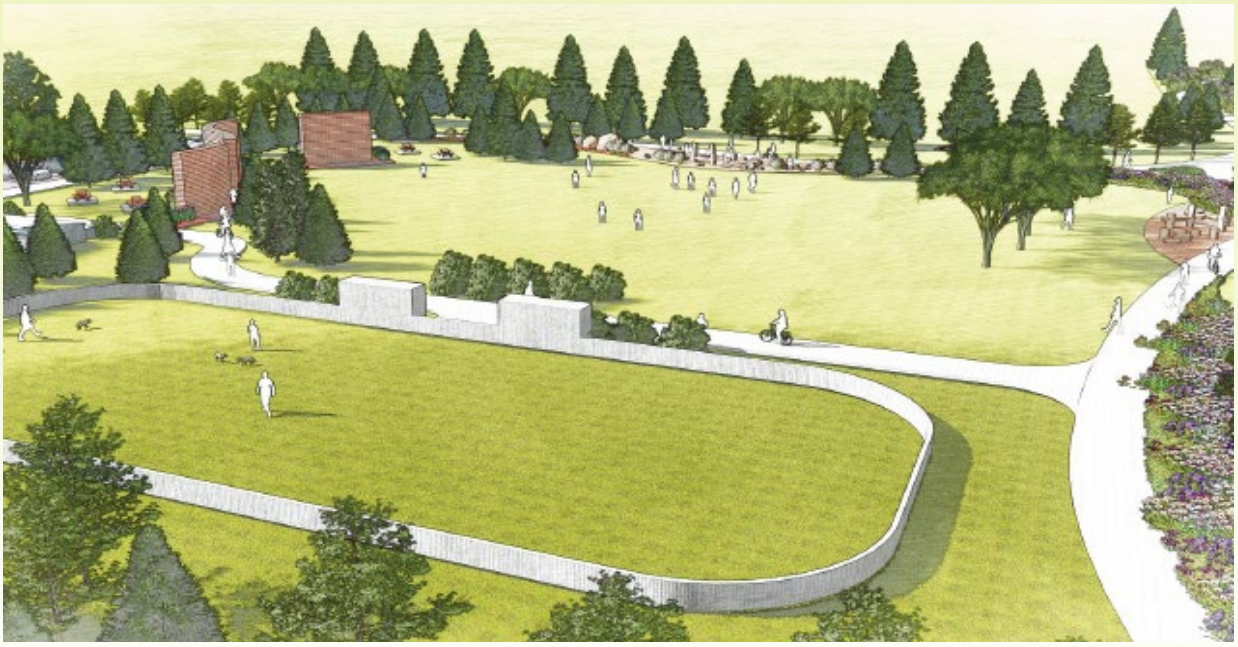


Erin Ridge North Phase 2

Parks Master Plan

February 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This parks master plan for Phase 2 of the Erin Ridge North neighbourhood. Erin Ridge North Phase 2 is an extension of an existing neighbourhood, known as Erin Ridge North Phase 1and is located at the northeastern border of the City of St. Albert. This second phase of neighbourhood development was brought forward by the area developer as a distinct area within the overall neighbourhood, separated from the existing phase by Neil Ross Road. It was added to the Area Structure Plan (ASP) after substantial build out of Phase 1, and so this portion of the neighbourhood has servicing, internal road network and entrances from St. Albert Trail somewhat separate from the first phase. To the north and east of this phase of the neighbourhood are agricultural lands within Sturgeon County. St. Albert Trail and Neil Ross Road form the eastern and southern boundaries.

As an extension of the existing Erin Ridge North community, the ASP for Phase 2 calls for commercial development along St. Albert Trail, a high-density housing site at the northern edge, a large central stormwater management facility (SWMF) and single-family housing throughout the remainder of the development, as show in Figure 1 below. The neighbourhood is completed by two community parks and multi-use trails connecting the SWMF to the parks and low-density housing.

This concept plan provides direction for the enhancements of the parks and open spaces located in Erin Ridge North Phase 2. Building from the existing recreation amenities located in Erin Ridge North Phase 1, these enhancements will provide environmentally sustainable landscapes with recreation amenities that support a healthy and active community, provide a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities and contribute to a high quality of life within the neighbourhood. This document supplements the Erin Ridge North Parks Enhancements Concepts Plan completed in 2018, which provided recommendations for the enhancement of parks and open spaces in Erin Ridge North Phase 1. Build out of these parks will be timed with the development of the adjacent housing. The completion of the parks is expected to take five to seven years, in alignment with the overall building of the neighbourhood. Public feedback gathered during development of that plan informed the concepts contained in this parks master plan.

All planned enhancements in this document are conceptual and will be further assessed for economic and environmental sustainability, technical feasibility and public acceptability during the detailed design process.



Figure 1: Erin Ridge North Phase 2 Future Land Use

Principles

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

- **Quality of Life** – The parks and open spaces in Erin Ridge North Phase 2 will be responsive to community needs and trends, promote health and wellness for residents, encourage social interaction and complement the parks and open spaces found in Phase 1.
    - Park design will emphasize safety through application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

- **Connectivity and Integration** – Parks in the area will be highly connected for pedestrians and cyclists, easily accessible, and integrated with the community through 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** – Parks and open spaces in Erin Ridge North Phase 2 will promote landscape connectivity through naturalized plantings and use of green infrastructure wherever possible. All amenities will be operationally sustainable.



Objectives

Objectives outline the desired outcomes to be achieved through the design of the parks and open spaces in Erin Ridge North Phase 2. The objectives of this Parks Master Plan are to:

1) Meet the current and future recreation needs of Erin Ridge North, providing a balance of active and passive spaces throughout the neighbourhood, with a focus on multi-purpose amenities.
2) Provide a well-connected parks and open space system in Phase 2 that cohesively integrate the planned stormwater management facility trails with the park spaces.
3) Provide vibrant, active spaces that encourage four-season use of parks and open spaces.
4) Support sustainability using naturalized plantings, tree plantings and pollinator gardens.
5) Support community building through park design by providing opportunities for social gathering and amenities that encourage extended visits.

Current State Assessment

Current Development

Phase 1 of the Erin Ridge North Area Structure Plan is nearly complete. The existing development includes:

- commercial development along St. Albert Trail
- medium and high-density developments along Element Drive and Everitt Drive North
- a seniors complex along Everitt Drive North
- single family housing throughout the neighbourhood

There are two existing park sites in Erin Ridge North:

1) Coal Mine Park: a Conservation Park that has gravel trails winding through a large natural tree stand with seating nodes and interpretive signage, a small grassed area and trail connections along the former Coal Mine Road.

2) Everitt Park: A Community Park consisting of a sports field, picnic area and trails adjacent to Lois E. Hole School.
    a. The school additionally maintains two playground pods, a tarmac area and community garden boxes.



The construction of recreation amenities available in Erin Ridge North Phase 1 parks and open spaces was guided by the Erin Ridge North Open Space Enhancements Concepts plan. This plan has been implemented through the development of Everitt Park adjacent to Lois E. Hole School, along with the final enhancement of Coal Mine Park completed in 2020. Phase 1 also calls for enhancements at Element (SWMF) including a new trail to connect the existing trail to Neil Ross Road, increased naturalized plantings and a sheltered seating area at the south end of the facility. This work is anticipated to be complete in 2021. The planned enhancements to Edgewater (SWMF)were not supported by public engagement and so have been removed from the City's capital plan.

Development of Erin Ridge North Phase 2 is in beginning stages. Commercial development along St. Albert Trail has begun, as well as the first stages of housing north of Neil Ross Road. A small trail along the planned southern SWMF has been constructed and will connect to the West Community Park when complete.

Recreation Amenities Context

Nearby amenities are an important consideration in planning for Phase 2 parks in Erin Ridge North. With St. Albert Trail presenting a major barrier to pedestrian movement, the accessible amenities for Erin Ridge North Phase 2 residents are largely located in Erin Ridge North Phase 1 and Erin Ridge. The amenities of Erin Ridge are located more than a 10-minute walk from the boundary of Phase 2.

The existing Phase 1 concept plan considered the park spaces in phase 2. Some public feedback was received through the development of the Erin Ridge North Phase 1 park planning and generally supported the inclusion of additional playgrounds, an outdoor rink, sports courts, sheltered seating areas, ball diamonds and community gardens. This feedback has been incorporated to the greatest extent possible into the concepts for phase 2 parks.

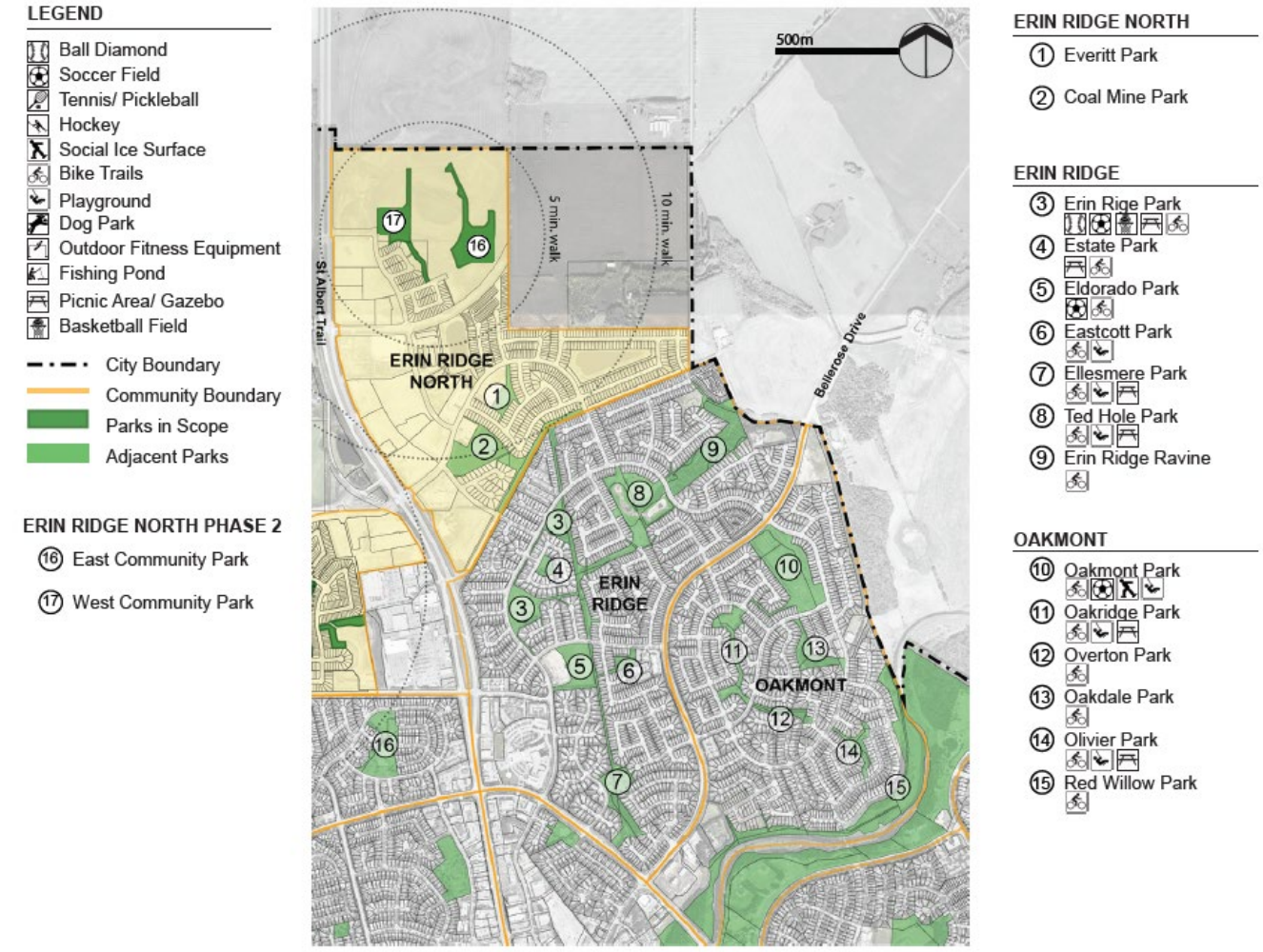


Figure 2: Recreation Context

Recreation Trends

Parks, trails 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) emphasizes living full and active lives in accessible neighbourhoods. This parks master plan continues to recognize the role that high-quality parks and open spaces play in creating connected, vibrant, healthy and livable communities.

Consideration to the 2018 City of St. Albert Recreation and Parks User Satisfaction survey, Canadian Urban Parks Report (2020) and 2017 Alberta Recreation Survey has also informed planning for these parks. Relevant trends include:



- Increasing desire for naturalization and the creation of nature experiences within parks, with 70% of cities reporting increased demand.
- Increased desire for park-based food amenities including community gardens and edible landscapes.
- Increasing demand for spontaneous use spaces including areas for social gathering.
- Preference for participating in recreation activities in parks and outdoor spaces over indoor facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided additional insight into future needs for park spaces. Well-connected trail systems and sufficient open green space for spontaneous use and physical distancing were highlighted as needs throughout Canada in the summer of 2020 (City Parks Report). Through the City of St. Albert's experiences during the pandemic, designing spaces that can bring traditional indoor activities outside (classes, children's programming, etc.), in ways that can reduce the impact of weather, will improve resiliency for the City.

Demographics

Alberta, and in particular its urban centers, is expected to continue to grow in population (Government of Alberta - Alberta Population Projections 2020-2046). Albertans' average resident age is expected to rise and more than half of the population growth in the Edmonton area is expected to occur due to international immigration. Although projections are not specific to St. Albert, it is reasonable to expect that St. Albert will likewise become an older and more diverse community. Park design needs to be responsive to these changing demographics.

As of the 2018 City of St. Albert census, Erin Ridge North has an average age of 34.6 years old, compared to 40.9 years old as the City average. Residents are predominately employed full time with many families living in the area. This trend towards younger families is expected to continue with Phase 2 of the development.

The park concepts are responsive to the expected demographics for the neighborhood and with the expected size and configuration for these spaces. The changing needs of these residents over time, particularly as families age, was also taken into consideration.

CONCEPT PLANS:

Planning for parks involves a number of sequential steps that begins with the allocation of land through ASP and continues to the construction of the parks and operation. As the first design step, conceptual plans for each of the Erin Ridge North Phase 2 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 and adjusted based on available budget, changes to neighbourhood context and/or timing of construction as needed.

The focus of the design program is a well-connected neighbourhood with emphasis on naturalized settings and opportunities to interact with nature through plantings, interpretive signage, nature-based play structures and safe interaction with water outside of the SWMF. This emphasis is balanced with the provision of multi-functional and multi-season recreation amenities that reach across ages and provide a wide variety of opportunities for residents. Materials and colours for recreation amenities will complement the natural feel of the spaces to provide consistency and connection between the park spaces.

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. Changes to the ASP, should they occur, may impact the viability of certain amenities, and will be further explored at the detailed design stage. Significant changes to the size, location, configuration, or classification of the parks outlined in this plan may require updated concepts.

Reference imagery is provided to support understanding of the design and should not be considered representative of the amenity to be constructed.



West Community Park

This community park is located directly adjacent to the main roadway leading into Erin Ridge North Phase 2 and will provide an attractive welcome to the community. The design focuses on integrating natural elements with opportunities for social gathering and play. A large entryway wall provides visual interest and separation between the park space and the parking area, with the potential to add bouldering hand holds to the park side for increased play.

Natural play features are integrated along the trails and a large open green space will provide space for spontaneous activities. Picnic tables and a seating node with potential shade shelter round out the amenities for social gathering. A boarded rink will provide a designated off-leash area for dogs in summer. In winter, the central green space transforms to include a flooded social ice surface surrounded by a freezeway that weaves through the entry wall. Trees and naturalized planting beds buffer the surrounding housing from the park space and trails.



Polinator garden and naturalized planting along SWMF

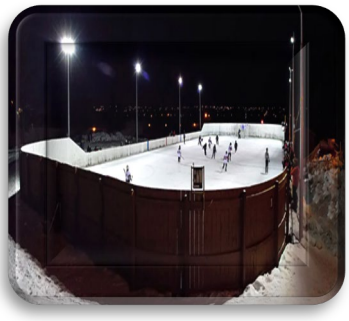


Boulder natural play feature and timber log natural play feature



West park open play area











*** A mow strip adjacent to private development is to be maintained

WEST COMMUNITY PARK SUMMER PLAN

OCTOBER 2020



WEST COMMUNITY PARK WINTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2020

East Community Park

This community park will be a focal point for creating a sense of connectedness within the neighbourhood. Located along a highly visible collector road, with off-street connection to the west side of the neighbourhood through the trail system that surrounds the SWMF, the park provides a multitude of recreation opportunities. The design continues to integrate naturalized plantings and natural materials into the park space, balanced with recreation amenities that will serve a broad range of residents.



Sliding hill and timber log natural play feature

A large pollinator garden supports increasing bio-diversity in the neighbourhood, adding another stepping stone connection to the existing pollinator gardens at Lois E. Hole School and Coal Mine Park in Phase 1. Increasing community food sources and urban agriculture is a goal of the City's new Municipal Development Plan (Flourish – 2021, draft). Edible plantings along the trail and into the park space provide an opportunity for residents to spontaneously pick and enjoy berries or other low-maintenance edible plants native to Alberta. Fruit bearing trees may also be incorporated. Interpretive/informational signage will support understanding of the pollinator garden and edible plantings.



Playground with at-grade slides and zipline

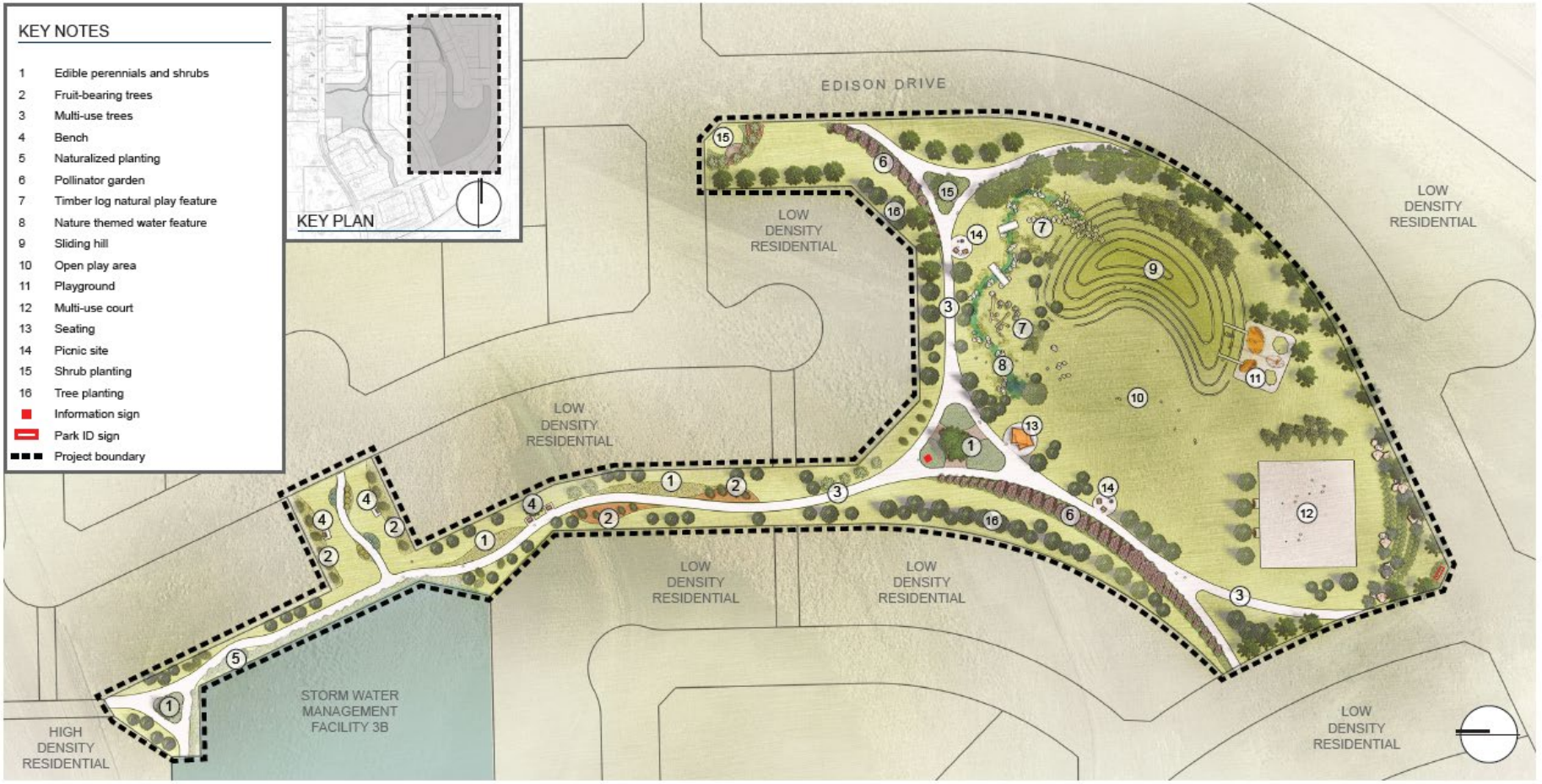
For summer use, the park space features a large tarmac area that will support a variety of hard surface games including basketball, ball hockey, pickleball/tennis (bring your own net), four square and chalk art. Two different play structure areas are proposed in the design. The west side of the park proposes a naturalized play structure and small water stream suitable for play. Taking advantage of the large hill, a zip line and slides are proposed more centrally. Picnic areas and a seating node complete the design. In winter, the large hill will support tobogganing, while the large open area lends itself to snowman building and snowshoeing.





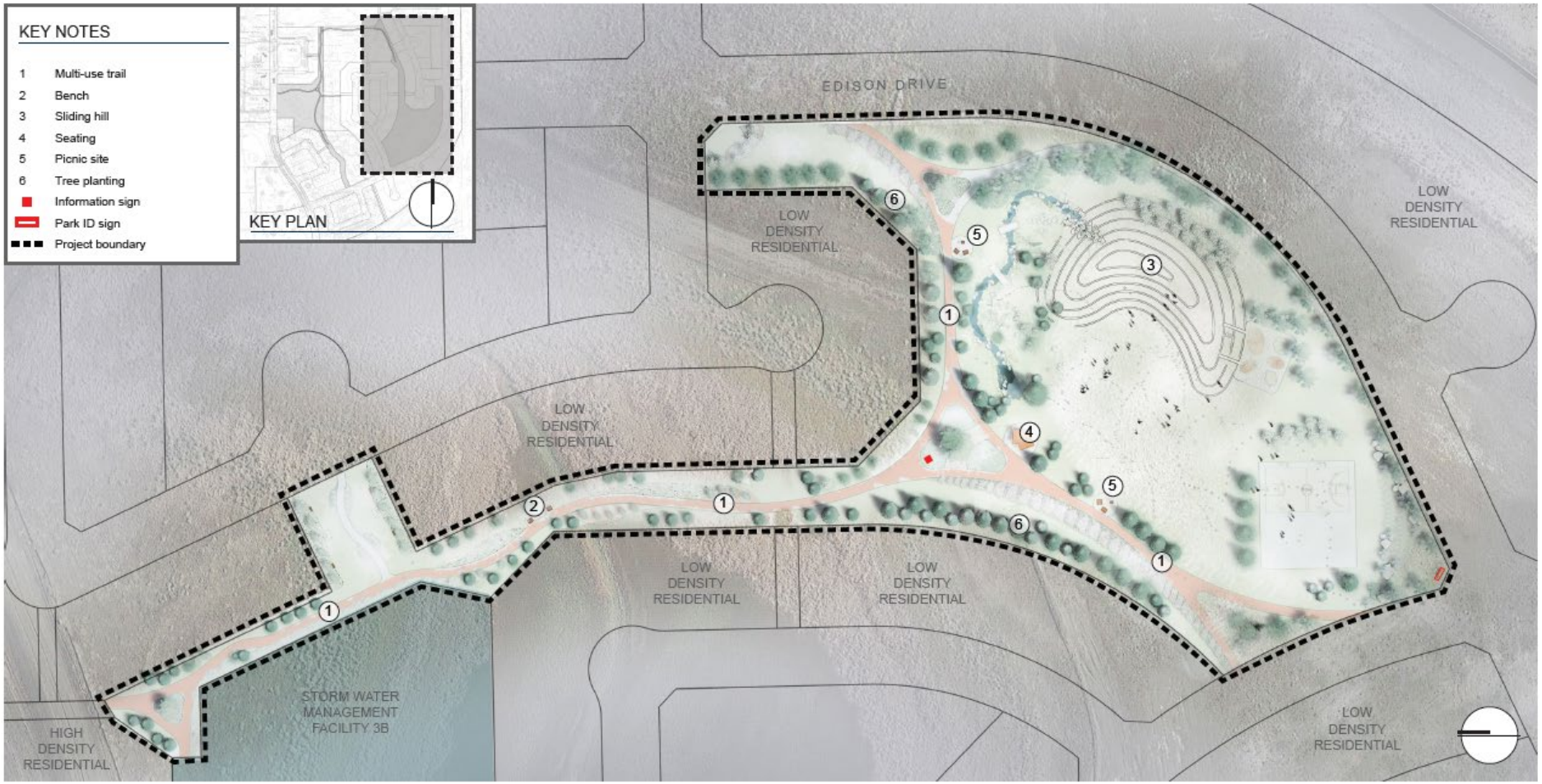






*** A mow strip adjacent to private development is to be maintained

EAST COMMUNITY PARK - SUMMER PLAN



EAST COMMUNITY PARK - WINTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2020

Connecting Trails

Shown with the two community parks, the connecting trails that loop through the parks and along the stormwater management facility will be a major feature of the neighbourhood. Following the City of St. Albert Engineering Standards, the landscaping near the trees and SWMF will focus on naturalized plantings that support a healthy and functional SWMF. Although the facilities should never be used for recreation, they do provide a scenic place to walk, rest and enjoy a natural environment. Bench placement, plantings, signage and other features such a bat houses will support safe enjoyment of and education about the SWMF and the trail network.





