

The Trans Canada Trail in Alberta: Completed Sections Edmonton's River Valley Trails

Type of Trail: Within the main river valley (excluding ravines) a combination of existing paved and granular multi-use trail surfaces, with some sections linked to city roadways and sidewalks. The eastern half is a continuous stretch of 2 – 3 meter wide paved multi-use trail, while the western half is mainly granular multi-use surface. Numerous footbridges cross the North Saskatchewan River allowing for a recreation trail experience with limited vehicle interaction. The Edmonton portion of the TCT is 28.7 km in length. Plans for expanding the trail system are in progress (regional connections could add up to 43 km).

Location: Edmonton, Alberta's capital city, is located in the center of the province just 3 hours north of Calgary. The Trans Canada Trail traverses the city from east to west through the river valley and can be accessed at almost any point along the river's edge. The northeastern trailhead is located at the Strathcona Science Centre, near Sherwood Park, while the southwestern terminus of the trail leaves Edmonton at 156th Street. A temporary route continues along 156th Street south to Highway 19 and on to Leduc County and Devon.

Historical Perspective: Edmonton from its vantage point on the North Saskatchewan River, began as a fur trade depot for the Hudson Bay Company. The Saskatchewan River and river valley were mined for natural resources - trees, coal, clay, ice and gold. After a damaging flood in 1915, civic leaders sought to promote and protect Edmonton's river valley for parkland purposes. As a result of this early vision, Edmonton has the largest continuous stretch of urban parkland in North America, encompassing over 7400 hectares. Over 150 kilometers of paved and granular trails wind through the Edmonton's river valley and ravine system, and are used summer and winter. For a more complete history of Edmonton's river valley, visit www.louisemckinneryriverfront.com

Terrain: Trail varies in grade throughout, with some challenging stretches climbing in and out of the valley. The trail passes through stands of aspen parkland and boreal forest as well as through established neighborhoods and city parks.

Access: There are numerous access points located along the trail, including municipal parks, cultural facilities and city neighborhoods. Numerous attractions and facilities can be visited along the length of the trail. The City of Edmonton produces a Cycle Edmonton map which details all the bike routes in Edmonton, including the Trans Canada Trail. The map is available at many bike shops or park facilities at no charge. An online version can be found on the city's website at www.edmonton.ca

Signage: Trans Canada Trail signage will be installed in the spring of 2002.

Facilities: Amenities are located throughout the river valley; picnic sites, shelters and washrooms can be found in all parks. The trail also passes near some of Edmonton's most popular recreational facilities

Points of Interest: In the course of its length, the TCT crosses the river 6 times by means of pedestrian and traffic bridges. Ten municipal parks and many of Edmonton's most popular destinations are also found along the trail – Muttart Conservatory, the High Level Bridge, Alberta Legislature, University of Alberta, Fort Edmonton Park, Rundle Park, the Valley Zoo, and the Whitemud Nature Reserve. (For information regarding hours of operation for municipal parks and facilities visit the City of Edmonton's website at www.edmonton.ca)

The river valley is also home to an abundance of wildlife. Canoeing, fishing and gold panning are popular water-based activities.

Trail Managers: City of Edmonton, Community Services Department, 780-496-4999

Length: 28.7 km (17.83 miles)

Surface: Asphalt (13.1 km), granular trail (7.1 km), roadway (2.8 km), sidewalk & pedestrian bridges (5.7 km)

Width: 2.5 - 3 m (9.84 feet)

Permitted Uses: Hiking, walking, cycling, cross country skiing, inline skating

This is an unsupervised recreational trail and is used at the personal responsibility and risk of the person using the trail. Please use respect, and obey all regulations.