

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Proudly Connecting Your
River Valley



RIVER VALLEY
ALLIANCE



Prepared February 2021 by the River Valley Alliance

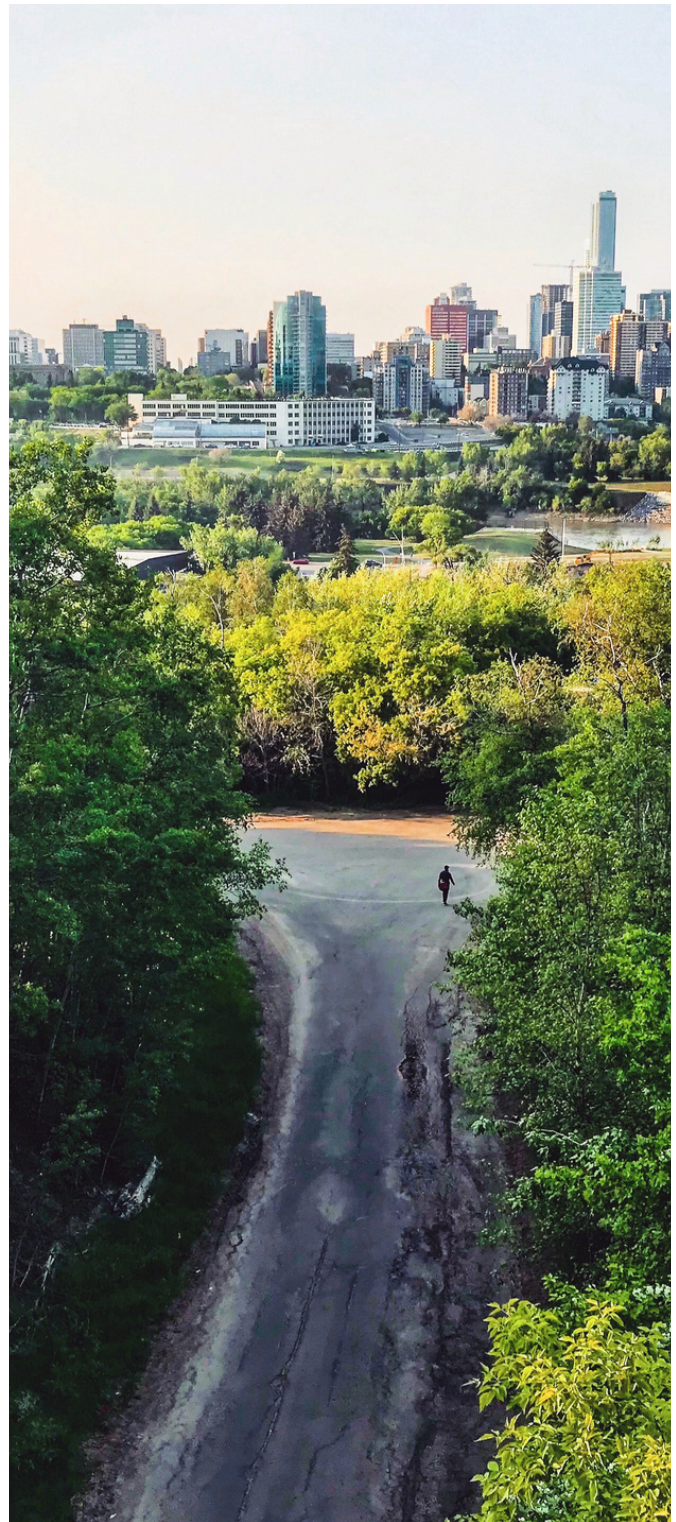
Design and layout by Makennah Walker

Additional photos by Harmony Wolgemuth,
Stephanie Wachnuk, Darby Petersen, Keith Moore
and Shruti Srinivas

At the time of publishing this report, we are one year into 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.



"Trails not only connect us with each other, but they also connect us with ourselves."

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

2020 was a year of tragedies and heroism as we trekked through the ups and downs of the COVID pandemic. One of the truly bright spots that emerged was the dramatic increase in the usage of our wonderful North Saskatchewan River Regional Trail System. Our Trail System is one of the places residents can easily and safely access for exercise and to replenish our spirits.

I know everyone in the RVA community takes satisfaction in seeing such great usage and appreciation of the River Valley Trail System. Past investments by our Municipal Shareholders in partnership with the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada are paying enormous dividends to the entire Region when most needed.

We made great progress in 2020 towards our goal of seeing a fully connected Regional Trail along the North Saskatchewan from the Town of Devon and Parkland County in the southwest through the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County to the City of Fort Saskatchewan and Sturgeon County in the northeast. Of the overall 100 km length, we have 78 km of the Regional Trail in place that will be fully connected once the Edmonton to Strathcona County footbridge is completed.

We are on the cusp of having a truly World Class Trail System that will be enjoyed by area residents and visitors for generations to come. In 2020 the RVA worked closely with its Municipal Shareholders to establish a process to determine an “Overarching Name” for our Regional Trail System. This will help to take us to the next level in terms of awareness and continued improvement of this World Class amenity.

As I come to the end of my time on the RVA Board and the past three years as Chair, I can only express my thanks and admiration to the staff, fellow Board Members, Committee Members, Shareholders, Provincial and Federal funding partners for their ongoing support and dedication to this wonderful organization. The RVA is a shining example of Regional cooperation and what can be accomplished when we pull together in support of a shared vision and our love for the North Saskatchewan River and the trails along it.

GUY BRIDGEMAN, CHAIR



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect upon the past year and the unprecedented uncertainty and change that the pandemic brought, there is still an underlying sense of increased community and the incalculable value of connection, to ourselves, to others and to nature. Upon the retirement of Brent Collingwood in December, I was honoured to accept the Executive Director's position and humbled by the challenges that lay ahead with the shuffling of government priorities and the need to pivot to online engagement with partners and the community.

In light of those challenges, the RVA reviewed its Strategic Plan and re-focused our efforts and resources to continue work to connect the 100 kms of the regional trail from Sturgeon County to the Town of Devon. We advanced important pieces of infrastructure such as the Hwy 15 Underslung Pedestrian Bridge and the Edmonton to Strathcona County Pedestrian Bridge, currently in preliminary design and consultation. Also completed were the new Battery Creek Trail in Devon and the Parkland Nature Trail in Parkland County. By 2024, with these key pieces of infrastructure in place, there will be more than 75 kms of fully connected trail.

With this 75 percent connectivity in view, the Trail Naming Initiative was resurrected, focusing on an effective process for garnering a marketable end-to-end trail name that respects and highlights the history and geography of the region. We also engaged the community with an interactive calendar, online scavenger hunts, and educational blogs related to river valley trail etiquette and usage and all it has to offer.

I remain incredibly impressed by the work of our team and the never-wavering vision of connecting the North Saskatchewan river valley trail system while at the same time respecting and appreciating its natural beauty. This truly is a passion project for all involved.

KRISTINE ARCHIBALD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PROJECTS SUMMARY

Even with the shutdown of many things in 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was a busy year of behind-the-scenes planning for new connections in the river valley, along with great progress for ongoing projects—and recipient of an additional award.



Battery Creek Trail, Devon

Construction begins on Highway 15 pedestrian bridge

Construction on the new “underslung” pedestrian bridge continued to 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 regional connectivity goal from Devon to Sturgeon County.

New trail at Battery Creek

A new addition to the Devon river valley park system has added 3 km of trail along Battery Creek ravine and the top of the riverbank. Many thanks to the local landowner for his cooperation and participation in the RVA's Vision.

New trail in Parkland County

The Parkland Nature Trail has been completed, with the official opening in the spring of 2021. This new trail adds 3 km of trail east along the river. It includes over 700 stairs up and down the bank and affords breathtaking vistas of the river.

Additional Accolades for the Edmonton funicular

The 100 St Funicular (which includes the Frederick G. Todd Lookout) was awarded its fourth accolade, the National Urban Design Award. This is in addition to the International Architecture Award the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction - Alberta Steel Design Award of Excellence and the Edmonton Urban Design Award of Excellence.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The RVA's three priority areas are completion of connectivity through trails and bridges, trail naming and marking, along with public engagement through social media and our website. We also continue work on our Advocacy Plan as we strategize funding for the Phase II Initiatives.



Strategic plan

From the Strategic Planning process of 2020, the RVA's priority areas are completion of connectivity through trails and bridges, naming and marking, public engagement, and government advocacy for phase II funding. 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 access, infrastructure), the review re-affirmed the importance of connecting people to the river valley through infrastructure, activities, and awareness that make it easier to access and enjoy.

Planning and construction

The RVA, in concert with the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County, will also continue work to advance the Edmonton to Strathcona County Footbridge in Edmonton's northeast. This project is in the preliminary design and construction phase, with final approval for the construction being considered in the Fall of 2021.

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.

Naming and Marking

The RVA will continue to advance the End-to-End Trail Naming Initiative.

Government grants

The RVA will continue to work on our advocacy plan as we engage with the provincial government 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.

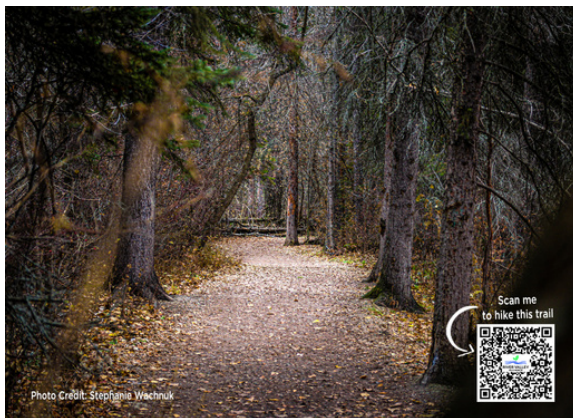
CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

Covid-19 and the Pivot to Connecting With Community Online

2020 was a year that none of us could have predicted. While we acknowledge that it has been a hard year for many, it's also been a year that so many people have found reprieve and joy in the river valley. While we all adapted to a different daily life, the behind-the-scenes planning for new ways to connect as a community continued. While large gatherings could not continue the RVA created new ways to engage with the community until our regular in-person activities could continue.

Interactive Calendars

For the 2021 calendar, we added the interactive element of a QR code to each month. Each month's QR code links to a trek the trail blog that highlights the trail where the photograph of the month was taken. Using the calendar we have created monthly interactive scavenger hunts to encourage more people to go out and trek the trails. For monthly scavenger hunts, we have been giving away RVA trek the trail hoodies as prizes.



RVA Ambassador Program

Over 110 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 2021.

100%

more followers on Instagram since 2019, doubling our following.

5100+

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



Hosted trail walks

RVA staff and committee members hosted two trail walks in 2020 to draw attention to RVA projects. Trail walks were organized on the new Battery Creek Trail in Devon and Gold Bar and Rundle Parks along the river to the Strathcona Science Park Footbridge. As the restrictions due to Covid-19 increased, the RVA was no longer able to hold in-person trail walks. To stay engaged with the community, monthly trail walks shifted to a virtual platform; using the interactive calendar to link to a featured trail of the month; individuals could then use a trail trek blog for a self-directed adventure.

Over the Christmas Holidays, the RVA held a 14-day virtual scavenger hunt that featured 14 unique locations throughout the river valley, encouraging people to get out to explore trails unfamiliar to them. Thanks to our Christmas scavenger hunt prize sponsors Track N Trail, The Fort Detailers, River Valley Adventure Company, United Sport & Cycle, Revolution Cycle, The Grindstone Theatre, Florida Pizza & Steakhouse Devon and MKP IT Management Consulting LTD.



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 six 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 Robert Parks, Strathcona County

Councillor Kelly Vandenberghe, Leduc County / left December

Councillor Michael Walters, City of Edmonton / left April

Councillor Aaron Paquette, City of Edmonton / joined April

Directors at Large

Wendy Boje, Parkland County / left April

Marcel Chichak, City of Edmonton

Michael Gardiner, City of Edmonton

Bob Horton, Strathcona County

Andrew Leach, City of Edmonton / left April

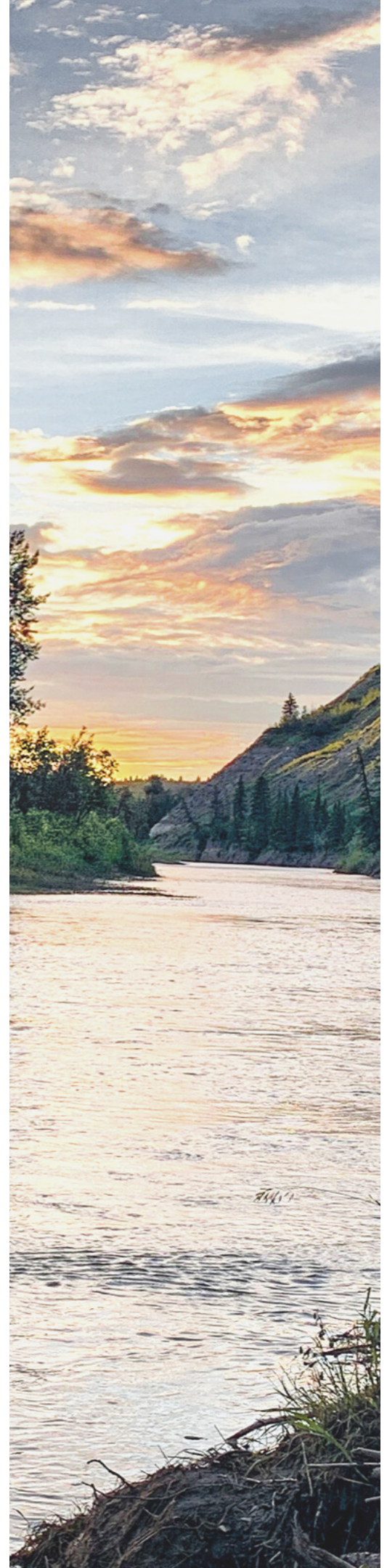
John McGladdery, Strathcona County

Carol Moreno, City of Edmonton (CEC Chair Interim) / left June

Wendy Boje, Parkland County (CEC Chair Interim) / returned July

Cathy Kiss, Strathcona County / joined April

Katherine O'Neill, City of Edmonton / joined April



COMMITTEES

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Wendy Boje, Committee Chair / left April
Katherine O'Neill, Committee Chair / joined April
Peter Faid / left April
Andrew Leach / left April
John McGladdery / joined April
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
Brad Armstrong / joined June
Pat Butler
Marcel Chichak
Guy Bridgeman, RVA Board Chair
Brent Collingwood, RVA Executive Director (ex-officio)
Kristine Archibald, RVA Finance Manager (ex-officio)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Michael Gardiner, Committee Chair
Mark McRae
Neil Cockburn / joined June
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 / left July
Grant Geldart, Town of Devon
Evelyn Mark, Town of Devon / left May
Mike Evans, Parkland County / left April
Valerie Turner, Parkland County / left April
Jason Jama, City of Edmonton / left May
Wendy Lickacz, City of Edmonton / left May





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONTINUED

Suzanne McAfee, City of Edmonton

Maele Piquee, City of Edmonton / left May

Stephanie Borgs, Strathcona County

Dennis Lukawesky, Strathcona County / left November

Jeff Adema, City of Fort Saskatchewan / left December

Jim Cockburn, City of Fort Saskatchewan / left April

Wendy Boje, Parkland County / joined July, Interim Committee Chair

Avelyn Nicol, Parkland County / joined July

Mike Pye, City of Edmonton / joined November

Graham Taylor, City of Edmonton / joined April

Kendell Slusarchuk, City of Fort Saskatchewan / joined April

VOLUNTEERS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thank you to the Community Engagement Committee members for their continued dedication to supporting the RVA with community outreach. While Covid had interrupted our ability to hold community events we look forward to future opportunities.

RVA AMBASSADORS

Thank you to the over 100 plus ambassadors that have signed up since the ambassador program's launch. We look forward to meeting in person again; until then, we are grateful for all of the social media shares. Keep up the great work!

STAFF

Kristine Archibald, Executive Director

Brent Collingwood, Executive Director/ Retired Dec 2020

Makennah Walker, Marketing and Communications Manager

Sydney Brown, Administrative Coordinator



SPECIAL THANKS

Phil Krysa, Principal, Architectural Works Inc

Ruth Stiksma, Corporate Support Group

Kyle Matheson, NetSmart

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, 2020, 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, 2020, 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.

Emphasis of Matter

We draw attention to Note 2 to the financial statements which describes a prior period adjustment.

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 17, 2021

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

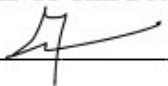
THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2020

	2020	2019 (Revised, Note 2)
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 347,533	\$ 310,424
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	53,746	177,170
Restricted accounts receivable (Notes 5, 14)	1,303,961	606,934
Building Canada Fund (BCF) claim receivable (Note 14)	1,313,572	1,706,211
Prepaid expenses	4,408	5,920
	3,023,220	2,806,659
RESTRICTED CASH AND INVESTMENTS (Notes 6, 14)	19,816,018	23,450,712
CAPITAL ASSETS (Net of accumulated amortization)	-	2,889
	\$ 22,839,238	\$ 26,260,260
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 35,927	\$ 68,273
Restricted accounts payable (Notes 7, 14)	632,471	-
Payable to municipal shareholders for capital project claims (Note 14)	36,882	3,007,501
Deferred contributions (Note 8)	10,000	-
	715,280	3,075,774
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PLAN OF ACTION (Notes 9, 14)	21,764,198	22,756,356
DEFERRED CAPITAL ASSET CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 10)	-	1,926
	22,479,478	25,834,056
LEASE COMMITMENTS (Note 11)		
NET ASSETS		
Share capital (Note 12)	7,000	7,000
Invested in capital assets	-	963
Unrestricted municipal shareholder assets	352,760	418,241
	359,760	426,204
	\$ 22,839,238	\$ 26,260,260

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD


 _____ Director
 _____ Director

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019 (Revised, Note 2)
REVENUE		
Contribution from Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) grant (operations) (Note 9)	\$ 325,483	\$ 500,000
Contributions from municipal shareholders	120,000	230,000
Donations, sponsorships and other	9,057	1,171
Unrestricted interest	5,561	7,658
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions (Note 10)	1,926	3,850
	<u>462,027</u>	<u>742,679</u>
EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	443,720	489,814
General and administration	54,886	126,383
Communications and branding	16,638	27,366
Professional fees	10,338	9,738
Loss on disposal of capital assets	2,889	-
RiverFest	-	47,665
Amortization of capital assets	-	5,775
	<u>528,471</u>	<u>706,741</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	<u>(66,444)</u>	<u>35,938</u>
OTHER RESTRICTED REVENUE (EXPENSES)		
Capital Projects Matched by BCF		
Capital projects (Note 13)	(1,433,947)	(4,849,833)
Contribution from BCF (Note 9)	706,638	1,839,169
Contribution from AEP grant (Note 9)	727,309	3,010,664
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Non-Operating AEP Grant		
Preliminary design	(75,727)	(1,631,265)
Devon and Parkland project	(40,957)	(15,837)
Project oversight	(127,468)	(260,160)
Contribution from AEP grant (Note 9)	244,152	1,907,262
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ (66,444)</u>	<u>\$ 35,938</u>

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	Invested in Capital Assets		Unrestricted Municipal Shareholder Assets		2020	2019
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$	963	\$	418,241	\$ 419,204	\$ 383,266
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses		(963)		(65,481)	(66,444)	35,938
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$	-	\$	352,760	\$ 352,760	\$ 419,204

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019 <i>(Revised, Note 2)</i>
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash receipts from contributions by municipal shareholders	\$ 270,000	\$ 90,000
Cash receipts from other revenue	9,057	1,171
Cash receipts from unrestricted interest	5,561	7,658
Cash payments to suppliers and employees	(567,243)	(677,748)
Cash flow used by operating activities	(282,625)	(578,919)
FINANCING AND INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Redemption of restricted cash and investments, net	3,634,694	5,171,977
Contributions from BCF	1,099,277	1,638,266
Interest received from restricted cash and investments	304,786	619,171
Payments for Devon and Parkland project paid by RVA to be reimbursed one-third by the municipalities	(111,260)	(403,905)
Payments to municipal shareholders for capital projects	(4,607,763)	(6,306,642)
Cash flow from financing and investing activities	319,734	718,867
INCREASE IN CASH	37,109	139,948
CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR	310,424	170,476
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 347,533	\$ 310,424



RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

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Trek the Trails

