



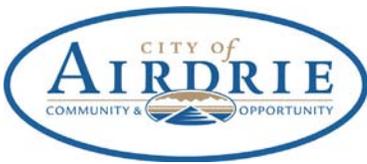
# City of Airdrie Great Places



**Sandalack + Associates**  
urban design / landscape architecture / planning







# CITY OF AIRDRIE GREAT PLACES

## December 2006

*By 2025, Airdrie's Open Space System will be a model of environmental stewardship and a highly valued community asset. Strong forward planning over the coming years will provide Airdrie with a comprehensive, contiguous and innovative parks, open space and trail system. Residents will recreate 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 significant regional events, and will be known as the City of Great Places.*

Prepared by Dillon Consulting Limited and Sandalack + Associates  
on behalf of the City of Airdrie



*“Many of the benefits that a community can expect from the development of green infrastructure have, at their core, the ability of a person to make a trip by non-motorized means. These benefits will not materialize unless the appropriate land use and infrastructure are present.”*

Hugh Morris, 2002

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# PART ONE

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Airdrie has seen significant prosperity over the past few years, growing from over 19,000 people in 1999 and fast approaching 30,000. The City currently operates approximately 450 acres of open space and joint use sites with Rocky View School Division and Calgary Catholic School Division. Additional parks have been identified as part of Community Area Structure Plan processes.

Airdrie has become an increasingly desirable place to live and while some of its physical form does not exhibit a strong sense of place, the city contains many “Great Places”.

Airdrie has the opportunity to put a plan in place in which the public realm will be the framework for a city of Great Places. As the city continues to grow, it will require additional parks and a greater diversity of open space, and these should be developed within the context of a comprehensive Great Places Plan.



Pathway system in a residential community

### 1.1 Role of Great Places

Over the last two decades, the City of Airdrie has relied on a series of prescriptive-based recreation plans to provide direction for parks planning. Most are out of date or the projects prescribed have either been built or deferred in light of other competing development projects. As well, rapid growth and a variety of planning models have resulted in increased pressure on Airdrie’s open spaces. Open space planning, siting, development/construction and maintenance is shared by several municipal departments. As a result, current City policy is fragmented into a number of different documents.

The role of the Great Places Plan (GPP) is to provide a one-window, comprehensive and integrated policy on open space, and an overall philosophy for planning environments that contribute to the building of a Great City. While the plan will still take direction from the City Plan (MDP), this non-statutory policy document will provide city-wide policy and long range goals for an open space system that will be viewed in the same light as a long range transportation plan. That is, open space development should occur at the beginning of the land use planning process, rather than at the end of the process, with land that is left over, as has sometimes been the case.

The Great Places Plan serves as a foundation document upon which more specific and detailed policy plans (e.g., CASP, NSP) will be based. It provides policy, strategies, and an overall general concept for an open space network in Airdrie. More detailed parks and open space plans will take overall direction from the Great Places Plan as they are required. Ultimately, the hierarchy of Great Places Plan at the City of Airdrie, should be considered the same level as the Transportation Master Plan.

Factors in a Triple Bottom Line

### 1.2 Triple Bottom Line Benefits of Open Space

According to the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association’s (ARPA) Urban Parks program, there are proven benefits to integrating parks in urban environments. These follow triple bottom line (TBL) principles as shown:

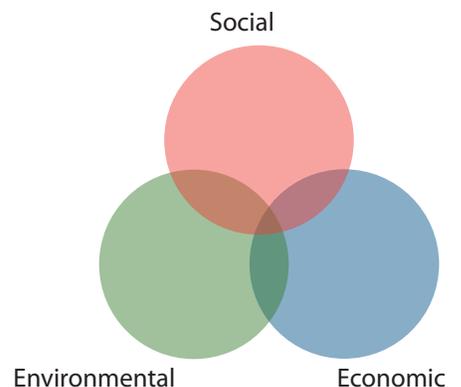


Table 1. Triple Bottom Line Benefits of Open Space

TBL Realm	Benefits (APRA, Urban Parks Program proposal)
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks, open spaces and protected areas play an essential life sustaining role, contributing to the critical environmental health of the city.</li> <li>• Parks, open spaces and natural areas meet a strong and growing desire for natural, environmental based recreation and nature interpretation.</li> <li>• Preserving natural lands is recognized as a wise investment, an essential part of integrated landscape management required for long range environmental future.</li> </ul>
Social & Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open spaces create quality communities. These spaces are critical foundations for city building and their easy access has become a valid measure of a community's quality of life.</li> <li>• Participating in the development of recreation facilities through urban parks and open spaces creates leadership development opportunities that build strong communities, social capital and social cohesion.</li> <li>• Recreation in parks and open spaces links neighborhoods and communities, promotes ethnic and cultural harmony, and reduces alienation and loneliness.</li> <li>• Parks and open spaces help to encourage community involvement, and their shared development and management contributes greatly to community vitality, civic pride and responsibility.</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of life created by parks and open spaces translates into proven economic advantages for the surrounding community. Analysts confirm that quality of life, measured in part by urban green space is a determining factor in real estate values and economic vitality.</li> <li>• A park enhanced environment attracts tax-paying businesses to locate, relocate and expand in a community while acting as a catalyst for tourism and its inherent spin-off benefits.</li> <li>• Urban parks and open spaces also support one of our economy's most vigorous growth areas: outdoor recreation.</li> </ul>

### 1.3 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:

- identifying and addressing the needs of Airdrie residents;
- recognize that making Great Places for recreation and leisure requires a combination of many types of amenities and for a range of activities; and
- providing a policy and conceptual planning framework to ensure long range planning and implementation of open space needs.

## 1.4 Approach & 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, Recreation Board and other stakeholders. The approach to producing the plan included the following major activities:

- Gathering of background data and review of documents, in order to provide a baseline condition assessment of Airdrie's existing open space system and plans, as constraints to future implementation and opportunities to build on;
- Consulting with the public, key stakeholders and City Staff;
- Performing several aspects of townscape analysis including a historical evolution analysis in order to understand how Airdrie and its open spaces have developed over time, and to recognize spatial patterns and trends;
- Development of a vision and guiding principles to provide a standard and ultimate goal to work towards in developing Airdrie's open space system;
- Development of a typology of open space in order to identify the range of open space types that are required for a great city, and to utilize as a tool in assessing Airdrie's existing open spaces and identifying gaps and needs;
- Identification of issues and opportunities regarding open space;
- Development of a concept plan to address the issues and opportunities, to illustrate the vision, and to provide an overall framework for open space;
- Preparation of a Great Places Plan, as an overall document consisting of the analysis, concept and policies; and
- Description of the most appropriate standards to apply to areas.

Multiple destination uses (mailboxes, newspaper stand) alongside trailhead.



## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1 Review of Airdrie Planning Document Framework

Table 2. Framework for Airdrie's Policy Documents

Increasing Detail of Plans / Processes ↓	Type of Policy and relationship to Open Space	Municipal Government Act / Provincial & Federal Legislation (as applicable)		
	City-wide; Partnership-based; Multiple policy functions	Airdrie-MD of Rocky View Intermunicipal Development Plan	Airdrie City Plan; Other Council approved policy documents (e.g., Transportation Plan)	Any applicable Joint Use Agreements
	City-wide; All open space policy	Great Places Plan		
	City-wide; Specific to issue or aspect of open space; Examples include:	Urban Forest Management Policy	Water Management Plan for the Nose Creek Watershed (Draft)	Stormwater Management Plan
	Policy for broad geographic area	Area Structure Plans	Area Redevelopment Plans	Airdrie Growth Study
	Configuration of open space in a specific area (implementation)	Land Use Bylaw, Community ASP, Tentative Plans of Subdivision		
	Implementation of policy through development of specific site or project	Design & Construction Approvals process	Development Agreements	Master Plans for City Park Projects (e.g., Chinook Winds)

(credit - model format adapted from The City of Calgary)

### 2.2 Review of Previous Airdrie Recreation Plans

The City of Airdrie has embarked on a number of planning processes over the last two decades to create plans for recreation and parks development.

Summary of Airdrie Recreation Plans Review (See Appendix for details)

City of Airdrie and Regional Recreation District Master Plan, 1986

- Similar planning framework to approach for Great Places.
- Joint use agreements between Airdrie and School Boards, included as appendices.
- Many issues and needs are the same today as they were in 1980s (including high growth rate).
- Good SWOT analysis of each park and open space parcel.

Parks, Recreation and Community Resources Department, Philosophy, Goals and Objectives, circa 1986

- Overriding philosophy at that time was, “social and leisure services are essential to the development and continued well being of the community”.
- Discussed the importance of maintaining appropriate City staff to respond to community needs for social and leisure services.

City of Airdrie, Urban Park Concept Plan, circa 1988

- Goal: To work toward the development of an open space system that will meet the needs of Airdrie residents and visitors for the long term future.
- The vision for the “Urban Park” was, “a series of open spaces and activity centres are linked together by a comprehensive linear park”.
- Figure 4 – “T.R.A.D.E. Centre Park” – site plan for a destination style park in west Airdrie – Good example of what is needed today.

City of Airdrie, Urban Park Master Plan, 1992 (executive summary & appendices)

- Appendix A – spreadsheet inventory of all park spaces.
- Appendix D – Opinion Survey and Results.

## 2.3 Longevity of the Great Places Plan

The Conceptual Plan provides a framework for the City to implement over the next 15 years and land use oriented policy to give the Planning, Parks and Engineering Departments guidance for developing and approving open spaces.

Amendments to Great Places may be required from time to time therefore the Parks Department is encouraged to review the document every year prior to fiscal budgeting.

## 2.4 Summary of Public & Stakeholder Consultation Process

This section provides a summary of all consultation that was reviewed or completed in the Great Places Plan. The City of Airdrie has engaged the public through a number of other Open Space and Parks projects over the last two decades.

In addition, the City also frequently conducts a Citizen Satisfaction Survey 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. Figure 1 shows a detailed illustration of many parts of this process, and appendices provide a more detailed summary of the consultation processes and results.

Review of 2005 Citizen Satisfaction Survey  
 February 8, 2006  
 Banister Research & Consulting Inc.

In 2005, Banister Research & Consulting Inc. conducted a telephone survey of 405 Airdrie residents regarding services provided by the City. Respondent opinions were

Great Places Café, April 8, 2006





Manicured parkscape - natural vegetation interface

taken into consideration for not only their own experiences, but also their perceptions or what they may have seen, heard or read about in terms of the services investigated. Respondents may or may not have had any direct experience with the City services examined, therefore, the study not only provided a measurement of City performance, but also the perceived image of the quality of service provided by the City of Airdrie.

Overall satisfaction with Airdrie parks continued to be very high, as 87% of respondents reported a good or very good rating (similar to 84% in 2004). Respondents in 2005 were significantly more likely to say “very good” rather than “good” with respect to City parks.

#### 2006 Great Places Consultation Summary

The consultation strategy was proactive in communicating with City Administration, the public, users and stakeholders, about this important project and consulting with them in a timely manner. The purpose of the consultation process was to have stakeholders assist in:

- determining the vision for the Great Places Plan;
- understanding the role of pathways and trails in the overall community transportation system;
- developing a series of policies and standards to guide open space design, guidelines and planning;
- reviewing a strategy for the City to meet these standards today and in the future;
- developing a strategy on how to better incorporate environmental infrastructure in the open space system; and
- assuring the Recreation Board and Council that the standards, policies and guidelines are representative of the stakeholders expectations and interests.

The Consultation process consisted of the following:

- Great Places Café, April 8, 2006 – This Café was a discussion symposium for staff, recreation board members, recreation organizations, and the general public to share ideas and create a vision for the future of parks, trails, and open space in the Airdrie. A report synthesizing the information was made available on the City’s website.
- Key Stakeholder Interviews – The consultants interviewed a number of key City staff.
- Recreation Board Members – Parks Planner met with Rec Board; identify issues.
- Airdrie Home & Garden Show – Parks Planner set up a booth at Home & Garden Show to solicit comments from attendees.
- Newsletters (3) – Newsletters were prepared and posted to the City’s website and provided to stakeholders at key milestones in the process.
- Website – Information about the project, the public consultation process, and any reports and newsletters coming out of the process was continually updated to keep the public and key stakeholders informed.
- Airdrie Home & Garden Show, April 28-30, 2006 – Information about the Great Places Plan and opportunities for input were presented over this three day show. A number of residents provided input and collected information about the plan.

- Public Open House, June 27, 2006 – A Public Open House was held to present the plan process, the historical evolution of Airdrie and the proposed concepts for delineation of new public open space. The event was advertised for two weeks but still resulted in a low turn out. Discussion with attendees was valuable and an exit survey was administered.
- Council Meeting – Presentation of the final plan to City Council and general public.

#### Priority Actions Identified in Consultation Processes

1. The information in the Appendix, provides the foundational information and directions for Great Places. This information was instrumental in guiding policy directions provided in this Plan.
2. Recommendations from Great Places Café (below) should be validated through the administration of a representative survey in Airdrie. Great Places Café participants were united in desiring:
  - A downtown central park to create a gathering place.
  - Areas for multiple activities like special events, multi-use fields, walking, gardens, structured and unstructured play areas.
  - Create a city with 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, and downtown. The pathway should be paved and have a clear connection between communities, as well as more east west connections.
  - Linear paths should incorporate elements such as historical markers, adjacent to natural features, lead to cultural resources and commercial centres.
  - Protect and preserve natural areas.
3. Create a regional natural area for walking, nature viewing, bicycling, and education.
4. The City of Airdrie will require future consultation as a means of directing more specific open space plans at development stages.



## 3.0 VISION & PRINCIPLES

### 3.1 Great Places Vision

By 2025, Airdrie's Open Space System will be a model of environmental stewardship and a highly valued community asset. 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.

### 3.2 Infrastructure of Public Open Space – Landscape Leading the Way

The Airdrie Great Places Plan proposes that the landscape and the public realm be considered as the underlying framework for the city form. This implies a shift in priorities, but would result in a more livable, walkable, and coherent city. The following diagram and notes provide a discussion of this theoretical framework.

The built environment is composed of several inter-related 'layers.' Each layer represents a degree of permanence.

#### Layer 1 - The Land

The land and landscape character is the most permanent aspect of the built environment, with the greatest potential to contribute to a sense of place. Urban planning and design can be some of the best ways to express good conservation practices, and to create places that have a relationship to the landscape. At the scale of the neighborhood, careful attention to the topography, the natural features, the view and the connections can help to create memorable places with a strong foundation in the landscape.

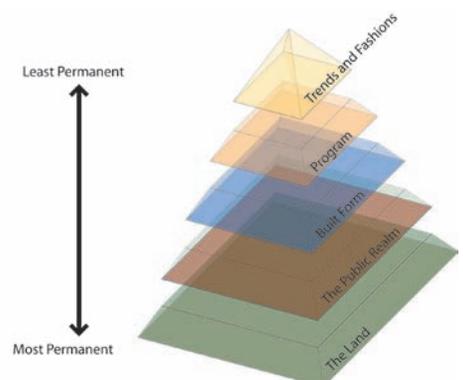
Good urbanism is good environmentalism. This can be expressed through the built landscape.

#### Layer 2 - The Public Realm

Most of our everyday urban experience occurs within the shared city space made up of the streets, sidewalks, parks, squares and plazas. Collectively this is known as the public realm; the city space where all citizens can be by right. It constitutes the next most permanent component of the built landscape. The open space system and network of pedestrian-friendly streets can provide a strong framework for neighborhood and city development. All public open spaces and neighborhood streets should be places of quality, and deliberately-designed parts of the public realm.

#### Layer 3 - Built Form

Buildings are the most visible part of the urban environment, and they sit within the infrastructure of the public realm. Several generations of built form will come and go within the life cycle of the urban structure, however if the frame of the public realm is intact, then the built form has a sense of continuity and meaning over time. The outside of the building forms the inside wall of the public realm, and all buildings have this responsibility to help shape space. Making a good street, park or square is difficult when the edge conditions are not supportive.



(Concept by B. Sandalack (2000), re-drawn by Francisco Alaniz Uribe 2005.)



#### Layer 4 - Program

Each individual open space or public building, if it has a resiliency of form, may be used for various activities or programs over its lifetime. The robustness of built form contributes further to the establishment of a sense of place through continuity of form, rather than continually rebuilding in the name of newness.

#### Layer 5 - Trends and Fashions

The least permanent aspects of the built environment, and of design activity, are the transient and ephemeral trends and fashions. While these frequently add the qualities of delight and contemporariness to the built environment, there is normally a built-in obsolescence to them, and they should be understood as the least permanent, although not necessarily the least important, aspects of urban design.



This framework can lead to the creation of a city that is firmly rooted in its landscape context and that has an open space system that is connected to that landscape and that provides a strong public realm infrastructure.

### 3.3 Open Space Principles

The photo at the top shows a residential street conceived and designed when ideas of the street as public space informed typology, and where the buildings supported the street. The photo below shows a more recent residential street, designed according to a transportation model rather than typology, and where the public role of the street has been neglected, and is unsupported by the building edge.

Great Places provides a strategy 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 its importance is ranked high on Council priorities and long term planning for sustainable environments in Airdrie;
- reflect the environmental context of Airdrie through the respect of natural features and views, and the use of plants and other materials that are appropriate to the climate and context, and that protect and enhance biodiversity;
- 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;
- reflect and respect Airdrie's history and culture;
- recognize Airdrie's existing special places, create new ones, and provide good linkages through paths, good streets and linear parks;
- ensure a walkable and accessible city, neighborhoods, and streets to the community's assets;
- provide access for all Airdrie residents in residential areas within a 5 – 7 minute walk; and
- 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.

## PART TWO

### 4.0 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

Townscape Analysis provides a methodology for understanding, in detail, Airdrie, its evolution and its qualities, and it provides some of the basis for the development of an open space concept. It consists of the following:

- review of plans and documents (including current parks and proposals shown in Figure 2);
- environmental analysis (shown in Figure 3);
- historical evolution analysis (shown in Figures 4 & 5);
- inventory of cultural landscapes and landmarks;
- inventory of existing open space (shown in Figure 8); and
- demographic overview.

#### 4.1 Review of Airdrie Comprehensive Area Structure Plans & Neighbourhood Structure Plans

The purpose of this section is not to be an exhaustive examination of the area structure plans, community plans and neighborhood plans, but rather a cursory scan for applicable and relevant policy, concept plans and development options for open space within each document.

The open space proposed within each of the documents is shown on the Proposed New Development map to illustrate what the future conceptual open space network might be. While these documents are statutory and approved by Council resolution, the City or other stakeholders (e.g., developer) do have the option to apply for amendments to any or all of the documents. Amendments may include:

- the addition for more rigorous open space and park development policy,
- changes to MR and/or ER dedication, and
- alteration of conceptual plan (although this may also occur at the NSP stage).

The majority of the ASPs, NSPs and CASPs provide conceptual plans, providing enough of a detailed park and trails plan to illustrate the proposed trail and open space system in the Existing Park Space and Proposed Development Concepts Map.

There are six (6) plans which do not provide significant detail on parks and paths, or should be amended (or changed at the CASP or NSP stage) to reflect improvements in their open space and path proposal. These plans are:

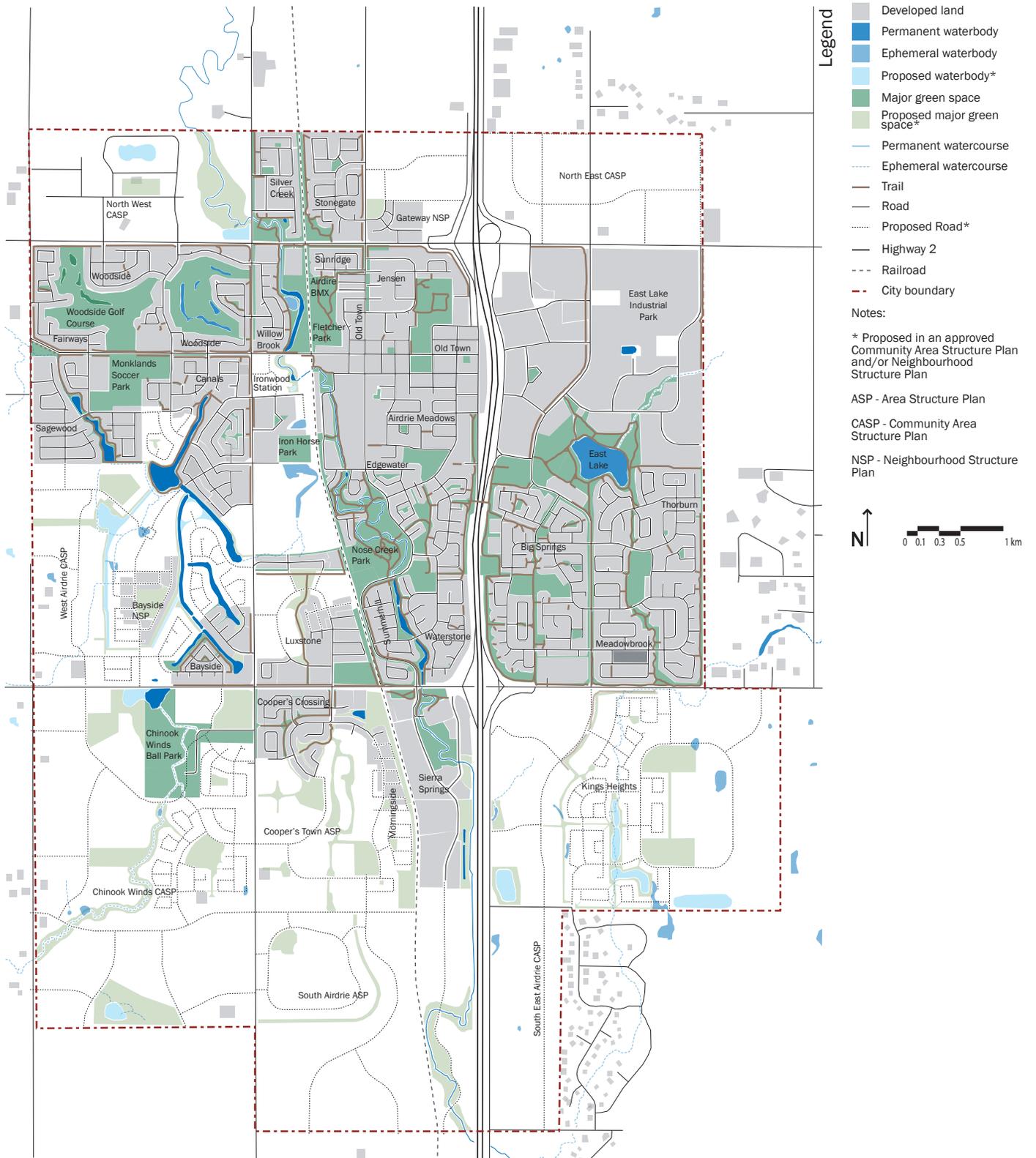
- West Airdrie ASP
- South Airdrie ASP
- Luxstone ASP
- Bayside Phase 2 NSP
- Northeast Airdrie ASP
- Sagewood Stage 2 NSP

For a more information on the review of each plan, refer to Appendix C.

New development at Kings Heights



figure 2  
Existing Park Space and Proposed Concepts



## 4.2 Review of MD of Rocky View Area Structure Plans Adjacent to Airdrie

The MD of Rocky View has two approved Area Structure Plans (ASP) and one Unadopted Draft ASP which share boundary with the City of Airdrie. The policies within these plans relate to open space and trail development outside of Airdrie, but which affects the City in terms of potential connections with the MD and for potential long range annexation of lands. It is therefore prudent to review these plans and provide applicable policy (bylaw) in Great Places for consideration in developing the overall open space system.

The following table provides the most important and relevant information for each of the three MD of Rocky View Plans abutting the City of Airdrie’s boundary. Additional information and relevant policies for each ASP may be found in Appendix F.



Wetland, Southwest Airdrie

Table 3. Review of MD of Rocky View, Area Structure Plans Adjacent to Airdrie

MD of Rocky View ASP	Relevant sections to refer to when planning open space and trails
East Airdrie (Draft)	Sections 6.1 (d), 6.1 (e) 6.1 (g) 8.0 8.1 (a-c)
Balzac East	Sections 5.2, 5.6.4
Balzac West	Sections 6.6, 6.6.1 - 6.6.9, 6.7, 6.7.2 - 6.7.6, 6.7.10, 6.7.12, 6.7.16, 6.11, 6.11.1, 6.11.2, 6.11.5, 6.11.6

## 4.3 Environmental Context

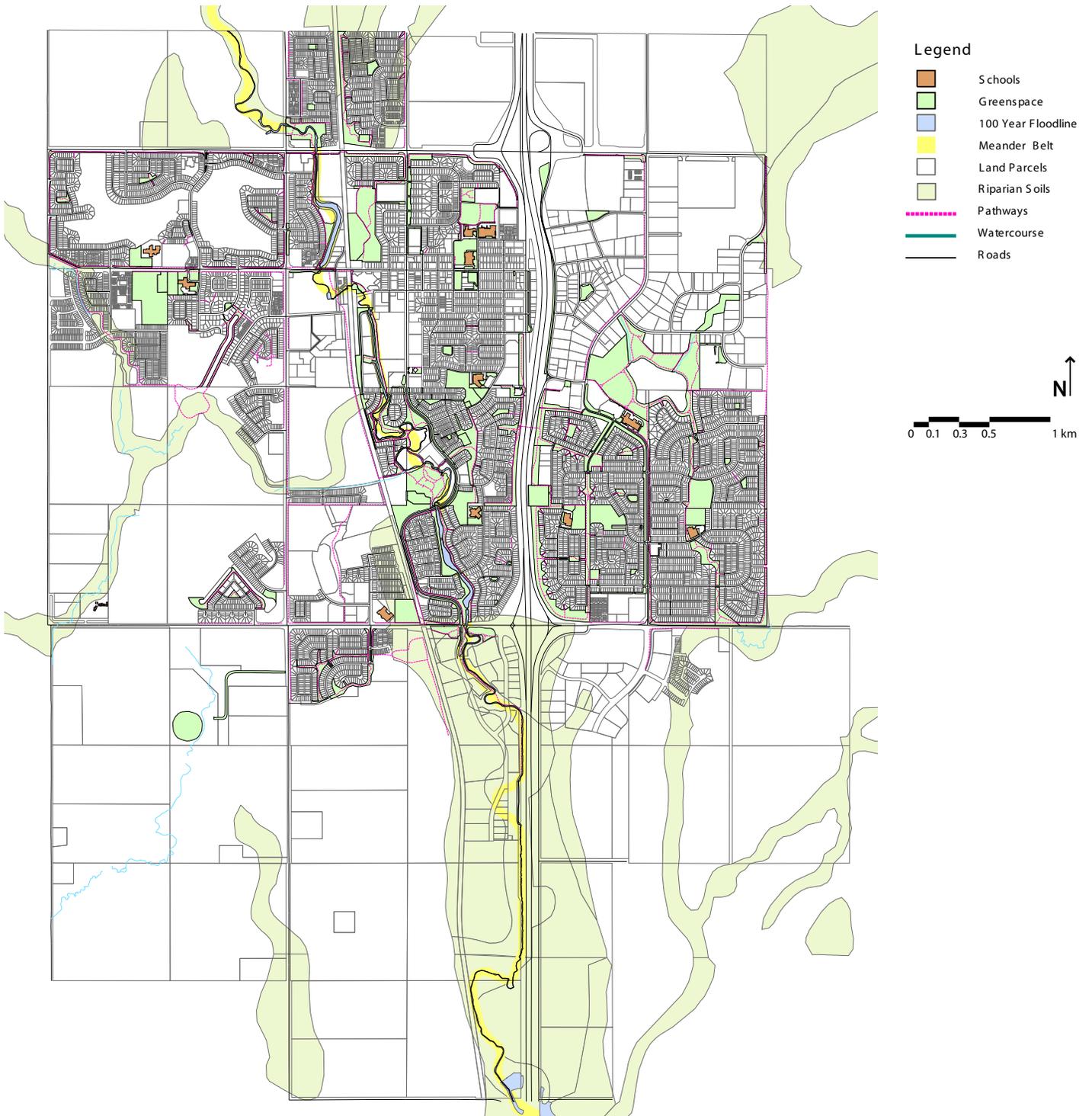
Airdrie has grown over the years, through a series of annexations of land from the MD of Rocky View. This region has traditionally been used for extensive crop farming and pastureland for cattle. As a result, much of the once natural landscape has been altered to a great extent. There are still patches of native grassland that can be found, particularly in south Airdrie. The city is located in the northern section of the Foothills Fescue Natural Subregion. Native grasslands in this sub-region are characterized by rough fescue and Parry’s oatgrass. Sub-species of grasses include june grass, northern wheat grass and bluegrasses.

The upland topography is level to undulating, with a few localized sites of rolling terrain, as observed in west Airdrie. Drainage in Airdrie has been a historical problem, and there are numerous permanent and ephemeral waterbodies. There are three tributaries leading to Nose Creek in the northwest of Airdrie which used to drain that area. Over time, and in part with the construction of the rail line, the drainage channels of what is now west Airdrie were compromised and much of this west side is poorly drained.

Nose Creek is a permanent stream that occupies a minor glacial meltwater channel and is the most significant ecological feature in Airdrie. This can be seen on the Environmental Analysis in Figure 3.

Upland soils are mainly deep black, well-drained chernozems formed on loess overlying till or glaciolacustrine materials. There are also poorly drained, saline gleysols on fine, recent lacustrine deposits overlying till, and a few areas of solonetzic (hardpan) soils on moraine. Soils on upper stream terraces along Nose Creek are weakly developed, moderately-well drained chernozems on fine loamy till.

figure 3  
Environmental Analysis



The wildlife biodiversity in the Foothills Fescue Sub-region (in and around Airdrie) is low compared with other parts of the Grassland Natural Region. The geographic location of the Foothills Fescue is west of the main Alberta range of endemic Great Plains species (Balzac West Area Structure Plan, MD of Rocky View). Because some 80% of the original native grassland in the area was once cultivated and the remaining patches or tracts of native prairie are found mainly Nose Creek and tributaries, wildlife sitings are few. The invasion of northern wheat grass, June grass and blue grama is due to a history of intensive grazing. The region is also devoid of large tree stands.

#### 4.4 Historic Evolution of Airdrie

Airdrie's history spans over 100 years and its urban form has evolved considerably over this time. The evolution of the urban form and structure, and the range of open spaces were identified at key periods in Airdrie's history. This historic evolution is illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

##### Early history

Airdrie became a rail settlement in the late 1800s with many of the workers on the Calgary-Edmonton rail line living in Airdrie. Steam-run railcars would stop in Airdrie to collect water from Nose Creek. Soon after, a local economy began to develop as workers needed services and housing. From 1891 into the early 1900s, Airdrie began to develop as a permanent settlement largely due to the C&E Railway originating in Calgary. Nose Creek was also a significant reason for settling Airdrie due to the rail needing a water source as well as providing potable water for inhabitants.

By 1939, two grain elevators were built in the village (incorporated in September 10, 1909) bringing an increased and diversified economy to the area. Airdrie became one of the premier cereal crop farming areas in the province. The construction of Highway 2 along side the rail line brought even more traffic to Airdrie, and this increased with the growth of automobile and truck traffic.

##### Modern History

Airdrie was incorporated as a Town in May 1, 1974 as one of a series of sidings along the railway between Calgary and Edmonton. A railway station and grain elevators were constructed along the tracks, however an abundance of wetlands and a high water table forced the establishment of the town site to the east of the railway lines on higher ground, and Main Street was established parallel and perpendicular to the survey grid. The early town consisted of a commercial main street and a grid pattern of residential blocks.



Aerial view of Airdrie 1970s

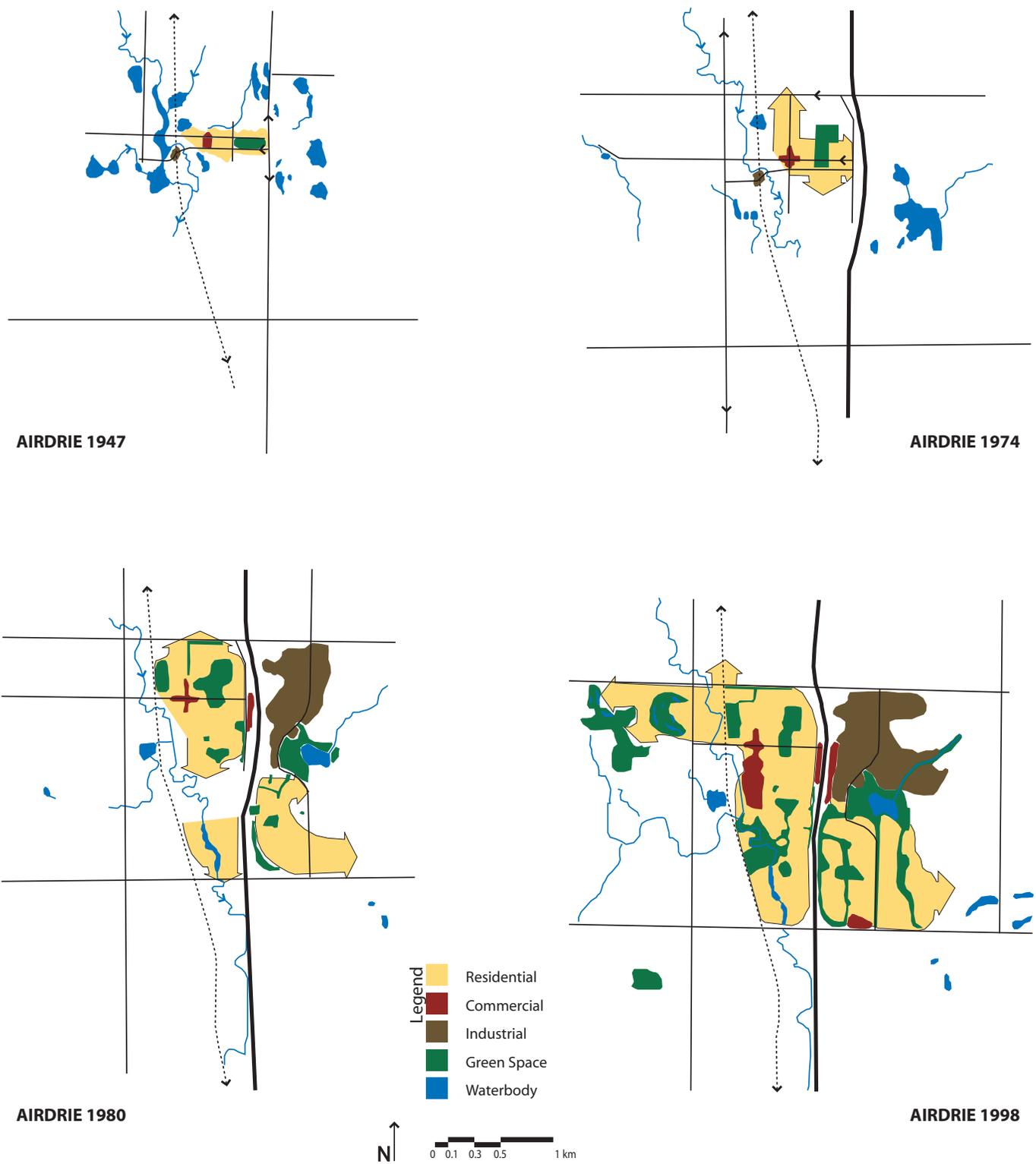
Watercourse feeding East Lake



figure 4  
Historical Analysis



figure 5  
Historical Evolution of Land Use Patterns



Townscape Analysis – Timeline				
1947	1974	1980	1998	2006

By 1947, Airdrie was a small compact village and served as an agricultural and railway service centre with direct highway and rail access. Urban form and structure highlights included:

- Airdrie was oriented to Highway 2 (now 2A) to the east;
- main entry was from highway at 1 Ave.;
- railway station and grain elevators formed a node of activity on the railway tracks;
- the townsite was surrounded by numerous wetlands and watercourses;
- Nose Creek was dammed forming a water source just to the west of the townsite;
- the main downtown node was at Main Street and 1 Avenue;
- residential uses evolved on a grid pattern between Main Street & Highway 2A;
- the agricultural grounds / fairground were located at the east part of town;
- regional connections to Crossfield, Balzac, Irricana were along grid roads; and
- the railway provided passenger and freight transportation to the north and south.

Open Spaces Developed during this Period:

- Railway garden
- Agricultural/fair grounds

Townscape Analysis – Timeline				
1947	1974	1980	1998	2006

By 1974 Airdrie was a Town with a population of approximately 1000, and construction of Highway 2 in the 1950s had just bypassed the townsite. Urban form and structure highlights included:

- the commercial core was still centred on Main Street and 1 Avenue;
- modest residential growth extended grid north and east, city still had a compact form;
- schools / recreation fields central to built up area formed the major green space core;
- other green spaces were associated with churches;
- Highway 2 formed a strong edge on the east;
- railway and Nose Creek inhibited development to the west;
- cemetery to the south (east of highway) was not connected to the town;
- good connections to Calgary and Red Deer via Highway 2; and
- secondary highways; connected Airdrie to towns to the east and west.

Airdrie United Church



Open Spaces Developed during this Period:

- School grounds
- Churchyards

Townscape Analysis – Timeline				
1947	1974	1980	1998	2006

By 1980, Airdrie like most of Alberta had experienced significant growth in response to an economic boom, and development had occurred on both sides of the highway. Urban form and structure highlights included:

- the grid pattern of the original townsite has filled in, and much new residential and industrial development has occurred in East Airdrie;
- a highway commercial strip has developed along the west side of the highway, accessed internally by Highway 2A;
- residential growth to the south has leapfrogged due to the availability of easily developable land, creating a discontinuous and dispersed town form;
- Highway 2 forms a strong barrier between West and East Airdrie, which are connected only by two roads and one pedestrian overpass;
- two grade-separated highway intersections (2 miles apart) provide access (Highway 2A provides a more inconvenient access to west Airdrie);
- residential growth in north Airdrie has taken place in a modified grid pattern; new residential development to the south and in East Airdrie takes the form of a less-permeable pattern of cul-de-sacs, crescents and curvilinear collector roads;
- significant amounts of mobile home developments are located in East Airdrie;
- public open spaces in the north part of town are easily accessible and are perceived as public;
- public space in the new developments to the south are water oriented amenity spaces, and perceived as more private;
- public space in East Airdrie includes linear parks, tot lots and playgrounds, and also incorporates the cemetery;
- East Lake Park has been developed as a water-oriented complex of recreation and amenity spaces;
- industrial development has taken place in the northeast part of Airdrie;
- the railway station and grain elevators have been lost, and this area sits vacant or is used as storage/light industrial; and
- Nose Creek has been channelized in several sections, resulting in restriction and formalization of the water course.

#### Open Spaces Developed during this Period

- East Lake
- Urban parks
- Water-based amenities
- Cemetery (now is part of town)
- Linear park / path beginnings
- Recreation fields
- Picnic areas



East Lake Park

Townscape Analysis – Timeline				
1947	1974	1980	1998	2006

By 1998, Airdrie has established neighborhoods in the west and east, and is growing to the northwest. Urban form and structure highlights included:

- residential growth in the east and west is according to a variety of curvilinear street patterns;
- linear parks and paths have been incorporated in new residential developments, particularly with a north-south orientation;
- Nose Creek Park has been developed and forms a major open space complex in the southwest part of Airdrie;
- the golf course has been constructed in the west part of town, and is integrated with new residential developments;
- more industrial development has taken place in the northeast;
- a big box commercial mall has been constructed in the downtown south of the historic main street area as a vehicle-oriented area and contributes to the decline of Main Street;
- highway commercial development has taken place on both sides of Highway 2 where it is accessed by service roads;
- country residential developments have taken place outside city limits;
- a strong edge is still formed by the railway along most of the west part of Airdrie, with two railway crossings at the north permitting growth to the west; and
- the south edge is defined by the city limits.

#### Open Spaces Developed during this Period

- Many paths and linear park connections
- Nose Creek Park
- East Lake
- Golf course

## 4.5 Airdrie Today

Townscape Analysis – Timeline				
1947	1974	1980	1998	2006

By 2006, Airdrie had become a rapidly growing city with a population of over 27,000 and while historically it served as a bedroom community of Calgary, its economy has diversified and today, Airdrie provides a complete community for its residents (shown in figures 6 & 7). Urban form and structure highlights include:

- extensive growth has taken place in all four directions;
- new commercial development has taken place in the south and north edges in the form of vehicle-oriented big box development, and the central commercial (mall) core is still developing, and has been joined by the municipal offices in a renovated commercial building;
- some small commercial developments have emerged in new areas;
- the downtown main street commercial is in physical and economic decline;
- more highway commercial has developed on both sides of the highway;

figure 6  
Airdrie Today

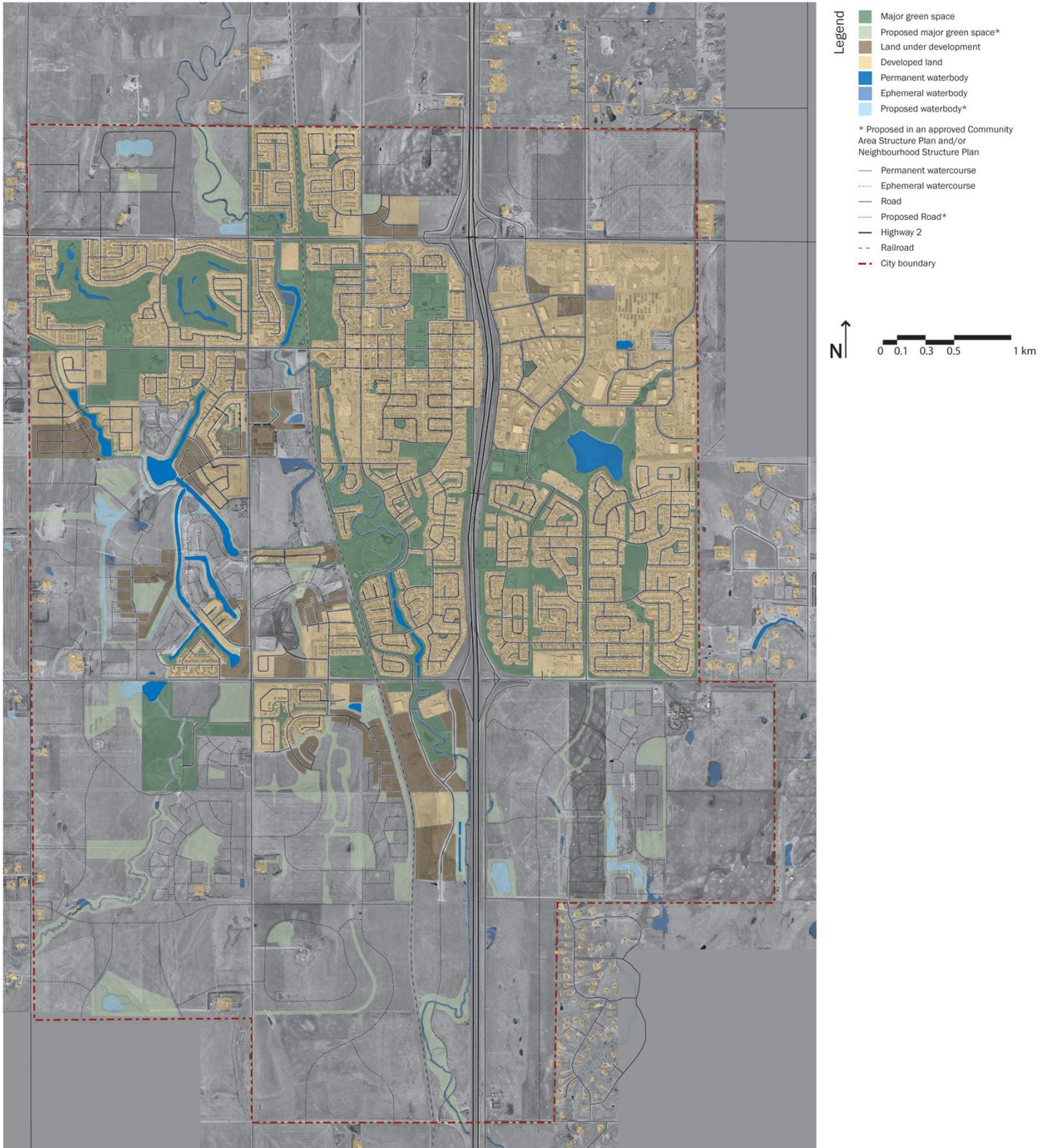
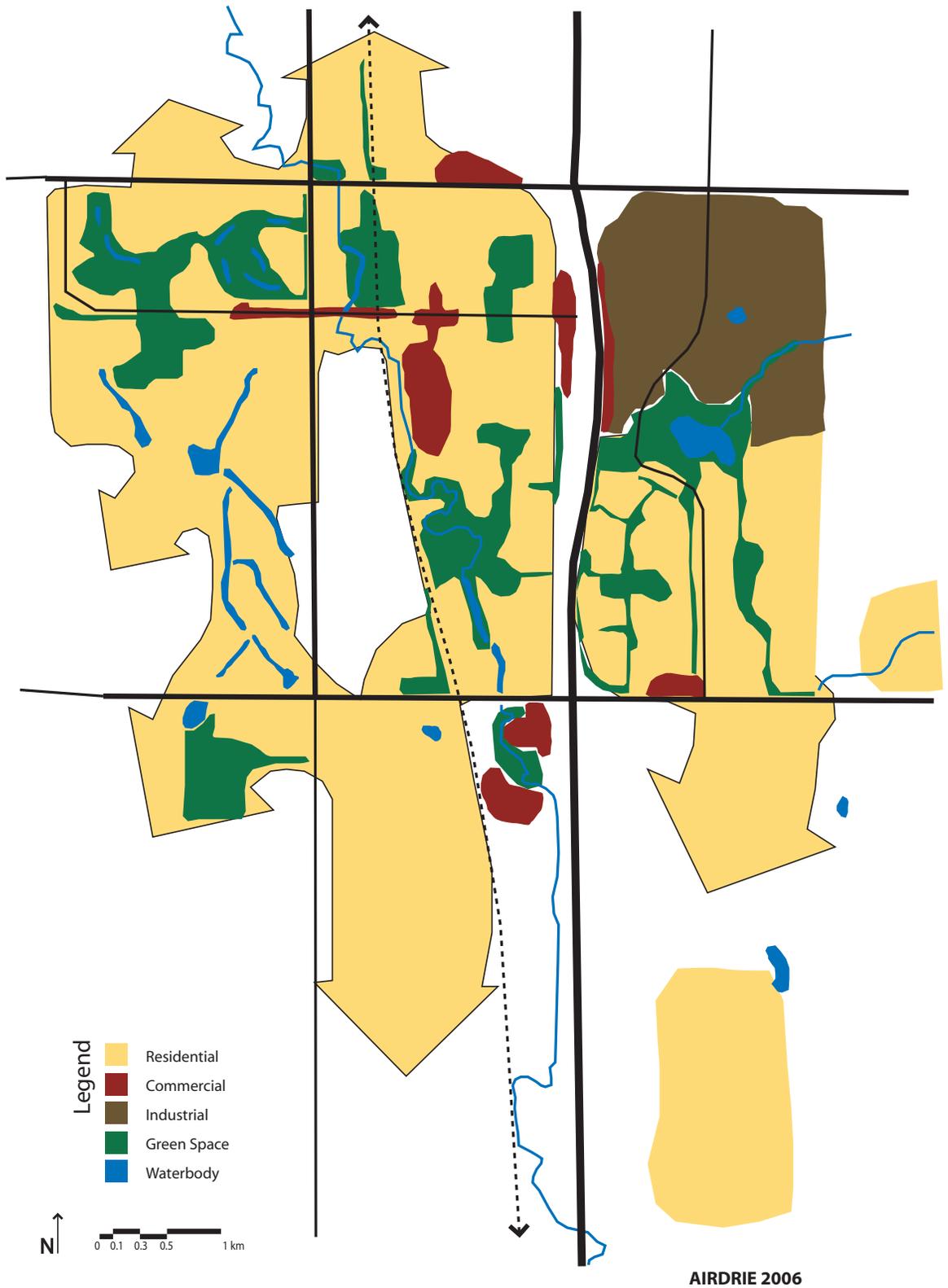


figure 7  
Land Use Patterns - Airdrie Today



- the highway is a strong barrier between west and east Airdrie;
- the railway no longer forms as strong an edge in the west, however there are still few crossings new residential areas are a variety of unrelated forms and are poorly connected to each other;
- many linear parks and paths have been added in new residential areas;
- many new developments are water-oriented, with the creation of “canals” and other water features;
- there is a lack of civic and open spaces in the downtown; and
- the railway lands and area at the town centre are devoted to industrial uses and contain contaminated lands;
- the first in a proposed series of ecological parks has been developed at the north;
- new internal roads form barriers between parts of the city; and
- a third major grade separated entry is planned at the south.

#### Open Spaces Developed during this Period

- Baseball fields
- Linear parks and paths
- Several amenity spaces
- School grounds / recreation fields
- Soccer fields
- Natural environment park

## 4.6 Cultural Landscapes & Special Places

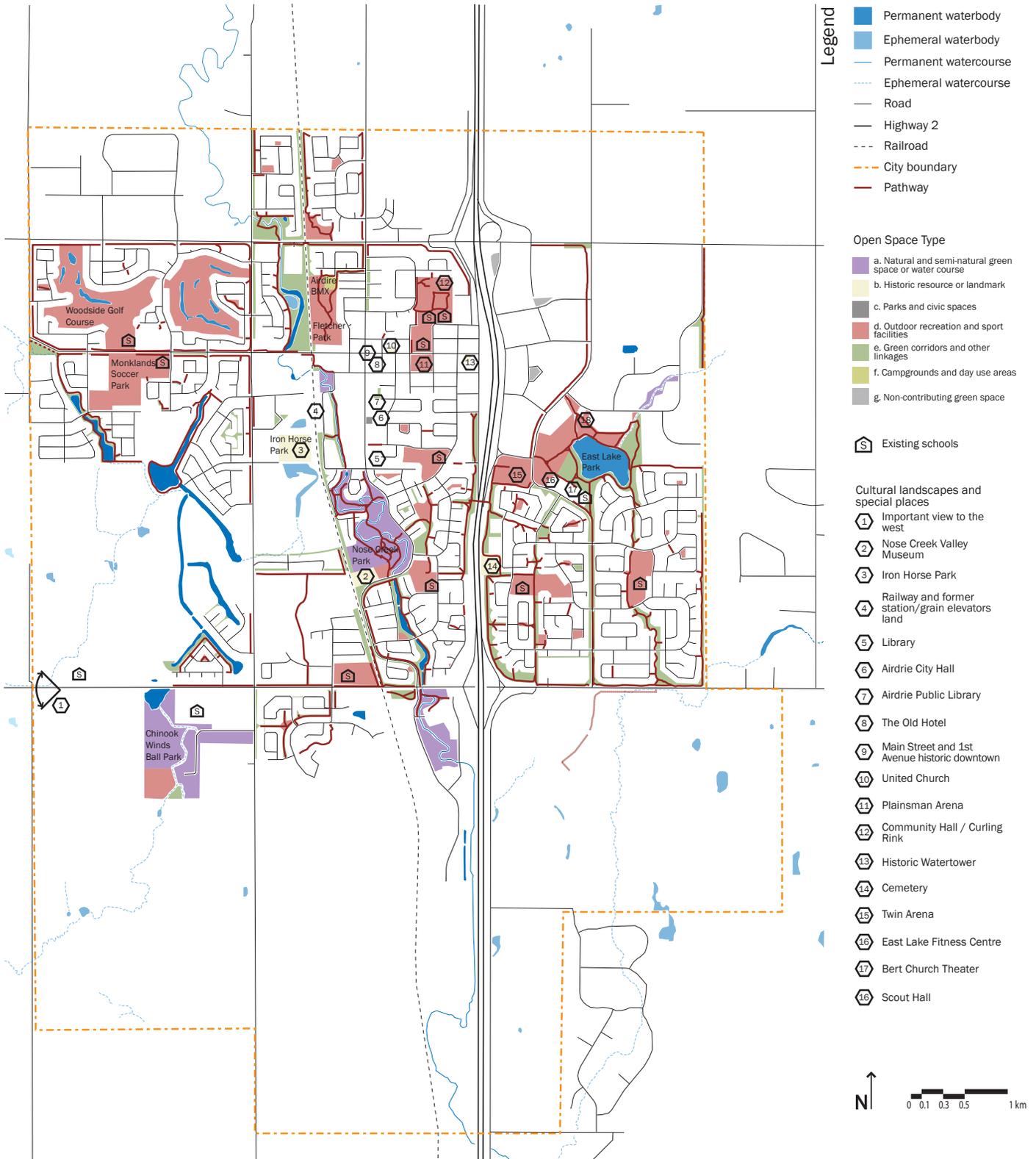
Discussions in the Great Places Café highlighted the concern many people have that Airdrie does not have a distinct and recognizable culture. Although it has a strong railway and agricultural history, it now functions more as a bedroom community of Calgary, and its main visual impression is one of suburbs and big box stores. Airdrie's special places are not as obvious, and should be emphasized more, and linked through the open space plan.

Airdrie's identity should be grounded in its clear and simple beginnings as a railway depot, and also recognize its standing as a new city with all the amenities of modern life. Airdrie also has the opportunity to distinguish itself through its open space plan.

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

- Grid survey system of land subdivision & roads
- Important views to the regional landscape
- Railway and lands
- Location of former railway station
- Location of former grain elevators
- Main street historic commercial district
- Old hotel
- Old town and original homes
- United Church, and other churches
- Nose Creek Valley Museum
- Schools

figure 8  
Open Space Park Inventory



- Nose Creek and Nose Creek Park
- Water tower
- Cemetery
- Plainsman Arena
- Scout Hall / Boys & Girls Club
- Glacial erratic

Many of these landscapes and landmarks are part of the open space system and discussed in Section 5. Several cultural events and activities are important in Airdrie, and are closely connected to the physical spaces within which they occur. These should be respected in open space planning, and path and street links should be strong. These include:

- Bert Church Theatre
- East Lake Recreation Centre
- Festival of Lights
- Canada Day Parade
- Airdrie Pro Rodeo
- Airdrie Car Show – Nose Creek

In addition interest was expressed in public feedback for a public art program, which could also serve to enhance the visual and cultural identity of Airdrie.

#### 4.7 Airdrie Open Space Inventory

This section provides a discussion of current open spaces in Airdrie, and detailed inventory of each space. Not included are trails, ROWs and other non-contributing / unused MR, ER and MSR parcels.

Figure 8 shows the locations and spatial relationships of the different open space types presently found in Airdrie, as well as the public network of streets and lanes that connect them. The map also indicates the extent and importance of the network of streets, and its determining influence on Airdrie's character and function. A good network of streets and lanes provides not only access, but also choice of routes.

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

- 3935 meters of paths for walking, bicycling & in-line skating
- Baseball diamonds
  - 2 shale infield diamonds. One diamond suitable for midget, bison, junior, intermediate and senior levels of baseball, and one diamond suitable for mite and squirt levels of softball, and women's fast pitch softball
  - Seating capacity of approximately 40 per diamond
  - Both diamonds fenced by 4 ft chain link fence
- 4 tennis courts - Multi-use for basketball
- 4 soccer fields - One major, one practice.
- Washroom facilities
- Picnic shelter
- Hockey facility - Asphalt Pad



Airdrie Cemetery

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

- One tennis court
- Three shale infields diamonds
  - Each field measures 78 - 79 metres from home plate to centre field, suitable for midget, junior, senior softball; men's and women's slow pitch
  - Diamonds fenced by a 4 foot chain link fence
  - Seating capacity approximately 30 people per diamond
  - Fields lined by the user groups
  - No camping allowed
  - Washrooms
  - Concessions
  - Playground equipment
  - Two parking lots

### Gwacheon Park

- Located in Nose Creek Park, opened in 2003 to celebrate the twin city agreement between Gwacheon and Airdrie
- Holds a Korean arch, flowerbed, flag posts and sitting areas

### Nose Creek Park

- 1985, Nose Creek Park Society formed to coordinate the development of a 32 acre parcel of land along Nose Creek as a park area
- Along the southwest edges of the City, Nose Creek Park offers a variety of recreational opportunitys
- Nose Creek Pond located in the centre of the Park; many special events such as Festival of Lights and Canada Day Celebrations
  - Amphitheatre
  - Picnic Shelter
  - Fire Pit
  - Concession
  - Washroom facilities
- Natural areas promote the growth of native grasses and shrubs
- Wild life such as the muskrat, beaver, deer, rabbit, heron, ducks and various songbirds inhabit the park

BMX Park, Northwest Airdrie



### Chinook Winds Ball Park (off 8th St. & Big Springs Rd)

- Four shale infield baseball diamonds
  - Fields follow guidelines for midget, junior, senior softball and men's and women's slow pitch
  - Fenced by a 6 to 10 foot chain link fence
  - Seating capacity approximately 50 people per diamond
  - Lined by the user groups
  - Regular field maintenance performed by Parks Department
  - No camping allowed
  - One large unpaved parking lot
  - Concessions

Baseball / Softball fields

- There are 18 baseball/softball fields

Field locations:

Table 4. Baseball / Softball Field Locations in Airdrie

Location	Number of Fields
A.E. Bowers Elementary	1
Chinook Winds Ball Park	4
East Lake Park	2
Fletcher Park	3
Meadowbrook School	1
Muriel Clayton School	4
Our Lady Queen of Peace	1
Ralph McCall School	1
St. Martin de Porres	1



Skateboard Park, Southwest Airdrie

Soccer Fields

- 28 fields located in various areas around the City
- 18 small soccer fields located at Big Springs Park
- Available for booking with Parks Department

Field locations:

Table 5. Soccer Field Locations in Airdrie

Location	Number of Fields
A.E. Bowers Elementary	2
Big Springs Park	18 (small)
East Lake Park	4
Edgewater Park	1
Edwards Elementary	2
George McDougall High School	1
Meadowbrook School	1
Monklands	6
Muriel Clayton School	1
Our Lady Queen of Peace	1
R.J. Hawkey School	2
Ralph McCall School	1
St. Martin de Porres	1
Stonegate	1
Thorburn Dr.	2

Monklands Soccer Park



## Tennis Courts

Court locations:

Table 6. Tennis Court Locations in Airdrie

Location	Number of Courts
East Lake Park	4
Summerhill	2
Tri-School Site	2

## Iron Horse Park

- Iron Horse Park will be a re-creation in miniature of the railroad pioneers in western Canada
- Main attraction will be a 1.5 mile ride on a miniature railway that represents a journey from the prairies, over the Rockies to the coast
- Construction is still in the early stages, however a short train ride will be operational on the open days
- On non public days the park will be available for some charity fund raisers and corporate picnics

## Professional Rodeo Grounds

- Home of the Annual 5 day Professional Rodeo
- 160-acre site located on Highway 567, 5.5 miles west of Highway 2
- The Rodeo Grounds can accommodate 10,000 guests and is used all year round for family picnics, cross-country skiing, and group functions

## Off Leash Areas

- East Airdrie: along the pathway south of the Cemetery to Spring Haven Crescent (fenced area between the residential area and Highway 2)
- West Airdrie: south of 3 Ave. to Sandstone Crescent (fenced area between the residential area and Highway 2)

## BMX Park (Northwest Airdrie)

- 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
- Season runs March to September, racing on Wednesday and Friday evenings

## Skateboard Park

- Located in central Airdrie, just south of Nose Creek Park
- Controlled access and hours posted
- Retrofitted basketball/tennis court with 12 foot high chain link fence
- Quarter-pipes, rails, stairs
- Facility is unsupervised at times; monitored only during peak times
- Only actively participating skateboarders and in-line skaters may enter the facility, spectators must remain outside the fence
- No bicycles, scooters, motorized vehicles or unauthorized structures

**Airdrie Kinsmen Splash Park**  
(Jensen Park / Plainsmen Arena, corner of 305 1 Ave. N)

- Features a central wading 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
- The Splash Park will not be open on cool, windy, rainy days and will close if electrical storms are in the area



**Playgrounds**

Table 7. Playground Locations in Airdrie

Community Location	Street Location
Airdrie Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashwood Green</li> <li>• Muriel Clayton</li> <li>• Plainsmen Arena</li> </ul>
Big Springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Hill Circle</li> <li>• Big Springs Crescent</li> <li>• Big Springs Green</li> <li>• Big Springs Mews</li> <li>• R. J. Hawkey School</li> <li>• Spring Dale Court</li> <li>• Spring Haven Close</li> </ul>
Bayside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bayside Rise</li> </ul>
Canals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoe Place</li> </ul>
Cooprs Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coopers Circle</li> </ul>
Fairways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairways Crescent</li> </ul>
Jensen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edwards School</li> <li>• Jensen Park</li> <li>• Town and Country Centre Park</li> </ul>
Meadowbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marquis Place - Phase 1</li> <li>• Meadow Place - Phase 2</li> <li>• Meadowbrook School</li> </ul>
Ridgegate/Nose Creek Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ridgegate Park</li> <li>• Nose Creek Park (2)</li> </ul>
Sagewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sagewood Dr</li> </ul>
Silver Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creek Springs Road</li> </ul>
Stonegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stonegate Park</li> <li>• Stonegate Road</li> </ul>
Summerhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A.E. Bowers</li> <li>• Summerfield Close</li> </ul>
Sunridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fletcher Park</li> </ul>
Thorburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorburn Park (off Tucker Road)</li> <li>• Thornleigh Way</li> <li>• Thornbird Rise</li> </ul>
Waterstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterstone Crescent</li> </ul>

Nose Creek Park

Playground at Sagewood Drive



Community Location	Street Location
Woodside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodside Circle</li> <li>• Woodside Crescent</li> </ul>
Willowbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willowbrook Park</li> </ul>

#### Fire Pits

- Available campfires for families, youth groups, schools, community groups, reunions etc.
- Fire pits are available free of charge to the entire community
- Nose Creek Park: 3rd Airdrie Scout's large fire pit is located northwest of the playground. Benches seat 60-70
- East Lake Park: 2nd Airdrie Scout's large fire pit is located beside the Scout Hall on East Lake Road. Benches seat 20 - 30 people

#### Airdrie Cemetery (33 Big Hill Way)

- Paths for motorized and non-motorized vehicles
- Trees and annual/perennial plantings

## 4.8 Demographic Profile

The population of Airdrie is currently 29,035 (2006 Civic Census), due in large part to a population spike between 2001 and 2006 (a 36.5% population increase). The following list characterizes in part, Airdrie's population (Source: City of Airdrie Census Results 2004):

- Median age group is 30-34 years
- Males outnumber females in nine out of sixteen age groups
- Females outnumber males in age groups 25-44, and over 65
- 90.7% of Airdrie's population is under 65 years old
- 70.8% is under 45 years old
- 38.1% is under 25 years old
- Average number of people per household is 2.79 in 2004, compared to 2.73 in 2003
- 39.67% of population over 15 years old work in Calgary, or attend a post-secondary institution in Calgary
- 85.6% of the population (over 15 years of age) has a high school diploma or higher education
- 52.2% have post-secondary education
- 62.64% of residences have internet access

Airdrie's economy is diversifying and strengthening which is resulting in an increase in housing starts. The city's rate of growth is expected to increase over the next decade, but will level out to more sustainable rate within that time horizon. The lifespan of Great Places is approximately 15 years. Two population projections are provided in this plan; one representing moderate growth and the other with sustained high growth until 2021.

Table 8. Airdrie Population Projections to 2021

Growth	Rate	Estimated Population	Difference b/w Mod & High
Moderate	5.83 %	66,073	15,418
High	7.07 %	81,491	



Recent growth in Airdrie

#### 4.9 Recreation Trends & Issues in Airdrie

In January 2004, a report on parks and recreation trends (Parks and Recreation Trends Report) in was prepared by a planning student (Debra Korevaar) from the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. The report was a scan of Canadian and Albertan trends affecting the delivery of parks and recreation services. Many of the trends are affecting or will begin to affect Airdrie in the next decade. The following are excerpts and summary of this reports' research.

##### Demographic Trends

Park space development and program services will change to reflect the population it serves. Several of the major demographic trends that influence parks and recreation in Canada are:

- Aging population , there are more adults/seniors/retirees. It is important to examine this diverse group which is composed of individuals with a wide variety of abilities, motivations and interests. It is a market that loves youth and is motivated to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. An aging population will have a large effect on demands for facilities to accommodate their needs.
- Increasing diversity. Society is diversifying in terms of culture and ethnic background and also in terms of ability. In addition to high levels of immigration and in-migration (from within Canada), there are more people now with special needs than in the past. Parks and Recreation Departments at the City cannot assume that the values and interests of various ethnic groups are the same.
- Widening gap between the "haves" and "have-nots". The "have-nots" in communities are becoming more marginalized and less able to access services (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001, Turner 1999, Wickens 1999). Lower income Canadian adults have more leisure time per day than higher income adults but also have lower rates of participation in recreational activities (City of Edmonton 2002).

##### Challenges and Trends in Parks and Recreation

The report examined several key trends that influence parks and recreation programs in Airdrie:

- Increasing customization and individual activity. Across Canada, traditional organized team sport is in [slight] decline, while casual, self-structured, individual activities are on the rise (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001, City of Edmonton 2002). Over the past 20 years there has also been a greater variety of accessible activities and this choice has had an influence on the reduction of participation in more traditional sports (ACD 2002).

- Declining volunteerism. Statistics Canada's 2000 survey on volunteerism revealed a decline in Canadian volunteer hours. Canada lost one million volunteers and 53 million volunteer hours from 1997 to 2000 (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001). The loss of volunteers and their time could have a huge impact on the parks and recreation sector which relies heavily on them to provide many services to the public.
- Changing participation levels according to age. Youth activity levels have declined over time and youth obesity has risen at an alarming rate. In 1998 1/3 of Canadian children did not have the minimum amount of activity required to sustain basic health. This increased to 2/3 in 2000 (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001). Youth are tending to participate less in traditional sports, particularly team sport and more in activities aligned with youth culture such as skateboarding.
- Time constraints and the changing style of leisure time. Albertans are switching to activities that are more time efficient and easier to fit into their busy schedules (ACD 2002). This trend is known as "time deepening", where people speed up the activity (i.e. use a golf cart rather than walking), participate in more time-intensive activities (i.e. play squash rather than tennis), multi-task and schedule activities within tight deadlines (City of Edmonton 2002). Flexibility in the programs and delivery services of recreation is becoming more essential for meeting the needs of time-pressured users (ACD 2002).
- Increase in recreation activity for improving health. Health awareness is increasing and more efforts are being made to increase participation in recreation activities and change overall lifestyle behavior. This change will increase demand for recreation services and facilities. Also, the promotion of recreation's health benefits could lead to more support for parks and recreation service providers (City of Edmonton 2002).
- Increasing pursuit of pleasure and the spiritual quest. The pursuit of immediate pleasure, stimulation of the senses and spiritual quests are becoming more popular in recreation activities today. "Extreme sports" is experiencing increasing participation rates largely due to changing values toward self-gratification and risk-taking (City of Edmonton 2002). Involved in this is the trend towards one-time experiences becoming more popular than long-term commitments.
- Increasing citizen involvement. People are demanding more input into all types of decisions that affect them, including decisions in parks and recreation programming and services. Parks and recreation administrators will increasingly need to include various community members and groups in decision-making processes (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001).
- Increasing emphasis on safety and protection of the environment. Municipalities will need to work towards reducing perceived risks. Several actions to improve safety in parks include: placement of emergency phones at trailheads, clearly marked trails, more park staff visible on the trails and better lighting in parking lots (City of Edmonton 2002). Intervention at early stages to remove litter, vandalism and graffiti from parks can improve perception of safety, increasing the recreational potential of the park and deterring illegitimate use.

Playground structure



## Policy

1. The City shall consider all ages, gender, and abilities when planning for open space or working with developers.
2. Culture and ethnicity within a community should be considered when planning new recreational opportunities or retrofitting open spaces for new uses.
3. The City should encourage developers and communities to incorporate public art and aesthetic elements into open space designs, thereby marketing the space to a broader spectrum of users.

## Priority Actions

1. The Parks and Recreation Trends Report provides good insight into some of the challenges the City will face as far as expectations of users in the coming years (2006 – 2016). It will take time for Parks and Planning Departments to plan, fund and implement many of the projects required to meet this need in advance.
2. Parks and Open Space development should consider the following trends in the design and planning stages:
  - offer less time-consuming recreation options to park users or offer “tranquility” through minimizing the intrusion of development on the park space, providing more contact with nature and promoting interpretive opportunities that promote greater connection with nature;
  - offer more daytime opportunities (so long as demand is present);
  - offer more self-structured, individual, drop-in activities;
  - customize services based on disability, occupation, skill level in a leisure activity lifestyle, level of knowledge, special interests, etc.;
  - increase the area available for dog parks and community gardens; and
  - increase the supply of naturalized areas in parks to reflect the growing demand.
3. The City should seek new programs and policies for effective partnerships involving close collaboration with local sports organizations, non-profit organizations, community groups and private sector businesses.
4. The City’s approach to marketing open space should be reviewed to ensure Airdrie’s open space system is receiving appropriate exposure to potential users. The Internet, radio, print and television provide advertising opportunities for events and programs (e.g., Festival of Lights in Nose Creek Park).
5. Through an education program, Airdrie Staff will be better equipped to identify consumer need, cultural diversity, leisure counseling, etc.

## PART THREE

### 5.0 GREAT PLACES CONCEPT

#### 5.1 Issues and Opportunities

The Townscape Analysis, community consultations, and review of existing planning documents provided an understanding of the evolution of Airdrie and its public realm, and allowed the identification of issues and opportunities that may then be used to provide focus and direction for the Great Places Plan.

Airdrie is a city in rapid transition. Its transformation from a small railway village on the Calgary – Edmonton line to a booming city straddling Highway 2 took place over a brief period of time. Where Airdrie's population was once comprised of people associated with either agriculture or with local services, now much of the city's population commutes to Calgary for work. The original town core is now barely legible, as it is surrounded on all sides by suburbs, with big-box commercial developments growing at north and south edges.

Growth over the past few decades has taken the form of suburbs and big-box commercial and light-industrial development. The City's proximity to Calgary, as well as the demands of an increasingly urban population are important factors in making Airdrie a desirable place to live.

Over the course of Airdrie's evolution, several parks and open spaces have been constructed and a network of linear parks and paths has emerged to connect these. Until the 1970s, Airdrie was a compact town, centred around the downtown core, and most streets were a walkable grid pattern. The Planned Unit Developments of East Airdrie in the 1980s included a range of open spaces, and set the stage for the development of a linear path system, however they also began the pattern of including curvilinear streets with less connectivity and walkability. More recent subdivisions have created neighbourhoods isolated from adjacent areas, and consist of a hierarchical street pattern that promotes more automobile dependency. Open spaces have not always contributed to a comprehensive system or to the linear pathways.

Several issues and opportunities were identified (which are shown on Figure 9):

##### Nose Creek & Other Natural Features

- Nose Creek is a unique feature and an important amenity, however it is difficult to follow the course of Nose Creek as it has been channelized in several areas.
- Other natural features have been lost to development, or transformed into artificial canals and other features, and Airdrie's sense of place is declining.

##### Open Space Types

- Airdrie has a fairly comprehensive infrastructure of linear parks and paths that should be reinforced and augmented.
- There are several large recreation areas, but not a wide range of open space types for a city of its size.
- Linear parks connect north-south, however east-west linkages are weak.

##### Town Centre

- There are currently no downtown public open spaces.
- Airdrie has a small square and public space associated with the City Hall, but there is an opportunity for a more extensive civic plaza.
- It is difficult to identify a legible town centre or heart.
- The historic main street commercial area is in visual and economic decline.

Main Street, Airdrie



- A downtown plan is required (an update to the existing ARP) that would set out a comprehensive plan for this area that includes provision of a range of civic spaces.

#### Entrance Points

- Entries to city occur at 2-mile intervals along the highway at grade-separated intersections. This concentrates traffic in a few areas, and gives importance to the entry areas.
- Entrance points are not visually strong, and there is an opportunity to create a higher quality physical impression.

#### Town Linkages & Barriers

- Highway 2 forms the strongest edge and barrier.
- Several new internal roads have formed strong barriers between areas of town.
- The railway forms an edge, with infrequent crossing points.
- Railway lands need a development concept.
- Contaminated lands form a barrier to circulation and development.

#### Development Patterns and Neighbourhood Design

- There are several residual open spaces resulting from fragmented development patterns.
- Street / open space patterns of new neighborhoods are incongruent and detached from earlier urban form.

#### Streets

- There is a range of street types in Airdrie's neighbourhoods, and these vary in their degree of walkability, connectivity, and urban quality.
- Certain streets function more for traffic efficiency rather than as multi-modal elements, and there is an opportunity to improve street design.

## 5.2 Concept Plan

The Great Places Plan responds to the principles (Section 3.0) and addresses the issues and opportunities, and sets out a physical plan and strategy for the development of an exemplary system of public open spaces.

The Plan consists of an integrated system of streets, paths, parks, squares and other open spaces, and it attempts to build on Airdrie's existing special places and urban structure.

The Plan addresses the provision of public spaces at three integrated scales: the city, the neighbourhood, and the street, and sets out design guidelines for several aspects of the plan.

The key aspects of the Great Places Concept Plan are shown in Figure 10, and include the following:

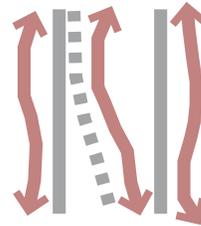


Entrance to Airdrie from Big Hill Springs Road

C.P. Rail



figure 9  
Issues and Opportunities



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Linear park and trail system is strongly aligned north-south

- continue linear system in new developments, and provide better east-west connection
- base linear parks on ecological features where present

Railway is strong edge and barrier

- provide safe pedestrian crossings to allow links between downtown and west neighbourhoods

Railway lands are important physical and historic site

- develop plan for this area that reflects its importance and history

Nose Creek corridor is the central defining element of Airdrie, but channelization is eliminating it from the physical and cultural landscape

- allow the natural creek patterns to be the determinants of open space form

Monklands Soccer Park is a significant recreation hub, and well situated, but with a limited range of amenities

- opportunity to develop as a more significant Northwest node

Nose Creek and Gwacheon Park are a major recreation /community node in West Airdrie, with a variety of open space types and amenities

- ensure that connections are maintained
- emphasize Nose Creek Valley Museum as an important place

New roads are forming barriers between city areas

- ensure that all road widenings are considered as multimodal acomodating bicyclists, pedestrians and street trees in both sides

New neighbourhoods constructed as independent pods with poor connections to adjacent areas

- ensure block and street design provide continuity and walkability, and a range of uses and housing types

Important entry

- opportunity for establishment of visual character

Downtown main street is in decline, and in competition with big box retail, no civic spaces or squares downtown, City Hall precinct is illegible, old town has traditional quality and character

- comprehensive plan required for downtown and established neighbourhoods

East Lake is major recreation/community node in East Airdrie, with a variety of open space types and amenities

Highway 2 divides Airdrie – only one pedestrian crossing

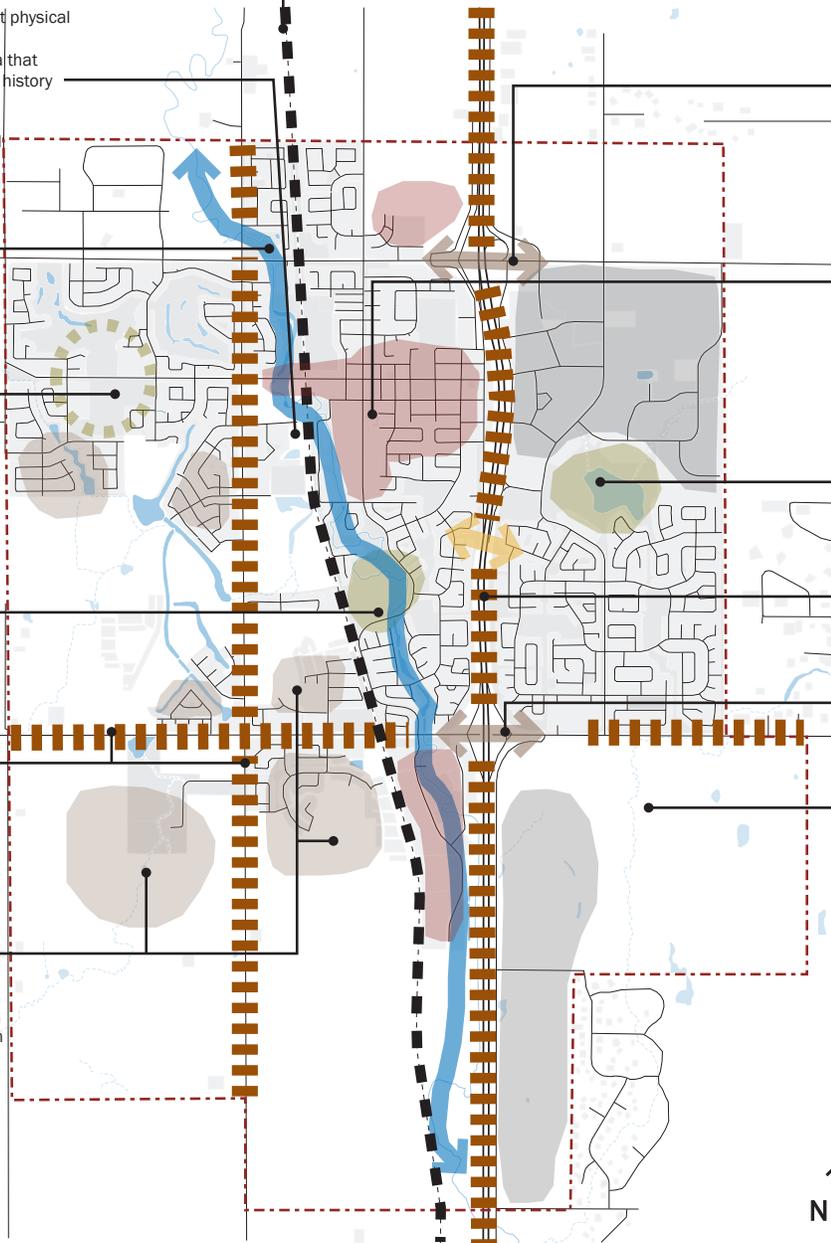
- need for additional pedestrian-friendly bridges

Important entry

- opportunity for establishment of visual character

Rapid suburban growth over past decades has not produced a well-connected urban fabric

- potential for development that is continuous with open space system and with street patterns
- wetlands and creeks should be considered in development plans



### 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 and Nose Creek Park, and smaller places such as the museum. Emphasis and reinforcement of these sites and areas helps to provide greater legibility and enhance the sense of place.

### Ecological Integrity

*Nose Creek, East Lake and the many wetlands 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, and development should be done according to an optimum density in order to protect valuable land.

### 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.

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 at the same time functioning as open space amenities.

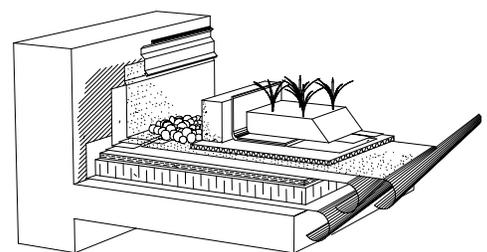
### The Public Realm

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. More recent developments have emphasized private property at the expense of the provision of a high quality public realm, and this plan is an opportunity for Airdrie to establish higher standards for public realm development.

The public realm forms one of the most permanent elements of the urban infrastructure.



Living Machine - Ocean Arks International  
(drawings by Jeff Wolovitz - Research PennState)



Sopranature Typical Assembly according to Soprema (www.soprema.ca)

Green roof by Soprema in Canmore, AB



All private and public development contributes to the formation of the public realm, and every project should be considered as having a responsibility to create high quality public space.

### A Range of Open Space Types

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.

Open spaces are either resource-based (i.e. are found where they occur naturally or where cultural or historic sites have been established), or are population-based, and provided according to accepted norms and standards. Each open space type is distributed according to a distinct pattern, although all the types are inter-related and inter-dependent. By overlaying the open space patterns, it is possible to identify areas of overlap, or places where there is a convergence of circulation routes or paths, or places where there are existing special places. These locations are where major open space nodes should be located. Many of these already occur in Airdrie, and they should be supported. The plan also identifies where natural systems and population distribution indicates where new major nodes should be located.

Smaller open space nodes are distributed according to a finer grain, and are located according to population distribution.

Both major and minor open space nodes should be well-linked to the linear path and street network.

### Paths and Linkages

The Great Places Plan attempts to provide good multi-modal linkages for all areas of Airdrie. These linkages build on natural systems, on existing path systems, or on anticipated connections between neighbourhoods.

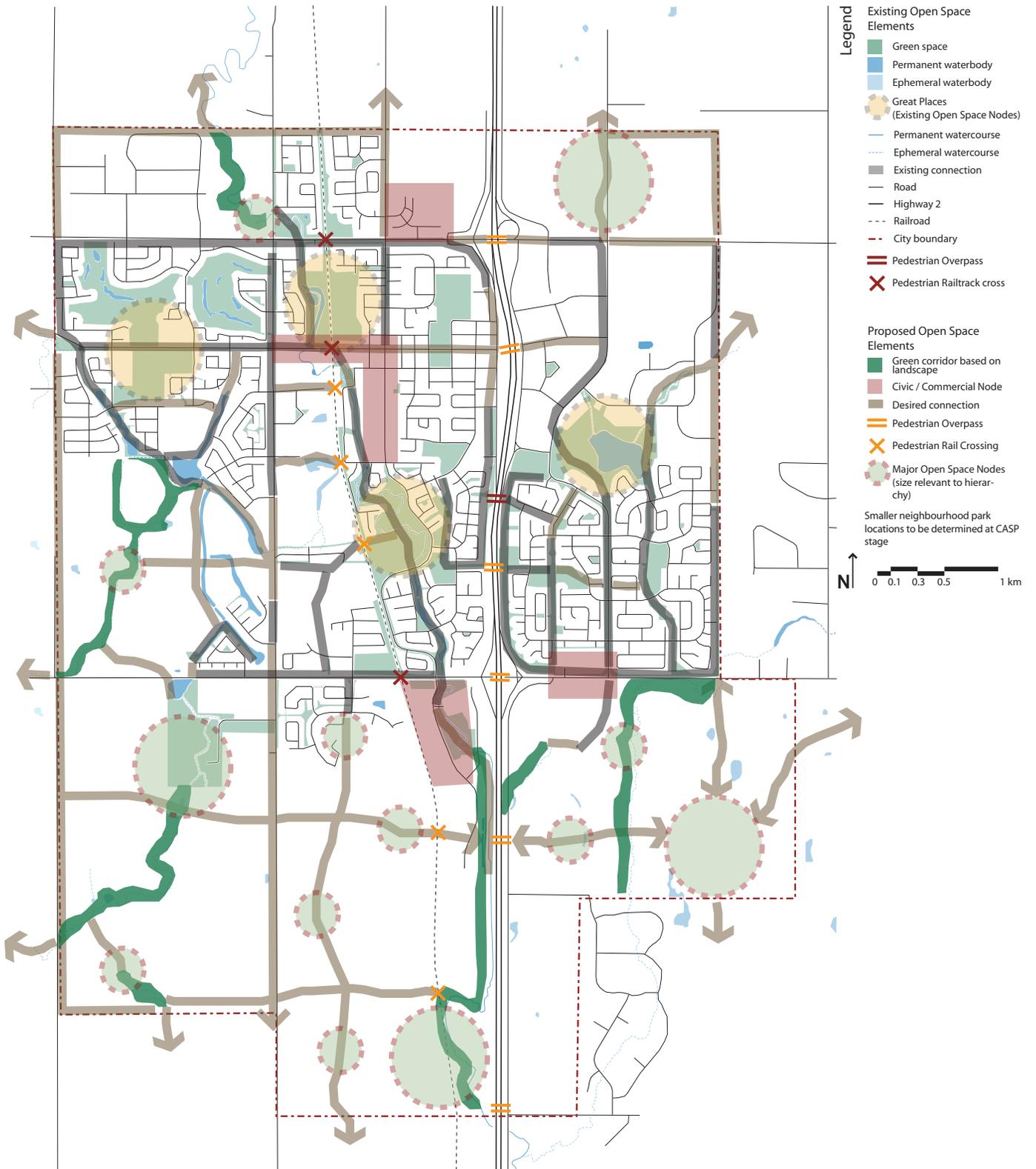
Pathway, connecting neighborhoods



General connection points with the MD of Rocky View are shown, and intermunicipal green space recommendations (e.g., creeks) are illustrated. In areas of interface between south and east Airdrie and the MD of Rocky View, the Airdrie East, Balzac West and Balzac East Area Structure Plans' future concept plans provide the basis for making connections.

Entries provide an opportunity to establish the image, character and qualities of Airdrie and should be developed to a high standard. Entry streets should be designed as special thoroughfares.

figure 10  
Concept Plan



### 5.3 Open Space Types

This section discusses the types of open spaces that are included in the Great Places Plan, and outlines some of the norms and standards that determine the requirements for provision of each open space type. As well, open space objectives are discussed, and policies are outlined.

The language of open space types provides the vocabulary for conceptualizing, designing and realizing a coherent and high quality infrastructure of public streets and spaces. Development of a typology of open space helps in understanding the relationship between the physical form of the open space and the functions it provides. An understanding of the typological framework of open spaces can help in providing an open space system that addresses the needs of a growing population. Maintenance and management standards of each type reflect the characteristics, ranges of activities likely to occur, and intensity of use, and the degree of public visibility and appropriate aesthetic qualities.

Open space types are either resource-based (e.g., natural or cultural landscapes), or population-based (e.g., parks, recreation fields). Each of the open space types can be understood as a 'system,' with the presence and distribution of open spaces a factor of the characteristics of each type. Each type is somewhat distinct from, but interrelated with, the other types.

The extent to which one type of open space is found depends on local availability, needs and circumstances, and also depends on the age of a settlement – open space systems take time to develop, and therefore great care should be taken to the establishment of a proper framework upon which the system can evolve. Each of Airdrie's development eras has been characterized by open space types that have been considered valuable, and over time, Airdrie has acquired many of the open space types appropriate to its population.

Each open space type implies a particular design vocabulary, particular vegetation, and maintenance regime, and therefore the uses that are appropriate and desirable in each space. The following section discusses some general standards and norms for provision of open spaces, however these need to be interpreted in terms of Airdrie's particular circumstances and needs.

It should be noted that normative standards should not be applied too rigidly, as they are based on generalities, and on a synthesis of several sources, and may not reflect the social, cultural, environmental, or economic situation of Airdrie in full or in part. This plan proposes provision of open spaces to meet the projected population needs, however this may be modified to suit specific needs or conditions, and also to make the best use of available resources.

There may be variation over time in how a particular open space is used, within the parameters of that type. For example, a recreation field may accommodate changing sports trends and changing age groups, but it will still maintain its recreation function, and will still require the same level of maintenance. It should not, on the other hand, be modified into another type, for example, into a civic square, or an ecological park (which would imply very different design standards and maintenance regimes), without modification to the open space plan as a whole. This will ensure that Airdrie will maintain the desired range of open space types, and that its open space system will

Standards & norms sourced from:

Leung, Hok-Lin, *Land Use Planning Made Plain*,  
Second Edition, University of Toronto Press  
Incorporated, Toronto, Ontario, 2003.

American Planning Association, *Planning and Urban  
Design Standards*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., New  
Jersey, N.Y., 2006

be adaptable to the population and culture as it evolves. This will also ensure that the infrastructure of open spaces will be legible and appropriately maintained.

#### A. Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space or Watercourses

This type of open space includes:

- Woodlands
- Grasslands
- Wetlands
- Canals
- Open and running water
- Ecological reserves
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)



Example of Type A (Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space or Watercourses)

This plan assumes that the 'natural capital' of Airdrie is one of its major assets. Identifying the open spaces that are based on, or associated with, natural areas or ecological features is important in establishing an ecological framework for the Plan. These sites have intrinsic ecological and aesthetic value, and provide wildlife and fish habitat, and they may have greater potential for certain recreation or interpretation purposes.

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.

What is of value to a city, region, or culture, may vary from time to time. For example, wetlands were at one time considered to be a nuisance and a hindrance, and now they are considered to have great ecological and amenity value.

Nose Creek, East Lake and the many wetlands are considered as key organizing elements in the Great Places Plan. Other natural and semi-natural open spaces are linked to these major elements, and form an integrated system.

The issue of authenticity and ecological integrity is also of concern in the development of a system of open spaces. Each Type A open space should be understood for its particular ecology, vegetation, wildlife, and context.

#### Standards for Provision

- Service catchment area – up to 1 hour driving time, for several neighbourhoods.
- Size can range from 1 acre to well over 1,000 acres (400 ha) depending on resource availability and preservation needs.
- Regional park reserves generally have 80% of the area dedicated to conservation and resource management, and 20% to nature-oriented outdoor recreation.

## Objectives

- Emphasize importance of ecological systems
- Preserve natural features – keep natural, avoid creek channeling
- Reflect / respect different habitat types
- Maintenance standards – reflect natural process and form

## Policy

Policies relating to Type A Open Space has been grouped into four sections: Natural Systems, Watercourses, Stormwater Management and Best Management Practices.

### Natural Systems

1. All natural systems shall be integrated into new neighbourhoods and/or parkland areas (e.g., portions of Nose Creek in northwest and southeast corners of Airdrie city limits).
2. Parks and Planning Departments shall be primarily responsible for identifying land for City acquisition (see Acquisition Strategy) and for their long term maintenance.
3. The City of Airdrie is encouraged to create Natural Area Management and Enhancement Plans for open spaces set aside as Type A open spaces. Any new developments adjacent to such areas shall be required to mitigate cumulative affects or other potential development impacts prior to construction.
4. New development proposals shall be required to include, in concept or area structure plans, a biophysical assessment of proposed developable lands identifying potential impacts on natural ecosystems, environmental significant areas, habitat and other aesthetic qualities (e.g., view-shed).
5. The protection of identified Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) in Airdrie shall be a priority. Specifically:
  - a) ESAs should be preserved and maintained as ecological components (Type A open spaces) of the open space system;
  - b) designated natural environment parks shall be managed so they maintain their natural character and integrity of these sites;
  - c) all Natural Environment Parks (NEPs) shall be obtained and developed primarily for unstructured recreation opportunities;
  - d) municipal reserve and/or school reserve dedicated adjacent to an environmental reserve or ESA should be located and developed in a way that will ensure compatibility between the two sites; and
  - e) in the case of an ESA being identified, the City may require a developer to prepare a Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA) to assess mitigation requirements and conditions of the resource.

Conservation of natural watercourse / seasonal drainage into East Lake by Industrial zone



### Water Courses

6. The recommendations of the Water Management Plan for the Nose Creek Watershed shall provide Airdrie with management practices for protecting this resource.

## Stormwater Management

7. The City promotes innovative integrative designs for stormwater management. Best Practices are also encouraged and the City supports the following management methods:
- Wet ponds,
  - Constructed or natural wetlands,
  - Point source control (e.g., pervious pavement for parking lots),
  - Storm conveyance methods, and
  - End-of-pipe practices.
8. The use of MR lands for new or retrofit stormwater management facilities should be permitted, however the environmental, recreational, and aesthetic integrity of the lands should not be compromised.
9. Notwithstanding Policy 1 above, where a natural drainage course needs to be altered, Parks and Engineering Departments shall determine if a stormwater retention of constructed wetland system will provide the best alternative to the natural processes.
10. The use of M/SR for dry ponds is generally discouraged in Airdrie. Innovative implementation of natural systems and where needed, constructed (wet) stormwater management systems are preferred
11. Where dry ponds are required:
- a) they must only occupy a maximum of 1/3 of the M/SR in a community and if additional pond space is required it will be dedicated as a Public Utility Lot.
  - b) all active sport fields (e.g., soccer fields, baseball diamonds) and their buffer zones shall be located outside the 1:5 year inundation level, and the inundation must:
    - not be more than 48 hours in any month of the year;
    - not exceed six times per month; and
    - leave fields suitable for play within 48 hours after the flood event has receded.

## Best Management Practices

12. Development Plans (CASPs) submitted to the City shall be reviewed for integration of green infrastructure, including the following criteria:
- Has landscaping for energy conservation been incorporated into the plan?
  - Has the reliance on fossil fuels been reduced?
  - Does the plan include provisions for organic waste reduction?
  - Have impervious surfaces been effectively reduced?
  - Does the site maximize infiltration and minimize runoff?
  - Has landscaping (e.g., xeriscaping) for water conservation been incorporated into design?
  - Are the streets, sidewalks, community level trails connected to the regional pathway system?
  - Have energy efficiency measures been incorporated into building design?



Wetlands in southwest Airdrie

13. The planting of trees in Airdrie has a significant benefit for improving air quality, providing habitat, reducing ambient street level temperatures and improving quality of life for residents. Developers shall be responsible for tree planting in new developments to Parks' specifications and also for the maintenance of trees over the first three year period to ensure early growing period is successful.
14. The use of roof top gardens (green roofs) is encouraged in Airdrie. A green roof system is an extension of the existing roof which involves a high quality waterproofing and root repellent system, a drainage system, filter cloth, a lightweight growing medium and plants.
15. The City encourages the practice of urban agriculture through initiatives like community gardens.
16. The reduction of impervious surfaces (particularly asphalt) is encouraged to increase infiltration on site, decrease construction material use and maintain lower ambient street level temperatures.
17. The City encourages developers to employ construction materials which have lower embodied energy for new and retrofitting existing communities. Density bonusing or other development incentives may be negotiated for higher sustainability considerations.

#### Priority Actions

1. Given the future-oriented nature of the Great Places Plan, the City is encouraged to provide collaborative workshops for the local development industry, school boards, recreation stakeholders and other City departments to identify how to best designate and protect Type A open spaces and ESAs for the benefit of all parties.
2. Airdrie should establish links with the Parks Foundation and the Partner Parks Endowment Council to establish programs to help protect Type A open spaces and ESAs.
3. The City shall develop a more thorough list of acceptable Green Infrastructure items which may be incorporated into landscape and building design. This approach will aid in protecting/enhancing the natural space.

#### B. Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark

This type of open space includes the following:

- Cemeteries
- Churchyards
- Water Tower
- Museum
- Historic sites
- Land settlement patterns

These are resource-based open spaces, and occur where they have been established through historic or settlement processes. They can be sites of events of historic importance, and consist of artifacts or markers/cairns. They can also be historic districts, notable or distinctive land settlement patterns, or landscapes created through cultural processes or ethnic groups.

Open spaces associated with cemeteries or churches relate to settlement patterns, population densities, and land use designations made in the past.

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.

Airdrie has a brief but interesting history, and like other areas of western Canada, places of historic interest are often intertwined with the early settlement patterns. The early land subdivision pattern and the railway provided the first determinants of Airdrie's urban form, and opportunities to acknowledge this in urban planning should be found.

The railway was once the functional and symbolic heart of the town, and although many sites of historic importance have already been lost, such as the railway station and grain elevators, there are others that may not have been identified or effectively integrated into the city structure.

The Nose Creek Valley Museum is an important receptacle of Airdrie's history, and is located on a site that has greater potential for prominence in the urban structure.

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 (e.g., picnic tables),
- walking and cycling trails,
- tourism,
- historic research, and
- land conservation (providing undeveloped space, preserving views).

#### Standards for Provision

- There are no accepted standards for provision.

#### Objectives

- Cultural landscapes, landmarks and historic resources are specific to Airdrie and should be identified and integrated into the urban structure and the open space plan.
- Cemeteries and churchyards should be considered as assets in the plan and identified as Type B open spaces.
- The railway lands have particular importance as historically important areas and as potential centrally located public spaces.



Example of Type B (Historic Resource, Cultural Landscape, or Landmark)

## Policy

1. As a condition, all lands slated for development shall be required to conduct an Historical Resources Impact Assessment to be submitted to the Province for approval and to the City for review.
2. Cultural and historic resources should be brought to the attention of the public and to historical societies interested in their long term preservation (funding may be available to the City).
3. All lands slated for cemetery development shall follow cemetery purposes under provincial legislation but the City is encouraged to design cemetery lands (under the directive of City Bylaw No. B-48/2003) with a secondary recreation use.
4. The City of Airdrie should develop a Cemetery Business Plan to plan for the next 50 years and any land identified will be included as Type B open space.

## Priority Actions

1. Airdrie residents suggested the City should develop an interpretive walking tour of Old Town to celebrate its historic and cultural assets. As a starting point, the Old Town Plan should be reviewed and updated to represent the area as public open space from a cultural perspective.

## C. Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces

This open space type includes:

- Civic spaces
- Gardens
- Amenity green space

Most settlements and communities have one or several formal or informal parks or gardens that have civic or ceremonial purposes. This category also includes informal recreation areas in housing areas, green spaces around housing areas, and hard surfaces designed for pedestrians.

These may have actual use, but are sometimes spaces that are left over after land use planning is complete, and may not contribute to the overall infrastructure of open space, and function as Type G Non-Contributing Green Space.

Parks, gardens and civic spaces are population-based, and also depend upon access (by foot, bicycle and vehicle). There are normative values for provision of this type of open space that correspond to population numbers, densities and distribution.

This type of open space should be readily available to all sectors of the city and all of the population. It could be expected that a finer grain of distribution (many smaller sites) would emerge to correspond to population concentrations.

Type C open spaces differ from Type D 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 uses and enjoyment. Landscape

planting in Type C spaces can include more ornamental planting, which implies a higher degree of maintenance.

Type C open spaces also includes civic squares that can accommodate gatherings and ceremonial functions, typically located adjacent to civic buildings and libraries. Also included should be a range of urban parks, pocket parks, plazas and small squares in the downtown and other commercial nodes.

These spaces provide areas for sitting, eating lunch, and passive enjoyment, and 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 the downtown and commercial areas, and improve the vibrancy and economic potential.



Example of Type C (Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces)

Since Airdrie is a four-season city, consideration should be given to design for winter conditions. Shelter from winds and provision of sun-traps will make enjoyment of these spaces possible all year round.

#### Standards for Provision

These types of open spaces are population-based, and should be provided according to the accepted norms and standards.

Table 9. Standards for provision of Type C. Parks, Gardens, and Civic Spaces

Subtype	Service Catchment Area	Desirable size
Neighbourhood parks serving a social, aesthetic, or informal recreation purpose	1/4 – 1/2 mile, uninterrupted by major road	3 – 10 acres
Large Urban Park	Several neighbourhoods or to preserve notable landscapes and open spaces	20 – 40 acres
Civic Squares	Whole city	Small pocket parks, squares

#### Objectives

- Provide a range of civic squares and parks in the downtown and commercial areas.
- Ensure that all neighbourhoods provide informal recreation and sitting areas. These may be provided adjacent to other open space types, such as historic landscapes or landmarks, recreation fields, or paths.

#### Policy

1. A community needs assessment should be conducted to determine the desirable locations and types of spaces that are required.
2. The downtown and commercial areas shall include design and development of a range of appropriate civic spaces.
3. The design of urban spaces shall adhere to good urban design principles, and be safe and accessible and shall include appropriate landscape planting.

4. All Type C open spaces shall be well connected to adjacent areas by high quality sidewalks and paths.
5. Type C open spaces should be designed for four-season, all-time use, and include appropriate:
  - surface materials
  - benches and seating
  - landscape materials
  - barrier free design, and
  - lighting.

#### Priority Actions

1. A Downtown Plan should include the provision of a range of civic spaces, including a municipal plaza associated with the city hall/library precinct, and other smaller civic spaces.
2. The City should consider adoption of density bonusing through which developers would receive an increase in developable space in exchange for the provision of appropriate public open space that contributes to the overall open space system.
3. Since the provision of civic spaces can enhance the economic potential of businesses downtown and in other commercial areas, and increase the quality of public life, the City is encouraged to examine the potential for off-site levies to business owners' payable to the City or through a local business owner's group (e.g., Business Revitalization Zone).
4. Neighbourhood development plans shall include provision of Type C parks according to the normative standards outlined in this plan. Connections to the neighbourhood and to linear path systems shall be clearly illustrated.

#### D. Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

This open space type includes:

- Tot Lots
- Playgrounds
- Sports Fields
- School and Institutional Playing Fields
- Tennis Courts
- Golf Courses
- Skateboard Parks / BMX Parks and Tracks
- Splash parks/activity parks

Example of Type D (Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities)



These are spaces that are designed for active sports and recreation uses. They vary in their degree of publicness (tennis courts and golf courses often function on a fee-for-service), 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 specifics may change over time as certain activities become more or less popular, for example skateboarding has emerged as a more recent activity requiring specialized facilities.

The distribution of open spaces of this type is population-based. Playing fields have a larger catchment area than playgrounds and tot lots, and have a somewhat coarser grain of distribution. 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.

The requirement for different types of sports and recreation facilities varies from place to place, and from time to time. Also, the need can be affected by the supply – there is often no demand for a particular facility until one is provided in a place. Some activities are also subject to trends, and may only be in demand for a finite period of time. There is also significant opportunity for the joint use of many of these facilities (schools and community associations, other groups).

#### Standards for Provision

These types of open spaces are population-based, and should be provided according to the accepted norms and standards.

Table 10. Standards for provision of Type D Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

Subtype	Acres/ha per 1000 pop.	Service Catchment Area	Desirable size
Tot Lot	0.25 - 0.5 acres	Radius <1/4 mile	<1 acre
Neighbourhood Park / Playground	1 - 2 acres	Radius 1/4 - 1/2 mile for a population <5,000	>15 acres
Athletic Complex	5 - 8 acres	Radius 1 - 2 miles	>25 acres
Large combined athletic complex and other athletic facilities, tournament level facilities	Varies	Regional	20 - 80 acres



Golf course

Table 11. Norms for provision of some sport facilities

Sports fields/recreation facility	Standard per population	Airdrie 2006 (pop.: 29,035)
Baseball diamonds	1/6,000	1/1,708
Softball diamonds	1/3,000	
Tennis courts	1/2,000	1/3,629
Soccer fields	1/2,000	1/1,037
Basketball courts	1/500	n/a
Swimming pools – 25 meter	1/10,000	1/29,035
Swimming pools – 50 meter	1/20,000	
Skating rinks	1/30,000	1/14,517
Golf course	1/25,000	1/29,035

#### Sports Fields & Joint Use Sites

The City of Airdrie has historically kept up with or exceeded the expectations of the public and sport groups by offering sports field locations at the District, City-wide and community levels. As Airdrie's population continues to grow, the City can expect that shortages in field availability may result. Escalating land prices and diminishing availability will be limiting factors in terms of developing larger-scale park spaces. Reserve dedication to the City may be the primary means for park development in the next 10 – 15 years.

Table 12. Current quantity and needs for some sport facilities

Sports fields/recreation facilities	Standard per population (1per)	Current	Based on population should have:			
		2006 29,035	2006 29,035	2011 41,156	2016 57,912	2021 81,491
Baseball diamonds	6,000	17	4.84	6.86	9.65	13.58
Softball diamonds	3,000		9.68	13.72	19.30	27.16
Tennis courts	2,000	8	14.52	20.58	28.96	40.75
Soccer fields	2,000	28	14.52	20.58	28.96	40.75
Basketball courts	500	n/a	58.07	82.31	115.82	162.98
Swimming pools	10,000	1	1.45	2.06	2.90	4.07
Skating rinks	30,000	2	0.97	1.37	1.93	2.72
Golf course	25,000	1	1.16	1.65	2.32	3.26

Playground on MR land



User reports from the City and other jurisdictions show that these facilities are largely unused during the daytime hours (i.e., 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) unless the fields are established as a joint use site between the municipality and school board.

What these facilities do offer, is a variety of organized sports to a cross section of ages, play levels and informal (unorganized) sports for the same.

## Golf Courses

Airdrie currently has one golf course located in northwest Airdrie which is owned by the City and leased to a private contractor for operation. The policies in this plan extend primarily to City-owned courses but any private courses developed in Airdrie will be a part of the overall open space system.

## Emerging Sports

The emergence of newer sports is changing the way recreation spaces are designed. Once thought of as “extreme” sports – skateboarding, inline skating and BMX are fast becoming mainstream activities in urban centres and in many cases, are overtaking traditional team-based sports. Competition amongst participants is also becoming very popular as is the case with Airdrie’s BMX facility north of Fletcher Park. Trends show that these sports will continue to grow and the availability of facilities in Airdrie needs to be addressed.

Although dedicated skateboard parks are popular in many cities, it is also recommended that Airdrie provide some skateboard/inline skating infrastructure throughout the city, so that users can more easily access these facilities. This will also be a more economical way for Airdrie to provide facilities, and will be a way to encourage more diversity and mix of populations in the recreation areas.

## Objectives

- The City of Airdrie should continue to provide a range of Type D open spaces to address a range of sports and recreation needs for all sectors of the population.
- Where possible, a range of recreation and sports facilities should be included in one area, to avoid over-specialization of open spaces, and to encourage development of more multi-use and vibrant recreation nodes.

## Policy

1. The primary role for Type D Outdoor Sport and Recreation Fields is in the provision of fields for entry level sports.
2. Major sport and recreation nodes/athletic parks shall be built to accommodate advanced levels of play and will be generally acquired through a partnership arrangement.
3. The Parks Department shall examine all opportunities for retrofitting and intensifying existing sports fields prior to building new sites.
4. Any retrofitted or new sports fields shall be designed to accommodate alternative field uses in off peak hours and during the off-season.
5. 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.”



Outdoor skating rink, East Lake Park

Soccer field, Monklands



6. All neighborhood sports fields and parks, especially those located in conjunction with community centres should be restricted to informal rather than advanced-level organized sports. For example, all neighbourhood softball fields should have grassed infields in order to encourage multi-use of the site.
7. Land dedicated in commercial or industrial areas may be suitable for sports field development, dependant on adjacent land use and connection to the site by regional pathway.
8. Public golf courses shall be supported by the City but no new public courses should be developed until the usage rate of the existing course is 95% over the course of the playing season.
9. Partnerships (for example, the public-private arrangement between Airdrie and its first golf course) shall be sought when considering developing a new course.
10. Golf courses and major sport and recreation facilities should be designed to encourage multiple uses year round (e.g., cross-country skiing).

#### Priority Actions

1. The City should develop a “Sports Fields Management Plan” to address at a minimum: user issues, cost recovery strategies, utilization / underutilization, seasonality of use and ways to improve booking and programming.
2. Emerging, non-traditional sports groups (e.g., skateboarding, BMX, inline skating) should be encouraged by the City to assist in reviewing underutilized sports fields or indoor facilities for opportunities to retrofit and adapt those sites for their use and/or investigating industrial lands for such uses.
3. Chinook Winds and future adjacent park development shall be the primary focus for major sports field development over the next five years.
4. The City of Airdrie is encouraged to negotiate with local School Boards, in seeking an option of upgrading fee-simple open space and park sites and increasing their level of maintenance.

#### E. Linear Systems, Green Corridors & Other Linkages

This open space type includes:

- Paths
- Bikeways
- Trails
- Rights-of-way
- Streets

Green corridors are important as recreation pathways and access points to ecological areas and recreation fields, and many are related to existing green spaces. Other linkages

between open spaces may already exist, and one of the purposes of this project is to identify where potential linkages between individual open spaces, open space clusters, or population concentrations may be strengthened.

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.

Ordinary streets are also part of the open space system. Street design is discussed in a later section of this plan.

#### Standards for Provision

- 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.

#### Pathways / Trails

The City of Airdrie manages a regional multi-use trail system as well as a neighborhood level pathway system with non-traditional linkages (e.g., downtown sidewalks) to fill in weak 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 tributary pathway system provides multi-modal circulation for commuters, school students and for recreation. Users of Airdrie's path system include walking, running, cycling, inline skating and skateboarding.

There are many social, environmental and economic benefits to utilizing non-motorized transportation. However, there are several commonly agreed upon constraints to planning, design and operation of linear recreation systems (e.g., regional pathway):

- meeting the needs of multiple users, together with increasing use levels and an increase in overall speed of pathway users;
- integration of pathway and bikeway facilities to create a seamless recreation and transportation system;
- giving access to natural areas (and ESAs) while ensuring that the habitat quality and sustainability are protected;
- retrofitting "missing links" in the regional system especially in areas that are already built up; and
- funding new or retrofit projects and the long term financial sustainability of the system.

#### Right-of-Way (Roadway) Greens

Right-of-Ways (ROW) provide area for infrastructure improvements and also act as utility easements. While there are many ROW open spaces that are considered "unusable" as open space, there are still others which may be incorporated into the open space system. Moreover, a ROW considered unusable from an active open space perspective may still offer "visual relief" from the built environment and provide a buffer zone between the built and roads or rail lines (as is the case with Airdrie's CPR line).



Pathway, good signage

Right-of-Way



Parks can work with Engineering to retrofit existing ROWs (e.g., installation of benches) so they become part of the open space system and through the development of alternative road construction standards, new ROWs can be constructed to better meet multiple needs in the community.

#### Objectives

- Open space nodes and all major parks and open spaces should be linked by a multi-modal path system.
- New development should link to the existing open space system.

#### Policy

1. Community level 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.
2. The regional pathway connections should be routed along the edges of ESAs or into locations with less sensitivity to the natural ecology to minimize the impact on the natural space and to minimize desire lines.
3. The City of Airdrie shall support, enhance and expand both the community level and regional pathway system to promote healthy living, and sustainable recreation and transportation. Optimally, 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 (e.g., posting speed limits).
4. Any widening of 8 Street in West Airdrie should ensure that sidewalks and/or pathways are provided on both the east and west side of the road.
5. The City should consider increasing the width of pathways from 2.5 to 3.0 m wide asphalt top.
6. The alignment of Airdrie's regional pathway system should be designed with connections through parks, where possible.
7. The City should collaborate with the MD of Rocky View to seek opportunities to connect Airdrie's regional pathway with the MD (if applicable).
8. An inventory of existing ROWs is shown in Figure 8 of the Great Places Plan. The existing system shall be reviewed by Parks, Planning and Engineering Departments to determine usefulness of the spaces for integration with the open space system.
9. The City shall ensure that when possible, ROW spaces are left in their natural state of vegetation. Stripping of topsoil and replanting with highly maintained turfgrasses should be discouraged.

#### Priority Actions

1. Figure 8 illustrates the existing regional pathway for Airdrie. New alignments for

regional paths and sub-regional (community level) are identified conceptually and should be reviewed annually through a multi-departmental committee to ensure it is in keeping with the City's policy and infrastructure direction.

2. More detailed locations and alignment of the regional and community level pathway system is to be determined at the Area or Neighborhood Structure Plan level and should be finalized at the CASP and construction plan stages.
3. A priority for the City of Airdrie is to concentrate on gaps in the existing pathway system in the downtown and established neighborhoods. These gaps are illustrated in the concept plan.
4. An interdepartmental committee at the City should be formed to review the City's roads and sidewalk standards and provide alternative designs that integrate better with the open space system.

#### F. Campgrounds & Day Use / Picnic Areas

This type of open space includes:

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

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.

Campgrounds and day use areas should be located within access of all of the population, but are best located in association with either an ecological feature or a cultural landscape. Road access is a requirement.

There are currently no campgrounds or day use areas in Airdrie reserved for the purposes of the traveling public. 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. The City should respond to the numerous requests for a camping area, particularly for visitors taking part in local sporting events.

#### Standards for Provision

- 5-10 acres/1000 population (2 - 4 ha).
- Service catchment area 1 hour driving time, for several neighbourhoods.
- Desirable size > 200 acres (80 ha).

#### Objectives

- Find an adequate site for camping (tent and tent-trailer) within Airdrie's city limits.
- Provide day use facilities (washrooms, showers, kitchen facility) for traveling public.



Areas of Nose Creek Park are examples of Type F (Campgrounds & Day Use / Picnic Areas)

### Policy

1. The City of Airdrie is encouraged to respond to desires for a campground facility located within city limits.
2. Siting 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.
3. Rules and regulations for the campground must be strictly enforced by the City of Airdrie or third party contractor.
4. Facilities associated with the campground may be used by day-use visitors on a fee for use basis.
5. The siting, design and planning for a campground use in Airdrie shall be done with the involvement of the public and stakeholders.
6. The City is encouraged to site a campground in the northeast corner of Airdrie within a future industrial area.

### Priority Actions

1. The City should conduct a Best Practices Review of urban campgrounds in North America as a starting point for considering this use in Airdrie.
2. The Section on Open Space Nodes discusses opportunities for siting a campground in the future northeast Airdrie industrial area. The City may wish to commission a study to evaluate the benefits of this location.

### G. Non-Contributing Green Space

This type of open space includes:

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

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.

This type of open space 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.

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 are not created by the City. Similarly, the CPR line ROW is non-contributing open space generated by this authority.



Example of Type G (Non-Contributing Green Space)

Objectives

- To reduce the future acquisition and/or creation of non-contributing open space and remove existing non-contributing parcels from the illustrated open space mapping and Great Places.

Policy

1. All new proposed open space must contribute to the overall system of public space.
2. The City shall work with local developers to ensure no new non-contributing open space exists in development plans.
3. All existing non-contributing open space should be evaluated for its use and potential re-use. In doing so, if the space is non-contributing, then it should be removed from the City's open space system, and the mapping revised.

Priority Actions

1. The City should review all inventoried non-contributing open spaces to determine how best to deal with existing spaces that do not contribute to the system and how to avoid this type of space in the future.

5.4 Major Open Space Nodes

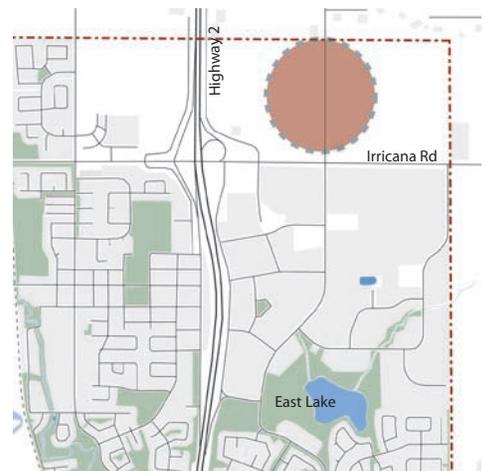
Overlay of the systems formed by the open space types A – F (existing and ideal) allowed identification of where major concentrations of open spaces occur, and where new Major and Minor Nodes should be located.

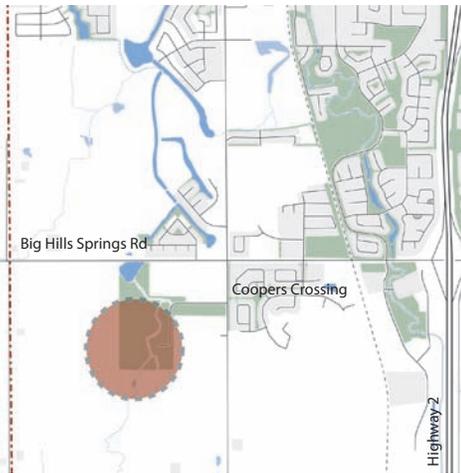
The overlap of several open space systems, the presence of many public functions, or the convergence of several circulation routes creates greater potential for the development of Great Places, in which the landscape, urban structure, functional relationships, and circulation patterns reinforce each other.

Existing Major Open Space Nodes are found in two locations:

- 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; and

Major Node I





Major Node II

- 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.

Additional Major Open Space Nodes are proposed in four locations. They should all include open space Types C (parks, gardens, civic spaces) and D (sports and recreation facilities), and where appropriate Types A (natural and semi-natural) and B (cultural and historical landscapes and landmarks). All major nodes are to be well linked by Type E (linkages). In addition, the Major Nodes should include additional facilities and features:

- Major Node I northeast Airdrie could include: campground, off-leash area (scheduled times), tennis courts;
- Major Node II southwest Airdrie could include: off-leash area (scheduled times), tennis courts, and a swimming pool, skateboard park, and splash park/activity centre. This node should be more natural and incorporate wetlands;
- Major Node III southeast Airdrie could include: off-leash area (scheduled times), tennis courts, 9 hole golf course; and
- Major Node IV south Airdrie could include: off-leash area (scheduled times), tennis courts.



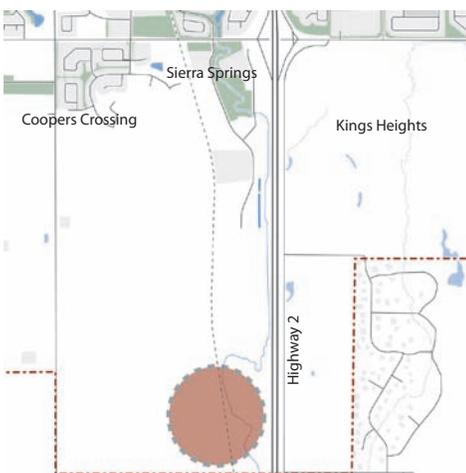
Major Node III

It is proposed that all Major Nodes be considered as transit oriented developments, and include good accessibility by public transit, good multi-modal linkages, and higher relative residential densities.

### 5.5 Minor Open Space Nodes

Smaller open space areas, or Minor Nodes, should be located in conjunction with the population distribution, and include Open Space Types C (parks, gardens, civic spaces) and D (sports and recreation facilities), and where appropriate Types A (natural and semi-natural) and B (cultural and historical landscapes, landmarks). These Minor Nodes will serve several neighbourhoods, and have a more local character. Each Minor Node should be designed by a qualified landscape architect/urban designer, and should reflect the principles and objectives of the Great Places Plan. Incorporation of new landmarks and features should consider input from residents in order to develop places that have a community-building potential.

Major Node IV



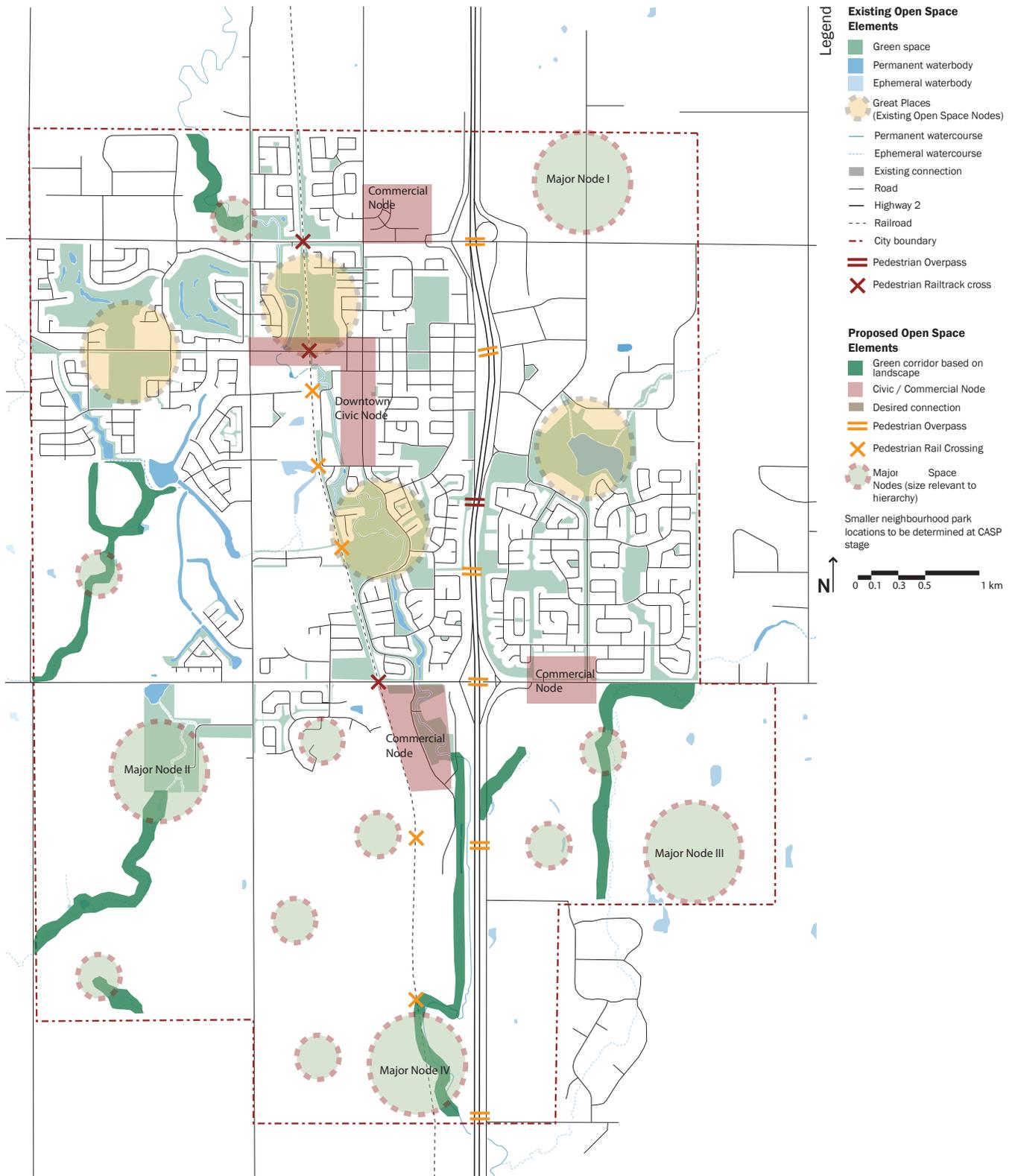
### 5.6 Commercial & Civic Nodes

Several Commercial/Civic Nodes are also identified:

- Downtown Civic Node
- Three Commercial Nodes associated with shopping areas

These Commercial Nodes should include provision of Type C open spaces, and also incorporate Type B (cultural/historic landscapes, landmarks) where possible.

figure 11  
Open Space Nodes



### Policy

1. Vehicular access to Major Nodes shall ensure safe routes via collector road system to avoid increased traffic passing through residential neighborhoods.
2. Connections with Airdrie's regional pathway system shall be mandatory for all new Major and Minor Nodes.
3. The acquisition of land for a Major Node may not be through dedication of MR and/or ER. The City is encouraged to seek alternate means for land acquisition and/or partnerships for funding to purchase.
4. Support facilities (e.g. concessions) should be built in conjunction with Major Nodes, particularly if the site will draw festivals, tourists or sporting events

### Priority Actions

1. The City of Airdrie will ensure that a range of open space types is provided in each major and minor node, to correspond to the norms and standards outlined above.
2. The City will be responsible for ensuring that detailed plans and designs for Major Nodes are prepared that reflect the principles, objectives, and concepts of the Great Places Plan, in conjunction with the local School Board as appropriate.
3. Developers will be required to provide detailed concept plans for Minor Nodes at the CASP stage.
4. Planning and design of neighbourhood-scale Type C and D open spaces shall be included in the preparation of CASPs and NSPs.
5. Whereas neighbourhood-scale and Minor Nodes may be planned as a new area is developed (e.g. for residential use), Major Nodes may require several years of advanced acquisition and planning prior to construction.
6. Due to the expense of developing new Major Nodes, the City should augment the assets at existing destination facilities as a priority.

### Neighbourhood-Scale Parks

Neighbourhood parks are often connected with a K-6 school or a community association, or located for the use of a single neighbourhood. These spaces are typically Type C or Type D open spaces, and are small in size.

The spaces are often multi-use, and are utilized by school children during the day and by the community after school hours. There may be a joint use agreement between the municipality and local school board.

### Policy

1. The dedication of MR in new communities which are too small to be used as

viable long term open spaces shall be discouraged.

2. Single use park spaces, due to their small size, shall be discouraged where frequency of use and length of lifecycle of use are outweighed by the costs for construction.
3. Existing pocket parks should provide (through retrofitting) sustainable, long term use for:
  - children between 0 – 5 years of age;
  - persons with reduced mobility;
  - picnicking areas;
  - mailboxes;
  - transit stops; and
  - where large contiguous open spaces are limited due to natural or transportation constraints
  - bird feeder
  - passive reflection (bench)
4. Airdrie should ensure that, where possible, neighbourhood-scale parks are sited in collaboration (i.e., signing of a joint use agreement) with the local school board to maximize opportunities for joint uses on the site for formal and informal play and school related activity and community related activity areas.
5. The location of the park space shall take advantage of and maximize the catchment area of the community (such as Meadowbrook Middle School in East Airdrie which is centrally located).
6. A comprehensive site concept plan shall be required from developers, consistent with the level of detail required by the City at the CASP stage.
7. The design of Neighbourhood / Community Park Space shall comply with the City of Calgary’s “Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications—Landscape Construction.”



Parking lots provide opportunities for multiple tree planting and should contribute to the urban forest



Street narrowings provide space for trees

## 5.7 The 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.

Streets should always have trees on both sides





Least desired street

The presence of street trees, and the design of residential streets, has varied over time in Airdrie. Over time, the inclusion of public street trees in neighbourhood planning has declined, to the detriment of the city form, image and quality.

The City of Airdrie currently has a policy (policy No. 12 – Urban Forest Policy) that deals with tree removals and plantings on city titled boulevards and road right of ways, and it also has a list of appropriate tree species. This should be supplemented by an urban forest management plan, based on objectives that support this Great Places Plan.

A strong vision of the public open space system, developed through public consultation, should include streets with street trees as one of the most important public open space elements. This needs to be combined with a good planting, management and replacement program. This plan proposes that all streets include street tree planting.

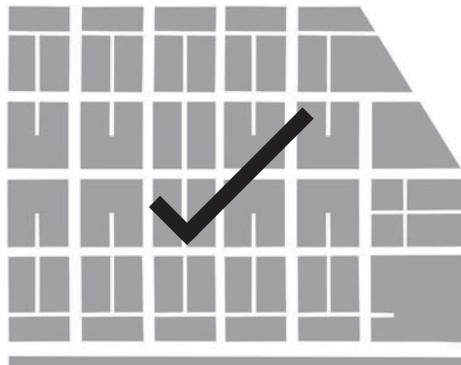


Most desired street

An inventory of public street trees was conducted by the City for the central area of the city. This is an invaluable tool, and should be updated, and completed for the entire city.

### 5.8 Neighbourhood Design & District Guidelines

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

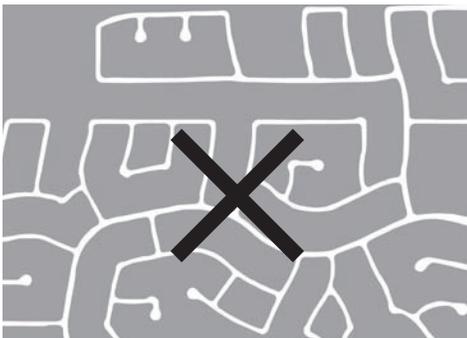


Grid streets with back lanes provide the most walkable and permeable structure

The proposed open spaces and linear connections within each of the approved CASPs and NSPs in Airdrie are shown in Figure 2. It is expected that all parks and open spaces will contribute to a comprehensive city-wide system, and while many of the CASPs and NSPs provide adequate amounts of open space, in some cases, the location of proposed parks and paths do not lead to integration and linkage, and do not necessarily build on the existing environmental systems.

In some cases, recommendations for amendments to the CASP and/or changes at the outline plan stage have been proposed in this plan, and the concept map (Figure 10) reflects these revisions. New neighbourhoods should have good connection to the existing street patterns, paths, and open spaces. In particular, new neighbourhood design should avoid the creation of what often functions as large cul de sacs of several thousand people, with only one or two access points.

Curvilinear block pattern is less walkable with low connectivity



All new neighbourhoods should be integrated with the existing city, and the open spaces and paths should link with the open space system.

Urban character and quality are partly a product of block and street form. Block size and layout and street types determine permeability and choice of routes and mode of travel (walking, biking, or driving). Grid streets with street trees and narrow driving surfaces are the safest and promote walking and biking.

- New development should build on the most walkable established Airdrie block patterns in order to sustain permeability and walkability and to increase city connectivity
- Curvilinear suburban block patterns do not necessarily provide connectivity and walkability

- Streets are considered part of the public realm, and one of the most important elements
- Street are a part of the open space system
- Feedback from residents in workshops and other presentations indicated a strong preference for streets with sidewalks and street trees both sides
- These should be the street type of choice in Airdrie

### Established Residential Neighbourhoods

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 than their new community counterpart.

### Policy

1. All park development / redevelopment within the established neighbourhoods should meet neighborhood or community open space needs to provide effective, safe and sustainable open space environments.
2. The City shall be required to investigate alternative and innovative open space integration and augmentation within the defined established city area to overcome the constraints associated with park planning in this area.
3. The City should work closely with the local School Boards to ensure that established inner city school and joint use sites are being utilized to their maximum potential (usage is in line with the size).
4. The planning of open space for residents in established neighbourhoods shall be done through a community needs assessment to ensure their specific needs are considered when determining the types of spaces to develop.
5. 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.

### Priority Actions

1. The process of creating Area Redevelopment Plans will largely dictate how open space can be retrofitted into the established neighbourhoods. Airdrie's Downtown ARP should be reviewed and revised to incorporate better open space planning features and links established through to the new communities.
2. The City's Growth Study (2000) should be reviewed next year (2007) to ensure it is in keeping with the Great Places Plan and its recommendations. Specifically, the Growth Study should address how to:
  - solve the problem of many established communities having less open space land than newer areas;
  - overcome the high costs associated with open space purchase in the

- inner city; and
- negotiate with local School Boards on the joint use or purchase of existing school sites for older established neighbourhoods.

3. The Parks Department must adopt a general approach to implementing parks projects in different areas of the city. This approach is to be developed in concert with residents and shared through an education program. Demographics will play a large role in determining what approach to take. For example, the inner city may be characterized by a lower number of children and a higher proportion of adults over 40 years of age. These areas in the next 10 years may not require as many totlots or playgrounds with equipment, but will still require Type C parks, gardens and civic spaces, and Type D sports and recreation facilities appropriate to the population, and they will require connections to the regional path system.

#### New Neighbourhoods

New residential development in Airdrie is occurring primarily on the west side of the city and is spreading south on both sides of the highway. East Airdrie has established communities with considerably better north-south pathway connections than the west (with the exception of Nose Creek Park – which is considered inner city). Other new developments in southwest Airdrie include big box commercial which should also be linked with open space.

Forward planning in the form of Community Area Structure Plans and Neighborhood Structure Plans will allow for proper planning of open spaces to meet the requirements of Great Places Plan. The long list of CASPs included elsewhere in this document indicates that considerable planning has already been approved by the City. While these are approved bylaws of Airdrie, there is general acceptance by the Parks and Planning Departments that amendments may be required to some plans to better conform to Great Places.

It should be possible to easily walk 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 should be designed with pedestrian primacy in mind. Compact development, with the aim of contributing to livability and walkability, will provide some natural limits to town growth. This will, as a by-product, help to protect agricultural and amenity land, by building more compactly and efficiently, and will be more ecologically and economically sustainable. Neighbourhood structure plans should emphasize pedestrian primacy and linkages, in addition to car traffic efficiency.

Public open space should not be created by default or from left over land, or simply be a by-product of development. New neighbourhoods should include as a priority the setting aside of public land.

#### Policy

1. All new open spaces 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."

2. All park development/redevelopment within the established suburbs should meet neighborhood and community park objectives to provide effective, safe and sustainable open space environments.
3. 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. This may be accomplished through creating a long term phasing strategy at the outset of the design process. This shall be provided with development plans.
4. The current trend in parks and open space planning in Alberta (see [www.arpaonline.ca](http://www.arpaonline.ca)) is to develop them as contiguous park space to facilitate ease of maintenance and to combine recreational opportunities in fewer geographical areas.
5. Open space in new communities shall have access to the regional and community level pathway systems, to vehicle parking, to commercial amenities as they are built and to residential areas.
6. All new park space shall be designed using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to optimize community safety.
7. Ultimately, the Parks and Planning Department shall be responsible for approving parks and open spaces through the CASP process.
8. The City is encouraged to seek out potential partnerships with industry and community to finance park planning projects for their community.
9. New open space should contribute to viable and useful public space, and should include all types of open spaces and serve the neighbourhood first.

#### Priority Actions

1. A Deferred Reserve Study should be undertaken by the Planning Department to determine what (if any) reserve area has been deferred by the City and what conditions were established for each parcel.
2. The City and Developers of new communities will need to collaborate on a market assessment for new communities to determine what types of open spaces will be developed. It will no longer be sufficient to build the status quo, by simply constructing a tot lot, soccer and baseball field and a thoroughfare type trail to the regional path with no consideration for need and lifecycle of the community.
3. More detailed open space planning will be required in Area Structure Plans. Parks should have a more extensive list of open space planning requirements and should provide it to developers at the appropriate stage of development.
4. The following Area Structure Plans, Neighborhood Structure Plans may require amendments to coincide with the approved Great Places concept plan (or alternatively, shall require revision at the CASP submission stage):

- West Airdrie ASP
- South Airdrie ASP
- Luxstone ASP
- Bayside Phase 2 NSP
- Northeast Airdrie ASP
- Sagewood Stage 2 NSP

For a more information on the review of each ASP, refer to the Appendices.

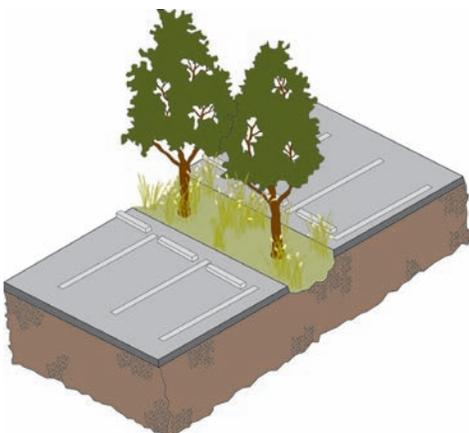
### Business Parks & Industrial Parks

Planning for open space and trails within the context of a business park (e.g. big box retail) or an industrial park (e.g. East Lake Industrial Area) is challenging and generally, the same rules for land acquisition within a residential area do not apply. Cash-in-lieu of land may be taken for municipal reserve dedication.

#### Policy

1. The City should create policy for comprehensive commercial business parks (e.g., big box retail) in Airdrie, similar to Section 2-3.5 of the City Plan as it pertains to open space for industrial areas.
2. The City is encouraged to decide on the dedication of open space (MR/ER) in commercial and industrial parks on a case by case basis.
3. The City should seek agreements and/or partnerships with developer / landowners to integrate open space and park into industrial or commercial land use areas.
4. The integration open space and park with industrial / commercial business shall only be approved if the two uses do not conflict with each other.
5. 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.
6. The use of green infrastructure practices for big box retail centres and/or lifestyle centres should be practiced as discussed in Section 5. These types of development have a large impact on the quality of water and the environment.

Biofiltration swales help remove pollutants from storm water runoff as it flows through the vegetation



#### Priority Actions

1. The City should create an Eco-Industrial / Business Park Strategy to guide future big box and light industrial development in a manner that is more responsive to the environment and is more inviting to users. Construction using green infrastructure is highly encouraged.
2. The City is encouraged to investigate the possibilities of developing a new BMX / Skateboard / Inline facility (outdoor with opportunity to enclose with a poly-membrane dome) in the northeast corner of the city designated as future industrial growth. The facility would require a joint use agreement with the landowner. In addition, the siting of a campground is also encouraged.

The advantages of this site include:

- **Parking:** The peak usage times for the facility would be evenings and weekends; generally during the times when the industrial park businesses would be closed. Parking is then shared on a joint use agreement basis.
- **Access:** the site is accessed by the north interchange and an upgrade to the interchange with pedestrian crossing would offer vehicular, cycling and foot traffic, access to the facility from West Airdrie. Additionally, people visiting the site from outside Airdrie need only travel on Highway 8 and access the site via Irricana Road. Increased traffic due to special events is not routed through residential areas.
- **Compatibility of Use:** Concerns over compatibility of emerging sports and more importantly, campgrounds with residential land use are mitigated through integrating with industrial use.
- **Trail Access:** A proposed regional trail extension from East Lake Blvd. is proposed to connect with this site offering residents in East Airdrie non-motorized access also.

## 5.9 Street Design

Much of the everyday urban existence in Airdrie, as in other cities and towns, occurs within the shared city spaces made up of the streets, sidewalks, parks and squares. The street is one of the most important elements in the open space system, as it provides the infrastructure and connective tissue of the city, and is the space most likely to be used by all citizens.

The public realm is common ground – it is a place where all citizens can be by right and it is recognition and confirmation that all citizens have something to enjoy in the city, as well as a responsibility to it. This concept of the public open space system allows for the creation of a stronger sense of community, since it emphasizes the public realm of streets and open spaces as the framework of a neighbourhood.

Streets also provide important linkages to other neighbourhoods and parts of the city, an access to the trails and other parks. Streets and street design vary considerably in their walkability, aesthetic qualities, transition between public and private space, presence or absence of street trees, and other characteristics. Street and neighbourhood design have huge potential impacts on public health and on the incidence of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

Properly designed streets provide space for access, socialization, recreation, and contemplation. Streets also provide important linkages to other neighbourhoods and parts of Airdrie, and access to the linear path system and other parks. Local mobility and walkability should always be valued over regional mobility and traffic efficiency.

A hierarchy of street design assures that traffic efficiency is maintained, however this should not result in funneling of excessive traffic onto a few roads. This practice creates congestion, and often results in streets that are not suitable for other modes of travel.

Streets and street design in Airdrie currently vary considerably in their walkability, aesthetic qualities, transition between private and public space, presence or absence of public street trees, and other characteristics. Input obtained from public review during this project indicated an overwhelming preference for street types that included public

street trees and sidewalks both sides, and a strong dislike for streets where garages dominated the streetscape and sidewalks were absent. The open space system should contribute to a high degree of livability, and should be a continuous, walkable network of streets and spaces. Even major streets can include space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and street tree plantings.

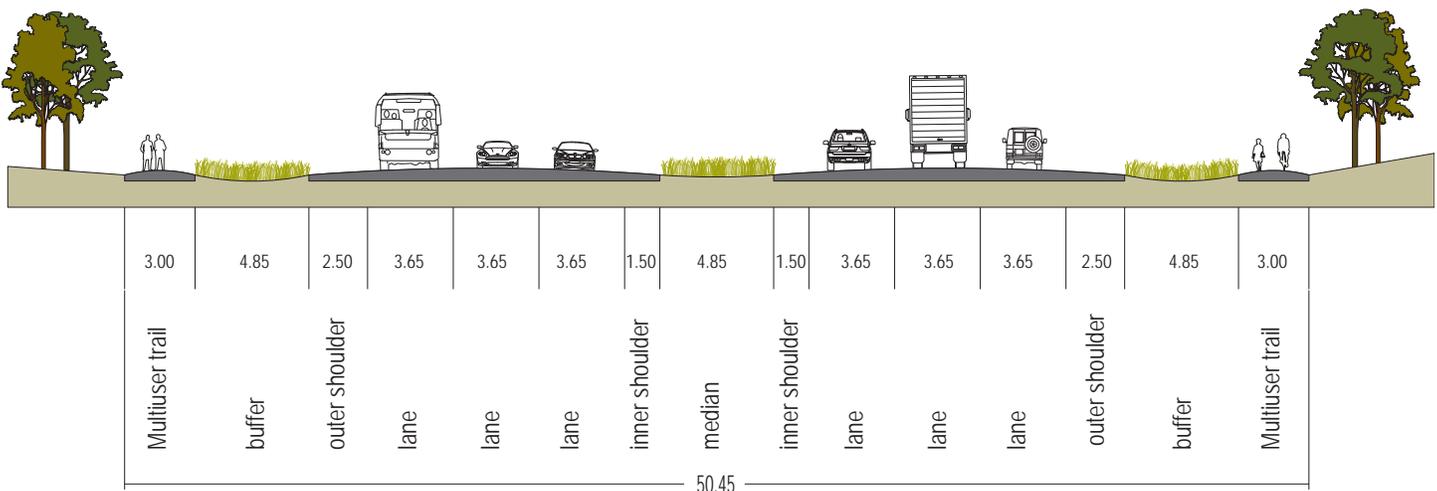
Streets should always be designed with pedestrian primacy in mind and serve as multi-purpose thoroughfares, and not simply as vehicle-movers. All streets should accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, in addition to motor vehicles, and be designed to include street trees. Ideally, streets should include sidewalks, boulevards and public street trees on both sides.

The fine grain of urban form found in the town core provides a model for new development. Block size should be small, streets should be continuous, lanes should be provided, and public open spaces should be linked and easily accessed by all modes of circulation, and not privilege the car.

Policy

1. Hierarchical street systems should be avoided, since they tend to funnel high volumes of car traffic onto a small number of roads; this emphasis on traffic efficiency leads to the need for road-widening and reduces walkability.
2. Streets in one neighbourhood should connect with streets in adjacent neighbourhoods. Multiple connections between neighbourhoods should be provided, and wide road allowances, which form barriers between city areas, should be discouraged.
3. Grid or modified grid patterns should be encouraged. This type of street network is the most permeable and provides the greatest amount of choice of routes.
4. Encourage laned block structure. Lanes provide service access, allow the separation of front and rear yard activities, and make it more possible that

All streets should be conceived as multimodal, including arterials, providing space for automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians



street trees may be planted. In laneless developments, all services and driveways need to be accommodated at the lot fronts, drastically reducing the amount of plantable area.

5. Both laned and laneless block patterns are possible, however in laneless blocks, front car garages should not be allowed to dominate the streetscape. Encourage side driveways and recessed garages instead, and ensure that there is sufficient plantable area for street trees.
6. All streets should include public street trees and sidewalks on both sides. This provides a more comfortable urban structure for pedestrians, and makes the streets more likely to serve as informal community space where ad-hoc meetings and socialization can occur.
7. Street width should conform to the narrowest acceptable width, in order to increase human comfort and use.

#### Traffic Calming

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) defines traffic calming as “the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and provide conditions for nonmotorized street users” (ITE Journal, July 1997). It is a new approach to street design and traffic planning that considers the street as a place for automobiles, bicyclists and pedestrians.

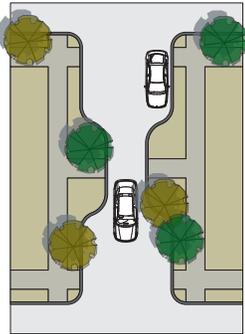
Streets are the basis of the public realm and should be for every citizen to use, not only for cars. Therefore this approach should be incorporated as general practice. Some examples of traffic calming measures are illustrated here.

#### References:

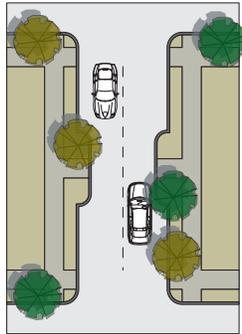
Appleyard, Donald. 1980. *State of the Art: Residential Traffic Management*. Washington, DC: Federal Highway Administration

Ewing, Reid. 1999. *Traffic Calming: The State of the Practice*. Washington, DC: Institute of Transportation Engineers and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

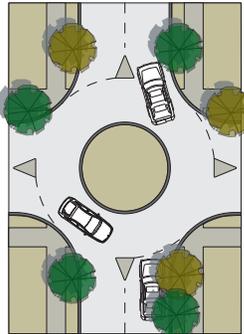
figure 12  
Traffic Calming Measures



Chokers



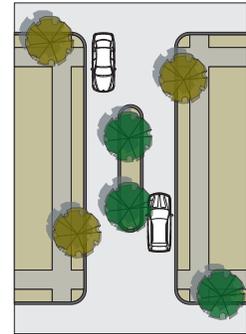
Chokers



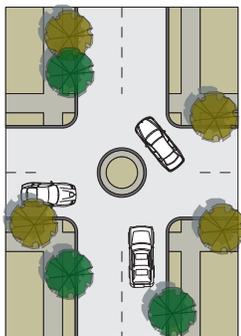
Roundabouts



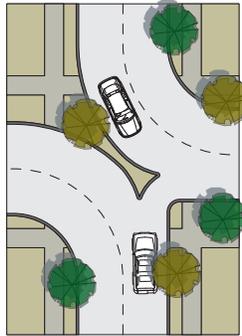
Neckdowns



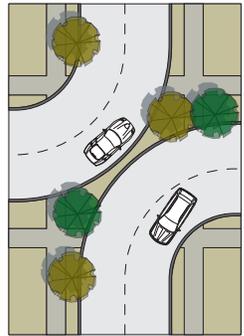
Centre Island  
Narrowings



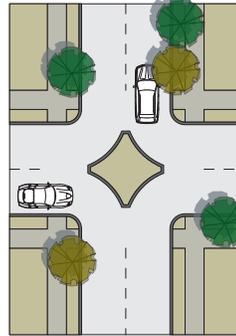
Traffic Circle



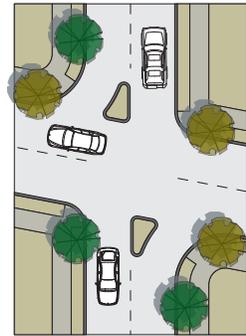
Forced Turn



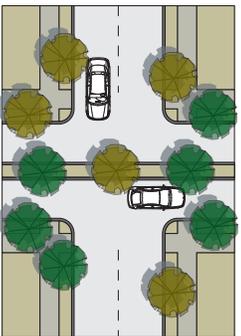
Diagonal Diverter



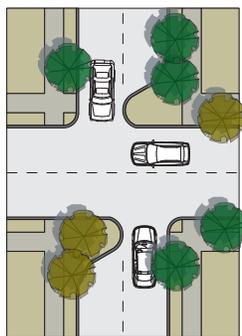
Star Diverter



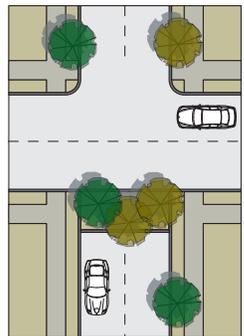
Forced-Turn Islands



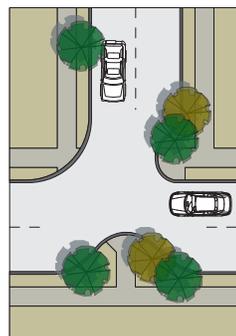
Median Barriers



Half Closures or  
Semidiverters



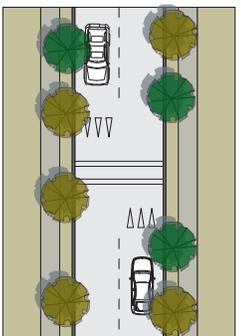
Street Closures and  
Cul-de-sacs



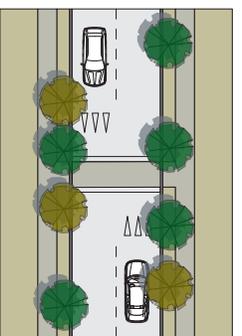
Raised Intersections



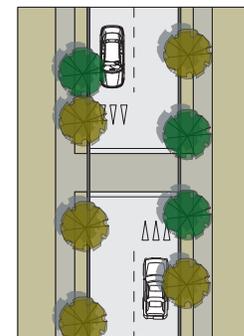
Chicanes



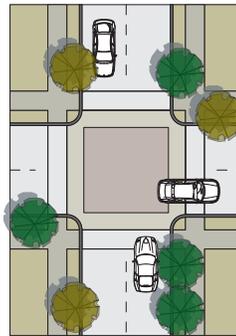
Speed Humps



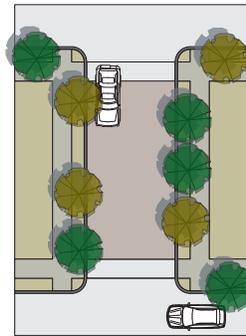
Raised Crosswalks



Speed Tables



Raised Intersections



Textured Surfaces

## PART FOUR

### 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Great Places ensures that City Staff have a “road map” to implement the recommendations, priority actions and policy. This document is to be used by a number of audiences and must be readable and conclude with an action plan.

#### 6.1 Priority Action Summary

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 to achieve the action. A suggested timeline for each action is provided and should be reviewed each year to ensure they are in keeping with progress. Should changes be necessary, no formal amendment by Council to the plan is required. Table 13 summarizes the priority actions noted in Great Places.

Priorities range from 1 to 3, where 1 is within the 0-2 year time frame, 2 is 2-4 years and 3 is 4-6 years. A priority action may also be “ongoing”.

Table 13. Priority Action Summary

Priority Actions		Internal Relations & Resources	Priority
<b>Major Projects</b>			
Public Consultation	Provide collaborative workshops for the local development industry, school boards, recreation stakeholders and other City departments to identify how to best designate and protect ESAs for the benefit of all parties.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Developers, Recreation Board	ongoing
Old Town	Develop an interpretive walking tour of Old Town to celebrate its historic and cultural assets. As a starting point, the Old Town Plan should be reviewed and updated to represent the area as “open space” from a cultural perspective	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Public	1

Priority Actions	Internal Relations & Resources	Priority
Plan & Strategy Development	Develop a Cemetery Business Plan to plan for the next 50 years and any land identified will be included in the open space network.	City, Consultant 2
	Create or have created, a "Sports Fields Management Plan" to address at a minimum: user issues, cost recovery strategies, utilization / underutilization, seasonality of use and ways to improve booking and programming.	City, Consultant 1
	Undertake a Deferred Reserve Study to determine what reserve area has been deferred by the City and what conditions were established for each parcel.	City, Consultant 1
	Prepare more detailed open space planning in Area Structure Plans.	Developers ongoing
	Create an Eco-Industrial / Business Park Strategy to guide future big box and light industrial development in a manner that is more responsive to the environment and is more inviting to users.	City, Consultant, Developers 2
	Prepare a density bonusing system (strategy) as a means to negotiate with local developers to incorporate urban open space in community plans. This may result in an increase in developable area in exchange for more public open space.	City, Developers 2
	Develop a more thorough list of acceptable Green Infrastructure items which may be incorporated into landscape and building design and linked to a density bonusing strategy or other incentive strategy	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Developers 1
	Examine the potential for off-site levies to business owners' payable to the City or through a local business owner's group (e.g., Business Revitalization Zone) to invest in civic spaces downtown.	City Dept – Planning, Engineering, Developers 2
Review & Revision	Conduct a Best Practices Review of urban campgrounds in North America as a starting point for considering this use in Airdrie.	City, Consultant 2
	Review Airdrie's Downtown ARP and revise to incorporate better open space planning features and links established through to the new communities.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Consultant 1

Priority Actions		Internal Relations & Resources	Priority
<b>Monitoring Actions</b>			
Partnerships (internal & external)	Establish links with the Parks Foundation and the Partner Parks Endowment Council to establish programs to help protect ESAs.	City Dept – Parks, ARPA	2
	Negotiate with local School Boards, in seeking an option of upgrading fee-simple open space and park sites and increasing their level of maintenance.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, School Boards	2
	Form an interdepartmental committee at the City to review the City's roads and sidewalk standards and provide alternative designs that integrate better with the open space system.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation	1
	Work with local developers, affected City departments and other stakeholders to improve ROW greens and design them to require less maintenance, where possible.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Developers	ongoing
	Collaborate on a market assessment for new communities to determine what types of open spaces will be developed.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Developers	2
Review & Monitor	Review all inventoried non-contributing open spaces to determine how best to deal with existing spaces that do not contribute to the system and how to avoid this type of space in the future.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation	2
	Review the City's Growth Study (2000) next year (2007) to ensure it is in keeping with the Great Places Plan and its recommendations.	City Dept – Parks, Planning	1

Table 14: Great Place Making: Priority Open Space, Parks &amp; Trails

Great Place Priorities		Resources	Priority
<b>Park Specific Projects</b>			
Plan & Strategy Development	Encourage emerging, non-traditional sports groups (e.g., skateboarding, BMX, inline skating). Review underutilized sports fields or indoor facilities for opportunities to retrofit and adapt those sites for emerging sport use and/or investigate industrial lands for such uses.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Consultant, Community Services	2
	The City is encouraged to investigate the possibilities of developing a new BMX / Skateboard / Inline facility (outdoor with opportunity to enclose with a poly-membrane dome) in the northeast corner of the city designated as future industrial growth. The facility would require a joint use agreement with the landowner. In addition, the siting of a campground is also encouraged	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Consultant, Community Services	2
	Section 5.4 provides the opportunities for siting a campground in the future northeast Airdrie industrial area. The City may wish to commission a study to evaluate the benefits of this location.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant	2
	Provide safe and inviting pedestrian crossings to allow links between downtown and west neighbourhoods.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation	2
	Develop Monklands Soccer Park as more of a significant and “whole” northwest Great Place (e.g., commercial, public square).	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant, Developer	3
Pilot Projects	Select one or two underutilized sports field sites and pilot a retrofitting project to increase field sizes and usability.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant	3
Review & Monitor	Chinook Winds (and potential adjacent park space) shall be the primary focus for destination (City-wide) sports field development over the next two to four years.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation	1
	Ensure that connections are maintained and emphasize Nose Creek Valley Museum as an important place within Nose Creek Park .	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering	2

Great Place Priorities		Resources	Priority
<b>General Open Space Projects</b>			
Plan & Strategy Development	Develop plan for the railway lands that reflects its importance and history.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant	3
	Due to the expense of developing new Destination / City-wide Parks, the City should augment the assets at existing destination facilities as a priority.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering	ongoing
Review & Monitor	Concentrate on gaps in the existing pathway system in the downtown and established neighborhoods. These gaps are illustrated in Figure10.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Consultant	ongoing
	Nose Creek corridor is the central defining element of Airdrie, but channelization is eliminating it from the physical and cultural landscape: allow the natural creek patterns to be the determinates of open space form.	City Dept – Parks, Planning, Engineering, Transportation	ongoing

## 6.2 Open Space Acquisition Strategies

As one of the most important sections of Great Places, the land acquisition strategies provided here are meant to provide the Planning Department with the means to implement many of the recommendations in the Plan. Parks, open space and trails are dependent on the City acquiring land in one form or another and through some means to then dedicate it as public space and/or environmental reserve.

### General Land Acquisition Principles

1. Land should be acquired by the City to produce a system of open space as shown in Figure 10 (as amended from time to time) that includes a variety of park spaces and trails for public access.
2. Airdrie residents value the natural systems in their city and land acquisition through reserve dedication is a primary means to protect environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., Nose Creek).
3. Land which is contaminated (e.g., Luxstone) should not be accepted from developers as reserve because it limits the type of use permitted and is an environmental liability which must be controlled (i.e., increased costs to the City).
4. The City is encouraged to seek partnerships and innovative solutions to acquiring land for open space and trails.
5. Ensure lands are acquired to enhance and build a greater functioning open space system of parks and trails that are publicly accessible to meet the needs of all city residents.
6. Acquire a minimum of parkland to achieve 10 acres of park per 1,000 residents.

7. Ensure all community neighbourhoods have equitable access to parks and trails.

#### General Land Acquisition Practices

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 investigation 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 by and a safe environment for the public: consist of lands that do not contain excessive slopes, are not susceptible to flooding, and 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 metres 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 the responsibilities of managing the lands and can provide a substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits.

#### Policy

1. The City of Airdrie should use all means of acquiring land through Reserve dedication prior to seeking alternative means such as land transfers and easements.
2. The acquisition of available Reserve land in the inner city and downtown areas of Airdrie should take precedent over securing lands in the new communities.
3. For land where an Area Redevelopment Plan exists, the City should make it a priority to acquire these lands first, before seeking additional Reserve lands in existing developed areas without an ARP (unless market prices demand otherwise)
4. 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.
5. The City of Airdrie should not knowingly acquire contaminated lands which pose human health risks. Notwithstanding, the City may enter into an agreement to purchase contaminated lands whereby all liabilities and reclamation responsibilities rest with the existing landowner.
6. All lands donated to the City of Airdrie (e.g., willed) 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.

#### Advanced / Innovative Acquisition Practices

The following list comprises more advanced (less practiced) reserve dedication and land acquisition practices by the City of Airdrie. The Planning and Parks Departments are encouraged to work together to employ these Acquisition Practices when standard reserve acquisition strategies (above) do not work or a more innovative solution will yield better results:

#### 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)

#### 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 in order to ensure access to other pathways, lake and other water bodies, parks and open space areas.

### Overlay Zoning

- The overlay zoning technique is a common set of standards or controls that are applied over a large area, across many different conventional land use districts. In the case of open space, a zoning ordinance can be superimposed as an overlay to ensure areas unsuitable for development are protected or that development that occurs doesn't interfere with the sensitive environmental features of the area. (Source: New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide 2004)

### Performance Zoning

- This technique establishes zones, which are based on an allowable environmental impact to the resources of an area as opposed to a specific allowable use. This technique is a good way for a municipality to maintain control over development impacts and to ensure that development will occur only in ways in which the natural resources will not be severely damaged. For example, a community zoning ordinance might require water bodies to be protected with vegetated buffers. Thus, instead of requiring buffer zones depending on the specific use of the land, buffer zones would be established regardless of the use. Rapidly changing technology can create new industries, making it difficult in some areas for a municipality to establish effective zones based on specific uses. In these communities, the performance standard approach may be particularly helpful. (Source: New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide 2004)

### Special Use Permits

- A zoning regulation will list "as of right" uses which are allowed in a particular district without the necessity of obtaining any further review. After these uses are listed, a list of conditional uses or "special use permit" uses may be listed, as exceptions. The kinds of uses that require a special permit are those which may be desirable but which could have adverse impacts that require special review and conditioning before being approved. For example, special use permit criteria can require development proposals to provide buffer areas and best management practices for control of non-point source pollution adjacent to wetlands. They can also require that a percentage of land be left as open or green space. (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.

### Policy

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. The City is encouraged to develop a reserve land acquisition system that allows flexibility for dedicating “developable” environmentally significant lands as Municipal Reserve. This will allow land to be preserved and controlled by the City, offer developers a more sustainable development and provide the public with a natural open space amenity.
4. The City should negotiate and establish a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the local School Boards whereby they may lease School Reserve on a medium to long term basis, for the purposes of passive or semi-structured activities (e.g., trail, soccer field or other minimal disturbance activities).
5. The City shall negotiate with developers over density transfers in exchange for land dedication in addition to MR and ER dedications, with support of a Business Case.
6. The City may negotiate other means of land acquisition if it is in their best interest. Other methods, not mentioned above include: leasing, bare land strata, and land trusts.

#### Priority Action (for all Reserve Dedication)

1. The City should create a Reserve Land Acquisition Policy Paper to provide the Planning Department with a flexible checklist for dedicating “developable” land as MR.
2. Establishing discussions leading to an MOA between Airdrie and the local School Boards is deemed appropriate to seek possible lease arrangements of School Reserve to the City of medium to long term periods.
3. The City should prepare a Deferred Reserve Study to:
  - identify all reserves that have been deferred against individual properties in Airdrie;
  - show all deferred reserves taken under a former Act (prior to MGA) which are subject to discharge by either the owner or the City; and
  - create a GIS of all deferred reserves comprising a database that includes caveat number, legal address, acres owed to the City, Linc number and a general land description.

## 6.3 Operations & Monitoring

### Maintenance and Construction Standards for Open Space

The City of Airdrie has an Operations and Maintenance Plan based on individual park space requirements. Great Places proposes the classification of parks into Types of Open Space. Using this system of classification will allow Parks to define specific operations and maintenance criteria for each Type. Each type (regardless of size) will have standard elements and activities therefore the transition from asset to maintenance requirements will be straightforward.

#### Priority Action

1. Parks is encouraged to classify each open space and park as one of seven Types of Open Space in Great Places and set up operations and maintenance requirements based on this classification system.

## 6.4 Updating Great Places

Great Places is a policy document and 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 should be reviewed each year, prior to municipal budgeting.

#### Priority Action

1. The City should create a TBL Checklist for reviewing Great Places to ensure it is meeting the overall objectives and principles of the Plan.

## 6.5 Funding Strategies for Open Space

### Capital Planning

Great Places uses a Typology Approach to classifying open spaces, parks, trails and civic amenities. While other system-type approaches like “active / passive”, “neighborhood through to city-wide” may be used, they do not translate to capital plans as easy as the Typology approach. Classifying each open space asset (and future sites) as one of six types noted in Great Places, each is its own system complete with characteristics (noted in Section 6).

Costs (construction and/or maintenance) can be attributed to each of the characteristics and an overall cost for the Type can be easily calculated. The unit cost (e.g., cost / acre) for a particular Type can then be extrapolated for any size of that Type.

Using a “Structured” based classification system (i.e., Passive / Active) does not provide clear characteristics of the type of space, thus the permutations of the composition of these park systems makes it much more difficult to cost capital and maintenance requirements. Similarly, using a “Scale” based classification system (i.e., neighborhood through to city-wide sizes) does not provide specific characteristics of each park space from which to provide capital and maintenance costs.

## Funding Options

The following list outlines methods to fund open space and park development.

### Fee Simple, Development Process

The City of Airdrie will acquire through the reserve dedication processes provided in Great Places, as much municipal and environmental reserve possible in new development proposals where it is deemed appropriate. This is the simplest and least costly form of acquiring land for open space and park development.

### Public-Private Partnerships

The City may wish to enter into a development agreement with a landowner or developer whereby land for park space (normally additional to 10% MR and ER dedication) is provided to the municipality in exchange for “incentive” benefits to the developer such as density bonusing or up-zoning to allow for higher densities. Airdrie may also enter into a business arrangement (e.g., Airdrie Golf Course) where land is owned by the City for park use and is leased back to the developer to be administered as a pay-per-use (fee-based) open space or park.

### Government Grants

Government grants at the provincial and federal levels are available to municipalities for the development of parks and open space. Most are specific to a certain purpose and the City will need to develop a strategy for targeting certain types of grants. Park Grants may be for:

- Tourism,
- Health and wellness,
- Ecological management, and
- Community development.

Examples of grants include:

- Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP): Under ICAP, the federal and provincial governments provide up to two-thirds of the funding for eligible project costs. Partnering communities or private sector organizations (proponents) cover the remainder of project funding. In Alberta, ICAP is implemented by Western Economic Diversification Canada and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Green Municipal Funds (GMF): Under the GMF program, municipalities may apply for grants or loans to construct green infrastructure. The grant is up to 50% of the project cost, matched by other third party contributors or the municipality.

### City of Airdrie Funding

Parks and Planning Department Staff can propose to the rest of Administration and Council, that funds be set aside each year in addition to their regular budget, for the purposes of implementing one or two additional projects required to augment the open space and park system. This will require a marketing and business case initiative to gain buy-in from Airdrie residents, and then translate into political support.

### Adopt-a-Park

Municipal programs like Adopt-a-Park provide financial relief for municipalities in terms of capital and operations costs. User groups and other interested citizens are invited to assist in park and open space development and long term maintenance to off-set costs borne by the City which would otherwise not be possible to fund. This also makes residents “stewards” of the park and provides a sense of ownership which is valuable for a community.

### Landowner Donations

As outlined in the land acquisition section, land may be donated to the City for the purpose of park and open space development. Alternatively, a landowner may apply to the Land Conservancy to have the land designated as conservation land and then provided to the City.

### Priority Action

1. The City should establish a list of grants available and begin the process of applying early each year – some applications are onerous and go through a long and iterative review period.
2. All park spaces proposed should be expressed in terms of best approaches for funding.

## 7.0 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

### 7.1 Summary & Next Steps

Great Places is a comprehensive source of policy on open space, as well as a guide for its acquisition, development and use. The Plan emphasizes the importance of understanding the town's context, historical evolution, and present structure, and of the value of documenting and analyzing the components of the open space system, their uses, and their inter-relationships.

This Plan can also be considered a statement of values and principles, and will be of use in guiding development in the future so that it responds to what is considered as important to the desired way and quality of life. Public education and stewardship are important aspects of this Plan, and will help to ensure that the open space resources are managed well in perpetuity.

#### Priority Actions

1. Review the GPP every year to ensure all construction is in keeping with the concept.
2. The Parks and Planning department shall administer the recommendations in the Concept plan and will review all development proposals against it.



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## APPENDIX A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Active Recreation</b>	Refers to activities such as team sports or organized sports with facilities, which require the alteration of the landscape (e.g., baseball fields).
<b>Cemetery</b>	Publicly owned and administered land base for burial and memorial purposes, developed as landscaped passive parkland.
<b>Community Centre</b>	The primary public activity centre within a community. Community centres are intended to provide a mix of public and commercial activities, including transit, provision for goods and services, community facilities, schools and open space to serve the needs of the community.
<b>Community-level Pathway</b>	Provides secondary routes within communities, linking residential areas to facilities such as neighborhood parks, schools, and other local community destinations. Local pathways may also serve as linkages to the regional pathway system and are generally asphalt or composed of granular material.
<b>Community Needs Assessment</b>	A decision-making tool used within the inner city or established suburbs to evaluate the need for proposed new open space and/or open space redevelopments by screening potential options against public demand, participation, opportunity, and fiscal assessments.
<b>Community Parks</b>	Community Parks are planned parks with a variety of active and passive opportunities. These parks are usually large in size containing soccer fields and/or baseball diamonds and serve a community area at least 1 -2 mile in radius.
<b>Constructed Wetlands</b>	Designed and/or modified permanent water bodies that fluctuate with water drainage peaks but hold water at all times. Used to improve stormwater runoff quality through nutrient and sediment removal using vegetation, detention, settlement and other best management practices.
<b>Contamination</b>	The presence in soil, water, groundwater, air or structures of a material or condition that may adversely affect human health or the natural environment (e.g. soil, water, land, buildings). The intrusion of these undesirable elements may render a site inappropriate for certain land uses or types of development.
<b>Cultural Landscapes</b>	Geographical areas that have been modified or influenced by human activity.
<b>Day Use Areas</b>	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.
<b>Destination Recreation Parks</b>	Park development and site programming that is undertaken to meet unique city-wide needs, including major festivals. There is a recreational and/or cultural emphasis in their use, design, development, and programming. They serve as in-city destinations for residents on half-day or day outings.
<b>Downtown Open Space</b>	Comprised of, but not limited to, publicly accessible parks, plazas, street edge and streetscapes with a mix of hard and soft landscaping designed to beautify the city core and provide “green” respites from the heat, noise and congestion of the downtown area.
<b>Dry Storm Ponds</b>	Designed, low lying areas that temporarily fill with water in peak drainage conditions with controlled outflow rates. These sites are used to manage the peak volume and runoff rates of stormwater. The sites may be designed as multi-use facilities with sports field use when they are dry.
<b>Easement</b>	An acquired privilege or right of use or enjoyment which an individual, firm, corporation, person, unit of government, or group of individuals has in the land of another.
<b>Environmental Open Space</b>	Includes the Creek Valley System, Natural Environment Parks and Environmentally Significant Areas.

<b>Environmental Reserve (under the Municipal Government Act)</b>	A part of a parcel of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision and is to be provided as environmental reserve as required by the subdivision authority if it consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course,</li> <li>b. Land that is subject to flooding or is, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, unstable, or</li> <li>c. A strip of land, not less than 6 metres in width, abutting the bed and shore of any lake, river, stream or other body of water for the purpose of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Preventing pollution, or</li> <li>ii. Providing public access to and beside the bed and shore.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Environmentally Significant Area</b>	A natural area that has been inventoried prior to potential development and because of its natural features and characteristics is significant from an environmental perspective.
<b>Established Community</b>	Established neighborhoods and communities that are outside the defined inner city. They do not include the city's edge communities currently undergoing new development.
<b>Floodplain/Flood Fringe</b>	The lands abutting the floodway. The boundaries of the floodplain are indicated by floodwaters of a magnitude likely to occur once in 100 years.
<b>Floodway</b>	The creek channel and adjoining lands which would provide a pathway for flood waters in the event of a flood of a magnitude likely to occur once in 100 years.
<b>Golf Course</b>	Public golf courses owned by the City and operated by private owner.
<b>Historical Resource</b>	Any property, area, place, district, building, structure, site, neighborhood, scenic view-plain or other object having special historical, cultural, architectural or aesthetic value.
<b>Inner City</b>	The geographic boundary of the inner city communities, where there has been an evolution of land uses and housing mixes.
<b>Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)</b>	A statutory plan jointly prepared by neighboring municipalities to establish strategic policies and identify issues of mutual interest that overlap municipal boundaries, in this case, the City of Airdrie – MD of Rocky View IDP.
<b>Intermunicipal Open Space</b>	Open space lands edging the interfaces of the City and the MD of Rocky View.
<b>Joint Use Site</b>	Municipal reserve lands owned jointly by the City of Airdrie and local School Boards through the Joint Use Agreement. Provisions concerning planning, development and maintenance of sites are included in the agreement. Sites may contain schools, playfields, community association facilities, recreation facilities, dry ponds, etc.
<b>Linear Park</b>	A narrow open space area/park that is often in linear form containing a pathway or trail connecting adjacent parks or open spaces.
<b>Municipal Development Plan</b>	A statutory plan that guides the future growth and development of a municipality as it relates to transportation, housing, economic activity, recreation, the environment, social issues and other matters.
<b>Municipal Reserve</b>	Reserve land dedicated for park and open space purposes.
<b>Municipal School Reserve</b>	Reserve land used for educational sports fields, community recreational sport fields and school building sites.
<b>Natural Environment Park</b>	A park classified as MR and/or ER, where the primary role is the protection of an undisturbed or relatively undisturbed area of land or water, or both, and which has existing characteristics of a natural/native plant or animal community and/or portions of a natural ecological and geographic system. Examples include wetlands, escarpments, riparian corridors, natural grasslands and woodlots.
<b>Natural Open Space</b>	Defined as undeveloped land left in its natural environment it often includes wetlands, steep hillsides, environmentally sensitive areas, creek and river corridors, and woodlots.

<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Neighborhood Parks are the combination of tot lot/playgrounds and park designed for the primary purpose of non-organized recreation activities. These type of parks are generally small in size and offer children’s play structures and picnic areas.
<b>New Communities</b>	The substantially unbuilt/undeveloped residential areas toward the edges of the city. Although unbuilt, planning policies are in place in all of these new communities areas prior to development.
<b>Non-Statutory Planning Study</b>	A non-statutory study that contains policies approved by Council but not adopted by bylaw.
<b>Non-Traditional Open Space Uses</b>	Uses that have a more specialized appeal in terms of participation rates than “traditional” activities such as ball, soccer and hockey. Programming for non-traditional open space uses is typically provided by specialized sports, recreational or user groups.
<b>Open Space</b>	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 (CP). For the purposes of the Open Space Plan, open space includes current and potential future parks, pathways, roadway greens, land for parks and recreation facilities, golf courses, cemeteries and other types of alternative use open space.
<b>Pathways and Trails</b>	Designated areas for walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized activities and serve as a means to linking various part of the community. Trails can serve single purpose or be multi-purpose serving a range of activities which may include mountain biking, rollerblading, walking and horseback riding.
<b>Passive Recreation</b>	Refers to activities that are more of an individual activity rather than a team activity, they usually are non-motorized, non-commercial, and non-competitive requiring little to no alteration to the natural landscape i.e. walking.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Measures of progress towards the vision for Airdrie.
<b>Preservation</b>	Designed to provide protection and maintenance of currently undisturbed natural areas and enhancement of existing natural features. Human access to these areas would be limited.
<b>Protected Open Space</b>	Open space that is subject to certain restrictions that limit the use of the lands and ability to transfer of the property such as conservation easements.
<b>Public Utility Lot</b>	land required to be given under the Municipal Government Act for public utilities. A public utility is a system or works used to provide certain services for public consumption or benefit. Examples of public utilities include water, public transportation, irrigation, drainage, waste management and telecommunications.
<b>Recreation</b>	The activity that a person takes part in for pleasure or relaxation outside of the workplace. Recreation has different meanings to people, for some it is the physical activity of hiking, climbing or playing soccer, for others it is the intellectual activity of studying nature through birdwatching or photography. Both parks and open spaces provide for active and passive recreational opportunities respectively.
<b>Recreational Open Space</b>	One of the three major types of open space (along with environmental and urban design open space). Recreational open space is open space that is acquired primarily to provide places for accessible public recreation.
<b>Regional Pathway System</b>	A city-wide linear network that facilitates non-motorized movements for recreation and transportation purposes. The spine of the system parallels the major physical features of the river valleys park system, including waterways, escarpments and ravines. It connects communities by linking major parks, recreation facilities and natural features. The regional pathway system may also link other major community facilities such as schools, community centres and commercial areas. The regional pathway is hard-surfaced, typically asphalt and located off-street. It is a multi-use facility and no one user or type of user is to be given elevated status.

<b>Regional Recreation Parks</b>	Parks developed for general recreation. May consist of either natural or constructed features, or both. Regional Recreation Parks are located and designed to serve more than one community but less than the entire city. They usually accommodate multiple activities for half or full day outings. Major features and amenities include: riverbank escarpment, passive recreation areas, picnicking, winter recreation, tot lots, local and regional pathway connections, and sports field areas.
<b>Creek Valley</b>	Sloping area abutting the creek channel.
<b>Right-of-Way / Roadway Greens</b>	A type of open space located within road rights-of-way. In addition to mowed grasses, they commonly include amenities such as trees, pathways, benches, natural areas and, less commonly, flower beds, sculptures, playgrounds and play fields.
<b>Sports Fields</b>	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.
<b>Sports Fields – Community Level</b>	Educational and recreational sports field requirements for public elementary schools, public junior high schools, public elementary and junior high schools, separate elementary schools and separate elementary and junior high schools, as per City’s “Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications—Landscape Construction.”
<b>Sports Fields – District Level</b>	Educational and recreational sports field requirements for public and separate high schools as per the Site Planning Team’s Joint Use Site Guidelines, as shown in the City’s “Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications—Landscape Construction.”
<b>Sport Fields – City-Wide Level</b>	Indoor and outdoor facilities that are available at dedicated sites. They have onsite staff and include Airdrie’s major athletic parks. Both children and adult programs are offered at the city-wide facilities. They are built to accommodate advanced levels of play.
<b>Stormwater Management</b>	The planning, analysis, collection, storage and controlled discharge of urban stormwater runoff. A series of techniques is used to manage where and how much water passes through a system after a storm. The term “best management practices” is used to describe techniques that work in conjunction with the natural systems.
<b>Sub-neighborhood Park</b>	The smallest of the parks, it usually functions as a play area for small children or as a passive park. May be combined with a larger park.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Economic and social development within the limits required to sustain long-term environmental well-being. Such development ensures that our use of the environment and natural resources today does not harm the prospects for use by future generations.
<b>Trails</b>	Constructed linear paths with a granular surface and are generally located in natural areas. As a management tool they identify intended public routing and can formalize desire lines to minimize the impact on the natural environment.
<b>Unprotected Open Space</b>	Open space owned by individuals, private companies, groups or societies with the right to develop the lands as they wish, (e.g., private golf course).
<b>Urban Design Open Space</b>	Open space where the main function is to contribute to the quality, form and function of the built environment through visual aesthetics, character, variety, sun allowances, noise/sight buffering, and public areas. Examples include roadway greens, escarpments, landscaped boulevards, sidewalks and urban plazas.

**Urban Plaza**

A place where the design, function and programming are its key characteristics and, therefore, it shall be maintained as a Class A park. The adjacent land uses, the plaza's unique features, interesting surface treatments, grade changes and seating contribute to its distinct identity and create a sense of place. It is an outdoor public space where cars are excluded. Its main function is for casual use by all Airdrie residents, regardless of ability, age, gender, culture or socio-economic status. However, it can also be used as a public gathering place for such activities as festivals, carnivals, art shows, exhibits, concerts, rallies and street markets. The three types of Plazas are:

**a. Downtown and Commercial District Plazas:** These plazas contribute to the livability, character and vitality of the downtown and commercial districts, and primarily service nearby retail services and office buildings.

**b. Community Squares:** These plazas contribute locally to a greater sense of community by their distinct identity and sense of place.

**c. City-wide Plazas:** These centrally located and highly visible plazas contribute to a greater sense of community on a city-wide basis.

**Utility Open Space**

Classified as "miscellaneous open space," it includes undeveloped parklands, buffer strips, roadway greens, boulevards and medians, easement and utility rights-of-way.

**Wet Storm Ponds**

Constructed, permanent water bodies that fluctuate with water drainage peaks but hold a permanent level of water at all times. Site is managed for stormwater quantity and quality objectives. Live storage area may encourage vegetation, but is not necessarily vegetated. Depth may vary depending on site security and public access. Site may have restricted access.

## APPENDIX B CONSULTATION INFORMATION

The following table provides a summary of comments, concerns and directions provided by City Staff, Stakeholders and the Public.

Table A-2. Consultation Process Results (Summary)

Event	Participants	Overall Comments / Direction
Project Meetings	City's Parks Planner / Project Leader, Consultant	
Key Informant Interviews	City Staff, Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more parking for the major park spaces like Fletcher Park and BMX facility to hold major events.</li> <li>• Camping for events desired (for baseball and BMX).</li> <li>• Many of the seniors would like to see a bocci ball and lawn bowling facility built.</li> <li>• Skateboard park – need a new one and the siting needs to be considered - if you live on the east side, very hard to get to with the highway.</li> <li>• Small scale (neighborhood) skate facilities are needed.</li> <li>• Destination parks are needed rather than small parks scattered around the communities.</li> <li>• Need another large central park (i.e., like East Lake and Nose Creek) – multi-user (structured and unstructured) – destination scale.</li> <li>• Skate park: consider putting indoor (year round use)</li> <li>• Northwest corner of the city – ecological preserve area, potential for flooding in 1:100 year floodplain</li> <li>• If you can't access the green space, is it really green "open space"?</li> <li>• Sidewalks – need to provide enough room to be able to walk two people abreast.</li> <li>• Linear parks need to go somewhere, not just dead-end</li> <li>• Lifecycle of a park – if a tot lot outgrows its value use then the space needs to be large enough to do something else.</li> <li>• Other needs: splash park, cemetery</li> <li>• Small parks are underused (e.g., Thorburn park) – too costly to maintain.</li> </ul>
World Café	Mayor, City Manager, City's Parks Planner / Project Leader, Planning Manager, City Staff, Key Stakeholders, Public	See Table A-3 below.

Event	Participants	Overall Comments / Direction
Airdrie Home & Garden Show	City Parks Planner / Project Leader, Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need stronger east-west and north-south linkages (east-west is most desired)</li> <li>• Need destination parks, multi-use parks</li> <li>• Linear parks/linkages used quite frequently – gaps need to be identified and constructed</li> <li>• Would like more non-programmed open space – places where children can play a casual game of soccer, etc.</li> <li>• Would like a downtown plaza (gathering space)</li> <li>• Celebrate history and Old Town by creating walking tours or interpretive signs.</li> <li>• More trees!!</li> </ul>
Public Open House	City's Parks Planner / Project Leader, Key Staff, Public, Consultant	<p>Exit Questionnaire (9 respondents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of respondents live in West Airdrie</li> <li>• Majority value Natural &amp; Semi-Natural Green Space or Water Courses and Green Corridors &amp; Other Pathway Linkages as open space types</li> <li>• Most willing to walk / cycle / run / inline up to 10 minutes to get to an open space or park</li> <li>• Most willing to drive up to 2 minutes to get to an open space or park</li> <li>• Majority feel there are not enough open spaces or parks</li> <li>• Majority have concerns with the lack of connectiveness between East and West Airdrie</li> <li>• Majority have concerns with crossing CPR</li> <li>• Majority have no concerns with amount of parking at open spaces and parks</li> <li>• Majority agree with proposed Vision statement (7 yes, 2 unsure)</li> <li>• Majority's favorite park or open space is Nose Creek Park</li> </ul>
Recreation Board Meeting (Input Session / Mapping)	City's Parks Planner / Project Leader, Director of Community Services, Recreation Board	
Council Meeting	City Council, City's Parks Planner / Project Leader, Public, Consultant	

Table A-3. Summary Analysis of Great Places Café

Topic	Key Points	General Comments
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a park in the downtown core that can be used as a gathering space for seniors, youth, and downtown workers.</li> <li>• Create an identity – a theme – for Airdrie that is reflected in the architecture.</li> <li>• Improve infrastructure downtown such as trees, boulevards, benches, and gathering spaces.</li> <li>• Link the downtown with walking trails from the residential areas to the shops that are separated by boulevards or parked cars.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a strong agreement that the downtown lacked a focal point as well as an identity.</li> <li>• It was also agreed that Big Box commercial design discouraged the public from walking or riding to the site.</li> </ul>
Town Form & Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a park in the downtown core that can be used as a gathering space for seniors, youth, and downtown workers.</li> <li>• Create an identity – a theme – for Airdrie that is reflected in the architecture.</li> <li>• Improve downtown infrastructure (e.g. trees, boulevards, benches, and gathering spaces).</li> <li>• Link the downtown with walking trails from the residential areas to the shops that are separated by boulevards or parked cars.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agreement was that although the pathway system was good, it is still lacking key linkages between communities, and between communities and commercial areas.</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternate designs for roads and traffic calming would make it more conducive to pedestrian activity.</li> <li>• Participants discussed the lack of ‘great places’ or destinations to draw people.</li> </ul>
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create innovative and environmentally sensitive multi-functional naturalized areas (e.g. Storm Water Management)</li> <li>• Create a large multi-use park for natural and semi-natural recreation (e.g. off-leash dog area, camping, education opportunities, trails, picnic/fire pit areas etc) with linkages.</li> <li>• Protection and preservation of Airdrie’s natural areas including both existing waterways and those that are now old dry oxbows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major concern is the loss or alteration of the natural environment with the rapid pace of development.</li> <li>• Concern of the lack of innovation in engineered watercourses/storm ponds.</li> <li>• Preserve natural areas as well as provide a large multi-use park.</li> </ul>
Historical & Cultural Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airdrie needs to create an identity that will give the community a sense of place. It may be found in history or depicted as a progressive community.</li> <li>• Preserve, protect, and promote the history of Airdrie through walking tours, monuments, plaques, or designations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants believed that Airdrie is a progressive community with a wonderful pathway system and a real sense of community.</li> <li>• There are a number of historically significant places and buildings that could be taken advantage of.</li> </ul>

Topic	Key Points	General Comments
Walkability, Street Types & Linear Paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths need to lead to hubs such as parks, play fields, commercial, or natural features.</li> <li>• A priority is the east/west connectivity of the city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pathways need to lead somewhere (e.g. regional park, downtown, shops, or a circuit of some sort).</li> <li>• Streets that have rear garages, sidewalks, and boulevards are preferred (e.g. East Lake Boulevard)</li> <li>• Desire for more east west connections</li> </ul>
Sports & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play fields and playgrounds are well represented though could include more multi-use facilities.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for other activities such as community gardens, lawn bowling, bocci-ball, and skateboard elements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear consensus that formal sports and recreation are well represented but the strain during large events is seen (e.g., shortage of parking).</li> <li>• Ensure support for both east and west sides and/or create pedestrian linkages.</li> <li>• Provide elements of skateboard parks incorporated in other open spaces, linear pathways, and local parks.</li> </ul>

## GREAT PLACES SURVEY AND RESULTS

### Open House (Draft Concept)

6:00 – 8:00 pm, June 27, 2006

City Hall, Airdrie, AB

### Exit Questionnaire

Please fill out this short questionnaire before you leave this evening. The City of Airdrie values your input and would like to receive as much feedback as possible on the Great Places Plan. If you require assistance, please ask one of the Open House Facilitators.

#### 1. Where do you live?

- East Airdrie (1)
- West Airdrie (7)
- Outside Airdrie city limits (1)

#### 2. What **type** of park or open space in Airdrie do you value most? (*check a maximum of two*)

- Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space or Water Courses (5)
- Historic Resource or Landmark (1)
- Parks & Civic Spaces (2)
- Outdoor Recreation & Sports Facilities (4)
- Green Corridors & Other Pathway Linkages (6)
- RV/Campground & Day Use Areas

#### 3. How long are you willing to **walk, run, cycle or inline skate** to get to a park or open space in Airdrie?

- 5 minutes (1)
- 10 minutes (5)
- 15 minutes
- 15+ minutes (3)

#### 4. How long are you willing to **drive your vehicle** to get to a park or open space in Airdrie?

- 2 minutes (3)
- 5 minutes (2)
- 8 minutes (1)
- 8+ minutes (1)

#### 5. Do you use parks or open spaces in **both** East and West Airdrie?

- Yes (5)
- No (4)
- Unsure

#### 6. Do you have concerns with Airdrie's parks and open spaces regarding: (*check all that apply*)

Amount of park and open space	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Number of facilities for organized sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure (2)
Pathway system	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Connections between East and West Airdrie	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (9)	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Railway crossings	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Nose Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Vehicle parking at parks or open spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure (1)

**7. If you answered Yes to having concerns with certain parks and/or open spaces in #6, please explain.**

- For the things I answered “yes” I think we need more with the population growth and the size of Airdrie now (distance). Trying to get from west to east is VERY frustrating.
- It feels like we don’t really have any parks that are usable. Nose Creek park (an open field with a stream) doesn’t really cut it. I grew up in Red Deer where there are tonnes of parks, trees, paths, etc. We need a place for our youth (e.g. skate board park). We need to preserve the old buildings, etc.
- Unfinished walkways not connecting. More grass needs to be cut by walkways.
- Only one connection for pedestrians east-west, water quality and protection of Nose Creek, larger green spaces adjacent to creek.
- Could always use more park space. Pathway network has weak east-west linkages. Not enough pedestrian crossings at railways. Nose Creek needs to be enhanced and/or preserved as a natural feature and amenity.
- East-west connections are a concern for continuity/connectivity. CP rail is a concern for hold-ups at crossings and the barrier they present. Nose Creek is a concern regarding health and being well protected.
- City needs to connect the pathways. Form larger park. Plant more trees along roadways. Increase planting in parks – trees, flower garden etc.

**8. Do you agree with the Vision proposed in the Great Places Plan (see below)?**

*By 2025, Airdrie’s Open Space System will be a model of environmental stewardship and a highly valued community asset. Strong forward planning over the coming years will provide Airdrie with a comprehensive, contiguous and innovative parks, open space and trail system. Residents will recreate and commute to work through a network of trails, pathways and streetscapes while stopping to enjoy the many park space amenities available. The city will also play host to world class special events like bicycle moto-cross competitions and soccer tournaments. This will all be made possible through the implementation of Great Places.*

Yes (7)  No  Unsure (2)

**9. If you answered No in #8, please explain.**

-Not sure if enough planning as a whole (all departments) in the Great Places Plan

**10. What is your favourite park or open space to visit in Airdrie?**

- Canals path system around the lake and east side lake area
- I go to Calgary to ride my bike or walk. Mostly along the river. It is worth the drive for the scenery.
- Nose Creek Park
- Nose Creek Park
- Nose Creek Park/pathways
- Fletcher Park
- Nose Creek Park
- Meadow Brook Park and pathways linking to Thornburn
- Nose Creek Park and East Side Park – still lacking trees

**11. Are there parks or open space types missing in Airdrie’s open space system?**

- Yes (4)  No (1)  Unsure (4)

**12. If you answered Yes to #10, please explain what types of park or open space are missing.**

- Something for “old town” area, maybe enhance what is there. New concrete skate park for Airdrie (the old one is not sustainable because it is wood. Also too small now).
- It’s all new terminology to me. I don’t think anything is missing. We need new and better planned parks for youth activities – skate boarding, freestyle, tobogganing, bicycling, etc. Treed pathways where you can’t see or hear civilization.
- Civic, natural green space
- Multi-use park, civic plaza/community gathering space
- Gardens and downtown civic spaces
- Lack of centre park. Centre park act as the centre of a wheel and feeds into all connecting pathways.

**13. Are the proposed locations for new parks & open spaces on the Concept Plan appropriate?**

*(see map attached)*

- Yes, all are located appropriately (5)
- Some are located appropriately (*draw on the map, which ones are not*) (2)
- No, none of the proposed sites are appropriate (*please make notes on the map to explain*)
- No data given
  - Is there anything proposed for the current part of Airdrie? We need to enhance what we have. Trees in Nose Creek Park, trees along pathways, inner city parks and pathways.
  - Proposed major open space located south on the map would be “another great Nose Creek Park”
  - Yes but want to ensure pathway connectivity to Calgary/Crossfield
  - Increase trees along major roadways, should design in an additional park for seniors in the middle of the city, as the roads are widened build in linear park space along road sides, increase the size of one of the smaller proposed parks, the top left hand smaller proposed park should be a campground with access to the city via foot.

**14. Are parks and open spaces (e.g., squares, plazas, treed streets) in the downtown important to you?**

- Yes (5)  No  Unsure (3)

**15. If you answered Yes to #13, what specific parks or open space areas would you like to see developed?**

- Is there a possibility for building skate park elements into the existing and future pathway system?
- Treed streets, city hall, revitalized walking area down Main Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
- I think what has been done on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is nice but...how many walkers enjoy it?
- Skate park/bike park
- Downtown, west of silver creek.
- Plaza’s, feature park
- Gardens, gathering – resting spaces
- Tree lined streets with flower garden, increase value of the city

## APPENDIX C REVIEW OF AIRDRIE'S PREVIOUS PARKS & RECREATION PLANS

Airdrie Regional Recreation Master Plan, 1979

*Not available for review*

City of Airdrie and Regional Recreation District Master Plan, 1986 (*reviewed*)

- Similar planning framework to approach for Great Places
- Park and open space inventory with ER/MR/MSR delineation for each parcel
- User needs survey undertaken
- Joint use agreements between Airdrie and School Boards, included as appendices
- Several good objectives for the Plan noted on pages 8-10
- Projections for types of open space needed (good socio-demographic information)
- Many issues and needs are the same today as they were in 1980s (including high growth rate)
- Good SWOT analysis of each park and open space parcel
- Plan examines programming offered by the City
- Overall concept plan with potential pathway linkages and park spaces

Parks, Recreation and Community Resources Department, Philosophy, Goals and Objectives, circa 1986 (*reviewed*)

- Overriding philosophy at that time was, “social and leisure services are essential to the development and continued well being of the community”.
- The three goals and objectives provided for each, relate to program and service delivery and much less on developing assets.
- The need to respond to community needs is stressed.
- Discussed the importance of maintaining appropriate City staff to respond to community needs for social and leisure services.

Nose Creek Park Master Plan, 1988

*Not available for review*

City of Airdrie, Urban Park Concept Plan, circa 1988 (*reviewed*)

- Multi-consultant effort on this project.
- Refers to a document called, “Facility Development Plan” – includes work on park development and upgrading existing assets.
- Intent of the Urban Park Concept Plan was to provide an outline of the components of the urban park plan.
- Goal: To work toward the development of an open space system that will meet the needs of Airdrie residents and visitors for the long term future.
- Objectives written on page 1 – used in part, for the Great Places Plan.
- Good public consultation programs through various projects, from 1985 – 1989.
- The vision for the “Urban Park” was, “a series of open spaces and activity centres are linked together by a comprehensive linear park”
- Plan breaks down existing assets into: Recreation Areas (e.g., Town and Country Centre, Plainsman Arena, Eastlake Aquatic Centre); Culture (e.g., Museum, Theatre); Parks (e.g., Jensen Park, Fletcher Park).
- Figure 1 – “Urban Park Concept Plan” – shows existing assets and proposed destination park locations in west Airdrie.
- Activity centres that were planned included, Recreation (T.R.A.D.E. Centre Park); Culture (Library, theatre expansion); Parks (T.R.A.D.E. Centre Park, Nose Creek Park, MR213); Schools (Big Springs/Thorburn, Summerhill).
- Figure 2 – “Land Ownership Plan” – shows Private parks, MR and ER, MSR and SR as of 1988.
- Figure 3 – “Recreation Concept Plan” – much the same as Figure 1, but park parcels have structured sport fields drawn in (e.g., baseball fields).
- Figure 4 – “T.R.A.D.E. Centre Park” – site plan for a destination style park in west Airdrie – Good example of what is needed today.

Tourism Action Plan, 1989

*Not available for review*

## City of Airdrie, Urban Park Master Plan, 1992

(reviewed; executive summary and appendices only – no copy of main report available)

### Executive Summary

- In 1989 the Province awarded Airdrie with \$3.2M for phase two of the Urban Park Program. This two step process began in 1990 with Nose Creek Park Master Plan being developed (\$1.3M). Second phase was referred to as the “Urban Park Master Plan” and Nose Creek Park was included in this.
- Staff and residents identified six (6) major park development components with four directional themes.
  - Nose Creek Park
  - Nose Creek Trails
  - Chinook Winds Park
  - Big Springs Park
  - East Lake Park
  - Community Wise Pathways Linkages
- Implementation plan included chart of all parks noted along with capital purchases and administrative time – total was \$3.2M.

### Appendices

- Appendix A – spreadsheet inventory of all park spaces.
- Appendix B – Transportation Study Recommendations and Transportation Bylaw No. 05/92.
- Appendix C – Native Species / Vegetation
- Appendix D – Opinion Survey and Results
  - Survey sent to Council members, Municipal Boards/Committees, related City Staff and 84 community groups and organizations. 39 surveys completed and returned.
  - Survey designed to receive comments on the original concept plans for the urban park and to identify other considerations for potential inclusion.
  - Passive / unstructured areas received highest level of support as primary focus for development (Natural areas were second priority, and then active / structured areas).
  - Priorities for development of the urban park were combined and set up in a ranking system and results were:
    - ✓ Priority 1 – City Wide Pathways
    - ✓ Priority 2 – Nose Creek Trails
    - ✓ Priority 3 – East Lake Park
    - ✓ Priority 4 – Big Springs Park
    - ✓ Priority 5 – TRADE Centre Park
  - Respondents asked to rank activity desires in terms of “Must Have”. Top 10 Results from highest to lowest:
    - ✓ Walking/Jogging
    - ✓ Passive Recreation Areas
    - ✓ Cycling
    - ✓ Family Picnicking
    - ✓ Outdoor Skating
    - ✓ Group Picnicking
    - ✓ Sledding/Tobogganing
    - ✓ Soccer/Football
    - ✓ Baseball
    - ✓ Fastball/Softball
  - Other activities not included in survey list provided that respondents wanted:
    - ✓ More linkages between communities
    - ✓ Skateboarding
    - ✓ Skating
    - ✓ Camping (e.g., in TRADE Centre Park)
    - ✓ Roller-skating / Inline Skating
  - Improvements to existing or suggestions for future park spaces:
    - ✓ East Lake Park: Bicycle path

- ✓ Big Springs Park: trees and plants, addition of outdoor rink / summer ball hockey and community centre
- ✓ Nose Creek Trails: include trails outside the city limits
- ✓ TRADE Centre Park: still need a multi-use recreational centre for this designated area
- General Comments:
  - ✓ Comprehensive path (paved) is required to link the entire community and perhaps parallel major transportation routes.
  - ✓ Walking trails between east and west sides of the city are considered a high priority.
  - ✓ Campground needed.
- For each of the proposed components in the Urban Park system, survey asked for a ranking of priority for development. Results from highest to lowest priority:
  - ✓ City wide pathway
  - ✓ Nose Creek paths
  - ✓ East Lake Park
  - ✓ Big Springs Park
  - ✓ TRADE Centre Park
- Appendix E – Personal Interviews – Summary
  - East Airdrie Community Association
  - Nose Creek Valley Museum Society
  - E.A.S.T Society
  - Recreation Board Chair
  - Nose Creek Valley Historical Society
  - CARES

#### *Appendices (Cont'd)*

- Appendix F – Public Survey and Results
  - Public survey administered in 1992 – 385 households completed the survey.
  - 60% noted passive / unstructured areas are a high priority.
  - 50% noted natural areas as a high priority.
  - Completion of the pathway system is a high priority for development in the urban park system.
  - Future development of East Lake Park should include a combination of natural-like and landscape areas.
  - Development of the Nose Creek pathway should incorporate both natural-like and landscaped areas with a slight emphasis on preservation and enhancements of the areas along the pathway and protection of existing habitat.
  - 90% of respondents said that city wide tree planting should be added to the proposed developments in the Urban Park Master Plan.
  - The main activities recommended for further development in the urban park plan included:
    - ✓ More playgrounds, particularly for preschool children
    - ✓ An outdoor pool for family use
    - ✓ Recreational opportunities for teens to keep them off the street
    - ✓ Arenas or ice rinks for hockey and pleasure skating
    - ✓ Area for basketball
    - ✓ Areas for roller-skating / Inline Skating
    - ✓ Areas for campgrounds
    - ✓ More areas for trees, flowers, green spaces
- Appendix G – East Lake Storm Retention Pond Report

## APPENDIX D REVIEW OF AIRDRIE STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

*Airdrie City Plan (City of Airdrie Municipal Development Plan)*  
*Amended February 17, 2005 Bylaw B-04/2004 & Bylaw B-05/2004*  
*Adopted by City Council June 20, 2003 Bylaw B07/2003*

The MDP includes Section 1-2, which discusses environmental responsibility as follows:

*“Within the City of Airdrie, certain areas exist that due to their physiographic character or environmentally sensitive nature should be retained in their natural state or protected from incompatible development. The City should take a lead role in ensuring local amenities are identified and protected as required. Environmental considerations form an integral part of the local planning process. Lands identified as having environmental significance or hazardous properties should be identified and addressed in the preliminary planning stages, protected or permitted to continue to perform their natural functions.”*

Pertaining to open space, specific policies contained in Section 1-2 are:

- 13) All development shall respect and maintain the integrity of the Nose Creek corridor and environment.*
- 23) Major drainage and water courses shall be protected from development, dedicated as environmental reserve and integrated into urban development in a manner which minimizes disruption of the natural drainage system.*
- 24) No development other than parks shall be permitted to occur within the floodway of Nose Creek.*
- 27) The City shall endeavour to retain and improve the natural functions and habitat as well as improve the recreational and scenic qualities of watercourses.*

Section 2-1 addresses open space for residential land use and development. It states:

*“A high standard of visual amenity shall be incorporated into all new development areas by capitalizing on varied visual impressions produced by such features as road configuration, integrated open space, sensitive use of building materials, or colors, landscaping and architectural styles.”*

This Section also notes that approval of single detached dwelling as it relates to any Neighborhood Structure Plan will, among other criteria, be dependant on the inclusion of open space. Further, the City shall encourage multi-unit high density development to locate in proximity to shopping facilities, institutions, parks or open space and have good access to arterial roadways and public transit service (Section 2-1(15)).

Section 2-2 discusses commercial land uses and, in particular, highlights two districts that should incorporate open space uses.

- In a Central Business District,  
*“Floor space to ground area ratios are generally higher in this area however the importance of open space and a well developed circulation system is recognized” (Section 2-2A).*
- Within a Neighborhood Commercial District,  
*“Orientation of structures shall maximize accessibility for pedestrians and bicycle racks shall be provided on site” (Section 2-2C.6).*

For industrial land uses:

*“Industrial development should incorporate open space and amenity areas for the benefit of the employees, and sidewalks or pathways should be included to allow access to all sites from future transit routes” (Section 2-3.5).*

Section 2-4 address policy related to parks, schools, and opens space. It states:

*“The provision of an attractive, multi-functional open space system is a high priority for Airdrie residents. In order to meet the needs of our community, the system must provide structured parks containing facilities for formal, high intensity recreational activities, unstructured parkland for spontaneous low intensity recreational activities and natural areas for the maintenance and protection of natural processes and observation and interpretation of the natural landscape and wildlife.*

*Further, as Airdrie is not provided with many natural features which augment the supply of open space with Environmental Reserves, the majority of the system must be dedicated as either credit Municipal Reserves or Public Utility Lots. Therefore, the available supply of open space in Airdrie is limited. In order that the open space systems in the city meet as many of our citizens’ needs as possible, the City must encourage these systems to fulfill many functions within the urban fabric:*

- *Active Play Space*
- *Passive Recreation Space*
- *Natural Ecosystem*
- *Buffer Space and Ornamentation*
- *Schools and other Institutions*
- *Public Utility Functions*

*To maximize the benefit of its investment in open space, it is the desire of the City of Airdrie to enhance all aspects of the open space system to meet a variety of needs. Careful allocation of reserves, efficiency in design, and the possibility of multiple benefits from each square foot of land wherever feasible, allowing for both activity and solitude, shall ensure that our open spaces are at the same time functional, safe, attractive, and easy to maintain.*

*The City’s predominant natural feature, Nose Creek, holds centre stage in the City’s open space plans. In addition to providing for many of the above needs, it is the City’s only significant wildlife corridor. Respect for the natural environment as it appears in Nose Creek is of major interest to the public, as well as to our municipal neighbors.”*

Specific policies in Section 2-4 are:

- 1) *The City of Airdrie shall update and maintain The Urban Parks Master Plan detailing development programs, timing and standards for the development of open space, parks and pathways.*
- 2) *Priority shall be given to the maintenance and enhancement of Nose Creek and East Lake Park as Airdrie’s principal natural environments.*
- 3) *As development occurs, the Nose Creek open space corridor shall be expanded so that it forms a continuous parkway system between the north and south limits of the City.*
- 4) *Environmental Reserve shall be provided as required adjacent to and including major watercourses and drainage areas, and land may be augmented with Municipal Reserve to ensure the open space is functional and continuous pathway systems can be constructed.*
- 5) *The City supports development of pathways linking Airdrie with the M.D. of Rocky View and City of Calgary via a continuous Nose Creek Park system.*

- 6) *New development areas shall provide linear parkway systems, where possible linking school sites, recreation facilities and major open space areas such as Nose Creek to the rest of the community.*
- 7) *The provision of regional and local pathways and local tot lots or playgrounds shall be detailed in a park concept plan approved by the Airdrie Regional Recreation Board at the Neighborhood Area Structure Plan stage.*
- 8) *All open space areas and facilities shall be designed to enhance the safety and security for the individual and the neighborhood using generally accepted principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.*
- 9) *Emphasis shall be placed on the provision of useable open space when dedicating credit Municipal Reserve. Walkways which solely provide connections between streets and facilities shall be provided as part of the road system or as Public Utility Lots.*
- 10) *Private open space and recreational facilities shall be encouraged to complement and augment the recreational facilities and open space areas provided by the City of Airdrie.*
- 11) *Major entry points into the City including the Highway 2 corridor should incorporate a higher level of landscaping and serve as attractive entries into the community.*
- 12) *The City supports the preservation and enhancement of publicly and privately owned trees and their contribution to the City's health and appearance.*
- 13) *Where storm water retention facilities are provided, they shall be dedicated as public utility lots, designed to enhance open space and its usage as well as to avoid water stagnation problems.*
- 14) *Portions of dry pond areas lying above the 1:5 year flood elevation may be eligible for Municipal Reserve credit provided the location, design and development coincide with the City's open space needs and concerns.*
- 15) *Where dry ponds are being considered in conjunction with school sites, priority shall be afforded to school and recreational needs.*
- 16) *Dry pond areas may be eligible for partial reserve dedication provided the location, design and development coincide with local needs and concerns.*

Specific to school policy, Section 2-4A states:

*"it is also recognized that there is a limited amount of public land available and that consideration to public open space and parks must be given in addition to school needs".*

Community facilities have a strong relationship to open space and the following policies apply:

- 1) *The City shall develop and maintain a 10 Year Capital Plan to provide for the assessment of community needs and prioritize facility construction in accordance with the City's financial resources.*
- 2) *Wherever possible, major community facilities should be located on municipally owned land other than dedicated reserves thereby maximizing the amount of open space and green area available for use by the citizens of Airdrie.*
- 3) *Facilities such as baseball diamonds and soccer pitches should be provided as need and support is demonstrated and may form part of the overall open space plan and municipal reserve dedication.*
- 4) *The City shall proactively pursue community and corporate participation and support in the development of new and expanded community facilities (Section 2-4B).*

Transportation and utilities, both public and private, are discussed in Section 3-1. The policy discusses the necessity to ensure utility easements are identified early in the planning process and to maximize their value in respect to the natural environment and enhancing the opportunity for the rights of way to complement the open space system.

Specifically, Section 3-1.9 states:

*“Utility companies are encouraged to maximize utilization of rights of way and service trenches. Facilities shall be creatively designed and located to provide linear open space connections and be as inconspicuous as possible”.*

In regards to storm water retention, drainage, and flood mitigation, Section 3-2 emphasizes the need to address alternatives to direct or indirect runoff discharges into Nose Creek, as the capacity of these systems is limited, they are ecologically sensitive areas needing protection, and future costly remedial improvements should be avoided.

Section 3-2.4 states:

*“Storm water retention sites shall be designed to enhance open space and its usage as well as to avoid water stagnation problems”.*

Transportation uses plays a significant roll in open space planning and Section 3-3 addresses the following:

*“In addition to road systems, parking control and pedestrian or bicycle pathway systems must form part of the overall transportation plan. Increasing public awareness in the environment as well as increased emphasis on leisure activity suggest that pathway systems be incorporated into transportation corridors where reserve and open space is not available for that purpose.”*

Specific policy states:

*“The City shall continue to foster and promote transportation strategies which make more efficient use of existing facilities and reduce environmental impact (e.g. commuter rail link, public transit, car pooling, pathways)” (Section 3-3.9). And that, “Road rights-of-way should make provision for landscaping, tree planting and walkway or pathway systems. Pathways form part of the overall transportation system and therefore shall be dedicated as part of the road rights-of-way. Roads and pathways should be constructed simultaneously” (Section 3-3.13).*

## ***The City of Airdrie***

### ***Land Use Bylaw***

#### ***No. B-9/2005***

*Adopted by Council June 20, 2005*

*and Consolidated November 2005*

Section 3-1(2)(i) discusses setbacks and site dimensions and states that a water courses, as defined by Alberta Environment, shall be sited a minimum distance of 15 back from the bank of the water course, unless supported by Approving Authority.

Also, according to Section 3-1(5), any land subject to flooding or subsidence, or which is marshy or unstable, shall not be developed any way except as a discretionary use and with the support of an Approving Authority. Generally, development within a floodway is encouraged to take the form of bridges and pedestrian walkways, public parks and outdoor recreational land uses, or uses that will not obstruct flow.

Landscaping standards, as discussed in Section 3-3, states the quality and extent of landscaping established on a site shall be the minimum standard to be maintained on site for the life of the development. However, despite the minimum requirements, all portions of a site not covered by structures, parking, or vehicular circulation areas shall be developed and maintained in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Also existing vegetation shall generally be preserved and protected.

As per Section 3-3(1)(i), a minimum 6.0 metre landscape buffer is required for all commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential projects located adjacent to municipal roadways.

Section 4-1(7)(e) states that in R-3, R-4, and R-5 Districts, a minimum of forty 40% of the site area must be provided as landscaping.

The general rules for any Residential District expect a minimum lot coverage and soft landscaping features.

The general rules for any Commercial District requires a minimum 10% of total site area shall be landscaped, that a minimum of 1 tree per 25 square meters of landscaped area. (Section 5-1). The general rules for any Industrial District requires a minimum 10% of total site area (Section 6-1).

Section 5 refers to Mixed Use Performance Criteria which expects the placement of buildings and design of site access and public frontage to accommodate street related activities and landscaping that contributes to a pedestrian-oriented environment, which provides maximum pedestrian connectivity.

Public Service Districts (P-1) are referred to in Section 7-1. The stated purpose and intent is “to provide for the development of public uses of a community, educational, or institutional nature. Inclusive of permitted uses from picnic areas to public parks, and discretionary uses ranging from public swimming pools to sports fields, these Districts could serve an open space use. Section 7-2 refers to Quasi Public Service Districts (P-2) and Urban Holdings Districts (UH), which are less flexible, but could support open space related uses

***City of Airdrie / Municipal District of Rocky View  
Intermunicipal Development Plan***

*Adopted by Airdrie City Council August 7, 2001*

*Bylaw No. b-21/2001*

Section 2.6 addresses Natural Environments, Open Space, and Recreation, and following policy:

*“The protection, maintenance and enhancement of a healthy natural environment and the preservation and reuse of historical resources are important objectives in providing a higher quality of life for residents of both municipalities. Whether located within the City of Airdrie or the M.D. of Rocky View, these resources are enjoyed by residents of both municipalities.*

*The natural features identified on Map 4 in the Background Section of this Plan represent significant resources and should be used as an initial guide for reviewing redesignation and subdivision proposals in the Plan area. It is intended that this map will be updated from time to time, as additional significant natural areas are identified.*

*Nose Creek is the most prominent natural feature within the Plan Area. Not only does it provide for recreational opportunities for residents within both municipalities, development along its banks can affect the downstream quality of the resource. Its significance has been recognized on a regional level and therefore lands adjacent to the creek within the Plan Area fall within either the Policy Area or the Nose Creek Notification Zone, as discussed in Section 2.3.2.”*

Section 2.6.2 of specific polices, which are as follows:

1. *Development within the Plan Area should control surface runoff using best management practices, both during construction as well as in the long term.*

2. *All sites being developed or redeveloped where the history of use is uncertain or where the possibility of site contamination exists, should undergo, at a minimum, a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment (ESA).*
3. *Lands that qualify as Environmental Reserve under Section 644(1) of the MGA should be dedicated at the time of subdivision approval as either environmental reserve or environmental reserve easement in favor of the respective municipality.*
4. *Provisions should be made for the prevention and control of invasive noxious weeds (as listed by Alberta Weed Control) on both private and public lands. Restoration of disturbed sites may include the establishment of natural species of flora appropriate to the area.*
5. *Generally, existing watercourses, as they are currently aligned, will be protected and dedicated as environmental reserve. However, realignment could be considered when it can be shown that a proposal to realign an existing water course will:*
  - a. *result in an enhancement to the existing riparian habitat;*
  - b. *not detrimentally affect water quality or stream flow;*
  - c. *provide enhanced opportunities for residents to enjoy the recreational/aesthetic qualities of the water course, such proposals can be contemplated as a component of subdivision and/or development applications;*
  - d. *employ best management practices as identified by a licensed professional who specializes in this field;*
  - e. *address the concerns of both municipalities; and*
  - f. *be to the satisfaction of the Province.*
6. *Recognizing that City of Airdrie and the M.D. of Rocky View have different approaches and priorities regarding the acquisition and maintenance of open space, both municipalities agree to co-operate on the long term planning and development of future open space systems within the Plan Area to the extent that is practical. More specifically, they will:*
  - a. *encourage options for and provide flexibility in the establishment of open space systems utilizing the Nose Creek floodway, flood-fringe, and other natural areas;*
  - b. *encourage the dedication of dedicate environmental and municipal reserve land adjacent to Nose Creek to establish a continuous linear park system that will connect a series of larger open space units whenever possible and practical;*
  - c. *respect and protect the riparian habitat immediately adjacent to the watercourse in plans for development of trails within this park system;*
  - d. *discourage development of slopes and the Nose Creek flood fringe in favour of retention of such lands as part of a natural open space system; and*
  - e. *give due consideration to the impacts that development may have on natural areas.*
7. *Subject to further study and public input, both municipalities will jointly investigate setting priorities for development of a regional trail network that may link existing open space sites and points of interest and development within the two municipalities.*
8. *For subdivision applications within the Policy Area, municipal, school, or municipal/school reserve should only be taken by direct dedication of land or registration on title of a deferred reserve caveat.*
9. *Both municipalities recognize the value that significant historical and cultural resources contribute to quality of life of present and future residents. They agree to identify such resources and incorporate protective measures into site and subdivision design proposals which affect these resources. More specifically, this means that:*
  - a. *subdivision and development applications may be subject to provincial review for identification of historically or culturally significant sites. Developers will be responsible for the study and protection of such sites in accordance with provincial legislation; and*

- b. *any subdivision or development applications for lands identified as having potential historic sites will be referred to Alberta Community Development in accordance with Section 5(3)(i) of the Subdivision and Development Regulation.*

Section 2.0B refers to relevant provincial land use policies as it relates to open and, they are as follows:

1. *“Municipalities are encouraged to identify, in consultation with Alberta Environmental Protection, significant ravines, valleys, stream corridors, lakeshores, wetlands and any other unique landscape area, and to establish land use patterns in the vicinity of these features, having regard to their value to the municipality and to the Province.*
2. *If subdivision and development is to be approved in the areas identified in accordance with policy #1 municipalities are encouraged to, within the scope of their jurisdiction, utilize mitigative measures designed to minimize possible negative impacts.*
3. *Municipalities are encouraged to identify, in consultation with Alberta Environmental Protection, areas which are prone to flooding, erosion, landslides, subsidence, or wildfire and to establish appropriate land use patterns within and adjacent to these areas.*
4. *If subdivision and development is to be approved in the areas identified accordance with policy #3 municipalities are encouraged to, within the scope their jurisdiction, utilize mitigative measures to minimize the risk to health, safety, and to loss due to property damage.*
5. *Municipalities are encouraged to identify, in consultation with Alberta Environmental Protection, areas of significant fish, wildlife and plant habitat and to establish appropriate land use patterns designed to minimize the loss of valued habitat within and adjacent to these areas.*
6. *If subdivision and development is to be approved in the areas identified accordance with policy #5 municipalities are encouraged to, within the scope their jurisdiction, utilize mitigative measures to minimize the loss of habitat.”*

Section 2.0H refers to Urban Servicing and states the following:

*“The Nose Creek Watershed ultimately receives all stormwater runoff in Airdrie. The City of Airdrie recognizes the highly valued recreational benefits to the Citizens of Airdrie and the eventual downstream impacts. The City of Airdrie has joined together with the MD of Rocky View, the City of Calgary and Alberta Environment to form the Nose Creek Water Partnership. This partnership monitors water quality along Nose Creek. The City and the MD acknowledge the need to apply Best Management Practices to future urban and rural developments.”*

## APPENDIX E REVIEW OF CASP & NSP IN AIRDRIE

Location / Name	Land Use	Rec. / Trail Plan	Concept Plan	Policy	Notes
<b>Community Area Structure Plans</b>					
Chinook Winds CASP	Residential (SF/MF), Rec (baseball)	✓	✓	✓	Section 5.6 (Open Space). Plan shows east-west regional pathway connections.
Coopers Town ASP	Residential (SF / large MF core), linear and pocket open space	✓	✓	✓	Section 3.7 (Open Space) Strong north-south linear park system through the middle of the development
Luxstone ASP	Residential (SF/MF), open space	X	✓	✓	Policy for open space and concept for internal road are weak. Suggest changes to linear pattern.
Northeast CASP	Light Industrial, Residential / Commercial, Industrial Business	X	X	✓	Page 20 (pedestrian orientation) Section 5.5 (Pathways) Concept plan does not adequately show potential tie in with existing trails nor does it show proposed trails.
Northwest CASP	Residential (SF with MF nodes), ER, M/SR	✓	✓		Preservation of Nose Creek emphasized Environmental Site Assessment and BIA performed. Nose Creek Floodway and Flood Plain shown. Section 5.4 – linkages
South Airdrie ASP	1 Residential node (SF), Light Industrial, Commercial	X	✓	✓	Preservation of Nose Creek emphasized Policies on open space and pathways are weak. Suggest changes to linear pattern and nodal open space.
Southeast Community ASP	Industrial (along highway), Residential (MF – townhouse & apartment), linear and nodal open space.	✓	✓	✓	Phase 1 ESA and EIA completed. Section 3.5 (Public Open Space). Section 3.5.1 (Regional Pathway). Section 3.5.2 (Local Pathways).
West Airdrie ASP	Residential (SF with 2 small MF nodes), 2 commercial nodes, M/SR sites, linear and pocket parks	✓	✓	✓	Linear park space looks good, but parks are almost all joint use and otherwise, not well sited. Figure 7B shows open space as “stormwater management” Policies on open space and parks are weak – more like guidance.

<b>Neighborhood Structure Plans</b>					
Bayside Phase 2 NSP	Residential (SF/MF), Large M/SR, Canals	✓	✓	X	Falls under the West Airdrie CASP. Section 3 (Open Space) provides details on areas. Use of MR for open space (perhaps trails?) is peripherally oriented to the development – does not provide a useable system.
Chinook Winds (Prairie Springs) Stage 1 NSP	Residential (SF/MF nodes), M/SR, Open Space/Rec (baseball)	✓	✓	✓	Chinook Winds Baseball Park facility and open space to project the creek) Joint Use Sites providing nodes of open space. Regional pathway runs north-south and east-west – good connections. Section 4.2.2
Gateway NSP Stage 1	Regional Commercial, Commercial Mixed Use, PUL, SWM	X	✓	X	Section 4.4 - a deferred reserve caveat has been placed on title for a subdivision to the north of the plan area. Open space provided at the south of the parking lot and to the northwest corner surrounding a storm pond.
Ironwood Station NSP	Commercial, Residential, Mixed Use (Com/Res), ER/MR	✓	✓	X	Open space (MR/ER) along Nose Creek. Open space associated with SWM. Page 8 (Design Guidelines) – narrow pedestrian street w/wide sidewalks, continuous sidewalk and path system. Very good pedestrian linkages shown.
Kings Heights NSP	Residential, 1 Commercial node, Industrial Business Park, Residential (SF/MF), Open Space	✓	✓	X	Figure: Landscape Concept Plan – provides a comprehensive ER/MR linear path and park space plan and M/SR provides joint use locations.
Sagewood Stage 2	Residential (SF/MF), Reserve, Open Space	X	✓	X	Outline Plan (figure) only. No detailed trail mapping.
<b>Outline Plans</b>					
Luxstone Outline Plan	Residential (SF/MF), Reserve, Commercial	✓	✓	X	Outline Plan (figure) only.
Morningside Outline Plan	Residential (SF/MR), MR/ER (buffer from CPR)	✓	✓	✓	Section 6 (Open Space Analysis) – comprehensive. Set of figures showing details of park and path spaces.
Sierra Springs Outline Plan	Highway Commercial, Regional Commercial, Light Industrial, Parks/ Open Space, ER	✓	✓	✓	Section 3.3 (Open Space Concept Plan). Figure 8 (Open Space Plan). Linear north south pathway and northern park/open space.

## APPENDIX F MD OF ROCKY VIEW ASPs ADJACENT TO AIRDRIE BOUNDARY - REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE POLICIES

### *Airdrie East ASP (2006 DRAFT)*

#### *Section 6.1 (d)*

*Linkages between municipal, school and environmental reserves are encouraged and shall be dedicated in all conceptual schemes with identification of low trails will connect between development areas.*

#### *Section 6.1 (e)*

*Collaboration with the City of Airdrie is to be encouraged with regard to recreation and open space, including the connectivity and access to East Lake and Kings Heights.*

#### *Section 6.1 (g)*

*Wetland areas will be retained and enhanced through the dedication of environmental reserve; construction of engineered wetlands for stormwater collection and treatment; and overall habitat maintenance.*

### *Section 8.0 Intermunicipal Cooperation*

#### *Section 8.1 Transition to Urban Densities:*

- (a) urban overlay policies should be used to ensure orderly future subdivision and development of country residential areas and shall include the following:
 
  - (i) lot lines for both the present subdivision and for future subdivision;*
  - (ii) building sites for both the present subdivision and for future subdivision; and*
  - (iii) rights-of-way for roads and utilities for both the present subdivision and for future subdivision.**
- (b) urban overlay plans must be prepared on a greater section basis.*
- (c) Urban overlay plans will be prepared based on City of Airdrie Service Standards.*

### **Balzac West ASP**

#### *Section 6.6 Natural Areas and Regional Open Space*

*"...these policies are intended to provide a framework for the protection, rehabilitation, and enhancement of identified environmentally sensitive areas within the Plan Area....A preliminary analysis of the natural environment within the Plan Area has identified the Nose Creek and Wet Creek (Rocky Creek) valleys as the most important natural areas in this ASP....Major findings of the preliminary analysis of the natural environment within the Plan Area are contained in Appendix C. Those findings can be summarized as follows:*

#### *...Nose Creek and Adjacent Native Grassland*

- The Nose Creek valley provides good wildlife viewing potential.*
- Any recreation pathways should be located with consideration for wildlife conservation and should avoid sensitive areas..."*

*6.6.1 Conceptual Schemes for areas where any significant natural areas, environmentally sensitive lands, or culturally significant sites may be subject to negative impacts from development shall be required to provide one or all of the following:*

- i. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA);*
- ii. Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA);*
- iii. hydrological evaluation;*

- iv. *geotechnical report;*
- v. *Historical Resources Overview or Historical Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA);*
- vi. *environmental protection plan or mitigation plan;*
- vii. *identification of any activities, operations, or facilities requiring approval under the Environmental Protection Act, Water Resources Act, Historical Resources Act, or Department of Environment Act; and*
- viii. *any other analysis deemed appropriate by the Municipality.*

6.6.2 *The Municipality may consider preparation of a Natural Areas Management Plan for this Area Structure Plan.*

6.6.5 *Land use activities should not compromise the conservation and protection of the natural environment.*

6.6.7 *Alternative means of open space dedication (e.g., conservation easements, Environmental Reserves, Environmental Reserve Easements, public access easements, and privately maintained common property under condominium ownership) are strongly encouraged for protection of significant natural areas, environmentally sensitive lands, or culturally significant sites identified within the Plan Area.*

6.6.9 *All sites being developed or redeveloped where the history of use is uncertain or where the possibility of site contamination exists, should undergo, at a minimum, a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment (ESA).*

#### *Section 6.7 Community Open Space*

*The purpose of the Community Open Space policies is to establish a framework for the creation of a connected and comprehensive system of public open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, equestrian trails, and natural areas within Balzac West. Figure 7 includes a Conceptual Community Open Space System, which is intended to illustrate in general terms how a pathway and trail system could both serve Balzac West and connect communities within this ASP to open space systems outside the Plan Area (e.g., within the Nose Creek valley). Accordingly, the Conceptual Community Open Space System shown on Figure 7 shall only be used for illustration purposes until such time as Conceptual Schemes are prepared.*

6.7.2 *Linkages and continuity among pathway and trail systems, public open spaces, and significant natural areas are encouraged in order to provide passive recreational opportunities for both existing and developing communities.*

6.7.3 *Figure 7 includes a Conceptual Community Open Space System, which shall only be used for illustration purposes until such time as Conceptual Schemes are prepared.*

6.7.5 *Alternative means of open space dedication (e.g., conservation easements, Environmental Reserves, Environmental Reserve Easements, public access easements, and privately maintained common property under condominium ownership) are strongly encouraged for the creation of an overall open space, pathway, and trail system within the Plan Area.*

6.7.6 *Wherever Municipal Reserve is dedicated within the Plan Area, it shall result in the creation of new, publicly accessible, and useful open space.*

6.7.10 *Maintenance and operation of open space and reserves serving the Plan Area should be encouraged through a number of initiatives, including partnerships with area Recreation Boards, Community or Homeowners' Associations, neighboring municipalities, and the MD of Rocky View.*

6.7.12 *The pathway and trail system should provide recreational and travel opportunities and connections that will accommodate a variety of users (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian users).*

6.7.16 *Wherever possible, pathways and trails should be located along significant natural areas and natural drainage or water courses, provided that they will not create any adverse environmental impacts.*

#### *Section 6.11 Intermunicipal and Regional Planning*

*The purpose of the Intermunicipal and Regional Planning policies is to place the Balzac West Area Structure Plan in the broader geographical and jurisdictional context, particularly as it relates to...the City of Airdrie..."*

*6.11.1 All Conceptual Schemes within the Balzac West Area Structure Plan shall address the following regional, intermunicipal, and interjurisdictional matters:*

- i. compatibility of neighbouring land uses, transportation, and utility services;*
- ii. connectivity of transportation, open space, and utility servicing systems;*
- iii. interfaces of neighbouring land uses, development, and transportation networks;*
- iv. provision of school sites;*
- v. integration with and connections to regional open space systems;*
- viii. vi. provision of community and regional recreational facilities;*
- ix. vii. provision of community services;*
- ix. future provision of public transit; and*
- x. protection of water resources through proper stormwater management, sanitary sewer systems, provision of potable water, and water recycling.*

*6.11.2 The Municipal District of Rocky View shall endeavor to collaborate with the City of Calgary, the City of Airdrie, and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation on planning for areas within and outside the Balzac West Area Structure Plan, particularly to address the following:*

- i. compatibility of neighbouring land uses, transportation, and utility services;*
- ii. connectivity of transportation, open space, and utility servicing systems; and*
- iv. interfaces of neighbouring land uses, development, and transportation networks.*

*6.11.5 The Municipal District of Rocky View shall endeavor to collaborate with the City of Calgary, the City of Airdrie, and Alberta Environment in the preparation of a master drainage study for the Nose Creek watershed, particularly as stormwater flows relate to the protection of water resources within the Nose Creek watershed.*

*6.11.6 The Municipal District of Rocky View shall endeavour to collaborate with the City of Calgary, the City of Airdrie, and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, the Calgary Airport Authority, and Canadian Pacific Railways in the preparation of a regional transportation study that addresses all modes of travel in and around Balzac West.*

## **Balzac East ASP**

### *Section 5.2 Nose Creek Flood Limit Policies*

*“...Nose Creek is the major drainage course in the Plan Area and is of intermunicipal interest as it traverses through the three (3) municipalities of Airdrie, Rocky View and Calgary. Nose Creek has historically been a source of water for domestic livestock and has future potential as a recreational amenity...”*

*...A study was carried out for Alberta Environment in 1980 which identified Nose Creek’s 100 year flood limit boundary (Hydrocon, 1980). This study represents the most recent information on the flooding potential within the Plan Area. The study was based upon contour information with 10-foot (3.0 meter) elevation intervals, and the authors admit the large interval makes it difficult to determine the exact extent of flooding in flatter areas. Flood limits from the 1980 report can be found in Appendix B.”*

### *Section 5.6 Open Space, Recreation and Public Land*

*“...Recreational spaces should be created to serve the residents within the Plan Area. In addition, the Plan Area has an opportunity to link a regional linear park system along Nose Creek between the City of Calgary and the City of Airdrie...”*

#### *5.6.4 Trails – Regional and Local*

*The Highway 2 corridor, in particular that portion containing the segment of Nose Creek that passes through the Plan Area, is subject to a number of diverse and sometimes conflicting planning interests. Local residents have expressed desire for extended linear parkways and green spaces in this area which represents a logical extension of the City of Calgary and City of Airdrie Parks Master Plans. In accordance with Provincial policies, no portion of the Highway 2 right-of-way will be made available for a trail network.*

- a. Proposals for development within the vicinity of Nose Creek should consider developing complementary trail linkages to the City of Calgary and the City of Airdrie through the Plan Area. Trails adjacent to Nose Creek should be consistent with the policies contained within Section 3.1.g of this Plan.*
- b. The width and dedication of land for a continuous linear park system along Nose Creek through the Plan Area shall be at the discretion of the Municipality as a condition of subdivision and/or development.*
- c. Trails should be established in new residential areas or areas undergoing in-filling that promote linkages between communities and recreational areas.*
- d. Establishment of a linear park adjacent to Nose Creek may be considered in the future at the discretion of the Municipality in consultation with the M.D. of Rocky View Airdrie Recreation District.*

## APPENDIX G SUMMARY OF AIRDRIE STUDIES & STANDARDS

### *City of Airdrie Transportation Master Plan Final Report May 2006*

Alternate transportation modes (bicycle and pedestrian) are mentioned in reference to sidewalks and pathways, but only in terms of engineering and road standards. Beyond this aspect, there is little mention of planning for pathway, trail, or open space systems, except for some illustration on schedule maps.

### *City of Airdrie Growth Study 2000 February 2001*

This Study addresses Regional Open Space and the need to plan for an expanding population. In discussion of specific lands for future growth, it states the following:

*A portion of regional open space requirements will be provided by natural open space along the Nose Creek corridor. In addition, the City of Airdrie owns the majority of 120 acres of land that is reserved as a future Regional Recreation Centre site<sup>15</sup>. This 120-acre site is planned to accommodate the existing ball diamonds along with other regional sports play fields and a junior high/high school complex. The future Regional Recreation Centre is located in the M.D. of Rocky View (NW quarter of Section 35), immediately adjacent to the current Airdrie boundary at the southwest corner of Big Hill Springs Road and 8th Street (p. 33).*

In discussion of future land requirements related to growth, the Study states:

*Urban growth during the next 30 years is also expected to require 108 acres of new retail commercial land, incorporation of the City's 120 acre Recreational Centre land, and allowance of 10% or 208 acres for other regional open space, quasi-public and institutional uses, major road and freeway uses, and flex-land to allow for an efficient land conversion process. These land requirements are in addition to land currently contained within the City (p. 34).*

The Study cites the West Airdrie Area Structure plan states, "the plan accommodates linked open spaces based on unique stormwater management and recreational water canal system" (p. 13).

The Study offers a Summary of Land Evaluation for various Sectors in future growth areas surrounding the City. Its evaluation criteria are numerous, but among them are issues of utility servicing and physical restraints, specifically environmentally significant areas. Which it defines as follows:

For purposes of this report, environmentally sensitive areas are limited to lands with slopes greater than 15%, significant wetlands, and drainage courses that contain water for most of the year.

- i) No environmental sensitive areas (high rating)
- ii) Environmentally sensitive areas can be incorporated into urban fabric at reasonable cost (medium rating)
- iii) Environmentally sensitive areas render a significant portion of the quarter section undevelopable or expensive for urban development (low rating) (p. 39)

A summary section and detailed table provides a sector by sector land evaluation, but with little implications for open space planning.

## ***Water Management Plan for the Nose Creek Watershed - DRAFT***

*Nose Creek Watershed Partnership – November 2005*

The Plan outlines a number of objectives, but they are essentially two-fold:

1. improve the riparian function of the Creek (i.e. prevent/reduce stream bank erosion, channel length and width reduction, degradation of native grass and trees, and maintain wetlands), and
2. improve water quality.

Associated objectives are to help provide safe human recreational uses. In particular, Section 3.3 states, “The recommended water conservation objectives aim to maintain channel structure by minimizing anthropogenic causes of stream bank erosion. They also aim to maintain fish habitat, maintain recreation opportunities and minimize safety concerns resulting from stream bank instability and flooding, while allowing for sustainable development in the basin”. The Plan, among other goals, seeks to encourage jurisdictions to adopt and incorporate its recommendations into Land Use Bylaws and/or other policies and guidelines.

Section 3.5 offers a list of recommendations related to implementation, in particular “x” recommends that appropriate jurisdictions “review setback policies to establish what amounts to a healthy corridor for both the urban and rural reaches”.

Section 4.1.2 makes recommendations for stormwater management and, in particular, discusses “low impact development”. The Plan does not specifically address open space planning, but states:

*The pre-development rates and volumes for smaller storm events and severe, infrequent events. This is typically achieved through reduction in the level of imperviousness and integration of best management practices (BMPs) in subdivision design, including “green infrastructure” features, and stormwater reuse. In some cases, precipitation captured at the source can be returned to the original, natural hydrologic pathways through infiltration and evapotranspiration*

This policy would certainly be complementary to the objectives of open space planning. The Plan specifically recommends a review and revision of design standards to better reflect these objectives.

Section 4.2 highlights the need for riparian protection. It specifically addresses setbacks and offers an overview making note of the need to understand the nature of fixed- and variable-width setbacks, which exists at present. It recommends a more flexible and site-specific three zone system, and includes specific width recommendations provided in Table 4.3.

In Section 4.2.2, more specific recommendations made for riparian protection as it relates to Urban and Country-Residential Areas, and Agricultural Land Uses. Setbacks are discussed as they relate to particular topography and identified areas of sensitivity. Restricted and permitted activity within setbacks is highlighted. Among those recommended to be permitted are: existing parks and playgrounds, natural areas, and passive recreational areas.

Section 4.3.2 makes recommendations as it relates to water quality. In serving the preservation of channel length and structure, the Plan recommends that any new development should serve the principle that “no net loss” and “no degradation”. It encourages that all development applications be required to include documentation to show that project considered the preservation of riparian areas and water quality in the planning process. A series of specific recommendations serve the protection of natural features, and stress the need to avoid invasive development of existing topographies, and, among others, makes the following recommendations:

- q) Stripping, grading or filling of escarpment areas should not be permitted for any new development.
- r) On lands subject to development, escarpments, equal to or greater than 15% should be designated as Environmental Reserve and retained as natural area as identified on the Riparian Area Management Map.
- s) Where land is situated adjacent to or includes the banks of any watercourse, including coulees, ravines, gullies, valleys and where the slope of the bank adjacent to any watercourse is in excess of 15%, buildings or other structures should not be permitted:
  - i. Where the height of bank is less than 6 m, within 12 m from the top of the bank,
  - ii. Where the height of bank is between 6 m and 23 m, within a distance that is two times the height of bank, from the top of the bank,
  - iii. Where the height of bank is more than 23 m, within 46 m from the top of the bank. M.D. of Rocky View Land Use Bylaw Section 34 (a).
- t) It will be the responsibility of the developer, with the assistance of qualified environmental specialists, to identify native vegetation communities and appropriate runoff volume release rates for intermittent streams.
- u) Wetlands should be retained in the watershed using a minimum 30 m setback.

Section 4.5 addresses compensation, mitigation, and restoration. It stresses compensation only as a last resort and, if compensation is to occur, it should serve restoration of riparian areas near or away from the site on the same watercourse. In general, restoration activity is stressed, which would, in part, contribute the open space and natural areas amenities indirectly. Section 4.5.3 states:

Nose Creek and West Nose Creek are vulnerable to further degradation unless development and agricultural practices change and efforts are made to restore ecosystem function. Nose Creek has been impaired through channelization (loss of channel length), loss of riparian function and loss of wetlands. Restoration of Nose Creek and West Nose Creek should be a priority as future land use decisions are being made and further alteration to the creeks is anticipated. Studies conducted by Cows and Fish (2001) indicate that the creeks will be highly responsive to any improvements made to grazing land management or development practices that reduce stormwater input and degradation of riparian areas.

There are a number of areas in Nose Creek Watershed where the integrity of the riparian area has been compromised either through development or agricultural activity. The following recommendations should be considered to restore ecosystem function.

### ***City of Airdrie, Engineering and Construction Standards***

Design standards provide information regarding the standards governing subdivision design, servicing standards, design and construction approval processes and the as-built drawing submission requirements within the City of Airdrie. Due to close proximity to Calgary, the City of Airdrie follows The City of Calgary's design standards. Airdrie has however adopted some standards separate from Calgary's design standards document, listed in Airdrie's free standing document Schedule "A". Any information included in Schedule "A" supersedes the effected design standards of The City of Calgary. Airdrie also uses The City of Calgary's Landscape Construction Standards (2005).

## APPENDIX H AIRDRIE'S URBAN FOREST POLICY

Policy No.12 - Urban Forest Policy

Tree Removals & Plantings on City Titled Boulevards and Road Right of Ways

### DATES OF APPROVAL

Original Policy: May 10, 1999

Airdrie Regional Recreation Board Motion: 99-R-49 May 10, 1999

City of Airdrie Council Motion: 99-C-252

### Tree Removals

All street trees have a life expectancy. Some longer than others but eventually over time all trees will need to be removed and replaced. Trees are a community asset and therefore an important part of a community's image, identity, and well being. Removal of an asset must meet certain criteria and will not be removed unless the trees meet the criteria. Any removals will be effectively communicated with the property owner well in advance of the tree being taken down. The following criteria will be applied to determine whether or not to remove a tree.

Trees located on city titled boulevards and road right of ways shall be considered for removal if:

- The tree is dead.
- The majority of the crown is dead and the tree is past the stage where it can be cost effectively treated.
- When it is necessary for insect and disease control.
- If the tree has been damaged during a storm and there is no chance of treating the tree. (when over two thirds of the crown has been damaged)
- Trees have been found to have major decay in the trunk and are not successfully compartmentalizing the decay on their own. (the decay is continually spreading throughout the tree)
- Trees that have to be removed for construction purposes only when there are no cost effective alternatives to save the trees.
- A past history of extensive damage has been recorded to City property (i.e., sewer, sidewalk, roadway) and it is in the best interest of the City to have the tree removed. Removal is the final choice after all other alternatives have been considered.
- Removals will be accomplished on a first come first served basis, taking in to account risk management.
- Due to budget restraints, removals are completed on a "as time permits" basis and no concrete date can be given for removals. Removals are usually done in the fall.
- If a tree has been inspected and deemed a 'high risk' hazard to recognized I.S.A. standards, the removal of the tree will be expedited as quickly as possible.

## **Tree Planting**

The intent of this section of the policy is to limit and control the planting of trees along road right of ways and boulevards. Trees located in these areas require a higher degree of monitoring and long term maintenance due to the location. The City will monitor the installation or replacement of trees on City titled property, such as, boulevards and road right of ways to ensure proper species selection and installation techniques are used at all times.

- All plantings located within City owned road right of ways and boulevards shall be approved by the City arborist.
- Trees that have been removed may or may not be replaced due to surrounding area circumstances.
- If at all possible, with the owner's permission, replacement trees will be planted with-in the adjacent property owner's property.
- All plantings will be monitored on a rotating yearly basis based on species and location.
- Planned streetscapes will be approved by the City arborist before planting.
- Plantings located with-in City owned road right of ways or boulevards that have not been approved by the City arborist will be removed. The cost of the removal will be billed to the person/s responsible for the unauthorized planting.
- If a property owner wants to plant trees located with-in the road right of way or boulevard, the tree/s must meet current City of Airdrie development specifications and be of an approved species for the area. The planting must be approved by the City arborist.
- All tree planting in new developments will be located on the homeowner's side of the property line unless previously approved in writing by the city arborist.
- All plant material and installation techniques will meet current development guidelines and specifications.

## APPENDIX I      ALTERNATIVE OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORKS REVIEWED

This section provides an overview of the open space systems within which the Typologies of Open Space operate. Each Open Space Type (A through G) may be large or small (Hierarchy), may attract local and/or tourists (Target User) or may be structured or unstructured (Formality of Space). A mixture of each open space type within a variety of systems described below, will result in a successful open space system.

**Configuration:** the configuration of open spaces are numerous but are generally comprised of open space parks connected (or not) by pathways. The configuration may be linear like a rail line with station stops along its path, or “nodal” like a bicycle wheel (also known as “hub and spoke”) with large, central open space with paths radiating outwards to smaller satellite open spaces. Other configurations vary.

**Hierarchy of Space:** the size of open space varies in an urban municipality depending on its function, location and availability of land. Sizes can range from a half acre up to tens of acres depending also on the size of the city. The accepted nomenclature (also used in Great Places) is: Sub-neighborhood (e.g., tot lots), Neighborhood (e.g., larger open green spaces attached to a Community Association), Community (e.g., Joint-use site with a school), and Destination / City-wide (e.g., unique spaces attracting residents/tourists to the open space; Nose Creek Park).

**Target User:** a municipality must plan open space with the intended user in mind. At the local level, residents range in age, gender, expectations, desires, fitness level and ability. Open space and parks may also be constructed to serve visitors to the area and this brings a whole different set of expectations the venue must uphold.

**Formality of Open Space:** In recreation, open spaces, paths and parks are generally classified as being “Structured”, where the space’s activity opportunity is well-defined for the user, or “Unstructured”, where the user is free to define the activity within the space for themselves.

As noted, these systems provide the framework within which the types of open space defined in Great Places are located.

## APPENDIX J REVIEW OF PLANS, BEST PRACTICES & PRECEDENTS

Many cities in North America are creating better living environments due in large part to the adoption of municipal level policy and landscape strategies for open space and park protection and integration with the built form. There are countless sources of information for open space planning and design techniques and an equal number for recreation planning and construction. For the purpose of providing Best Practices in Great Places, a review of innovative plans and park planning techniques in North America (particularly those plans for four-season cities) was performed.

### Great Plans

Amongst the Open Space Plans that were reviewed, the following four plans were considered as being great and relevant to Airdrie. Information may be drawn from these plans as Airdrie implements Great Places and Staff is encouraged to communicate with any of the jurisdictions to learn more about their successes and drawbacks.

#### City of Ann Arbor, Michigan

[www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/CommunityServices/Parks/Pros%20Plan/2006%20Parks%20Open%20Space%20Plan.pdf](http://www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/CommunityServices/Parks/Pros%20Plan/2006%20Parks%20Open%20Space%20Plan.pdf)

A four season city with a strong emphasis on making the most of their parks and open spaces by encouraging the sharing of uses: “Provide an efficient recreation and open space system, where all the components will complement each other in providing a broad spectrum of services that minimizes duplication”.

#### Town of Franklin, Massachusetts

[www.franklin.ma.us/auto/town/pacdev/fmplan/openspace/default.htm](http://www.franklin.ma.us/auto/town/pacdev/fmplan/openspace/default.htm)

Also a four season city, Franklin places a strong emphasis on educating current landowners to donate or “...grant access to or through their lands to help the Town create a network of trails and access routes linking open space and recreational parcels for the use and enjoyment of all residents”. The Town has a funding strategy that requires them to set aside a set dollar figure each year as well as a signage strategy to ensure people are able to locate the public access open space areas.

#### Guilford County, North Carolina

“Lying in the heart of North Carolina’s Piedmont Triad Region, Guilford is the state’s third largest county and contains the major cities of Greensboro and High Point. The County is home to six colleges and universities, and provides a range of opportunities to live and work in one of the most desirable environments in the Southeast”  
<http://gcms0004.co.guilford.nc.us/>

They collaborated with three cities (High Point, Jamestown, and Greensboro) to develop regional parks as well as connecting the communities. They also felt it was vital to ensure they had a complete inventory of all open space lands in order to decide where, when and how they should connect the spaces. One of their main principles reads, “The program will be built on the concept of corridors and bubbles, such that, in thirty years, there would be strategically located open space “bubbles” or core areas throughout the county; these open space core areas would be linked together by stream corridors, greenways, bike trails, walking paths, utility easements, or other liner connections; and each site would have a variety of uses appropriate to that site”. Their overall plan principle fits with the typology of open spaces recommended for Airdrie.

## **Forsyth County and Winston-Salem Parks and Open Space Plan**

[www.forsyth.cc/Documents/ParksPlanDraft2006.pdf](http://www.forsyth.cc/Documents/ParksPlanDraft2006.pdf)

The partnership between the local municipalities is one of respect and compromise. They work "...together regionally to jointly provide recreational facilities and open space for their residents". They also have ongoing "... cooperation between the schools and recreation departments for the use of some school's recreational facilities for public recreation" (e.g. school gymnasiums as community recreation centres). Even more so, "school administration has provided greenway easements and public recreational facilities at several new school sites". "Cooperative acquiring, planning, development and use of sites for both school construction and recreational uses will maximize the use of tax dollars". They are also big into promoting the use of public private partnerships in developing recreational facilities.

## **Spokane County, Washington State**

"This Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is intended to lay the groundwork for the future of the County park system. The park plan is designed to supplement the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. It expands on the information contained in the Comprehensive Plan by providing significantly greater detail regarding the inventory of park and recreation facilities. While this park plan may be considered a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, the drafting and adoption of this park plan represents procedural and substantive differences from the process used to develop and adopt the Comprehensive Plan. Thus, while this park plan meets the Growth Management Act requirement of consistency with the existing Comprehensive Plan, it should not be considered to be a Growth Management Act plan.

The plan inventories existing parks and identifies future park needs. It explores potential park locations, and prioritizes strategies to meet level of service standards identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The plan also describes existing and potential funding sources that will be needed to meet level of service standards and maintain park facilities and recreation services. Finally, the policies within the park plan work to ascertain the economic feasibility of proposed new parks. The plan sets forth seven goals intended to accommodate the park, recreation, and open space needs of County residents. The goals are supported by policies that will guide County staff and elected officials in implementing the park plan."

## **Best Practices & Options for Airdrie to Implement**

The following list provides Best Practices for open space planning as they relate to the "Typologies of Open Space."

### *Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space or Water Course*

- Between 25 and 50 percent [of park space] should be planned as undeveloped green space for informal play to afford needed visual breaks in the city, particularly when located along major thoroughfares.

### *Historic Resource or Landmark*

- Many corridors containing trails...have an interesting historical component that appeals to many people. Trails will often highlight this aspect of history through interpretive signs.
- TransCanada Trail has a number of historical signs along its trail.

### ***Outdoor Recreation & Sport Facilities***

- Connections to community facilities via green infrastructure can connect people with other types of recreational facilities such as soccer and baseball fields (e.g. Capital Crescent Trail and Washington Trail in Washington DC)
- The trails and greenways themselves act as a form of recreation facility (e.g. Fish Creek Park in Calgary, AB)  
*Hugh Morris, Trails and Railways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda, September 2002.*

### ***Green Corridors & Other Linkages, Paths & Streets***

- Survey research shows that bike commuters will choose a somewhat longer route so they can use a trail. These same commuters also tended to have longer commutes in general, indicating that people are willing to go further if they can do so on a trail” (Aultman-Hall, 1997)
- Brownson et al, found that 5% of trail users indicated that they had increased their amount of walking since the began using the trail” (Brownson et al, 2000).

*Hugh Morris, Trails and Railways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda, September 2002.*

### ***Campgrounds and day use area***

Open space and parks are often used as gathering spots and facilitate spontaneous social interaction as people come upon their neighbors on the trail” (e.g. Picnic areas throughout Fish Creek that allow for multiple types of users during all seasons).

*Hugh Morris, Trails and Railways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda, September 2002.*

- Forsyth County and Winston-Salem of North Carolina focus on ensuring that parks and open spaces are multi use sites which would work to encourage day use areas in Airdrie. Combine a park with camp ground facilities with picnic benches that can be used when campers are not using the space  
*Forsyth County and Winston-Salem Parks and Open Space Plan*

### ***Non-contributing Green Space***

- Transform the space into a useable space (e.g. Vancouver, BC transformed a forgotten space into a viable skate park called the New Line Skate Plaza (Mark van der Zalm, 2005).
- In Franklin, Massachusetts a review of public lands is completed and if the use of the land is not needed or desired then the land is sold and the “...proceeds fund the acquisition of open space and recreation lands and/or to develop recreational uses” (Franklin Master Plan – Open Space and Recreation, 2005).

### *Open Space Types*

The City and County of Broomfield, Colorado utilizes a checklist that concentrates on the core elements of each of its open spaces. For example:

Active Uses	Passive Uses	Support Facilities
Core Elements		
Medium to large playground	Individual and group picnic areas	Off street parking commensurate with site size and level of use

In this manner the spaces can be used year round and by various user groups.

### *Inner City & Suburban Open Spaces*

- Certain constructs, such as low density development, segregated land uses and lack of transportation options, conspire to favor the automobile. Conversely, higher density development, mixed land uses and a variety of transportation options make transit and facilities for walking and bicycling viable options for people when they want to get to their desired destination

*Hugh Morris, Trails and Railways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda, September 2002.*

### *Financing & Public Incentives*

- Supply grants and other gap financing to reduce development costs
  - Waive development fees and taxes
  - Provide low-interest loans, such as revolving loan funds
  - Give grants and loans for feasibility assessments
  - Seek out patient investors, such as public pension funds and foundations
  - Price infrastructure to reflect full costs of development
  - Investigate funding from federal programs and alternative sources
  - Structure impact fees to favor infill development
  - Adopt policies linking public investment to Smart Growth objectives
  - Tie funding to preferred development locations
  - Reward outcomes that cut costs and lessen environmental impacts (Getting to Smart Growth, [www.metrocouncil.org/planning/landuse/reinvest\\_tool.pdf](http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/landuse/reinvest_tool.pdf))
- The City Ann Arbor, Michigan is looking at funding and financial stability through:
  - a) Consider a variety of funding strategies including: millage, grants, easements, use agreements, land use controls, dedication, bequeaths, volunteer work, private organizations, etc.
  - b) Where required, channel fees paid for the use of facilities within an enterprise fund back into the maintenance, upkeep and improvement of the facilities within that fund.
  - c) Require new residential development within the City to contribute equitably to the resulting increased demand for parks, recreation and open space so that the current recreation and open space quality does not deteriorate.

- d) Explore new long-term funding opportunities as property tax reform evolves.
  - e) Study the services and facilities that receive subsidy and those services and programs which charge fees to determine optimal (desired) fee levels and subsidy levels.
  - f) Seek broad support for the park, recreation and open space system, including support from the surrounding townships.
  - g) Develop strategies by which volunteers, community businesses, educational institutions (The University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, etc.) and service groups might be more directly involved in developing, sponsoring and assisting with recreation programs, or ecological restoration of natural areas.
  - h) Implement resource and cost sharing as a means to finance building and maintenance of multi-purpose facilities.
  - i) Strive for adult sports programs self-sufficiency.
  - j) Increase public support through citizen knowledge of and identification with park spaces. Foster volunteerism and public input to the decision-making process by facilitating organized citizen park stewardship with an adopt-a-park program and continuation of Natural Area Preservation Park Steward program.
  - k) Include actions addressing the issues of water quality protection and restoration since these are state and federal goals and will qualify park projects for state and federal grants.
  - l) Encourage the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor Public Schools to provide more public open space for community use.
- The Town of Cary, North Carolina focuses a part of their fiscal budget to be used to acquire open space priority areas as well as leverage for additional funds from county, state, and federal sources. “The exact method of financing an ongoing land preservation program will be based on direction from Town Council, based on the adopted goals of the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan”. They also have a strong focus to working with additional groups (e.g. not-for-profits, and various levels of government) to ensure their open space will be preserved. They also use what they refer to as ‘voluntary landowner’ initiative which “through advance planning, they can achieve significant financial benefits through the use of conservation easements for significant resources, while employing conservation design techniques for developing less-sensitive areas of the land”.
  - Use of acquisitions to obtain land for open space and parks. “acquisition methods can be classified into two categories – methods where landowners retain ownership of the land and preserve a resource through an easement or other mutual agreement; and methods involving a transfer of title from the owner to the local government, land trust or preservation organization that is in land management”. This Country provides an entire tool kit that we could use as an appendix (G) – again I only have it in hard copy.

### ***Green Infrastructure***

- Implement best management practices that promote green infrastructure
- Preparation for ordinances, regulations, and incentives affecting the siting of buildings, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, roadways, drainage, landscaping, and other physical features, using zoning, subdivision control, and site planning requirements.
- Review and approval of applications for development, which includes scrutiny of plans for:
  - Residential subdivision
  - Planned unit development
  - Mixed-use developments
  - Redevelopment of blighted area

- 
- Street, sidewalk, and bikeway improvements within public rights-of-way
  - Landscaping plans and plans for neighborhood parks and play lots
  - Community services and facilities plans
  - Urban design plans for streetscapes, plazas, and other public spaces (American Planning Association)
- City of Edmonton ensures that there will be “systematic or routine maintenance of...” green infrastructure (Urban Parks Management Plan, Parkland Management Plan)
  - Urban Naturalization in Canada: A Policy and Program Guidebook (Evergreen, 2001)
  - City of Regina focuses their open space and parks planning to include “The Parks and Open Space Section of the City of Regina’s Development Plan (Section 6.3.2) states that:
    - Ecological principles shall be an integral part of the design process for parks and open space; and
    - To conserve water increased development and use of drought tolerant plant materials be considered in all new park development and redevelopment initiatives.
  - Urban Naturalization in Canada: A Policy and Program Guidebook (Evergreen, 2001)
  - In Burnaby, British Columbia the Official Community Plan’s Subdivision Requirements and Comprehensive Development District zoning regulations require that developers landscape portions of the development site with native vegetation if it borders an identified environmentally sensitive area. Areas where native vegetation landscaping will be required are identified in Local Area Plans and include riparian areas.

## APPENDIX K EVOLUTION OF PARK SPACE IN AIRDRIE

Table A-1. Evolution of Typical Park Space Types in Airdrie

Date	Open Spaces Introduced	Open Space Type						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1947	• Railway garden			✓				
1974	• Agricultural / fair grounds	✓			✓			
	• School grounds				✓			
1980	• Churchyards	✓		✓				
	• East Lake	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	• Urban parks	✓		✓		✓		
	• Water-based amenities	✓		✓				
	• Cemetery (now is part of town)		✓	✓				
	• Linear park / path beginnings	✓				✓		
	• Recreation fields				✓			
1998	• Picnic areas	✓		✓				
	• More paths & linear connections				✓			
	• Nose Creek Park	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	• East Lake (sports fields)				✓			
2006	• Golf course				✓			
	• Baseball fields				✓			
	• Linear parks and paths					✓		
	• Many amenity spaces			✓				
	• School grounds / recreation fields			✓	✓			
	• Soccer fields					✓		
	• Ecological park	✓						

*A=Natural and Semi-natural green space or watercourse, B=Historic resource or landmark, C=Parks and civic spaces, D=Outdoor recreation and sport facilities, E=Green corridors and other linkages, F=Campgrounds and day use areas, G=Non-contributing green space*

## APPENDIX L      REVIEW OF PARKS DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTS

### Parks Department

#### *Mandate*

The City of Airdrie currently oversees parks planning in two different, but integrated divisions: Parks, Planning & Development Department, provides policy direction on land use and the Parks Department provides operation and maintenance for parks, open space and trails.

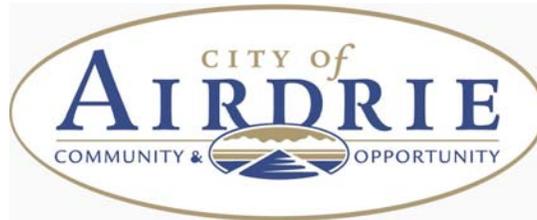
#### *Mission*

To ensure that a diverse parks system is developed and maintained to the highest possible standard. Ensuring both outdoor recreational opportunities and visual image that enhances quality of life for the residents of Airdrie and the Municipal District area. This is accomplished through the provision of the following key service areas:

- o Ensure safe active and structured play spaces are maintained to levels set by City Council.
- o Ensure natural areas and leisure park areas and facilities are maintained to levels set by City Council.
- o Provide opportunities for active and passive leisure that will enhance quality of life for individuals and communities.
- o Provide and maintain cemetery operations.
- o Provide and maintain an Urban Forest.
- o Ensure customer feedback and market opportunities in both active and passive leisure park services. (This would include programs and groups like adopt a park, Horticultural Society, Chinook Winds Ball Association, Minor Soccer for example.)
- o Manage Outdoor Joint Use Agreements with both School Divisions.

## **APPENDIX M      AIRDRIE GREAT PLACES - WORLD CAFE REPORT**

# City of Airdrie



## Great Places Plan

### Great Places Café Report on Public Consultation

April 08, 2006

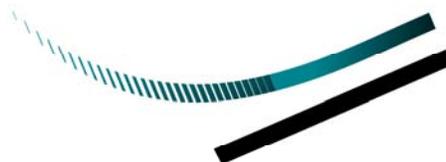
Woodside Seniors Club

Airdrie, AB

Prepared by: Dillon Consulting Limited

For: The City of Airdrie

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006



**DILLON**  
CONSULTING

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## Appendix

Foundations of Public Participation  
Great Places Bulletin  
Great Places Table Topics  
Notes from each topic facilitator  
Evaluations Summary

## Introduction

The City of Airdrie is undertaking the development of a Great Places Plan to define the future of an integrated open space system for the city. The Great Places planning process includes an innovative public input session called the Great Places Café. With the assistance from city staff, the Great Places Consultant Team organized this event. Facilitators, from this team recorded the thoughts and creative ideas of participants, led six different table discussions. Invitations to the Great Places Café were mailed out to a number of sports and recreation associations and citizen groups. The invitation was also posted around the City, on the City of Airdrie Website, and through a large email distribution list. This report details the consultation methodology and provides a summary of the public input into the process to date.

This is the first step towards ensuring that the process is fair, logical, and respectful; the consultation process will continue to provide avenues for input and comment into the draft Great Places Plan.

## The World Café Process

In the development of the Great Places Plan, key stakeholders and the general public were identified as playing a critical role in the vision for open space in the city of Airdrie. The design and implementation of a public consultation program is based on the Core Values and Code of Ethics developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). The Core Values (see Appendix A) defines the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. The Code of Ethics addresses the actions of practitioners in seeking and incorporating this input.

As part of the Great Places Plan, the Spectrum of Involvement was used to show the different levels of public involvement, and determine the differing levels of participation. Depending on the goals, timeframes, resources, and levels of concern or interest involved in the decision to be made, differing levels of participation are considered appropriate.

During the consultation process, the public has been invited to participate at the “involve level” and the Recreation Board has been invited to participate at the “collaborate level” (see appendix A).

The first step in the planning process was to invite all stakeholders to the Great Places Café at the Woodside Seniors Club on April 08, 2006. There were 13 participants in this café. The techniques opened up a collaborative dialogue on a number of focused topics (see Appendix C); tables of 3-5 people discussed issues and contributed information on those topics and their dialogues were facilitated and captured by table hosts. The information and recommendations in this report will be used to help form the draft the Great Places Plan.

The Great Places Café engaged participants in expressing their vision and creative ideas on several topics around open space including:

1. Sports and Recreation;
2. Downtown Places;
3. Town Form and Function;
4. Natural Environment;
5. Historical and Cultural Landscape; and
6. Walkability, Street Types, and Linear Paths.

Organization of the event allowed attendees to join in any four different discussion groups over the duration of the event. Each discussion was given 25 minutes, at which time participants were asked to move on to the next topic of choice.

## Analysis of Great Places Café Public Input

The following six topics have been summarized with a general description of the topic, key words, key points, and general subtopic area primary discussion.

### 1. Downtown

Downtown plays a significant role in creating identity for a city. It acts as a hub, drawing residents from all corners to gather, socialize, recreate, and shop. This topic provided an opportunity for participants to explore what is important about downtown to them and what they would like to see in the downtown in the future.

**Key Words:** Park, gathering spaces, identity, trees, paths, public spaces

**Key Points:**

- a. Create a park in the downtown core that can be used as a gathering space for seniors, youth, and downtown workers.
- b. Create an identity – a theme – for Airdrie that is reflected in the architecture.
- c. Improve infrastructure downtown such as trees, boulevards, benches, and gathering spaces.
- d. Link the downtown with walking trails from the residential areas to the shops that are separated by boulevards or parked cars.

There was a strong agreement that the downtown lacked a focal point. There is a need for a gathering place for people to walk, recreate, and sit. There were many people who felt that **a park** could act as the focal point. It may include lawn bowling, bocci-ball and horseshoe pits for seniors, skateboard elements for teens, and a water feature for children.

Downtown needs **areas for people to gather**, a town square, clusters of restaurants, and a cultural draw such as public art, public theatre, and a space where bands could play in the summer.

There was agreement that the downtown lacked **identity**. A theme that architectural guidelines can create, more investment in infrastructure like the bridge on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, pedestrian friendly streets, benches, more trees, and boulevards.

There was much discussion about the **civic space** in front of City Hall. To have the public and downtown workers gather in the civic space, it needs to be designed to encourage usage. Make it multi-functional so that the youth, seniors, and workers can use it.

To encourage people to walk downtown, create a **walking trail** that can be used as a circuit, connecting residential areas with the downtown. Ensure that the walking trails are separated from traffic through boulevards or parked cars.

## Other Commercial Areas

There was a strong agreement that Big Box commercial design discouraged the public from walking or riding to the site. Individuals thought that more landscaping, trees in boulevards, and pedestrian linkages between stores, and to residential communities should be encouraged. One person suggested that a large green space “front yard” or linear park in front of all of the stores would encourage walking between the stores and site.

## 2. Town Form and Function

The purpose of this topic was to relate open space with town form and function. For residents to understand that form and function play a significant role in the development of open space systems such as linear paths, parks, natural environment, and formal recreation areas. The discussion at this table provided an emphasis of importance of particular elements of open space discussed at other tables.

### Key Points:

- a. Create continuity of the path system and linkages where there is missing links.
- b. There needs to be a stronger emphasis on the east/west connections.

**Key Words:** pathways, linkages, big box, safe crossing, ring path, paved paths, and destinations

## Pathways and Linkages

The majority of people felt that the pathway system in Airdrie was well used by the residents. There was agreement that although the pathway system was good, it lacked some **key linkages** between communities, and between communities and commercial areas.

Challenges included linking communities east and west of Highway 2. Another challenge was creating some form of pedestrian linkage to large big box store developments.

Opportunities included a pathway in front of the golf course, a path along 8<sup>th</sup> street to Bill Hill Springs Road, and across the creek to Summerhill.

There was general consensus that a linear pathway system should include paved paths, some undulation, and have elements such as benches, skateboard features, historical landmarks,

## Connectivity

A number of disconnected areas were identified in the discussion. It was felt by most that there was a need for more **east/west pathway connections**. As well,

pedestrian and bicycle crossings over major roadways, railways, and interchanges required more thought in the design to ensure safety. There needs to be opportunities for alternate designs for roads and traffic calming to make it more conducive to pedestrian activity.

A number of participants suggested a ring road for people and bikes to connect all of Airdrie.

There is a need for political support for financing and ensuring new development includes clear pedestrian linkages and pathways between communities.

### Create Destination Places

Participants discussed the lack of ‘great places’ or **destinations** to draw people. There needed to be more informal places such as benches, picnic tables, and pathway linkages to parks.

Downtown needs an identity through improved infrastructure, types of businesses, architecture controls, market places, and a central park. City Hall has a good outdoor area that can be designed to be used by multiple users.

## 3. Natural Environment

The natural environment provides the ecological framework for open space and has great potential for recreation or interpretative purposes. Participants were asked to provide comments on what natural features were significant to them and what natural capital should be preserved.

### Key Points:

- a. Create innovative and environmentally sensitive multi-functional naturalized areas (e.g. Storm Water Management)
- b. Create a large multi-use park for natural and semi-natural recreation (e.g. off-leash dog area, camping, education opportunities, trails, picnic/fire pit areas etc) with linkages.
- c. Protection and preservation of Airdrie’s natural areas including both existing waterways and those that area now old dry oxbows.

**Key Words:** protection, preservation, regional park, innovation, and environmentally sensitive development

### Loss of Natural Environment

There were a number of comments on **the loss** or alteration of the natural environment with the rapid development in Airdrie. The Historical Resource Map identified a number of natural features that have been lost with growth. There is a disconnect between the approved developments and the built form.

There is a missing link in the pre-development assessment stage where natural features are undervalued or not incorporated as part of the design of the neighbourhood. There has also been **lack of innovation** in engineered watercourses/storm ponds. There needs to more efficient and green designs to accommodate infrastructure, land uses, and quality of life feature.

### Natural Parks and Rivers

Airdrie needs a **large multi-use park** that incorporates natural features and active recreation spaces. A park in the downtown or Chinook Winds area would be well received.

**Preserve** natural areas (e.g. Nose Creek, ravine and creek west of Sagewood, dry creek in Chinook Winds, creek area in Silver Creek, East Lake) for the use and enjoyment of all Airdrie Residents.

### Linkages and Greening of Existing Communities

There is a disconnect in the phasing of new development and the pathway linkages between communities. Developers need to provide pathways and a linear park system that links to neighbouring communities.

## 4. Historical and Cultural Landscape

Airdrie has a rich and interesting history, intertwined with early settlement patterns. Rich layers of open space create a sense of identity and can be used as destinations. The historical and cultural landscape can be used as destinations or attractions along linear pathways and parks.

### **Key Points:**

- a. Airdrie needs to create an identity that will give the community a sense of place. It may be found in history or created as a progressive community.
- b. Preserve, protect, and promote the history of Airdrie through walking tours, monuments, plaques, or designations.

**Key words:** Railway theme, agriculture, old town walking tours, nose creek, festivals, rodeo, and progressive community

### Culture in Airdrie

There is a strong opinion that Airdrie has a reputation as a bedroom community rather than a city with strong rural roots, growing ethnic diversity and railway history. There is debate if Airdrie should strive to bring history to life or create a sense of place as a modern city. Participants believed that Airdrie is a progressive community with a wonderful pathway system and a real sense of community.

Culturally significant places, events, and buildings include:

- Bert Church Theatre;
- East Lace Recreation Centre;
- Festival of Lights;
- Gwacheon Park;
- Airdrie Rodeo;
- Airdrie Car Show; and
- Chitauqua festival in Nose Creek.

These culturally significant features may be emphasised through cultural/historical walking tours, local artists work in public buildings, public art, story telling, museums, and community garden/railway garden to celebrate agricultural roots.

### History in Airdrie

Airdrie was an important centre of transportation. Steam trains still stop here to get water and there was a train station. There are a number of historically significant places and buildings including:

- Grain Elevators;
- Old town and original homes;
- Plainsman Arena;
- Scout Hall;
- Nose Creek Valley Museum;
- Sharp Hill;
- Airdrie Water Tower;
- Old Train Station;
- Old Downtown Hotel;
- The United Church;
- Tee pee rings;
- Buffalo Rubbing Stone; and
- Glacial Erratic.

These and other significant historic sites may be recognized and incorporated in open space planning through things as: preservation and historical land marks; walking tour, trail map linking sites, monuments.

## 5. Walkability, Street Types, Linear Paths

Streets, sidewalks, and linear paths are key elements in connect open spaces. They allow the evolution of an infrastructure of open space; with the various types of open space connected by a system of roads, rails and trails. The importance of each of these elements to be 'walkable' will determine the success of the system.

### Key Points:

- a. Paths need to lead to hubs such as parks, play fields, commercial, or natural features.
- b. A priority is the east/west connectivity of the city.

**Key Words:** connectivity, safety, paved pathways, leading to destinations

### Linear Pathways

The current linear pathways are good, however, there was a general consensus that the pathways needed to **lead somewhere** like a regional park, downtown, shops, or a circuit of some sort. Pathways may provide a way to link residents to local schools or recreation centres. Take advantage of the natural environment and have pathways incorporated in these areas. Pave the pathways to provide easier access for alternative usage such as wheelchair, roller blades, skateboards.

**Provide opportunities** on the linear pathway for other activities such as skateboarding stations, tidbits of play structures, benches, and historical landmarks. Linear pathways may also link tot lots. Plant and maintain landscaping such as trees and flowers.

Address dog droppings through signs, garbage receptacles with plastic bag storage containers, or bylaw enforcement.

### Connectivity

Again an emphasis that there needs to be more east west connections, especially between East and West Airdrie. Linear pathways must connect to each other rather than dead end at the edge of a community. Provide linkages and proper crosswalks from pathways to commercial sites. Pedestrian Crossings on the train tracks would be an asset.

Connection to the TransCanada Trail would be a great opportunity for economic development and providing local recreational opportunities.

### Street types

Streets that have rear garages, sidewalks, and boulevards are preferred. Large rear lanes will accommodate residential and visitor parking, keeping cars off the street. An example of good community design is East Lake Boulevard. The pathways have adequate width however sidewalks in communities are too narrow. Crosswalks near schools need to be better designed to ensure safety.

## 6. Sports and Recreation

Playing fields and playgrounds are important elements of an open space system. They act as hubs to a linear park system, and can be used at the local and regional levels of participation.

**Key Words:** Multi-functional, local parks, pathway linkages to sports and recreation, skateboard parks, gardens, campgrounds, lawn bowling.

**Key Points:**

- a. Play fields and playgrounds are well represented though could include more multi-use facilities.
- b. Provide opportunities for other activities such as community gardens, lawn bowling, bocci-ball, and skateboard elements.

## Outdoor Sports Facilities

There was a clear consensus that formal sports and recreation are well represented in the City of Airdrie. Although usage is high during the summer months, it is not as well utilized for the remainder of the year. Having a **variety** of opportunities in the form of local parks and recreation centres that can be used for other things like local skating rinks and unstructured play would be well utilized.

There are great facilities out there but the strain during large events on parking and facilities is apparent. Fletcher Park and Canal are both excellent facilities for sports. There needs to be more opportunities for multiple users including seniors, youth, and sport associations. There was support to providing services in both **east and west** sides of the city and/or create more and safer pedestrian connections between the two sides of the city.

The current skateboard park was discussed. As it is made out of wood, it can be a challenge to maintain and use during wet periods. There is no other users in the facility and it is not connected to other outdoor uses so there is no real monitoring of users. It was well supported to provide **elements of skateboard** parks incorporated in other open spaces, linear pathways, and local parks. Perhaps incorporate BMX, Inline skating, and skateboards in one park.

**Seniors** would benefit from a lawn bowling, bocci-ball and horseshoe facility. A central park, perhaps in the downtown or in the natural environment was encouraged to host special events. An area for a multi-use park to include both formal and informal activities would be great.

There was some discussion about playgrounds being so safe that it has taken the fun out of the play structures.

## Campgrounds

Provide facilities adjacent to regional sports facilities to accommodate users during tournaments. RV parking can be found in the Wal-Mart parking lot or arena. It would be good to have a nice campground for visitors to shop and visit.

## Community Gardens

The idea of green roofs and community gardens was discussed. This grass roots initiative can be utilized as a recreational and social opportunity for all ages. It could be incorporated adjacent to natural areas, large parks, or local parks.

## Recommendations

Throughout the discussions on the various topics, there were common themes that ran throughout the café. Participants are united in desiring:

- A downtown central park to create a gathering place and area for multiple activities like special events, multi-use fields, walking, gardens, structured and unstructured play areas.
- Create a city with an identity or theme using either heritage, cultural, or modern ideas. Use this theme to create a sense of place in the downtown and city.
- Enhancement of the current linear pathway system to include linkages to destinations such as sports fields, historical sites, playgrounds, commercial, and downtown. The pathway should be paved and have a clear connection between communities, as well as more east west connections.
- Linear paths should incorporate elements such as historical markers, adjacent to natural features, lead to cultural resources and commercial centres.
- Protect and preserve natural areas.
- Create a regional natural area for walking, nature viewing, bicycling, and education.

Notably, people were not as concerned with sports and recreation as they were with preserving the natural environment and improving town form and function. It was stated that the sports and recreation spaces were adequate and provided ample opportunities for organized sports. Expansion should be in the incorporation of both unstructured and organized activities together in a multi-use parks and linear path systems.

There was some diversity of opinion on the street types. Some participants held value in the front garage as it created larger spaces for backyard activities. Others were adamant about rear garages, large alleys, wide sidewalks, and treed boulevards to create a sense of community.

There was a level of agreement on the implementation of a plan. It was felt that in the past, new communities did not meet the expectations set out in the approval process. There needs to be a system in place to plan for linear pathway connectivity between communities and in communities, with innovative solutions to storm management, and creative design of parks space to accommodate a variety of uses.

These recommendations have been prepared to guide the development of the Great Spaces Plan. They draw on two key aspects of the public consultation input:

- They represent the most passionately held views of participants in the Great Places Café; and

- They provide direction for the next steps in the development of a plan that is reflective of community input.

As part of the evaluation of the process (see appendix F), participants expressed a need create more opportunities for the public to provide input into the vision and priorities for open space planning. They also emphasized the need for the plan to outline clear direction and ease of implementation.