Jensen Lakes

Parks Master Plan

April 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Jensen Lakes is a neighbourhood located near the northern border of the City of St. Albert, to the west of St. Albert Trail and north of Villeneuve Road. The Area Structure Plan (ASP) calls for commercial development along St. Albert Trail that is largely complete, a second commercial site in the northwest corner along Hogan Road, areas of medium density housing, a high-density development along Hogan Road, stormwater management facilities, parks and trails. Most residential areas are planned for low density housing.

Outlined in the ASP, the objective of this community is to provide a family-friendly neighbourhood that is safe, attractive and well-serviced. The ASP provides for trail connections that connect to park areas, provide access to the commercial areas and lead to the nearby North Ridge and Deer Ridge neighbourhoods. This neighbourhood represents a unique development for St. Albert with the inclusion of a 10-hectare private lake. The lake and associated recreation amenities will be managed privately through a homeowners association (HOA) exclusively for Jensen Lakes residents. Plans for the private lake and beach area include a clubhouse with meeting rooms and potential commercial opportunities (art gallery, daycare/preschool etc.), beach facilities, docks for paddling and fishing, a playground, pickleball court and onsite parking. In winter, the lake will provide opportunities for hockey and skating, with a small social ice surface in the beach area.

This parks master plan will complement the amenities available in the private lake area, ensure equitable investment for Jensen Lakes residents and provide for family-friendly, connected amenities in alignment with the ASP. At completion, the neighbourhood will have at total of 15.3ha of dedicated municipal reserve split into:

- One joint school site and community park.
    - Completed in 2019, this site includes Joseph Demko School, Sister Alphonse Academy and Joyal Park.
- Trail connections to Joyal Park along the north and west edges of the existing stormwater management facility, completed in 2019.
- One connector park along the north boundary of the neighbourhood.
- Six neighbourhood parks distributed throughout the neighbourhood, with a park or open space within a 400-metre walkable distance of every residence.
    - The parks will be constructed across many different stages of development. Build out of these parks will be timed with the development of the adjacent housing or commercial developments. The completion of the parks is expected to take ten to fifteen years, in alignment with the overall building of the neighbourhood.

The following concept plans provide direction for the enhancements of the undeveloped public parks and open spaces. The plan does not direct development of any private amenities including the lake, clubhouse or associated recreation amenities.

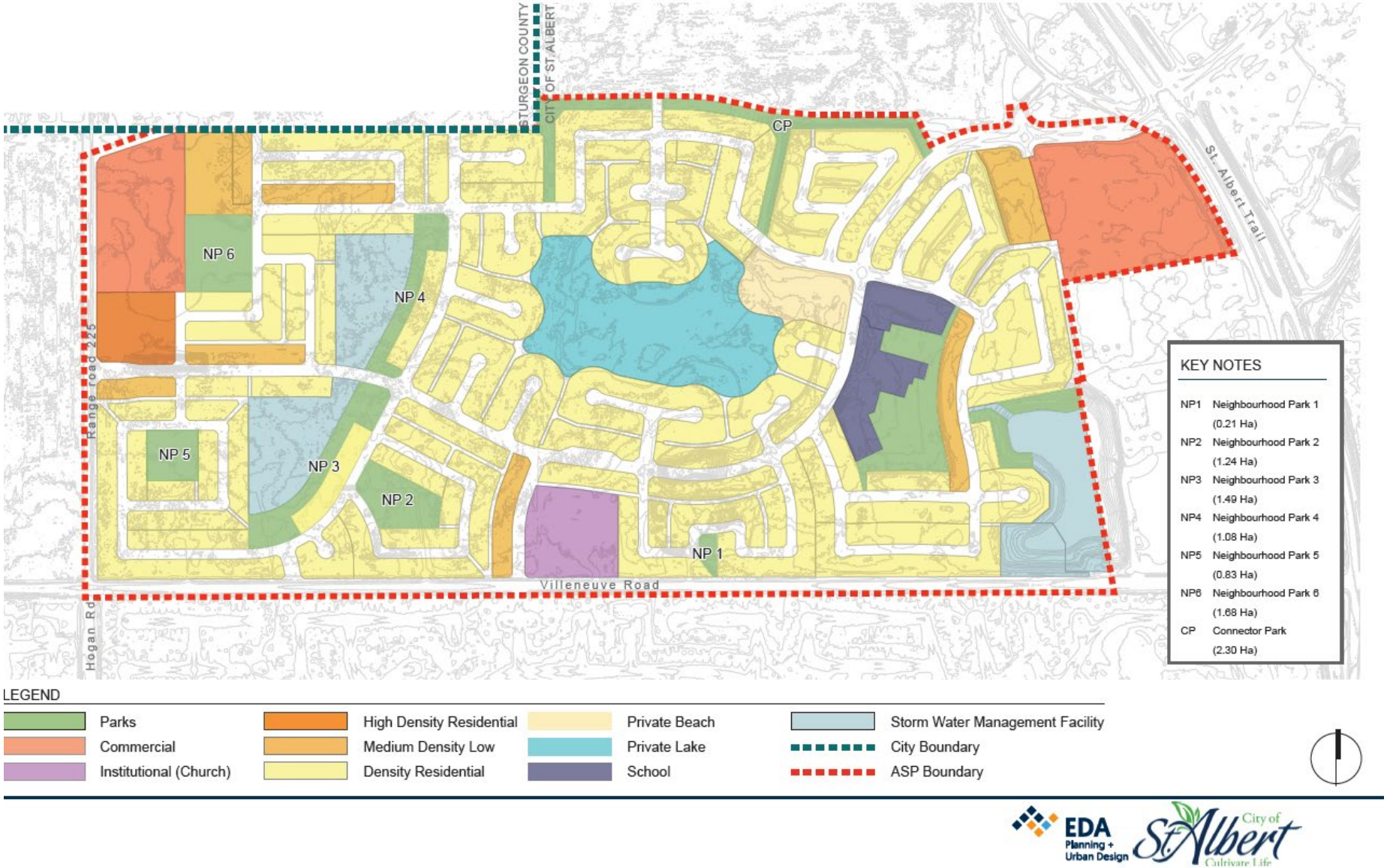
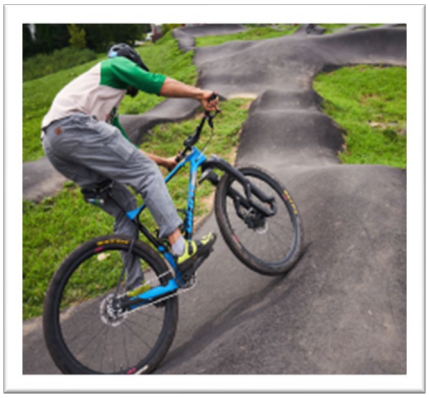


Figure 1 : Jensen Lakes - Approved Future Land Use

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 Jensen Lakes will be responsive to community needs and trends, promote health and wellness for residents, encourage social interaction and complement the amenities found at the private lake.

- 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 through trails, walkways and pathways, and integrated with the community through design.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Parks and trails will ensure equitable access, accessibility and programming for a wide range of users, ages and abilities. Amenities will provide for four-season use wherever possible.

Sustainability and Conservation

Parks and open spaces in Jensen Lakes will be operationally sustainable and incorporate green infrastructure wherever possible. Opportunities to increase biodiversity and tree canopy will be included in park design.

Objectives

Objectives outline the desired outcomes to be achieved through the design of the parks and open spaces in Jensen Lakes. The objectives of this Parks Master Plan are to:

1) To provide well developed park spaces that complement the private lake and beach amenities and support the goals of the ASP of a family friendly neighbourhood.
2) To provide parks and open spaces that are functional, accessible, serve residents of all ages and are used year-round.
3) To increase the biodiversity and tree canopy of the neighbourhood through naturalized planting through the parks and open spaces.

Current State

Current Development

The community has several areas and amenities already developed. The commercial area along St. Albert Trail is largely complete. Some residential has been built and occupied, including townhouses along Jensen Lakes Boulevard and single-family housing in the east of the ASP. A large stormwater management facility was completed in 2019. Two schools and Joyal Park were built in 2018 and include multiple playground areas and sportsfields. A small portion of the north connector park was completed in 2019.

Recreation Amenities Context

Nearby amenities are an important consideration in planning for parks in Jensen Lakes. With St. Albert Trail presenting a major barrier to recreational movement, the accessible amenities for Jensen Lakes are in the Deer Ridge neighbourhood. Barriers to access of Deer Ridge recreation amenities include:

- Lack of sidewalk along Villeneuve Road
- No walkway accesses into Deer Ridge along Villeneuve Road
    - Need to cross Villeneuve Drive at Dennison Drive as the closest access point to Deer Ridge

Sidewalks will be incorporated along Villeneuve Road as the City's Complete Streets guidelines are fully implemented. The timeframe of upgrading is not known at this time.

In Deer Ridge, particularly at Deer Ridge Park located adjacent to Muriel Martin School, residents have access to a wide range of structured recreation opportunities including baseball diamonds, soccer fields, an outdoor rink, multiple playground areas and picnic areas.

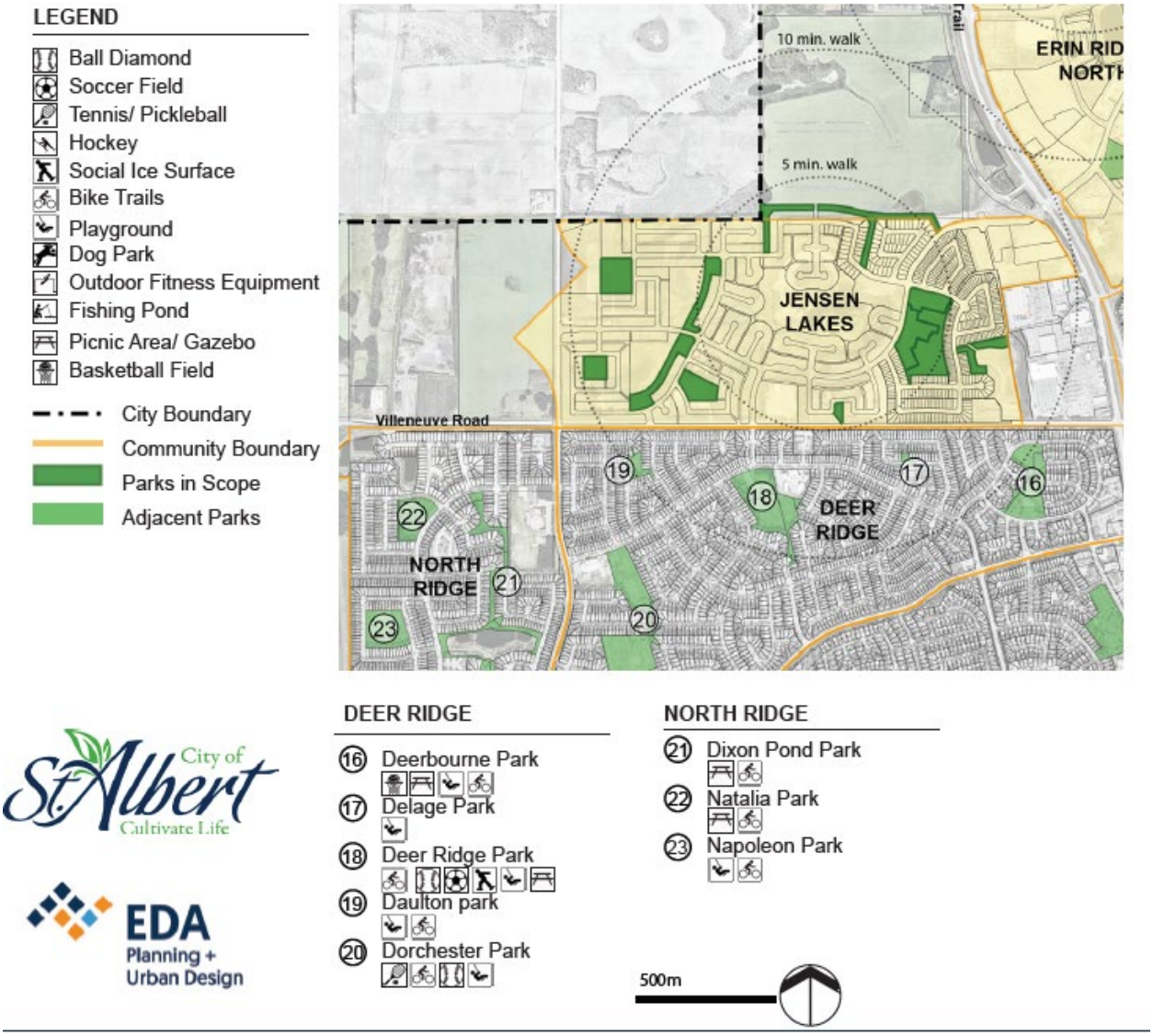


Figure 2: Recreation Context Plan

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, including small scale opportunities to play along the way, and sufficient open green space for spontaneous use and physical distancing were highlighted as needs throughout Canada in the summer of 2020. Increased dog ownership over the course of a pandemic was a nationwide trend that will have impacts to residents demands for many years into the future. As St. Albert has high levels of dog ownership normally, existing demands for dog friendly spaces is expected to increase.

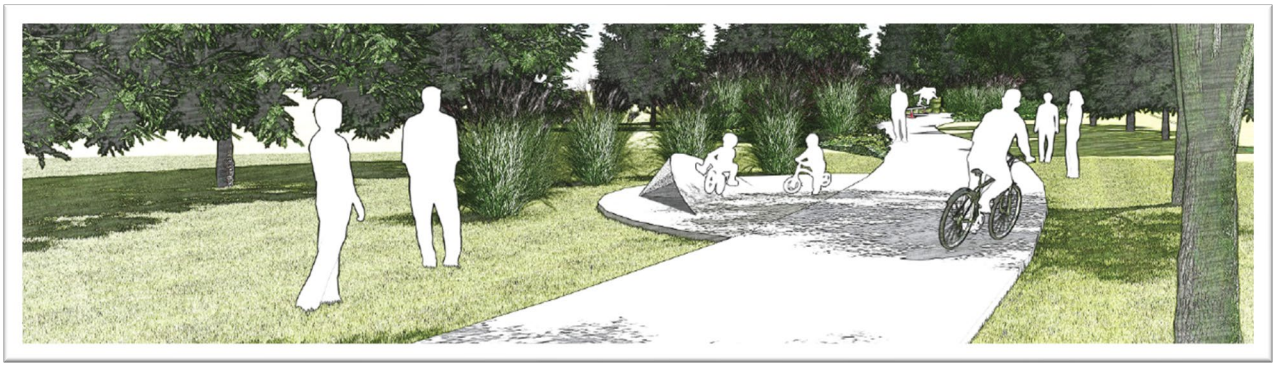
Another focus of the City is to design spaces that can bring traditional indoor activities (classes, children's programming, etc.) outside. The pandemic highlighted the need for flexible spaces that can support programming outdoors providing for some protection from weather impacts will improve the City's recreation resiliency in future years.

Demographics

Alberta, and in particular its urban centres, are 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 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 over time. Park design needs to be responsive to these changing demographics.

As of the 2018 City of St. Albert census, Jensen Lakes has an average age of 29.0 years old, compared to 40.9 years old as the City average. This number is not reflective of the current state, as the neighbourhood has grown substantially between 2018 and 2020 and the housing variety increased to include more single-family housing. Residents are predominately employed full-time, with many families living in the area. This neighbourhood is expected to be attractive to families over the long term, both due to the presence of two schools and the attraction of the private lake.

The park concepts anticipate 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 sequential steps that begin with the allocation of land through the ASP and continues to the construction of each park space and onto operation, maintenance and replacement. As the first design step, conceptual plans for each of the undeveloped Jensen Lakes parks have been created.

The overall focus of the design program is an active family friendly development that accommodates the needs of residents across a wide range of ages, abilities and interests. A mix of spontaneous and programmed spaces will provide unique opportunities for active living, play and community building. Opportunities for naturalization, increased tree canopy and community agriculture are integrated into the designs where feasible. Additional opportunities for naturalization and increased tree canopy will be incorporated wherever possible at detailed design.

Public participation is a key component of the detailed design phase and may require changes to this plan to address resident desires, previously unidentified community needs and/or constraints. These concepts are intended to represent the best available information at the time of writing and will be refined through detailed design. Concepts will be adjusted based on available budget, changes to neighbourhood context and/or timing of construction as needed.



Figure 3: Park Development Process

Reference or precedent imagery is provided to support understanding of the conceptual design and should not be considered representative of the amenities to be constructed.



Neighbourhood Park 1



Neighbourhood Park 1 is a small 0.21ha park site, connecting pedestrians from Villeneuve Road to the Jensen Lakes neighbourhood. The park features a welcoming entryway with opportunity for inclusion of public art, including the potential for interactive public art, subject to the *City of St. Albert Public Art Policy*.

A naturalized treed area buffers the neighbourhood side of the park from the roadway noise. A trellis structure with edible plantings provides for unique urban agriculture, while further separating the play areas from the roadway. A playground area will support the nearby low density housing families and an open green area enables spontaneous use for games of catch, picnics and other spontaneous play.









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

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK 1

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Neighbourhood Park 2



The focus for Neighbourhood Park 2 is providing a dog friendly area for off-leash use. This site will conform to the city's *Dog Friendly Guidelines* at the time of detailed design. Fencing, dog agility equipment and other amenities were considered as part of the conceptual design and may be incorporated into the plan if in alignment with City guidelines at the time of construction.

Small, grassed mounds create a more interesting terrain for dogs to play. Provision of seating and a connecting trail will make this site an inviting space for all residents, while perimeter plantings will create a buffer between the park space and nearby residences.

In the northeast corner of the site is an existing tree stand. Surrounding development may impact the long-term viability of this natural treed area. If the forested area can be maintained in good health, the tree stand will be incorporated into the park plan, with opportunities for further naturalization of the space. Use of naturalized grasses, native species plantings, wood mulch and other low maintenance materials will improve the overall sustainability of the park.





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Neighbourhood Park 3 & 4



Although Neighbourhood Park 3 and 4 are two parcels separated by a roadway, they are planned together to provide a cohesive and a continuous experience for park users. Nestled against the proposed stormwater management facility (SWMF), these parks focus on providing opportunities for residents to interact with a naturalized environment and incorporate opportunities for urban agriculture.

Neighbourhood Park 3 is located with direct visibility from Villeneuve Road. A trail lined with high-canopied trees leads to a central plaza with opportunity for public art inclusion or other decorative feature, subject to the *City of St. Albert Public Art Policy*. The trails then continue along the SWMF, with benches placed to take advantage of views over the water, encouraging social gathering and viewing of wildlife. Naturalized plantings will further enhance the attractiveness of the SWMF and encourage use by wildlife.

Adjacent to the north roadway is a proposed series of geometric planting beds that utilize low maintenance native plants and shrubs including edible plantings like saskatoon or raspberry. Blocks of various sizes and heights create attractive and unique gathering, seating and climbing opportunities. Bright colours reflect winter city guidelines, providing visual interest in snowy conditions.

Neighbourhood Park 4 continues the overall look and feel from Neighbourhood Park 3. Additional seating blocks on the north of the intersecting roadway provide continuity between the two spaces. The multi-use trail with surrounding naturalized plantings leads to a potential community garden area that will be constructed and operated with the support of a partner organization. Central to the community garden space is another opportunity for public art, or other entrance feature such as decorative concrete. Naturalized tree plantings and gravel access paths round out the north end of the park.





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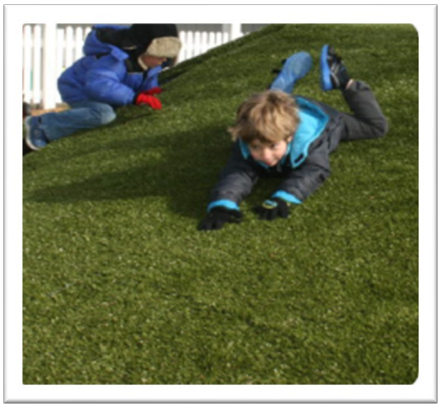
Neighbourhood Park 5



As the farthest park site from the private lake and amenity area, this space is intended to support the day-to-day recreational needs of the residents in the nearby low-density housing. Sheltered picnic tables and a large green space give opportunities for gathering. A playground surrounded by a paved tricycle track supports young riders, permitting use for bicycling, and other wheeled uses. A north facing sliding hill extends use of the park through the winter. Plantings along the low-density housing will increase privacy for nearby homes, while a pollinator garden supports education and increases naturalization of the park area. Plant species will emphasize native species wherever possible.









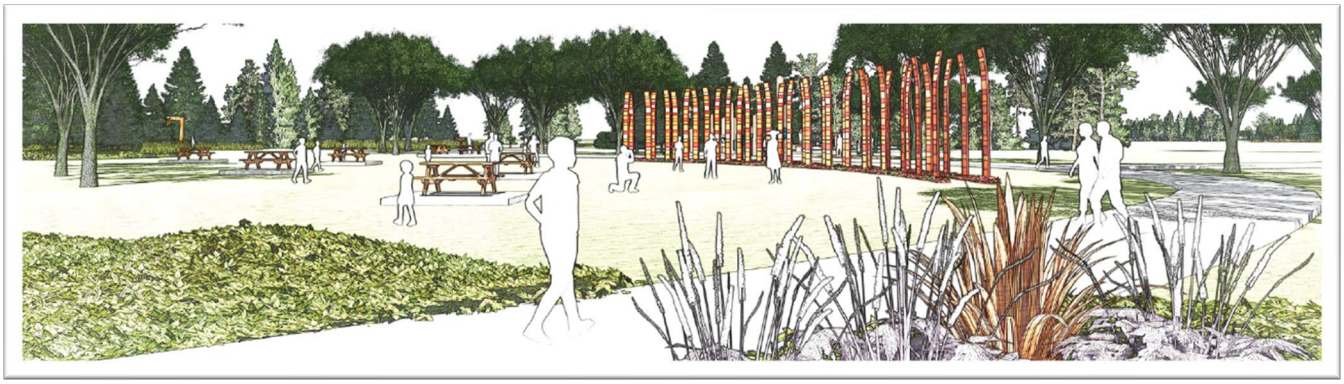
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Neighbourhood Park 6



As the largest non-school related park space in the Jensen Lakes neighbourhood, this site enables a variety of opportunities for residents. Adjacent to a proposed commercial area and a multi-family housing site, the park focuses on encouraging residents to “stay and play.” The site design provides a strong connection between the commercial spaces and park through two dedicated picnic areas and unique interactive art features such as a possible decorative art wall and large-scale swing.

The play features of this park are more heavily focused on youth and include a potential parkour or risk-based activity site and large asphalt court that can be lined for basketball, pickleball, tennis or other hard surfaced sports. A large green area will also support active and passive recreation including use for picnics, catch, spikeball or other field games. Trails provide good access from the neighbourhood and through the site, while plantings are strategically placed to encourage good sight lines from roadways while still maintaining screening for the adjacent housing.









NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK 6

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Connector Park



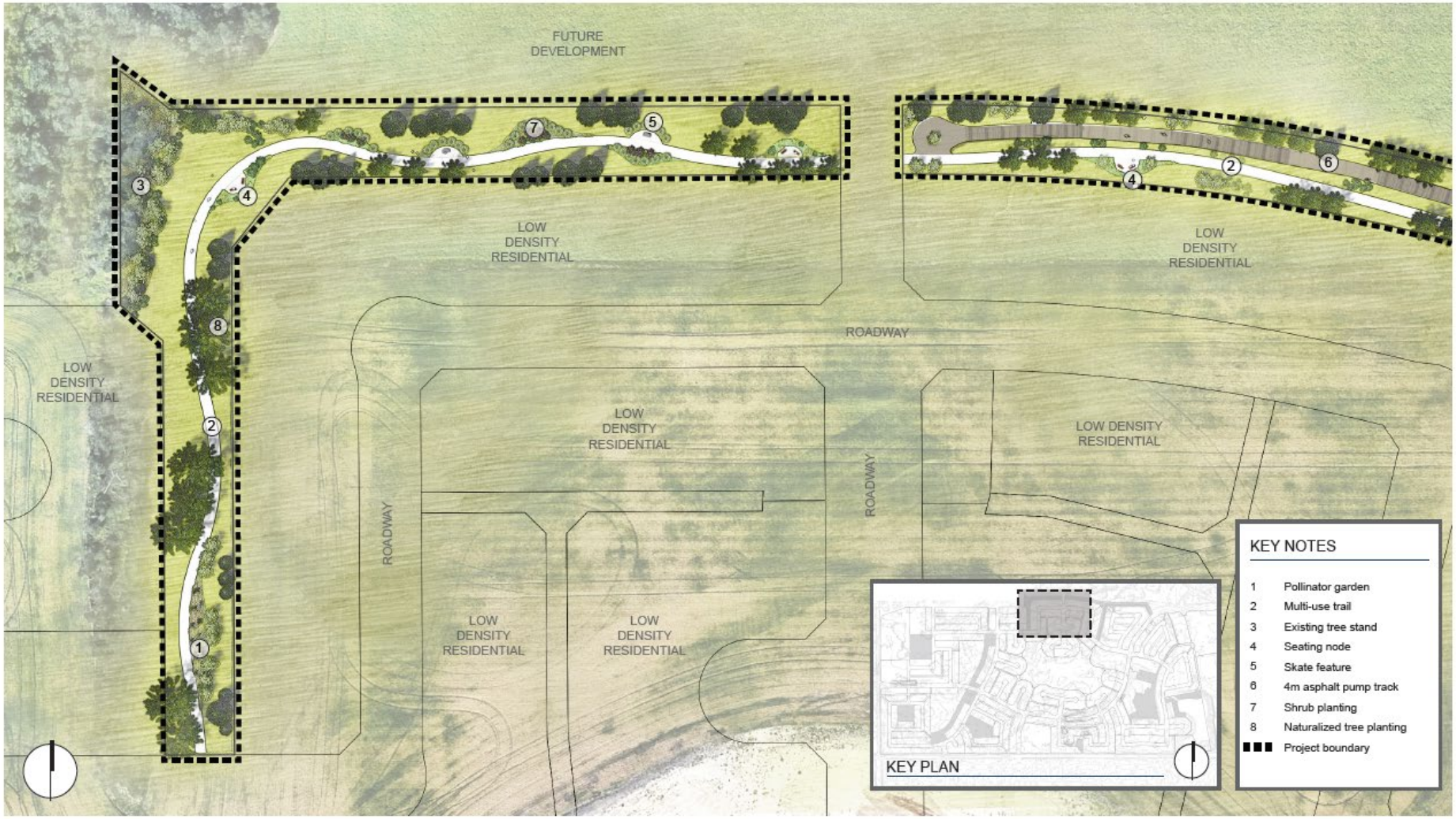
The connector park in Jensen Lakes represents a substantial portion of the municipal reserve for this neighbourhood and as such is planned for more recreation opportunities than other similar spaces within the City of St. Albert. This linear park connects the neighbourhood to the future Transit Oriented Development and Light Rail Transit (LRT) station.



The main feature of the connector park is to provide “play along the way” opportunities. On the western portion of the trail system, a series of bump outs that will contain quarter pipe ramps, grind rails or other bike/skate features are planned. To the east, an asphalt pump track with turnarounds at each end provide an interesting way for bikers to move along the trails.

A separate asphalt trail, benches and tree plantings provide an active transportation corridor and will give off-street access for residents in the north of the neighbourhood to the private lake and recreation amenities. Plantings and amenity placement will consider the needs of neighbouring landowners to the greatest extent possible.





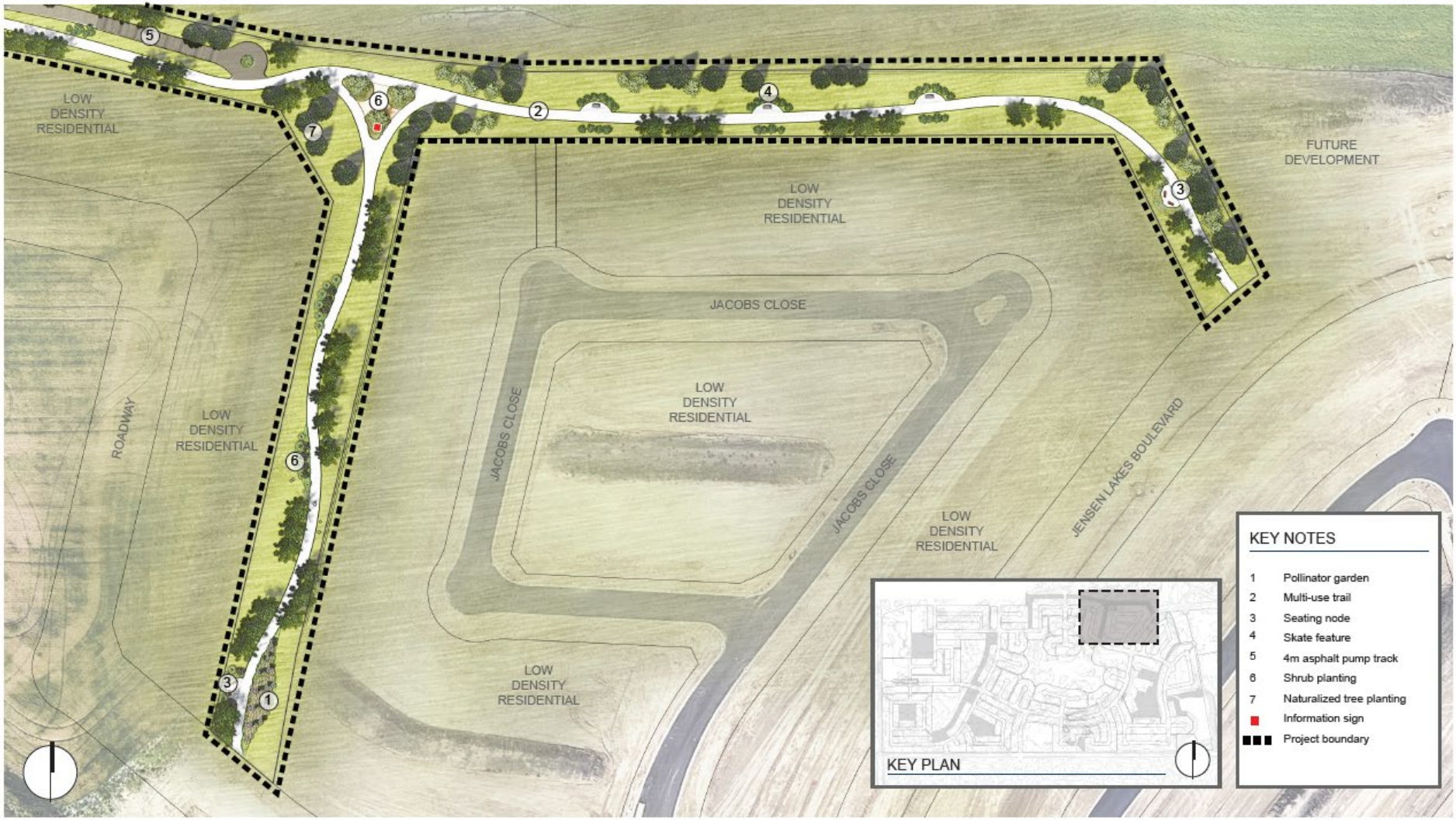
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