

Ville Giroux Parks Master Plan

January 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Ville Giroux is a new community in northwest St. Albert, envisioned with a combination of commercial, mixed-use and residential developments. The community is designed with high walkability and includes a substantial centrally located commercial area to support resident's day to day needs.

The development of the Ville Giroux neighbourhood is directed by the Ville Giroux Area Structure Plan (ASP), approved in 2012 and amended in 2013. The ASP includes a total of 30 hectares, with a combination of parks, open spaces and trails (3ha), commercial development (5ha), residential development (14ha), roads and St. Albert Fire Hall #3. The neighbourhood is projected to house 1,409 people when fully built out.

Generally, Ville Giroux is bounded by:

- North Ridge neighbourhood to the north
- Lacombe Park West neighbourhood to the east
- Canadian National (CN) Sangudo rail line to the south
- Ray Gibbon Drive to the west

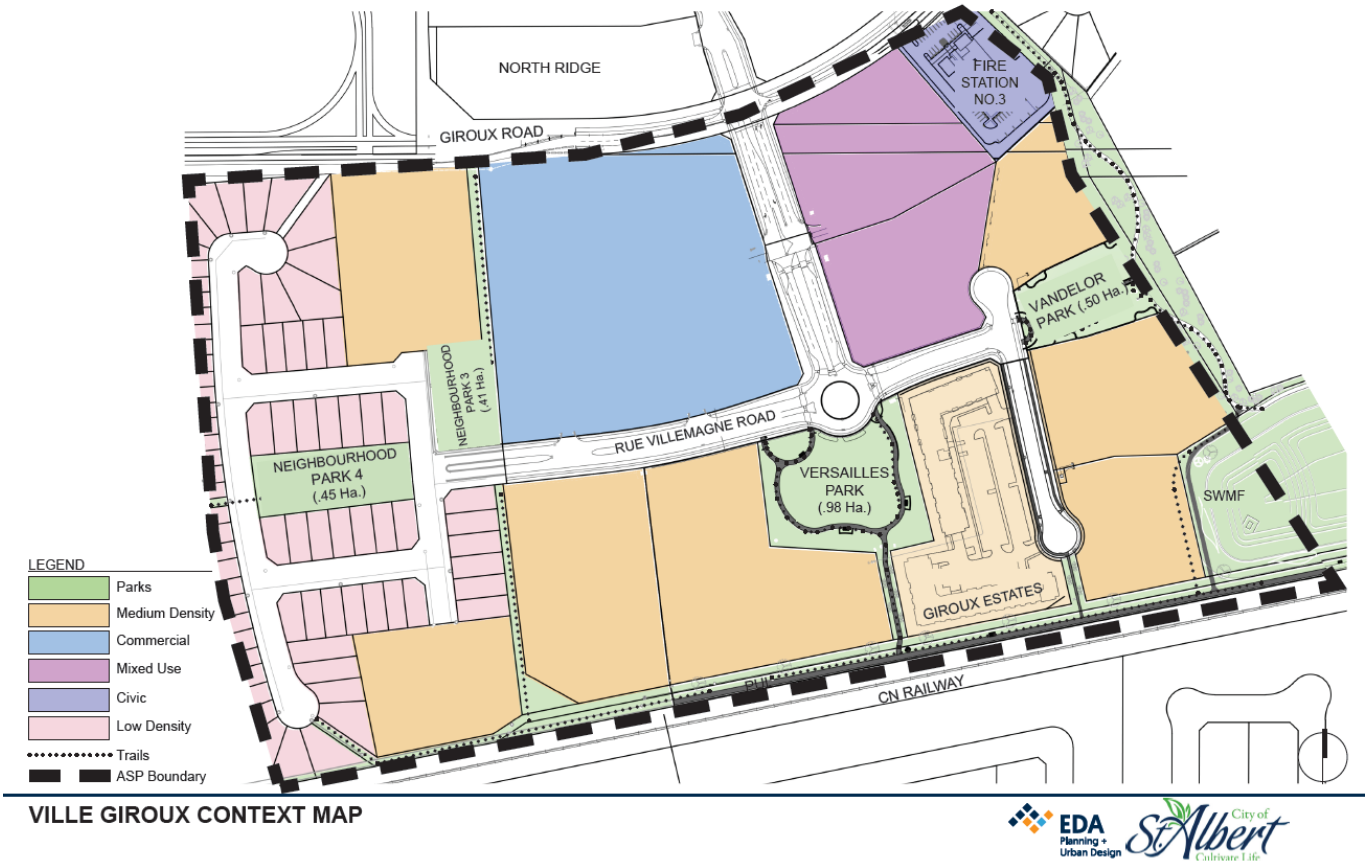


Figure 1: Ville Giroux Municipal Reserve

Ville Giroux is styled as an urban village, with rustic French heritage architectural themes throughout the building design and developer provided amenities. Park design elements will mirror the built form architectural style though use of curvilinear trail and hard surface design

and enhanced landscaping to complement the boulevard plantings and private amenity areas. Vegetation, material and colour choices that complement the surrounding development will be utilized where possible.



The Ville Giroux neighbourhood includes four neighbourhood parks: Versailles and Vandelor to the east, and two additional neighbourhood parks in the west. There are planned and existing trails connecting the entire community, with trails traveling east-west along the CN rail line to the south, as well as north to south connected to Giroux Road (see figure 1). Due to the small size of the ASP, no community parks or school sites are included. Nearby, there are many recreation amenities available including the dog friendly park, skating and fishing amenities of Lacombe Lake Park, trails and fitness stations in Lacombe Park West and skating at Napoleon Park in North Ridge. The playgrounds at Lafleur Park and Lachance Park are also within walking distance, especially for residents on the east side of the development. Despite the variety of amenities in nearby communities, each of these recreation opportunities is more than a 10-minute walk away, emphasizing the need for a variety of amenities to be provided within the neighbourhood.

Principles:

This document adheres to the City of St. Albert Parks and Open Space Standards and Guidelines principles including:

Quality of Life – The parks and open spaces in Ville Giroux will be responsive to community needs and trends, promote health and wellness for residents, encourage social interaction and reflect the unique aesthetic character of the neighbourhood where possible.

Park design will emphasize safety through application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Connectivity and Integration – Parks in the area will be easily accessible, convenient, and integrated with the community through siting and design.

Diversity and Inclusivity – Parks will be designed to ensure equitable access for the greatest number of residents and enable year-round use.

Sustainability and Conservation – Park design in the Ville Giroux neighbourhood will be operationally sustainable and integrate green infrastructure where feasible.

Objectives:

The objectives of this Parks Master Plan are:

1) To ensure development of these parks is aligned with City of St. Albert bylaws and policies, including the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), Land Use Bylaw (LUB), ASP, Recreation Master Plan, and the Municipal Engineering and Landscaping Standards.

2) To ensure alignment with the Parks and Open Spaces Standards and Guidelines principles and criteria.

3) To maintain the identity proposed within the ASP for a walkable community with a distinct urban form through design.
    a. To maintain key trail linkages to North Ridge and Lacombe Park, including trail linkages through Vandelor Park and south adjacent to the SWMF.
    b. Maintain the neighbourhood's rustic French aesthetic in construction material selection and landscape design where possible.

4) Ensure appropriate four-season use is incorporated into park design.

5) Acknowledge the presence of Fire Hall 3 in the neighbourhood and celebrate the rich firefighting community and its past, present and future role as an essential service to St. Albert.

Current State Assessment:

This area consists of former agricultural lands with no large native tree stands or natural wetlands. Pre-development, the terrain is generally flat, sloping gently towards the south. Water drainage likewise trends southward and include a stormwater management facility at the south end, shared between the Ville Giroux and Lacombe Park neighbourhoods.

Due to the small size of the ASP, there is a strong need to ensure that park spaces are maximized to meet the greatest number of needs. Walking and cycling access is constrained heavily to the west due to Ray Gibbon Drive and south due to CN Rail Line. There are also some limitations with opportunities to connect to North Ridge, due to the need to cross Giroux Road. This major road has good crosswalk controls but may be a barrier to access by different age groups, abilities and comfort levels. There are excellent opportunities to link directly via trail and sidewalk to the trail and parks system in Lacombe Park West and onwards to the Red Willow Trail System.

As of 2020, the first phases of development have occurred, including the building of Fire Hall #3 in the northeast corner. The mixed commercial to the west of Versailles Avenue is complete. Two multi-story apartment buildings adjacent to Vandelor Park are in use with 214 rental units occupied as of the 2018 City of St. Albert census. Trail work along the south border of the neighbourhood has been completed and will link into the Lacombe Park trail system. Development of Giroux Estates is in progress, with tenants expected in 2021. Landscaping and trail work for Vandelor Park was completed in 2019. This space is open for use by the public.



Recreation Trends

Trails, parks and open spaces are highly valued within St. Albert. In 2019, 45% of residents considered parks, trails and open spaces the highest contributor to quality of life in the city, more than double the next ranked contributor. The Community Vision and Recreation Master Plan (2016 update) both emphasize living full and active lives in strong and accessible neighbourhoods. This plan continues to recognize the role that high-quality parks and open spaces play in creating connected, vibrant, healthy, and livable communities.

The 2018 City of St. Albert Recreation and Parks User Satisfaction survey and 2017 Alberta Recreation Survey have informed planning for these parks, along with relevant census information and research on recreation trends. Current surveys suggest walking, bicycling and fitness activities are priorities, with a preference for being active in outdoor and natural spaces. Picnicking and other unstructured recreation activities also ranked highly and are accommodated in this plan. Dog ownership is quite high in St. Albert generally, and with most residents in this neighbourhood in medium to high density housing with limited private green space, providing a dog-friendly area was considered important.

Demographics

Ville Giroux has a planned mixture of residential developments, with single family homes to the west, and medium density and mixed used housing to the east. There are projected to be 287 school-aged children. The average age of this neighbourhood as of the 2018 City of St. Albert census was 47.5 years old, significantly higher than the City average of 40.9, with fewer children than would be projected based on population size alone. This is likely due to the style of development completed to date and will change as more diverse housing types are built.

The expected housing types and demographics at full build out are described by the chart below.

	AREA (HA)	% OF GROSS DEVELOPABLE AREA	UNITS	POPULATION
Low Density Residential	4.24	14.1%	85	249
Medium Density Residential	6.72	22.4%	236	476
Medium To High Density Residential	3.4	11.3%	425	684
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	**14.36**	**47.8**	**746**	**1,409**

The park concepts are responsive to the expected demographics for the neighbourhood and with the expected size and configuration for these spaces. Emphasis for parks design in this neighbourhood is on opportunities that can accommodate a wide variety of spontaneous play, along with opportunities for both unstructured and organized family and community events.

CONCEPT PLANS:

Planning for parks involves a sequence of steps that begins with the allocation of land through the Area Structure Plan and continues to park construction and operation. As the first design step, conceptual plans for each of the four Ville Giroux parks have been created. These concepts are intended to represent the best available information at the time of drafting and will be refined through detailed design. These concepts should be considered high level and subject to further changes as the development of the neighbourhood occurs.



Figure 2: Park Development Process

Public participation is a key component of the detailed design phase and may require changes to this plan to address resident desires or previously unidentified community needs and/or constraints. Reference, or precedent, imagery is provided to support understanding of the design and should not be considered representative of the exact amenity to be constructed.



Vandelor Park



Located in the east side of Ville Giroux, Vandelor Park is 0.5 hectares and is the first of four parks completed by the developer. Enhancements to the park focus on celebrating the connection to St. Albert's firefighters and firefighting community with its proximity to Fire Hall 3.

Messaging and commemorative or legacy pieces that carry forward the theme of the park will be created. A firefighter's monument, landscaping feature (memorial signage, commemorative planting, etc.) or other recognition is planned for in the design, guided by the City of St. Albert Public Art Policy and in collaboration with City of St. Albert Fire Services and IAFF Local 2130. Surrounded by a naturalized pollinator meadow, the central sculpted mound area provides an opportunity for a commentative piece that is highly visible to the community.

The remainder of the park development will support the parks function as a major connection point to the Lacombe Park neighbourhood. Generally, the park development will be minimal and will maintain the existing trail design and landscaping.



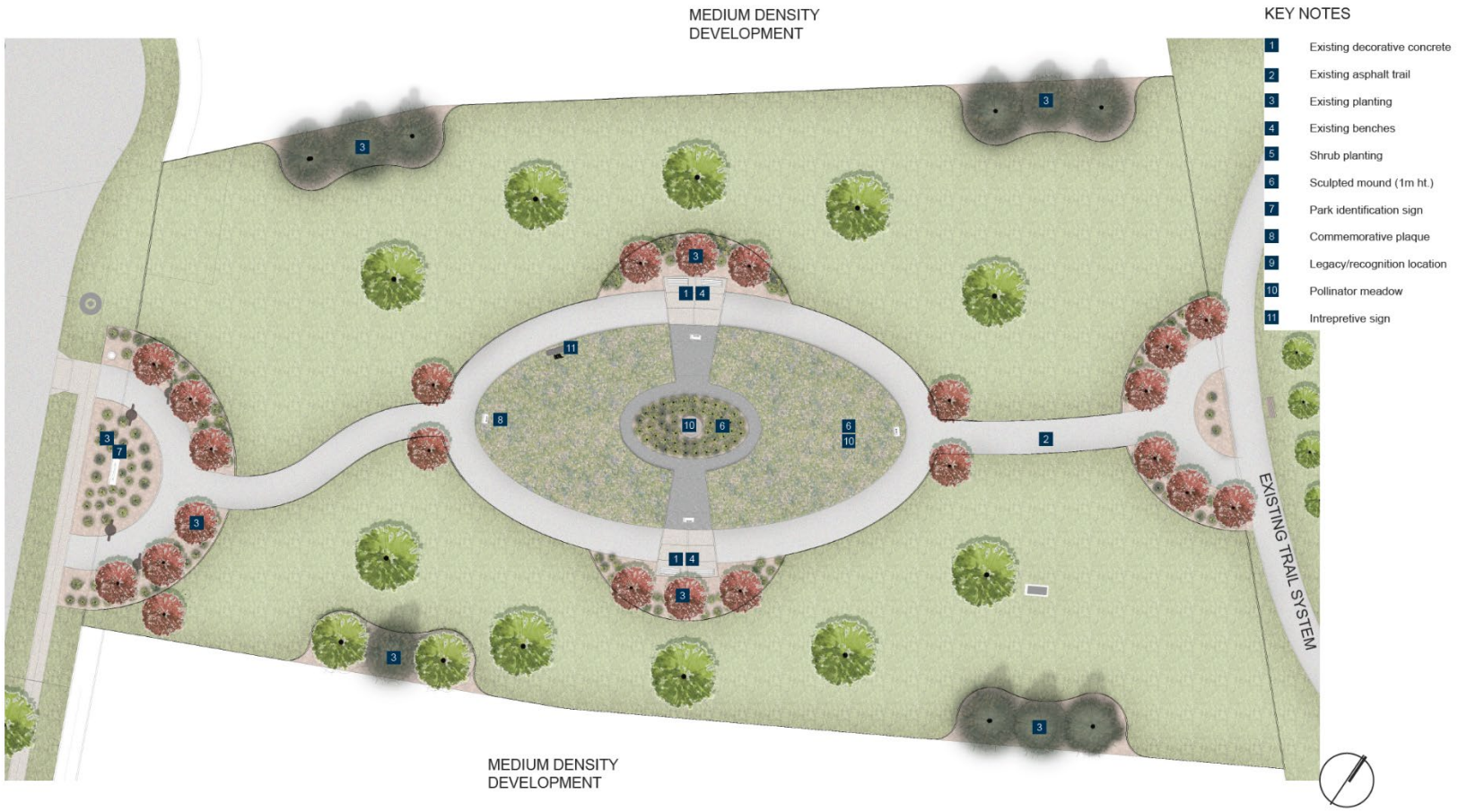
Pollinator Meadow



Interpretive Signage



Sculpted Mound



VANDELOR PARK PLAN

MARCH 2020

Versailles Park

This 0.98ha park is highly visible, located directly adjacent to the main entry to the neighbourhood. The ASP envisions this park as the focal point for community gathering. Landscaping design considers both the pedestrian and drivers' viewpoint, and additional tree plantings will frame the park to provide a welcoming entrance into the community. An outer ring of trails provides a continuous system that connects directly to the neighbourhood pathway system to the north, and to the Lacombe Park West neighbourhood to the south. A large, flat central open space will encourage spontaneous use (e.g., soccer, catch) and permit small community events (e.g., small farmers market, fitness classes, etc.). Grassed berms surrounding the open space create a small natural amphitheater, as well as proving opportunities for sledding and rolling down hills.

A playground will provide adventure play elements, integrating changes in the height of land to add to the play experience. A small, accessible, ground and waist-level water play area will allow children to interact with water – splashing, floating boats and cooling off from the summer sun. Firefighting themed water and playground elements will help build connection to Fire Hall 3 and the firefighting legacy in St. Albert, complementing the commemorative elements in Vandelor Park. In recognition of the St. Albert Firefighters' commitment to supporting muscular dystrophy education and research, ground surfacing and play elements will emphasize accessibility along with the firefighting theme wherever feasible.



Adventure Play



Bermed Earth



Adventure Play



In-ground water feature



VERSAILLES PARK CONCEPT PLAN

EDA Planning + Urban Design

City of St. Albert Cultivate Life

Neighbourhood Park 3

This is a small park space of 0.41ha with good access to the commercial area as well as the nearby medium density housing. This park will be primarily used for passive, unstructured activities, with a goal of encouraging a range of uses that supports the nearby commercial area, as well as the low and medium density housing nearby. The concept includes a welcoming plaza area on the northwest area, utilizing a circular design to mirror other trail and landscaping elements in the neighbourhood. This concrete plaza is intended to an attractive casual gathering spot for the community. It will also act as a hard-surfaced play area, enabling casual play for a variety of users and ages, with opportunity for basketball, ball hockey, chalk art or other play.

The remainder of the park features a small off leash dog area, bounded by the trail and strategic plantings to separate it from the adjacent sidewalk and corner plaza. Opposite the dog off leash area, picnic tables with trees for shade will provide eating and rest areas for residents alongside employees and visitors to the commercial site. Trails connecting along and through the site ensure good access to surrounding housing, Giroux Road and the commercial area.


Chalk Art


Off Leash Dog Area


Corner Plaza



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK 3 PARK CONCEPT PLAN

EDA Planning + Urban Design

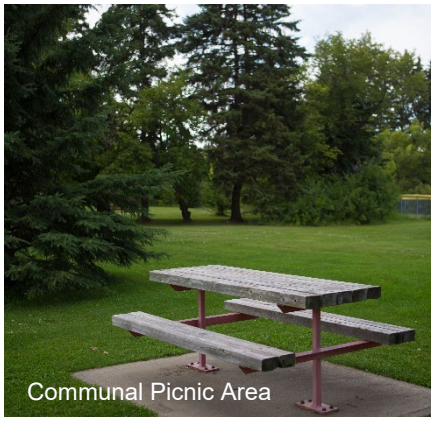
City of St. Albert Cultivate Life

Neighbourhood Park 4

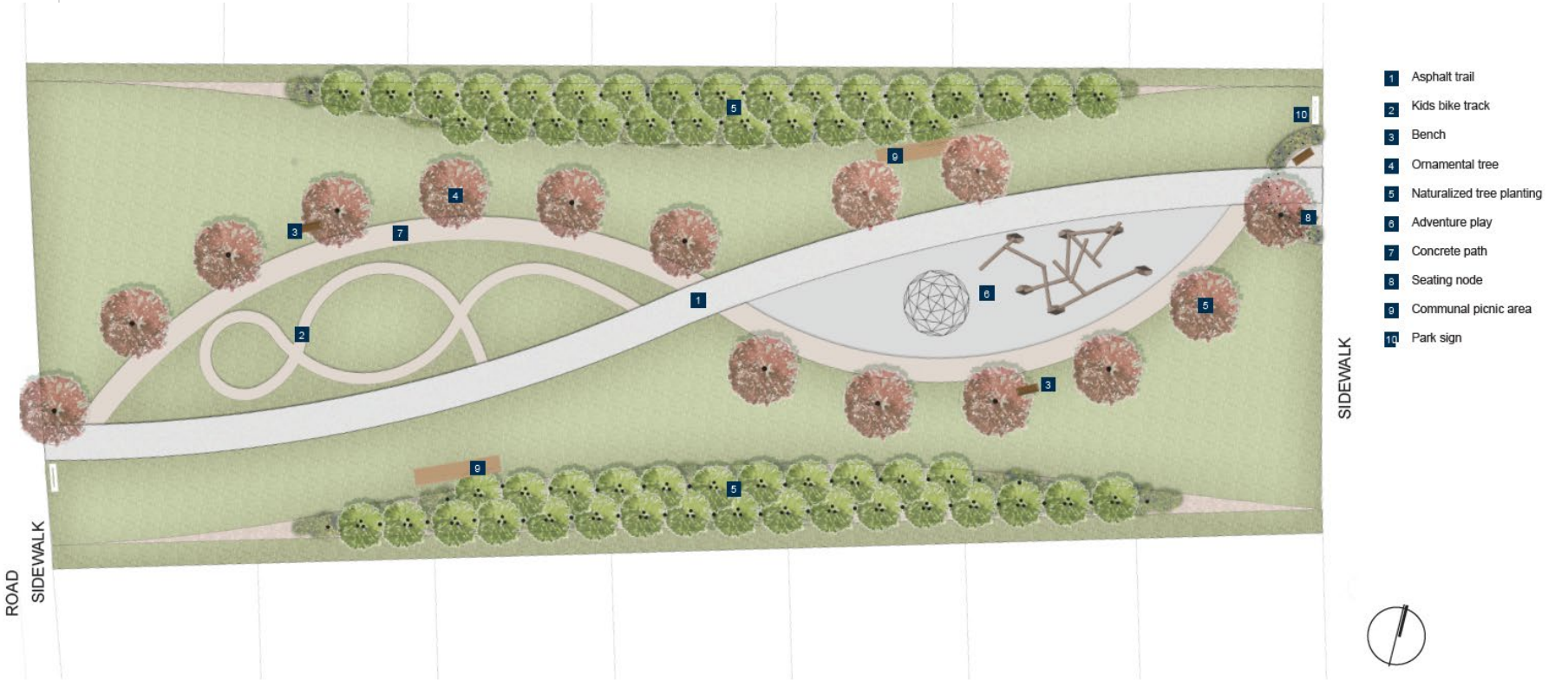
The main function of this 0.45ha neighbourhood park is a connector, bringing people to and from the neighbourhood via the future pathway to be built adjacent to Ray Gibbon Drive. This park site offers complementary recreational use and amenities to the nearby Neighbourhood Park 3 and addresses needs of the adjacent low-density housing. Bike trails are featured with a loop of connected trails and a small area with narrow trails that extends the routes and options for small bikers. A small play feature and communal picnic tables or grouped picnic areas, shaded by nearby trees, will provide opportunities for community connection and family gatherings.

A resting node at the entrance to the park provides a peaceful stop along the trail system. Curves and arcs are evident in the trail and landscaping design to maintain design continuity with the other parks in the area. Landscaping will maintain good line of sight to play features and seating amenities to enhance visibility and safety from the trails and sidewalks. Screening trees along the north and south edges will add to the privacy of adjacent homes while still maintaining visibility into the park.


Naturalized Planting


Communal Picnic Area


Kids Bike Track



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK 4 CONCEPT PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was guided through a team of City of St. Albert staff and supported by the work of EDA Planning and Urban Design and the developer for Ville Giroux, Cidex Group. The project team and contributing members listed below are gratefully acknowledged for their contribution to this project.

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