

The background of the cover features a vibrant aurora borealis in shades of green and blue, dancing across a dark night sky filled with stars. In the lower portion, the dark silhouettes of evergreen trees are visible against the glowing light.

Open Space Strategy  
Planning and Environment Services  
Urban Planning and Economy

**Edmonton**

## **Guide to the Strategic Assessment and Environmental Assessment Review Process**

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[edmonton.ca/RiverValleyPlanningReview](https://edmonton.ca/RiverValleyPlanningReview)



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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The [North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan](#), Bylaw 20996, ("River Valley ARP") is Edmonton's statutory land use plan for the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System ("River Valley"). In addition to placing restrictions on certain types of land uses in the River Valley, the River Valley ARP provides decision-making guidance related to proposed development within the boundary of the plan. The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the review process for Strategic Assessment (SA) and Environmental Assessment (EA) reports, including their purpose, structure, and role in the City of Edmonton's decision-making process.

### 1.2 Scope and Limitations

This guide outlines the standard process used for submission, review, and evaluation of SAs and EAs in accordance with the River Valley ARP. Information provided in this guide supports the interpretation and application of policies with the River Valley ARP. This guide is intended to be read alongside the River Valley ARP; please refer to the River Valley ARP for additional definitions, maps, and policy text related to the information provided here. In the event of a discrepancy or conflict between this guide and the River Valley ARP, the River Valley ARP shall prevail. The contents of this guide are generalized to address a range of activities and projects in the River Valley; as such, the guide is not comprehensive and modifications or adjustments to the standard process may be applied to a specific activity or project. Throughout this guide, the terms "proposal" and "project" may be used interchangeably.

While this guide focuses on SA and EA requirements, it's important to note that additional land use policies in the River Valley ARP unrelated to the SA and EA review process apply to proposed development in the River Valley. Proponents of activities and development in the River Valley are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with policies that may apply to them.

Some of the activities described in this guide require review and approval from provincial and federal departments, regulators, and regulatory bodies, and/or may be subject to other applicable legislation. In order to comply with applicable legislation, proponents must obtain and follow all required approvals and permits for their project.



This guide is not a stand-alone document for completing SAs and EAs, and is not intended to provide site-specific guidance or instructions, as the SA and EA requirements for each project will vary.

The City of Edmonton periodically reviews and updates the information in this guide to improve the SA and EA review process and information provided to proponents. Please visit the City of Edmonton's [Review Requirements in the River Valley and Ravine System](#) web page to access the most recent version of this guide. Suggestions and comments for future revisions of this guide can be sent by email to: **[rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca](mailto:rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca)**

If you have any questions regarding the application of River Valley ARP policies or the review process for a specific activity or project in the River Valley, please contact the Open Space Strategy unit at: **[rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca](mailto:rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca)**



## 2.0 SA and EA Overview

### 2.1 Background

SAs and EAs are completed as part of development proposals on City-owned lands and for certain types of plan amendment and rezoning applications in the River Valley. SAs and EAs:

- help inform decision-making about the proposed development in the River Valley, including whether the proposed development may proceed; and,
- support evaluation and refinement of project plans and designs to ensure alignment with the City's open space policies, and to ensure that any adverse environmental and community impacts are effectively and appropriately avoided or mitigated.

SAs and EAs are subject to review and acceptance by the City of Edmonton's Open Space Strategy unit ("OSS") within Planning and Environment Services, Urban Planning and Economy. In some cases, City Council approval or consideration of the SA is also required. Please see Table 1 for an overview of SA and EA requirements associated with development proposals, plan amendment applications, and rezoning applications in the River Valley.

#### **Purpose of the SA**

An SA informs and supports decision-making regarding proposed development, plan amendment applications, and rezoning applications in the River Valley ARP area. An SA evaluates the proposed development, plan amendment, or rezoning to ensure alignment with City policy and identify any potential adverse community or environmental impacts and anticipated mitigation measures in the early stages of a project. SAs are used by City Administration and, where applicable, City Council, to determine if the proposal is aligned with City policy and plans and may proceed. SAs are completed in accordance with Appendix 1 of the River Valley ARP.

#### **Purpose of the EA**

An EA informs and supports the detailed identification, prediction, and evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed development. The EA also addresses mitigation measures and identifies any residual impacts once mitigation measures have been applied. EAs are completed in accordance with Appendix 2 of the River Valley ARP.



## 2.2 SA and EA Requirements

An SA is required for the following types of proposals in the River Valley:

- Any amendments to the River Valley ARP, except those that are solely for purposes of:
  - amending the boundaries of the River Valley ARP based on updated technical information reflecting current site conditions; or
  - changing the land use, as shown on Map 1 of the River Valley ARP, to River Valley Open Space
- Any applications for rezoning within the plan area, except those that:
  - propose rezoning from any zone to A - River Valley Zone or NA - Natural Area Zone as defined in [Zoning Bylaw 20001](#), as amended; or
  - are entirely within the Residential Community portions of Rossdale or Cloverdale, as shown on Map 1 of the River Valley ARP.

An SA **and** EA are required for the following types of proposals occurring within the River Valley ARP area:

- Any development proposed on lands identified as River Valley Open Space or Public Utility. A development is defined as follows:

Constructed buildings, structures, or facilities, or changes to the land, undertaken to serve social, economic, or environmental needs. This does not include work or a change in use occurring entirely within existing constructed buildings, structures, or facilities, and with no potential for impact to the surrounding environment.



**Table 1. SA and EA reporting and approval requirements based on proposal type.**

<b>Proposal Type</b>	<b>Associated SA Approval Requirements</b>	<b>Associated EA Approval Requirements</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Project or activity occurring entirely outside of the River Valley ARP boundary	No SA required*	No EA required*	Any project or activity occurring entirely outside of the River Valley ARP boundary as shown on Map 1
Projects or activities not considered to be new or expanded development	No SA required*	No EA required*	Research projects, field studies, and technical studies with no potential for impact to the surrounding environment; recreational use; special events and festivals not requiring built structures or ground disturbance; maintenance, renovations, alterations, or like-for-like replacement of existing built structures or infrastructure with no potential for impact to the surrounding environment; minor vegetation pruning or hazard tree removal
New or expanded development proposed on lands identified as River Valley Open Space or Public Utility, as shown on Map 1, but not considered to be a new or significantly expanded intensive utility facility, intensive transportation facility, or intensive open space facility	Review and acceptance of the SA by OSS required	Review and acceptance of the EA by OSS required	Maintenance, renovations, alterations, or like-for-like replacement of existing built structures or infrastructure requiring ground and/or vegetation disturbance not likely to result in long-term or permanent, adverse environmental impacts or community impacts, as determined by OSS*; development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of infrastructure and amenities not meeting definitions of "intensive utility facility," "intensive transportation facility," or "intensive open space facility" and not likely to result in long-term or permanent, adverse environmental impacts or community impacts, as determined by OSS**



New or significantly expanded development proposed on lands identified as River Valley Open Space or Public Utility, as shown on Map 1, likely to result in long-term or permanent, adverse environmental impacts or community impacts that cannot be mitigated, as determined by OSS**, but not considered to be a new or significantly expanded intensive utility facility, intensive transportation facility, or intensive open space facility	Review and acceptance of the SA by OSS required  <i>and</i>  City Council approval of the SA via regular City Council meeting required	Review and acceptance of the EA by OSS required	Maintenance, renovations, alterations, or like-for-like replacement of existing built structures or infrastructure requiring ground and/or vegetation disturbance likely to result in long-term or permanent, adverse environmental impacts or community impacts, as determined by OSS**; development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of infrastructure and amenities not meeting definitions of “intensive utility facility,” “intensive transportation facility,” or “intensive open space facility” but likely to result in long-term or permanent, adverse environmental impacts or community impacts, as determined by OSS**
New or significantly expanded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intensive utility facilities</li><li>• intensive transportation facilities</li><li>• intensive open space facilities</li></ul> proposed on lands identified as River Valley Open Space or Public Utility, as shown on Map 1	Review and acceptance of the SA by OSS required  <i>and</i>  City Council approval of the SA via regular City Council meeting required	Review and acceptance of the EA by OSS required	Water or wastewater treatment facilities projects with a total footprint > 500 m <sup>2</sup> ; roadway or roadway expansion with a total footprint > 500 m <sup>2</sup> ; development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of park infrastructure and amenities with a total footprint > 10,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Plan amendments for the purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• amending the boundaries of the Plan, as shown on Map 1, based on updated technical information reflecting the current site conditions, or,</li><li>• changing the land use, as shown on Map 1, to River Valley Open Space</li></ul>	No SA required*  City Council approval of the plan amendment via City Council public hearing required	No EA required*	Boundary amendments based on top-of-bank delineations, geotechnical reports, or flood studies; land use type change to River Valley Open Space (Map 1) as a result of ownership changes and/or land acquisition by the City



Plan amendments for purposes other than those listed above	Review and acceptance of the SA by OSS  <i>and</i>  City Council approval of the amendment, with consideration given to the SA, via City Council public hearing	No EA required*	Policy amendment; removal of lands from the River Valley ARP area; land use type change other than to River Valley Open Space
Rezoning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>from any zone to A - River Valley Zone or NA - Natural Areas Zone as defined in Zoning Bylaw 20001, as amended; or,</li><li>entirely within the Residential Community portions of Rossdale or Cloverdale, as shown on Map 1</li></ul>	No SA required*  City Council approval of the rezoning via City Council public hearing required	No EA required*	Rezoning to A or NA associated with adjacent neighbourhood development; rezoning to A or NA associated with land securement; any rezoning within the Residential Community portions of Rossdale or Cloverdale
Rezoning for purposes other than those listed above	Review and acceptance of the SA by OSS  <i>and</i>  City Council approval of the rezoning, with consideration given to the SA, via City Council public hearing	No EA required*	Rezoning to facilitate residential, mixed use, commercial, or industrial development outside of the Residential Community portions of Rossdale or Cloverdale
Development on lands other than River Valley Open Space or Public Utility, as shown on Map 1	No SA required*	No EA required*	Development conforming with permitted or discretionary uses for the applicable zone as per the Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw 20001), as amended



\*OSS may review the proposal, identify open space planning (including environmental / ecological) information requirements, and provide input through established mechanisms and processes outside of the SA and EA review process (e.g., Land Development Application, Development Permit, Community-Led Projects, Parkland Access Permit, Public Tree Permit, etc.). Environmental best management practices, and conditions arising from other municipal, provincial, or federal requirements, may apply.

\*\*Determined on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to factors including, but not limited to: site conditions (e.g., environmental sensitivities, sites of cultural significance), project context (e.g., scope and scale of design), mitigation measures (e.g., restoration plans), engagement feedback, etc.



## 2.3 Types of SA and EA Reports

Two SA and EA reporting types are available for proposals in the River Valley: Simple and Complex.

### Simple SA and Simple EA

The [Simple SA/EA Form](#) combines the required components of the SA and EA into one document, and consists of standardized questions about the proposal or project. The Simple SA/EA Form is appropriate for proposals and projects that are unlikely to result in long-term or permanent adverse environmental or community impacts, and for which extensive in-depth technical reporting and policy assessment are not needed. Supplementary information may be requested by OSS as part of the Simple SA/EA Form review process (see Supplementary Information section, below).

### Complex SA and Complex EA

Complex SAs and Complex EAs are more comprehensive narrative reports based on terms of reference developed specific to the project and site context. Complex SAs and Complex EAs are completed for proposals and projects that may result in long-term or permanent adverse environmental or community impacts, and thus warrant detailed or extensive technical reporting and policy assessment. Proponents are strongly encouraged to submit a Complex SA at an early stage of project planning and design before key decisions about a project (e.g., location, design, budget, construction methodology, etc.) have been finalized. Complex EAs are generally completed once the Complex SA has been reviewed and accepted by OSS, and approved by City Council if City Council approval is required.

Preparation of Complex SA and Complex EA reports is typically preceded by one or more scoping meetings. Scoping meetings provide an opportunity for:

- proponents to provide information about the project (e.g., rationale, anticipated concept design, anticipated construction methodology, etc.), which will inform the project-specific terms of reference developed by OSS;
- OSS to provide initial feedback on the project, including its design, potential impacts, and alignment with applicable City policies and plans, including the River Valley ARP;
- OSS to provide information on the review and approval process, including reporting requirements and estimated timelines; and,
- OSS to identify supplementary information requirements related to the proposal.



**Determination of Simple or Complex SA and EA Requirements**

General criteria for determining whether Simple or Complex SA and EA reporting is most appropriate for a given project are provided in Table 2. Proponents are encouraged to review Table 2 to identify the most likely reporting type that may apply, and consult with OSS if their project context is not addressed in Table 2 or if they are otherwise unsure about application of the criteria to their project. Final determination of SA and EA report type and submission requirements, including supplementary information or deviations from the guidance in Table 2, is at the discretion of OSS.

**Supplementary Information**

Supplementary information (e.g., technical reports, status of provincial or federal regulatory applications, concept plans or drawings, public and Indigenous engagement plans or reports, etc.) may be requested by OSS on a case-by-case basis (i.e., based on site conditions or project context) as part of the review process. Requests for supplementary information are based on project and site context and are intended to provide reviewing agencies with a more comprehensive understanding of subject areas addressed by SAs and EAs. Supplementary information may be requested to support the review of both Simple and Complex SAs or EAs; however, such requests are more likely to occur in association with a Complex SA and EA. Such requests will be communicated to the proponent as early in the review process as possible (e.g., during the scoping process or upon initial submission of the SA or EA). Proponents are encouraged to provide all available information and relevant studies when submitting either the Simple SA/EA Form or Complex SA and Complex EA reports for review.



**Table 2. SA and EA report types in relation to proposal and site characteristics.**

Report Type	General Considerations	Proposal / Project Category	Examples
Simple SA/EA Form	Limited project footprint / scale  <i>and</i>  no or limited presence of environmental sensitivities, environmental risks, public access points or amenities, or sites of cultural significance  (Development unlikely to result in long-term or permanent adverse environmental or community impacts in the absence of extensive mitigation efforts)	Minor maintenance, rehabilitation, or upgrade of existing structures or infrastructure beyond existing footprint in areas with no or limited presence of environmental sensitivities, environmental risks, public access points or amenities, or sites of cultural significance	Rehabilitation or replacement of existing utility infrastructure (e.g., underground utility, small power transformer, power poles, etc.), transportation infrastructure, (e.g., bus stop, small maintenance shed, etc.), or open space amenity (e.g., landscaping, washroom, small storage shed, etc.) with small increase in footprint on a temporary or permanent basis.
		Construction of small scale utility infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, or open space amenities in areas with no or limited presence of environmental sensitivities, environmental risks, public access points or amenities, or sites of cultural significance	New utility infrastructure (e.g., underground utility, small power transformer, etc.), transportation infrastructure, (e.g., bus stop, small maintenance shed, etc.), or open space amenity (e.g., landscaping, washroom, small storage shed, etc.) in road right-of-way, utility right-of-way, or within an existing developed footprint such as a roadway, parking lot, or building.
		Small scale environmental risk investigation or management interventions in areas with no or limited presence of environmental sensitivities, environmental risks, public access points or amenities, or sites of cultural significance	Geotechnical or environmental site assessment investigation or testing (e.g., borehole drilling, test pitting), minor slope stabilization, or ecological restoration project within an existing developed footprint or disturbed area.
Complex SA and Complex EA	Moderate or large project footprint / scale  <i>and / or</i>  presence of environmental	Intensive open space facility	Indoor or outdoor facilities, including buildings, structures, golf courses, manicured sports fields, or hardscape surfaces, used for entertainment, recreation, conferences, park functions, or other similar purposes, and which are approximately 10,000 m <sup>2</sup> or more in size.



	sensitivities, environmental risks, public access points or amenities, or sites of cultural significance		Examples include: sports or recreation centres or clubs; golf courses; soccer fields; paved plazas; zoos; museums; interpretive centres; or other similar facilities.
	(Development that may result in long-term or permanent adverse environmental or community impacts in the absence of extensive mitigation efforts)	Intensive utility facility	Utility facilities or infrastructure greater than approximately 500 m <sup>2</sup> in size, including: power generation facilities, water and wastewater treatment facilities, waste management facilities and landfills, stormwater management facilities, or other similar facilities or infrastructure.
		Intensive transportation facility	Transportation facilities or infrastructure greater than approximately 500 m <sup>2</sup> in size, including: parking lots, railway corridors, railway bridges, roadway corridors, roadway bridges, surface or below ground parkades, transit centres, or other similar facilities or infrastructure.
		Other	Construction, expansion, or rehabilitation of medium- or large-scale structures or infrastructure in environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., outfalls, pump stations, substations, access roads, parking lots, park pavilions, trails, etc.).
Complex SA only	Changes in River Valley ARP policy or land use pattern	Plan amendment applications requiring City Council approval	Policy amendment; removal of lands from the River Valley ARP area; land use type change other than to River Valley Open Space.
		Rezoning applications requiring City Council approval	Rezoning to facilitate residential, mixed use, commercial, or industrial development outside of the Residential Community portions of Rosedale or Cloverdale.



## 2.4 SA and EA Timing

### Simple SA/EA Form

It is recommended that the Simple SA/EA Form is completed during initial project planning stages (e.g., concept plan development) to ensure adequate time for the review cycle and provide sufficient opportunity for the proponent to incorporate feedback from the review into site plans, project design, construction methodology, and post-construction site restoration activities. Completion of the Simple SA/EA Form two months or more in advance of any on-site activities is recommended.

In the event of emergency maintenance or repair activities, or other circumstances where an early submission is not feasible (e.g., emergent safety risks, environmental risks, etc.), the Simple SA/EA Form will be accepted sooner than two months to on-site activities taking place. The Simple SA/EA Form should be submitted as soon as the need for urgent activities or development is identified, and should explicitly indicate the need for an urgent review.

### Complex SA and Complex EA

A Complex SA should be initiated during initial project planning and design (see Table 3). Completing the Complex SA review and approval process at an early stage of the project (e.g., concept design) provides proponents with the opportunity to obtain feedback on the proposal, adjust project schedules or budgets, make adjustments to plans or designs to avoid and mitigate adverse environmental or community impacts, gain clarity on whether the project aligns with City of Edmonton plans and policies and will be supported, and understand any additional assessment, permit, or regulatory requirements that may apply to the project. In cases where insufficient information exists to address all SA requirements at an early stage, the SA can be used to facilitate collaboration with and feedback from OSS before the SA is formally submitted for review. The Complex EA is generally completed once detailed information regarding the location and design is available, the site can be accessed, and site-specific analysis and technical studies can be completed.



**Table 3. General timing of initiation of an SA as part of development proposals, plan amendment applications, and rezoning applications.**

<b>Proposal Type</b>	<b>General Timing</b>
<b>Development proposal</b>	<p>Initiate as part of business case development, concept design, site planning</p> <p><i>Please note that the SA will be accepted at later stages (e.g., preliminary design, detailed design, development permit, etc.) but submission at earlier stages is strongly recommended.</i></p>
<b>Plan amendment</b>	<p>Initiate as part of plan amendment pre-application meeting; submit as part of plan amendment application</p>
<b>Rezoning</b>	<p>Initiate as part of rezoning pre-application meeting; submit as part of rezoning application</p>



## 3.0 Standard SA and EA Review Process

The following steps characterize the standard submission, review, and acceptance process for SAs and EAs. Please note that the SA/EA review process is designed to be applicable to a wide range of activities and proposals, and that diverse site conditions and environmental sensitivities characterize the River Valley. To accommodate project- and site-specific circumstances and context, modifications to this process may be made on a case-by-case basis. Any adjustments to the standard process outlined below will be communicated to proponents as early in the process as possible.

### 3.1 Key Steps in the Standard SA and EA Review Process

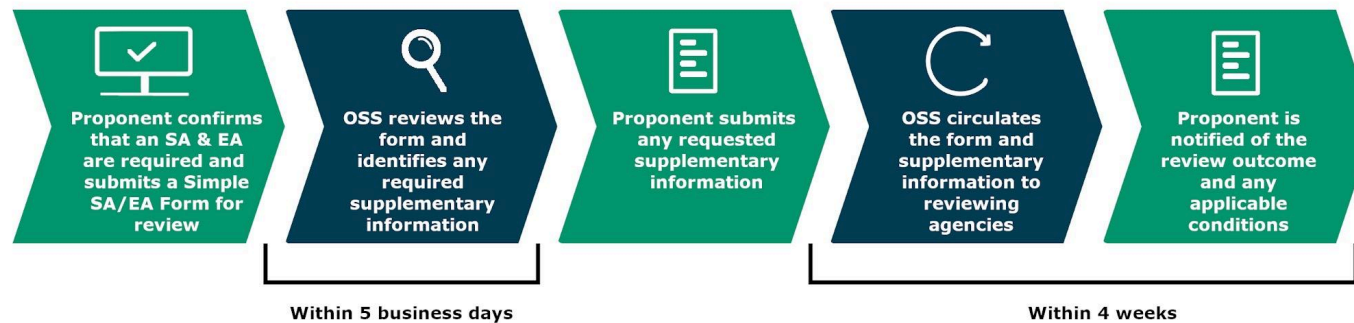
#### Simple SA and Simple EA

1. Using Table 1 and Table 2, the proponent assesses what SA and EA requirements apply to the proposed project. This determination is confirmed by OSS based on a description of the proposed project scope and location. To support this determination, proponents submit any existing information related to the project (e.g., draft concept plans, draft site plans, biophysical assessments and surveys, etc.) **or** complete and submit the Simple SA/EA Form. Proponents can contact OSS if they are unsure what requirements apply to the proposed activity or development.
2. OSS reviews the submission for completeness and identifies any supplementary information requirements that may apply. This step is typically completed within five business days of SA or EA submission.
3. OSS circulates the complete submission to reviewing agencies and provides an outcome letter, and any conditions applying to the project, within four weeks. This time period does not include any additional circulations, correspondence, or project scope or design changes that may be required to address feedback and questions from reviewing agencies. The project may proceed once the proponent has received all relevant municipal, provincial, and federal permits and approvals, including approval of the Simple SA/EA Form by OSS.





## Simple Strategic Assessment & Environmental Assessment Review Process



### LEGEND

EA = Environmental Assessment  
OSS = Open Space Strategy Unit  
SA = Strategic Assessment  
TOR = Terms of Reference



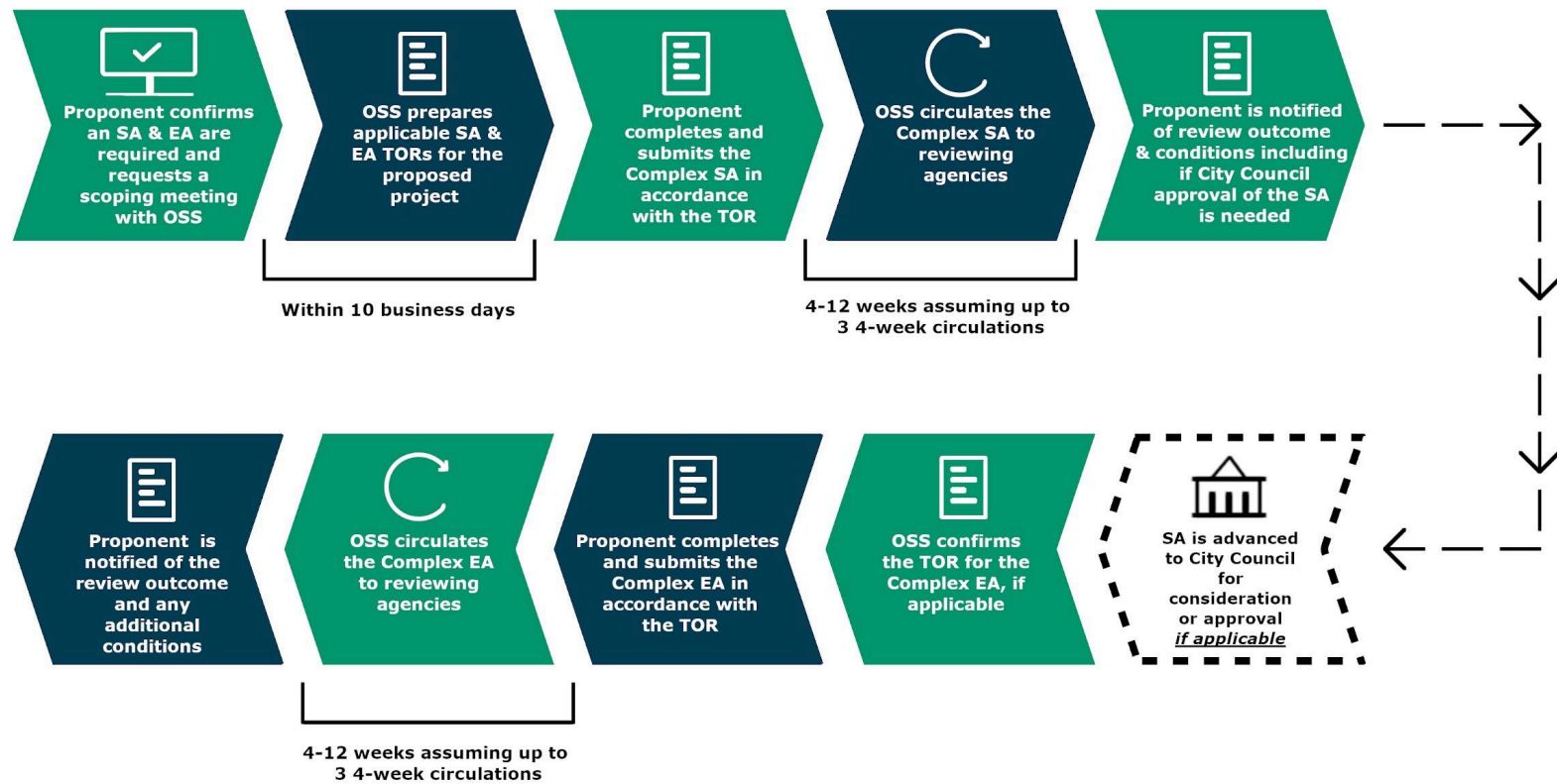
## Complex SA and Complex EA

1. Using Table 1 and Table 2, the proponent assesses what SA and EA requirements apply to the proposed project. This determination is confirmed by OSS based on a description of the proposed project scope and location. To support this determination, proponents submit any existing information related to the project (e.g., draft concept plans, draft site plans, biophysical assessments and surveys, etc.) **or** complete and submit the Simple SA/EA Form. Proponents can contact OSS if they are unsure what requirements apply to the proposed activity or development.
2. OSS reviews the submission for completeness and identifies any supplementary information requirements that may apply. This step is typically completed within 10 business days of SA or EA submission.
3. For proposed development requiring a Complex SA and/or Complex EA, a scoping meeting with OSS must be requested to determine the scope of the SA (i.e., project-specific SA terms of reference) and SA approval requirements. Preliminary terms of reference for the Complex EA may also be initiated as part of this process. The Complex SA should be reviewed and approved by OSS and/or City Council before initiating the Complex EA.
4. For proposed development requiring a Complex SA and/or Complex EA, OSS confirms the scope of the EA (i.e., project-specific EA terms of reference) following acceptance of the Complex SA by OSS and/or approval of the Complex SA by City Council, if applicable. OSS circulates the complete submission to reviewing agencies and provides an outcome letter, and any conditions applying to the project, within four to 12 weeks. This time period does not include any additional circulations, correspondence, or project scope or design changes that may be required to address feedback and questions from reviewing agencies. The project may proceed once the proponent has received all relevant municipal, provincial, and federal permits and approvals, including acceptance of the Complex EA by OSS. Please note that should significant deviations from the Complex SA be identified as part of the Complex EA review process, the Complex SA may need to be updated or amended and submitted for acceptance by OSS and/or approval by City Council, if applicable. Examples of such deviations include, but are not limited to: significant deviations in project scope, location, design, or extent; significant deviations in type, extent, duration, or severity of adverse community or environmental impacts; or, inability to comply with required mitigation measures or conditions.





## Complex Strategic Assessment & Environmental Assessment Review Process



### LEGEND

EA = Environmental Assessment  
 OSS = Open Space Strategy Unit  
 SA = Strategic Assessment  
 TOR = Terms of Reference



### 3.2 Reviewing Agencies

Circulation to reviewing agencies is an integral part of the review process overseen by OSS. Reviewing agencies include City of Edmonton business areas with subject matter expertise in relevant subject areas or whose operations may be impacted by the proposed project, such as City of Edmonton ecologists, parks planners, hydrologists, geotechnical engineers, environmental engineers, foresters, parkland management staff, and operational staff, as well as utility providers. Reviewing agencies and subject matter experts evaluate SAs and EAs against the policies of the River Valley ARP and other applicable City policies, plans, standards, and guidelines. OSS coordinates the review and circulation process, including information requests, feedback, and conditions submitted by reviewing agencies. While one review cycle is generally sufficient for most projects occurring in the River Valley, additional circulation of the SA, EA, and/or supplementary information may be needed. The need for more than one review cycle will, whenever possible, be communicated to the proponent as early in the review process as possible (e.g., during the scoping process or upon initial submission of the SA or EA).

### 3.3 Review Outcomes

The outcome of the SA and EA review process is communicated to proponents through an outcome letter once the circulation is complete and feedback from reviewing agencies has been received. Review outcomes can include, but are not limited to:

- SA or EA accepted and sign-off with conditions granted: the project may proceed to the next stage under the conditions specified, including City Council approval requirements, if applicable.
- SA or EA not accepted: significant deficiencies in the content (e.g., methodology, findings, conclusions) of the SA or EA have been identified. Rationale for the outcome and potential next steps for the proponent to consider are included for the proponent's information.
- Project not supported: the project is not in alignment with River Valley ARP objectives or policies and is not supported by OSS. Rationale for the outcome and potential next steps for the proponent to consider are included for the proponent's information.



### 3.4 Approval Validity

Acceptance of the SA and/or EA by OSS is generally valid for a period of one year from the date of issue of the outcome letter. Should project activities be delayed, outcome letters issued more than one year prior to commencement of site preparation activities or construction will need to be re-issued by OSS. Additional review and or notification to affected reviewing agencies may be required as part of the re-issuing process.

Proponents must notify OSS in the event of changes to the proposed project or activities that deviate from original SA and/or EA approval once the SA and EA review process is complete. Examples of potential changes that require notification include, but are not limited to: project scope; project timing; site conditions; extent, duration, or severity of community or environmental impacts; impact avoidance and mitigation measures; or, inability to comply with the conditions specified by OSS or City Council (if applicable). OSS must be notified of such changes regardless of how much time has elapsed since the outcome letter was issued. Depending on the extent and complexity of the scope change, OSS may notify affected reviewing agencies, initiate a modified review cycle, or withdraw its sign-off and request a new submission from the proponent.



## 4.0 SA and EA Content

In accordance with the River Valley ARP, both Simple and Complex SAs and EAs must meet the minimum information requirements outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the River Valley ARP, respectively. These information requirements are summarized below.

### SA Content

An SA describes the following:

1. Project rationale and anticipated benefits;
2. Alignment with North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan policy direction;
3. Alignment with Ribbon of Green policy and spatial guidance on lands identified as River Valley Open Space as per Map 1;
4. Site rationale, necessity of a River Valley location, and alternatives considered;
5. For renewal projects or redevelopment on existing footprint, evaluation of opportunities to reduce the developed footprint and expand open space;
6. Overview of potential environmental impacts and community impacts, and associated mitigation measures; and
7. Completed or planned public, interested party, and Indigenous engagement.

### EA Content

An EA describes the following:

1. Project context, including purpose, design, and construction approach;
2. Site context, including existing land uses and environmental conditions;
3. Assessment of potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of construction and operation;
4. Demonstrated application of the mitigation hierarchy;
5. Anticipated mitigation measures in alignment with the mitigation hierarchy;
6. Temporary, long term, and permanent environmental changes and residual environmental impacts;
7. Severity and significance of residual environmental impacts;
8. Environmental monitoring requirements; and
9. Summary of feedback pertaining to the project or its environmental impacts from any public, interested party, and Indigenous engagement undertaken.



The above information requirements represent a minimum standard; depending on the nature of the project and the site context, supplementary information and additional studies may be needed to enable a complete assessment of environmental and community impacts and associated mitigation measures.

For the purposes of completing the SA and EA, assessment of community and environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures should take into consideration direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts resulting from construction and operation. Temporary, long-term, and permanent impacts should be included. Assessment should address impacts to: soil, air, and water quality; hydrology; geology; geomorphology; ecology and biodiversity; geotechnical stability; flood resilience; historical and archaeological resources; climate change adaptation and mitigation; noise, odour, and visual environment; public access; and other similar considerations.

The mitigation hierarchy is a tool that gives guidance towards limiting the negative impacts that a development project can have on biodiversity. The components of this hierarchy, in order of importance, are as follows:

1. **Avoid:** Prevent impacts through project relocation, changing the project scope, and/or project timing.
2. **Minimize:** Minimize impacts through project design modifications that reduce the extent, duration, and/or intensity of unavoidable impacts.
3. **Restore:** Restore or rehabilitate areas that have been exposed to impacts that could not be avoided or minimized.
4. **Offset:** Offset permanent losses to native ecosystems through restoration, creation, or protection of native ecosystems where residual impacts cannot be addressed by avoidance, minimization, or mitigation.

If you have any questions regarding the application of River Valley ARP policies or the review process for a specific activity or project in the River Valley, please contact the Open Space Strategy unit at: [rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca](mailto:rivervalleyplanning@edmonton.ca)