



Terwillegar Park Footbridge and
West End Trails
Public Engagement Progress Report

August 2014

BACKGROUND

The Capital Region River Valley Park is North America's largest urban park, with a total area of more than 18000 acres. The park system connects over 88 kilometres of the North Saskatchewan River Valley from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan.

The City of Edmonton has partnered with the River Valley Alliance (RVA) on River Valley Connections, which is the next significant step in creating a world-class, connected river valley park system. Once complete, the project will increase access to and connectivity throughout the river valley park system.

River Valley Alliance

The River Valley Alliance (RVA) is a non-profit group formed by the seven Capital Region municipalities bordering the North Saskatchewan River. Their mission is to protect, preserve and enhance the river valley park system from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan.

A 16-member board of directors governs the RVA with representatives from each member municipality. Its three primary goals are:

- To coordinate river valley planning and development within the seven member municipalities.
- To ensure plans respond to and balance the social, recreational, environmental, and economic needs of Capital Region residents.
- To raise funds to bring these plans to reality.

In 2012, the RVA announced \$90 million in capital funding for 18 Capital Region projects to improve public access to, and connectivity within the regional river valley park system. \$24.3 million has been allocated by the RVA for projects within Edmonton. The \$24.3 million provided to the City of Edmonton by the RVA was matched by the Government of Canada (which provided \$24.3 million) and the Government of Alberta (which provided \$22.6 million). The City of Edmonton contributed an additional \$1.2 million from general finances and \$0.4 million from parkland reserve.

River Valley Connections

In total, \$72.9 million in funding has been allocated towards twelve river valley projects, which are grouped into five initiatives. The five initiatives are:

1. Terwillegar Park Footbridge: This 262-metre long footbridge will link Terwillegar Park to the river terrace north of the river.

2. West End Trails: This initiative will add 5.4 kilometres of primary (paved) and secondary (gravel) trails to the river valley main spine trail. The extensions include a link between the recently completed signature Fort Edmonton Footbridge and the new Terwillegar Park Footbridge.

3. East End Trails: This initiative will develop 15 km of trails in east Edmonton.

4. Boat Launches and Docks: Three boat launches and seven docks will be added throughout the river valley for public use.

5. 104 Street River Valley Access and Touch the Water Promenade: This water promenade will look at developing the area in and around the old EPCOR power station to include recreation facilities and access to the river. Access on an inclined elevator from Jasper Avenue to Rossdale connecting to the river valley trail system and the Touch the Water Promenade is also part of this initiative.

Terwillegar Park Footbridge and West End Trails

On July 2013, City Council approved the construction of a 280-metre footbridge to cross from Terwillegar Park to the River Valley Oleskiw lands in the city's west end. The footbridge will be a 'stressed ribbon' design—the first bridge of this design in Edmonton.

As part of this initiative, 5.4 kilometers of trails in and around Terwillegar Park will be upgraded or developed. These trails will link the Terwillegar Park Footbridge with Terwillegar Park to the south and the river valley terrace (River Valley Oleskiw lands) to the north. They are another step towards creating a continuous trail system in Edmonton's river valley.

Public Engagement Update

As part of its ongoing commitment to public engagement, the City of Edmonton continued a dialogue with members of the public, park users and area residents following the public and stakeholder engagement activities (community stakeholder meeting and public open house) held in the fall of 2013.

In November 2013, a Community Advisory Committee was established with representatives from area community leagues, the mountain biking community, the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities, and the City's Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee to solicit input into the ongoing design and planning details of the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and West End Trails. Several meetings were held between November 2013 and April 2014 with the committee, in addition to targeted meetings with representatives of the mountain biking community. Summary reports of these meetings have been prepared separately.

At the direction of City Council to gather feedback directly from the naturalists' community, a meeting was also held with representatives of environmental and nature groups on May 15, 2014 at Calder Bateman Communications (10241 – 109 Street). The intent was to specifically discuss the pros and cons of alternate trail routes through the River Valley Oleskiw Lands (West End Trails – North Trail), which will link the Fort Edmonton Footbridge with the new Terwillegar Park Footbridge (a map of the proposed routes can be found in Appendix A).

During this meeting, participants developed criteria to establish a preferred route. Following the discussion, it was noted that the group's preferred route is North Trail – Option 4, which runs along the west edge of the forest, however, the group also suggested an alternate route (North Trail - Option 5), which runs along the escarpment (the western edge of the meadow).

Following this meeting, the City conducted further analysis and assessed each option using a set of evaluation criteria. As a result, route options 1 and 4 were eliminated as they rated the lowest of the five options. However, all five route options were presented at the May 22, 2014 Community Advisory Committee meeting and the May 31, 2014 public open house, along with the evaluation criteria, to illustrate why the two routes were eliminated.

Input received during all engagement activities informed the project team in development of the final concept design for the Terwillegar Park Footbridge, as well as routes and specific design details of the West End Trails – South Trails and route options for the West End Trails – North Trail.

In May 2014, the final designs, artistic renderings and construction details for the Terwillegar Park Footbridge; final designs, route maps and construction details for the West End Trails - South Trails and detailed information on potential route options for the West End Trails - North Trail were presented to the Community Advisory Committee and the general public for feedback. The comment form used to solicit feedback at the open house and as an online survey can be found in Appendix B of this report.

This report encompasses the feedback received during the following public engagement activities:

Community Advisory Committee

May 22, 2014, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Riverbend United Church (14907-45 Ave NW)

Attendance: 5 members

Public Open House and Online Survey

May 31, 2014, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Alfred H. Savage Centre (13204 Fox Drive)

Attendance: 211 participants

Comment Forms/Surveys: 323 comment forms received (90 at event, 233 received online)

The open house was advertised by roadside signs in nearby communities, print advertisements in the *Edmonton Journal*, *Edmonton Sun*, *Edmonton Examiner*, and *Riverbend Ragg Times*, on the City of Edmonton website and through a direct mail campaign that reached more than 18,000 homes in and around Terwillegar Park. Area community leagues were also contacted and asked to distribute information on the open house to their members. These materials, along with the open house presentation material can be accessed at www.edmonton.ca/rivervalleyprojects

Summary of Feedback

What We Heard: Community Advisory Committee

Committee members show consensus in support of the final design of the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and are appreciative that nearly all stakeholder and public suggestions were incorporated. They are pleased with the inclusion of elements to meet the needs of a variety of users including the canopied observation areas, multi-level handrails and the textured walking surface that minimizes slipping.

Although committee members agreed with and accepted the route evaluation criteria as used by the City of Edmonton to evaluate the five proposed North Trail options, one member disagreed with the elimination of Option 4 (along the forest edge), which is the route preferred by the naturalists. The option was eliminated due to potential impacts to archeological sites and the concern that this trail would lead to the creation of multiple informal trails as users try to reach the river's edge, which would cause significant environmental damage. One committee member underscored the idea that people want to access a trail that goes along the river.

Although the City's Office of Biodiversity has approved North Trail - Option 2 as there is no evidence of old growth forest impact, one member noted that there are rare plants located along this route and therefore, this option should be eliminated. The project team agreed to investigate these plants and suggested that mitigation in the way of minor route adjustments could be made to accommodate, if necessary.

Generally, committee members are in support of North Trail - Option 2 (the route along the river's edge), however, it is not unanimous.

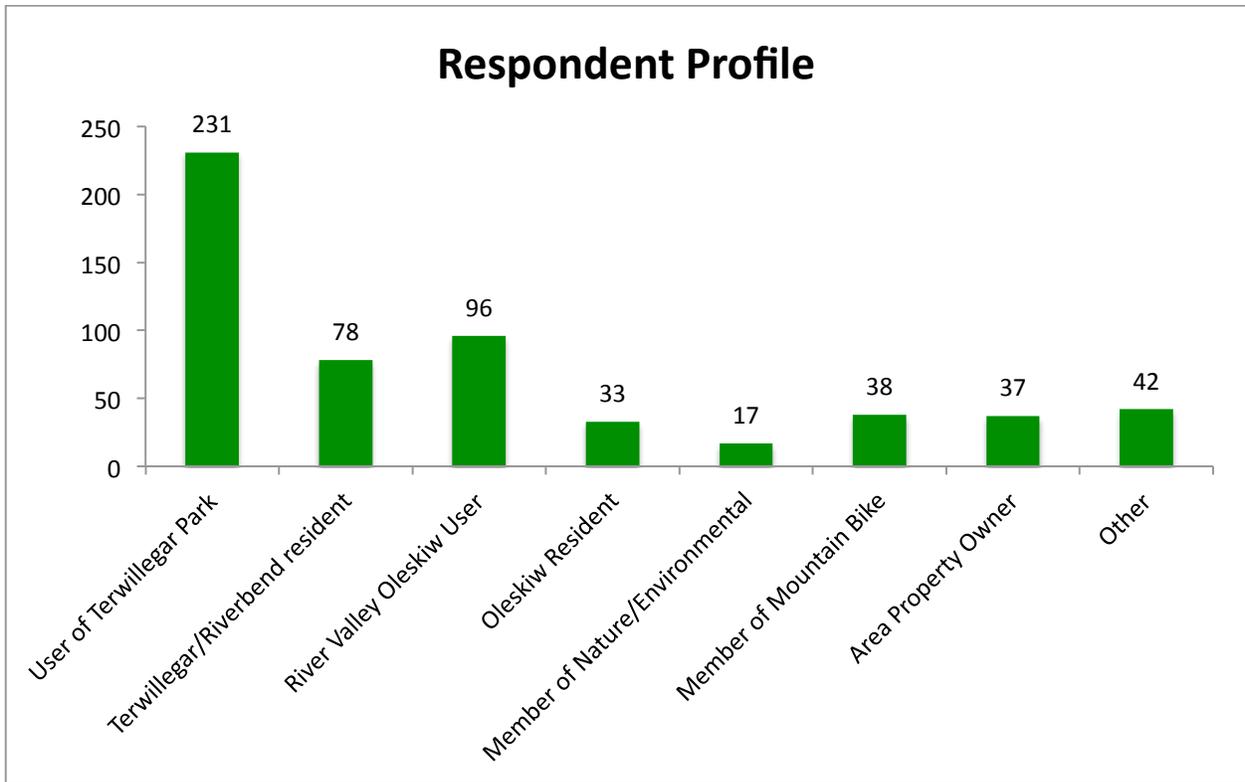
What We Heard: Public Open House/Online Survey

A comment form was provided for open house attendees to fill out and return at the event as a means of providing input to the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and West End Trails. Alternatively, the comment form was also available as an online survey accessible from the City's project webpage, open to any interested stakeholder or member of the public. The online survey was open following the open house between May 31 and June 8, 2014.

Three hundred and twenty three (323) comment forms/surveys were submitted (90 at event, 233 received online). The summary of input received below is a reporting on all responses combined, rather than broken down as responses received at the open house and online survey. As not every question was completed in each comment form/survey, feedback is reported as number of responses received rather than percentages.

Respondents' Relationship to Project

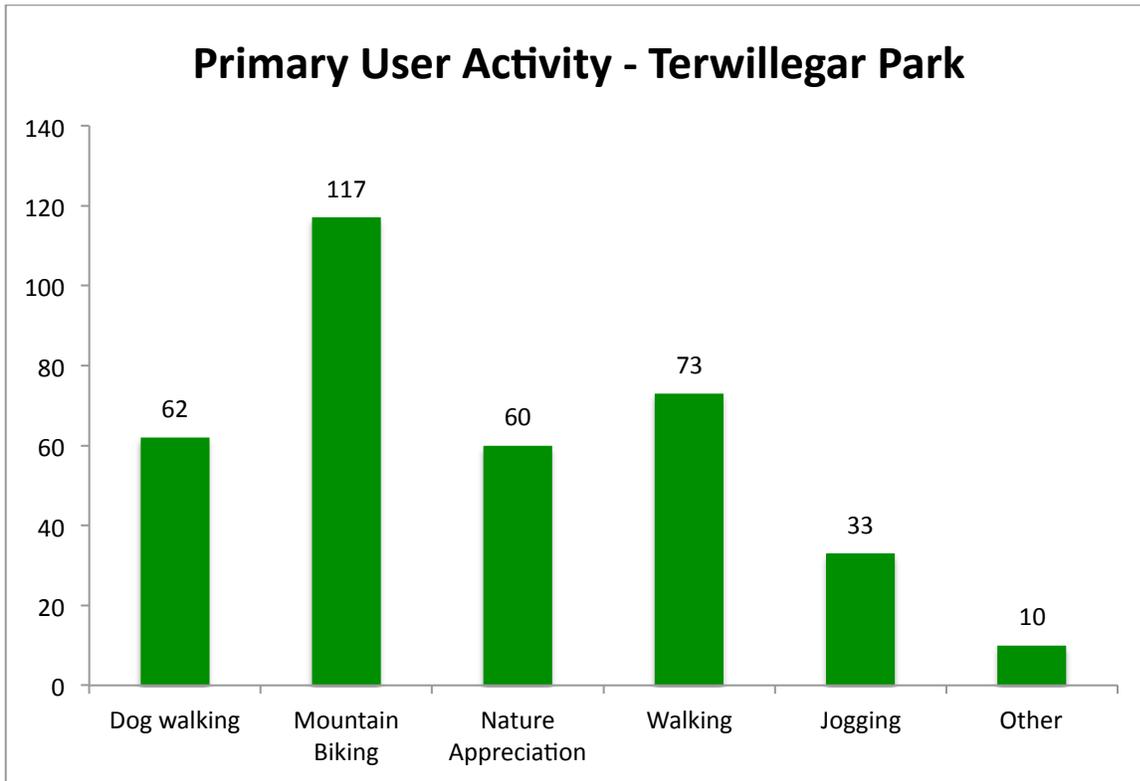
Respondents were asked to identify themselves in relation to the project. A respondent could check more than one response.



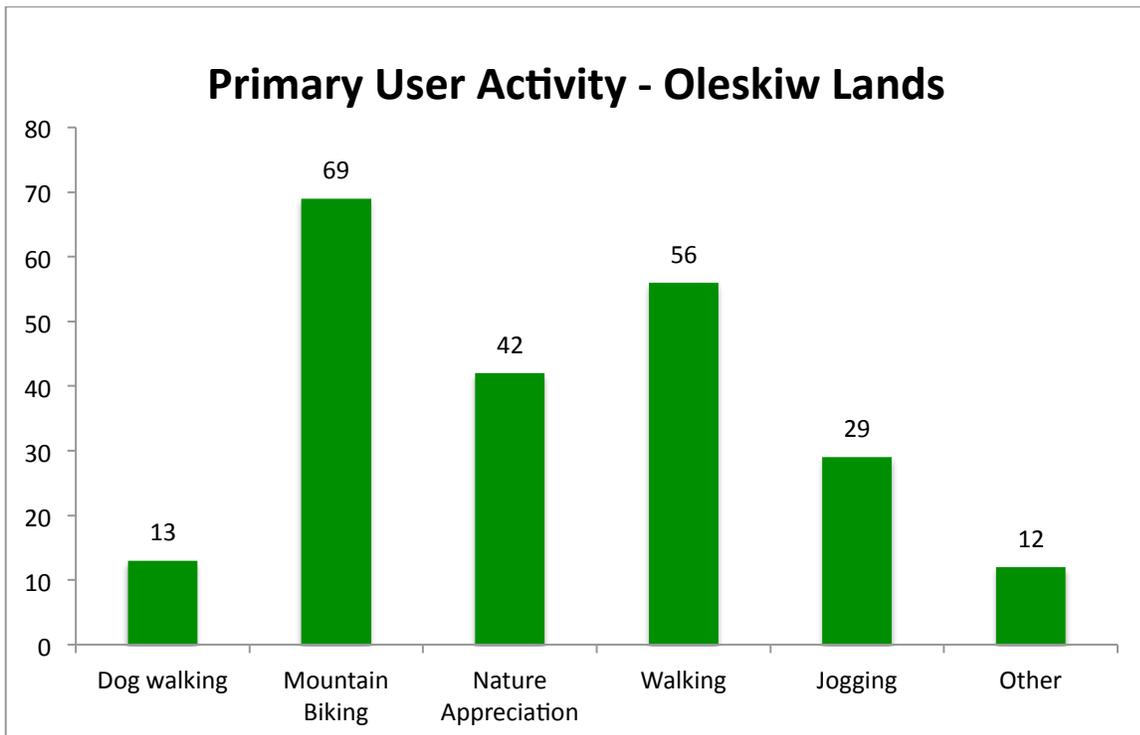
Primary Activity in Terwillegar Park and Oleskiw River Valley Lands

Respondents who use Terwillegar Park and/or the River Valley Oleskiw lands were asked to identify their primary activity.

Terwillegar Park



Oleskiw



Respondents' participation in previous engagement activities

A stakeholder meeting – 12 respondents

A Community Advisory Committee meeting – 14 respondents

Public open house – (September 21, 2013) – 30 respondents

Online survey (September 2013) – 33 respondents

First Time Participant – 148 respondents

Level of Satisfaction: Terwillegar Park Footbridge

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the Terwillegar Park Footbridge overall, respondents remain supportive. The majority of responses (176) indicate respondents are either Somewhat Satisfied (83) or Very Satisfied (93), with only 67 respondents indicating they are Somewhat Dissatisfied (36) or Very Dissatisfied (31). A nearly equivalent number—64 respondents—indicate they are Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied.

Respondents were also asked to explain their response to their level of satisfaction with the Terwillegar Park Footbridge. The positive responses received by those who are Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied most predominantly note support for the footbridge overall and its innovative and esthetic design. Many others indicate their satisfaction is related to increased connections to the trail system, and increased access to the river valley and expansion of the Ribbon of Green vision.

“I really like the design, it gives us further access to all parts of our amazing river valley.”

“. . . adding the footbridge and paved trails connecting the river valley is a great investment.”

Although a few negative responses were received specific to the footbridge, most notably about cost (7 responses), the lack of parking to access the footbridge on the north side of the river (7 responses), and those who don't feel there is a need for a footbridge at all (9 responses), the most common negative responses noted by those who are Somewhat Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied relate to the West End Trails project rather than the Terwillegar Park Footbridge as the question posed or to lack of awareness of the project overall.

Twenty (20) responses note dissatisfaction with the loss of the natural/mountain bike trail in Terwillegar Park. Twenty-one (21) respondents indicate a lack of awareness or not enough information about the project.

‘I do not like that the existing mountain bike trails will be destroyed to make the 3m gravel path.’

‘Why not leave the current single track trail and just build a new multi purpose trail?’

North Trail Options 2, 3 and 5

Respondents were asked to provide comments on what they Like and Dislike about three route options that the City is considering for the North Trail through the River Valley Oleskiw lands (Options 2, 3 and 5), which is intended to connect the new Terwillegar Park Footbridge with the existing Fort Edmonton Footbridge along the north side of the river.

There is no one preference for any of the options. All three routes options received a variety of comments in support of and opposed to it. Overall, the comments received express a general preference for walking next to the river and opposition to environmental impacts including tree clearing.

The key factors respondents **Like** about each route options:

Option 2 – proximity to river/viewpoints

Option 3 – variety, less disruptive, a compromise between options 2 and 5

Option 5 – direct route

The key factors respondents **Dislike** about each route option:

Option 2 – environmental impacts/tree clearing

Option 3 – no purpose, over-exposed, not enough river viewpoints

Option 5 – boring, no variety or viewpoints

Option 2 – Like

When asked what respondents Like about North Trail - Option 2, the majority of responses (120) indicate they like the proximity of the route to the river and the views it provides, with one respondent commenting that the river is the 'reason we go there'. Thirty-one respondents appreciate the variety of scenic experiences that the route provides, with an additional 26 respondents who Like the route as it meanders through the trees. Forty-seven (47) respondents said they Like 'nothing' about Option 2. Ten (10) comments were received about the fact that the route minimizes access to sensitive areas including the sandbar, with an additional 11 comments applauding the City's use of existing trails.

"This would allow me to experience the river and take in the view of the river most. It would also provide cover and protection from the sun, wind and, to some degree, from the rain."

"Looks like the most fun option to run along, people like trails that run along the river."

Option 2 – Dislike

The most common response received about what respondents Dislike about North Trail - Option 2 relates to environmental concerns including tree removal, wildlife impacts and erosion (75 responses). An additional 68 comments were received by those who Dislike the loss of the natural/mountain bike trail, with 20 responses indicating a Dislike of the cost implications of the trail. Comments received from 31 respondents indicate they Dislike 'nothing' about Option 2.

"Loss of existing trails. Single track and desire lines will be formed regardless, and there is no need for organized tree removal or trail widening."

"Unnecessary loss of habitat. Why would you think that cutting down all those trees would improve the park?"

Option 3 – Like

When asked what they Like about the North Trail - Option 3, respondents indicated that it provides variety (46 responses) and is less disruptive (41 responses) than some of the other route options presented. Twenty-three responses indicate respondents Like the proximity of the route to the river, while 21 responses indicate they feel Option 3 simply provides a good compromise (between options 2 and 5). Forty (40) responses indicate they Like 'not much' or 'nothing' about this option. An additional 12 comments noted the respondents Like that Option 3 represents less disruption to the natural/mountain bike trail.

"More diversity of landscape." "River access, variety of terrain." "Both forest and field sections."

"Good compromise between options 2 and 5. Gives most of the benefits of Option 2 but seems simpler as it does not require the drainage crossing and requires less tree removal."

Option 3 – Dislike

The primary factor that respondents Dislike about North Trail – Option 3 is the sense that this route has 'no purpose', it is too open/exposed and doesn't provide enough river viewpoints (65 responses). Others Dislike the loss of the existing natural/mountain bike trail (54 responses) and the potential disturbance to the existing ecological corridors/negative impact on wildlife (50 responses). Twenty-one (21) responses note tree removal is a concern. Other responses received include cost (14 responses) and limitations the route could place on future development (14 responses). Twenty-two (22) responses indicate they Dislike 'nothing' about Option 3.

"Too much open space." "This passes through an open field."

“It loses the potential view points on the river that many people may need the developed trails to be able to experience.”

Option 5 – Like

The most common response received to what people Like about North Trail - Option 5 is that it is more direct, therefore providing a great commuter route for those who wish to get through the river valley quickly (87 responses). The second most common Like about Option 5 is there would be less environmental impact/tree clearing (70 responses) followed by ‘nothing’ (63 responses). Others indicate that they Like the low cost (46 responses) and that it would save the existing natural/mountain bike trail (26 responses). Eight (8) respondents note that this is the best option, they like ‘everything’ about this route.

“Saving the single track for those who want to ride it.” “Maintains natural informal trails.”

“Direct, low cost and leaves wild area and pre-existing trails alone.” “It’s a direct route for commuting.”

Option 5 – Dislike

The most common response (80 responses) received to why respondents Dislike North Trail – Option 5 indicate that it would be ‘boring’ and has ‘no variety’, ‘scenery’ or ‘enjoyment of the forest’. An additional 53 comments specifically indicate the route provides no river views, with a few comments adding that the river is ‘where people want to be’. Thirty-two (32) respondents indicate they like ‘nothing’ about this option. Fifteen (15) comments note the route is too open and exposed, providing no shade or protection from the elements, with 16 additional comments noting that if this option is chosen, people will find other ways to get to the river, creating informal trails to do so. Twenty-one (21) respondents have concerns relative to the archeological site, both whether the route would be disqualified as a result of the historical area, as well as the potential loss of the site itself.

“No access to river viewpoints, informal social trails could go anywhere and disrupt anything.”

“Open field trail not as enjoyable.”

Level of Satisfaction: South Trail – Gravel

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the South Trail – Gravel, 123 respondents indicate they are Somewhat Satisfied (53) or Very Satisfied (70), with 87 respondents noting Somewhat Dissatisfied (44) or Very Dissatisfied (43). An additional 79 respondents are Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked to explain their responses to the level of satisfaction with the South Trail – Gravel. The most common response (35) received simply indicates general support for the trail with specific comments such as it ‘looks good’, ‘good walk’, ‘lovely’ and ‘love it’. Eighteen (18) additional

comments note that it provides great connectivity and links to Anthony Henday Drive. Forty-eight (48) respondents are concerned about losing the natural/mountain bike trail while 26 comments note the respondents have never used the trail and feel they are unable to comment on it.

There are varying opinions about the trail surface with some respondents who approve of the gravel surface, while others suggest it should be paved and others who believe it should be left natural. Many comments indicate surface preference based on method of travel on the trail.

“I’m glad it is not asphalt.” “Would rather have an asphalt section.”

“The asphalt and gravel are both difficult to bike on.”

Level of Satisfaction: South Trail – Single Track Nature Trail

Respondents rated their level of satisfaction with the new Single Track Nature Trail with 132 respondents being Somewhat Satisfied (64) or Very Satisfied (68) and only 43 being Somewhat Dissatisfied (17) or Very Dissatisfied (26). An additional 105 were Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied with comments suggesting that these respondents don’t understand the reasoning behind the creation of this new trail or believe it is unnecessary.

Comments from those who are Very Satisfied indicate that the South Trail – Single Track Nature Trail provides an additional mountain bike and running path, appreciating that it provides a new trail option in addition to the more developed trails, as well as connections to the broader trail system. Those who are Somewhat Satisfied are concerned about whether the new trail will be as good as the current single track trail, with some suggesting they will reserve judgment until the trail is actually complete, others want assurance the City will consult with the mountain bike community on the trail’s design and construction (one respondent notes that the Edmonton Mountain Bike Association does not represent all mountain bikers). Others feel this trail provides an acceptable ‘compromise’ at the expense of the existing single-track nature trail. An additional 29 comments suggest respondents are simply unhappy with losing the existing single-track nature trail and prefer that it be left as it is.

“I strongly support the creation of a new single-track. There are many qualified consultants/associations that can be used to create awesome trails. Please use professionals. . . .”

“As long as it’s done properly.” “Looks good, makes sense, good compromise.”

Final Thoughts

Finally, respondents were asked to provide one additional thought for the project team. A broad range of comments were received, however key themes that emerged were: overall support for the project and a desire to move forward, a caution to not overdevelop the river valley, and dissatisfaction with the loss of the existing nature/mountain bike trail in Terwillegar Park. An abundance of praise was received for the

City and the project including specific comments such as 'great work', 'go ahead', 'love the new development ideas' and 'just do it'!

"Accommodate the needs of different groups, walkers, bikers etc. but do not overdevelop. Make the system useful for as many users as possible."

"Don't overbuild."

"I love our river valley and [by] opening it up with more trails more can come to love it as I do."

"You have done a magnificent job. Congratulations, it makes me proud to live in Edmonton. Love the footbridge."

"Accessibility to and use of this wonderful resource [river valley] must be increased."

"Don't give in to special interest at the expense of a silent majority. You will never satisfy all people."

"Try to balance many uses and user needs."

"Minimize environmental impact - disturb plants, trees, habitat minimally. Reduce amount of paved, gravel trails - walkers like natural habitat."

"Please retain informal trails – they are actually the best part of the river valley."

"Thanks for moving ahead with the vision of extending the bike system. Its still my favourite place to bike and easily the best part of living in Edmonton."

"Please make the new single track trail as kick ass as humanly possible."

"A well used single-track should be left alone."

"Keep things interesting and bold – don't settle for mediocre."

Appendix A: North Trail Route Options

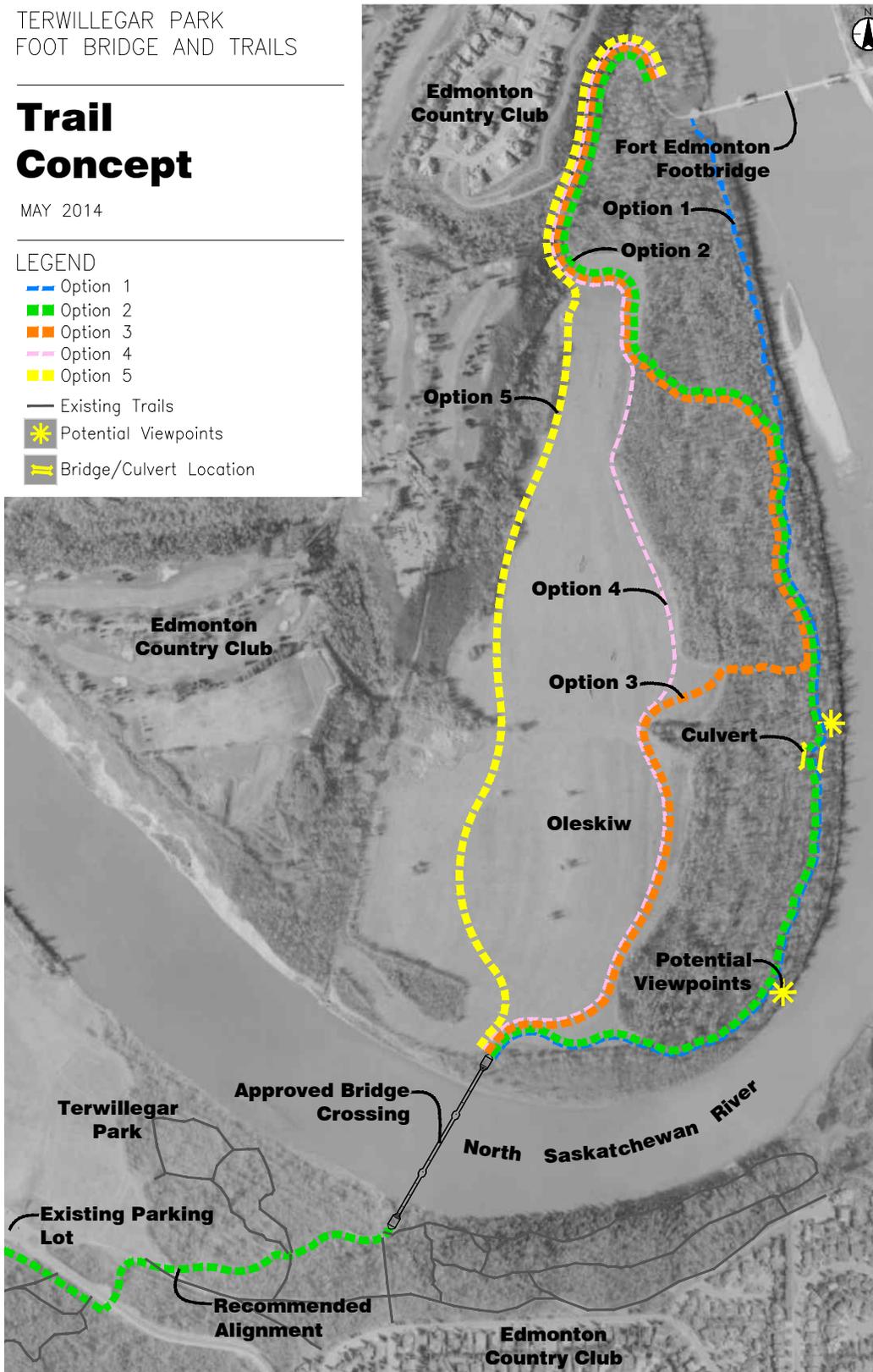
TERWILLEGAR PARK
FOOT BRIDGE AND TRAILS

Trail Concept

MAY 2014

LEGEND

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4
- Option 5
- Existing Trails
- ✱ Potential Viewpoints
- Bridge/Culvert Location



Appendix B: Comment Form and Responses

COMMENT FORM

May 31, 2014

Public Open House



About You

1. I am (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A user of Terwillegar Park | <input type="checkbox"/> A Terwillegar/Riverbend area resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A user of the River Valley Oleskiw lands | <input type="checkbox"/> An Oleskiw area resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A representative of a nature/environmental association/organization | <input type="checkbox"/> A member of a mountain bike organization |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

2. If you currently use Terwillegar Park, which of the following activities is your primary activity?

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature appreciation | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

3. If you currently use Oleskiw River Valley lands, which of the following activities is your primary activity?

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature appreciation | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

4. What are the first three digits of your postal code? _____

5. In regard to the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and West End Trails, did you participate in (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A stakeholder meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Online survey (September 2013) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Community Advisory Committee meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Committee of City Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public open house (September 21, 2013) | <input type="checkbox"/> First time participant |

About the Project: Terwillegar Park Footbridge

6a. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the Terwillegar Park Footbridge overall.

- 1) Very Dissatisfied 2) Somewhat Dissatisfied 3) Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied 4) Somewhat Satisfied 5) Very Satisfied

6b. Please explain.

About the Project: West End Trails

North Trail

Five options for the trail route through River Valley Oleskiw lands were explored. Three options (Option 2, Option 3 and Option 5) are being carried forward. Your input on these three routes is important and will be considered in the decision-making process.

7a. What do you like about Option 2?

b. What do you dislike about Option 2?

7c. What do you like about Option 3?

d. What do you dislike about Option 3?

7e. What do you like about Option 5?

f. What do you dislike about Option 5?

South Trail: Gravel

8a. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the south gravel trail (connects Terwillegar Park to the Anthony Henday pedestrian river crossing) overall.

- 1) Very Dissatisfied 2) Somewhat Dissatisfied 3) Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied 4) Somewhat Satisfied 5) Very Satisfied

8b. Please explain.

South Trail: Single Track Nature Trail

9a. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the new single track nature trail in the Terwillegar Park area.

- 1) Very Dissatisfied 2) Somewhat Dissatisfied 3) Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied 4) Somewhat Satisfied 5) Very Satisfied

9b. Please explain.

Other Comments

10. If you could tell the project team one thing, what would it be?

About the Event

Your responses to the following questions will assist us in planning future meetings.

11. Using the following scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Strongly Disagree and 5 means Strongly Agree. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
• The information presented at the event was useful and informative.	1	2	3	4	5
• The information was easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
• The project representatives were helpful, friendly and available to talk to me.	1	2	3	4	5
• I was able to find satisfactory answers to my questions.	1	2	3	4	5
• I have a better understanding of the project because of my attendance.	1	2	3	4	5
• Participating in this session was a good use of my time.	1	2	3	4	5
• The venue location was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Which aspects of the meeting did you find most valuable? (Please check all that apply)

- Interaction with representatives Display boards
 Handouts Other (Please specify): _____

13. How did you hear about this meeting? (Please check all that apply)

- Road side signs Word of mouth Newspaper advertisement
 Flyer in mailbox Email Community league website
 City of Edmonton website Social Media Poster
 Public Library Other (Please specify): _____

Thank you! Please leave your comment form at the welcome desk or scan/email to vasenova@calderbateman.com or fax 780-425-6646. You can also complete this form online at edmonton.ca/rivervalleyprojects Submissions must be received by midnight June 8, 2014.

