

# GREAT PLACES PLAN

CITY OF AIRDRIE  
2016









## CITY OF AIRDRIE GREAT PLACES PLAN

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Prepared by Green Space Alliance  
on behalf of the City of Airdrie

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# Document Overview

The Great Places Plan is a comprehensive source of policy on open spaces in the City of Airdrie. It also provides an implementation strategy to guide open space acquisition, development and use. The Plan emphasizes the importance of understanding the City's land use context, present urban structure, open space system, the statutory policy framework, and their inter-relationships with each other. This Plan is a statement of values and principles, and will be of use in guiding open space development and preservation in the future. Public education and stewardship of our public greenspaces are important aspects of this Plan, and will help to ensure that the open space resources are well-managed in perpetuity and contribute effectively in improving the overall quality of life in the City.

The Plan includes six key chapters:

Chapter 1 outlines overall project context including the role of the Great Places Plan, its goals as well as approach and methodology used in establishing open space development guidelines. It also provides an overview of current conditions assessment including demographic characteristics, key accomplishments and municipal policy background.

Chapter 2 provides a summary of stakeholder consultation undertaken for this project. The Plan builds on the extensive consultation undertaken in 2006. It also incorporates the direction established through a series of additional consultation events organized in Fall 2015. The focus of this recent consultation was to update the Concept Plan, seek direction to strengthen the implementation framework and ensure the Plan meets the current open space demand as well as outdoor recreational trends.

Chapter 3 outlines the guiding principles, Plan vision and Open Space Concept Plan. This chapter is the foundation of the Great Places Plan. It establishes the Concept Plan that provides direction for future open space delivery.



Chapter 4 establishes open space types as well as open space nodes specific to Airdrie. It also establishes open space delivery standards for each open space types.

Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive set of guidelines and action steps for open space delivery in established neighbourhoods, new neighbourhoods and non-residential areas. The guidelines put a strong emphasis on environmental preservation, pedestrian connectivity, environmental stewardship, open space acquisition methods and open space design for residential as well as non-residential areas.

Chapter 6 provides key strategies necessary to implement the vision established in the Great Places Plan. The implementation strategy provides direction for potential advocacy measures, partnerships, and monitoring/ review. A special emphasis is also placed on allocating priorities for each action and potential stakeholders responsible for implementing each action.

A 10-year priority action plan is established to allocate specific timeframe and responsibility for each stakeholder for successful and timely project implementation.







# 1. Context

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## 1.1 Project Background

In 2012, the City of Airdrie annexed approximately 12,600 acres to the land base from Rocky View County. The City is currently responsible for approximately 1,200 acres of parkland and also has joint use agreements with Rocky View School Division, Calgary Catholic School Division and Francophone School Division.

The long-term planning of sufficient parks development is directly related to land acquisition by the City. There is a high demand for more recreational fields. As of 2015, Airdrie's population is 58,690 and is projected to be approximately 85,000 by 2025-2028. Currently the City has limited land inventory to provide appropriate park developments in order to meet increasing demand as a result of population. Over the past few years, the City of Airdrie has seen strong economic growth in residential, commercial and industrial developments, as well as an increase in the number of building permits it receives each year.

## 1.2 Purpose of Great Places Plan

- Establishes principles, vision and guiding principles for developing Airdrie's open space system;
- Identifies and addresses the parks and open space needs of Airdrie residents;
- Establishes a typology of open spaces in order to identify the range of open space types that are required for a great city, and utilizes the typology as a tool in assessing Airdrie's existing open space inventory and identifying gaps;
- Establishes appropriate open space standards for efficient open space delivery;
- Establishes guidelines and conceptual planning framework to ensure long-range planning and implementation of open space needs; and
- Provides a long-range Concept Plan for the future open space system.

### 1.3 Great Places Plan Goals

The Great Places Plan will be used to guide the City of Airdrie's acquisition, development and long-term use of open space through the following goals:

- **Sustainable:** Meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Make decisions today that sustain options for the future.
- **Balanced:** Create a parks and open space system that is sensitive to both the recreational needs and the environmental needs of the City.
- **Diverse:** Provide a high-quality, sustainable parks and open space system that provides for all ages and lifestyles.
- **Accessible:** Provide an inter-connected system of useable, accessible pathways and trails that offer both recreational opportunities and effective routes for active transportation.
- **Safe:** Ensure that the safety of recreational users in Airdrie is and will continue to be a priority in developing parks, trails and open spaces in the city.
- **Respectful:** Reflect and respect Airdrie's history and culture in the design and development of parks and open space through a variety of means.
- **Fiscally Responsible:** Create effective and efficient methods for acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining parks, pathways and open space.

### 1.4 Approach and Methodology

The Great Places Plan was created through a collaborative effort between the City and their consultant, along with the invaluable contributions of the public and other stakeholders. The approach to producing the plan included the following major activities:

- Extensive document and policy review;
- Demographic analysis and assessment of needs;
- Comprehensive engagement with public, key stakeholders and City Staff;
- Assessment of the current parks and open space system to identify opportunities and constraints;
- Evaluation of emerging trends and best practices in parks development and acquisition, sustainability and environmental protection;
- Evaluation of current and future parks and open space needs based on triple bottom line analysis including social, environmental and economic prosperity;
- Development of concepts and guidelines;
- Development of a parks and open space typology; and
- Development of an implementation strategy designed to enhance the provision of parks and open space, reduce the gaps in the parks and pathway system, meet a range of needs over the short and long term, and work toward the established vision.



A multi-layered analysis approach illustrated in Figure 1 is utilized by the Parks Department in developing the Great Places Plan. The proposed policy framework and implementation strategy is evolving through this multi-layered analysis approach, which includes analysis of environmental features, historical evolution and other existing open spaces as well as special places to establish an Airdrie-specific typology of open spaces.

## Park Development Planning Process

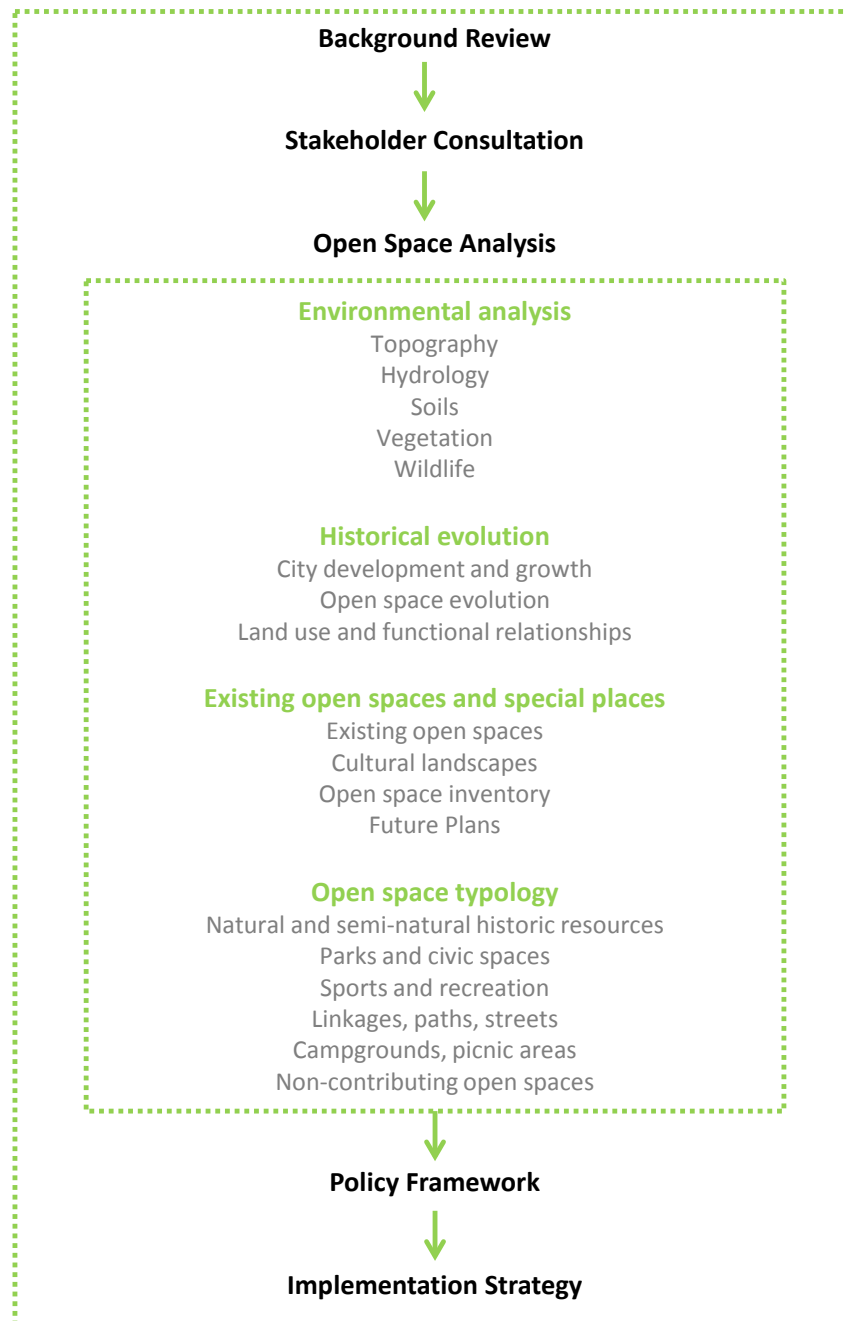


Figure 1: Great Places Plan Process

## 1.5 Current Conditions Assessment

### 1.5.1 Demographic Characteristics

The City of Airdrie is now home to approximately 60,000 people and has established itself as a key urban centre along the Edmonton Calgary corridor providing a wide range of residential, commercial, institutional and industrial options to its residents. The land base of Airdrie has also expanded: In 2012, the City of Airdrie annexed approximately 12,600 acres of land from Rocky View County to provide for the next 50-years of growth and development.

The City of Airdrie is somewhat unique from many urban communities:

#### It's young

Airdrie is a young community. The median age group is 30-34 and 83% of the population is under 65 years old with the majority, 64%, under 45 years old. The median age in Airdrie is 32.4 compared to Calgary at 36.4 and Canada as a whole at 40.2 years old.

#### It's growing very quickly

Airdrie is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada; population growth for the past sixteen years has exceeded 5.5%. Between the census years of 2006 and 2011, the population of Airdrie increased by 47.1%. The City is projected to grow a further 75% by 2030 to reach a population of 90,000.

#### It's recent

Over half of Airdrie residents have lived in Airdrie for less than 5 years. According to 2014 survey, of those who have been at their residence for less than 1 year, 38% of them moved from Calgary and 32% from within Airdrie.

#### It's mobile

Over 90% of Airdrie residents report that their primary mode of travel to work is single vehicle transportation, which in Calgary is 72%. While a large number of residents commute to the City of Calgary for employment, 50% work within Airdrie or places other than Calgary.

These growth and demographic characteristics provide many opportunities and challenges for developing and maintaining parks, pathways and open space. There will be continuing needs for a wide range of open space opportunities ranging from very active, programmed park facilities through to low-intensity environmentally-protected open spaces. The strategies for acquiring and developing these open space opportunities will require the joint efforts of different levels of government, developer contributions, City investments and private landowner contributions.



### 1.5.2 Parks and Open Space Accomplishments Since 2006

The first Great Places Plan was developed for the City in 2006 and served as a guide to developing parks and open space. The Plan was comprehensive in scope and detailed the important linkages between land use planning and role of parks in placemaking and public realm and environmental sustainability. The 2006 plan was the result of an extensive engagement process which identified park planning priorities important to the City's residents:

- Areas for multiple activities like special events, multi-use fields, walking paths, gardens, structured and unstructured play areas;
- A downtown park as a central gathering space;
- Creation of an identity or theme using either heritage, cultural or modern ideas to create a sense of place in the downtown and the city as a whole;
- Enhancement of the current linear pathway system to include linkages to destinations such as sports fields, historical sites, playgrounds, commercial areas and downtown;
- Linear paths should incorporate elements such as historical markers adjacent to natural features, lead to cultural resources and commercial centres;
- Protection and preservation of natural areas;
- Creation of a regional natural area for walking, nature viewing, cycling and education; and
- Future consultation as a means of directing more specific open space plans at development stages.

Since the adoption of the 2006 Great Places Plan, the City and the development community have implemented the following parks and open space development initiatives:

#### Park Development Improvements

- Increased park space from 600 acres to 1,200 acres.
- Increased the number of playgrounds from 38 to 63.
- Built 3 additional off-leash dog parks for a total of 5.
- Continued to develop the Chinook Winds Regional Park. Additions included four baseball diamonds, Phase 1 and 2 of the splash park, a skateboard park, concessions and bathrooms, a playground, four beach volleyball courts and an outdoor rink. This multi-functional district park has many athletic and family amenities and hosts/has hosted many events such as the annual Batting Against Breast Cancer ball tournament, weekly woman's roller derby practice and volleyball for the prestigious 2014 Alberta Summer Games.
- Undertook a complete overhaul and reconstruction of Jensen Park in 2013. Jensen Park contributes to the amenity of the central core of the

City of Airdrie and gives citizens a space to enjoy everything from active children's play areas, a Farmers market to a demonstration orchard.

- Developed East Lake Athletic Park.
- Initiated the Nose Creek Park Enhancements process in 2015 with focus group and public consultation sessions. The enhancement project is anticipated to progress in 2016.
- An overall City theme has not yet been established although the City has moved forward on some elements of this initiative. The Parks department has established a community sign and parks interpretive sign program to create a recognizable theme through signs in the communities and parks.

### Pathway Improvements

The City's extensive pathway system was also extended and improved since the adoption of the 2006 Great Places Plan:

- Total length of pathways (with snow clearing) increased from 39km to 104km.
- Initiated pilot projects involving waterway enhancements of specific riparian areas in communities which have a significant water influence.
- Continued implementation of the Sign Program which consists of creating, monitoring and assessing signage in Airdrie. Established environmental interpretation signage along the Nose Creek corridor, including the community of Williamstown in NW Airdrie which has environmental signage along the Environmental Reserve area.
- The City continues to add over a kilometer of pathways each year connecting each community. Eventually the pathway system will link not only communities but other cities and towns. Currently there are six pedestrian access locations crossing for the railway tracks and three pedestrian accesses across the QEII connecting the East and West sides of the City. The City continues working with developers and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to ensure all season pedestrian access continues as a high priority.

### 1.5.3 Overview of Relevant Policies and Studies

Since the adoption of the 2006 Great Places Plan, the City has adopted a range of policies pertaining to parks, open space, sustainability and environmental protection that guided the development of the 2016 Great places Plan.

#### AirdrieOne Sustainability Plan (2012)

The AirdrieOne Sustainability Plan provides direction for key actions to be undertaken by the City to promote short-term and long-term sustainable development. The Sustainability Plan identified the following key priority actions for the City:

#### Protect Natural Assets:

- Develop a planning strategy for the annexed lands which protects the identified environmentally sensitive areas;
- Develop and maintain an inventory of significant natural and ecologically-sensitive areas to ensure that these areas are recognized and considered in parks plans and new area structure plans;
- Create and protect a connected greenspace network throughout the City by connecting environmentally significant areas, trails, pathways, parks and open spaces; and
- Develop compact and efficient settlement patterns to minimize the loss of natural areas and impacts on wildlife habitat.

#### Enhance Nose Creek:

- Incorporate appropriate riparian management policies and setback requirements into the new Municipal Development Plan; and
- Collaborate with community organizations and support the Nose Creek Watershed group to manage sensitive ecosystems, remove invasive species, plant appropriate native vegetation, prevent erosion and install signage to inform and educate the public.

#### Green the City:

- Enhance City's urban forest policy and develop regulations and incentives for retaining the existing tree canopy within the City;
- Enhance tree planting in public spaces to improve community air quality and greenspace; and
- Collaborate with the Calgary Regional Partnership and the development community to develop tools and incentives for integrating green infrastructure and low impact development into the urban environment.



### Airdrie City Plan (Municipal Development Plan 2014)

The Airdrie City Plan is closely aligned with the AirdrieOne Sustainability Plan. It addresses the development and land use implications of sustainability. It also incorporated many of the development-related policies contained within the 2006 Great Places Plan.

The City Plan is one of the statutory, strategic and guiding documents providing a higher-level direction for the GPP. The following is a summary of key directions established in the City Plan for open spaces, natural areas and environmental features in Airdrie:

- One of the goals in the Parks, Pathways and Municipal Reserve chapter of the City Plan is to provide a range of parks and open spaces that meet a broad range of residents' needs and lifestyles and offer both passive and active recreational opportunities.

The following Key objectives are also identified in the City Plan:

- Expand and enhance the City's inventory of parks and open spaces for the ecological, health, recreation and educational benefits they provide;
- Develop parks and open spaces that are accessible, connected, diverse, functional, attractive and sustainable over the long term;
- Ensure that all City residents enjoy the full benefits of the dedication and distribution of Municipal Reserve lands;
- Encourage environmental management and stewardship of all public open spaces;
- Respond to the long term needs and changing demographics within the City; and
- Utilize parks and open spaces to complement and enhance biodiversity, linkages, habitat and the overall health of Airdrie's ecological network.

The Plan establishes a broad range of policies to guide the development of parks, pathways and open space and to protect the long-term environmental sustainability of the City. While the following is not a complete list of the park-related policies, the following are relevant to the 2016 Great Places Plan implementation strategies:

### Open space acquisition (policy 8.1):

The city will seek to acquire lands to produce a system of open spaces that includes a variety of publicly accessible park spaces and trails as well as natural areas.

#### Acquisition target (policy 8.2):

The City's long-term parks and open space acquisition target is 10 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. This measure includes municipal reserve, environmental reserve, and other publically-accessible open space.

#### Open space connections (policy 8.3):

As new areas are planned and developed, the city shall ensure the design of the parks, pathways and open space system provides:

- Linkages to major parks and the Nose Creek corridor;
- Pathway and pedestrian connections within and between neighborhoods; and
- Linkages with natural systems, as identified in the City's Ecological Inventory and Environmental Best Practices Report in order to strengthen Airdrie's ecological network.

#### Nose Creek Corridor (Policy 8.4):

As development occurs, the Nose Creek open space corridor shall be expanded so that it forms a central, continuous parkway system between the north and south limits of the City. The Nose Creek Corridor shall form the major open space amenity for the City of Airdrie such that:

- Land along the corridor may be provided through the dedication of environmental and municipal reserves;
- Land along the corridor may be acquired by municipal purchase; and
- Policies contained within Community Area Structure Plans and Neighborhood Area Structure Plans shall be designed to protect and enhance the Nose Creek corridor.

#### Integrated Pest Management Plan (2005)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pest damage by economical means that minimize hazards to people, property, and the environment.

#### Airdrie Standard Landscape Guidelines & Specifications (2010)

Airdrie's Standard Landscape Guidelines & Specifications outline the technical information necessary to meet the City's overall landscape development objectives and requirements in Council approved plans. The City refines these standards as required to ensure they reflect current needs and best practices.

#### Ecological Inventory Expansion and Environmental Best Practices Report (2013)

This study identifies clusters or 'hot spots' of ecological inventory giving significance and rank to these areas based on their potential to provide ecological services. The study also includes an environmental best practices summary that identifies methods used by other jurisdictions to effectively manage development near the ecological significant.

#### Nose Creek Baseline Assessment Report (2014)

Nose Creek Baseline Assessment Report provides a detailed baseline assessment report on Nose Creek.

#### Transportation Master Plan (2014)

Airdrie's Transportation Master Plan is intended to be a comprehensive strategic plan that provides short, medium and long-term strategies to guide the future transportation infrastructure developments in Airdrie. It also provides a high level direction for planning and delivery of active transportation networks including pathways, multi-use trails and bike paths.









## 2. Stakeholder Consultation

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The City of Airdrie conducts Citizen's Satisfaction Surveys every two years to determine how well the City's Administration is delivering services to the public. In keeping with the open, transparent and engaging consultation efforts Airdrie is known for, the Great Places Plan process also utilized a public and stakeholder consultation process to develop the plan. In addition to the GPP related consultations, the City of Airdrie has also engaged the public through a number of other Open Space and Parks projects over the last two decades.

This section provides a summary of a series of consultation sessions, surveys and events undertaken by the City for the preparation of the Great Places Plan. The consultation strategy focused on identifying current issues in the open space delivery methods, new market trends in open space use and current gaps in the existing open space network. Special emphasis was placed on soliciting stakeholder input in establishing the Open Space Concept Plan. The purpose of the consultation process was to have stakeholders assist in:

- Revisiting the vision for the Great Places Plan;
- Redefining open space typology framework;
- Confirming key policies and standards to guide open space design, guidelines and planning;
- Identifying current issues and opportunities;
- Establishing new Open Space Concept Plan;
- Identifying top priorities for improving existing amenities;
- Identifying top priorities for new open space amenities; and
- Reviewing implementation strategy for the City including key actions and priorities.

## 2.1 Surveys

The 2014 Community Needs Assessment reports Bannister Research findings on the various facilities around Airdrie:

- Most visited Airdrie parks and playgrounds in the past 24 months included the walking path and trail system (84%) and the Nose Creek Park (73%). Conversely, only 18% of the respondents reported visiting Jensen Park within the last two years.
- Effectiveness of Airdrie parks and playgrounds - 92% of the respondents who visited the Nose Creek Park in the past year rated it as effective and 90% who rated the East Lake Park as effective. At least 80% of the respondents rated all of the parks and playgrounds as effective, with the exception of the Splash Park (71% of respondents).



## 2.2 Consultation Methods/Events

The Consultation process consisted of the following:

### Internal stakeholder Meeting

- A two hour 'kitchen table' internal stakeholder meeting was organized on October 15th, 2015. The meeting included representatives from the Planning Department, Engineering Department, Community Development Department, Economic Development Department, Transit Department, Corporate Properties, Booking and Events Services, Recreation Culture & Social Sustainability and the Parks Department. The focus of this session was to seek input from internal City Departments about how they can improve internal processes and working together to implement Plan actions, effective open space delivery and day to day operation.

### World café

- A two day World café session was organized on October 20th, 2015 and October 27th, 2015. Approximately 24 people representing a variety of stakeholders were invited for this session. This included participants, observers and volunteers. The World Café session was designed to allow participants to work together in groups to provide input related to key issues and opportunities and establish a revised Open Space Concept Plan.

### Public Open House

- A Public Open House was held on November 24th, 2015 to share the emerging themes and new Plan direction with Airdrie citizens. Discussion with attendees was valuable and an exit survey was administered. Developers were invited to attend the Public Open House.



### Council Meeting

- The final Plan was presented to City Council in March 2016.

### Website

- Information about the project, the public consultation process, and reports and newsletters were continually updated to keep the public and key stakeholders informed.

A detailed summary of stakeholder consultation is provided in Appendix D.

## 2.3 Priority Actions Identified In Consultation Processes

Great Places Café participants were united in desiring new amenities along with improvement of existing amenities. The need for new district park was a consistent topic which came up throughout the consultation process. Participants helped designate potential areas for this major node and what amenities should be included.

The top 5 new amenities that the group wanted were:

- Distance signage along pathways;
- Designated bike/pedestrian pathways in high traffic areas;
- Youth park (with activities such as parkour or an outdoor climbing wall);
- Ring of pathway/cross country ski-track around the City with connections to Balzac, Crossfield and the TransCanada Trail; and
- Outdoor sportsfield with lighting.



The top 5 ways to enhance existing amenities were:

- Improve pathway connectivity (CRP tracks, from park to park, to commercial areas, east/west connections);
- More outdoor washroom facilities;
- Picnic shelters, fire pits, BBQs in neighbourhood parks;
- Additional multi-use courts with basketball hoops/tennis and sports fields nearby; and
- Increase lighting along pathways and off-leash areas.

**Provide warming huts for outdoor skating facilities**

Spray park and wading areas

**Need additional youth facilities**

Need additional outdoor swimming pools

**Need synthetic turf field with lighting**

Need additional park amenities such as benches, bbq areas and other park furniture

**Need additional skate park on the east side**

Improve pathway connectivity between neighborhoods

**Discover**

**Destiny**

**Design**

**Dream**

Extend pathways to the edge of the city

**Develop district parks at strategic locations**

Improve connectivity to surrounding municipalities

**Provide more passive green spaces**

Ensure the future TransCanada trail is linked to existing / future district parks









# 3. Principles, Vision and Concept

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### 3.1 Open Space Principles

Great Places provides guidelines for developing a high quality open space system and is intended to satisfy the following general principles, which address environmental, social and economic concerns:

Raise the profile of parks, open space and trail systems within the City of Airdrie's Administration to ensure long term planning for sustainable environments in Airdrie.

Reflect the environmental context of Airdrie through the respect of natural features and views. Use plants and other materials that are appropriate to the climate and context, protect and enhance biodiversity; and provide a diversity of places for recreation, physical activity, and enjoyment of the outdoors for a diverse population by ensuring that there is a complete range of open space types appropriate for Airdrie.

Ensure the safety of recreational users in Airdrie is and will continue to be a priority in developing parks, trails and open spaces in the city.

Ensure a walkable and accessible city, neighborhoods, and streets to the community's assets.

Recognize Airdrie's existing special places, create new ones, and provide good linkages through paths, good streets and linear parks.

Aim to locate parks and open spaces within 5-10 minute walking distances from all residential areas.

Reflect and respect Airdrie's history and culture.

Improve pedestrian access to open spaces in residential areas.

### 3.2 Great Places Vision

**By 2026, Airdrie's Open Space System will be a model of environmental stewardship and a highly valued community asset.**

The City will protect its open space in best practice management systems. Strong forward planning over the coming years will provide Airdrie with a comprehensive, contiguous and innovative parks, open space and trail system. Residents will play and commute to work through a network of trails, pathways and streetscapes while stopping to enjoy the many park space amenities available. Airdrie will also play host to major regional special events, and will be known as a City of Great Places.

## 3.3 Great Places Concept

The Open Space Concept Plan for Airdrie was developed through extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The key aspects of the concept are explained through the following themes. The Concept Plan also provides high level direction for preferred location of potential open space elements such as pathways, pedestrian rail crossings, pedestrian overpass, urban nodes and green corridors. It also provides background context for existing open space types as well as existing open space elements in Airdrie.

### 3.3.1 Establish Sense of Place

The Great Places Plan attempts to build on Airdrie's existing environmental features, historic and cultural resources, open spaces, and distinguishing features in order to enhance and support its sense of place.

The historic relationship between the town centre, Nose Creek and the railway can contribute much to the sense of place of Airdrie and should be reinforced through town planning. The development of local identity and culture should be derived from these historic relationships, and be interpreted in contemporary ways.

Airdrie's existing special places should be emphasized, including the downtown, Chinook Winds Park, East Lake Park, Jensen park, Iron Horse Park, Nose Creek Park and other neighbourhood level public spaces. Emphasis and reinforcement of these sites and areas helps to enhance the sense of place.

### 3.3.2 Promote Ecological Integrity

Nose Creek, East Lake and the many environmental features within recently annexed City lands are unique and valuable amenities and ecological systems and should be considered as the key organizing elements in the Great Places Plan. The plan should be considered as a system of 'green infrastructure' that flows outward from the aquatic corridors and provides linkages to all parts of town.

Airdrie is located in a region of high agricultural and economic value; development should be done according to an optimum density in order to protect valuable land.

### 3.3.3 Improve Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure includes projects related to water and wastewater systems, water management, solid waste management and recycling, and capital expenditures to retrofit or improve the energy efficiency of buildings and facilities owned by local municipalities. Many urban municipalities in Alberta rely on constructed, engineered infrastructure for water treatment, wastewater disposal and treatment and stormwater management. There are several innovative "green" ecological means for accomplishing the same types of treatment.

### 3.3.4 Raise Quality of Public Realm

The City of Airdrie is encouraged to find additional innovative ways to return clean resources back to the environment to improve ecosystem functioning and quality of life for residents, and to support developments such as the Canals and Nose Creek Park in which infrastructure is integrated with ecological processes, while simultaneously functioning as open space amenities.

The public realm is made up by the parks, squares, streets, paths, and other public spaces. This is where all citizens can be by right, and is an essential component to any neighbourhood or city. The public realm forms one of the most permanent elements of the urban infrastructure. All private and public development contributes to the formation of the public realm, and every project will be considered as having a responsibility to create high quality public space.

### 3.3.5 Continue to Use Open Space Types Framework

Many park and open space plans concentrate on sports fields and recreational space, and while these are important, the Airdrie Great Places Plan also includes principles and standards for other elements of public space such as streets and civic spaces. A range of open space types is required for a great city, and the infrastructure created by the effective layout, distribution, and linkages of these spaces contributes to a high quality public realm.

Airdrie's existing parks and open spaces provide the framework for the development of the plan. There is currently a good range of open space types, and most areas have access to parks and open spaces.

### 3.3.6 Improve Paths Network and Linkages

The Great Places Plan provides good multi-modal linkages for all areas of Airdrie. These linkages build on natural systems, on existing path systems, and on anticipated connections between neighbourhoods. A conceptual network of key proposed pathways and green corridors is identified in the Concept Plan.

The City should also improve the character of various entrance corridors in order to establish an inviting image of Airdrie. Entrance corridors should be designed as special thoroughfares.

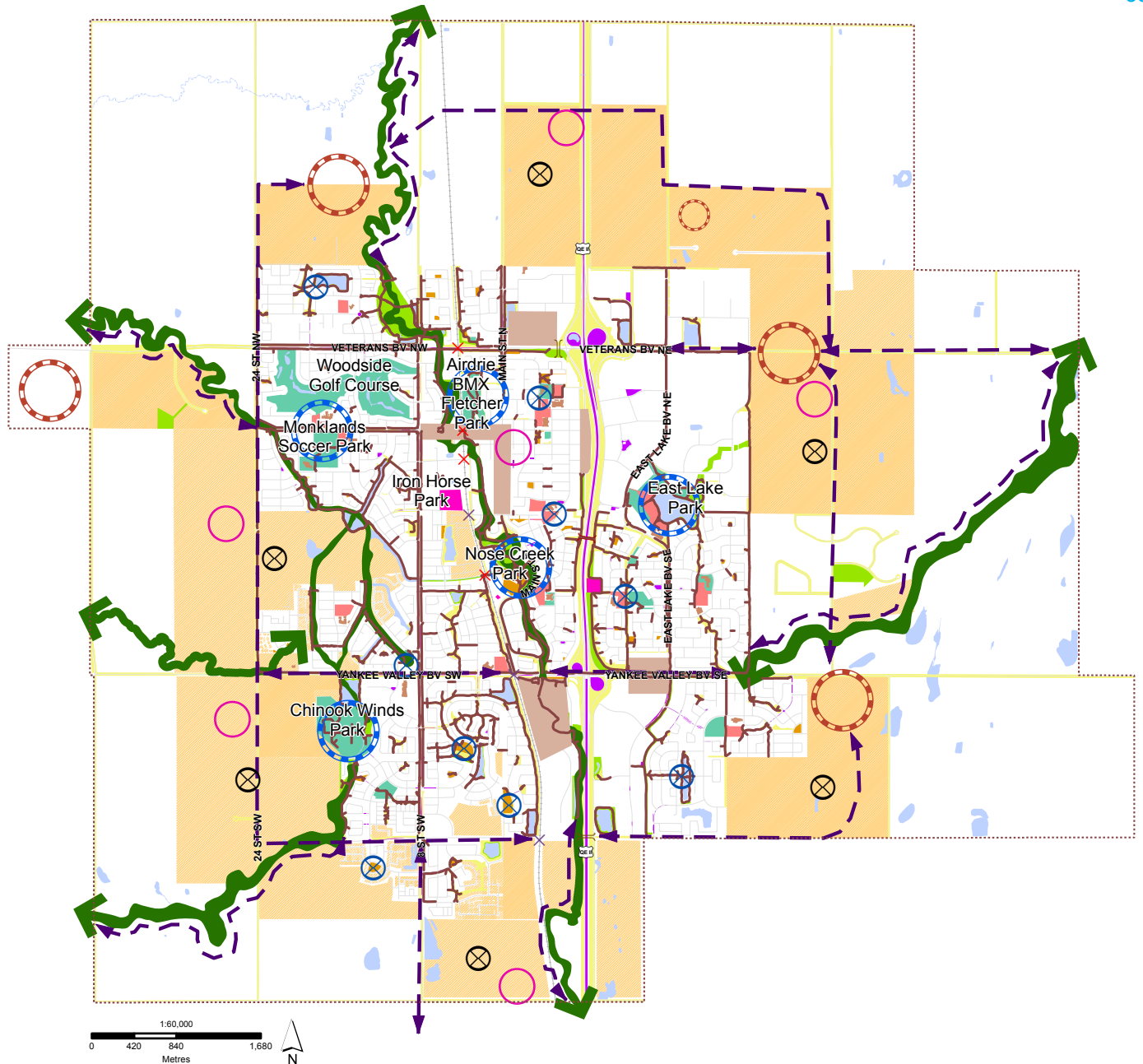
### 3.3.7 Urban Forest

The Great Places Plan provides a policy framework for providing well-designed treed areas on public as well as private lands and establishing greener Airdrie for the long term benefit of the residents. The City should continue its efforts to increase its inventory of trees in the public realm including streets, public parks and natural areas. Equal emphasis should be placed on ongoing maintenance and protection of the already existing inventory of treed areas.



Map 1 illustrates the Open Space Concept for the City of Airdrie. Key elements of the Open Space Concept include:

- Identification of existing parks and open space typology;
- Establishing existing and potential open space nodes;
- Identification of existing and potential pedestrian connection; and
- Establishing potential green corridors.



## MAP 1 | Open Space Concept

### Existing Open Space Types

- A** Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space
- B** Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark
- C** Neighbourhood Parks, Gardens and Civic Spaces
- D** Joint Use Sites
- E** Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities
- F** Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages
- G** Campground & Day Use / Picnic Area
- H** Non-Contributing Green Space
- Proposed Community
- Future Development Land

### Existing Open Space Elements

- Pathway
- Pedestrian Rail Crossing
- Pedestrian Overpass
- District Open Space Node
- Civic Open Space Node
- Neighbourhood Open Space Node

### Proposed Open Space Elements

- Pathway
- Pedestrian Rail Crossing
- Pedestrian Overpass
- District Open Space Node
- Civic Open Space Node
- Neighbourhood Open Space Node
- Green Corridor



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# 4. Parks and Open Space Framework

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A. Natural and Semi-natural  
Green Space



B. Historic Resource, Cultural  
Landscape, or Landmark



C. Passive Parks,  
Gardens, and Civic Spaces



D: Joint Use Sites



E. Outdoor Sport and  
Recreation Facilities



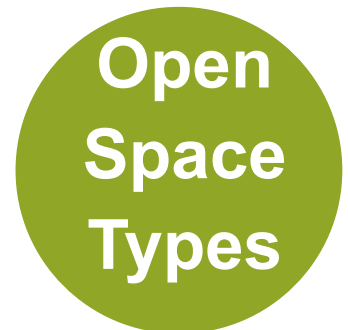
F. Linear Systems, Green  
Corridors & Other Linkages



G. Campgrounds And Day Use /  
Picnic Areas



H. Non-Contributing Green  
Space





## 4.1 Parks and Open Space Typology

The Great Places Plan establishes the following 8 open space types for the City of Airdrie. (Refer Map 2)

- Type A. Natural and Semi-natural Green Space
- Type B. Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark
- Type C. Neighbourhood Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces
- Type D: Joint Use Sites
- Type E. Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Type F. Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages
- Type G. Campgrounds and Day Use/Picnic Areas
- Type H. Non-Contributing Green Space

Each open space type implies a particular design vocabulary, particular vegetation, and maintenance regime, and the uses that are appropriate and desirable in each space.

### 4.1.1 Type A: Natural and Semi-natural Green Space



#### Characteristics

These are resource-based open spaces and occur where they are found naturally. This implies that there will not necessarily be an even distribution of this kind of open space, but that Airdrie needs to identify its environmental assets and attempt to build part of its open space system and its urban development around them. Preservation of natural systems is important in guaranteeing that open spaces of this type are present and that they maintain ecological integrity. Many of these lands are designated as Environmental Reserve (ER) and may include wetlands, environmentally sensitive areas, significant tree stands, and riparian areas.

This type of open space type includes:

- Woodlands;
- Grasslands;



- Wetlands;
- Storm water;
- Open and running water;
- Environmental reserves (ER);
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA); and
- Nose Creek corridor.

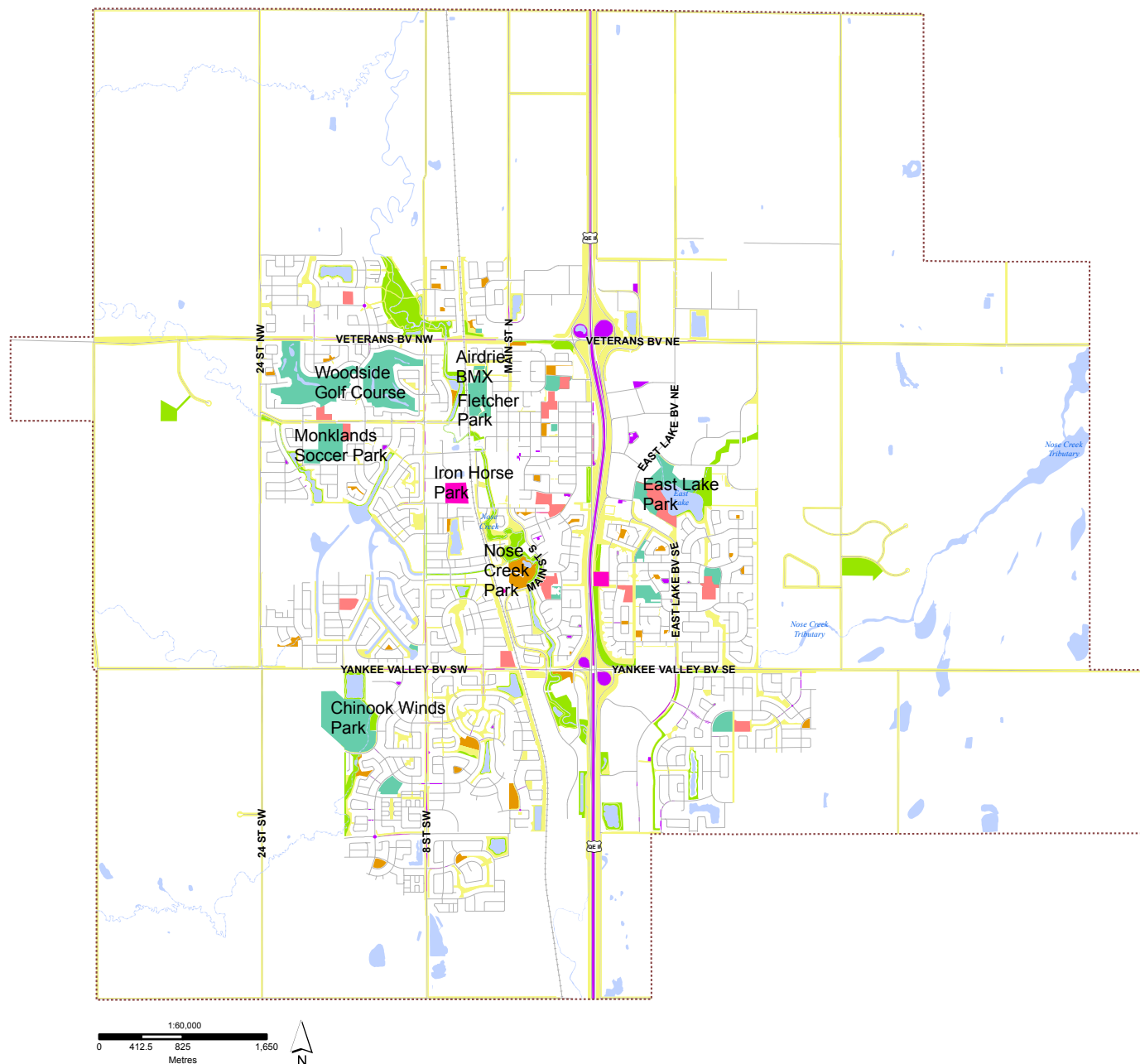
#### Parks & Open Space Function

Natural Areas are considered vital to protect sensitive or scenic public land or natural features on public land from disturbance and to maintain that land or those features in a natural state for use by the public for conservation, nature appreciation, low intensity outdoor recreation or education, or for any combination of those purposes.

These lands are intended to serve an ecological function with limited recreational activities. Many of the lands included within this open space type are located within the Nose Creek Corridor and its tributaries. Manmade features are limited to pathways, trails, boardwalks, interpretive facilities and bridges. No active programmed activities are included within natural areas.

#### Development Considerations

- Designated natural environment parks should be preserved and managed so they maintain their natural character and integrity.
- All Natural Parks should be acquired and developed primarily for unstructured recreation opportunities.
- Where feasible, any natural ecosystems should be integrated into the urban fabric.



## Map 2 | Open Space Types

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>A</b> Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space                 | <b>E</b> Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities          |
| <b>B</b> Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark | <b>F</b> Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages |
| <b>C</b> Neighbourhood Parks, Gardens and Civic Spaces      | <b>G</b> Campground & Day Use / Picnic Area               |
| <b>D</b> Joint Use Sites                                    | <b>H</b> Non-Contributing Green Space                     |



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#### 4.1.2 Type B: Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark



##### Characteristics

The location of historic sites or cultural landscapes depends upon local history and the existence of physical landmarks. Their identification provides the basis for a rich layer of Great Places. It is not expected that these will be evenly distributed throughout the city, however their existence provides an excellent base for place-specific plans to be developed that build upon unique resources.

This type of open space includes the following:

- Cemeteries;
- Churchyards;
- Water Tower; and
- Museum and historic sites.

##### Parks & Open Space Function

Existing museums and other historic sites provide key landmarks and a potential to establish neighbourhood as well as city level open space nodes. Integration of these sites in the overall trail and open space system can contribute towards effective place making.

##### Development Considerations

Historic areas will be restored to become practical to today's demographic while still keeping the original significance. In 2012 Jensen Park was enhanced, increasing park usage yet retaining the history and heritage of the area. Other areas that could be similarly enhanced include the water tower, museum and cemetery.

The water tower has been a familiar landmark in Airdrie since its construction in 1959. At that time a water and sewage system was also built for the village. In 1972, a large reservoir was built at the south end of Airdrie making the tower





obsolete. In 2003, the water tower had a new lease on life when council voted unanimously not to tear it down. The Airdrie water tower continues to be a key city level landmark.

Cemeteries can serve a dual use as an open space. The primary purpose for the land is as a cemetery (as governed under the Cemeteries Act, Crematories Designation Regulation) and a municipality is bound by this legislation. However, for the most part the land is otherwise underutilized. Most cemeteries can provide secondary uses such as:

- Passive recreation;
- Walking; and
- Historic research sites.

#### 4.1.3 Type C: Neighbourhood Parks, Gardens and Civic Places



##### Characteristics

Neighbourhood parks, gardens and civic places can accommodate gatherings and ceremonial functions, typically located adjacent to civic buildings and libraries. There will also be a range of neighbourhood parks, urban parks, pocket parks, plazas and small squares in the downtown and other commercial nodes. Neighbourhood level small scale open spaces that include tot lots and playgrounds for small kids are also considered as Type C open spaces.

Type C open spaces differ from Type E recreation and sports fields in the range of uses and the degree and type of maintenance required. Type C spaces are more important for their aesthetic qualities, and provide for passive recreation of adults and play areas for children. Landscape planting in Type C spaces can include more ornamental planting, which implies a higher degree of maintenance.

This open space type includes:

- Passive parks;
- Civic spaces;
- Gardens;
- Amenity green space; and
- Neighbourhood parks.

Consideration for multiple seasons, winter conditions, shelter from winds and provision of sun-traps will make enjoyment of these spaces possible all year round.

##### Parks & Open Space Function

These spaces provide areas for sitting, eating lunch, and passive enjoyment; they are appropriate for ornamental planting, hard surfaced areas, seating, and a higher degree of maintenance. Provision of a variety of these spaces will increase

the attractiveness of residential neighbourhoods, the downtown and commercial areas, and improve the vibrancy and economic potential.

#### Development Considerations

- All Type C open spaces shall be well connected to adjacent areas by high quality sidewalks and pathways.
- Type C open spaces will be designed for four-season, all-time use, and include appropriate:
  - surface materials;
  - benches and seating; and
  - landscape materials.
- A wide range of civic squares and parks should be provided in residential neighbourhoods, the downtown, commercial areas and industrial areas.
- All neighbourhoods should provide areas for sitting as well as informal recreational activities. These may be provided adjacent to other open space types, such as historic landscapes or landmarks, recreation fields, or paths.

#### 4.1.4 Type D: Joint-Use Sites



##### Characteristics

The City of Airdrie supports the public and sport groups by offering sport field locations at the district, city-wide and community levels. Airdrie's population continues to grow; as a result the City is experiencing shortages in field availability. Reserve dedication to the City is the primary means for joint-use site/park development.

In 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established and signed between the City of Airdrie and the school boards. The terms and understanding between the partners is to commence implementation and operationalization of the Airdrie Reserves Joint Use Agreement. This agreement assures the opportunity for the development of open spaces, parks and schools in fulfillment of the vision of the City of Airdrie as a “vibrant, caring community rich in urban amenities and opportunities for everyone”. The agreement remains draft in nature but has reached the point of substantial agreement.

This open space type includes:

- School sites with joint use agreements with school boards



#### Parks & Open Space Function

The joint-use facilities offer a variety of organized and informal (unorganized) sports to a cross section of ages and play levels.

#### Development Considerations

- Programing of municipal and school related open spaces should incorporate community needs.
- The City should work collaboratively with local school boards.

#### 4.1.5 Type E: Outdoor Sports and Recreational Facilities



#### Characteristics

These spaces are designed for active sports and recreation uses. They vary in their degree of publicness and in degree of general-specific use. They are often larger in size than other open spaces, and often include specialized structures or equipment.

The distribution of this open space type is based on population, community desire and user demand. Playing fields have a larger catchment area than playgrounds and tot lots. They are still population-based, but it is expected that the population would access these spaces by vehicle as well as by foot. It is also expected that the larger space and equipment requirements would mean that this type of open space would be selectively located.

This open space type includes:

- Playgrounds / Outdoor Gyms;
- Sports Fields;
- Tennis Courts;
- Multi-use courts;
- Golf Courses;
- Skateboard Parks / BMX Parks and Tracks;
- Splash parks/activity parks;
- Outdoor skating / Outdoor hockey rinks; and
- Volleyball courts.

#### Parks & Open Space Function

The primary role for Type E Outdoor Sport and Recreation Fields is in the provision of fields for entry level sports.

#### Development Considerations

- The City should continue to provide a range of Type E open spaces to address a range of sports and recreation needs for all sectors of the population.





#### 4.1.6 Type F: Linear Systems, Green Corridors and Other Linkages



- Where possible, Type E open spaces should include a range of recreation and sports facilities in district parks, to avoid over-specialization of open spaces, and to encourage development of more multi-use and vibrant recreation nodes.
- Type E open spaces should include areas and facilities for international and regional competitions.

##### Characteristics

The City of Airdrie manages a regional multi-use trail system as well as a local pathway system with non-traditional linkages (e.g. downtown sidewalks) to add potential links and gaps in the system. The regional trail system provides Airdrie residents and tourists with an extensive and relatively unencumbered linear recreation amenity in the city for active recreational opportunities. This system combined with a secondary pathway system provides multi-modal circulation for commuters, school students and for recreation.

This open space type includes:

- Linear parks and green corridors;
- Pathways and trails;
- Bikeways;
- Rights-of-way; and
- Streets.

##### Parks & Open Space Function

Linkages and corridors are a key part of Great Places. They allow the evolution of an infrastructure of open spaces, with the various types of open space connected by a system of paths and trails. Many of the existing streets and linear parks provide opportunities for development of this system.



In general, areas around naturalized, environmentally sensitive areas, stormwater management facilities, planned green spaces along utility/transportation corridors and neighbourhood level green spaces constitute linear parks network.

#### Development Considerations

- Linear systems and green corridors should be carefully sited to improve connectivity between various open space types.
- Linkages between residential areas and natural areas should be improved by establishing an interconnected network of streets, open spaces, linear parks and natural areas.

#### 4.1.7 Type G: Campgrounds and Day Use Picnic Areas



#### Characteristics

Places for camping and day use are often associated with natural areas, and are usually close to road access. They can also take advantage of views or existing places of interest.

There are currently no campgrounds or day use areas in Airdrie. Campgrounds may not be compatible with other land uses such as residential development; therefore campgrounds should be located away from concentrated residential areas and within easy access of the highway.

This type of open space includes:

- Recreational Vehicle Park Areas;
- Picnic areas; and
- Campgrounds (including washroom and cooking facilities).



### Parks & Open Space Function

Campgrounds and day use picnic areas provide family-oriented passive recreational opportunities.

### Development Considerations

- New campgrounds should be carefully sited to minimize impact on existing natural areas, transportation infrastructure and existing residential neighbourhoods.
- Road access is a mandatory requirement for all campgrounds and day use picnic areas.
- Any future development of a campground must consider:
  - proximity to a major transportation route;
  - access to regional pathway system;
  - inclusion of washroom / shower facilities;
  - proximity to land uses sensitive to noise and traffic; and
  - proximity to basic commercial goods.
- Rules and regulations for the campground must be strictly enforced by the City of Airdrie or third party contractor.
- Facilities associated with the campground may be used by day-use visitors on a fee for use basis.
- The siting, design and planning for a campground use in Airdrie shall be done with the involvement of the public and stakeholders.

#### 4.1.8 Type H: Non-Contributing Green Spaces



### Characteristics

To contribute to an open space system, all parks, trails and open spaces should contribute to a comprehensive plan and be developed as one of the Types A – F. Through development and construction processes, there can often be leftover parcels of land which are provided to a municipality as Municipal Reserve and identified as “Park”.

These often-isolated spaces have no real connection to the community nor do they connect with another type of open space. An example of a non-contributing green space is the grassed area in the northwest quadrant of the East Airdrie industrial land.

Other non-contributing open spaces are created by authorities other than the City of Airdrie. Highway 2 is a provincial highway under the jurisdiction of Alberta Infrastructure & Transportation. ROW standards are set by the province therefore

green space generated along sides of the highway is not created by the City. Similarly, the CPR line ROW is non-contributing open space generated by this authority.

This type of open space includes:

- Utility strips and transformer pads;
- Grassed intersections;
- Left-over green space/open space;
- Awkward locations/sizes/shapes; and
- Spaces too small for human use.

#### Development Considerations

- Type H open spaces should be minimized. Although some of these spaces are necessary, they should not be included in the calculation of park and open space. This type of open space should be described accurately so that its maintenance can be appropriate.
- All new proposed open spaces should contribute to the overall network of public spaces.
- The City should work with local developers to ensure no new non-contributing open space exists in development plans.
- All existing non-contributing open space should be evaluated for its use and potential re-use.

## 4.2 Open Space Nodes

The open space nodes within the City of Airdrie may be characterized into the following three types:

- District level open space nodes;
- City level open space nodes; and
- Neighbourhood level open space nodes.

### 4.2.1 District Level Open Space Nodes

#### Characteristics

Typical open space types in the district level open space node may include any combination of the following open space types:

- Type A: Natural and Naturalized Green Space or Watercourses;
- Type B: Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark;
- Type E: Large Scale Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities;
- Type F: Linear Systems, Green Corridors and Other Linkages; and
- Type G: Campgrounds and Day Use/Picnic Areas.

The existing district level open space nodes in the City of Airdrie include:

- In the northwest: Monklands Soccer Park, Ralph McCall Elementary School, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic School, Bethany Care Centre, Woodside Golf Course, and connections to the canals;



- In East Airdrie: East Lake, Fitness and Wellness Centre, Bert Church Theatre, Bert Church High, Scout Hall, sports and recreation fields, and connections to the linear path system;
- In the north: Airdrie BMX/Fletcher Park;
- In the centre: Nose Creek Park; and
- In the southwest: Chinook Winds Regional Park.

#### Parks & Open Space Function

- District level open space nodes provide active and passive recreational opportunities for number of neighbourhoods within the City.

#### Development Considerations

- All district level parks, large scale natural features and major recreational facilities should provide connections to Airdrie's regional pathway system.
- The passive recreational elements within any district park should be well-integrated with existing wetlands, treed areas or any other natural features.
- Each district level open space node should have a distinct theme in order to establish a unique sense of place. Entrance areas and other internal activity centers within the district level node should also incorporate city's overall branding through consistent signage.
- Vehicular access to all district level open space nodes shall ensure safe routes via collector road system to avoid increased traffic passing through residential neighborhoods.
- All district level open space nodes should provide good accessibility to public transit, high density residential areas and multi-modal linkages.
- Support facilities should be built in conjunction with district level open space nodes, particularly if the site will draw festivals, tourists or sporting events. The exact nature of support facilities should be decided subject to consultation with relevant event and activity organizers.
- New district level nodes should be developed in accordance with the Open Space Nodes Concept Plan and established at the ASP and NASP stage through a collaborative approach between the City and local developers.
  - Priority District level Node 1 – East Airdrie
  - Priority District level Node 2 – North Airdrie
  - Priority District level Node 3 – West Airdrie

#### 4.2.2 City Level Open Space Nodes

Open spaces that are designed to host city level events or provide passive recreational opportunities for everyone in the city constitutes city level open space nodes. In general, the city level open space nodes include downtown commercial area, other key commercial areas, major city level trail network, special urban plazas or parks that are popular as city level destinations.

Typical open space types in the district level node may include any combination of the following open space types:

- Type A: Natural and Naturalized Green Space or Watercourses;
- Type B: Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark;
- Type C: Passive Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces; and
- Type F: Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages.

The existing city level open space nodes in the City of Airdrie include:

- Downtown;
- Commercial Node at the northeast corner of Main Street and Veterans Boulevard;
- Commercial Node at the southwest corner of QE2 and Yankee Valley Boulevard SW; and
- Commercial Node at the intersection of Kingsview Boulevard SE and Veterans Boulevard SW.

#### Parks & Open Space Function

- City level open space nodes act as unique gathering places for city level events. They also opportunities for provide passive recreational activities and generally are responsible for establishing unique civic image for the City.



#### Development Considerations

- Development of urban plazas and family oriented open spaces should be encouraged in the Downtown Commercial node.
- Design of streets in the commercial and downtown nodes should:
  - Incorporate high quality public realm;
  - Provide wider sidewalks;
  - Incorporate multi-use trails; and
  - Incorporate public art.
- All commercial nodes should include small scale urban plazas, appropriate street furniture and provide pedestrian connections to the surrounding city level trail and open space network.
- Historic buildings, structures, landmarks and cultural landscaped areas should be connected to the city level trail and open space network.

#### 4.2.3 Neighbourhood Level Open Space Nodes

##### Characteristics

Typical open space types in the neighbourhood level open space node include any combination of the following open space types:

- Type C: Passive Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces;
- Type D: Joint Use Sites; and
- Type F: Linear Systems, Green Corridors and Other Linkages.



Parks & Open Space Function

Small scale open spaces serving the day-to-day recreational needs of individual neighbourhoods constitute neighbourhood level open space nodes.

Development Considerations

- Neighbourhood level nodes should incorporate appropriate lighting, CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.
- A comprehensive site concept plan shall be required for a neighbourhood level open space node, consistent with the level of detail required by the City at the Community Area Structure Plan (CASP) stage.

4.3 Open Space  
Delivery Guidelines

The following table provides a comparative analysis of current inventory of various open space types in Airdrie, the delivery guidelines established in the 2006 Great Places Plan and average open space ratios found in comparable Alberta municipalities. It also provides high level recommendations for potential open space delivery guidelines to meet current trends and projected population in 2025-28. The recommended guidelines are based on ongoing citizen feedback and current utilization rates. Detailed open space delivery guidelines should be established for each open space type through a potential Sports Fields Management Strategy.



	Standard established in 2006 Plan	Current inventory (2015 census population - 58,690)	Average standard in 16 Alberta municipalities*	Recommended guideline (2025-28 projected population – 85,000)
<b>Open Space Type A</b>		48		
Size	From 0.4 ha to well over 400 ha depending on resource availability and preservation needs.	Average size (0.8 ha)	NA	From 0.4 ha to well over 400 ha depending on resource availability and preservation needs.
<b>Open Space Type B: Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark</b>		3	NA	
Size	Cemeteries are population and demographically based. Historic sites are opportunity based.	Average size (2.4 ha)	NA	Cemeteries are population and demographically based. Historic sites are opportunity based.
<b>Open Space Type C: Passive Parks, Gardens and Civic Spaces</b>		44		
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>		43	-	-
Size	1.2 – 4 ha	Average size (0.4 ha)	NA	0.12 – 4 ha
<b>Large Urban Park</b>		1		
Size	8 – 16 ha	Average size (5.26 ha)	NA	4 – 16 ha
<b>Civic Squares</b>		0		
Size	Variable	NA	NA	Variable
<b>Open Space Type D: Joint Use Sites</b>		14		
Size	-	Average size (2 ha)	NA	1.2-4 ha
<b>Open Space Type E: Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities</b>				
Baseball & Softball Diamonds	1/6,000 population (10 required by 2015)	2.5/6,000) Total 25	4.39/6,000	(2.5/6,000) (35 required by 2025-28)

\*Data obtained from [www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca) and is based on analysis of 16 Alberta communities (public facilities only): Airdrie, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Strathcona County, St. Albert, Tri Municipal Region, Medicine Hat, Morinville, Cochrane, Brooks, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Okotoks, and Stoney Plain.

	Standard established in 2006 Plan	Current inventory (2015 census population - 58,690)	Average standard in 16 Alberta municipalities*	Recommended guideline (2025-28 projected population – 85,000)
Tennis Courts	1/2,000 population 30 required by 2015)	(0.2/2,000) Total 6	0.5/2,000	(0.5/2,000) (21 required by 2025-28)
Soccer Fields	1/2,000 population (30 required by 2015)	(1.4/2,000) Total 44 (18 mini fields counted as 9 regular size fields)	1.36/2,000	(1.4/2,000) (60 required by 2025-28)
Basketball Courts	1/5000 population ( 12 required by 2015)	(0.5/5,000) Total 6	1.37/5000	(0.5/5,000) (9 required by 2025-28)
Outdoor Skating Rinks	1/30,000 population (2 required by 2015)	(4.5/30,000) Total 9	NA	(4.5/30,000) (13 required by 2025-28)
Beach Volleyball	NA	(1/15,000) Total 4	NA	To be determined by the Sports Field Management Plan and Strategy.
Football	NA	(0.33/10,000) Total 2	NA	To be determined by the Sports Field Management Plan and Strategy.
Open Space Type F: Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages		1359		
Size	This type of open space connects other types, and is a system in itself. It should be based on the environmental framework, and should link major nodes. All residents should have easy access to the system.	Average size (0.6 ha)	NA	This type of open space connects other types, and is a system in itself. It should be based on the environmental framework, and should link major nodes. All residents should have easy access to the system.
Open Space Type G: Campgrounds & Day Use / Picnic Areas		0	NA	
Area/per 1000 population	2-4 ha	NA	NA	2-4 ha
Average size of individual campground	> 80 ha	NA	NA	> 80 ha

\*Data obtained from [www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca) and is based on analysis of 16 Alberta communities (public facilities only): Airdrie, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Strathcona County, St. Albert, Tri Municipal Region, Medicine Hat, Morinville, Cochrane, Brooks, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Okotoks, and Stoney Plain.











## 5. Guidelines and Action Steps

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As new communities are developed or new projects are undertaken, the following guidelines and planning approaches will guide the actions of the City and its partners in park provision and development.

Neighbourhood plans will emphasize pedestrian linkages, and will set aside public lands for open space. These public spaces will connect to the existing open space system, and will include all types of open spaces and serve the neighborhoods first, in addition to providing town or regional scale amenities.

#### Objectives

- Ensure all new neighbourhoods are developed with high quality neighbourhood level open spaces to meet community needs.
- Ensure appropriate mix of open spaces to meet a broad range of needs throughout the community.
- Ensure existing and new neighbourhoods are connected to each other with open space and trail connections.
- Ensure existing open spaces in established neighbourhoods continue to provide appropriate level of active and passive outdoor recreational options to residents.
- Ensure appropriate types of open spaces are provided in business parks and industrial areas that meet current trends and citizen demand.
- Increase overall health and vigor of the Urban Forest canopy.

## 5.1 New Residential Community Development

The following guidelines provide direction for development of parks and open spaces when new residential communities are developed. New parks, pathways and contributions to the open space network will be identified through the Community Area Structure Plan (CASP) process and the Neighbourhood Structure Plan (NSP) process.

### 5.1.1 Guidelines for New Community Parks & Pathways

- Developers shall refer to the Park Typology and the Open Space Concept included within this Plan when planning for new parks and pathways within residential communities.
- All park development/redevelopment within the new communities will meet neighborhood and community park objectives to provide effective, safe and sustainable open space environments.
- The City shall employ Best Management Practices to design and develop new park environments, particularly for unstructured play and sports fields, which can be redeveloped easily and cost-effectively to respond to changing community needs and demographics.
- Public open space will not be created by default or from leftover land, or simply be a by-product of development.

- Where residential properties abut parks, developers shall endeavour to design parks to provide a measure of security for park users (e.g. casual surveillance).
- Neighbourhood parks should be strategically located to improve walkability to the surrounding residential areas they serve.
- Neighbourhood parks should include family oriented activities and unique landscape features to promote year round use by all age groups.
- Pocket parks should provide sustainable, long term use for:
  - children between 0 – 5 years of age;
  - persons with reduced mobility;
  - picnicking areas;
  - mailboxes;
  - transit stops; and
  - benches.
- Pocket parks and tot lots should be well integrated in the residential neighbourhoods and should be sited to ensure visual connectivity from the public streets as well as safe walkability from majority of residential areas within the same neighbourhood.
- All new open spaces should be designed and constructed in accordance with the current edition of The City of Calgary's "Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction" as well as The City of Airdrie's Standard Landscape & Specifications.
- When appropriate and cost effective, the City will utilize proactive land acquisition methods to acquire natural areas and district parks prior to the start of the NSP process.
- The City supports the celebration of local history and culture through park naming:
  - Park naming is limited to district and neighbourhood parks;
  - The park name shall reflect the original landowners, homesteaders or aboriginal inhabitants; and
  - The park name shall be approved through the Parks Department.
- Elements within the park cannot be named (e.g. concession stands, bleachers, tot lot etc.) however, the City may approve plaques recognizing the contributions of individuals, developers or groups within a park.
- Pathways should be designed to complement the walkability from all neighbourhoods to the downtown or to other commercial nodes, to schools, and to major public spaces. The routes to these important amenity areas will be designed with pedestrian priority in mind. Neighbourhood structure plans will emphasize pedestrian priority and linkages in addition to car traffic efficiency.
- Parks and pathways to be considered as part of Municipal Reserve (MR)

must be publicly accessible. The City will only approve proposals for new parks if the following design criteria are met:

- The park land must be physically accessible (e.g. no gates or other physical barriers that would inhibit or preclude public access);
  - The park land must be visually accessible (e.g. it must not create the impression of use by a select few); and
  - The park land must have physical access for maintenance purpose.
- A comprehensive site concept shall be required for an open space node, consistent with the level of detail required by the City at the Community Area Structure Plan (CASP) stage.
  - The City of Airdrie shall support, enhance and expand the community level pathway system to promote healthy living, and sustainable recreation and transportation.
  - The City will work with developers to establish high quality linear parks along transportation corridors, utility corridors and adjacent to the riparian/ environmental sensitive areas within the City.
  - The City should explore the possibility of developing existing City owned lands along rail corridors and other transportation corridors into green corridors and linkages through landscaping and public realm improvements.
  - Local pathways should connect with Airdrie's regional pathway, and/or other key destinations within the community, such as neighborhood scale parks, schools and commercial areas.
  - The regional and local trails/pathways should be well-connected with each other with good transition from one pathway type to a different type.
  - The regional pathway should be designed for walkers, runners, cyclists, inline skaters, skateboarders and persons with reduced mobility. Designs should also consider access, safety and adequate signage. The alignment of Airdrie's regional pathway system should be designed with connections through existing passive parks, where feasible.
  - The regional pathway connections should be routed along the edges of environmentally significant areas or into locations with less sensitivity to the natural ecology to minimize the impact on the natural space.
  - Airdrie should work with Rockyview County and Irricana to complete the proposed Trans Canada Trail pathway system to Irricana and have appropriate linkage with Rocky View County. The appropriate infrastructure easements will need to be in place.
  - Development in new neighbourhoods should seek to improve connections to the Alberta Trail Network located in Rocky View County.

### 5.1.2 Guidelines for the Provision of School Sites and Facilities

The following approaches support the provision of land to accommodate school sites in new communities through the Municipal Reserve dedication:

- The Reserves Agreement and/or Memorandum of Understanding (whichever is currently in place) will guide the acquisition, development and operation of municipal reserve lands.
- Reserve partners will identify new school facility site requirements in new Community Area Structure Plans. Site needs may be further refined in the Neighbourhood Structure Plan.
- The Reserve partners will identify school sites surplus to their needs. The City will determine if the site can be retained as parkland.
- The City and school districts support temporary use of vacant school building envelopes as sports fields with the understanding that the use is temporary and may be lost in the future.
- The programming of joint use sites should give due consideration for local community needs and city level needs in addition to the school board priorities.
- All joint use sites should be designed and programmed to meet the requirements of the school and the surrounding communities they serve. The preferred open space types and activities should be established through a collaborative process.
- Multi-use recreational sites promoting active lifestyles should be pursued.
- Where feasible, ensure joint use sites are connected to the local and regional pathway/trail network.

## 5.2 Established Communities

Airdrie has gone through significant development peaks throughout its history and there have been varying degrees of importance put on the preservation of open space. There is less opportunity to plan for open space development in the established neighbourhoods due to the constraints of existing neighbourhood land uses and development. Moreover, retrofitting solutions for establishing the open space network will require more innovative solutions.

### 5.2.1 Guidelines for Established Communities

- When existing parkland is being redeveloped, needs assessment should be conducted by the City in collaboration with park user groups and community residents.
- All park development/redevelopment within the established neighbourhoods will meet neighborhood or community open space needs to provide effective, safe and sustainable open space environments.
- The City should work closely with the local School Boards to ensure that established neighbourhood schools and joint use sites are being utilized to their maximum potential usage is in line with the size.
- The City shall work with the public and the business sector to establish

partnerships whereby funding and cost sharing may be sought to redevelop open spaces in the established city neighbourhoods.

- Where appropriate and cost effective, the City will utilize proactive land acquisition strategies to acquire park land in the established communities and downtown based on approved Area Redevelopment Plans (ARP).
- Redevelopment and/or retrofitting of existing parks should address current market trends, broader community needs and ensure comprehensive community involvement in the open space design process.

### 5.2.2 Park Rehabilitation & Renewal Strategies

- The City will develop and implement a program of park rehabilitation and renewal to sustain and improve local parks and open space and respond to changing demographics and needs. Activities may include, but not be limited to:
  - Development of criteria to guide future rehabilitation and renewal projects;
  - Development of a park rehabilitation process that includes design guidelines and engagement programs; and
  - Periodic needs assessments and demographic assessments to determine needs and preferences.

## 5.3 New Commercial and Industrial Development

The following steps will be undertaken when new commercial and industrial areas are developed. New parks, pathways and contributions to the open space network will be identified through the Area Structure Plan process and may be further refined through the Master Site Plan Process.

### 5.3.1 Guidelines for Non-Residential Areas

- Developers shall refer to the Park Typology the Open Space Concept included within this Plan when planning for new parks and pathways within non-residential developments.
- Cash-in-lieu of land may be taken for municipal reserve dedication in non-residential areas. The City may consider taking land for municipal reserve to achieve the following:
  - To provide land for recreational facilities that may be better located away from residential areas;
  - To provide needed pathway connections between residential communities and workplaces;
  - To provide small scale parks in light industrial areas to provide open space opportunities for employees; and
  - All comprehensive commercial business parks and industrial parks shall be connected by a regional and/or local level pathway system regardless if a larger open space or park is built into the development.



## 5.4 Promoting Ecological Integrity

### 5.4.1 Guidelines for Natural Area Protection

The following guidelines should be followed to protect the ecological integrity of Airdrie's natural spaces and features.

- The Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan shall provide Airdrie with management practices for protecting the Nose Creek corridor.
- The protection and maintenance of wetlands shall be in accordance with the Provincial Wetland Policy.
- The City should encourage application of a minimum 30m vegetation buffer around existing wetlands and aim for no net loss of wetlands.
- Development of permanent structures in the riparian areas of creeks and water bodies should not be permitted. Minimum development setback distances established in the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw shall be adhered to.

### 5.4.2 Guidelines for Ecologically-Sensitive Parks and Open Space Design

- Public access to natural areas may be provided as part of the regional pathway system, however, only minimal development, such as interpretive signage, pathways, bridges, boardwalks and benches will be provided.
- Natural vegetation and animal habitats should be preserved and protected from urban intrusion through sensitive parks and open space design.
- Selective planting will support and diversify plant and animal species on sites as required.
- The City will take steps to remove invasive plants and noxious weeds.
- Developers and builders will be required to provide erosion and sediment control measures to protect the health and integrity of natural areas during development and construction stages.
- The City supports parks designs that will reduce water use, energy consumption, and environmental impacts and landscape treatments that reduce long-term maintenance requirements.
- The City will minimize the use of pesticides on City-owned land. When pesticides are required, the City will follow the provisions of the Pesticide Management Plan.
- The City will ensure that park designs accommodate surface drainage on site and will minimize the use of mechanical drainage where possible.
- The City will develop a Naturescape Initiative designed to promote the naturalization of natural area edges and portions of manicured park sites and promote drought resistant landscaping.
- Developers or the City shall naturalize boulevards with drought tolerant plantings and naturescaping in new plan areas where appropriate.
- The City will work with developers and new residents to implement the Naturescape Initiative and promote drought resistant plantings and home landscaping.

- The City may accept landscape plans adjacent to parks that direct a portion of overland runoff from neighbouring properties onto parkland, to reduce stormwater flow into the Nose Creek system, where this action will not interfere with park use, providing the developer can substantiate a comprehensive commitment to the Nose Creek Water and Watershed Management Plan targets.
- The City will identify strategies required to restore ecosystem health and budget for these changes. The Nose Creek corridor is a priority restoration area.

## 5.5 Urban Forest

The Urban Forest is composed of all the trees and shrubs within city limits. It includes natural vegetated areas as well as parks and street boulevards. While the trees on private property also contribute to the urban forest, only the trees on public property are considered as the responsibility of the City in this plan. Street trees are an important structural, biological, and aesthetic component of the city, and greatly improve the quality of life as well as the economic value of neighbourhoods. Street trees provide numerous benefits including:

- providing shade in the summer and shelter in the winter;
- improving the walkability of streets, thereby contributing to higher standards of public health;
- contributing to the overall attractiveness of the streets and the city as a whole; and
- providing many ecological functions and serving as habitat for wildlife.

The City of Airdrie currently has an Urban Forest Policy that deals with tree removals and plantings on city titled boulevards and road right of ways. The City of Airdrie Landscape Guidelines & Specifications also has a list of appropriate tree species in the Airdrie Specifications and guidelines. This will be supplemented by an Urban Forest Operations Guidelines, based on objectives that support this Great Places Plan.

The City of Airdrie prides itself on our cultural practices reducing the use of chemicals with in the city parks. Continuing with cultural practices as a first response is a welcomed practice and will be continued in future operations.

The Parks Department is highly involved with the community and prides itself on working with the public to enhance residential communities and school sites. On an annual basis the Parks Department is involved in numerous volunteer group plantings, provides in-class education and outdoor education sessions. Taking this to the next level would be beneficial to increase the tree count, education and care of our neighbourhood trees and making Airdrie a great place.

#### 5.5.1 Guidelines for Urban Forest

- Developers shall be responsible for tree planting in new developments to Parks' specifications and also for the maintenance of trees throughout the Construction Completion Certificate (CCC) period.
- Developers and landowners should be encouraged to utilize landscape development on their property in accordance with Airdrie's approved Urban Forestry Policy.
- Design of boulevards on arterial and collector roadways should locate trees appropriately to ensure long term health and well-being of trees.







# 6. Implementation

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## 6.1 Parks and Open Space Management

### 6.1.1 Sports Fields Management Strategy

- The City will develop, adopt and advance a Sports Field Strategy to ensure the broadest possible public awareness, development and access to the City's sports fields by all segments of Airdrie's community and to ensure equitable allocation of City-owned sports fields.
- In order to create an environment that encourages participation for Airdrie residents in outdoor sport activities an inclusive vision is required.
- Objectives and actions can be planned through a Field Sport Strategy and will provide a strong foundation for making significant improvements to the delivery of field sport facilities and service delivery in Airdrie for the next 10 years and beyond.

### 6.1.2 Sport Field Development

- Major sport and recreation nodes/athletic parks shall be built to accommodate multi levels of play and will be generally acquired through a partnership arrangement.
- The Parks Department shall examine all opportunities for retrofitting and intensifying existing sports fields prior to building new sites.
- Any retrofitted or new sports fields shall be designed to accommodate alternative field uses in off peak hours and during the off-season. Chinook winds boarded rink accommodates hockey, basketball and roller derby at different times.
- All new sports fields shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the current edition of The City of Calgary's "Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction" and City of Airdrie Landscape Standards Specifications and Guidelines.
- Golf courses and major sport and recreation facilities will be designed to encourage multiple uses year round.

### 6.1.3 Parks Asset Management

The City will continue to document asset management needs for its parks and open space system, including capital and operating maintenance requirements, timing of infrastructure improvements, timing of rehabilitation and renewal activities and measures to identify maintenance and lifecycle costs.

### 6.1.4 Parks & Underground Utilities

In exceptional circumstances only, the City will allow underground major utility functions to be located under parks and pathways. The City will develop more detailed guidelines and considerations for compensation through the Landscape

Specifications. Guidelines governing the placement of these utilities include:

- The primary use of land and park function must not be compromised;
- High pressure gas facilities are excluded;
- Utilities are not permitted under Natural Areas; and
- Utilities are not permitted under school sites.

### 6.1.5 Dogs in Parks

- The City will encourage development of off-leash dog parks and explore providing specially designed 'social dog parks' as part of outdoor sports and recreation facilities.
- The design of social dog parks should include specially design equipment and layout to promote social development of dogs.
- The City and its stakeholders will identify parks where off-leash dog parks may be accommodated.
- The city will undertake periodic reviews of existing off-leash facilities, community needs assessments and best practices to ensure that facilities are meeting community needs.

## 6.2 Parks Programs, Partnerships and Advocacy

### 6.2.1 Parks & Partnership Considerations

- The City will seek opportunities to coordinate parks and pathway planning with other publicly owned spaces (e.g. Federal and provincial lands), quasi-public lands (e.g. Institutional lands and places of worship) and private amenity space where feasible to accommodate public access.
- The City will work with neighbouring municipalities and the Calgary Regional Partnership to enhance opportunities for pathway and trail connections and improved natural areas and stream corridors.

### 6.2.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Program

- The City will develop and implement an ongoing community and stakeholder engagement program to foster public participation and involvement in parks initiatives.
- The City will undertake a community engagement and/or survey process to determine the need for a campground within the City.

### 6.2.3 Stakeholder and Sponsor Recognition Program

The City will develop a recognition program to acknowledge the role of the development community and landowners who contribute to the development of Airdrie's parks and open space system. The recognition program may include:

- Park and pathway plaques;
- Park dedication ceremonies for new parks and renewal projects;
- Public notification signs in new communities to inform new and prospective residents of new parks and school sites; and
- Website information regarding park acquisitions and developments.

### 6.2.4 Stewardship and Education Programs

- Enhance commitment to community heritage, civic pride and cultural identity through a program of education, awareness and stewardship.
- Develop and implement an adopt-a-park and adopt-a-pathway program to support ongoing stewardship and community involvement in the parks and pathway system.
- Investigate educational opportunities with local schools and students pertaining to natural areas, riparian management, open space restoration and naturalization projects.
- Develop guidelines for site-specific stewardship and education initiatives as part of the Natural Areas Management Plan.
- Host information events for user groups and members of the public on responsible parks use, dog park etiquette, natural habitat, stream protection, etc.

### 6.2.5 Urban Agriculture

- The City will continue to support community gardens and will work with community partners and developers to identify future sites and opportunities.
- The City will develop guidelines for urban agriculture as well as guidelines for community gardens and beekeeping on public and civic lands.

## 6.3 Parks Acquisition

### 6.3.1 Parks and Open Space Acquisition Strategy

- The City shall make a priority that all environmentally significant areas, natural environments suitable for parks, and significant wildlife and fish habitat will be preserved, conserved, or protected (as the case warrants) through the dedication of Reserve land or other form of conservation instrument.
- The City will base parks and open space acquisition and renewal decisions on the following considerations:
  - Population growth trends and projections, demographic characteristics and planned development activity;
  - Current parks and open space supply and provisions levels based on the pars typology system;
  - Evolving parks design and recreation trends;
  - Current demand and projected growth in participation levels in sports and other programmed activities;
  - Partnership opportunities;
  - Input from the public and stakeholders; and
  - Identified gaps and deficiencies.
- The City will utilize a range of opportunities and tools to maximize the supply of available parkland, beyond the provisions of Municipal and Environmental Reserve. Tools may include (see also Appendix E):
  - Donations;

- Land exchange;
  - Conservation easements;
  - Environmental reserve easements;
  - Direct purchase; and
  - Land trusts.
- Acquisition of land through direct purchase will only be considered where there is a demonstrated community need; an identified gap in the parks and open space system; an environmental protection needs and a supporting financial analysis.
  - The City will support community fundraising and partnership projects and other initiatives to acquire additional parkland.
  - Where possible, the City will coordinate the acquisition of parkland with the appropriate school district to maximize land and facility use opportunities.
  - The City will undertake a study to determine the feasibility of a dedicated park and open space acquisition fund.
  - In designated activity nodes and intensification areas, where on-site parkland dedication may be limited, the City may consider potential alternative to park dedication and development including green-roofs, linkages to existing area parks/facilities, on-site amenities, urban plazas/ civic squares, enhanced Streetscaping and landscaping, bicycle parking and/or enhanced sustainability features.
  - All lands donated to the City of Airdrie for the use of recreation or open space, shall be examined prior to acceptance on the basis of their location, size, integration with the open space system, adjacent land use, and other criteria as established by the City.
  - Where a landowner in Airdrie wishes to protect environmentally sensitive land in perpetuity, the City should assist in establishing a Conservation Easement for the land.
  - Environmental Reserve Easement shall be used where the municipality and landowner agree that the land is better to be held in title by the current landowner.

## 6.4 Plan Review and Monitoring

- The Great Places Plan was created largely on the basis of existing conditions and expressed public need. As a result, it may change depending available budgets, changing public desires and development timelines for new communities. Great Places Plan will be reviewed periodically and revisions will be made when edits to superior documents are completed.
- The Great Places Plan should be reviewed and updated at least every 10 years.
- The City will establish indicators and measures to monitor the implementation of the Great Places Plan

## 6.5 Priority Actions for Implementing the Policy Framework

The following table outlines all of the priority actions provided in Great Places. Each action is annotated with the internal City human resources needed and interdepartmental relationships required achieving the action. A suggested timeline for each action is provided and will be reviewed each year to ensure they are in keeping with progress.

Priorities range from 1 to 3, where 1 is within the 0-4 year time frame, 2 is 5-7 years and 3 is 8-10 years. A priority action may also be “ongoing”.



Table 3: Priority Actions

Priority Action	Priority	Action by	Open Space Type	Action Type
<b>Parkland Acquisition</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Land Acquisition Strategic Plan to identify priority areas for the parkland acquisition in the recently annexed area.</li> <li>Prepare a District Parks Plan to identify short term and long term land requirements for new district level park space, potential location, size and programming.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept – Parks, Corporate Properties, Consultant	General	Capital Investment, Study
<b>Sports Fields Management Plan &amp; Strategy</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a “Sports Fields Management Plan” and “Sports Strategy” to address user issues, cost recovery strategies, utilization/underutilization, seasonality of use and ways to improve booking and programming.</li> <li>Continue to update the inventory of various recreational user groups and undertake periodic demand assessment through scientific surveys.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Consultant	E	Study, Review
<b>Natural Areas Management Plan</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create the Natural Areas Management Plan and Enhancement Plans for Type A open spaces.</li> <li>Undertake detailed Wetland Analysis to identify priority wetlands for potential preservation.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept – Parks	A	Operations and Management Plan
<b>Urban Forestry Operations Guidelines</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish official Urban Forestry Operations Guidelines based on City approved policy and seek Council approval.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept – Parks	Urban Forest	Operations and Management Plan
<b>Cemetery Business Plan</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Cemetery Business Plan to plan for the next 50 years and include any land identified in the open space network.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept – Parks,	B	Study

Priority Action	Priority	Action by	Open Space Type	Action Type
<b>Master Pathway Plan</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Master Pathway Plan.</li> </ul>	1	City Dept - Parks	F	Study
<b>Environmental Reserve</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an Environmental Reserve Policy.</li> <li>Review and update Ecological Inventory Expansion and Environmental Best Practices Report.</li> </ul>	2	City Dept – Parks, Planning	A	Policy Initiative, Monitoring and Review
<b>Parkland Redevelopment</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a sports field retrofitting pilot project designed to increase field size and usability. The pilot project would include one or two underutilized sports field sites.</li> </ul>	2	City Dept – Parks, Planning	E	Projects
<b>Master Signage Strategy</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Airdrie Master Signage Strategy to establish specifications for various sign types, identify open spaces that need signage upgrades and establish yearly signage replacement priorities.</li> <li>Undertake internal review to determine the appropriate sign locations for each sign type within the sign family range and identify priority new sign installation locations.</li> </ul>	3	City Dept – Parks, Planning	General	Study
<b>Guidelines Update</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update “Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications-Landscape Construction” to guide development of district level open space nodes and other landscape features in the City.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant	District level nodes	Guidelines











# 7. Appendices

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## Appendix A: Existing Open Space Inventory

This section provides a discussion of current open spaces in Airdrie and a detailed inventory of each open space. Not included are trails, Right of Ways and other non-contributing/unused Municipal Reserve (MR), Environmental Reserve (ER) and Municipal and School Reserve (MSR) parcels.

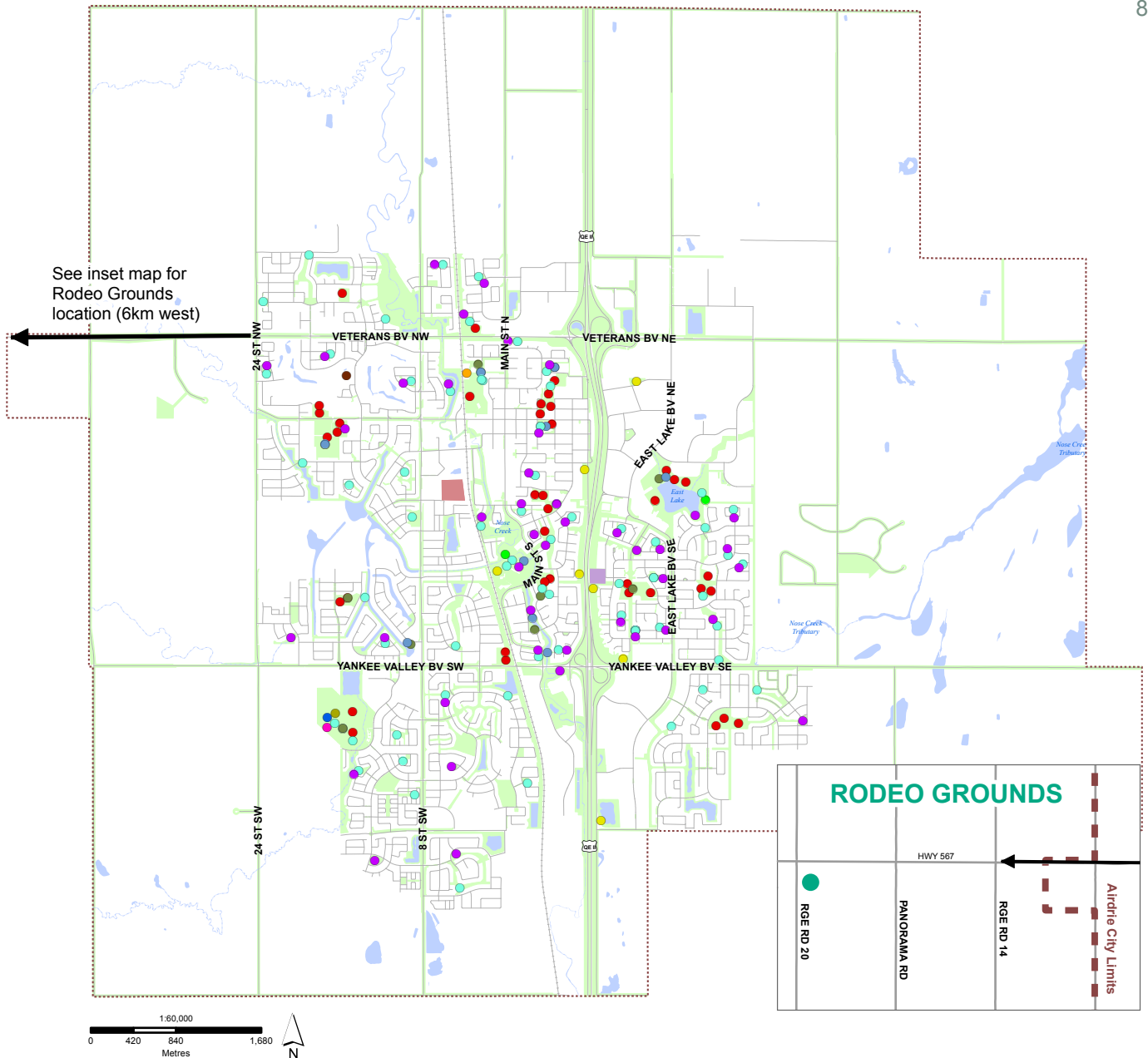
To make this section more interesting and relevant to a plan of action – it would be helpful to include commentary with each park describing where it is; what its intended for; what it offers; upgrades made since last GPP – 2006.

The following is an overview of the City of Airdrie's open space features as of December 31, 2015.

- Total length of maintained pathways - 104km
- Total trees – approximately 17,000
- Playfields (baseball/softball/little league diamonds) - 25
- Playfields (soccer) – 35
- Playfields (mini soccer fields) - 18
- Playfields (football) - 2
- Playgrounds - 63
- Outdoor gym - 1
- Splash Parks - 1
- Skate Parks - 1
- Outdoor skating rinks 9 plus three pond rinks
- Tennis Courts 6
- Outdoor volleyball courts -1
- Multi use courts -7
- Bayside- hockey boards, 4 basketball hoops
- Chinook-hockey boards, 4 basketball hoops
- East Lake – hockey boards
- Big Springs- 2 basketball hoops
- AE Bowers – 6 basketball hoops
- Fletcher Parks- 2 basketball hoops
- Summer Hill – 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball hoops

Neighbourhood Parks: Approximately 74 passive parks are dispersed throughout Airdrie's residential neighbourhoods. The average size of passive neighbourhood parks in a typical residential neighbourhood is 1.7Ha.

Map 3 identifies the overall inventory of various open spaces presently found in Airdrie, as well as the public network of connecting streets and lanes.



### Map 3 | Existing Open Space Inventory

- |                |                    |                   |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ● Passive Park | ● Multi-Use Court  | ■ Rodeo Grounds   |
| ● Playground   | ● Off-Leash Park   | ■ Iron Horse Park |
| ● BMX Park     | ● Outdoor Rinks    | ■ Cemetary        |
| ● Sports Field | ● Skate Park       |                   |
| ● Golf course  | ● Splash Park      |                   |
| ● Outdoor Gym  | ● Beach Volleyball |                   |



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### **District Parks**

Various environmental and recreational opportunities offered within Airdrie's existing District Parks are summarized below.

#### **Nose Creek Park**

In 1985, Nose Creek Park Society was formed to coordinate the development of a 32 acre parcel of land along Nose Creek as a park. Many key special events such as Festival of Lights and Canada Day Celebrations are organized in the Nose Creek Park.

- Nose Creek Pond located in the centre of the Park
- Amphitheatre
- Picnic Shelter
- Fire Pit
- Sheltered Concession
- Washroom facilities
- Off leash dog park
- Outdoor gym
- Miller Street Art Gallery
- Numerous bridges
- Open picnic areas
- Natural areas promote the growth of native grasses and shrubs
- Wildlife e.g.muskrat, deer, rabbit, heron, ducks and various songbirds inhabit the park

#### **Chinook Winds Regional Park**

- 8 covered baseball diamonds
- Open picnic tables and areas
- Two concessions
- Two washroom facilities
- Outdoor showers
- Splash park
- Two playgrounds
- Skate park
- Boarded skate rink with lights (Roller derby in summer)
- Beach volley ball court
- Toboggan hill
- Solar lighting

#### **East Lake Park (Airdrie East)**

- 3206 meters of paths for walking, bicycling & in-line skating
- 4 tennis courts - Multi-use for basketball



- 4 soccer fields - One major, one practice
- Washroom facilities
- Picnic shelter
- Hockey facility - Asphalt Pad
- Lookout decks onto East Lake
- Outdoor Gym
- Playground
- Fire pits

#### Fletcher Park (off 1 Ave. N)

- Three shale infields diamonds
- Concessions
- Playground equipment
- Pay RV sani-station
- BMX Park
- Washrooms

#### Monklands Soccer Park

- 4 soccer fields (Full size)
- 3 soccer fields (kids' size)
- 1 community garden

#### Cemeteries

As of 2015 the Cemetery consists of:

- Two columbariums; Columbarium one has 72 niches, Columbarium two has 84 niches;
- Plots in the Cemetery: 3023;
- Available plots: 1,076; and
- From 2002 to 2014, the City completed an average of 30 burials per year.

#### Off Leash Areas

- Off leash dog parks: 5

#### Special Parks

##### Iron Horse Park

- Iron Horse Park is a re-creation in miniature of the railroad pioneers in western Canada
- Main attraction is a 1.6 km ride on a miniature railway that represents a journey from the prairies, over the Rockies to the coast

### **Gwacheon Park**

- It is located in the Nose Creek Park and opened in 2003 to celebrate the twin city agreement between Gwacheon and Airdrie
- Holds five totem poles, a flower bed and a seating area

### **Ed Eggerer Athletic Park**

- 400 m, 8 lane rubber running track
- 1,000 capacity seating grandstand
- Regulation football field
- Long jump and throw area

### **Rodeo Grounds**

- Home of the Annual 5 day Professional Rodeo
- 160 acres site located on Highway 567
- The Rodeo Grounds can accommodate 10,000 guests and is used year round for family picnics, cross-country skiing, and group functions

### **Bmx Park (Fletcher Park)**

- One of the largest and most successful BMX race tracks in Canada
- Quick-start, fast-flying, high-banking, hard dirt race track
- Club sets each rider on an individual race level

### **Skateboard Park**

- Located in Chinook Winds park
- Quarter-pipes, rails, stairs

### **Splash Park**

- Features a central area and a variety of active and passive spray features for children
- Surrounded by beautiful mature trees, a large playground for children of all ages and large groomed open space with picnic tables and shade sails
- Seasonal concession

### **Fire Pits**

- Available campfires for families, youth groups, schools, community groups, reunions etc.
- Fire pits are available free of charge to the entire community



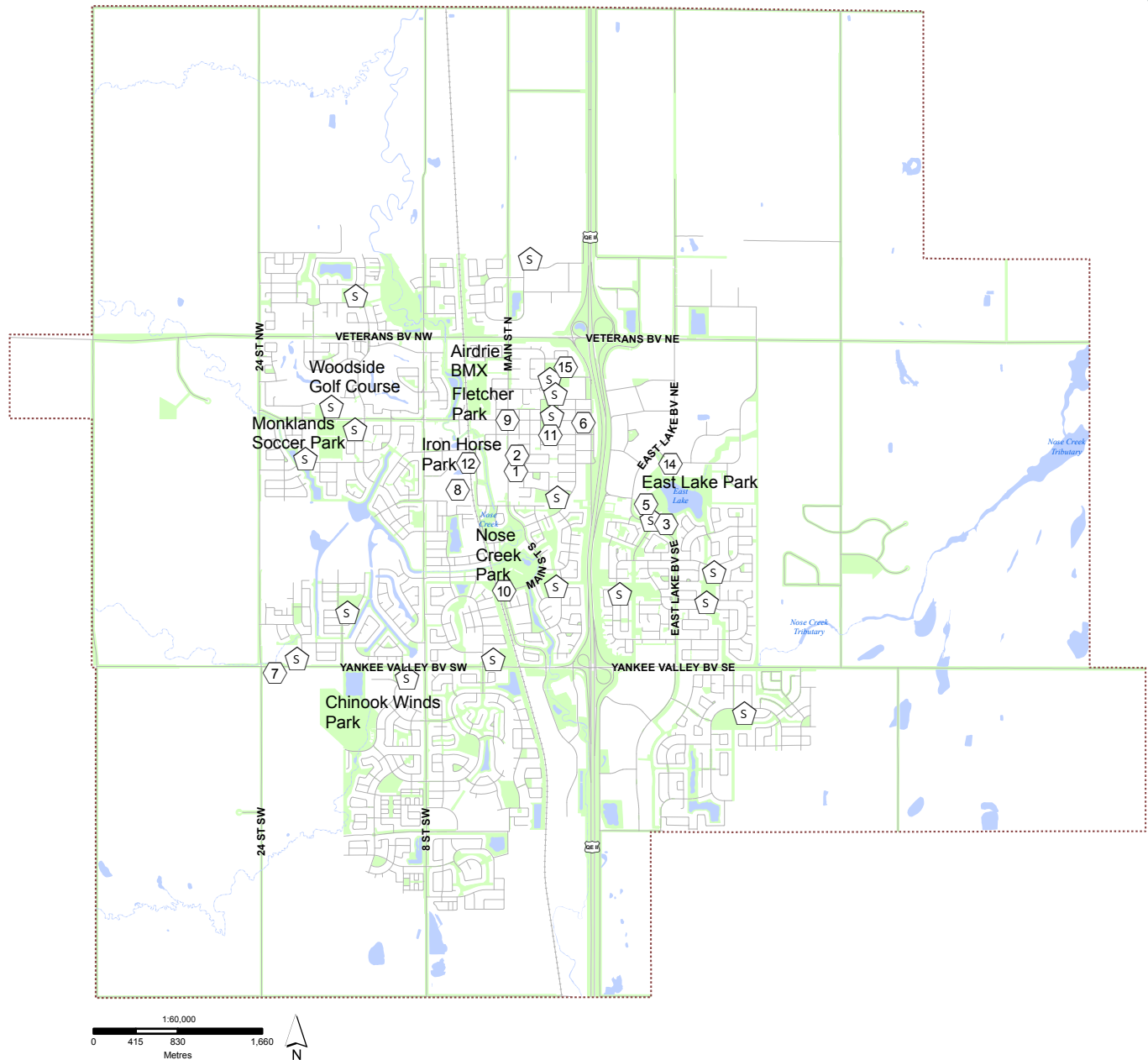
## Appendix B: Existing Cultural Landscapes and Special Places

The following elements of Airdrie and its region are important in contributing to the cultural and visual identity. These will be enhanced through linkages with path systems and emphasized through inclusion in open space site planning including:

- Important views of the regional landscape;
- Railway and lands;
- Main street commercial district;
- Jensen Park;
- Old town and original homes;
- United Church and other churches;
- Nose Creek Valley Museum;
- Schools;
- Nose Creek and Nose Creek Park;
- Water tower;
- Cemetery;
- Arenas; and
- Glacial erratic.

Map 4 identifies some of the key cultural landscapes and special places in Airdrie.





## Map 4 | Existing Cultural Landscapes and Special Places

- |                          |                                    |  |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 5 Existing School        | 6 Historic Water Tower             | 12 Railway & former station/<br>grain elevators land |
| 1 Airdrie City Hall      | 7 Important view to the west       | 13 Ron Ebbesen Twin Arena                            |
| 2 Airdrie Public Library | 8 Iron Horse Park                  | 14 Scout Hall  |
| 3 Bert Church Theatre    | 9 Main ST & 1 AV historic downtown | 15 Town and Country Center                           |
| 4 Cemetery               | 10 Nose Creek Valley Museum        |  |
| 5 Genesis Place          | 11 Plainsman Arena                 |  |



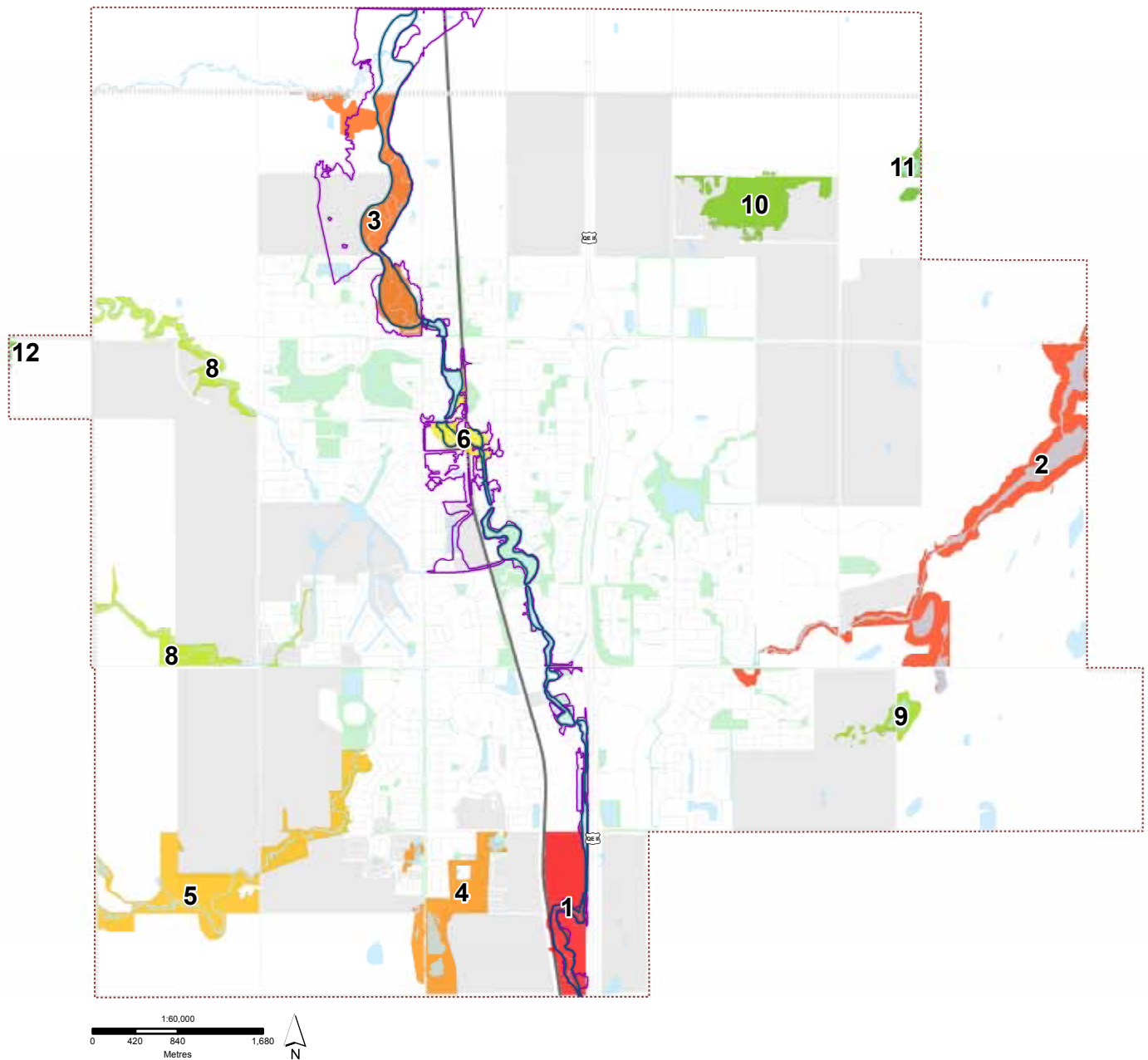
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## **Appendix C: Environmentally Significant Areas**

Preservation of natural areas and green spaces is a key priority for Airdrie. In 2013, the City prepared an Environmental Inventory Expansion and Environmental Best Practices Report to identify key environmental features within its boundary.

Map 5: GIS Ecological Hot Spots – Weighted Analysis provides a comprehensive overview of key environmentally significant areas within the City. These areas will play a critical role in maintaining and enhancing Airdrie's future open space network.



## Map 5 | Environmentally Significant Areas

City Boundary

100 Year Floodline

Flood Fringe

Study Area

Water Body

CP Rail

Cleared Land for New Development

Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Hotspot Ranking\*

1 (Top Ranked)

2

3

4

5

6

7

8 (Tied)

9

10

11

12 (Bottom Ranked)

\*Ranking reflects proximity to existing open space and land cleared for new development.

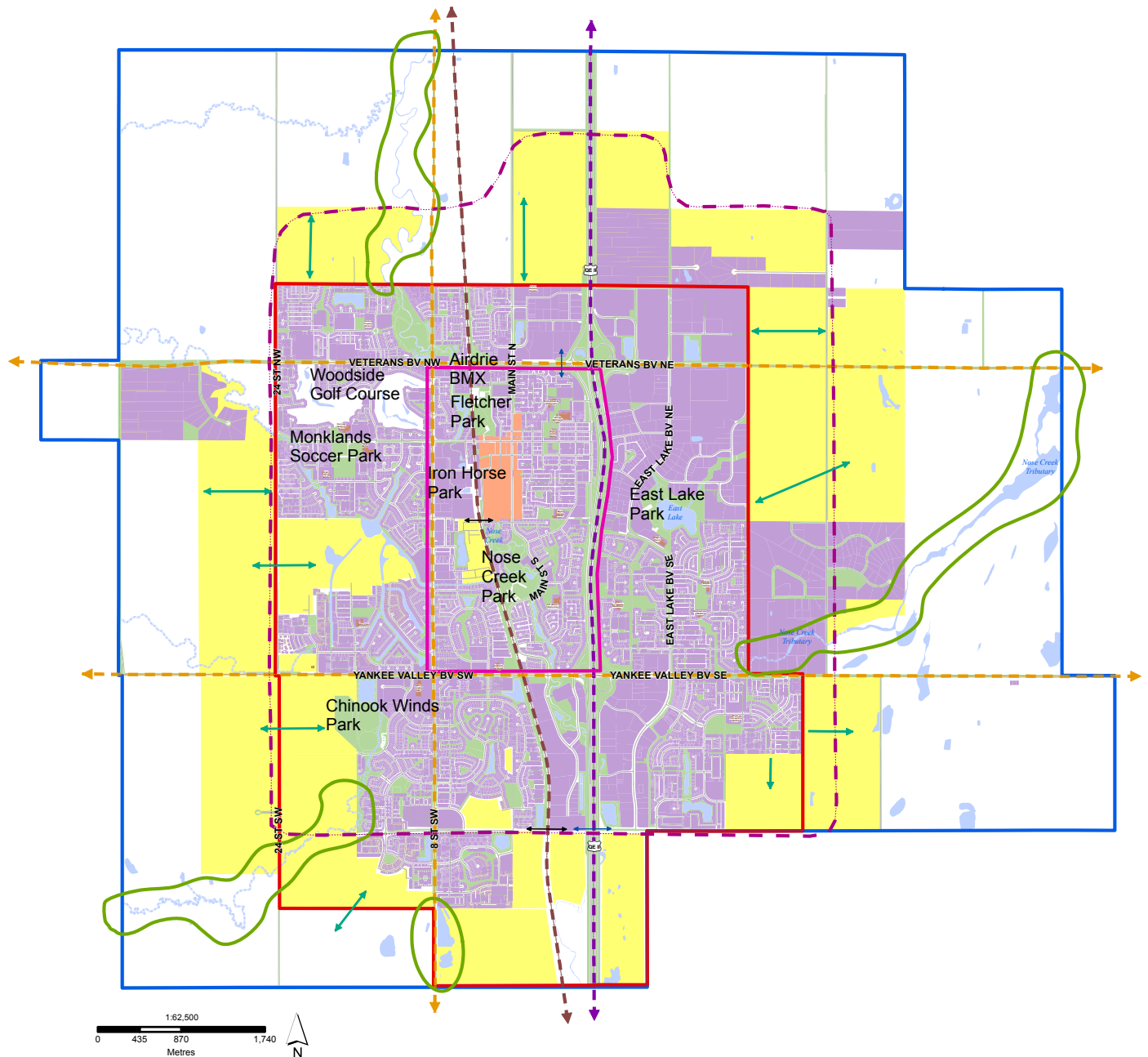


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## Appendix D: Summary of Stakeholder Consultation

	Issues	Opportunities
Connectivity / Green Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need additional pedestrian crossings over rail corridor</li> <li>• Pathway system in industrial areas lack connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify new locations for pedestrian crossings over rail corridors</li> </ul>
Parks and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need additional park amenities in all open spaces</li> <li>• Need improved signage and wayfinding along pathway system</li> <li>• Need additional public washrooms in passive parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate higher standards for signage, wayfinding, and public amenity delivery when new park space is developed in existing and new neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
Sports fields and outdoor recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more sports fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts with basketball hoops, outdoor swimming pool, squash courts, disk golf, turf fields and soccer fields</li> <li>• Some sports fields need upgrades</li> <li>• Timing conflicts between different sports groups on some sports fields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new district parks in each quadrant of the newly annexed areas of the City</li> <li>• Ensure new outdoor recreational facilities in different district parks compliment each other</li> </ul>
Environmental preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity of Nose Creek and other key natural features in the newly annexed lands need to be preserved as development occurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve environmentally sensitive areas identified in the newly annexed areas of the City</li> <li>• New regional parks may be developed in conjunction with the environmentally sensitive areas</li> </ul>
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of high quality public plazas</li> <li>• Main street character along 1st Avenue needs improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop small scale plazas as redevelopment happens in downtown</li> <li>• Undertake streetscape improvement projects along key corridors</li> </ul>
Established neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps exist in existing green space network connectivity between different neighbourhoods needs improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require development to provide connectivity between existing and new neighbourhoods as the City grows</li> </ul>



## Map 6 | Issues and Opportunities

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  | Current City Boundary Legend                                       |  | Existing Barrier (Railway)                    |
|  | 2011 City Boundary Legend  |  | Existing Barrier (Highway)                    |
|  | Developed Land   |  | Existing Barrier (Arterial Roadway)           |
|  | Future Development Land  |  | Potential Railway Crossing                    |
|  | Downtown Revitalization  |  | Potential Pedestrian Overpass                 |
|  | Key Areas for Environmental Preservation                           |  | Potential Pathway Loop (mature neighbourhood) |
|  | Establish Stronger Connection Between Existing & New Neighbourhood |  | Potential Pathway Loop (new neighbourhood)    |



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# DISCOVER



## What matters most to you?

- Protecting natural areas within the city as well as the annexed land/riparian areas
- Pathways & pathway connectivity (in the industrial areas, linking to other neighborhoods, parks, playgrounds and green spaces)
- Open green space
- CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)
- Availability of sports fields
- Fenced in off-leash areas

## What are we lacking?

- Pedestrian access over the railroad tracks, crossing Veteran's Boulevard at Edmonton Trail
- East to west links
- Signage (interpretive & distance) along pathway system
- Historical landmarks and legacy projects
- Lighting in parks and along pathways
- Adequate parking at parks and sports fields
- Outdoor skating amenities
- Public washroom facilities in smaller parks and open areas
- Sports related offices on site at parks
- Connectivity for commuting residents
- Sport field space

# DREAM



## What are your wants and needs for the next 10 years?

- Synthetic turf field(s) with lighting
- Additional district park(s) including a larger park/field space for special events (i.e. fireworks, Festival of Lights, concerts)
- Pathway connectivity amongst the new neighbourhoods integrated with shade (foliage) and benches along the way
- Pathway accessibility extending out to the edge of town and perhaps to neighboring towns/cities
- Designated bicycle paths and pedestrian paths especially in high traffic areas
- Additional skate park(s) on the east side
- Passive green spaces with playgrounds, pathways and open spaces
- Additional outdoor swimming facilities (spray park and wading areas)
- The future Trans Canada Trail system to lead to a district park and link to the path in Balzac
- Additional park benches
- Youth facility (parkour facility or climbing wall activities for 12–16 year olds)
- Warming hut (portable) for outdoor skating facilities

# DESTINY



## Priorities

### The top 5 new amenities:

- Distance signage along pathways
- Separate designated bike/pedestrian pathways in high traffic areas
- Youth park (with activities such as parkour or an outdoor climbing wall)
- Ring of pathway around the city with connections to Balzac, Crossfield and the Trans Canada Trail. Include a cross country ski track along side it.
- Synthetic turf field(s) with lighting

### The top 5 ways to better existing amenities:

- Improve pathway connectivity (CP tracks, from park to park, to commercial areas, east/west connections)
- More outdoor washroom facilities
- Picnic shelters, fire pits, BBQs in neighbourhood parks
- Additional multi-use courts with basketball hoops/tennis and sports fields nearby
- Increase lighting along pathways and at off-leash areas



## Appendix E: Land Acquisition Tools

The following list comprises generally accepted reserve dedication and land acquisition practices by the City of Airdrie:

### Fee Simple

Fee simple is the purchase of the fee title in a parcel of land. Lands are usually acquired at its fair market value. In some cases, lands can be sold at a reduced price, which may qualify as a charitable donation from income taxes. However, prior to purchasing fee simple lands it is important to conduct the appropriate environmental assessment to ensure the lands are not contaminated.

### Municipal Reserves

- As stated in Section 664(1) and 671(1) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) (Alberta) land may be taken as municipal reserve only to be used for the following purposes: a public park, a public recreation area, a school, or to separate areas of land that are used for different purposes. Triggered by an application of subdivision, the municipality may take as municipal reserve no more than 10% of the land or cash-in-lieu, after subtracting any required environmental reserve, or such lesser amount set forth in the municipal development.
- Municipal reserve sites shall: be located to allow for convenient access and a safe environment for the public; consist of lands that do not contain excessive slopes, are not susceptible to flooding, are not legally encumbered by rights-of-way or other limitations which would reduce design options for the site; and accommodate as broad a range of activities and user groups as possible without creating unsafe conditions or high potential for conflicts among users.
- Further, Section 668 (1-3) specifies (in this section, “developable land” means that area of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision less the total of (a) land required to be provided for roads and public utilities under section 662, and (b) land required to be provided as reserve land) that when in the opinion of the subdivision authority a proposed subdivision would result in a density of 30 dwelling units or more per hectare of developable land, the subdivision authority may require municipal reserve, school reserve or municipal and school reserve in addition to that required to be provided under section 666. The additional land that may be required to be provided under subsection (2) may not exceed the equivalent of 5% of the developable land or a lesser percentage as prescribed in the subdivision and development regulations.



### Environmental Reserves

As stated in 664(1 Subject to section 663, MGA (Alberta) a subdivision authority may take land as environmental reserve only if it consists of a swamp or a gully; is land that is subject to flooding, or in the opinion of the subdivision authority, is unstable; or is a strip of land not less than 6 meters in width abutting the bed and shore of any lake, river, stream, or other body of water to prevent water pollution or to provide public access.

### Development Setbacks / Buffers

Development setbacks are another way to protect open spaces. Common examples include setbacks from a river, floodplain, landfill, escarpments and environmentally significant areas.

### Donations

Land donation is a way in which private landowners can give their land to a land trust or government agency. This allows the owner to potentially release themselves from the responsibilities of managing the lands and can provide a substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits.

### Conservation Easements

As discussed in Section 22 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (Alberta) conservation easements are a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows the owner to continue to own the land, sell it or pass it on to heirs, however you give up the associated rights to the lands.

### Environmental Reserve Easement

Where the municipality and the landowner agree, environmental reserve may be taken as environmental reserve easement. The main difference between environmental reserve and environmental reserve easement is that with the latter, title to the reserve land remains in the name of the landowner. An environmental reserve easement may be registered on title by caveat in favor of the municipality.

### Public Access Easements

Public access easements allow the general public the right to access and use a specific parcel of the property. These are commonly used to develop a pathway through a development to ensure access to other pathways, water bodies, parks and open space areas.

### Dedication / Density Transfers

This mechanism allows open spaces to be dedicated to the City for density transfers on the development of a property. Known as density transfers, dwelling unit equivalents may be relocated to other portions of the same parcel or to contiguous land that is part of the common development plan.

### Land Swapping

The idea is to exchange land for land. In an example a developer may have a parcel of land they may wish to develop however; it may be identified as protected open space. The City may at this point exchange the lands for surplus lands it may have in its inventory that are not significantly valuable as open space.

### Land Trusts

They are independent non-profit organizations that work with landowners interested in protecting open space. These organizations may also work collaboratively with local, provincial and federal governments. Land trusts can also accept land donations, funds to purchase additional lands, and development rights to ensure the lands are protected for open space or remain in a natural state. (Source: New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide 2004)

### Deferred Reserve

The MGA allows a municipality to require a landowner/developer to provide up to ten percent of land for a particular development. However, rather than taking this dedicated land at the time of subdivision, the municipality may “defer” the owed reserve land to the remainder of the parcel being subdivided. This is generally practiced if the land is valued more than the cash equivalent but the dedication of the land at a later date is preferred.

## Appendix F: Parks Planning Policy Check List

The following checklist should be referred to by Parks Department staff to assist them in reviewing Community Area Structure Plan applications as well as site specific development applications.

	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Reserve Allocation</b>			
What percentage of land is dedicated as Municipal Reserve?			
What percentage of land is dedicated as Environmental Reserve?			
What is the net residential density for the proposed development?			
What kinds of Open Space Types are proposed?			
Is there a demand for the proposed open space type as identified by any existing City level studies?			
Does it meet the specifications outlined in City of Airdrie's Standard Landscape Guidelines & Specifications?			
Do the property lines propose any issues for parks ownership/maintenance?			
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability Considerations</b>			
Is the subject site located within the Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) identified in the Ecological Inventory Expansion and Environmental Best Practices Report (2013)?			
Is the subject site located within the floodplain zone?			
Is the proposed park located in closed proximity to Nose Creek or its riparian areas?			
Does the proposed park landscape design incorporate any water conservation methods?			
Has the reliance on fossil fuels been reduced by use of sustainable materials and landscape design practices?			
Does the plan include provisions for organic waste reduction?			
Have impervious surfaces been effectively reduced?			
Does the site maximize infiltration and minimize stormwater runoff?			
Has landscaping (e.g., xeriscaping) for water conservation been incorporated into design?			
Does the landscape plan encourage incorporation of Low Impact Development sustainable design principles in parks planning and subdivision design.			

	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Parks Design Considerations</b>			
If programming is proposed, is it multi-seasonal, multi-use?			
What is the size of the proposed park or open space?			
What is the general profile of the park within the surrounding neighbourhood?			
Are there any external factors that may negatively impact the use of the open space due to off-site factors such as traffic, dust or noise?			
Are there any public or institutional land uses such as schools that will be compatible with the parks and can help reinforce the role of parks as community focal points?			
Is there a possibility to highlight key cultural or historical roots of Airdrie in the proposed park development?			
Are benches provided at the transit stops adjacent to the proposed park?			
Does the site include any buildings that may have historic significance and may be designated as municipal historic resource?			
Is the irrigation phasing appropriate?			
What is the design speed of roads located immediately adjacent to the proposed parks?			
What is the exact nature of the proposed separation methods between the proposed park and public roads?			
<b>Pathway Design &amp; Connectivity</b>			
Is the park integrally connected with other parks, public infrastructure and land uses?			
Are there sufficient pathways to promote connectivity with the surrounding residential neighbourhoods?			
Are the streets, sidewalks, community level trails connected to the regional pathway system?			
Does the proposed open space network improve pedestrian and trail connections to the existing and new neighbourhoods?			
Are there any existing pedestrian/multi-use trails, pathways or transit facilities in close proximity to the proposed park space?			
Where a park is bound by two roads, the pedestrian entrance will not be located directly at the intersection, but slightly offset or set back from the intersection.			
<b>Sidewalks</b>			
Do sidewalks exist along all roadways immediately adjacent to the proposed park space?			
If only one sidewalk is required along the public road, is it located adjacent to the park edge?			
Are the widths of the proposed boulevards and sidewalks in accordance with the Boulevard Policy?			

	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Street Lights</b>			
What kind of lighting is proposed within and along the edges of the proposed park space?			
Is there adequate off-site street and or safety lighting to illuminate sidewalks adjacent to park, park entrance/gathering areas, road and linear trail intersections, on-site parking areas and key pedestrian entrances.			
Street light spacing should be designed to allow for even illumination and should be equal to or less than that within the adjacent residential subdivision.			
<b>Utilities</b>			
Underground utility vaults adjacent to parks are preferred to above ground kiosks.			
If above ground utility kiosks are located within the road right-of-way adjacent to parks, care should be taken to ensure that sightlines into the park are not compromised, and the entrances to the park are not diminished.			
Unless serving park programming, above ground utility boxes should not be permitted, if existing could be disguised with decorative elements to minimize negative visual impact.			
<b>Fencing</b>			
Is fencing proposed along the periphery of the park space?			
If yes, is the fencing transparent?			



## Appendix G: Definitions

### **Annexation**

The transfer of land from the jurisdiction of one municipal government to another municipal government.

### **Area Structure Plan (ASP)**

A statutory plan, which describes land use, road networks, servicing, park locations, and public facilities within an undeveloped area of land within a municipality.

### **Biodiversity**

The variety and variability within and among living populations and species of organisms and the ecosystems in which they occur. This variation is typically studied and analyzed at four levels of diversity: genetic, species, community, and landscape.

### **Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA)**

BIA is an assessment of the likely biophysical impacts and changes to nature's services that a project may have. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision-makers consider biophysical impacts before deciding whether to proceed with new projects.

### **City**

The Municipal Corporation of the City of Airdrie, and where the context requires, means the area of land contained within the boundaries of the Municipality's corporate limits.

### **Community**

An identifiable geographical area within a larger built-up area, primarily used for residential purposes. Communities are places to live, work, recreate and conduct commerce, which are made up of a number of neighbourhoods.

### **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

Pronounced "Sep-Ted", it is a style of site design which promotes the effective use of the built environment which may lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and in turn an improvement of the quality of life.

### **Cultural Heritage**

Cultural resources, history and practices such as farming, folk arts and crafts, industry, social and religious traditions, arts and literature, military traditions and skills, woodcraft and other human activities that help the present generations know and understand the people, places and events that came before them.

### **Cultural Resources**

Physical evidence of any past human activity identifiable through field surveys, historical documentation and/or oral history. This evidence includes archaeological sites, man-made objects, historic buildings, structures, objects or districts, cemeteries and the landscapes in which they exist.

### **Cultural Landscapes**

Geographical areas that have been modified or influenced by human activity.

### **Day Use Areas**

Lands designated for the daily use by the public for outdoor recreation purposes and may include uses and facilities such as parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, golf courses, campgrounds, and beaches.

### **District Park**

Means a large scale open space system including a number of open space types serving the outdoor recreational needs of district level population within the city. A typical district includes a number of neighbourhoods within the city and is typically defined based on geographic location of those neighbourhoods within the city.

### **Environmental Reserve**

Municipally owned land which is protected for perpetuity that must remain in its natural state or be used as a public park. These lands are comprised of either a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course; land that is subject to flooding; consists of steep slopes deemed unstable for development or a strip of land not less than 6 metres in width abutting the bed or shore of any body of water for the purpose of preventing pollution or to provide public access to bed and shore of said body water.

### **Greenways**

Greenways provide open space connections to and from parks, schools, and neighbourhoods, and may include wildlife corridors, pathways, and trails.

**Historical Resource** Any property, area, place, district, building, structure, site, neighborhood, scenic view-plain or other object having special historical, cultural, architectural or aesthetic value.

### **Municipal Government Act (MGA)**

The Municipal Government Act RSA 2000, Chapter M-26, and amendments thereto.

**Municipal Reserve**

Municipally owned land which may be used by a municipality or school board or by them jointly for any or all of the following purposes: public park; public recreation area; school board purposes or to separate lands that are used for different purposes.

**Natural Area**

Means areas of land or water representing distinct elements of an area's geological, ecological or species diversity and including natural landscapes or features of value for natural heritage protection.

**Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood Parks are the combination of tot lot/playgrounds and park designed for the primary purpose of non-organized recreation activities. These types of parks are generally small in size and offer children's play structures and passive recreation activities.

**Neighbourhood**

Means an aggregate of primarily residential lots which may surround a central amenity or commercial area.

**Open Space**

Open space in its broadest sense includes all land and water areas, either publicly owned or offering public access, that are not covered by structures. Open space includes current and potential future parks, natural areas, pathways, roadway greens, land for parks and recreation facilities, golf courses, cemeteries, and other types of alternative use open space.

**Open Space Node**

Means an area designed with single or multiple open space types that provides opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational activities for local or regional population. A open space node typically provides unique character and identity to a neighbourhood, group of neighbourhoods, city as a whole or the region.

**Passive Recreation**

Indicate uses that generally require or result in little or no alteration of the landscape and produce little or no light, noise or visual intrusion on their surroundings. Examples may include hiking, jogging, birding, photography, nature study, fishing, canoeing or kayaking (depending on the access needs), biking, and horseback riding.

**Regional Park**

Regional Park and District Park are synonymous terms for the purpose of this document.

**Skate Park**

Commonly called skateboard parks, although they accommodate in-line skating and other similar activities. Skate parks are usually cement structures with a series of moguls and edges to accommodate stunts and tricks.

**Sports Fields**

Developed open space providing educational and recreational opportunities for specialized sports activities; traditionally baseball, softball and soccer, with some fields for non-traditional uses including rugby, lawn bowling, cricket, field hockey, etc.

