



City of St. Albert



NORTH RIDGE PHASE II

PARKS MASTER PLAN

January 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION..... 3**
 - PARK & OPEN SPACE PLANNING SYSTEM..... 4
 - PRINCIPLES..... 6
 - OBJECTIVES..... 7
 - CURRENT STATE 7
 - CURRENT DEVELOPMENT 7
 - RECREATION AMENITIES CONTEXT 8
 - RECREATION TRENDS 10
 - DEMOGRAPHICS..... 11
- CONCEPT PLAN..... 13**
 - NORTH RIDGE PHASE II – COMMUNITY PARK 15
- APPENDIX A: CITATIONS..... 20**



INTRODUCTION

North Ridge Phase II is designated as an extension of the existing North Ridge neighbourhood, extending north of Villeneuve Road as shown on page five. The North Ridge Phase II neighbourhood is planned to include a centrally-located park with trails connecting to the City of St. Albert's trail network through a north/south trail alignment as identified in the Area Structure Plan (ASP).

The ASP for the North Ridge neighbourhood was amended in June 2020 to incorporate Phase II north of Villeneuve Road. The ASP outlines how the site will be developed over a 10-year period, which includes public open space development. As shown in Figure 1, the neighbourhood is located north of Villeneuve Road, west of Hogan Road, and bounded on the north by Fowler Way, a future NW crosstown road. The western portion of North Ridge Phase II is designated as a Future Development Site. This area is known as the Badger Lands and currently consists of a transfer station and electrical substation, and was formerly used for snow storage. Future planning for Badger Lands is underway as of 2022.

The developable neighbourhood is a mix of low and medium-residential housing, and small commercial development. The neighbourhood has no natural areas recognized by the City through the Natural Areas Management Plan, and a Natural Areas Review and Inventory reported no areas of interest.

The non-residential development area of North Ridge Phase II will sit at approximately 47.3% with the residential development area at 52.7%

The non-residential development area (parks, walkways /public utility lots, stormwater management facilities, commercial and roadways) of North Ridge Phase II will sit at approximately 47.3% with the residential development area at 52.7% of the overall developable area. The majority of that allocated area goes towards low-density residential (38.5%).

The principles and criteria, of the *Parks and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, are to be used to guide the design of a new park system and individual parks. When effectively applied, the principles and criteria will ensure the new park will deliver on the City's vision. The integrated principles and criteria applied in this parks master plan include, but are not limited to, four-season design, having character and identity, being visually aesthetic, promoting social interaction and functionality

through both structured and unstructured recreation activities. The parks master plan is further aligned with various supporting plans, policies, and guidelines including, but not limited to, the City of St. Albert bylaws and policies, including the *Municipal Development Plan (MDP)*, *Land Use Bylaw (LUB)*, *Area Structure Plan*, *Recreation Master Plan (2012)*, and the *City of St. Albert Municipal Engineering Standards*. Alignment to these documents allows for the parks master plan to contribute to the overall City’s vision.

PARK & OPEN SPACE PLANNING SYSTEM

| Provincial | City | Departmental |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Government Act • Alberta Land Stewardship • Provincial Land Use Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Development Plan • Bylaws (i.e. Land Use) • Area Structure Plans • Park & Open Space Standards & Guidelines • Engineering & Landscape Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Master Plan • Natural Areas Conservation & Management Plan • Recreation Master Plan • Parks Master Plans |

All plans articulated 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 : North Ridge Phase II - Approved Future Land Use

PRINCIPLES

The City's Parks and Open Space system is diverse and serves multiple functions across seven types of parks. North Ridge Phase II contains one community park. This park provides structured recreation amenities not available on or through other types (i.e. neighbourhood parks) with additional unstructured spaces available. This parks master plan adheres to the [City of St. Albert Parks and Open Space Standards and Guidelines](#) principles including:

- **Quality of Life** – The park space in North Ridge Phase II will be responsive to community needs and trends, promote physical and mental health and wellness for individuals and the community, encourage social interaction, integrate park design into the distinct character of the City and the neighbourhood, and the park space designed and arranged to encourage scenic quality.
 - Park design will emphasize safety through the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- **Connectivity and Integration** – The centrally-located community park will be easily accessible, inviting, convenient and integrated into the community through design.
 - Every resident will be within a 400-metre unobstructed walk on the active transportation network to a park or open space.
 - The park trails will connect with the neighbourhood's SWMF trail to contribute to the active transportation system for a north-south connection through the neighbourhood (see Figure 1).
- **Diversity and Inclusivity** – The centrally-located community park will be designed to ensure equitable access for the greatest number of residents and enable year-round use.
 - Park design will align with the City's [Universal Access Plan](#)
 - Park design will enable four-season use
- **Sustainability and Conservation** – The centrally-located community park will be operationally sustainable and integrate green infrastructure where feasible.
 - Park design will align with the City of St. Albert's Green Environment goal as outlined in the City of St. Albert Municipal Development Plan, which aims to value and protect the natural environment and conserve and enhance features and functions for the wellbeing of our community and our planet.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives outline the desired outcomes to be achieved through the design of the community park in North Ridge Phase II development. The objectives of this parks master plan are to:

1. Ensure alignment with relevant City bylaws, policies, and plans.
2. Provide vibrant, active spaces that encourage four-season use of park space.
3. Provide a focal point within the neighbourhood that enables community gathering and supports social cohesion.
4. Provide standard amenities to fulfill the needs of the neighbourhood while also including unique park amenities that attract City-wide visitors where possible.
5. Provide interaction and access to nature, green space and recreation opportunities for the benefit of neighbourhood residents' overall wellbeing.

CURRENT STATE

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

The North Ridge Phase II ASP applies to a gross area of 48 hectares with approximately 26 developable hectares. Low and medium-density residential land use will dominate North Ridge Phase II with the remainder of the developable land being divided into a centrally-located community park, one commercial lot in the northeast corner, and a SWMF – Figure 1. North Ridge Phase II is being designed with smaller single-family housing, zero-lot line products, and generally lower-cost residential homes in mind. The intended market for North Ridge Phase II is expected to reach young families from diverse backgrounds as they enter the housing market.

The ASP is a future-oriented plan and depicts how North Ridge Phase II is anticipated to develop over a 10-year period. As of 2022, development has begun in the south with Stage One of Eight. The development will proceed north and the community park is included in Stage Five.

Site Analysis

A site analysis of natural and cultural features was conducted as part of the ASP process. These studies provide insight into the naturally occurring space of North Ridge Phase II which contribute to incorporating key factors into the community park design.

- Site is generally flat, with ground elevation ranging from 685.5m to 687m. The drainage direction for the neighbourhood is to the west and the south.
- North Ridge Phase II is undeveloped and is mostly cultivated farmland.
- Class II and III wetlands were indicated to be within the ASP boundary, totaling in 0.9 hectares. The wetlands are not considered to have significant ecological value and have received clearance for removal under the Public Lands Act and Water Act.
- North Ridge Phase II has relatively little in the way of extant natural features.
- The Environmental Site Assessment and the Agriculture Impact Assessment did not identify any concerns for development in the proposed staged areas.

- Historical Resources Act clearance to proceed with development within the Phase II lands was obtained.

RECREATION AMENITIES CONTEXT

Nearby amenities are an important consideration in planning for North Ridge Phase II. With Villeneuve Road and Hogan Road presenting as major barriers to recreational movement, the accessible amenities for North Ridge Phase II are limited to the neighbourhood itself. Barriers to access to North Ridge and Jensen Lakes recreation amenities include:

- Lack of sidewalk along Villeneuve Road and Hogan Road.
 - No walkway access into North Ridge or Jensen Lakes neighbourhoods.
- Growth of Jensen Lakes and its recreation amenities is from east to west with the final stages of development being those immediately bordering North Ridge Phase II along Hogan Road.

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

As outlined in Figure 2, there are a number of park spaces currently developed or planned within a five- and 10-minute walk that will support residents of North Ridge Phase II, with barriers to access as noted above. Therefore, North Ridge Phase II community park is crucial in facilitating unobstructed access to park space for neighbourhood residents.

LEGEND

- Ball Diamond
- Soccer Field
- Tennis/ Pickleball
- Outdoor Rink
- Social Ice Surface
- Multi-use Trails
- Playground
- Off-leash Area
- Dog Park
- Fishing Pond
- Picnic Area/ Gazebo
- Tarmac Area w/ Basketball
- Community Garden
- Bike Pump Track
- City Boundary
- Neighbourhood Boundary
- Parks in Scope
- Adjacent Parks

NORTH RIDGE

- ① Natalia Park
- ② Napoleon Park
- ③ Dixon Pond Park

DEER RIDGE

- ④ Deerbourne Park
- ⑤ Delage Park
- ⑥ Deer Ridge Park
- ⑦ Daulton park
- ⑧ Dorchester Park



LACOMBE

- ⑨ Lacombe Lake Park
- ⑩ Larose Park
- ⑪ Lamoureux Park (no amenities)
- ⑫ Liberton Park
- ⑬ Langholm Park

JENSEN LAKES

- ⑭ Future Neighbourhood Park 1
- ⑮ Future Neighbourhood Park 2
- ⑯ Future Neighbourhood Park 3 and 4
- ⑰ Future Neighbourhood Park 5
- ⑱ Future Neighbourhood Park 6
- ⑲ Future Connector Park
- ⑳ Joyal Park

Figure 2 : Recreation Context Plan

RECREATION TRENDS

Parks, trails and natural areas in St. Albert are consistently rated as the most valued contribution to the quality of life in the City among residents. In 2021, 60% of respondents of the *St. Albert Community Satisfaction Survey* reported parks, trails and natural areas as a top factor contributing to the quality of life. The next highest-rated factor contributing to the quality of life was at 44% and was access to fitness facilities and youth/family programming (City of St. Albert, 2022), which also make use of the City's parks and open spaces. St. Albert has consistently ranked parks, trails and natural areas as being the top factor contributing to the quality-of-life since at least 2009.

“St. Albert’s parks, trails, and natural areas are cited by 60% of respondents as a top factor contributing to a high quality of life.”
– 2021 Community Satisfaction Survey.

The role of recreation and parks to individuals, communities and the natural and built environment have shifted over time and needs to be taken into consideration for recreation and park planning. For instance, the preferred methods of participation have been trending towards more unstructured or self-guided activities in comparison to structured or organized sports. Design considerations differ between providing structured activity space (ex. sport fields) in comparison to unstructured or self-guided activities (ex. trails or sensory play). This is true of St. Albert with residents indicating through the most recent recreation needs assessment (City of St. Albert, 2022), that their primary recreation participation is in outdoor activities and self-guided activities. This trend outlines the need to address demand beyond organized sport and recreation and to support individual users.

Furthermore, the impacts of climate change on our natural and built environment have increasingly been identified as a trend, and that parks and the natural environment can play a role in mitigating these effects, including using shade structures and tree canopies to cool park spaces and cleaning the air (City of St. Albert, 2022). From the urban heat island effect to decreasing air quality, the impacts of climate change are real and personal (Foderaro, 2022; Schottland, 2019). To that end, this parks master plan has incorporated above the standard level of shrubs and trees to contribute to shade and carbon capture, a trail network that connects to the City-wide active transportation network to encourage active transportation modes of transport and pollinator gardens to support ecosystem health and biodiversity.

A recent Park People survey found that 82% of Canadians said that parks have become more important (over the span of the COVID-19 pandemic) to their mental health (Park People, 2020).

Canadians' sedentary behavior has consistently been identified as an area in need of action (Participation 2021 Report Card). Sedentary behaviors negatively impact obesity rates, chronic diseases (diabetes and heart disease) and mental health (depression). The presence of parks, trails, natural areas and playgrounds in a neighbourhood can reduce sedentary behaviours (CPRA, 2015). St. Albert residents also identified the role of recreation and parks for their



physical health, with 87% of those surveyed in St. Albert indicating physical health as the reason for recreating with mental health not far behind (City of St. Albert, 2022).

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of parks have received much attention. Over the course of the COVID-19 restrictions, parks provided spaces for spontaneous use and physical distancing. The significance of parks was documented by Park People in June 2020 which found that almost three-quarters of Canadians said their appreciation for parks and green spaces has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Park People, 2020). This survey also found that 82% of Canadians said that parks have become more important over the span of the COVID-19 pandemic to their mental health (Park People, 2020). This appreciation for parks and green spaces is aligned with the St. Albert Recreation Needs Assessment which found that overall participation in recreation for residents is expected to increase in the coming years (City of St. Albert, 2022), with a preference for outdoor and unstructured opportunities.

This parks master plan continues to recognize the role that high-quality park spaces play in creating connected, vibrant, healthy and livable communities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Alberta, and in particular its urban centres, are expected to grow in population (Government of Alberta – Alberta Population Projections 2021-2046). Albertans’ average 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.

In 2018, North Ridge had an average age of 32.3 years old, compared to 40.9 years old as the City average.

In 2018, North Ridge had an average age of 32.3 years old, compared to 40.9 years old as the City average (City of St. Albert, 2018) with that increasing to 41.8 years old in the recent Canadian census (Government of Canada 2021 Census, n.d.). The highest percentage of children (0 to 18) are found within the North Ridge Neighbourhood. The estimated number of residents for North Ridge Phase II is 1,324 with that being over low and medium-density dwellings.

The neighbourhood is expected to be especially attractive to younger families due to the nature of the planned zero lot line, smaller lot size residential development, and the anticipated lower price of entry into home ownership. With the expected development of North Ridge Phase II and the intended demographics, the neighbourhood will likely see higher turnover as families outgrow their starter homes or progress to larger homes with larger lot sizes. The expected housing types and projected demographics at full build-out are described in the chart below.

| | Area (ha) | % of GDA | Units | Population |
|--|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Low-Density Residential | 10 | 38.5% | 283 | 821 |
| Medium Density Residential (approximately 40 du/ha) | 1.2 | 4.5% | 47 | 105 |
| Medium Density Residential (approximately 90 du/ha) | 2.5 | 9.7% | 226 | 398 |
| Total Residential Development | 13.7 | 52.7 | 556 | 1,324 |

Figure 3: Expected Housing Types



CONCEPT PLAN

Planning for parks involves a number of sequential steps that begins with the allocation of land through ASPs and continues to the construction of the parks and their continued operation. The conceptual design is 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.

As the first design step, a conceptual plan for the North Ridge Phase II community park has been created with the following outlining the overall focus for the parks master plan:

- The North Ridge Phase II community park is the only planned park for the neighbourhood and can act as the area’s focal point both geographically and socially.
- The concept plan incorporates four-season design through maximizing exposure to sunlight through orientation of park amenities, including color to enliven the park amenities in winter (e.g., sensory play area), and providing park amenities that are desired during winter months (i.e. tobogganing hill and social ice surface).
- The concept plans were developed with the inclusion of standard amenities to fulfill the needs of the neighbourhood, while also including unique park amenities that attract City-wide visitors where possible (e.g. standard amenities including tarmac, playground, open green space, etc., and unique items including the proposed hillside playground and sensory play area).

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



Figure 4: Park Development Process

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 park 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 final amenity to be constructed.



NORTH RIDGE PHASE II – COMMUNITY PARK

The 2.6-hectare community park is centrally-located to ensure all residences are within a 400-metre unobstructed walk to the surrounding trail system. Surrounded by roadways and low-density residential, the park space will provide an opportunity for structured and unstructured recreation. The design integrates a four-season design in its elements to maximize the utilization of the space all year.

A peewee-sized baseball field dominates the interior of the park with a sliding hill bordering the outfield. As identified in the City of St. Albert's Recreation Needs Assessment (2022), baseball diamonds are a medium need in the level of priority. However, with the growth of the City and the loss of baseball diamonds at existing school sites, the need in this space will be present. The orientation of the field maximizes the available space and allows utilization of the baseball diamond for other elements, such as the hill for sliding and the field for snowshoeing in winter. The proposed hillside playground is planned to include features directly embedded in the hill, with a more traditional playground structure adjacent.

For summer use, shown in Figure 5, the park features a large tarmac area that can support a variety of hard surface games including basketball, ball hockey, pickleball/tennis (bring your own net), four square and chalk art. The tarmac and hillside playground are connected through an intersecting 3m multi-use trail. A shade structure, spanning the length of the tarmac, will play an important role for park users due to increasingly frequent extreme heat events. The park's trails connect the space north/south and east/west linking the park elements together. The trails connect a number of seating and picnic nodes to allow for community gathering locations throughout the park.

For winter use, the tarmac area can become a social ice surface for skating. Figure 7 showcases winter uses of the site which includes but are not limited to, open play/snowshoeing and a sliding hill.



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

The site of the North Ridge Phase II community park is historically cultivated farmland. The plan calls for the addition of planting beds, strategically placed naturalized areas with native species planting and pollinator gardens. By maintaining a balance between development and natural features, the North Ridge Phase II community park can contribute to increasing the City’s tree canopy, supporting the naturalization of open space, and providing wildlife habitat (e.g., pollinators) while supporting stormwater absorption and providing shade for park users.





Figure 5: Landscape Concept Plan – Summer

SITE ENLARGEMENT - HILLSIDE PLAYGROUND AND TARMAC AREA



Figure 6: Landscape Concept Plan
– Site Enlargement

KEY NOTES

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | Open Passive Green Space | 6 | Shade Structure |
| 2 | Planting Bed | 7 | Hillside Playground |
| 3 | 3m Width Multi-used Trail | 8 | Tarmac Area |
| 4 | Seating Node Type 1: Picnic Area on Concrete Pad | 9 | Sensory Play Area |
| 5 | Seating Node Type 3: Bench on Concrete Pad | 10 | Pump Shack on Concrete Pad |





Figure 7: Landscape Concept Plan – Winter

APPENDIX A: CITATIONS

- 2018 St. Albert Census*. City of St. Albert. (2018). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://stalbert.ca/site/assets/files/1410/2018-stalbert-census-executivesummary.pdf>
- City of St. Albert 2021 Community Satisfaction Survey Results Report*. City of St. Albert. (n.d.). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from https://stalbert.ca/site/assets/files/19966/final_2021_city_of_st_albert_community_satisfaction_survey_report_-_statistically_valid.pdf
- City of St. Albert. (2022, May). *Recreation Needs Assessment What We Heard Report*. Key Documents | Recreation Needs Assessment | Cultivate the Conversation. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://conversation.stalbert.ca/27955/widgets/113138/documents/83077>
- A Climate of Resilience St. Albert Climate Adaptation Plan*. City of St. Albert. (2022, May). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from https://stalbert.ca/site/assets/files/22267/cac_-_st_albert_cap_final.pdf
- Foderaro, L. (2022, May 2). *The power of Parks to address climate change*. Trust for Public Land. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://www.tpl.org/parks-address-climate-change-report>
- A framework for recreation in Canada 2015 pathways to wellbeing*. Canadian Parks & Recreation Association. (2015). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from https://cpca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FrameworkForRecreationInCanada_2016wcitation.pdf
- Government of Canada, S. C. (n.d.). *Census profile, 2021 census of Population profile Table*. Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - St. Albert, City (CY) [Census subdivision], Alberta. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=St+Albert&DGUIDlist=2021A00054811062&GENDERlist=1%2C2%2C3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>
- Park People Covid-19 and parks: Highlights from our national surveys*. Park People. (2020, July 16). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://parkpeople.ca/blog/covid-19-and-parks-highlights-from-our-national-surveys/>
- Schottland, T. (2019, April 5). *Parks as a solution to climate change: Health & Wellness: Parks and Recreation Magazine: NRPA*. National Recreation and Park Association. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/april/parks-as-a-solution-to-climate-change/>