

Construction begins for Mechanized River Valley Access project

Construction begins this week for the Mechanized River Valley Access project, which will connect 100 Street near the Hotel Macdonald to the river valley trail system near the Low Level Bridge.

The construction work taking place over the next few months includes site mobilization of equipment, tree and shrub clearing, installation work of the top platform, and work on the foundations that will support the infrastructure for the bridge, elevator and funicular.

"While a significant benefit of this project is the creation of an accessible connection from the top of bank to the river valley trail system, the project is also about designing places for active play, social interaction and relaxation as well as creating programmable spaces for ongoing use," says Rob Marchak, Director, Strategic Projects. "Much of the conversation to date has focused on the funicular, but the project also includes a unique urban staircase, a promenade with a grass lawn, a bridge, an elevator and a river lookout point. It really is an exciting enhancement to Edmonton's downtown."

The project will make accessing the downtown river valley easier for anyone with mobility issues as well as parents with strollers and cyclists.

"The Accessibility Advisory Committee supports this project because it will provide people of all abilities with access from the downtown core to the river valley trails," says Erin Jackson, Committee Member, Accessibility Advisory Committee. "The funicular and elevator, the gentle slope of the path and bridge, and the abundance of seating and rest areas along the way will help ensure access for everyone to enjoy one of the things that make Edmonton such a great place to live."

The Mechanized River Valley Access project has a budget of \$24 million and is part of the City's River Valley Alliance projects. In 2013, the City of Edmonton received \$72.9 million in funding from the River Valley Alliance and the provincial and federal governments for five initiatives to increase access and connectivity within the river valley. The City of Edmonton contributed \$1.7 million to the project.

Construction is expected to be complete in fall 2017.

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