









Trails connect us with nature, community and ourselves."

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

When you think about the world's great trails, what comes to mind? Cabot? West Coast? Camino De Santigo?

In 2021, the River Valley Alliance (RVA) began the important and long-awaited process of finally naming our 100 km trail that will stretch from Devon in the west to Fort Saskatchewan in the east. We're in search of a single, unifying name that tells the story of this spectacular natural wonder and one we can proudly share with the world.

For more than 20 years, work has been underway on this ambitious and exciting regional project to connect the six municipalities by one single pedestrian trail that runs beside the meandering North Saskatchewan River. While the trail itself is still not complete (about 25 kms remain), our municipal shareholders unanimously agreed to begin the naming process. That work is expected to wrap-up in 2022 and has already involved extensive community consultation and research, including with Indigenous leaders and representatives in our region.

This process couldn't be happening at a better time. The trail system has seen record levels of use during the COVID-19 pandemic. People are either discovering or rediscovering this beautiful outdoor jewel of our region. At 18,000 acres, the North Saskatchewan river valley park system is 22 times the size of Central Park in New York and is open year-round, 24 hours a day, rain or shine.

It's a great honour to lead the RVA at such a key point in its history as we work to finally complete a dream that has been 24 years in the making. Thanks to our shareholders, federal and provincial funders, board of directors, committee volunteers, RVA ambassadors and stakeholders for continuing to support the RVA and this important regional project.

Thanks also to our staff, led by RVA Executive Director Kristine Archibald. This small but mighty team is passionate about this legacy project and helps coordinate everything from our volunteers to social media channels to the free monthly nature walks held throughout the trail system.

Lastly, thanks to Guy Bridgeman, the former RVA chair for his long-standing and loyal service to the board.

See you out on the trail!

KATHERINE O'NEILL, CHAIR





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2021 was a continuation of fostering virtual connections with individuals, community groups, Indigenous stakeholders and our funding partners within the federal, provincial and municipal governments. One of the most important connections though, was the one we could still do in-person, connect with nature. This past year once again highlighted how vital connections to nature and access to green spaces are for everyone, regardless of age, ability, cultural background or socioeconomic status. There is a growing number of studies to support the concept that spending time in nature is not only beneficial to physical fitness, but crucial to our mental health, with Canadian health care providers beginning to prescribe "time spent in nature" to relieve a wide variety of conditions, from diabetes to high blood pressure, ADHD, anxiety and depression.

We couldn't agree more, and are thrilled to be making considerable progress toward our primary goal of connecting a 100 km multi use pedestrian trail through 6 municipalities that border the North Saskatchewan River in the Metro-Edmonton Region. With the completion of the Hwy 15 Underslung Pedestrian Bridge in the northeast and the upcoming pedestrian bridge linking trails in the City of Edmonton to those in Strathcona County, we will soon have 75% connectivity. Having reached this key milestone, our municipal shareholders agreed it was time to identify a unifying trail name, one that speaks to the rich history of the region and considers the importance of the river valley to the Indigenous Nations and Communities that have called it home for thousands of years. This initiative began in mid-2021 and is slated to culminate in late 2022.

As we enter a new year, we look toward the updated goals defined within our 3 Year Strategic Plan that are described in more detail within this Annual Report. We enthusiastically continue to add to the quality of life for both residents and visitors, as our growing trail increases active transportation routes, tourism opportunities beyond our borders, reconciliation with Indigenous Nations and Communities through naming and storytelling, and those vital connections to diversity within nature, communities and ourselves.

Thank you to our board and committees, shareholder municipalities, the provincial and federal governments, Indigenous stakeholders, community groups and the ever-expanding number of volunteers who continue to contribute to the creation of this legacy that has been over 20 years in the making.

KRISTINE ARCHIBALD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PROJECTS SUMMARY

Even with the continued uncertainty in 2021 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 begining the process of identifying a unifying end-to-end trail name.



Construction continues on the Highway 15 pedestrian bridge

Construction on the new "underslung" pedestrian bridge continues in conjunction with the twinning of Highway 15, connecting Sturgeon County trails to those in the City of Fort Saskatchewan. This will be a critical piece of infrastructure in achieving our regional connectivity goal from Devon to Sturgeon County. The anticipated opening of this bridge is Fall 2022.

New trail in Parkland County

The Riverside Parkland Trail has been completed, with the official opening anticipated for Summer of 2022. 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.

Design begins on the Edmonton to Strathcona Pedestrian Bridge

Preliminary design was completed on the Edmonton to Strathcona County Footbridge. This critical piece of infrastructure will bring complete connectivity from Sturgeon County all the way to the West Henday Anthony Bridge in Southwest Edmonton, pending final approval, construction could begin in late 2022.

Naming of the end-to-end trail

A Trail Naming Committee was formed to identify a unifying name for the end-to-end trail. This committee is made up of an appointed member from each municipality, includes two members from the City of Edmonton Naming Committee, Indigenous representation and public members with experience in areas such as tourism and marketing.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The RVA's priority areas include completion of connectivity through trails and key infrastructure, trail naming and marking, and public engagement through social media and our website. We also continue to work on advocating for funding for the Phase 2 Initiatives, which will finally connect the 100km trail.



Strategic plan

Our updated <u>Strategic Plan</u> sharpens the focus on the next steps needed to accomplish our vision. In addition to identifying strategic priorities for advancing our work (funding, land access, Phase 2 infrastructure), the updated plan re-affirmed the importance of connecting people to the river valley regardless of age, ability, or socio-economic means. We also focussed on communicating trail etiquette and balancing use with preserving and protecting this amazing natural area.

Land acquisition

The RVA will continue to investigate land access in the southwest quadrant (Rabbit Hill Creek to West Anthony Henday Bridge) in order to fulfill the vision of a fully connected 100 km river valley trail. Work will continue to secure access through rights-of-way and easements along top-of-bank in areas that would be designated as environmental reserve.

Naming and Marking

The RVA is excited to be working toward identifying a unifying end-to-end trail name by summer of 2022. Stay tuned!

Government grants

The RVA will continue to engage with the Provincial and Federal Governments to advocate for funding of Phase 2 infrastructure that will result in a fully connected 100km river valley trail.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

COVID-19 and the Pivot to Connecting With Community Online

Finding new ways to connect and engage with community continued to be important in 2021. Amidst the collective uncertainty, many people have continued to find 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 were still on hold, the RVA connected in small groups when possible and continued to find more ways to engage within the virtual world.

Interactive Calendars

The 2021 Calendar highlighted trails and walks within all six of our partner municipalities, including interactive QR codes. They continued to be a popular holiday gift within our trail community.

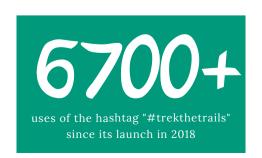




RVA Ambassador Program

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. They do this through social media, by leading or supporting activities on the trails, and by volunteering at RVA 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! Over the summer the RVA was able to host two ambassador meet-ups to engage and connect with this amazing group of volunteers.







Hosted trail walks

RVA staff and committee members hosted five trail walks in 2021 to highlight RVA projects. All of the walks were enthusiastically attended with great feedback from attendees. During the October walk we explored the trail from Government House to MacKinnon Ravine. This walk was hosted by RVA Board Chair Katherine O'Neill and RVA Volunteer Suzanne McAfee who shared the history of the fight to save this area in the 1960s and 1970s from being transformed into a freeway.

Over the Christmas Holidays and summer break 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 scavenger hunt prize sponsors Track 'N Trail, Fast Trax, Mud Sweat & Gears, Square 1 Coffee, Little Brick, Home Room Diner, Long Roof Brewing, Color De Vino, Snow Valley, Sugar & Spice, Norma Dee's Kitchen, Transcend Coffee, The Colombian, Florida Pizza & Steakhouse, YEG Coffee Pass, Edmonton Canoe, CanoeHeads, The Quarry Golf Course, Cattail Crossing Golf Course, Lori Frank, Camp Yowochas.



Trail Trek How-To Blogs

An important component of the RVA's Strategic Plan is to support respectful use of the trail system by providing tools and resources to make it easy to share and enjoy it. In that spirit, last year the RVA added videos on social media to support the Trek the Trails 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 within the six RVA shareholder municipalities. This continues to be the most popular of the online content produced and distributed by the RVA. So be sure to check it out.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

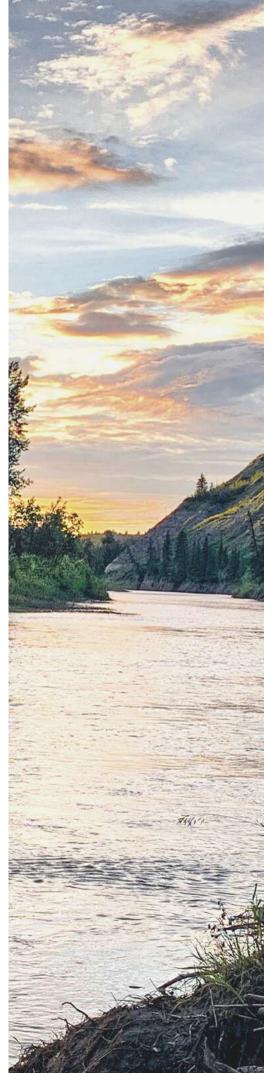
Katherine O'Neill

Municipal Directors

Councillor Wayne Bokenfohr, Sturgeon County / left October
Councillor Dan Derouin, Sturgeon County / joined October
Councillor Gurk Dhanoa, Town of Devon / joined October
Councillor Sarah Hamilton, City of Edmonton / left October
Councillor Gordon Harris, City of Fort Saskatchewan / left October
Councillor Michael Janz, City of Edmonton / joined October
Councillor AnnLisa Jensen, Parkland County / left October
Councillor Sandy Koroll, Town of Devon / left October
Councillor Sally Kucher Johnson, Parkland County / joined October
Councillor Patrick Noyen, City of Fort Saskatchewan / joined October
Councillor Aaron Paquette, City of Edmonton / left October
Councillor Robert Parks, Strathcona County
Councillor Ashley Salvador, City of Edmonton / joined October

Directors at Large

Brad Armstrong, Strathcona County / joined April
Wendy Boje, Parkland County (CEC Chair Interim) / left November
Cathy Chichak, Strathcona County
Marcel Chichak, City of Edmonton
Michael Gardiner, City of Edmonton / left April
Bob Horton, Strathcona County / left April
John McGladdery, Strathcona County
Mark McRae, City of Edmonton / joined April
Katherine O'Neill, City of Edmonton
Margot Ross-Graham, City of Edmonton / joined April





COMMITTEES

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

John McGladdery, Committee Chair Margot Ross-Graham / joined April Katherine O'Neill, RVA Board Chair

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Marcel Chichak, Committee Chair

Bob Horton, Committee Chair / left April

Brad Armstrong

Pat Butler

Darryl Howery

Katherine O'Neill, RVA Board Chair

Kristine Archibald, RVA Executive Director (ex-officio)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mark McRae, Committee Chair Michael Gardiner, Committee Chair / left April Neil Cockburn Katherine O'Neill, RVA Board Chair

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Wendy Boje, Parkland County, Interim Committee Chair / left November Avelyn Nicol, Parkland County, Interim Committee Chair Emilia Househ / joined February, left October Grant Geldart, Town of Devon Suzanne McAfee, City of Edmonton Amanda Papadopoulos / joined April Mike Pye, City of Edmonton / left May Sean Schoenberger / joined April Graham Taylor, City of Edmonton Maryann Woodman / joined October



VOLUNTEERS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thank you to our Community Engagement Committee members for their continued dedication and support of the RVA through community outreach!





RVA AMBASSADORS

Thank you to the over 100 RVA Ambassadors that have signed up since the ambassador program's launch. In 2021 we held two ambassador meet ups to reconnect in person and put some faces to names. We look forward to more in person events over the coming year. Thank you for all of the social media shares. Keep up the great work!

STAFF

Kristine Archibald, Executive Director 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 Chris Schulte, King and Company Chartered Accountants Sally Wu, King and Company Chartered Accountants



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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 organization), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2021, 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 organization as at December 31, 2021, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

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 organization in accordance with 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 these 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 ASNPO, 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 organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

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

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:

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

- 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 organization'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 organization'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 organization 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.

Edmonton, AB March 16, 2022

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

King + company

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2021

		2021		2020
ASSETS				
CURRENT				
Cash	S	315,213	5	347,533
Accounts receivable (Note 2)		55,650	100	53,746
Restricted accounts receivable (Notes 3, 12)		543,332		1,303,961
Building Canada Fund (BCF) claim receivable (Note 12)		76,560		1,313,572
Prepaid expenses	2	7,759		4,408
		998,514		3,023,220
RESTRICTED CASH AND INVESTMENTS (Notes 5, 12)		20,939,397		19,816,018
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	-	3,933		120
	\$	21,941,844	S	22,839,238
LIABILITIES				
CURRENT				
	\$	34,919	\$	35,926
				632,471
		76,863		36,882
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities Restricted accounts payable (Note 12) Payable to municipal shareholders for capital project claims (Note 12) Deferred contributions (Note 6)		10,000		10,000
		121,782		715,279
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PLAN OF ACTION (Notes 7, 12)		21,482,426		21,764,198
DEFERRED CAPITAL ASSET CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 8)	-	2,622		
	· ·	21,606,830		22,479,477
LEASE COMMITMENTS (Note 9)				
NET ASSETS				
Share capital (Note 10)		6,000		7,000
Invested in capital assets		1,311		
Unrestricted municipal shareholder assets	_	327,703		352,761
	-	335,014		359,761
		21,941,844	5	22,839,238

ON	REHAL	FOF	THE	BOARD
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THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Operations

		2021		2020
REVENUE				
Contribution from Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) grant				
(operations) (Note 7)	S	233,518	5	325,483
Contributions from municipal shareholders	54564	110,000		120,000
Donations, sponsorships and other		8,142		9,057
Unrestricted interest		4,160		5,561
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions (Note 8)	9	995		1,926
	7=-	356,815		462,027
EXPENSES				
Salaries and benefits		306,079		443,720
General and administration		53,662		54,886
Professional fees		11,110		10,338
Communications and branding		8,219		16,638
Amortization of capital assets		1,492		
Loss on disposal of capital assets	3	7.4		2,889
	0/4	380,562		528,471
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	2	(23,747)		(66,444
OTHER RESTRICTED REVENUE (EXPENSES)				
Capital Projects Matched by BCF				
Capital projects (Note 11)		(234,851)		(1,433,947
Contribution from BCF (Note 7)		92,898		706,638
Contribution from AEP grant (Note 7)		141,953		727,309
Non-Operating AEP Grant				8.0
Project oversight		(37,474)		(127,468
Preliminary design		(34,235)		(75,727
Devon and Parkland project		(34,233)		(40,957
Non-operating AEP grant (Note 7)		71,709		244,152
	923	(#)		(3-2)
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		(23,747)	S	(66,444

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

	- 25	Invested in bital Assets	Š.	Unrestricted Municipal Shareholder Assets	2021	2020
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$		s	352,761 \$	352,761 S	419,205
Deficiency of revenue over expenses		(497)		(23,250)	(23,747)	(66,444)
Purchase of capital assets, net	Si-	1,808		(1,808)	10 10 10 20 10 10	
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$	1,311	s	327,703 \$	329,014 \$	352,761

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

Statement of Cash Flows

		2021		2020
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Cash receipts from contributions by municipal shareholders	S	100,000	\$	270,000
Cash receipts from other revenue		18,142		9,057
Cash receipts from unrestricted interest		4,160		5,561
Cash payments to suppliers and employees	75	(392,081)		(567,243)
Cash flow used by operating activities	3	(269,779)		(282,625)
FINANCING AND INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Contributions from BCF		1,384,339		1,099,277
Interest received from restricted cash and investments Payments for Devon and Parkland project paid by RVA to be		213,068		304,786
reimbursed one-third by the municipalities		35,434		(111,260)
Purchase of capital assets		(5,425)		- (- 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1
Payments to municipal shareholders for capital projects		(266,578)		(4,607,763)
Redemption of restricted cash and investments, net	-	(1,123,379)		3,634,694
Cash flow from financing and investing activities	_	237,459		319,734
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH		(32,320)		37,109
CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR	_	347,533		310,424
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$	315,213	S	347,533

THE RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

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/rivervalleyalliance



@RiverValleyPark



@rivervalleyalliance

