



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Proudly Connecting
Your River Valley



Prepared April 2020 by the River Valley Alliance

**Photos by Arielle Demchuk, Keith Moore and Kim
Tannas**

At the time of publishing this report, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, perhaps more than ever, the sense of calm that comes from being out in the natural setting of the river valley (while practicing appropriate social distancing) brings a much-needed solace during these stressful days. This once-again reaffirms the value and importance of the work of the RVA to connect people to this wonderful gem in our own backyards.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

2019 was another busy year for the RVA in carrying out our core mission of completing a fully-connected trail from the Town of Devon to the City of Fort Saskatchewan. Our vision is for a trail system that is recognized as a world class attraction for residents and tourists alike, rivaling great trails such as the West Coast Trail, the Bruce Trail or the Cabot Trail.

The RVA is a shining example of effective regional collaboration. For our shareholders, it means coming together through the RVA to be part of something larger for its citizens— more than any one municipality could achieve on its own. For our funders, it means having seven municipalities speaking with a unified and clear voice about the priorities of the region.

Over the last few years, we have made great strides with over 70 km of the overall 100 km trail system in place. In the near term, we are focused on advancing an important footbridge between the East End Trails in Edmonton to Strathcona County, as well as securing land and funding to complete the remaining 30 km of trail from Anthony Henday Dr. to the Town of Devon along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River.

In 2019 the RVA updated our Strategic Plan which sharpened the focus on what we need to do to advance our mission and vision. I want to personally thank Dr. Andrew Leach, who will be leaving the RVA board this year, for leading this initiative and his service to the RVA. In addition to identifying strategic priorities for advancing the connected trail system, we also affirmed the related goal of connecting people to the river valley, making it easier to access and enjoy. Examples of this include the 2019 opening of five new boat docks in Edmonton and the nearly 6,000 participants in the third annual EPCOR RiverFest.

None of this would be possible without the efforts of RVA staff, volunteer Board Members, Shareholders, Community Engagement Committee members, RVA Ambassadors, landowners and Provincial and Federal governments. Thank you all! I also want to thank Wendy Boje, Michael Walters, Jim Cockburn and Carol Moreno for their service on the RVA Board and Peter Faid for service on our Governance Committee.

GUY BRIDGEMAN, CHAIR



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

An important part of the RVA's work is connecting people to the river valley, not just connecting the river valley itself. In fact, we often state that we're not building trails, footbridges, and other infrastructure to look at—we want people to use them.

This year, with 70km of connected trail and some impressive infrastructure projects already completed (Terwillegar Footbridge and the 100 St Funicular), we took the opportunity to put an intentional focus on not only encouraging people to want to be in the river valley, but on making it easier for them to do so.

From a host of new initiatives like river valley trail walks, launching our new RVA Ambassador program, showcasing Edmonton's five new boat docks, and our "How-To" trail trek blogs, the RVA in 2019 was the hub that connects people to the river valley. In our third year of holding EPCOR RiverFest, we attracted close to 6,000 people coming out to enjoy both a float on the river and experience the many ways they can participate in river valley activities.

At the same time, we didn't miss a beat on advancing our project work. We continued to make progress on plans to connect the last section of trail in the southwest quadrant of Edmonton while moving ahead on larger infrastructure projects like the Highway 15 pedestrian bridge between Sturgeon County and Fort Saskatchewan.

I am incredibly proud of the work of our team and all that we have accomplished in the period of a year. Connecting the river valley trail system is a passion project for all involved, and it is inspiring to see that passion come to life on the front line each and every day.

BRENT COLLINGWOOD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PROJECTS SUMMARY

2019 was a busy year of behind-the-scenes planning for new connections in the river valley, along with great progress for ongoing projects—and even winning a few awards.



New boat docks open in Edmonton

Four boat docks—Whitemud, Laurier, Dawson and Capilano—were officially opened to the public in August. The construction of these boat docks was completed in late 2018; however, this past summer was the first time people were able to use them to recreate on the river and enjoy the river valley from a different perspective.

Construction begins on Highway 15 pedestrian bridge

Construction began on the new “underslung” pedestrian bridge that will be built in conjunction with the twinning of Highway 15 connecting Sturgeon County to the City of Fort Saskatchewan. This will be a critical piece of infrastructure in achieving our goal of regional connectivity from Devon to Sturgeon County.

Smooth sailing for Devon boat trailers

The River Valley Alliance and the Town of Devon officially opened an expanded parking lot at Voyageur Park that will move non-trailer vehicles away from the boat ramp to make access easier for boaters and paddlers.

Accolades for the Edmonton funicular

The 100 St Funicular (which includes the Frederick G. Todd Lookout) won three awards in 2019: an International Architecture Award, a Canadian Institute of Steel Construction (CISC) Alberta Steel Design Awards of Excellence award, and an Edmonton Urban Design Award of Excellence.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The RVA's three priority areas are land acquisition, construction and planning, and government grants.



Strategic plan

From the Strategic Planning process of 2019, the RVA's three priority areas remain completion of trails and bridges, land acquisition, and government grants. Our updated **Strategic Plan** sharpens the focus on what we need to accomplish in order to achieve our vision. In addition to identifying strategic priorities for advancing our work (funding, land, infrastructure), the sub-committee re-affirmed the importance of connecting people to the river valley through infrastructure, activities, and awareness that make it easier to access and enjoy.

Government grants

The RVA will continue to meet with provincial government officials to encourage approval of the organization's funding application for its second phase of projects that will create a fully connected river valley trail system.

Planning and construction

Two construction projects are intended for completion in 2020: the Parkland County riverside trail and the Devon Battery Creek trail along top of bank to Rabbit Hill Creek. The RVA, in concert with the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County, will also continue to work to advance the Quarry Ridge footbridge in Edmonton's northeast.

Land acquisition

The RVA will continue to pursue land access in the southwest quadrant (Rabbit Hill ravine to west Anthony Henday bridge) in order to fulfill the organization's vision of a fully connected river valley trail system. The organization will work closely with landowners along top of bank to secure access through means that include rights-of-way and easements.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

Nearly 6,000 attend EPCOR RiverFest

The third edition of EPCOR RiverFest saw nearly 6,000 attendees in Edmonton and Devon get connected with the North Saskatchewan River Valley - including nearly 2,600 paddlers on the river. This far surpassed the 2019 goal of 5,000 attendees across both sites.

EPCOR RiverFest showcases the many ways people can safely enjoy the river valley on land and on water, the highlight of which is an organized paddle down the North Saskatchewan River. Thank you to the sponsors and volunteers who supported 2019 EPCOR RiverFest, and a special thank you to our RVA staff for the countless hours that were dedicated throughout the year to ensure this event's success.



RVA Ambassador Program launches

Over 80 people have signed up to be RVA Ambassadors since this program was piloted in March 2019. Ambassadors share their love of the river valley with others by promoting and raising awareness of the trails, pedestrian bridges, and other RVA projects that make it easier for everyone to connect with the river valley. They do this through social media, by leading or supporting activities on the trails, and by volunteering at river valley events. Thank you to all of the Ambassadors who lent a hand (or a voice) to help celebrate the river valley and the work of the RVA. The RVA looks forward to continuing to grow and enhance this program in 2020.

100%

more followers on Instagram since 2018, doubling our following.

2000+

uses of the hashtag "#trekthetrails" since its launch in 2018



Hosted trail walks

RVA staff hosted Board and committee members, RVA Ambassadors, and partners by organizing three trail walks in 2019 to draw attention to RVA projects. Trail walks were organized on the Hawrelak Park to Laurier Park trails (highlighting the new Laurier viewing deck and boat dock), on the East End Trails (highlighting this newly opened section of trail), and on Riverside Nature Trail (highlighting this newer section of trail as well as where a proposed RVA footbridge would be located to connect across the river to East End Trails at Quarry Ridge). RVA staff will continue to organize and host these seasonal walks.



Trail Trek How-To blogs

An important component of the RVA's strategic plan is to support use of the trail system by providing tools and resources to make it easy to get out there and enjoy it. In that spirit, last year the RVA launched a series of Trail Trek How-To Blogs. The blogs are hosted on the organization's website (rivervalley.ab.ca/trekthetrails) and feature how-to routes of short and medium trail distances all set in these magical, natural surroundings - many of which highlight RVA projects and other interesting geographical landmarks with the seven RVA shareholder municipalities. This continues to be the most popular of the online content produced and distributed by the RVA.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

Guy Bridgeman

Municipal Directors

Councillor Wayne Bokenfohr, Sturgeon County

Councillor Sarah Hamilton, City of Edmonton

Councillor Gordon Harris, City of Fort Saskatchewan

Councillor AnnLisa Jensen, Parkland County

Councillor Sandy Koroll, Town of Devon

Councillor Glen Lawrence, Strathcona County

Councillor Robert Parks, Strathcona County

Councillor Kelly Vandenberghe, Leduc County

Councillor Michael Walters, City of Edmonton

Directors at Large

Wendy Boje, Parkland County

Marcel Chichak, City of Edmonton

Michael Gardiner, City of Edmonton

Bob Horton, Strathcona County

Andrew Leach, City of Edmonton

John McGladdery, Strathcona County

Carol Moreno, City of Edmonton (Interim)



COMMITTEES

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Wendy Boje, Committee Chair

Peter Faid

Andrew Leach

Guy Bridgeman, RVA Board Chair

Brent Collingwood, RVA Executive Director (ex officio)

Kristine Archibald, RVA Finance Manager (ex officio)

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Bob Horton, Committee Chair

Pat Butler

Marchel Chichak

Guy Bridgeman, RVA Board Chair

Brent Collingwood, RVA Executive Director (ex officio)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Michael Gardiner, Committee Chair

Mark McCrae

Guy Bridgeman, RVA Board Chair

Brent Collingwood, RVA Executive Director (ex officio)

Kristine Archibald, RVA Finance Manager (ex officio)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Carol Moreno, Interim Committee Chair, City of Edmonton

Grant Geldart, Town of Devon

Evelyn Mark, Town of Devon

Mike Evans, Parkland County

Valerie Turner, Parkland County

Jason Jama, City of Edmonton

Wendy Lickacz, City of Edmonton

Suzanne McAfee, City of Edmonton

Maele Piquee, City of Edmonton

Stephanie Borgs, Strathcona County

Dennis Lukawesky, Strathcona County

Jeff Adema, City of Fort Saskatchewan

Jim Cockburn, City of Fort Saskatchewan



VOLUNTEERS



RVA AMBASSADORS

Denis Babin

Gregg Becker

Candace Boettger

Elliott Boe

Dubhe Boloix

Lisa Bourgeault

Sean Brown

Stephen Copen

Mark Gibbons

Chelsea Hampshire

Lisa Howatt

Benjamin Jonah

Bryce Joyce

Marshall Lamoureux

Danielle Langlois

Zoe LeParque

Harmony Medland-Wolgemuth

Keith Moore

Suzanne Michaud

Michael Nikolai

Andre Pires

Mike Pye

Melissa Radu

Jon Rodgers

Daniel Rosichuk

Daniella San Martin-Feeney

Sheryl Savard

Lois Serink

Marion Serink

Kim Tannas

Graham Taylor

Connor Thompson

Sheila Thompson

Laura Townsend

Kathy Trepanier

Valerie Turner

Daniel Tyrkalo

Brent Underschultz

Cyrus Weber

Sean Wingrave

STAFF

Brent Collingwood, Executive Director

Kristine Archibald, Finance Manager

Arielle Demchuk, Digital Media Specialist

Jessie Rew, MBA Summer Student

Connie Smart, Marketing and Communications Manager

Jennifer Ward, Administrative Coordinator



SPECIAL THANKS

Phil Krysa, Principal. Architectural Works Inc

Madelen Ortega, MO Consulting

Ruth Stiksma, Corporate Support Group

Trevor Tessier, Strong Coffee Marketing

Shannon Troke, King and Company Chartered Accountants

Chris Schulte, King and Company Chartered Accountants

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Shareholders of The River Valley Alliance

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The River Valley Alliance (the Corporation), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2019, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Corporation as at December 31, 2019, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Corporation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Corporation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Corporation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Corporation's financial reporting process.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Independent Auditor's Report to the Shareholders of The River Valley Alliance (continued)

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Corporation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Corporation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Corporation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

King + Company

Edmonton, AB
March 21, 2020

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS


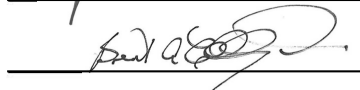
THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2019

	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 115,632	\$ 389,341
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	371,298	26,921
Building Canada Fund (BCF) claim receivable (Note 10)	1,503,751	1,286,443
Prepaid expenses	5,920	5,207
	1,996,601	1,707,912
RESTRICTED CASH AND INVESTMENTS (Notes 3, 10)	23,645,504	28,403,823
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	2,889	8,664
	\$ 25,644,994	\$ 30,120,399
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 67,608	\$ 34,090
Payable to municipal shareholders for capital project claims (Note 10)	3,007,502	2,572,886
	3,075,110	2,606,976
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PLAN OF ACTION (Notes 5, 10)	22,141,753	27,117,380
DEFERRED CAPITAL ASSET CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 6)	1,926	5,776
	25,218,789	29,730,132
NET ASSETS		
Share capital (Note 8)	7,000	7,000
Invested in capital assets	963	2,889
Unrestricted municipal shareholder assets	418,242	380,378
	426,205	390,267
	\$ 25,644,994	\$ 30,120,399

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD


 _____ Director

 _____ Director

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2019

	2019	2018
REVENUES		
Contribution from Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) grant (operations) (Note 5)	\$ 500,000	\$ 441,751
Contributions from municipal shareholders	230,000	240,000
Unrestricted interest	7,658	4,969
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions	3,850	3,850
Donations, sponsorships and other	1,171	4,464
	<u>742,679</u>	<u>695,034</u>
EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	489,814	552,429
General and administration	126,383	100,393
RiverFest (Note 7)	47,665	641
Communications and branding	27,366	11,708
Professional fees	9,738	9,738
Amortization of capital assets	5,775	5,775
	<u>706,741</u>	<u>680,684</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	<u>35,938</u>	<u>14,350</u>
OTHER RESTRICTED REVENUE (EXPENSES)		
Capital Projects Matched by BCF		
Capital projects (Note 9)	(4,073,695)	(4,522,074)
Contribution from BCF (Note 5)	1,855,574	2,261,037
Contribution from AEP grant (Note 5)	2,218,121	2,261,037
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Non-Operating AEP Grant		
Preliminary design	(2,152,163)	(502,803)
Devon and Parkland project	(454,514)	-
Project oversight	(270,000)	(382,252)
Contribution from AEP grant (Note 5)	2,876,677	885,055
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ 35,938</u>	<u>\$ 14,350</u>

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2019

		Invested in Capital Assets	Unrestricted Municipal Shareholder Assets	2019	2018
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$	2,889	\$ 380,378	\$ 383,267	\$ 368,917
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses		(1,926)	37,864	35,938	14,350
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$	963	\$ 418,242	\$ 419,205	\$ 383,267

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended December 31, 2019

	2019	2018
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash receipts from contributions by municipal shareholders	\$ 90,000	\$ 240,000
Cash receipts from unrestricted interest	7,658	4,969
Cash receipts from other revenue	1,171	73,464
Cash payments to suppliers and employees	(677,746)	(750,661)
Cash flow used by operating activities	(578,917)	(432,228)
FINANCING AND INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Redemption of restricted cash and investments, net	4,758,319	4,033,873
Contributions from BCF	1,638,266	3,307,022
Interest received from restricted cash and investments	619,171	599,954
Payments for Devon and Parkland project paid by RVA to be reimbursed one-third by the municipalities	(649,306)	-
Payments to municipal shareholders for capital projects	(6,061,242)	(7,499,098)
Cash flow from financing and investing activities	305,208	441,751
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	(273,709)	9,523
CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR	389,341	379,818
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 115,632	\$ 389,341



RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

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Trek the Trails

