Trails – formal trails management guidelines should be developed and fostered through consultation and a partnership between the City and the trail users to ensure that the trails are meeting the needs of users and that they are sustainable. Management activities may include regular trail inspections, vegetation clearing, erosion controls, surface repairs, ski track setting and maintenance of trail structures and amenities. Signage will be a key element in trails management providing information to users in trail rules, location, direction, distance, and difficulty.

- **Park Maintenance** – The primary maintenance activity will continue to be trash collection (once per week). Additional resources will be required to maintain built amenities such as viewpoints, signage and shelters. Some infrastructure management activities will be reduced once the road is paved, however, cleaning, snow clearing and building maintenance would increase.
- **Buildings** – the program/washroom building, the maintenance building and the remote washrooms will all require at least daily maintenance checks as well as scheduled maintenance to ensure that they are kept clean and suitable for use. For the program/washroom building, maintenance schedules will need to be established to correspond to use schedules. As a bookable facility, users should be required to take responsibility for managing access (ie. opening/locking the building), and for general cleanliness after each use.
- **Ponds, Lake & River** – management activities may include ongoing restoration planting, weed control, pest control, trail/access maintenance or even seasonal access restrictions. Water quality issues will need to be addressed to ensure public safety for direct contact recreation activities. There may be a wide range of management activities along the rivers edge which will focus on protecting the river banks from erosion as well as to maintain limited but safe access to the water. These activities may include restoration planting, weed control, trail maintenance and access restrictions.
- **Education and Safety** – a good communication/public relations plan to educate park users on the range of available activities, experiences and responsibilities to ensure the shared enjoyment of the Park. From a safety perspective, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards will be applied in the design of the parks facilities and amenities.
- **Bylaw Control** – Park Rangers will patrol and monitor the Park for safety, to educate users on appropriate behaviours, and to enforce bylaws when needed. The proposed Maintenance building and yard would increase the level of operations staff in the Park which may also assist in ensuring positive activities in the Park. Local rules may be applied in the application of the City Parks Bylaw.
- **Emergency Response** – EMS access will be provided along all 3.0 m wide trails. Some area will remain difficult to access especially in winter. Bluphones and trail signs with location markers will make it easier for EMS to respond. A secondary access/egress route into the Park is provided by the ‘old road’ trail leading to Rooney Crescent for extreme circumstances.
- **Signage** – a few signs can be placed to remind users of the “Rules of the Park” and to encourage the ‘shared resource’ value. Management activities may include sign maintenance and repair, as well as updating and changing out signs to keep the information current seasonally as well as over the long term as succession in the Park occurs and environments change.
- **River Valley Event Guidelines** – the City of Edmonton has a set of general terms and conditions of use as well as clear requirements to ensure that event organizers follow the rules for park use, safety, public notification, signage, vehicle access and environment that must be followed.