



E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant Newsletter

APRIL 2021

2020 IN REVIEW

2020 was a tremendously challenging year for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted economic and social life in our community, and around the world. While we started 2020 with several exciting projects at the E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant, we quickly needed to focus on continuing to deliver the essential services our communities count on and support customers.

90-DAY UTILITY BILL DEFERRAL

Early in the pandemic, EPCOR supported the development of a 90-day utility bill deferral program. The program was offered to electricity consumers province-wide and to water-cycle utility customers in Edmonton. Our focus during the COVID-19 pandemic is to continue delivering the essential services our communities count on, support customers whose incomes have been disrupted, and protect the health and safety of our employees, contractors, and customers.



SPRING RUNOFF

Each year, we recruit a panel of over 300 Edmontonians to participate in our Home Sniffing Program. This program is one way we get customer feedback about changes in taste and odour during spring runoff. Participants smell their tap water twice a day and enter their impressions into an anonymous online survey. In 2020, we achieved great scores during spring runoff with 95% of home sniffers finding no or limited odours in their tap water.

This year, spring runoff came early as a result of the warmer temperatures we have been experiencing. So far, our home sniffer data is indicating that any aesthetic changes to the water in 2021 have been quite mild. For more information, visit epcor.com/springrunoff.



ENOCH MOU

In September, we signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Enoch Cree Nation that formalizes our commitment to working together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. The MOU sets a strong foundation for both parties, creating a path forward on all projects, initiatives, and joint-endeavors that cause ground disturbance at the E.L. Smith and Rossdale Water Treatment Plants. As well, it provides a platform for meaningful, effective, and transparent communication on issues of mutual interest.

A signing ceremony took place on the former reserve lands of Enoch Cree Nation, at the E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant on September 1, 2020 with social distancing and public health measures in place. The celebration included a pipe ceremony, speeches, a gift presentation, and a drum song by local Enoch singers. Enoch Cree Nation Council members, knowledge holders, EPCOR senior leadership, and working group members attended.

Moving forward, Enoch Cree Nation and EPCOR will continue working together to reconnect the Maskēkosihk peoples to their lands, through activities such as harvesting of plants for traditional medicinal purposes, and formalizing procedures and processes related to archeological work. We will work together to ensure the E.L. Smith and Rossdale Water Treatment Plants continue to be centers for the production of clean, safe water for future generations to benefit from and enjoy.



BYPASS MAIN PROJECT MAP

We are pleased to be walking forward together with Enoch Cree Nation and advancing our formal relationship in the spirit of reconciliation.

FLUORIDE IS BACK

In March 2020, after completing necessary rehabilitation activities, we decided to delay the recommissioning of our fluoride facilities in order to ensure our staff could maintain the proper social distancing guidelines during COVID-19. Our recommissioning activities have now been safely completed and we resumed adding fluoride to the water at E.L. Smith in November 2020.

EPCOR has been fluoridating Edmonton’s water since 1966 and is directed to fluoridate by Edmonton’s City Council. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that exists in fresh water, seawater and soil. Most drinking water contains some natural fluoride. It is known to prevent tooth decay and promote better dental health.

If you have questions, or would like more information on the health benefits of fluoride, please contact Alberta Health Services Health Link 24/7 by dialing 811. For information on our fluoride addition please visit epcor.com/fluoride

BYPASS MAIN

We completed the first phase of work to construct a new bypass water transmission main at the plant last summer. Once completed, the new main will enhance the resilience of the water supply to South and East Edmonton.

We will begin the second phase of work this spring (shown in red on the map), and plan to have the new transmission main in service by the fall of 2021. Before we begin construction this year, a representative of Enoch Cree Nation will perform a ceremony at the project site to acknowledge the pending ground disturbance and start our work in a respectful way.

During construction, you may notice activity that is typical to construction, including company/ contractor vehicles and equipment along E.L. Smith Road. All work areas will be maintained in a safe and secure manner. All construction activities will be performed in accordance with the City of Edmonton bylaws, Occupational Health and Safety requirements and EPCOR’s health, safety and environmental procedures and guidelines. This type of work may be noisy at times; however, we will comply with the City of Edmonton’s Community Standards Bylaw for Noise Control.

If you have any questions or concerns about this work, please contact us at (780) 412-3599.

SOLAR FARM

In October 2020, Edmonton City Council approved the rezoning of the EPCOR-owned land for the E.L. Smith solar farm project. We’ll provide you with more information about these plans in the upcoming months before construction is initiated.

LOOKING TO 2021

In 2021, we plan to continue our focus on improvements to plant infrastructure. We expect to resume work on our plans to build an orthophosphate facility at E.L. Smith that will help protect against lead present in some of Edmonton's older homes (or as a result of lead components in some household plumbing fixtures). We also plan to continue other aspects of our lead management program. Visit our website at epcor.com/lead for additional information.

Other planned construction projects include continuing work on our new bypass water transmission main, and beginning construction on the solar farm. We will provide you with more information about these plans and others in the upcoming months.

In 2021, we are continuing to work with our neighbours to understand how EPCOR can operate the E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant in an environmentally and socially responsible manner that aligns with community interests. See the enclosed booklet for details about how you can provide feedback on our shared outcomes and design principles for the plant.

Check out the enclosed booklet for more information. We'd like your input on how we plan future work at our E.L. Smith site and engage with your community.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

We continue to deliver safe and clean drinking water to our customers from the E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant. There are currently no interruptions to core services related to COVID-19. We have temporarily reduced some of our services to protect the health of our employees and of our customers and maintain physical distancing measures. We won't be conducting any tours of our water treatment plants during this time, including at the E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant.

We've also postponed any home appointments that are considered non-essential (including meter inspections, home flood prevention visits, and proactive root maintenance). We will continue to provide critical in-person customer services including responding to emergency sewer backups, water main breaks, and water meter installations at new locations.

We have emergency response and business continuity plans in place to guide our organization. All areas within EPCOR have implemented a multi-stage response plan, including additional protocols to protect the health of our employees and our customers and to ensure our operations continue.

CONTACT US

Your questions, feedback, and input are important to us. For more information about our work at E.L. Smith or the information included in this newsletter, please contact us:

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