

4.0 The Master Plan

The following sections provide a descriptions of capital improvement recommendations in Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Programming, operations and maintenance improvements are provided in *Section 5.0 Management Plan*.

4.1 Park Entrance Improvements

See *Sheets LA01, and LA08* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

1 Recommendation: Provide landscaped standard City park entrance signs that easily mark the entrances to each of the three sites: Buena Vista Park, Laurier Park, and the Edmonton Valley Zoo. Visually enhance the entrance of Buena Vista/Laurier Park and the Edmonton Valley Zoo with landscaping, including boulevard trees and planting beds with park signage. Extend the existing sidewalks along Buena Vista Road to the park.

Rationale: The current configuration of the park entrance is confusing to visitors unfamiliar with the different park spaces. Providing park users with clear wayfinding signage and providing a pull-out will help visitors decide where they are going and what amenities the park offers prior to entering the site.

Public Response: 79% of respondents supported or somewhat supported entrance improvements; whereas, 17% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 4% were undecided. Total of 371 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.



Fig.18: Existing entrance into parks area

2 Recommendation: Investigate the concept of a roundabout as part of the adjacent neighborhood roadway renewal projects. The roundabout landscape should feature ornamental shrub and perennial planting beds with park signage features located at each exit to provide clear identification of the different park and Edmonton Valley Zoo sites.

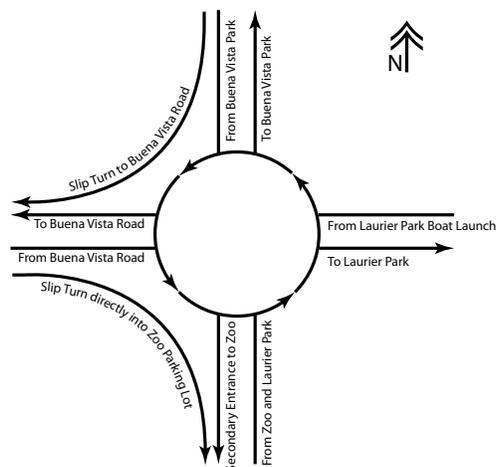


Fig.19: Illustration of roundabout traffic movement



Fig.20: Visualization of roundabout concept (Looking East)

Rationale: The terminus of Buena Vista Road serves as the main entrance for three destinations: the Edmonton Valley Zoo, Buena Vista Park, and Laurier Park. Improvements at the park entrance on Buena Vista Road will help visitors understand they are entering a river valley park. Currently, the park does not have a well-defined entrance and new visitors to the site may find it difficult to understand where different facilities and amenities are located.

A landscaped roundabout would provide a strong visual “finish” to Buena Vista Road and would highlight the entrances into each park space. As well, the roundabout would improve the functionality of the existing offset intersection and traffic flow during events.

At this time, additional information regarding traffic flow and cost implications for the roundabout requires additional investigation better suited to a neighborhood roadway renewal project.

Public Response: 57% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the concept of a roundabout; whereas, 37% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 6% were undecided. Total of 377 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Some people felt that a roundabout looks good and will slow down speeders, direct traffic, ease traffic flow, and increase safety by reducing U-turns, etc.
- Some people felt that a roundabout is unnecessary and a waste of money, unsafe since drivers do not know how to use them properly, and will be a problem for boat trailers to maneuver.
- Some people suggested that improved directional signs, safe pedestrian access/crossing, or using a four-way stop at the intersection instead of a roundabout would be beneficial.

4.2 Parking and Access

See *Sheets LA01, LA02 and LA03* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*. See *Appendix G Rationale for Parking Expansion in BVL P* for additional analysis and rationale for parking improvements.

3 Recommendation: Improve parking conditions in Buena Vista Park by providing additional parking stalls. Locations for additional parking should make use of existing open areas and disrupt as little natural vegetation as possible. Recommended parking improvements in Buena Vista Park include:

- **132 Street:** The existing parallel parking is converted into perpendicular parking (gravel surface). This will require a widened area on the west side of the roadway to provide the additional space required for the perpendicular stalls. Total increase of 22 stalls (20 existing stalls; 42 proposed stalls). Parking area should be gravel-surfaced.
- **Parking Area Near Off-leash Entrance:** The existing parking lot near 132 Street will be expanded north to accommodate additional stalls that are easily accessed from the off-leash area. A small turn-around at the north end of the lot will mitigate the dead end. Parking lot access and access to the rowing/paddling facilities will remain the same. Additionally, the expanded parking area provides better access for elderly people or people with mobility issues using the off-leash training area. Parking and access will be gravel-surfaced with swales for stormwater. Total increase of 30 stalls (30 existing stalls; 60 proposed stalls).

- **Parking Area Near Rowing Tank:** The existing parking lot near the rowing club will be significantly expanded and reconfigured to provide additional stalls and remove the existing dead end (increase of 40 stalls). The area adjacent to the existing rowing tank parking lot is an open grass area and construction will be relatively simple without requiring tree removals. The shared-use pathway will be realigned closer to the rowing tank in order to accommodate the parking expansion. Removal and replacement of existing parking lot likely will be required, in order to reconfigure the parking lot and provide space for the shared-use path. This lot could be developed in phases. Parking and access will be gravel-surfaced with swales for stormwater. Total increase of 40 stalls (30 existing stalls; 70 proposed stalls).

Parking increases should be phased to ensure that parking supply does not overrun parking demand. See *Appendix G Rationale for Parking Expansion in BVLVP* for additional information on phasing.

According to the City's development standards, there are specific landscape requirements for parking lots. However, these standards may be inappropriate or inadequate if applied in this park setting. Instead, the focus should be on providing enhanced landscaping with attractive naturalized vegetation. The design should fit with the natural qualities of the park and provide shade and screening. Landscape design should reflect Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles by maintaining clear sightlines into parking areas.

Landscape and parking areas should reflect low-impact development (LID) principles to manage stormwater and mitigate the environmental impacts of parking areas. All parking expansion, except for handicap stalls, should be gravel in order to maximize infiltration of stormwater. Swales will capture and filter runoff from parking areas prior to infiltration or slow discharge into vegetated areas.

Rationale: The parking lots near the rowing club tank and off-leash area are well-used and filled to capacity during peak seasons of the year. Additional parking would be beneficial to user experience and reduce the incidence of illegal parking along roadways and in grassed open spaces.

The landscaping helps mitigate the visual impact of parking areas and better integrate with the natural environment. LID features will help mitigate any environmental impacts, such as stormwater runoff.

Public Response: 80% of respondents supported or somewhat supported increased parking along 132 Street; whereas, 17% did not support or somewhat did not support it. Of the respondents 3% were undecided. Total: 382 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

During the July 2012 public workshop and online survey, the public was presented with three different concepts for parking increases in Buena Vista Park. Written comments provided by respondents regarding parking expansion are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- The majority of respondents support some additional parking, although a minority of respondents noted that additional parking is not needed and that parking should be shared, and people should walk more.
- Some people noted concerns that the amount of parking shown in some concepts was excessive for the needs of the park.
- It was noted that additional parking at Yorath House would only be required if it was developed as a multi-use facility.
- Some respondents had suggestions for the appropriate locations for parking expansion.

Based on the feedback received, the parking recommendations in the master plan are a hybrid of the different concept plans. In addition, it is noted and recommended that a carefully phased approach be taken to ensure that the amount of parking is balanced with parking demand and the natural aesthetic of the area.

4 Recommendation: Construct a small parking lot (approximately 28 stalls) near Yorath House to accommodate the renovated multi-use facility. As well, this parking area will provide a drop-off/turn-around area and handicap parking close to the facility. Should additional parking be required, additional stalls will be provided in the other Buena Vista parking locations as noted in the master plan. Parking and access will be gravel-surfaced. Runoff from the parking lot and access road will likely be minimal; however, any surface flow will be captured and filtered in swales that infiltrates or discharges into adjacent vegetated areas.

As noted in Recommendation 3, parking areas should have enhanced landscaping with attractive naturalized vegetation that provides shade and screening. Landscape design should reflect CPTED principles and incorporate LID principles to manage stormwater and mitigate the environmental impacts of parking areas.

Rationale: As a multi-use facility, Yorath House will need emergency access and parking. Using the existing driveway and front yard area of the house for access will allow people, especially those with mobility impairments, to have close access to the site.

5 Recommendation: Add two gated entrances into the overflow parking area and provide a “hard edge” (i.e. wood bollards and planting beds) between the field area and the west side of 132 Street. The area between the field and 132 Street should be landscaped to reinforce the use of the gateways.

Rationale: These improvements will help direct vehicles in and out of the space more efficiently during events and limit turf damage to a smaller area when the field area is used for event parking. Furthermore, vehicles will be discouraged from entering the field when parking is not allowed.

6 Recommendation: Evaluate the location of existing handicap parking stalls in Buena Vista Park and determine if they are conveniently located near popular destinations. Provide additional stalls as required, especially as parking areas are expanded. Particular attention should be paid to the parking area near Yorath House and the proposed fenced off-leash training area.

Rationale: Buena Vista/Laurier Park is an older park site, it is important to ensure that the existing parking areas meet current handicap parking standards. As well, with the improvements and new elements proposed in the master plan, it is important to ensure that the new destinations, such as the off-leash training area, are accessible.

7 Recommendation: Reverse the direction of traffic flow in Laurier Park to run clockwise around the park (existing two-way sections near boat launch and Edmonton Valley Zoo to remain). Improve asphalt surface of roadway.

Rationale: Reversing the traffic flow creates a more intuitive movement through the park because it allows all drivers, not just boat trailers, to drive straight into Laurier Park rather than being required to make a right turn onto the loop road and interact with traffic from the Edmonton Valley Zoo. This allows for clear entrance signage since vehicles will turn right to enter the Edmonton Valley Zoo, left to enter Buena Vista Park, and drive straight to enter Laurier Park.

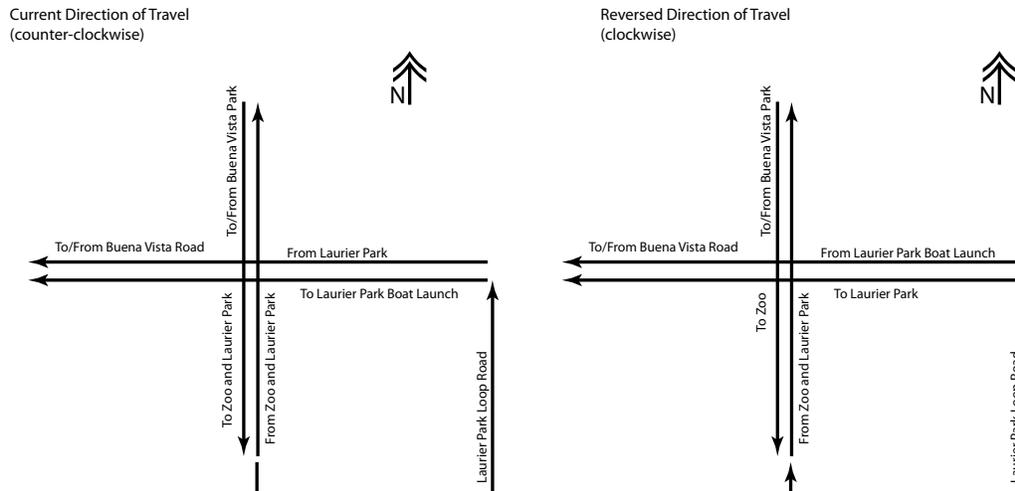


Fig.21: Illustration of reversed traffic flow in Laurier Park

8 Recommendation: Re-open the southwest extension of Laurier Park shared-use pathway to vehicles on summer weekends to provide access to upgraded accessible picnic areas (See Section 4.12 Picnic Site Improvements). A separate shared-use path will be provided along the roadway. Reinstall some of the parking stalls formerly used in this area.

Rationale: During the summer months, especially weekends, picnic sites are often filled to capacity. As the city’s population grows, it is likely that this pressure will increase. The picnic sites in this area are under-used because they are often overlooked by the public and do not have close parking. By opening the sites only on weekends, the shared-use path is only shared with vehicles for a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, since the road will be closed during the quieter times in the park, there is less chance of undesirable activities occurring in this relatively remote area.

9 Recommendation: Provide bike parking at key locations through the park. The standard City post and ring (“Q”) bike rack, which holds two bikes, should be used. The City’s Sustainable Development department is currently developing a multiple stall bike rack standard. This alternative may be appropriate in locations that require several parking stalls.

The number of stalls required per location is difficult to gauge because it is a new amenity added to the site. Bike rack use should be reviewed annually during peak season to ensure that demand is being adequately met.

Key locations and recommended rack quantities are:

- Laurier Park washroom facilities
 - Laurier Park basic toilet facilities: one rack each
 - Laurier three-season washroom: five racks
- Boat launch viewing area (locate stalls across roadway near basic toilet): five racks
- Information kiosk near the Hawrelak Park pedestrian bridge: two racks
- Yorath House: five racks
- Parking lot near Edmonton Rowing Club tank: two racks
- Off-leash area parking lot closest to fenced off-leash training area: two racks



Rationale: This recommendation allows cyclists to use site amenities, such as washrooms and the off-leash shoreline area, without worrying about bike security. In addition, the addition of bike parking supports the alternative transportation principles in the City's document, *The Way We Move*.

4.3 Pathway Improvements and Pathway Viewpoints

See *Sheets LA01, LA02 and LA03* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

10 Recommendation: Reconstruct the shared-use pathway section (the former road bed) running from the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge to the paddler/rowing facility access as a dual surface shared-use pathway, as shown in Figures 22-24. The 3 metre-wide asphalt portion will be constructed according to City of Edmonton standards for shared-use pathways. Any remaining additional space in the existing pathway right-of-way will remain as improved gravel surface. No additional clearing will occur to accommodate the dual surface pathway; however, selective pruning may be required to provide sufficient space (clear zones) on either side of the trail.

Construct the remaining section of shared-use pathway in Buena Vista Park, from the rowing/paddling facility access road to the Laurier Park boundary, as a 3 metre-wide asphalt shared-use pathway.

Paint solid yellow lines and appropriate markings on the shared-use pathway in Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Provide signage or colored symbols to indicate off-leash/on-leash designation of trails. Visually mark locations where off-leash pathways cross the shared-use path to make cyclists aware of potential conflicts.

Winter clearing of shared-use pathway will further enhance accessibility to the park. See Section 5.2 Recommendation 14.

Rationale: The shared-use pathway is an important connector and commuter route through the park and into other river valley destinations, downtown and the University of Alberta. The asphalt surface allows better accessibility for the mobility impaired and allows for easier snow removal. The gravel surface provides an additional option for people who do not like walking on asphalt and provides additional space for off-leash users.

According to the *Urban Parks Management Plan (2006)*, "universal design of trails will be provided to ensure access to the river valley by persons with disabilities."

Public Response: 56% of respondents supported or somewhat supported paving the shared-use pathway with asphalt; whereas, 41% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 3% were undecided. Total of 384 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- While slightly more than half of respondents support extending the paved surface along the shared-use path, concerns were raised that this would allow cyclists to increase their speed and potentially result in increased conflicts with dogs off-leash.
- Other concerns included a preference by many (including dogs) for walking on natural (softer) trail surfaces, a desire to keep area natural, and suggestions for use of alternative surfaces.
- Supporters of a hard surface felt it would reduce the amount of mud, and make the trail more accessible for all users throughout the year.

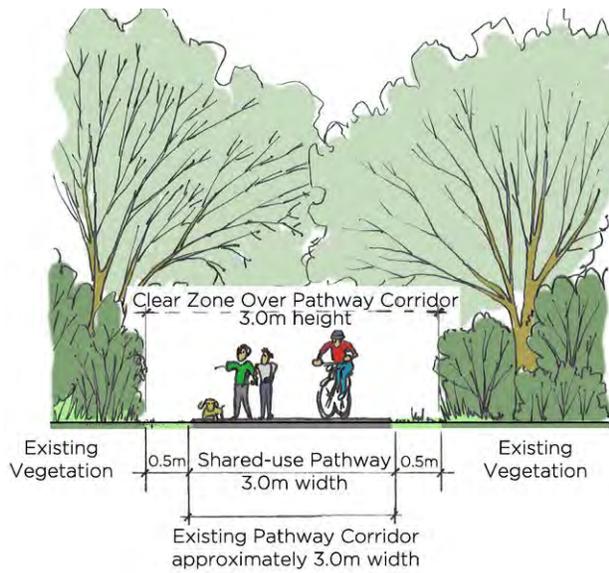


Fig.22: Typical cross-section for 3m wide shared-use path right-of-way

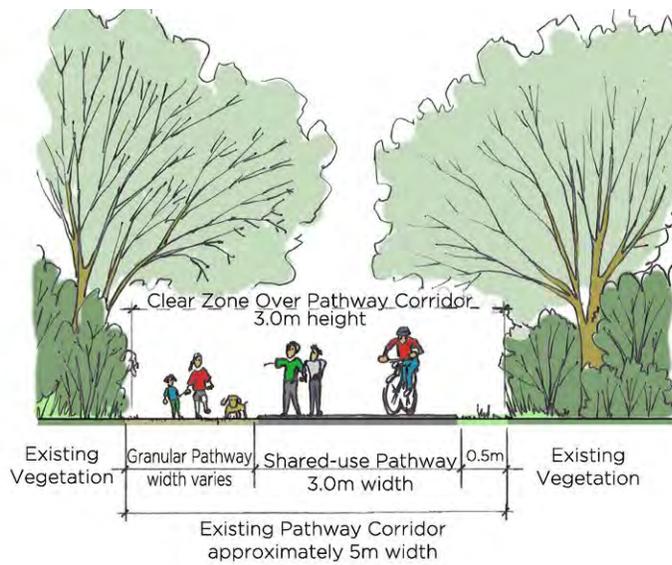


Fig.23: Typical cross-section for 5m wide shared-use path right-of-way

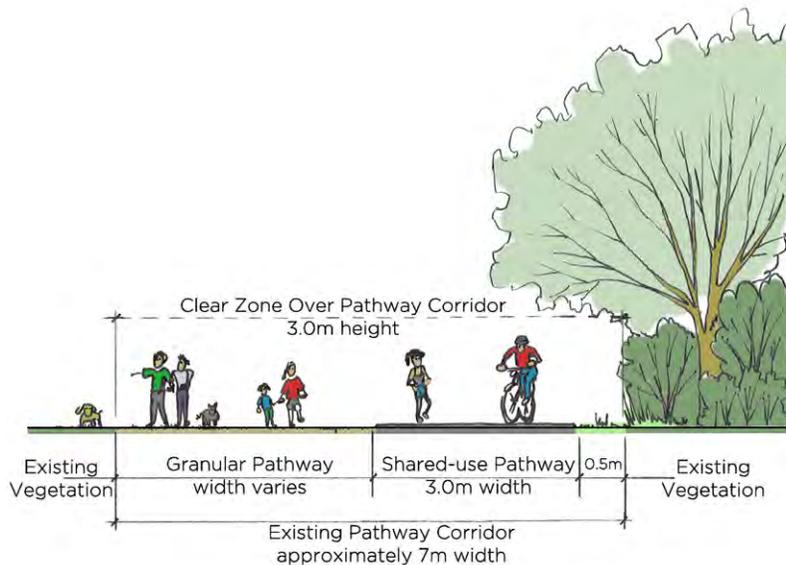


Fig.24: Typical cross-section for 7m wide shared-use path right-of-way



11 Recommendation: Community Services will continue to work with Park Operations Park Rangers and park users to identify and address safety concerns in the park areas. Areas of potential concern are places where the shared-use path passes through the Buena Vista Park off-leash area.

In these spaces, clear signage and visual cues will help park users better recognize that they are on a shared-use path. Shared-use path surface painting/marketing with colors or patterns to denote trail's on-leash or off-leash designation will provide visual indication of locations where an off-leash trail crosses the shared-use path (i.e. painted paw-prints or cutout dog silhouettes).

If required after monitoring, additional measures that will be considered include (in the order from least intensive to most intensive):

- Installing rumble strips on the shared-use pathway to alert cyclists of the intersection, help slow bicycle speed, and audibly notify dog-walkers of the coming bicycle. Rumble strips should be designed to ensure cyclist safety.
- Installing a thick edge of prickly plant material, where required, to provide improved separation between the shared-use pathway and adjacent open spaces. In areas where there is a strong vegetation buffer between open areas and the shared-use path, fencing may not be required as long as signage is clear.
- Installing sections of post and rail fence and landscaped buffers, as identified on Drawing LA03, to provide improved separation between the shared-use pathway and adjacent open spaces. This physical barrier prevents dogs from running across the shared-use pathway and prevents cyclists from leaving the pathway and cutting across the off-leash area. Kissing gates at pathway intersections along this section of fence would serve as a physical obstacle for movement by compelling the pedestrian (or dog) to zig-zag when approaching the shared-use pathway. Dog owners will have the opportunity to call their dogs prior to crossing. Furthermore, these structures will restrict cyclists from exiting the shared-use pathway into the off-leash area.

Rationale: As expressed in The Way We Move (2009), one of the City's sustainability mandates is to encourage active transportation by creating a "more walkable environment, a cycle-friendly city and an integrated network of multi-



Fig.25: Trail with painted paw-prints



Fig.26: Pathway rumble strips



Fig.27: Split rail fence and landscape buffer



Fig.28: Kissing gate

use pathway facilities". It is also understood that the off-leash area is one of the most popular and enjoyed places in Buena Vista/Laurier Park (Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park Management Plan Public Consultation Report, 2009).



Fig.29: Multi-use trail courtesy sign

During the public consultation process, both off-leash park users and cyclists expressed safety concerns in regards to accidents between bikes and dogs. In the 2009 Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park Management Plan Public Consultation Report, the most frequently mentioned issues regarding conflicts include with dog owners (31%), conflicts with cyclists (24%), and bikes travelling too fast (18%). The main area where these issues are anticipated is related to the interface between the shared-use pathway and the off-leash area.

Public Response: 61% of respondents supported or somewhat supported improvements to intersections (i.e. rumble strips and kissing gates); whereas, 34% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 5% were undecided. Total of 368 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Increased safety, reduction in conflict between dogs and cyclists/other pedestrians, and clarification of boundaries between on- and off-leash areas were cited by supporters.
- Concerns included that they are not natural, are unnecessary and a waste of money, are too controlling, would reduce visibility, and would not stop small dogs from getting under the fence.
- Some respondents were unsure as to how dogs were supposed to cross from one side to the other, and some felt that rumble strips were either unsafe or would not slow cyclists down.

12 Recommendation: Realign the section of the shared-use pathway that is near the rowing club tank by moving it closer to the building. Realign the section of shared-use pathway that is located near the Laurier Park entrance and open space.

Rationale: The realignments are required to accommodate two improvements; the expanded rowing club and Yorath House parking areas and the Laurier Heights/Edmonton Valley Zoo stormwater facility. This recommendation supports the parking improvements in Recommendation 3.

13 Recommendation: Re-route a small section of Melton Ravine bike route connection, and add boulders and vegetation at stairs to reduce the number of cyclists veering onto the riverside pathway (see *Sheets LA10 and LA11* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*). Provide signage to redirect cyclists to the new route and revegetate a small section of previous route to discourage use.

Rationale: The existing connection point from the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge toward the Melton Ravine makes it too easy for cyclists to continue travelling on the riverside pathway, which is for pedestrians only. The new route discourages this practice and provides a more convenient route for cyclists to access Melton Ravine.



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14 Recommendation: Improve the gravel surface of a selected looping pathway in Buena Vista Park with compacted a 25-50mm depth layer of compacted fine gravel (known as 10 minus crushed gravel) as part of seasonal maintenance practices. The majority of the route selected (as shown on Drawings LA01 and LA03) is at least 2 metres wide. One section of the looping pathway, which runs from the paddling facility across to the parking area will require construction to become a 2 metre-wide pathway. This section follows the alignment of an existing natural pathway and the edge of a forest area.

Rationale: An improved fine compacted gravel surface will provide a looping pathway for off-leash park users, especially people with reduced mobility. The compacted surface will limit erosion, flooding and trail widening caused by users walking along the edge of pathways to avoid flooded areas.

Public Response: 61% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the hardened looping pathways in the off-leash area; whereas, 35% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 4% were undecided. Total of 370 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Supporters feel that this would improve accessibility for all and trails would be in better condition in the spring and wet weather.
- Concerns were noted about increased conflicts with bike speeders if trails were hardened, as well as the type of material that would be used for hardening the trails, with many indicating a preference for softer trails of natural materials and a desire not to use asphalt.



Fig.30: Trail damage from puddling



Fig.31: Fine Gravel (10minus) for looping pathway (shown at half-scale)

15 Recommendation: Improve and maintain secondary pathways through minor regrading to mitigate trip hazards, flooding and erosion issues. Pathway surface improvements and trail widening are not recommended on most secondary trails; however an improved fine granular surface (25-50mm depth compacted 10 minus gravel) is recommended on key pathways that connect important destinations, such as the rowing club boat house and off-leash training area. Upgrade/construct the connection pathway along 132 Street to the off-leash training area (as shown on Sheet LA03). Construct secondary pathway from Edmonton Valley Zoo to boat launch viewpoint.

Rationale: Many secondary pathways exist throughout Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Because of their low key footprint through natural areas, they are attractive and enjoyable in their low maintenance state. Some of these require improvements to ensure that erosion, flooding, and over-use will not degrade the pathway or natural vegetation.



Fig.32: Bank erosion from goat trail cutting

16 Recommendation: Evaluate, close, and possibly revegetate natural pathways (goat trails) that cause environmental, erosion, bank stabilization or safety concerns. Closure measures that may be used include signage, deadfall barriers, revegetation, and split-rail fence sections.

Rationale: Some natural pathways near the river bank pose concerns for erosion and bank instability because of their negative effect on vegetation and soils. In addition, because of the constantly changing river bank, some of these natural pathways either are unsafe or may become unsafe. In Buena Vista Park, there are vegetated areas that contain rare plant species. Natural pathways in these areas should be assessed to determine if pathway closure is important to plant survival.

17 Recommendation: The riverside pathway should be evaluated for erosion and bank stability issues. Measures such as safety barriers, pathway regrading or realignment will be required in some locations. Bank stabilization and revegetation may help mitigate these issues.

Rationale: In some areas, river bank and riverside trail erosion is beginning to become a concern. Some river bank erosion is natural; however, many users are causing additional damage by cutting new trails to the shoreline or bank edge. Because of the changing nature of the bank, ongoing evaluation and modification is needed to improve pedestrian safety and reduce the risk of bank instability and erosion.



Fig.33: Viewpoint at Governor House Park

18 Recommendation: Provide four small-scale viewpoints along the riverside pathway in Laurier Park. Key locations for these viewpoints will be areas where there is sufficient room between the pathway and the bank, areas where there are good views, and areas where the viewpoints could be used as safety or pathway closure barriers.

Rationale: According to the *Urban Parks Management Plan (2006)*, views from top of the river bank are encouraged and

vistas and views into and out of the river valley are to be protected and managed . The addition of small-scale viewpoints along the riverside pathway provides visitors with the ability to experience a connection to the river, without walking down goat trails to the river bank.

Public Response: 66% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the viewpoint and riverside pathway improvements; whereas, 26% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 7% were undecided. Total of 316 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- The majority of respondents supported riverside path viewpoints, noting they would be nice and provide enjoyment to many people, would be a place for sitting and safe viewing of the river for families and those not so able-bodied, and would stabilize the bank and trails.
- Non-supporters felt the improvements were not necessary, and concerns were noted regarding erosion, cost, and taking away from the natural experience of the park and trails.

4.4 Signage

See *Sheet LA05* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

19 Recommendation: Provide clear and consistent signage throughout the park, as appropriate. Signage should be well located to be effective without “over-signing” and cluttering the natural landscape. Signage will be consistent with the most recent City of Edmonton River Valley Wayfinding and Signage Guidelines.

Multiple types of signage are required in order to function properly. Sign types required include:

- Wayfinding signage: Replace existing wayfinding signage with a consistent signage system that allows visitors to navigate through the park and encourages users to make use of the park’s various amenities. Wayfinding can also be used to identify recreational opportunities and connections to open spaces and pathways outside of the park. Wayfinding signage can be either stand-alone or integrated into information kiosks. Specific location information will be integrated into wayfinding signage, so that users can easily describe their location to emergency response personnel.
- Park roadway signage: Roadway signs should be provided at 142 Street and 87 Avenue to help visitors find the park sites.
- Park entrance signage: Use entrance sign features as an important part of creating a great first impression when entering a space. The existing park identification signs need to be upgraded with an aesthetic and coordinated design. All three destinations, Buena Vista Park, Laurier Park, and the Edmonton Valley Zoo, should be clearly indicated at the intersection that marks the entrance to the site.



Fig.34: Trail sign



Fig.35: Examples of inconsistent off-leash area signage

- Information kiosks: Add or upgrade information kiosks to provide spaces where park users can learn about the amenities available in the park, events taking place, and provide space for park users to post information. Construct a Trans Canada Trail kiosk at the intersection of the shared-use pathway and the new secondary pathway that runs from the Edmonton Valley Zoo to the boat launch viewpoint.
- Interpretive signage features: Interpretive features provide amenities for park users who like to learn more about their surroundings. Interpretive information can include educational opportunities focused around the natural science, culture or local history. Interpretive signage will adhere to the City of Edmonton River Valley Wayfinding and Signage Guidelines. In addition, non-traditional interpretive approaches, such as augmented reality, which allows visitors to use their cell phones to read information, should be evaluated as opportunities to reduce signage clutter.
- Off-leash/On-leash/No Dogs signage: Existing off-leash signage is inconsistent and confusing to park users. Strong and clear messaging is required to reinforce off-leash boundaries. Special attention is needed in areas where changes have been made to the boundary and where public consultation has identified confusion.
- Pathway signage: These signs or markers are used to indicate important pathway connections and permitted pathway uses. Important information on these signs, include bicycle restrictions, pathway intersections, kilometre markers and pathway wayfinding.
- Access and parking signage: General signage used to direct vehicle movement, restrictions, and handicap parking stalls.

Rationale: The public consultation process has identified signage as a critical issue for many users in the park. Because of the multiple user groups within Buena Vista/Laurier Park, it is especially important to clearly define permitted uses for the various areas of the park. For this reason, signage improvements should be made early in the implementation and construction phases of the master plan.

Throughout the project, stakeholders and park users have identified the need for clearer, consistent information signage. Currently, there is a great deal of confusion over the extent of the off-leash area and pathways that allow or disallow cycling. A comprehensive signage plan would help alleviate some of these concerns, allow for improved bylaw enforcement, better inform park users, and help facilitate cooperation between user groups.



Public Response: Preferences for signage were not identified by survey; however, signage has been a recurring theme in public comments received during the public consultation process.

4.5 Public Amenity Nodes and Washrooms

See *Sheets LA02 and LA03* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

20 Recommendation: The existing washroom facility in the center of Laurier Park will be removed and replaced with an improved facility. Like the existing facility, the washroom will have flush toilets and running water. Water fountains and taps for filling containers should be provided. Sustainable features such as dual flush toilets and solar hot water should be explored as potential improvements.

Rationale: The existing washroom facility is nearing the end of its lifespan. Sustainable features reflect the natural qualities of the park and the sustainability mandates of the City. An alternative for the existing propane water heating would allow the large existing propane tank to be removed from site.

Public Response: 89% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the proposed washroom facilities and their identified locations; whereas, 8% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 3% were undecided. Total of 373 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Almost all respondents indicated support for additional and improved barrier-free washroom facilities, including year-round access.
- Concerns were noted related to cost, safety, potential for vandalism, and the need for maintenance.

21 Recommendation: Construct two public amenity nodes, which include an accessible basic toilet facility, drinking fountain, dog watering fountain (off-leash node only), waste receptacle, bench and an information/wayfinding kiosk. The first node is located near the boat launch viewpoint area. The second node is located near the proposed dog training area in Buena Vista Park.



Fig.36: Visualization of off-leash amenity node

Rationale: Both amenity nodes provide a visible location for users to find maps, wayfinding and information signage. The node may also serve as an easy to find meeting area with seating.

The boat launch amenity node will benefit boat launch users, as well as people who enter Laurier Park from the river. The existing washroom building is not located near the launch and boaters who use Laurier Park to portage may be unaware of the washrooms locations.

The off-leash area amenity node provides a more centrally located washroom as an alternative to the “port-a-potty” located in the off-leash parking lot. A dog tie-up would allow park users to use the washroom without worrying about their dog’s safety. As well, the accessible toilet provides a near-by amenity for mobility impaired dog-walkers who use the off-leash training area.

Public Response: See Section 4.5 Public Amenity Nodes and Washrooms - Recommendation 20 for public response. In addition some respondents suggested including a facility located further north within the off-leash area, near the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge.

4.6 Weed Removal & Native Vegetation Restoration

See Sheet LA04 at the beginning of Section 4.0 Master Plan.

22 Recommendation: Remediate areas with excessive weeds and invasive plant species, such as caragana. Remove large communities of caragana in a phased approach to minimize the impact that vegetation removal will have on user experience. Key locations for remediation efforts are shown on Drawing LA04. Restore native material in remediated areas and in closed pathway locations.

Rationale: Former uses of the Buena Vista/Laurier site have caused caragana to establish and dominate areas of natural vegetation in Buena Vista Park. Buena Vista Park is categorized by the City of Edmonton as a conservation area and is recognized as a biodiversity core area. Caragana monocultures threaten the biodiversity of Buena Vista Park as well as the preservation area to the north. For this reason it is important to continually control the establishment and spread of caragana.



Fig.37: Caragana colony near rowing tank

Because the established caragana has out-competed much of the natural vegetation in some areas, mass removal of the species will adversely impact the quality of user experience. As revegetation efforts start to take hold and native plant material matures, user experience will improve. In order to mitigate some of these impacts, it is important to phase caragana and vegetation remediation efforts; however, this problem still requires active and progressive work to ensure that the caragana does not spread further.

Two open spaces between the shared-use pathway and riverside trail in Buena Vista Park were formerly used as City maintenance yards. These abandoned sites have become areas with extensive weed infestation. Reinstating meadow grasses in this area and removing weed species will make this area useable for park users, improve biodiversity and limit further spread of weed species.

Areas that have been damaged or pathways that have been closed may require revegetation to limit soil erosion and discourage park users from entering these areas

23 Recommendation: Review existing mature vegetation for signs of decline and plant additional groups of trees within Laurier Park. Species selected should be similar to the existing mature trees.

Rationale: The large mature trees in Laurier Park create a unique setting in the city. They provide a unique mixed canopy that is important to the character of the area. Many of the trees are some of the largest specimens of their species within the city. Due to the age of many of the trees, it is important to begin succession planting to ensure that new trees are relatively mature before the older trees begin declining.

24 Recommendation: Evaluate the condition of key areas along the riverbank and restore native plant material where there are erosion or bank stability issues.

Rationale: Some bank erosion is natural; however, in some areas revegetation would improve bank stability and erosion concerns. This is especially important in areas that have been disturbed by park users or previous land use.



Fig.38: Mature tree canopy in Laurier Park

4.7 Yorath House and Property

See *Sheets LA06* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

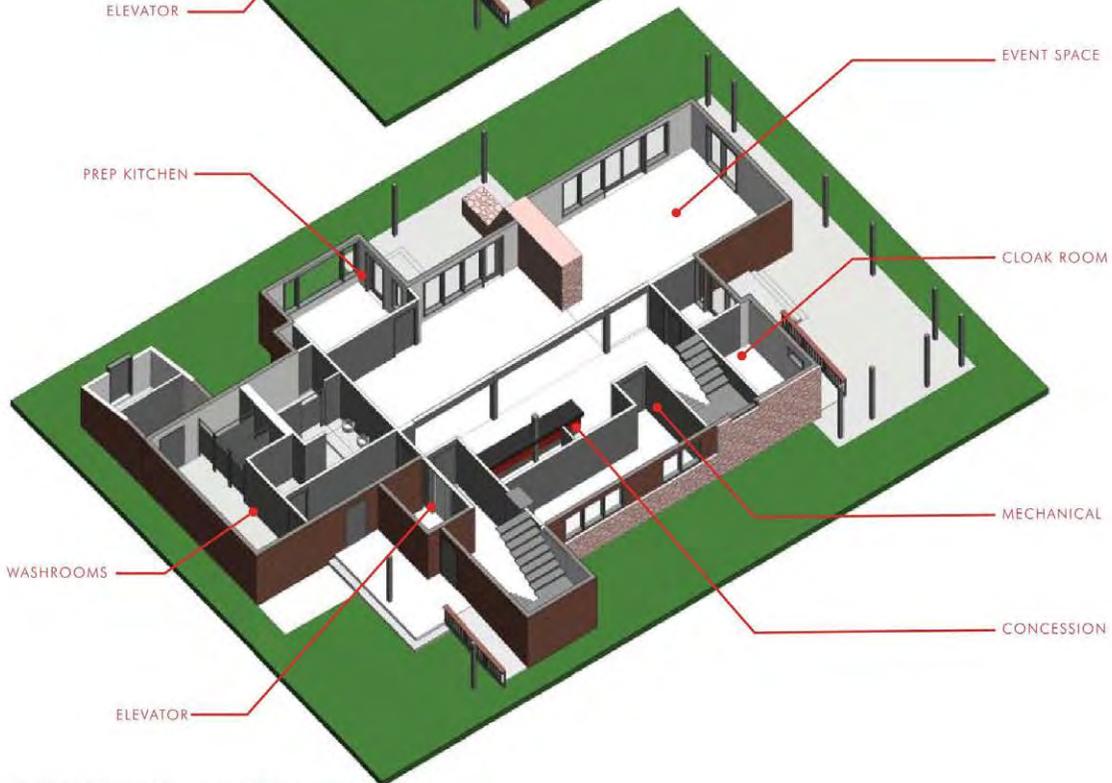
25 Recommendation: Yorath House presents a unique opportunity for a distinct programming and public rental space in the city of Edmonton. The location within the city, views of the river and connection to the river valley trail system present an opportunity for marketing a unique indoor/outdoor experience for public programming, weddings and corporate retreat packages that utilize the added value of the surrounding lands, gardens and river valley trails. The proximity to the Edmonton Valley Zoo and surrounding neighborhood also present an opportunity for functions that serve or compliment the neighborhood and/or Edmonton Valley Zoo development and program plan.

The setting, location and layout of the property provide an opportunity for a range of programming opportunities that would provide benefit to local residents and overall neighborhood appeal. The gardens surrounding Yorath House provide an opportunity to connect to the local community, regional horticultural societies and artists for volunteering, learning and promotional opportunities and are a key element to the added value of an indoor/outdoor rental experience.

The following provides a list of indoor programming elements that are being considered for Yorath House:

- Public washroom and water fountains
- Bookable space for community and public events
- Meeting and multi-functional spaces
- artist-in-residency program with community engagement aspects

LEVEL 2 FROM NORTH WEST



MAIN FLOOR FROM NORTH WEST

Fig.39: Concept for Yorath House renovations



- Park programming “home base” for programs, such as geocaching, all-season survival/camping skills, orienteering and navigation, snow shoeing, nordic walking.

For additional details on the condition and potential reuse of the building see *Appendix C Yorath House Condition Assessment & Adaptive Reuse Summary* and the *Yorath Condition Assessment and Conservation Plan* (under separate).

Rationale: The North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan promotes conservation and rehabilitation of architectural and historic resources within the parks and open space system.

The Yorath House property is important to the history of Edmonton’s river valley and Buena Vista/Laurier Park (See *Appendix C Yorath House Condition Assessment & Adaptive Reuse Summary*). This site was one of the last privately owned river frontage properties acquired by the City of Edmonton for river valley park development.

This house is believed to be one of few remaining outside of established neighborhoods located on the river flats.

A restrictive covenant placed on title at the time of acquisition ensured the Yorath land would be used for the sole purpose of providing public access to the river by pedestrian footpath and cycling path. The secondary purpose/intent was to utilize and redevelop the existing house into a public amenity building for Buena Vista Park.

Within the current zoning for the property (A Zone), public parks are permitted. Elements that would be ancillary to a public park including washrooms, minor concessions, and programming space would be permitted. The zoning also allows a number of discretionary uses including exhibition and convention facilities which would provide for permanent facilities for meetings, seminars and conventions.

Since 1996, the building has been investigated for redevelopment potential as a public multi-use facility. Because of the house’s relatively good structural condition, historical significance, and architectural value, it may become an important element of four-season park programming for Buena Vista/Laurier Park.

In February 2011, the City of Edmonton issued a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for the redevelopment of Yorath House. The City was seeking suggestions for the redevelopment of the house and grounds, as well as for its ongoing use, management and operation. Use of the property would be under a lease agreement with the City, with the potential of a public-use component. Through the RFEI several not-for-profit groups expressed interest in utilizing the Yorath House. While the RFEI unveiled interest in the property for an assortment of groups, no respondent organization was in a position to fund the necessary improvements to the house itself.

Public Response: 62% of respondents supported or strongly supported renovating Yorath House as a public multi-use facility; and 20% preferred the removal of Yorath House. 18% were undecided. Total of 373 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

26 Recommendation: Provide outdoor spaces that support and expand the public function of Yorath House. The following describes the recommended outdoor spaces:

- Front Entrance: Upgrade the front entrance of the building and connect it to the passenger drop-off area by way of a paved patio. Integrate the Yorath House entrance sign into the design of a seating wall that defines the front building entrance and provides an amenity for people awaiting pickup. Design the entrance patio to flow seamlessly into the rear terrace in order to



Fig.40: Visualization of Yorath House rear landscaping

- maximize the use of the space. Use the existing short hedge that defines the terrace area and the existing evergreen tree canopy makes the space intimate and inviting.
- Secondary Entrance: Provide a secondary entrance near the public washrooms in Yorath House. This entrance is intentionally disconnected from the main entrance patio area because of their different functions. Where the main entrance is more likely to be used by event guests and building tenants, the secondary entrance is intended to be used by Buena Vista Park users accessing the washrooms. Since off-leash park users will likely be the primary users of the public washroom entrance, pedestrian furnishings, benches and dog tie-up/watering stations, are included as important elements of the design.
 - Upper Terrace: Design the upper terrace at the rear of Yorath House to be an extension of building's interior space. Pave the terrace to create an outdoor room where indoor events can flow into the outside space. Provide movable furnishings such as tables and chairs on the patio that can be set up for events at Yorath House. Construct a pergola to provide shelter from the sun, while reflecting the architecture and materials of the building. As well, the pergola serves as an element that visually mirrors an arbour structure at the far end of the lower event area.
 - Informal Picnic Garden: Add picnic tables, tucked under the spruce trees, in the open space southwest of the upper terrace to provide cool spaces for park users in the heat of summer. The open space is a welcoming space highlighted with a mature canopy of evergreens and forest edge. In essence, the existing character of this residential space will be maintained as it provides an enjoyable and peaceful place that is unique to the Yorath property.
 - Wall, Stairs and Ramp: Rebuild the existing field stone retaining wall dividing the upper terrace from the lower event lawn similar to its existing aesthetic character. Extend the wall to the southwest forest edge to provide separation between the picnic area and the lower event lawn and to mitigate soil erosion on the existing slope.

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Incorporate stairs and a barrier-free ramp into the wall design to link the upper terrace with the lower event lawn.

- Lower Event Lawn: Program the lower lawn as an event space used in conjunction with Yorath House's indoor programming. Provide an oval pathway that borders the perimeter of the lower event lawn and provides barrier-free access to the event space and connections to the riverside pathway.
- Orchard Walk: Line the oval pathway with a row of fruit trees, such as apples and plums. These trees reflect the history of a former orchard that once existed nearby within the river valley flood plain. In addition, these trees complement two existing crabapple trees planted by former residents.
- Yorath Family Cairn: At the far end of the event lawn, highlight the existing Yorath family cairn with a small stone paver area to reflect the field stone material of the cairn. Construct an arbor structure with seating and information about the Yorath family to highlight the site's heritage. Selectively prune the forest edge adjacent to the cairn feature and relocate the deadfall elsewhere in the park to provide glimpses of the river and east riverbank from the upper terrace.

Rationale: The Yorath property is a unique space within Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Like Yorath House, the landscape has been formed by its previous residents and activities. Existing spaces have the opportunity to be re-imagined as places for public activities and events. Providing unique outdoor "rooms" allows the indoor programming of Yorath House to expand outside to accommodate different activities and additional people. The different landscape elements allow users to interact with different parts of the property's history. Buena Vista/Laurier Park hosts approximately 30 events yearly (8.5% of all of Edmonton's events). The multi-purpose function of Yorath House and its adjacent outdoor spaces will contribute to the site's use as an event space.

Public Response: 36% of respondents preferred the concept showing a high level of landscaping supporting Yorath indoor spaces; whereas, 26% preferred the concept showing minimal site landscaping around Yorath; and 20% preferred the removal of Yorath House. 18% were undecided. Total of 373 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

27 Recommendation: Establish a heritage buffer that incorporates Yorath House, the event lawn, orchard and historic cairn to ensure that future development within the buffer is sympathetic to the historic nature of the property and surrounding space. Any work within the identified heritage buffer shall adhere to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Proposed work within the heritage buffer will require review and project support from the City of Edmonton's Heritage Planning Unit.

Rationale: The residential character of the landscape should be retained to ensure that the historic building retains some of its historical site context. In addition, the mature trees provide a beautiful canopy that creates intimate spaces and reflects the residential nature of the site.

28 Recommendation: Interpretive signage and features will be integrated into the landscape design throughout the property.

Rationale: These features will provide insight into the Yorath family and their positive influence in the community, the architectural importance of the building and its original architects, and the history of Edmonton river valley development and its legacy as a premier recreational corridor.

4.8 Off-Leash Boundary Modification

See *Sheet LA07* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

29 Recommendation: The existing boundaries of the off-leash area will be modified from 48.5ha to 54.1ha (increase of 5.6ha). Signage and enforcement will be an important part of off-leash boundary modification. Signage must clearly indicate the boundaries to ensure that park users are aware of the changes. The following modifications to the off-leash boundary are recommended:

- Formalize north boundary to include the area just beyond the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge as off-leash and exclude the north portion as a preservation buffer area (on-leash)
- Extend the on-leash area from Yorath House to the Whitewater Paddlers lease area
- Extend the off-leash area in south to the realigned multi-use pathway near the rowing tank

Rationale: Modifications to the off-leash boundaries are intended to help mitigate some of the overlapping activities on-site that pose safety or environmental concerns. The formalization of the north boundary, which runs along an existing path, creates a more recognizable dividing line between off-leash and on-leash preservation buffer area. Furthermore, it will enable off-leash users to access the shoreline via a pathway under the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge, which will limit the need to cross the shared-use path.

The southeast modifications to the boundary are intended to provide a buffer between the rowing club facilities and off-leash areas. In the 2009 Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park Management Plan Public Consultation Report, “Dogs being off-leash in on-leash areas (i.e. the boat launch, dock areas)” was among the top three issues most commonly identified by the over 400 people who participated in the public consultation.

Limiting off-leash use of the Edmonton Rowing Club’s leased area will allow the rowing programs to be successful. Safety concerns, including concerns



Fig.41: Existing off-leash boundary plan



Fig.42: Modified off-leash boundary plan

for people carrying rowing equipment down to the docks when unleashed dogs enter the on-leash area, have been raised during public consultation for the master plan. As well, when river levels are high, there have been instances when dogs have been trapped under the floating dock panels because of the sudden shifting of weight on the dock. Creating an on-leash buffer around the Edmonton Rowing Club facility provides dog owners the opportunity to call their dogs and leash-up prior to reaching the rowing facilities. The on-leash requirement around the rowing club facility respects the program needs of the Edmonton Rowing Club in providing safe access to the rivers' edge for its members.

Public Response: 79% of respondents supported or somewhat supported formalization of the northern area of Buena Vista Park as off-leash; whereas, 14% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 7% were undecided. Total of 356 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

For the public workshop and the online survey, the public was shown three different concepts for off-leash boundary modification. The most supported concept (68% supported, 23% not supported, 9% undecided; total of 356 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey) showed the greatest amount of off-leash area.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Key concerns for off-leash users are to have as large a space as possible that also provides river access for dogs, and as limited requirement for dogs to be put on-leash as possible.
- Other respondents would like to have clear separation of uses to reduce conflict between dogs off-leash and cyclists/walkers, etc., as well as to have on-leash on the shared-use path and around the rowing club dock.

In order to balance both of these perspectives, the off-leash boundaries were revisited during the September 2012 advisory committee meeting. Based on this meeting, it was deemed that having off-leash dogs near the paddling facility would not adversely interfere with paddling activities and would still provide a sufficient buffer for the rowing facility.

As a result, the off-leash boundary expanded further south into the paddling facility, providing an additional shoreline access location for off-leash users. As well, it was determined that the shared-use pathway would be off-leash to limit the amount that off-leash users would need to leash their dogs. The final master plan shows an additional 1.8ha of off-leash areas compared to the preferred public workshop/online survey concept.

4.9 Off-Leash Shoreline Access

See *Sheet LA10* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

30 Recommendation: Construct stairway and new gently sloping secondary pathway near the popular off-leash shoreline area near the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge. Design the stairway similar to many of the other wooden stairways in the river valley.

Improve river access with upgraded stairs from the Whitewater Paddling facility to the shoreline for additional off-leash access.

Rationale: Currently, a relatively wide sloped, cleared area is used as an access route from the riverside pathway. The slope down to the shoreline is well-worn, subject to erosion, and slippery when wet.

The addition of a stairway down this sloped area would provide a safer route of access

down to the shoreline. The new pathway will provide an option for park users who prefer not to use stairs.

Improved stairs at the Whitewater Paddling facility will improve access down to the river.

4.10 Off Leash Training

Area

See *Sheet LA03* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.



Fig.43: Steep slope down to off-leash shoreline

31 Recommendation: Create small (separate) fenced and gated off-leash area for service dog training and for barrier-free access for elderly and mobility impaired (off-leash) dog walkers. The area will include benches and a small looping 2 metre-wide asphalt pathway. The area selected for this new amenity is located in a small open area nestled into an existing treed area. There are no anticipated tree removals as part of this improvement project.

Rationale: Small fenced and gated training areas are common in many off-leash dog parks. They provide dog owners with the ability to allow their dogs off-leash in a contained area. This would be the first such off-leash facility of its kind in Edmonton.

This is especially important for owners who are still training their dogs and people with mobility issues, who are worried about their dogs running off. An estimated 17% of Edmontonians have some form of disability that limits or restricts daily activities. Of these approximately 72% are mobility related (*City of Edmonton People with Disabilities, 2006*).

As well, service dog training programs, such as Dogs with Wings, have identified that they would benefit from a training area like this.

The proposed location of the training area is relatively close to parking and washrooms, which is important to people with mobility issues, while remaining in proximity to the larger off-leash areas of Buena Vista Park.



Fig.44: Visualization of off-leash training area

Public Response: 54% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the off-leash training area; whereas, 39% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 7% were undecided. Total 331 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Most respondents support a fenced off-leash barrier-free area for training dogs, feeling that this would provide access for mobility-impaired users who wish to walk dogs off-leash in a safe environment, would allow for puppy training as well as service dog training, and would be a unique facility in the City.
- Those not supporting this question the demand for it, do not feel that a separate training area is required, and that this would further reduce the off-leash area.

4.11 Boat Launch Viewpoint Area

See *Sheet LA09* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

32 Recommendation: Construct a boardwalk viewpoint area, complete with benches, wayfinding, information and other small amenities, near the existing boat launch on the top of the bank. The viewpoint has an accessible ramp down to riverside trail adjacent to the boat launch.

Rationale: Providing a place for people to access and view the river from Laurier Park will help prevent bank erosion and reduce the formation of goat trails from Laurier Park parking areas to the riverside trail. The viewpoint provides an accessible way for users to experience the river setting without venturing down the riverbank slope or boat launch driveway. Furthermore, a ramped boardwalk viewpoint creates a welcoming entrance for people entering the site from the river and makes the boat launch location more visible from the river.



Fig.45: Visualization of Boat Launch Viewpoint

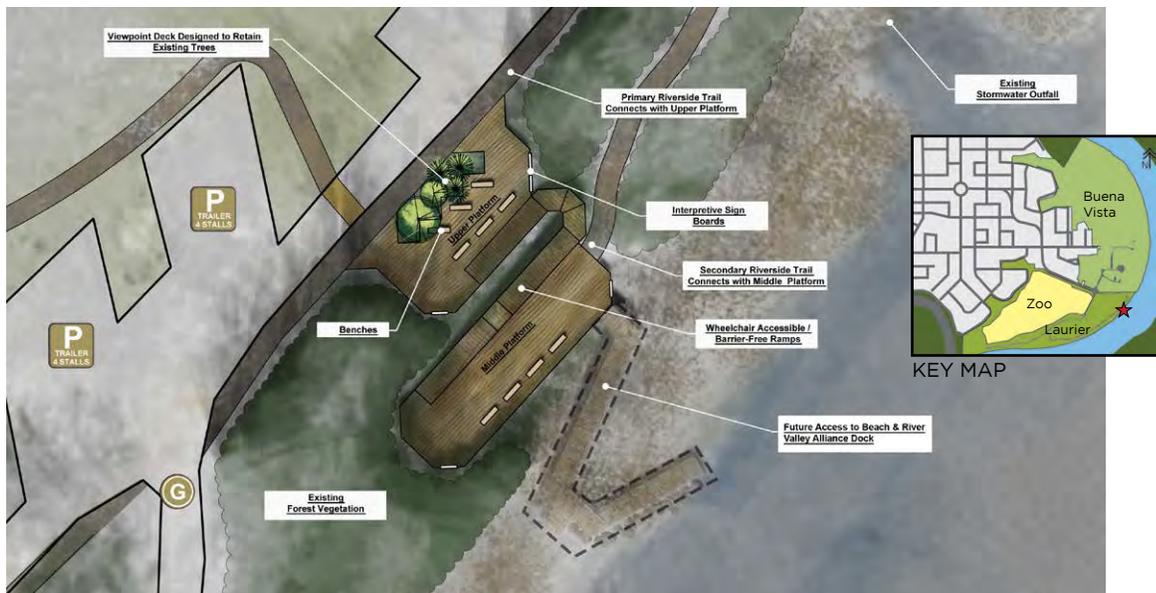


Fig.46: Concept for furnishing of boat launch viewpoint area
(See LA09 for larger context image)

Public Response: 54% of respondents supported or somewhat supported a low-key and boardwalk-ramped boat launch viewpoint area; whereas, 30% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 16% were undecided. Total of 373 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

Written comments provided by respondents are summarized by the following (see *Appendix F July 2012 Online Survey and Public Workshop Results* for full comments):

- Just over half of respondents support the boat launch viewpoint area noting that it would make the river more accessible and allow people to be active and enjoy the river.
- Just under one third of respondents do not support this option, noting concerns regarding need, cost design, and safety.

33 Recommendation: Review and confirm that a removable dock connecting to the boat launch, as recommended by the River Valley Alliance, could be added to the boat launch viewpoint in the future.

Rationale: The River Valley Alliance Plan of Action recommends multiple dock locations within the city, as a means to improve the recreational experience of the North Saskatchewan River valley. This concept requires further investigation to ensure that this is in keeping with the City's long-term recreational plans and benefits Laurier Park. Key considerations will be ensuring that Laurier Park can support the additional users resulting from the dock and that the dock will not logistically interfere with the boat launch and other water-based activities, such as rowing and paddling. In addition, there will be construction, safety and storage related issues that will need to be investigated prior to pursuing this concept.

Public Response: 45% of respondents supported or somewhat supported the addition of a dock to the viewpoint; whereas, 31% did not support or somewhat did not support it. 15% were undecided. Total of 332 respondents from the July 2012 public workshop and online survey.

4.12 Picnic Site Improvements

See *Sheets LA01 and LA02* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

34 Recommendation: Upgrade select picnic sites along the southwest extension of Laurier Park shared-use pathway and all group picnic sites to accommodate people with mobility impairment issues. Upgrades will include an asphalt-surfaced pathway, an accessible picnic table and an accessible bbq. These sites will be available for all park users, not just those with mobility impairments.

A few of the upgraded picnic sites in key park locations will be considered for the addition of picnic shelters. By offering protection from rain and snow, picnic opportunities are available into the shoulder seasons.



Fig.47: Picnic site along shared-use pathway

Rationale: Picnic sites are well used during the summer. On busy weekends there is a shortage of available sites for people with disabilities. The addition of accessible picnic sites will provide additional options for people with reduced mobility.

4.13 Playground Improvements

See *Sheet LA02* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*.

35 Recommendation: Remove existing playground equipment and replace with two natural playgrounds in Laurier Park. The northeast playground will be relocated further north, closer to the existing picnic shelter.



Fig.48: Natural playground elements

Rationale: The two existing playgrounds are nearing the end of their lifespan, offer limited play options, and cause safety concerns. Natural playgrounds are an interesting way to integrate play equipment with Laurier Park's natural setting. Beyond aesthetics, natural playgrounds offer children with play opportunities that inspire curiosity and interest in the natural environment. The relocated playground will be more visible and likely be better used by families using the surrounding picnic areas.

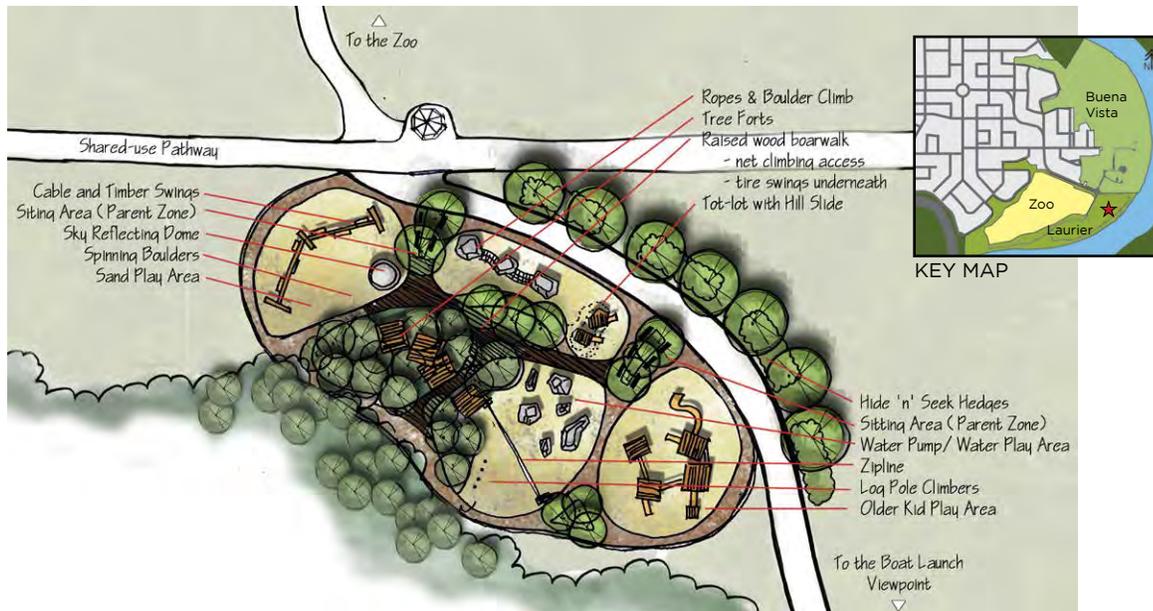


Fig.49: Natural playground concept plan

4.14 Laurier Heights/Edmonton Valley Zoo

Stormwater Management Facility

See Sheets LA01 and LA02 at the beginning of Section 4.0 Master Plan.

36 Recommendation: If required by the Edmonton Valley Zoo or the adjacent neighborhood storm system, construct a stormwater facility that integrates with the park's natural setting. The construction of this facility is not part of this master plan; though it impacts the park. The storm pond or engineered wetland should be designed to be an aesthetical fit with the natural quality of the area and provide an attractive feature and amenity in the park. Existing picnic sites will need to be relocated around this feature.

Rationale: As a result of the Edmonton Valley Zoo's master plan and renovations, a storm water management facility is required to be located within Buena Vista/Laurier Park. In order to ensure that the facility integrates into the park setting, a location and general aesthetic has been provided in this master plan.



5.0 Management Plan

The following are recommended guidelines for the short and long term management of Buena Vista/Laurier Park. The guidelines have been prepared with consideration of the site and environmental analysis, the defined opportunities and constraints, and the proposed development program. The need for good and consistent management of the park, particularly in regards to the parks' various uses, has been well-documented throughout the public consultation phases of the study. Insufficient management now and in the future is a significant concern of users. Throughout the study various management requirements, issues and solutions have been identified by stakeholders and the public, and have been evaluated by the project team and the advisory committee.

The recommended management guidelines are designed to provide basic measures and strategies for managing the parks natural resources, facilities, amenities, infrastructure and uses. The guidelines do not define specific operational practices or procedures as a majority of these would already be in place through existing approved City policies and documents such as the Urban Parks Management Plan. The management guidelines have been separated into three categories: Management Infrastructure, Resource Management, and Managing Use.

5.1 Environmental Management

1 Recommendation: Maintain the area of Buena Vista Park north of the main manicured area (off-leash "great meadow") in a natural state. While large areas of Buena Vista/Laurier Park have been altered and manicured, the northern portion of Buena Vista Park remains in a relatively natural state, and the meadows and forest that are found here provide valuable plant and wildlife habitat.

Large meadows such as the one found in Buena Vista Park are relatively unusual in Edmonton's river valley, where grassland-like communities are largely restricted to steep, south-facing slopes. Although weedy and anthropogenic in origin, the large meadow has value as habitat for species of open areas such as the clay-coloured sparrow and savannah sparrow.



Fig.50: Natural trail in northern Buena Vista Park

The relatively large continuous tracts of mature forest that dominate the northern portion of the study area support certain wildlife species that are dependent on forest interior habitat. More specifically, the presence of these forest interior species, such as the ovenbird, hairy woodpecker and pileated woodpecker, is reliant on areas of habitat that are isolated from the various disturbances present at the forest's edge. This interior forest habitat has considerable conservation value given the highly fragmented nature of most woodlands in Edmonton's river valley. The abundance of paper birch along the valley slopes, just below the top-of-bank in Buena Vista Park, represents an additional, uncommon element to these forested areas, as birch is typically not a large component of deciduous and mixed-wood stands in Alberta. Their abundance in this area suggests there may be higher than average soil moisture, possibly as a result of groundwater seeps. It is possible that this area may provide habitat for other plants that are unusual in Edmonton's river valley.

In order to maintain the distinct and valuable communities and habitats found in the northern portion of Buena Vista Park, we recommend that any extensive developments or activities be located away from these areas, in more developed parts of the park.

2 Recommendation: Avoid development that will hinder wildlife and ecological connectivity through the park. Currently, the narrowest point of natural habitat in Buena Vista/Laurier Park occurs east of Buena Vista Road where the forested riparian area along the river measures approximately 50 metres wide. A “break” in the forest in this area could create an ecological barrier to the movement of certain wildlife species, and would decrease the ecological connectivity of this portion of the river valley.



Fig.51: Wildlife warning sign

In order to maintain current levels of ecological connectivity it will be important to ensure that the wildlife movement along the river and through the park is not constrained by future park development. This can be done by avoiding any development that encroaches on the forest between Buena Vista Road and the river bank.

3 Recommendation: Minimize the creation of new trails/new edge habitat. This recommendation pertains primarily to Buena Vista Park, which contains an extensive network of trails. Though a relatively low-impact form of recreational infrastructure, these trails do affect surrounding ecosystems. Trails fragment ecological communities and increase the amount of “edge” area relative to interior area, which can decrease habitat for certain species. Trails are also routes by which weedy species can encroach into native plant communities; seeds are transported attached to shoes, paws, bike wheels etc., and establish on and near the disturbed trail environment. Additionally, trails can facilitate soil erosion, particularly on steep slopes. This is typically an issue on informally-developed trails where no design measures, such as switchbacks, are taken to mitigate erosion. Minimizing the extent of the trail network in the park can help mitigate these issues.



Fig.52: Erosion safety barriers along riverside trail

4 Recommendation: Avoid development along the river bank. Riparian communities along the river help to control erosion of the river bank and, in doing so, control sedimentation of the river. Riparian communities also provide valuable wildlife habitat. According to a study completed by EPEC Consulting (1981) the river bank along the North Saskatchewan River was rated as highly susceptible to erosion, with steeply sloped surfaces being particularly vulnerable.

In order to maintain the health of nearby fish habitat and the quality of the riparian communities, development of the river bank should be avoided, or, if this is not feasible, soil disturbance should be minimized and adequate erosion control measures implemented. In particular, careful consideration should be given to the redevelopment of any trails that cut perpendicularly across the river bank.

5 Recommendation: Develop a staged plan for removal of weeds and invasive species in Buena Vista Park. There are three key areas that require removal strategies:

- o **Buena Vista meadows** (between the shared-use pathway and the river): The small meadows in the eastern portion of Buena Vista Park (see *Drawing LA04* at the beginning of *Section 4.0 Master Plan*) are infested with weeds, including species considered noxious in the province (Alberta Weed Act 2010).



Fig.53: Meadow area in Buena Vista Park

These meadows are likely to eventually return to a forested state via natural succession, at which point light-dependent weeds will likely diminish as they are shaded out. This process, however, will take decades and, in the meantime, these weedy meadows are acting as seed sources, facilitating the spread of weedy species to other areas both within and outside of the park. Weedy species in these meadows should, therefore, be controlled as much as is feasible within budgetary and other constraints.

Common tansy and Canada thistle, both considered to be noxious weeds in Alberta, should be prioritized for control. Restoration could be as simple as mowing weeds and sowing seed of native plant species. However, if weedy species form a large portion of the seedbank, more intensive management measures may be required.

- o **Caragana colonies:** The second area that should be prioritized for weed control is the extensive caragana community near the Edmonton Rowing Club boathouse. In this area the caragana has begun to invade the adjacent natural aspen forest. Although caragana can be an excellent ornamental and shelter species in certain circumstances, it is an aggressive colonizer, and without active management it will continue to spread throughout the woodland.

Based on observations, as well as those recorded in other surveys (Komex 2008), caragana appears to strongly inhibit the development of understory communities, which normally contain much of the plant species diversity characteristic of aspen woodlands.



Fig.54: Established caragana colony

Despite its aggressive tendencies, caragana is not widely distributed throughout the park, yet. Staged removal of large colonies of caragana would begin to safeguard the park forest from destruction. Because of the negative visual impact and significant character change that will occur from complete removal, a phased process of selective removal and revegetation is recommended.

- o **Smooth brome colonies:** This aggressive grass species is widespread in many areas of the park. This species is known to invade ecosystems and form dense monocultures, and is a threat to grassland communities throughout central Alberta (Natural Regions

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Committee, 2006). Efforts to control smooth brome are further complicated by its ubiquity in disturbed and developed environments in the Edmonton region, which creates an abundance of seed sources. Many areas in Buena Vista/Laurier Park have been infested to the point that control is impractical and control measures may cause more harm than good (e.g., grassland habitat will be lost, at least temporarily, native plant species may be damaged or killed by control activities). Control strategies for areas that are only lightly colonized by smooth brome, or measures for preventing its spread could be considered.

6 Recommendation: Conduct additional environmental surveys, as required during future design and implementation phases, to ensure that changes in Buena Vista/Laurier Park do not cause adverse environmental impacts. Some areas of additional environmental surveys include:

- o **Soil and Geotechnical Surveys:** Considering the location of Buena Vista/Laurier Park within the river valley and its location adjacent to the river, future development within the park could have the potential to result in impacts to either the river bank and/or river valley slopes. Thus, depending on the nature of proposed activities, additional site-specific soil and geotechnical (including slope stability) investigations may be required.



Fig.55: Riverbank soils

- o **Rare Plant Surveys:** Because rare plants, including rare mosses, are known to occur in the river valley in the vicinity of Buena Vista/Laurier Park, targeted surveys searching for rare plants should be undertaken during the growing season prior to any new development in the study area. The recorded occurrence of flat-topped white aster on lawns near the Yorath House (Komex 2000) is of particular interest and concern, and it would be advisable to attempt to relocate and mark or map this population for future reference. Mature forested areas, particularly the mature birch-poplar at the north end of Buena Vista Park, should be surveyed for rare mosses by a qualified bryologist prior to any disturbance, as those areas may provide habitat for rare mosses.
- o **Fisheries Surveys:** Any proposed development of the river bank (e.g., permanent boat dock, promenade) in Buena Vista/Laurier Park that has the potential to affect fish habitat in the North Saskatchewan River may require aquatic surveys for the purposes of permitting.
- o **Historical Resource Surveys:** Consider conducting pre-construction historical resource surveys for any proposed development that requires significant disturbance of the ground surface (e.g., excavation, drilling). Although previous assessments have identified a low potential for the occurrence of historical resources, this does not preclude the presence of significant resources being located in previously unsurveyed areas.

5.2 Operations and Maintenance

Management Infrastructure

Beyond the improvements described in *Section 4.0 Master Plan*, there are a number of smaller park infrastructure elements that must be provided and maintained in support of good park management.

7 Recommendation: Trash and recycling receptacles and related amenities will be located throughout the park spaces in areas that are convenient to users. This will help discourage littering and maintain the natural and environmental qualities of the park.

- Approximately seven (including existing ones) high quality metal trash receptacles with lids are required at intervals along the off-leash looping pathway and along the Buena Vista Park section of the shared-use pathway and at the off-leash amenity area to dispose of animal waste. Receptacles should be located at important trail intersections and mounted on concrete pads. Larger in-ground receptacles (i.e. Molok-style receptacles) may be more appropriate in locations where trash collection is difficult.
- High quality metal trash receptacles will be provided at each of the picnic sites in Laurier Park. Alternatively, larger in-ground receptacles (i.e. Molok-style receptacles) may be provided to service a group of picnic sites, as long as receptacle is convenient for all sites.
- Larger in-ground receptacles (i.e. Molok-style receptacles) will be located near all group picnic sites and at parking lots.
- Permanent recycling receptacles will be provided near all group picnic sites and in parking areas in Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Temporary roll-out units will be provided close to areas with individual picnics sites in Laurier Park.
- Temporary roll-out recycling units may be required during events and busy weekends.
- The three existing dog bag dispensers need to have a larger capacity or more frequent refilling schedules. Potentially, four additional dispensers could be added at the off-leash amenity node, information kiosk near the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge, and at the two parking lots in Buena Vista Park. An alternative strategy is a partnership with the off-leash community and related businesses to monitor and fill dog bag dispensers more frequently. Bags used in dispensers will be compostable.



Fig.56: Molok garbage receptacle



Fig.58: Existing recycling unit



Fig.57: Bag Dispenser

8 Recommendation: Two additional emergency “blu-phones” are recommended in Laurier Park. One phone will be located near the intersection of the existing Laurier Park loop road and the reopened western access road near the upgraded accessible picnic sites. The other phone will be located near the turn-around loop at the end of the western access road. These phones will supplement the three existing blu-phones located near the Hawrelak pedestrian bridge, near the off-leash parking lot, and near the boat launch.

9 Recommendation: An existing chain-link fenced propane tank and storage yard is located near the existing Laurier Park washroom building. The aesthetics of this area should be improved with a solid screening fence and/or vegetation screening with a landscape bed around the perimeter of the yard. Required clear zones around tank should be maintained for safety.



Fig.59: Laurier Park storage yard

When the washroom building is replaced, alternative methods for water heating should be investigated to determine if propane tank can be removed from site. See *Section 4.5 Public Amenity Nodes and Washrooms - Recommendation 20*.

10 Recommendation: In various places throughout the park, furnishings, such as picnic tables and benches, require repair or replacement due to damage or age. All furnishings should be inspected and upgraded as required. Benches and picnic tables should be on level bases and provide for the comfort and safety of park users. Some benches may benefit from relocation to more suitable and usable places. Memorial benches, if requiring upgrading, relocation, or removal should be dealt with according to the City’s policies for memorial items.

11 Recommendation: Small placards with City contact information should be installed on all major amenities (washrooms, shelters, kiosks, viewpoints, etc) and at information kiosks to allow park users to report damage, maintenance needs or enforcement problems. Reported problems should be addressed immediately.



Fig.60: Dedicated drinking fountain

12 Recommendation: The existing closed drinking fountain in Laurier Park should be evaluated and rehabilitated. One fountain, which is located in the far west end of the Laurier Park, will need special review by the City because it has a dedication plaque. Water fountains and taps for filling containers should be provided in the new washroom facility in Laurier Park and at Yorath House in Buena Vista Park.

13 Recommendation: The use of speed bumps in Laurier Park needs to be reconsidered. The speed bumps prevent Laurier Park from hosting any events that use the loop road for running or walking and they will interfere with snow clearing. This will need to be considered carefully since the speed bumps are intended to slow down vehicles. An alternative

strategy may include the use of removable speed bumps. These would be removed temporarily for walking/running events and during the winter season.

Resource Management

With additional and upgraded amenities in Buena Vista/Laurier Park, adequate budget, staff and equipment resources will be required to ensure that defined service levels for extensive use (major parks) can be provided.

14 Recommendation: Pathways should be inspected once a year to determine maintenance requirements such as vegetation clearing, erosion controls, and surface repairs. Each pathway type requires a different level of maintenance and review.

- Shared-use Pathway: As the key amenity in the park, good pathway maintenance will be important to all users. The shared-use pathway should be maintained to the City of Edmonton's high standard for all-seasons shared-use pathways, as it is an important route within the river valley trail system. The pathway should be cleared of snow in winter.
- Buena Vista Looping Pathway and Secondary Pathways: These two pathways should be maintained according to the City of Edmonton standards for seasonal-use pathways. In particular, the riverside pathway requires additional inspections following storm/flood events to ensure pathway safety and erosion control.
- Natural Pathways: These pathways do not require ongoing maintenance or detailed inspection. Instead, they should be monitored for environmental and safety concerns. Natural pathways that pose concerns should be closed with deadfall and re-vegetated, as required.

15 Recommendation: Regular maintenance of the park and amenities will require dedicated resources to ensure that the amenities are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Inspections, repairs, and maintenance should occur at the following intervals.

- **Seasonally**
 - Signage should be monitored seasonally to ensure that all signs remain in place and consistent. Damaged, missing or misplaced signs should be corrected and/or replaced immediately. Seasonally, park information kiosks should be reviewed and updated to ensure that information material remains relevant.
 - Views from viewpoints will be maintained through the management of adjacent vegetation growth on a seasonal basis in consultation with the City's urban forestry staff.
 - Furnishings, such as garbage and recycling receptacles, benches, and barbeques, should be thoroughly inspected and repaired or replaced, as required.
 - Naturalized grass areas, including off-leash areas in Buena Vista Park and areas outside of the loop road in Laurier Park, should be mown once in spring, summer and fall (2-3 times per year).



Fig.61: Memorial bench

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- Inspect and top-up gravel around picnic sites.
- Review and develop strategies in natural areas for weed control and invasive species problems in consultation with the City's urban forestry staff.

- Review mature trees in Laurier Park for signs of decline and identify trees that are nearing their end of lifespan. Additional trees should be planted near declining trees to help successional planting efforts. Protect important natural and mature ornamental trees, especially near the river, from beaver damage using wire mesh.



Fig.62: Beaver damaged tree

- Prune large dead branches and cut down dead or dying trees that may cause safety hazards for park users.
- Parks staff should identify and address inappropriate river and access locations (pedestrians and vehicles).
- Review river bank edges for excessive erosion or damage caused by park users. Vegetative bank stabilization measures and "soft" measures should be implemented proactively. "Hard" safety and erosion control measures, such as railings, should be reviewed, repaired, or upgraded as required. If vegetated bank stabilization measures are used near viewpoints, selected plant species should be low growing.

o Monthly

- Shelters, viewpoints and buildings should be monitored for damage, deterioration and vandalism. Any problems encountered should be corrected immediately.



Fig.63: Group picnic shelter

o Bi-weekly

- Open lawn areas in the center of the loop road in Laurier Park should be mowed bi-weekly.
- A 1-1.5 metre strip should be mown along the shared-use pathway in areas where grass is directly adjacent to pathway.

o Weekly

- Basic toilet facilities (two in Laurier Park, one in Buena Vista) should be monitored, cleaned and supplies topped-up. Pump-out vaults should be monitored and emptied as required and prior to planned events. Any problems encountered should be corrected immediately.



Fig.64: Basic Toilet in Laurier Park

- Trash and recycling should be collected at least twice weekly during the summer and once every one to two weeks during winter. Additional collection may be required following events.
 - Picnic sites should be cleaned up and gravel should be raked out, as needed. Barbeque pits should be emptied of ash and debris.
 - Dog bag dispensers should be checked frequently. If the dispensers continually run out of bags, refill frequency may need to be increased during busy months or additional dispensers added to the site. An alternative strategy is a partnership with the off-leash community and related businesses to monitor and fill dog bag dispensers. A similar model is currently in practice in the City of Calgary.
- **Daily**
 - Laurier Park washroom building and Yorath House washrooms should receive daily monitoring, cleaning, and top-up of supplies. Any problems encountered should be corrected immediately.
 - Washrooms require lock-up during nighttime park closure hours.
 - **As Required**
 - Temporary roll-out recycling units will need to be placed in park prior to busy weekends and during events. These units should be emptied and returned to storage following the events in order to help protect these units from vandalism.
 - Vandalism, graffiti and littering should be corrected as soon as discovered to discourage further problems and maintain the quality of the park. Requirements for the removal of graffiti are outlined in the Community Standards Bylaw 14600.
 - Any signs or posters that are not located on information kiosk public posting boards should be removed as soon as they are found.
 - Snow clearing of both Laurier Park and Buena Vista Park access roads is required. The parking lots in Buena Vista Park should be cleared as well.

Management Practices

16 Recommendation: Maintenance vehicles should only be driven on roadways and the shared-use pathway, as needed. Currently, many vegetated areas within Laurier Park are being damaged by vehicles driving on turf and pathway areas. Off-leash park users have expressed concern for potential conflicts between maintenance vehicles and off-leash dogs. Areas being damaged by weekly trash collection would benefit from larger in-ground receptacles (Molok-style receptacles) to reduce the frequency of collection.



Fig.65: Tire rutting from vehicles

17 Recommendation: Over the long-term, a program for controlling weeds in natural and landscaped areas of the park, through measures defined in the approved Integrated Pest Management Policy, will be important. Since this could require significant resources, it is the type of program that may best be accomplished through organized volunteer activities on an annual

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basis (i.e. “Weed Control Day”). Caragana infestation in Buena Vista Park requires a staged removal approach, as removal will cause a significant visual impact.

18 Recommendation: Following the contract landscape work (tree planting, natural restoration), City staff will be required to continue plant establishment maintenance (watering, fertilizing, weed control) for up to five years. “Green” landscaping methods, such as limiting the use of chemicals, should be required wherever possible.

19 Recommendation: As noted in the *Urban Parks Management Plan (2006)*, partnerships are an important resource for the ongoing management of Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Volunteers from specific users groups such as dog walkers, rowing, cycling or walking groups, or an overall “Friends of Buena Vista/Laurier Park” group could serve as a valuable resource for identifying, coordinating and completing specific aspects of park maintenance. Through a partnership arrangement, the City could provide liaison, equipment and budget resources to support the work of this group(s).

There are several informal group that use the park regularly and informally assist in park maintenance, etc. It is unclear whether any of these groups would be interested in a more formal partnership arrangement with the City. The City should approach these groups to discuss partnership opportunities. If the City is interested in having a designated volunteer group to assist with management of Buena Vista/Laurier Park, a terms of reference would need to be developed to define the structure, role, authority and reporting relationship of the partnership.

Managing Use

As indicated by the public input, Buena Vista/Laurier Park users want a safe place to recreate while enjoying nature. They want suitable support amenities, and they recognize the importance of following the rules to ensure that the park can be enjoyed by people (and dogs) doing a range of activities. Many groups of users take pride and ownership in Buena Vista/Laurier Park.

Part of this expectation is that the park and the activities of users will be properly managed but park users don’t want excessive controls or an overabundance of regulatory signage that will impact the natural values of the park. This will be an important balance that can be achieved best by educating users, having a regular presence of City staff in the park, and through consistent enforcement of the rules.

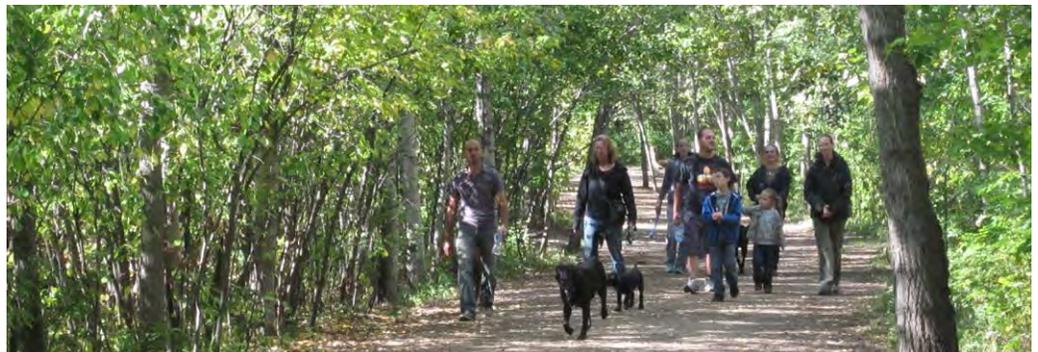


Fig.66: Shared-use pathway in Buena Vista Park

To ensure that the increasing use is properly managed, the City has a number of measures in place that need to be implemented to adequate levels to ensure a safe and comfortable experience for users.

20 Recommendation: Enforce the City bylaws (and provincial acts) which can be enforced to manage use in Buena Vista/Laurier Park include:

- o **Parkland Bylaw 2202** which defines rules that apply to all users of parks including members of the public, and anyone controlling, renting or maintaining public park space and recreational facilities
- o **Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw 13145** which regulates off-leash areas, pet licensing, stray animals etc.
- o **Bylaw Enforcement Officer Bylaw 8081** which regulates the authority of bylaw enforcement officers
- o **Community Standards Bylaw 14600** which regulates noise, excessive idling, graffiti, etc.
- o **Public Places Bylaw 14614** which regulates public behavior, littering, etc.
- o **Traffic Bylaw 5590** which regulates traffic, cyclist conduct, the use of sidewalks.
- o **Unauthorized Use of Parkland Bylaw 12308** which protects the park from unauthorized uses

21 Recommendation: Because of the number of different recreational uses of the park, additional “local rules” may be created. These rules are not enforced by City bylaw but instead provide standards for park user etiquette. Signs with local rules should be provided in key locations and at information kiosks. Some local rules that may help reduce user conflicts include:



Fig.67: People using the off-leash shoreline area

- o Parents, keep children nearby when in off-leash areas. Children need to take care when playing around dogs and should not approach unfamiliar dogs without talking to the dog owner.
- o Along the Buena Vista Park shared-use pathway, reduce bicycle speeds, use your bike bell and watch for running dogs. Dog walkers, keep your dog near you and bring your dog under control when you hear a bike bell. Feel free to walk with your dog on the pathway, but please use the open space for other activities, such as frisbee and running.
- o Pedestrians using the riverside pathway should yield to rowers and paddlers bringing equipment down to the dock. All dogs should be leashed when on the dock and should only go onto the dock when boats are not being loaded/unloaded.

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22 Recommendation: Stage park ranger “enforcement blitzes” at key times to help enforce the parks bylaws. Spontaneous “blitzes” will take place over a focused period of days with several park rangers monitoring and ticketing violators. This approach shows a strong and active enforcement presence, help correct inappropriate park behavior, and effectively use park ranger resources. Blitzes are in addition to current park ranger monitoring practices on site. As Buena Vista/Laurier Park continues to experience an increase in users, park ranger staffing and resource budgets will need to be increased to help to reduce the incidence of unlawful or inappropriate behavior.

Because of the modifications to the off-leash boundaries and rerouting of a portion of the Buena Vista Park bike path, it will be especially important to dedicate a focused effort on enforcement blitzes for the first year. This will ensure that users are aware of the changes and adhere to the boundaries. Because of the changes it is important to first create a strong communications strategy to inform all park users of the changes prior to enforcement blitzes.

23 Recommendation: It is recommended that a marketing and education campaign be designed and implemented to raise awareness about the park and proposed improvements and to encourage shared use and enjoyment. This can be an extension of the existing “Parks for Paws” program. In addition to information for off-leash park users, messaging should include information for cyclists, river access, conservation and safety.

24 Recommendation: Off-leash park users should be notified of hot air balloon launches in advance of launch day. Notification of launch days should be posted on Buena Vista/Laurier Park information kiosks several days prior to launch and free standing notification signs should be posted at all major entrances to the off-leash park area (Hawrelak pedestrian bridge and Buena Vista Park parking lots) on the day of the launch.

25 Recommendation: Review and confirm policies for managing City programs to ensure that they adequately address the programming needs in Buena Vista/Laurier Park. Specific policies for managing programs in the park and within Yorath House may be required. Since Yorath House will be a new programming opportunity for the City, it is important to create a management plan that will govern its future uses and permissible activities.

26 Recommendation: Review and improve vehicle access barriers (e.g. bollards, boulders, gates), as required to ensure that vehicles are not permitted to enter restricted park areas. The boat launch area is of especial concern, as the shoreline currently has signs of damage from vehicles because of insufficient boulder barriers.



Fig.68: Tire tracks along the shoreline

27 Recommendation: The City shall begin the process to officially name Buena Vista Park. At the time of this master plan, Buena Vista Park was an undesignated parcel of parkland within the river valley, though its uses have long been established in this location. Because the users currently refer to the space as “Buena Vista”, the name Buena Vista Park should be considered as a naming option. Official park naming will follow the approved naming process managed by the Sustainable Development Department and

the Names Advisory Committee (Urban Parks Management Plan, 2006).

28 Recommendation: Expand winter opportunities in Laurier Park to support the City's Winter City Strategy and provide an accessible location for winter activities.

Increased access would benefit the current people who use the park in winter and encourage additional users. The section of Laurier Access Road from Buena Vista Road to western access gate and the small parking lot south of the Edmonton Valley Zoo parking area should have snow removal during winter.

Additional operation, maintenance and enforcement resources will be required to accommodate additional winter park use.

29 Recommendation: Work with Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS) to identify opportunities to enhance DATS transit service to both Buena Vista and Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park.

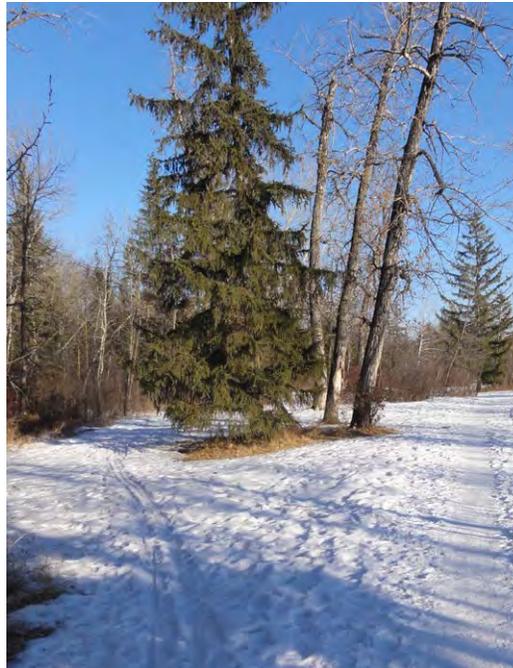


Fig.69: Signs of winter activities in Laurier Park



6.0 Implementation Plan

Based on consultation with the City project team, it is recommended that the Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan be implemented through multiple phases. The first phase is recommended to be completed within three years. Phase II includes the remaining improvements planned for both Buena Vista and Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park as part of this master plan. The remaining improvements are to be completed within the ten year master plan period. Operational cost impacts are outlined in Section 6.2.

6.1 Estimated Capital Costs

The following provides order-of-magnitude costs associated with the master plan. The order-of-magnitude costs provide a current dollar value to implement each of the master plan recommendations for each phase. A contingency is factored into the total cost of each phase. A detailed order-of-magnitude cost estimate is located in Appendix H.

Phase I

Park Entrance Improvements

Roundabout	\$600,000
Park entrance enhancements (includes directional signage and landscaping)	\$135,000
Sub total	\$735,000

Enhancements to the Off-Leash Area (Buena Vista Park)

Off-leash meeting area kiosk	\$7,500
Off-leash meeting area vault toilet	\$70,000
Fenced off-leash training area	\$17,775
Gravel path resurfacing along the looping trail	\$73,255
Fenced off-leash training area 2 metre asphalt path	\$18,200
North shoreline access pathway	\$4,500
North shoreline access stairs	\$35,000
Shoreline access improvement (mid-point location)	\$15,000
Shoreline access improvements (Whitewater Paddlers lease area)	\$10,000
Water fountain including water line	\$5,000
Sub total	\$256,230

Shared Use Path Improvements

3 metre shared use paved path re-alignment	\$62,800
3 metre shared use paved path asphalt overlay	\$179,425
Modified bike access to Melton Ravine	\$4,900
Pathway reclamation of former bike access (Melton Ravine)	\$10,000
Removal of bike channels at Hawrelak Footbridge	\$2,500
Shared use path (trail painting through Buena Vista off-leash area)	\$2,500
Sub total	\$262,125

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Signage

Site signage	\$180,000
Interpretive signage	\$120,000
Sub total	\$300,000

Phase I Total

Phase I Total	\$1,553,355
Contingency and Fees	27%
Contingency and Fee total	\$1,972,760

* Environmental review and preliminary design was completed as part of the Master Plan.

Redevelopment of Yorath (to coincide with Phase I)

Design Phase	\$176,625
Construction Phase	\$732,500
Project Management (City)	\$124,460
Soft costs (permits, assessments, etc)	\$34,725
Subtotal Base Project Costs	\$1,068,310
Design Phase Contingencies	\$35,050
Construction Phase Contingencies	\$121,298
Subtotal Contingencies	\$156,348
Total Base Construction Costs with contingencies	\$1,224,658
Sanitary servicing from existing main	\$86,750
Servicing tie-in from existing main to property line	\$20,000
Sanitary Service Subtotal	\$106,750
Engineering and Contingency (30%)	\$32,025
Project Management (15%)	\$16,012
Sanitary Service Subtotal	\$154,787
Upper terrace landscape improvements	\$115,000
Lower terrace landscape improvements	\$155,000
Stone walls, stairs and ramps	\$75,000
Site interpretive signage	\$30,000
Yorath House parking lot	\$99,450
Exterior costs subtotal	\$474,450
Exterior costs with contingency (14.5%)	\$543,245
Total Yorath Redevelopment Cost	\$1,922,690

Phase II

Parking and Access

132 Street Gravel Parking Lot	\$53,430
Gravel parking lot expansion of the off-leash parking area	\$75,600
Gravel parking lot expansion at the Edmonton Rowing Club (Buena Vista Park)	\$183,300
Buena Vista road refinishing	\$165,600
Overflow parking access (Buena Vista Park)	\$30,000
Installation of bicycle parking	\$15,750
Sub total	523,680

Pathway Improvements and Pathway Viewpoints

Create four viewpoints along the riverside trail in Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park	\$60,000
Create 500 metres of new shared use path in Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park adjacent the southeast extension of the park	\$70,000
Riverside path maintenance improvements	\$72,000
Riverside path maintenance improvements wood railings	\$12,500
Sub total	\$ 214,500

Public Amenity Nodes and Washrooms

Replace existing washroom facility in Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park (retain as three season)	\$100,000
Public amenity node and basic toilet in Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park	\$45,000
Sub total	\$145,000

Weed Removal and Vegetation Restoration

Phased removal and remediation of weed infestations, including caragana	\$100,000
Successional tree plantings	\$60,000
Naturalization restoration/vegetated bank stabilization	\$40,000
Natural trail closure restoration	\$40,000
Sub total	\$240,000

Picnic Site Improvements

Upgrade picnic sites along the shared use pathway for better accessibility	\$100,000
Upgrade existing Group Site to include one accessible picnic site	\$32,000
Update parking along accessible picnic sites	\$8,450
Sub total	\$140,450

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Natural Playgrounds (Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park)

Natural playground (two)	\$750,000
Sub total	\$1,500,000

Boat Launch and Viewing Area (Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park)

Boat launch viewpoint deck	\$350,000
Sub total	\$350,000

Phase II Total

Phase II Total	\$3,113,630
Contingency and Fees	27%
Contingency and Fee total	\$3,954,310
Design	\$246,000
Environmental Reporting	\$100,000
Total	\$4,300,310

Total Project Capital Costs

Phase I and Phase II total (not including Yorath House with contingency)	\$6,273,070
Yorath House (with contingency)	\$1,922,690
TOTAL PROJECT	\$8,195,760

6.2 Estimated Operational Costs

The operating impacts for Phase I are broken down between personnel, material and equipment and fleet services. This approach reflects a higher level of certainty based on known design parameters for elements included as part of Phase I. The estimated operating impacts of capital for future phases of the master plan implementation are calculated at a nominal 3% of the construction subtotal for each phase.

Building maintenance for Yorath House is calculated at 2% of the construction subtotal. Additional operating impacts include building services (janitorial, waste collection, snow removal, security), and grounds maintenance (lawn, shrub beds, and flowerbed maintenance).

The budget and scope of development for future phases will ultimately be dependent on funding made available in future budget cycles and are yet to be determined.

Phase I

	Operating Cost
Personnel	\$23,360
Material and Equipment	\$2,877
Fleet Services	\$5,755
Phase I Total	\$31,992

Yorath House

	Construction Subtotal	Rate	Operating Cost
Building Maintenance	\$732,500	2%	\$10,988
Building Services ¹			\$105,375
Grounds Maintenance ²			\$19,059
Yorath House Total			\$135,422

Phase II

	Construction Subtotal	Rate	Operating Cost
Parking and access improvements	\$507,930	3%	\$15,238
Pathway improvements and pathway viewpoints	\$144,500	3%	\$4,335
Public amenity nodes and washrooms	\$145,000	3%	\$4,350
Weed removal and revegetation	\$240,000	3%	\$7,200
picnic site improvements	\$140,000	3%	\$4,200
natural playgrounds	\$750,000	3%	\$22,500
boat launch viewing area	\$350,000	3%	\$10,500
Phase II Total			\$68,323

Total Project Operational Costs

Phase I	\$31,992
Yorath House	\$135,422
Phase II	\$68,323
Total Estimated Operating Cost	\$235,737

1. Building Services includes snow removal, washroom cleaning and maintenance, garbage removal, facility cleaning and supplies.

2. Grounds Maintenance for Yorath House is estimated at 0.55 hectares of turf at \$150/hectare and approximately 18 mowings per year; 500 m² of shrub beds at \$1.30/m² maintained approximately 5 times per year; 200 m² of specialty flower beds at \$42/m² based on a seasonal total.



7.0 Conclusion

The Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan defines an overall plan for the implementation of improvements and the management of Buena Vista/Laurier Park. It recognizes the uniqueness and its importance as one of Edmonton's premier recreation destinations.

The Buena Vista/Laurier Park Master Plan has been designed as a balanced strategy for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources of the park, while providing managed access for the recreation and enjoyment of individuals, families and groups. The master plan has been designed with careful consideration of the needs and desires of current users and the opportunities that exist for meeting the needs of a growing population in Edmonton.

A Park on the Edge

"A park characterized by interplay between two distinct settings: maintained and natural. These settings support a diverse range of year-round outdoor activities, provide access to the North Saskatchewan River and connect park users to attractions in the central west end of the City's river valley."

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