



The Honourable
Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor of Edmonton

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October 13, 2023

Reference No.: 484652496-001

Honourable Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Environment & Protected Areas
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Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
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RE: Designation of the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) as a Heritage River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System

Dear Ministers Schulz and Guilbeault,

On behalf of Edmonton City Council, and further to a motion unanimously adopted at the City Council Meeting of September 12, 2023, I am pleased to share with you the City of Edmonton's enthusiastic support for moving forward with the designation of the 718 kilometers of kisiskâciwanisîpiy (North Saskatchewan River) within Alberta's borders as a heritage river under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS).

The North Saskatchewan River runs through the heart of Edmonton and has been an important place of gathering, commerce and ceremony for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The river has been vital in the development of the city and will be an essential part of its future. The City supports the recognition of the North Saskatchewan River as part of Canada's outstanding river system, which will enhance its significant heritage value for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of Albertans and all Canadians.

My mayoral predecessor, Don Iveson, wrote to then Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks, Honourable Jason Nixon, in August 2021 in *conditional* support of the river's nomination. At that time, Council desired to learn more about the financial and governance implications of the designation. As these details have become better understood, the City confirms its support for the advancement of this initiative, which is led by Smoky Lake County and the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) in partnership with Indigenous nations, leaders, community members, and many dozens of other supporters.

The benefits and opportunities of the designation are complementary with the plans and aspirations of the City, the region, and the province. From an Edmonton perspective, I particularly note the work that the City of Edmonton has done in celebrating and protecting this unique water body through current municipal policies, plans, and projects, including the City Plan, [Breathe - Edmonton's Green Network Strategy](#), Touch the Water Promenade, Ribbon of Green, the ongoing River Valley Planning Modernization project, the River Valley Alliance (RVA) trails system and recent end-to-end naming (Amisko Wacîw Mêskanaw, or 'Beaver Hills Road'), the Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan, River Crossing Interpretive Plan, Fort Edmonton Master Plan, and by continuing to explore the designation of the Edmonton River Valley as a National Urban Park.

I echo the views of other supporters on the benefits of this voluntary, community-driven river conservation program that will advance awareness and protection without increasing rules and restrictions along the river corridor.

Designation under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System represents a goodwill commitment to collaborate and work together across communities and rural and urban municipal jurisdictions to the betterment of our rivers and landscapes, with a mind to the past, present and future.

I hope you will support this initiative, which recognizes and protects the North Saskatchewan River as an essential feature of Edmonton, the region and the province.

Yours Truly,



Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor, City of Edmonton

cc: City of Edmonton Council - council@edmonton.ca
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