



Herald

neighbourhood plan

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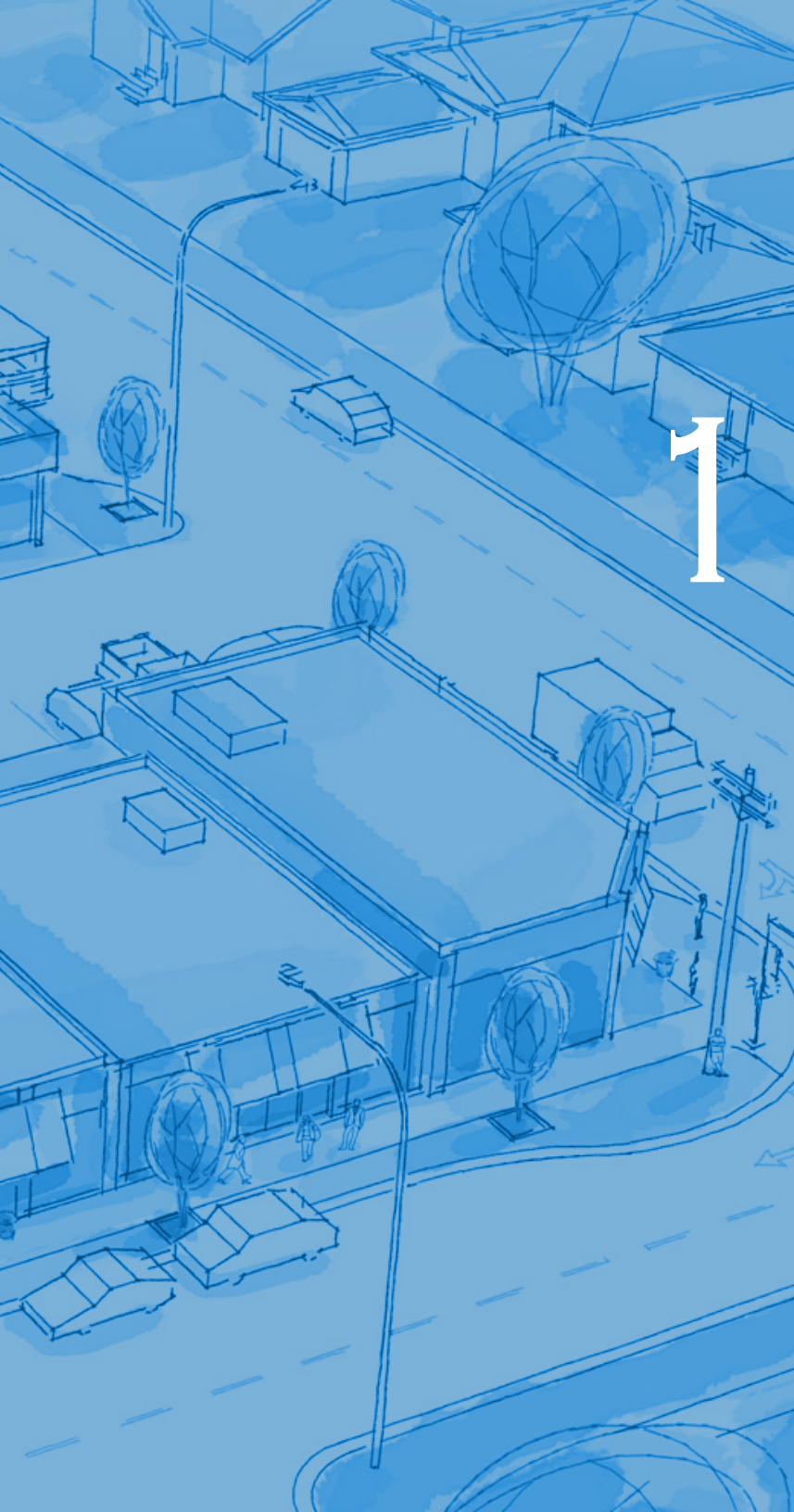
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overview



1.1 INTRODUCTION

As one of Medicine Hat's oldest neighbourhoods, Herald is unique in its character and history. Tree-lined boulevards and heritage homes make the neighbourhood beautiful and give it a unique character. Its proximity to the Downtown and South Saskatchewan River provides residents with a strong connection to the City Centre and one of our greatest natural amenities. The neighbourhood also benefits from nearby school sites, adjacent commercial developments that serve daily needs, and the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital a short distance away; making Herald a 'neighbourhood of choice' in Medicine Hat.

In recent years, the Herald neighbourhood has faced development pressures in the form of commercial businesses expanding from the Downtown, and adaptive reuse of homes as various types of

offices. Council has recognized that it is important to ensure that future redevelopment does not negatively impact the established neighbourhood character of Herald, but instead enhances the area and makes a positive contribution to the community as a whole.

Other considerations for the Herald area are:

- development opportunities and constraints of the South Saskatchewan riverbank;
- underutilized parks and commercial sites;
- significantly aged utilities; and
- transportation network enhancements.

1.2 PURPOSE

The Herald Neighbourhood Plan (the "Plan") is an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). An ARP is a statutory plan that guides the redevelopment, preservation and rehabilitation of existing neighbourhoods within a City. To meet the future challenges facing the Herald neighbourhood, the Plan provides a framework to guide redevelopment in the Plan Area over the long term. Neighbourhood objectives and policies will influence redevelopment decisions with the aim of achieving the neighbourhood vision set out in this Plan.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the legislative framework under which all municipalities in the Province of Alberta must operate. The authority for a municipality and a Council to prepare and adopt an ARP is provided through sections 634 and 635 of the MGA. This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the MGA. Although contemplated by section 635, a redevelopment levy is not proposed by this Plan.

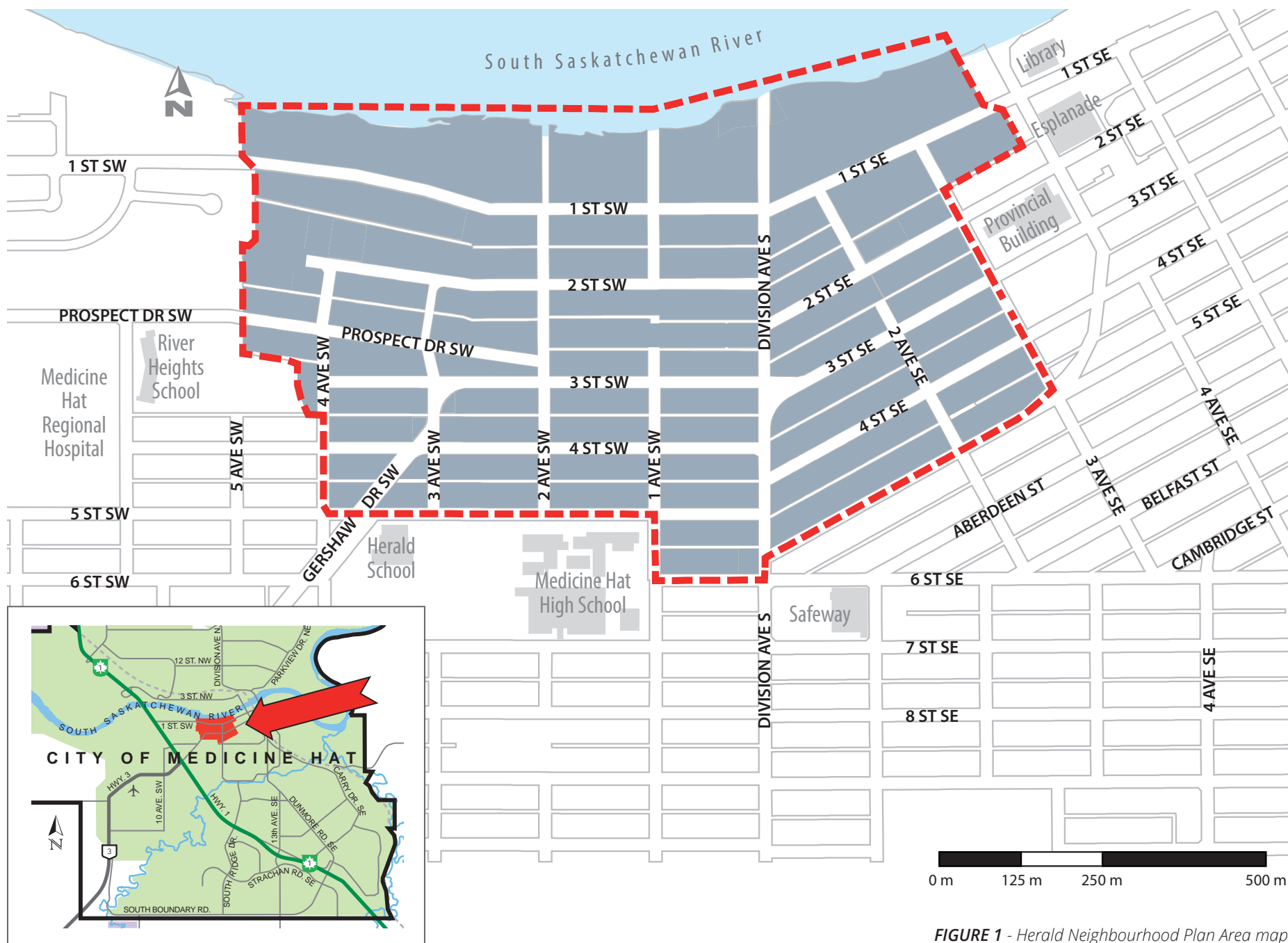


FIGURE 1 - Herald Neighbourhood Plan Area map.

1.3 PLAN AREA

The Plan Area consists of an established residential community of approximately 75 hectares as shown on *Figure 1– Herald Neighbourhood Plan Area map* (“Plan Area”). It can be described as being generally located:

- West of the Downtown;
- East of River Heights Elementary School and the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital;
- North of Herald Elementary School, Medicine Hat High School, and the Safeway grocery store; and
- South of the South Saskatchewan River.

Reverend James Herald

The Herald neighbourhood is named after Reverend James Herald, whose homestead covered a significant portion of land within the Plan Area. The homestead, which extended from the South Saskatchewan River to 6th Street SW, and from Division Avenue S to 4th Avenue SW, was subdivided after Herald's death in 1890 (*Figure 2*). Herald, born in Scotland in 1826, moved to Canada in 1856 with his wife and children. He arrived in Medicine Hat's early days in 1885 with his wife and ten children where he purchased a homestead just west of what is now known as Division Avenue S.



Rev. James Herald
circa 1885

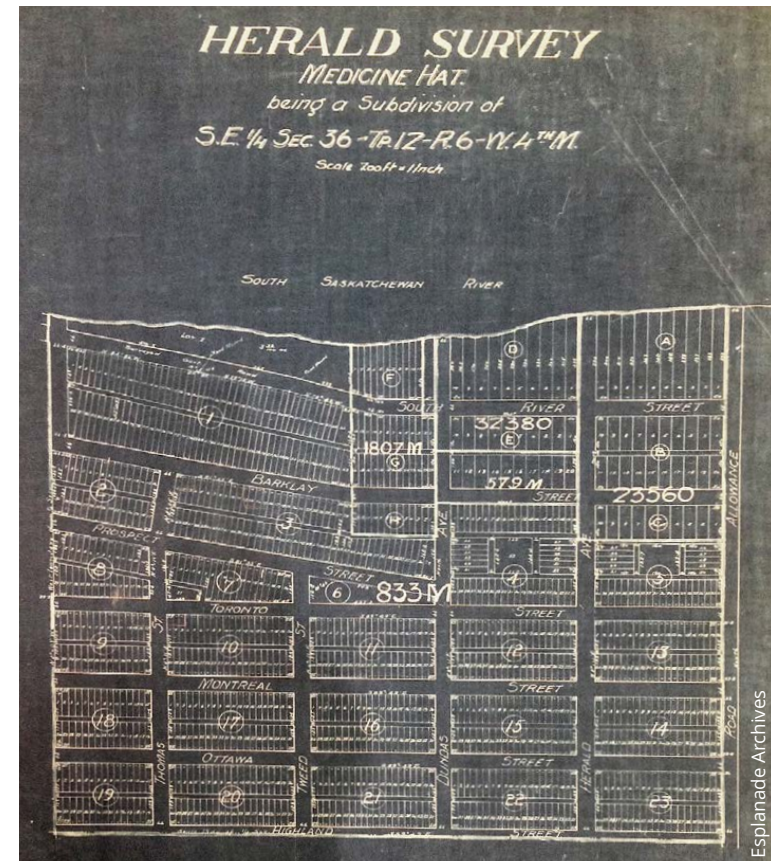


FIGURE 2 - Survey map of Herald homestead (1890)

Reverend Herald became one of the first ministers of St. John's Presbyterian Church from 1885 to 1890. During his time in Medicine Hat, Reverend Herald was very active in the community. He was the first chairman of the Hospital Board in January of 1889 and he was instrumental in the opening of the Reading Room, Medicine Hat's first Library, in 1887. He also advocated for shorter store hours, as stores were open at the time until 10 pm during the week, and midnight on Saturdays. Herald School, located adjacent to the Southwest edge of the Plan Area, is named after Reverend Herald.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The framework for the Plan consists of an overall vision for the neighbourhood, a series of high level objectives, neighbourhood concepts and policies to guide development. The vision and objectives were developed through a series of public engagement sessions and staff research. The neighbourhood concepts were created to help illustrate the redevelopment potential of the neighbourhood. Concepts include both easily attainable near term improvements and longer term 'blue-sky' concepts that would transform the neighbourhood. Complementing the concepts are detailed policies relating to each section of the Plan to ensure development proposals are consistent with the objectives, and thus, the vision for the Plan. The purpose of this framework is to set out the parameters under which redevelopment within the neighbourhood will occur. *Figure 3* provides a visual representation of the planning process utilized to establish the Plan framework.

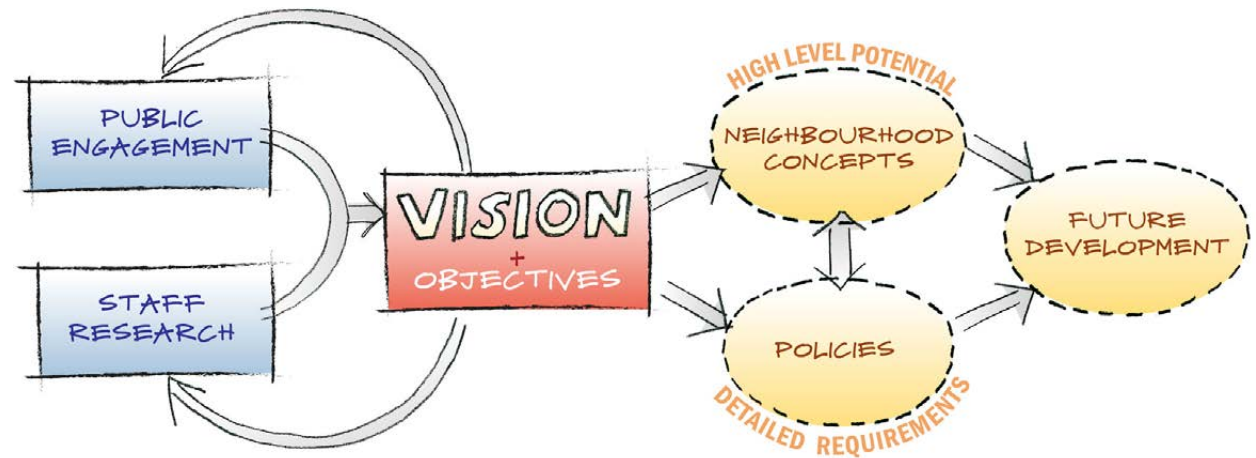


FIGURE 3 - Planning process.



2

vision and objectives

2.1 VISION

The vision for the Herald Neighbourhood Plan is:

A neighbourhood where the established pattern of land use, built form, and density are maintained and existing commercial and open space components are compatible and complementary with residential areas.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The Plan further defines its vision by establishing overarching objectives. These objectives are discussed below in a broad sense and will guide policy implementation in a manner that will achieve the vision of the plan.



A - Preserve neighbourhood character

Preserve neighbourhood character and heritage resources to reinforce community identity and historical integrity.



B - Establish a long range land use pattern

Provide a long range land use pattern to give certainty to residents about the future redevelopment of their neighbourhood.



C - Encourage vibrant and integrated commercial districts

Encourage the development of vibrant and integrated districts of commercial activity that offer unique, enjoyable and memorable experiences that foster sense of place.



D - Enhance parks and protect natural areas

Provide positive outdoor experiences by enhancing existing park space and protecting unique natural features to create accessible, safe and well connected open space amenities.



E - Strengthen the neighbourhood connection to the river

Take full advantage of an incredible natural asset by facilitating greater public access and increased recreation opportunities associated with the South Saskatchewan River Valley.



F - Foster healthy lifestyles through neighbourhood design

Provide a balanced and integrated transportation network that safely and efficiently accommodates vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movement throughout the built environment.



G - Strategic improvements to public infrastructure

Provide orderly and efficient infrastructure replacements and enhancements to ensure the sustainability of a neighbourhood with continually evolving needs.

2.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD DISTRICTS

The Plan Area consists of several distinct districts as depicted in *Figure 4*. The districts include: **Low Density Residential**, which comprises the majority of the neighbourhood; **Multi-unit Residential**, located next to the Downtown; **Neighbourhood Commercial**, of which there are two separate locations; and **Open Space**, which contains several natural areas and two parks. These districts do not represent zoning districts contained within the Land Use Bylaw. Instead, they are a future oriented guide for establishing a long-term land use pattern.

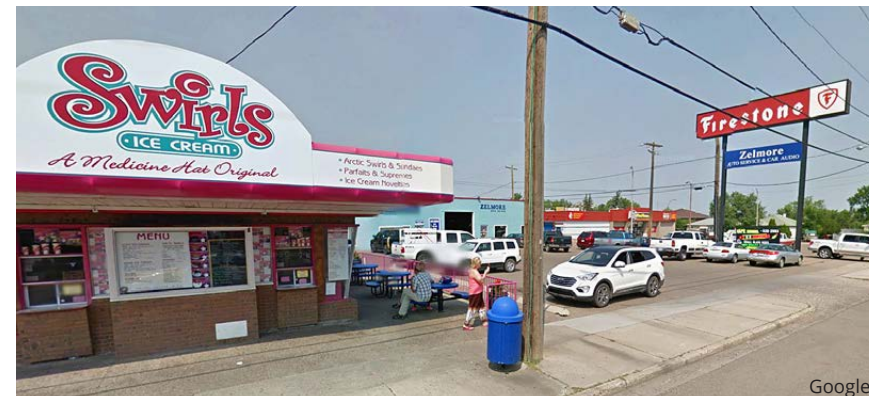
It is the intent of this Plan to reinforce these existing land use patterns by providing a series of concepts and policies for each district. Conceptual designs of improved commercial districts, opportunities for parks and open space, and complete street guidelines are included to demonstrate the redevelopment potential of the Herald neighbourhood. The policies identify specific requirements for redevelopment.



Low Density Residential District on 4th Street SW.

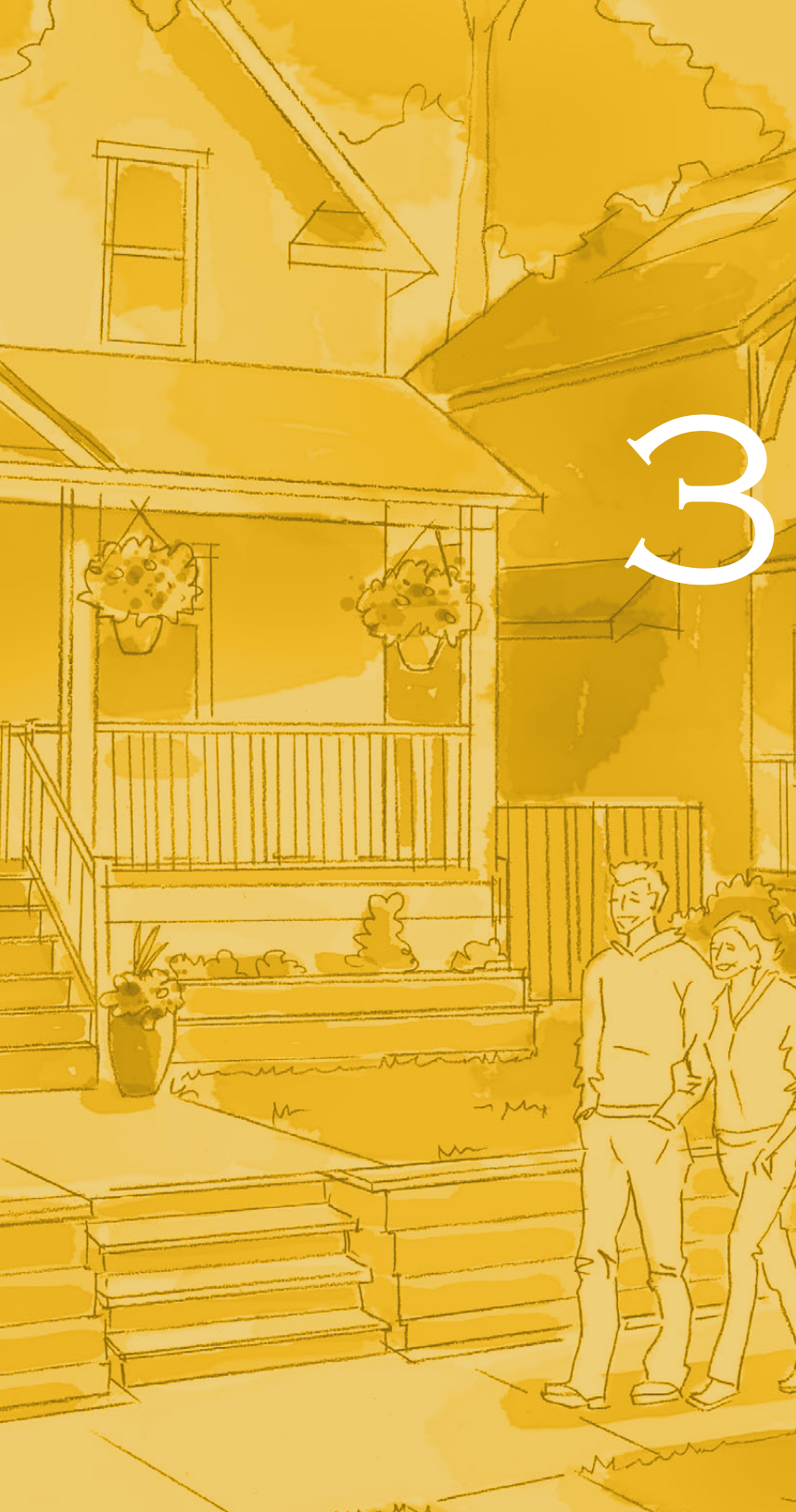


Multi-unit Residential District on 2nd Street SE.



Neighbourhood Commercial District on Division Avenue S.





3

low density residential



Green boulevard and mature street trees along 1st Street SE.



Single detached homes on Prospect Drive SW.



The former Earl Kitchener School on 4th Street SE (constructed 1916-17), is an example of an historic building re-purposed as a single residence.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE



c. 1912



2015

Herald's rich history is reflected in its many heritage buildings, such as the Cory Miller Residence located on 1st Street SE.

3.1 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Low Density Residential District contains some of the oldest residential homes in Medicine Hat. The predominant built form consists of a variety of single unit dwellings ranging from turn of the century estate homes, smaller wartime bungalows, and more conventional residential styles popular over the past several decades. Additionally, there are a handful of duplexes, secondary suites, and larger homes that have been converted into small apartments. This development pattern consisting of a variety of low density housing choices has contributed to making Herald a neighbourhood of choice for residents of all ages. Preserving this established pattern will be an important outcome of this Plan.

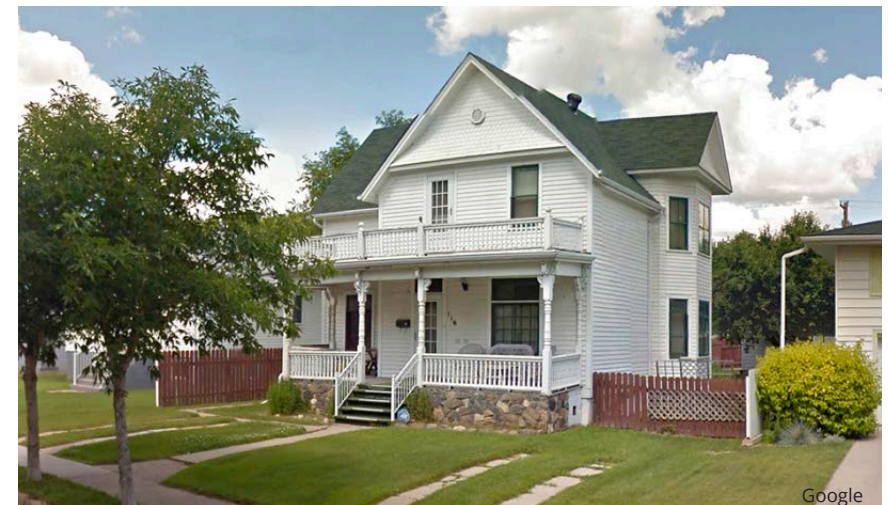
While single detached houses will remain as the primary dwelling type in the area, limited and contextual infill development, in the form of duplexes, secondary suites, and backyard suites, is encouraged provided it does not negatively impact the surrounding area.



A variety of architectural styles are seen on 4th Street SE.



Mature boulevard trees provide a canopy along 1st Street SW.



Separate sidewalks, street trees and a variety of housing types are seen on 5th Street SE.



LOW DENSITY STREETSCAPES

The traditional pattern of development, including grid patterned roadways, sidewalks separated from the street, grassed boulevards and mature street trees are some of the most sought after qualities of residential areas within Herald. Consistency in overall built forms and density, coupled with variety in architectural designs, make existing neighbourhoods unique and desirable to a wide range of residents.

FIGURE 5 - Conceptual design of low density residential streetscape..



policies

low-density residential district

Land use

- 3 (A) The Low Density Residential District shall remain residential and low density in character. The rezoning or redevelopment of sites to accommodate a higher intensity of residential land use (e.g. townhouses or apartments), or non-residential land uses (e.g. commercial), shall not be allowed.
- 3 (B) Existing residential dwellings shall not be repurposed or converted to non-residential land uses (e.g. offices or bed and breakfast). Home occupations may be allowed provided they are in accordance with the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw and do not impact the residential character of the building or streetscape.
- 3 (C) Residential dwellings that have been converted to offices are recognized and may continue to exist in their current form.
- 3 (D) The preservation and rehabilitation of existing homes is encouraged over infill development in order to maintain the character of the neighbourhood in its present form.
- 3 (E) The suitability for the addition of secondary suites or backyard suites shall be assessed at both the site level and neighbourhood scale to minimize the cumulative impacts. Planning considerations include, but are not limited to, increased density, parking, traffic, and servicing capacity.
- 3 (F) Redevelopment of the existing Multi-unit sites may occur but shall not increase the existing site density.



The architectural style of this infill development on Prospect Drive SW integrates well with the heritage homes in the neighbourhood.

Heritage

- 3 (G) New development shall be consistent with the proposed First Street South Municipal Historic Area Designation Bylaw No. 4212.
- 3 (H) Renovations to potential heritage resources should be done in a manner consistent with the original character of the building and site.
- 3 (I) Renovations to properties identified as 'places of interest' shall be circulated to the Heritage Resources Committee for comment.
- 3 (J) New construction or renovations adjacent to designated Municipal Heritage Resources or identified 'places of interests' should be designed to respect the character and integrity of the heritage resource.
- 3 (K) Heritage elements throughout the Plan Area should be recognized through plaques, concrete etchings, wayfinding installations, or other textural effects.

Urban Design and Landscaping

- 3 (L) All new development should have a front setback that is generally consistent with the established pattern along the block and shall be within the range established by the front setbacks of the abutting sites.
- 3 (M) In order to create and maintain a pedestrian friendly streetscape, vehicle access and parking should be provided from a lane, rather than a front or side street. On a site with no abutting lane, garages should be setback from the front façade of the dwelling.
- 3 (N) New development should minimize slope alterations (i.e. cutting and filling) in the site design.
- 3 (O) Landscaping that incorporates the principles of xeriscaping is encouraged. Trees and vegetative plantings are encouraged to be drought and chinook tolerant and suitable for the Medicine Hat climate.
- 3 (P) Existing healthy mature trees and landscaping on private land is encouraged to be retained and incorporated into new development.
- 3 (Q) Planting of trees beyond the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw is encouraged to increase tree cover.

Environmental

- 3 (R) Development proposed on Geophysical Risk Lands shall meet the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw. At the discretion of the Development Authority, development proposed on a property at risk, identified in the City of Medicine Hat Slope Setback Assessment Report, may require a Geotechnical study to support the proposal.
- 3 (S) Development on or near the Riparian Area of the South Saskatchewan River shall be consistent with applicable Provincial regulations.
- 3 (T) Development in proximity to abandoned gas wells shall be consistent with applicable Provincial regulations and the Land Use Bylaw.



4

multi-unit residential



Multi-unit residential building on 3rd Street SE with rear parking.



Townhouse development with integrated garages on 3rd Street SE.



Townhouse development near the Downtown core on 2nd Street SE.

4.1 MULTI-UNIT RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Multi-unit Residential District serves as an important transition in built form, density and land use from the Downtown to the Low Density Residential District. This area has evolved over time to offer higher density housing opportunities such as townhouses and low rise apartments. However, there are several key sites currently developed at low densities that are suitable for sensitive intensification. By strategically locating higher density housing in this district, redevelopment pressure for multi-unit development within the Low Density Residential District is relieved, the Downtown is supported with a denser population in close proximity, and further incursion of commercial development into the residential areas is reduced. The Multi-unit Residential District will provide an adequate stock of higher density housing; a vital component to creating a complete community.



Low rise apartment buildings on 4th Street SE.



Multi-unit development on 2nd Avenue SE.



*Aerial photo of 3rd Street /
3rd Avenue area (2015).*



Multi-unit residential in Southlands, an example of development with minimal front setback, varied facade and roofline, at-grade entrances, rear parking and attractive landscaping.

4.2 SENSITIVE RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

The Multi-unit Residential District will continue to evolve over time and future sensitive intensification of residential uses within this area is anticipated. Redevelopment consisting of low rise apartments and townhouses will continue to locate in the Multi-unit Residential District; providing housing alternatives and increased overall density to support the Downtown. (Figure 6).



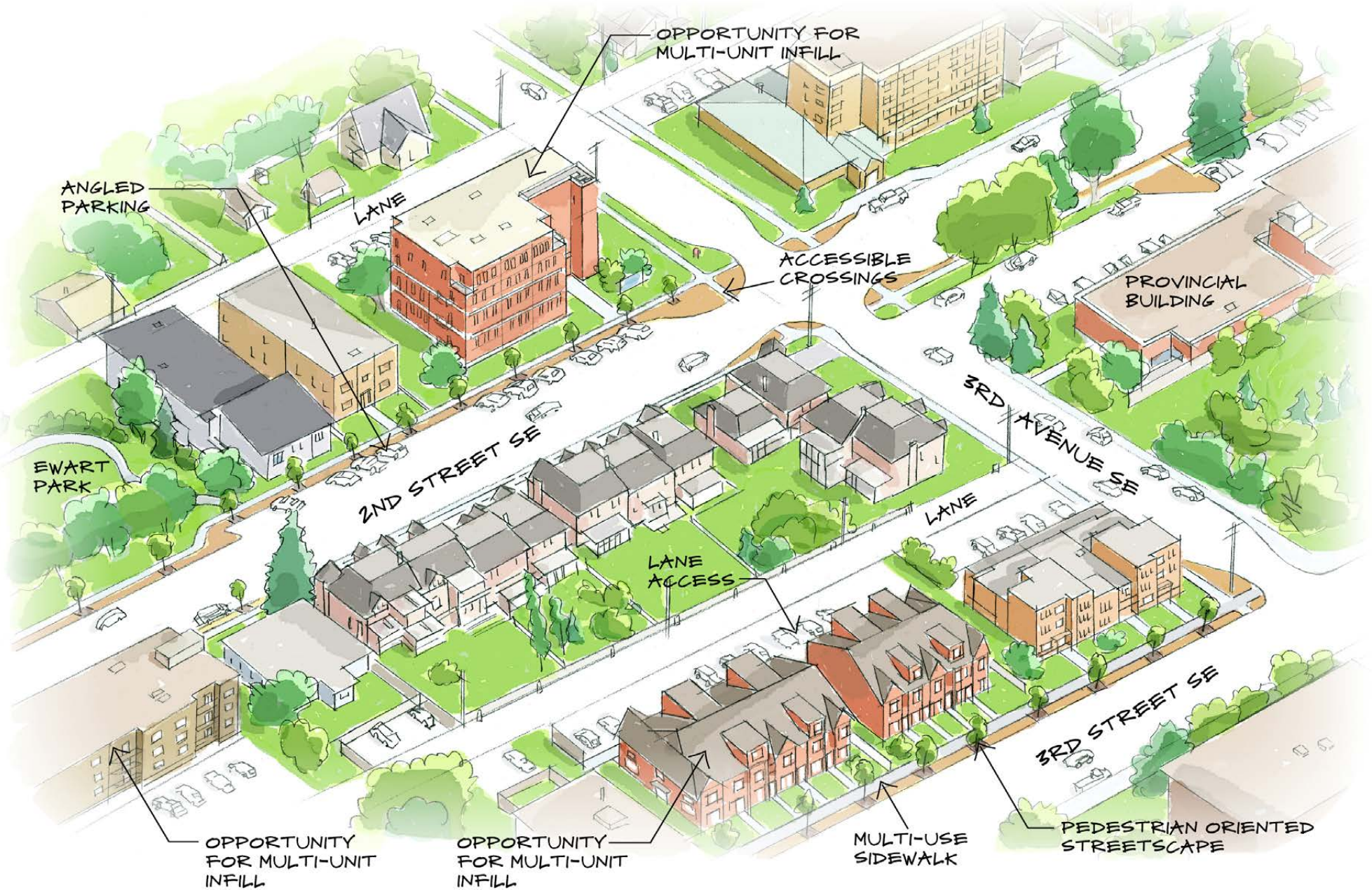


FIGURE 6 - Conceptual design of Multi-unit Residential District.



policies

multi-unit residential district

Land use

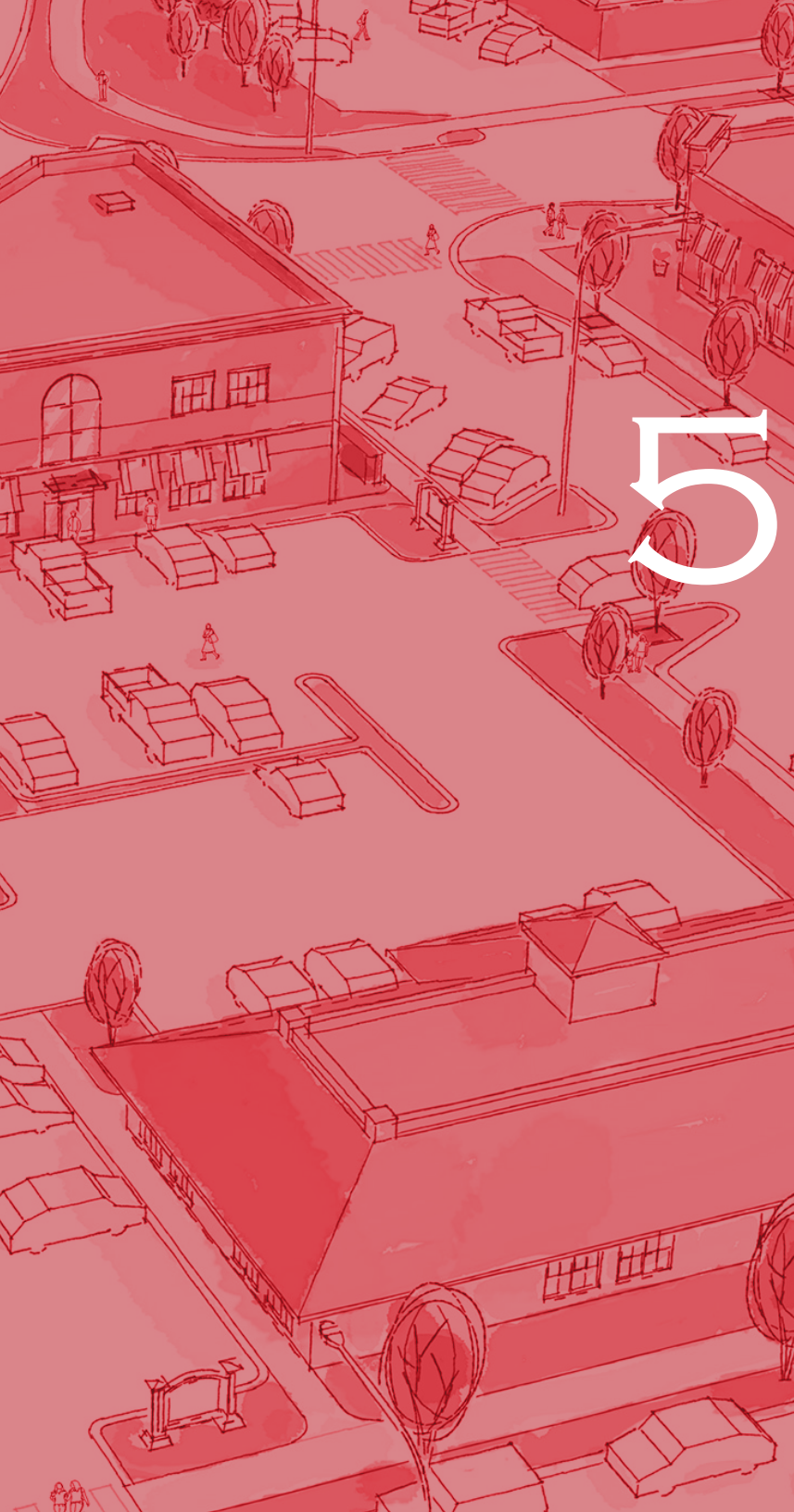
- 4 (A) The Multi-unit Residential District shall remain residential and medium density in character. The rezoning of sites to accommodate a lower intensity of residential land use (e.g. single detached house), or non-residential land uses (e.g. commercial), shall not be allowed.
- 4 (B) Existing residential dwellings shall not be repurposed or converted to non-residential land uses (e.g. offices, retail, or hotels). Home occupations may be allowed provided they are in accordance with the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw and do not impact the residential character of the building or streetscape.
- 4 (C) A range of housing built forms and ownership structure, including affordable housing, is encouraged to accommodate all segments of the community.
- 4 (D) The City should consider the implementation of incentives to encourage redevelopment and intensification in this district.

Urban design and landscaping

- 4 (E) On sites abutting the Low Density Residential District, new development should have a maximum building height of three stories.
- 4 (F) New development is encouraged to incorporate the following site design and architectural elements:
 - prominent main entrance facing the street with a walkway to a public sidewalk;

- grade oriented building design to reinforce the connection to the streetscape;
- building and façade stepbacks, where appropriate, to minimize shadowing on adjacent sites;
- recessed balconies and sensitive placement of windows overlooking adjacent sites;
- minimal front setbacks to create a strong connection to the street;
- variety and articulation of façades and roof lines; and
- accessible at-grade or gently sloped entrances.

- 4 (G) Underground off-street parking is encouraged and preferred. Where this is not feasible, off-street parking should be located behind the development, screened, and landscaped, with access from the rear lane to reduce the impacts on the streetscape and adjacent sites.
- 4 (H) Waste containers and utility service boxes should be screened and positioned to reduce the impacts on adjacent sites and the streetscape.
- 4 (I) Apartment developments are encouraged to provide secure and easily accessible bicycle storage.
- 4 (J) Landscaping that incorporates the principles of xeriscaping is encouraged. Trees and vegetative plantings are encouraged to be drought and chinook tolerant and suitable for the Medicine Hat climate.
- 4 (K) Existing healthy mature trees and landscaping on private land is encouraged to be retained and incorporated into new development.



5

neighbourhood commercial



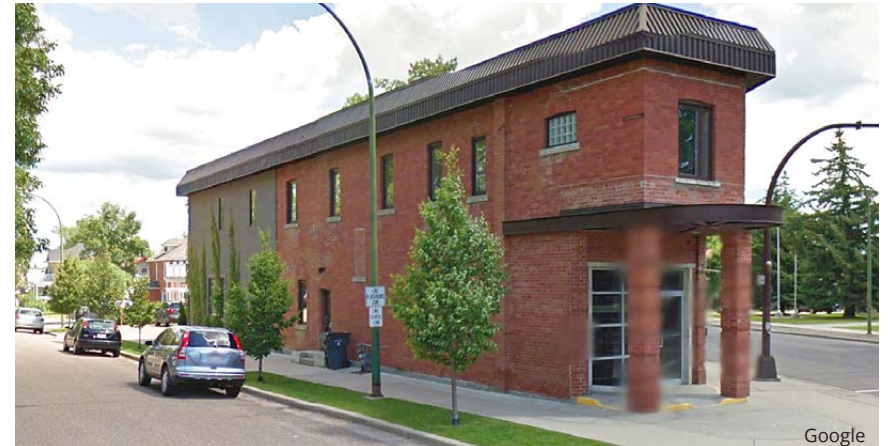
Aberdeen Street SE neighbourhood commercial.



Neighbourhood commercial site on 7th Street SW.



Neighbourhood commercial site on 8th Street NW.



Neighbourhood commercial site on 6th Street SE.

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Commercial land uses that are embedded within residential areas are an integral component of complete communities. They provide opportunities for residents to meet their daily needs by making the healthy choice of simply walking down the block to a neighbourhood store. Integrated residential and commercial uses allow residents to support local business by walking to the corner store for a carton of milk or loaf of bread; meeting friends and neighbours for an ice cream or a coffee; or visiting the family doctor's office. As an added benefit, jobs are potentially created for people that live in the neighbourhood.

Vibrant spaces, familiar faces

In order to maximize the potential of commercial areas as vibrant nodes, it is essential for these spaces to foster a 'sense of place.' The feeling of sense of place is evident to individuals when the built environment creates a unique, enjoyable and memorable experience. Important characteristics for achieving this in neighbourhood commercial districts include complementary and compatible neighbourhood businesses integrated with aesthetically pleasing private and public gathering places. Neighbourhood commercial districts can become community hubs of activity and strengthen the physical and emotional connections between residents and businesses to create sense of place.

Commercial district concepts

In the Plan Area, there are two existing neighbourhood commercial districts which are ideally situated to provide services to both the surrounding neighbourhood and city. Future development of these two districts is envisioned as moderate infill of small scale commercial development and the potential inclusion of above grade residential dwellings as part of a mixed use development. Ideally, businesses will cater first and foremost to the needs of the immediate neighbourhood to provide goods and services within easy access of nearby residents. While infill is proposed, it will be important that development respects the character and scale of the adjacent residential areas.

The Division Avenue (*Figure 7*) and Gershaw Drive (*Figure 8*) concepts illustrated in this section demonstrate two potential outcomes for how the commercial and transportation policies of this Plan could be implemented over the long term to transform these areas into vibrant and integrated neighbourhood commercial districts. The conceptual designs are examples of comprehensive approaches to site design in which the districts, despite consisting of individual properties, function as a whole. Both concepts retain the existing buildings, as well as show the potential for infill commercial development over underutilized areas and vacant lots. The concepts aim to increase interaction between the site, the street and the surrounding neighbourhood, while making the districts more pedestrian friendly. These concepts take into consideration the many overlapping principles and initiatives supported by the City such as smart growth, healthy communities, complete streets, community inclusion, walkability and alternative transportation.



Aerial photo of Division Avenue neighbourhood commercial district (2015).

DECADES OF DAIRY TREATS



1976



2015

Open seasonally for approximately 60 years, the ice cream shop on Division Avenue has had a variety of names including Dairy Queen and (currently) Swirls.

5.2

DIVISION AVENUE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Future development of this district will incorporate a comprehensive site design approach, and take advantage of infill opportunities, to provide integrated parking areas, improved pedestrian and traffic circulation, and new amenity and gathering spaces. By relocating multiple existing access points along Division Avenue, new on-street parking could be created. (Figure 7).



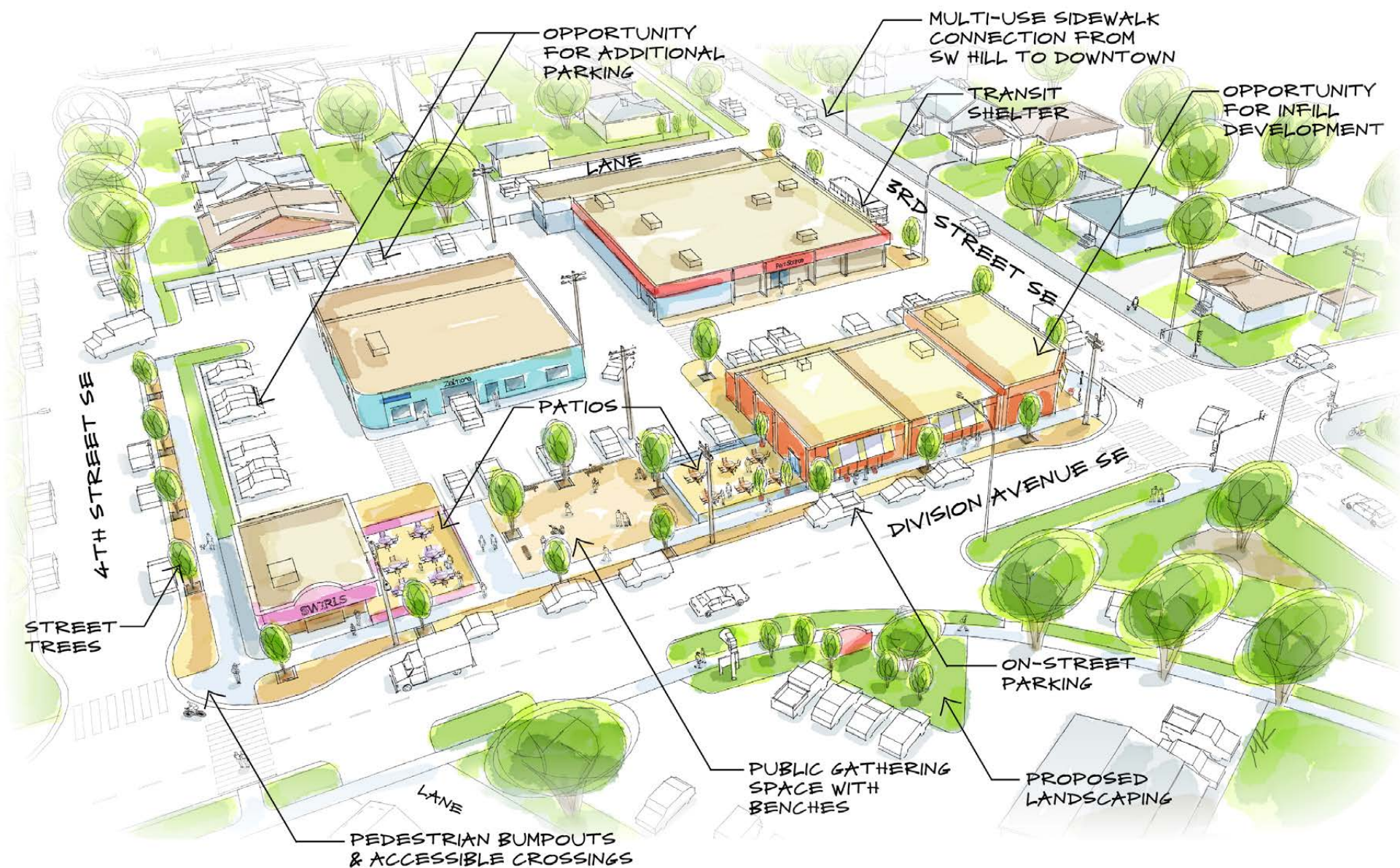


FIGURE 7 - Conceptual design of Division Avenue neighbourhood commercial district.

Aerial photo of Gershaw Drive neighbourhood commercial district (2015).



Currently underutilized space (parcels east and west of 3rd Avenue SW).



View of underutilized space from Gershaw Drive SW.

5.3

GERSHAW DRIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Gershaw Drive SW and the 3rd Street corridor will gradually evolve to be the primary west gateway into the Downtown; and as such there is great opportunity for businesses within the Plan Area to take advantage of their location on a major transportation corridor. The Gershaw Drive neighbourhood commercial district will benefit from high levels of vehicle and pedestrian traffic from the corridor, as well as local demand from surrounding residential and institutional uses. In addition to location and local demand, improved pedestrian connectivity and development of gathering spaces will be important ingredients for creating a vibrant neighbourhood commercial district. (Figure 8).



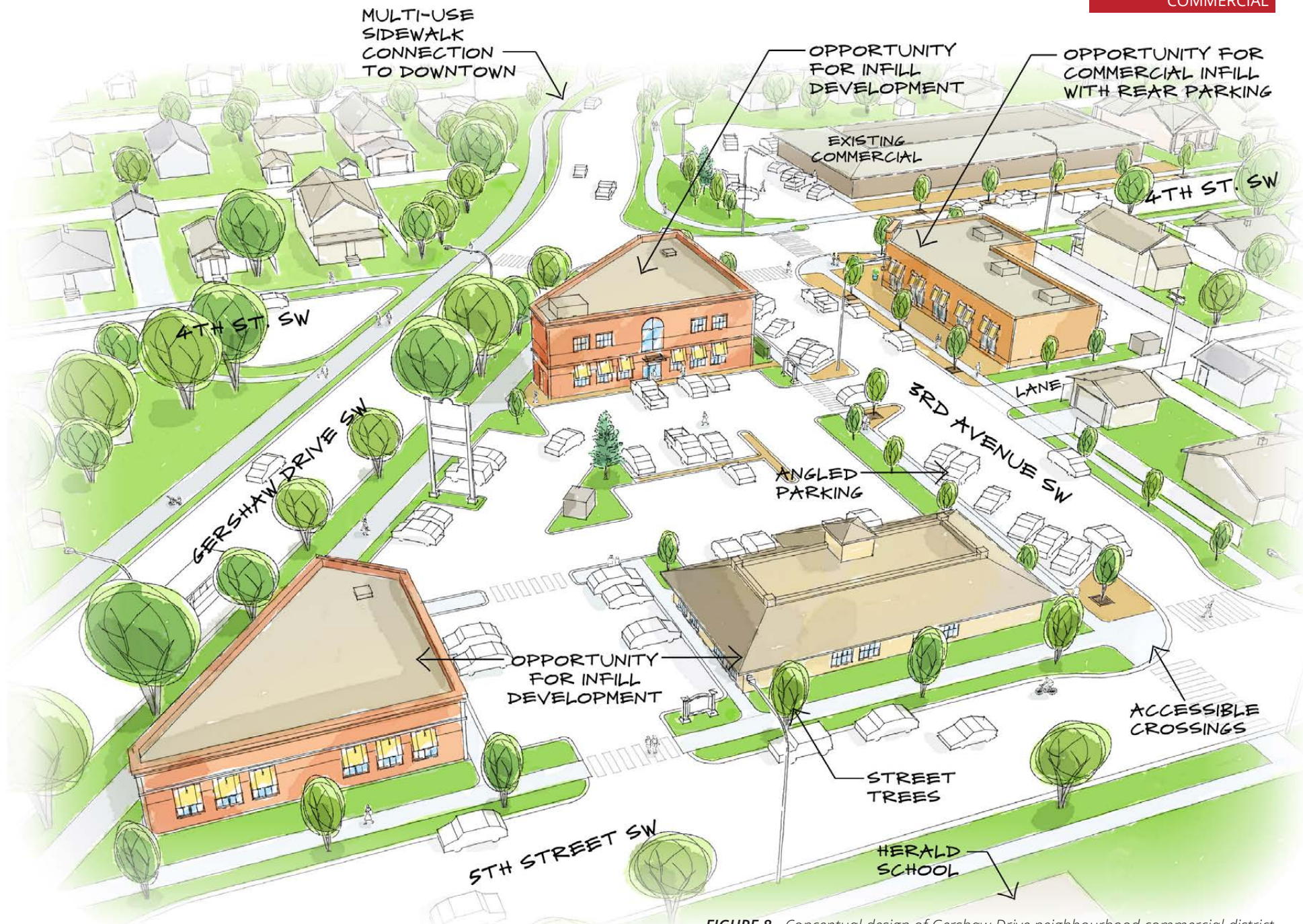


FIGURE 8 - Conceptual design of Gershaw Drive neighbourhood commercial district.

policies

neighbourhood commercial district

Land use

- 5 (A) Desirable commercial land uses include:
- a wide variety of businesses that provide goods and services for the neighbourhood such as retail, restaurants, health and professional offices; and
 - mixed-use development that incorporates at-grade commercial land uses with residential apartments on the 2nd and 3rd storey.
- 5 (B) Infill development of both neighbourhood commercial districts is encouraged provided it does not negatively impact adjacent residential areas.
- 5 (C) The neighbourhood commercial districts shall not be expanded beyond their identified area to maintain the viability of the Downtown and reduce the impact on residential areas.
- 5 (D) The Medicine Hat Lawn Bowling site (47 3rd Street SE) may be redeveloped to a higher use. Future redevelopment of the site as an enhanced recreation facility, a public park, mixed-use development, multi-unit residential development, or a comprehensively planned neighbourhood commercial development may be appropriate. Inclusion of the historical Civil Defense Siren into the site design is required.



Aerial view of Medicine Hat Lawn Bowling Club.

Urban design and landscaping

- 5 (E) Site design should be comprehensive and take the following into consideration:
- integrated parking areas across individual sites;
 - integrated pedestrian and vehicle circulation;
 - landscaping, waste and recyclables collection, on site storage, and all other functional components of commercial land uses.
- 5 (F) Buildings should be oriented to the street. Primary entrances are encouraged to be located adjacent to the public sidewalk and provide inviting entrances. Secondary entrances or pedestrian walkways are encouraged from parking areas.

- 5 (G) Building frontages should be inviting, attractive, and active by incorporating windows, window awnings, articulation of building façades and at-grade patios and gathering spaces in order to create visual interest and encourage pedestrian traffic.
- 5 (H) The massing and height of new buildings should not cause significant impacts on adjacent residential development. New buildings should minimize shadow impacts and ensure general compatibility with adjacent commercial and residential buildings.
- 5 (I) Local public art is encouraged to be incorporated into the site design.
- 5 (J) Vehicle access to off-street parking should be provided from rear lanes or flanking streets where appropriate. Vehicle access may be limited to one location to ensure the smallest possible amount of disruptions to pedestrians.
- 5 (K) Landscaping that incorporates the principles of xeriscaping is encouraged. Trees and vegetative plantings are encouraged to be drought and chinook tolerant and suitable for the Medicine Hat climate.
- 5 (L) All areas of a site not required for buildings, parking, or site servicing should be landscaped, or developed with patios, outdoor gathering space or other outdoor amenities. Existing healthy mature trees and landscaping are encouraged to be retained and incorporated into landscaping design.
- 5 (M) Neighbourhood commercial districts should be integrated as much as possible with adjacent open space, trails and sidewalks.
- 5 (N) Development proposals should incorporate the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).



Xeriscaping principles include planting drought-tolerant species which do not require irrigation, as shown in this commercial district.



6

open space

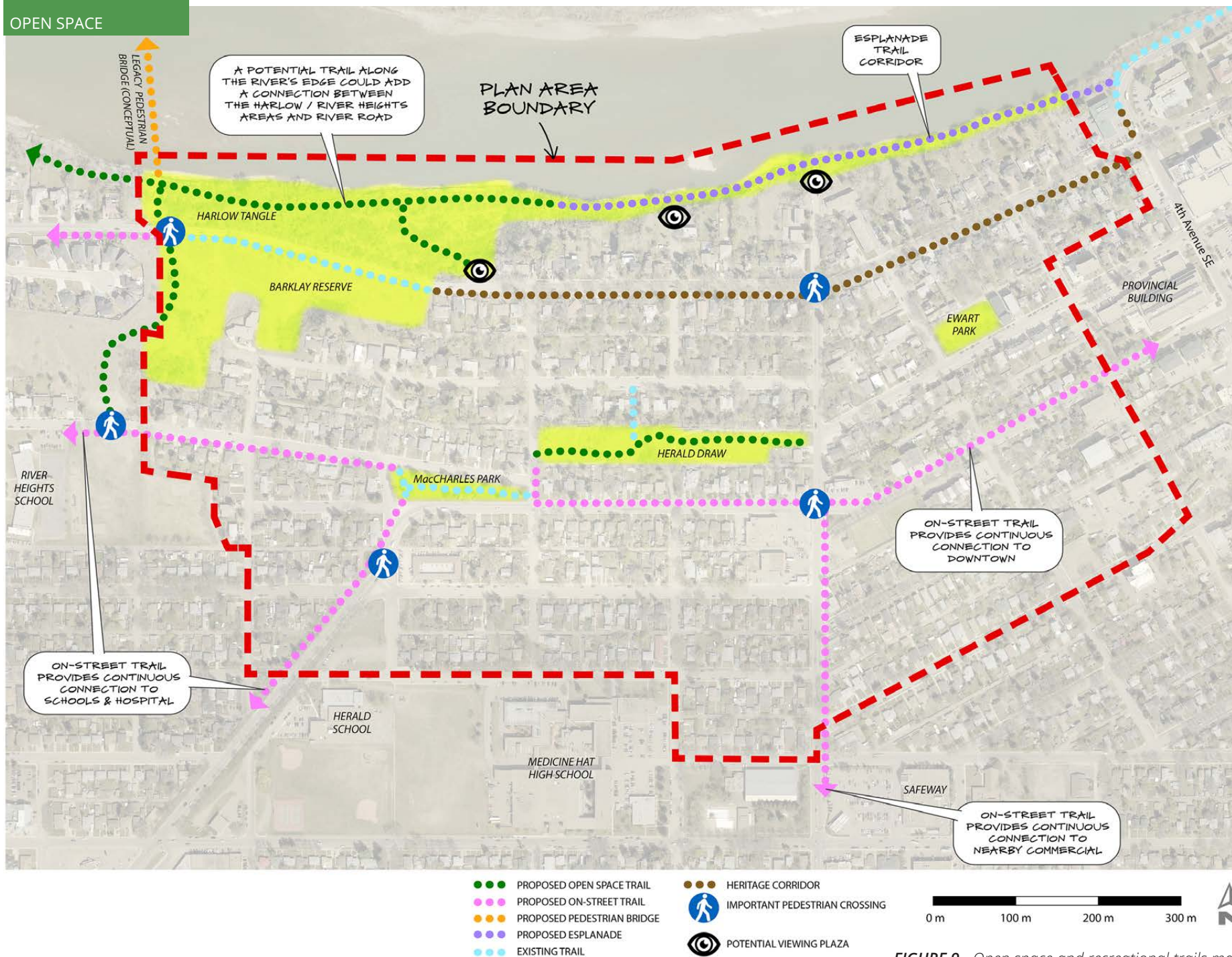


FIGURE 9 - Open space and recreational trails map

6.1 OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Parks and natural open spaces are important components of communities for many reasons. They provide passive and active recreation opportunities and increase the quality of life for residents. Park experiences can reduce stress, increase energy levels, and provide enjoyable spaces for people to gather. The City aims to provide these experiences through creating and maintaining attractive, safe and well connected parks and natural areas for present and future generations. In existing neighbourhoods it is important to consider all options for providing additional open space amenities by protecting environmentally sensitive lands, improving connectivity by linking leisure trails with pedestrian and bicycle corridors, and ensuring that redevelopment processes consider the enhancement of existing parks and the protection of unique natural features.



View of South Saskatchewan River from informal parking area on the north side of 1st Street SW



Barklay Reserve is a large natural space with significant slopes on the west side of the Herald Plan Area.



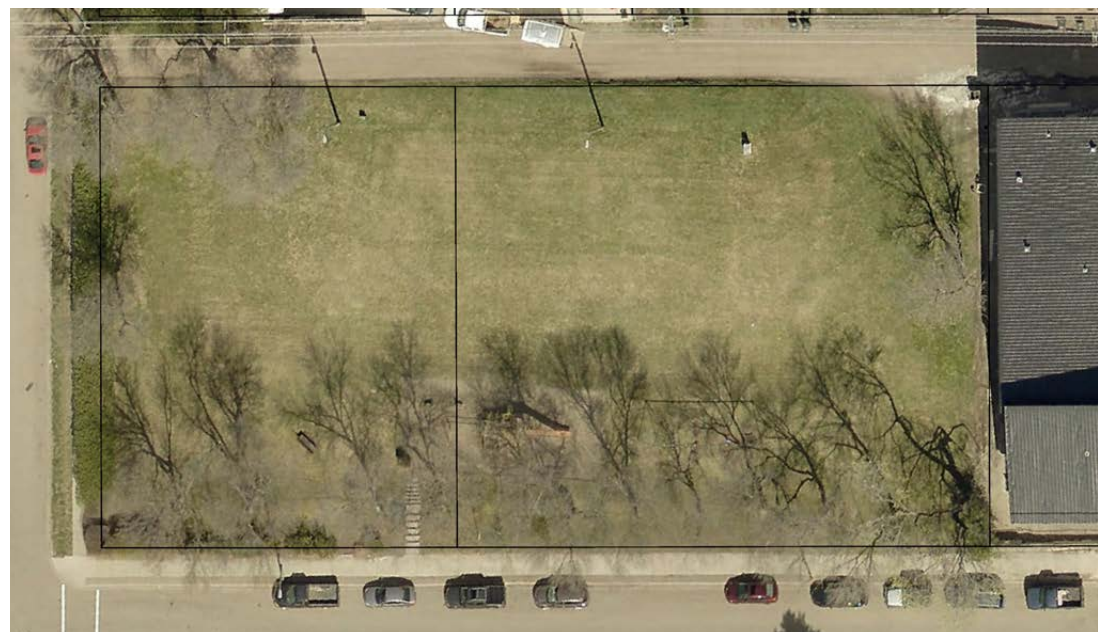
Trail in MacCharles Park.



Example of flood-tolerant trail adjacent to a waterway.

6.2 EWART PARK

Ewart Park is a small rectangular manicured park consisting of a playground and swing set, benches, and a flat grassed area. There are numerous mature trees planted along 2nd Street SE and 2nd Ave SE, and shrubs define the park boundary on 2nd Ave SE and a portion of 2nd Street SE. A moderate slope exists between 2nd Street SE and the park which currently creates some challenges in accessibility. The park has evolved over time; as it was previously developed with an outdoor rink. Ewart Park is already a great amenity for residents of the neighbourhood; however, with some minor enhancements the park could have a much wider appeal and an increase in usage.



Aerial photo of Ewart Park (2015).

Ewart Park Conceptual Improvements



The City may explore the viability of enhancing the park to again offer more significant amenities such as a picnic shelter, gathering spaces, hard surfaced plazas, benches, and multi-use trails. Incorporating a multi-use trail with a gentle slope through the park would increase the accessibility and open up the park to all segments of the community. A relocation of the playground equipment could create a more defined grass activity area and the potential for the restoration of the outdoor rink. The general slope of the park creates an opportunity for a Bioretention Swale in the northern corner that would allow for infiltration of storm water. (Figure 10).



Views of Ewart Park. Several multi-unit residential developments are in the immediate vicinity of the park



FIGURE 10 - Conceptual design of improved Ewart Park.

6.3 MacCHARLES PARK

MacCharles Park has a long narrow irregular shape and offers manicured grass, leisure trail connections, and a green buffer for the benefit of the adjacent residential development. The future intersection improvements to Gershaw Drive SW may offer opportunities to expand the SW portion of the park; providing additional trail connectivity and a green strip that would buffer the impacts of the major roadway. Development of a gathering plaza highlighting existing features and additional public art pieces along the trails could enhance the theme of the park. Installation of a hedge and/or a low wall would improve park safety by providing separation between the park and the 3rd Street corridor.

The park contains several large Yun Shan “Dragon Spruce” trees; notable heritage elements that should be preserved. These trees are native to western China and typically do not grow in Medicine Hat’s tree hardiness zone and are designated as Heritage Trees in the Provincial registry. One of the main focal points of the park is the Luke Lindoe Mosaic Ceramic Mural created in 1961 to commemorate Dr. Donald “Dan” MacCharles, a local medical doctor who made many valuable contributions to the community. In the MacCharles Park concept, a plaza is built around the mural and becomes an intersection point of all the trails that run through the area.



Trail winding through MacCharles Park.



Aerial photo of MacCharles Park (2015).

MacCharles Park Conceptual Improvements



The potential exists to add more trail connectivity to MacCharles Park by adding a green strip next to Gershaw Drive SW and including multi-purpose sidewalks along Prospect Drive SW and 3rd Street SW. The addition of a plaza would act as a community gathering space, with the existing mosaic ceramic mural as a centrepiece. (Figures 11 and 12).

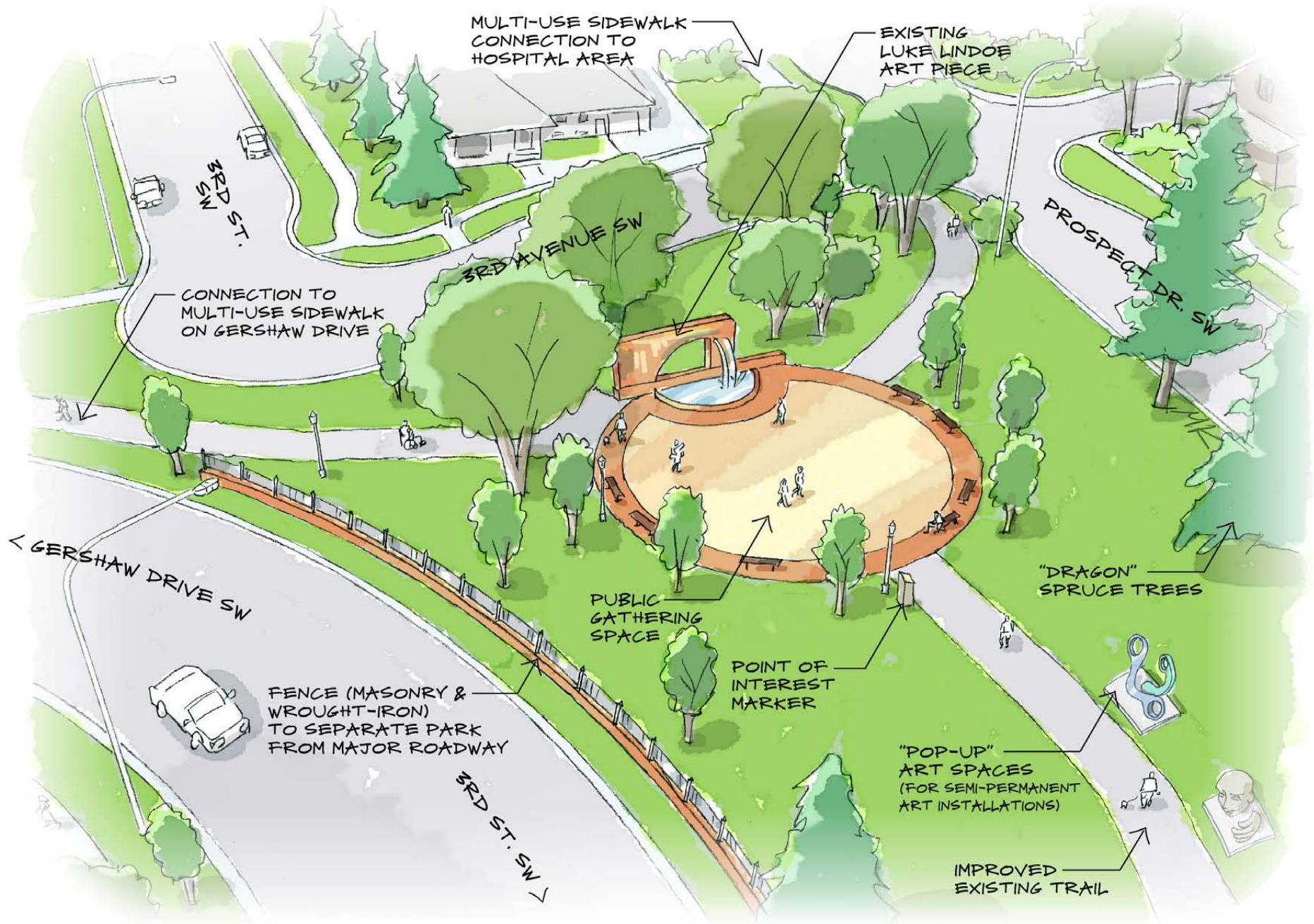


FIGURE 11 - Conceptual design of improved MacCharles Park viewed from southeast.

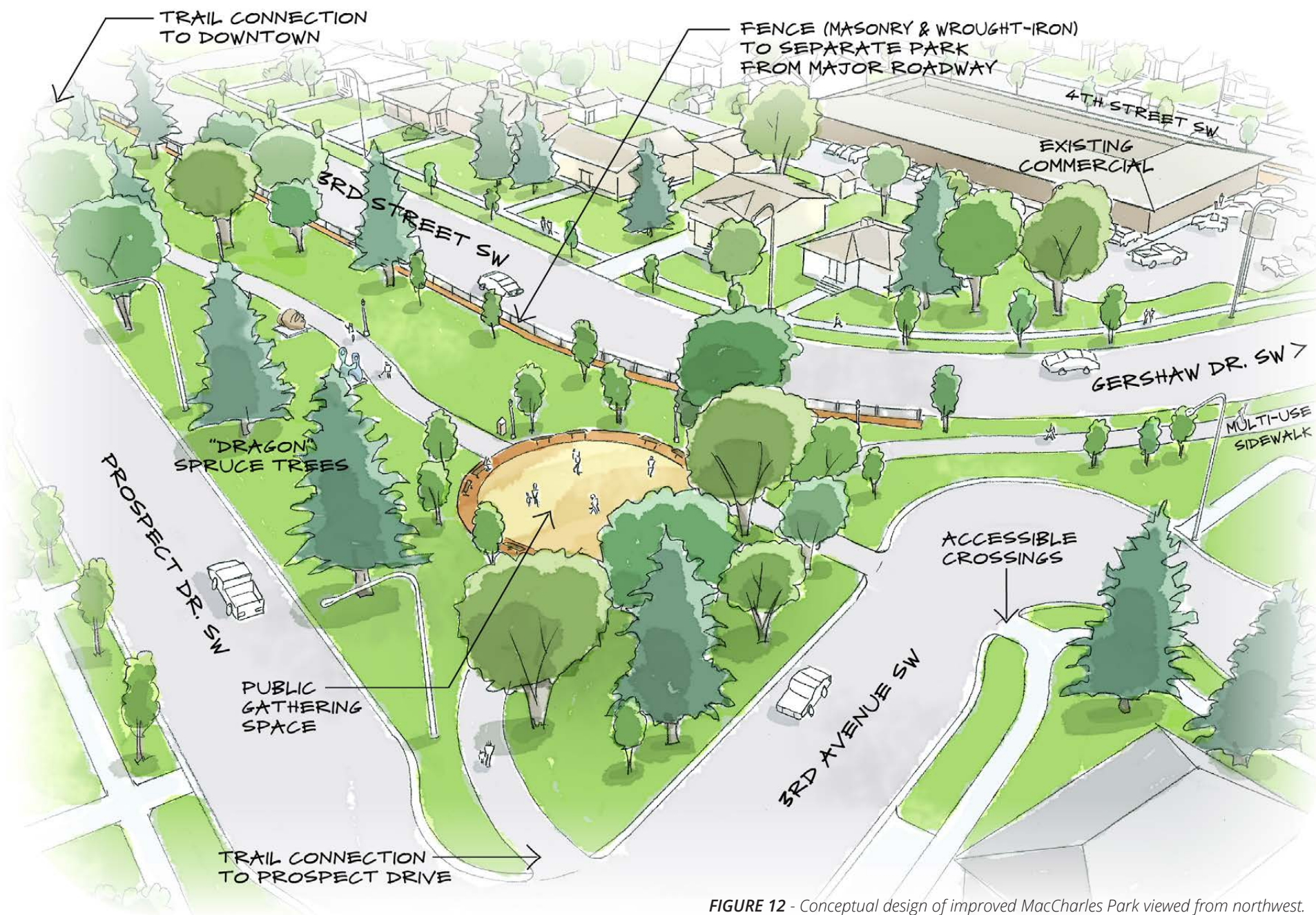


FIGURE 12 - Conceptual design of improved MacCharles Park viewed from northwest.

Park full of art

Correlating with the Luke Lindoe mosaic and the existing metal sculpture created by Clay Ellis, additional concrete pads along the trail could act as “pop-up” art spaces, allowing local sculptors and visual arts students to display their outdoor artwork on a term basis.



Luke Lindoe Mosaic (1961) commemorating Dr. MacCharles.



Clay Ellis sculpture (donated 1985). 3rd Street SW is seen on the right.

HAT DRAGONS



© rduta / Flickr / CC-BY-SA-3.0



Huluhai, Sichuan, China

MacCharles Park, Medicine Hat

The Picea asperata (or Dragon Spruce) is native to western China and may grow to 40m tall with a trunk diameter of 1.5m. Uncharacteristically, three of these species were planted in MacCharles Park at some point in the past. Although the species is said to be hardy to zone 6, they have thrived in the harsher (zone 4b) prairie climate of Medicine Hat.

6.4 RIVER VALLEY

Natural areas are an important component of a healthy environment and community. They provide many benefits including habitat for wildlife and native plant species; a healthy watershed with natural drainage corridors and storm water infiltration; and trees and vegetation which improve air quality. In addition to the environmental benefits, natural areas enhance the quality of life for residents by providing respite from urban areas and passive recreation opportunities. By protecting and making natural areas accessible within the neighbourhood, children will continue to have opportunities to connect with nature, develop an understanding of the environment, and nurture a lifelong enjoyment of being active in the outdoors.

The natural areas of Herald are anchored around the undeveloped northwestern slope of the river valley that generally extends from Prospect Drive SW to the South Saskatchewan River. The open space concept envisions the long-term protection of this natural area and the development of a connection to the river valley through an expanded network of trails, viewing points, plazas, and a pedestrian bridge. To ensure the integrity of the natural areas are protected, the City will need to identify and designate this land as Environmental Reserve. The City currently owns the majority of the natural areas within the river valley; however, many of the properties along the north side of 1st Street South extend to the legal bank of the South Saskatchewan River. The City should pursue the acquisition of the Riparian Area currently located on private land as opportunities arise.



Natural sloped area, as viewed from Prospect Drive SW.



River's edge, 300 block of 1st Street SE.



"Harlow Tangle", as viewed from from informal parking area on 1st Street SW

Herald Draw

The Herald Draw is a 1.5 ha 'semi-natural' area located between 2nd and 3rd Street SW (see *Figure 9*). This area has remained undeveloped for decades as Herald Avenue (1st Avenue SW) was never built. Today, it is utilized by residents in the area as a passive park. A relatively steep draw bisects the area and informal trails on either side of the draw meet in its centre to provide pedestrian access to 2nd Street SW. There are flattened portions on the western side of the draw, while the eastern half is predominantly sloped. At the eastern half there is a small set of wooden stairs which lead to a tetherball game area and a bocce ball pit. In established neighbourhoods, all opportunities

to preserve parks and natural areas should be realized to attain a desirable distribution of open space. By formally protecting the Herald Draw as a permanent natural area, through designation as an Environmental Reserve, this Plan creates certainty for residents who live near and enjoy this pocket of open space.



Various views of open space between 2nd and 3rd Street SW. As well as acting as a passive park, "Herald Draw" also provides lane access to several residences.

Leisure trails

Trail networks integrated into residential neighbourhoods are essential components of a healthy community. They provide pedestrian and cycling commuter corridors which promote alternative transportation and reduce traffic. The leisure trail network concept incorporates:

- improvements to existing trails;
- opportunities for future leisure trails projects;
- opportunities for future multi-use sidewalks on major transportation corridors; and
- a robust network of sidewalks.

Pedestrian connections between on-street and off-street trails and sidewalks link residents with:

- commercial districts in and around the Plan Area;
- the Downtown and other neighbourhoods;
- MacCharles Park, Ewart Park, and existing natural areas; and,
- the South Saskatchewan River Valley.

Over the long term, a network of leisure trails and sidewalks will contribute to overall pedestrian connectivity. The Plan also identifies the opportunity for two ‘visionary’ projects: the Esplanade Trail Corridor (*Figure 14*) and the Legacy Pedestrian Bridge (*Figure 15* and *Figure 16*). The Esplanade Trail Corridor and Legacy Pedestrian Bridge have the potential to form the core of a city wide trail network with a complete ‘east-west corridor’ from Echo Dale to Strathcona Park and a north-south link between both sides of the river (*Figure 13* and *Figure 15*). Together, this robust network of leisure trails and sidewalks have the ability to connect the inner city neighbourhoods of Herald, Harlow, River Heights, Riverside, the SE/SW Hill, the River Flats and the Downtown; as

well as create pedestrian connections to the amenities surrounding the Herald neighbourhood including the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, commercial areas, schools, parks and the River Valley.

Feasibility

Any potential future open space concept projects identified in this Plan will require further study, from both an engineering and financial perspective, to determine their viability. In addition to the technical considerations, a public consultation process will be required to ensure the community is supportive of the proposals.

Viewing plazas

Division Avenue S, 1st Avenue SW, and a small existing parking area along 1st Street SW terminate near the riparian areas of the South Saskatchewan River. There is a potential for developing these roadway ‘stubs’ as formalized public amenities. The development of these potential ‘points of interest’ or ‘viewing plazas’ with benches, bike racks, safety railings, wayfinding and landscaping, as well as potential connections to the Esplanade Trail Corridor, are examples of minimal public investment that can provide significant public benefit.



View of river from roadway “stub” at Division Avenue S.

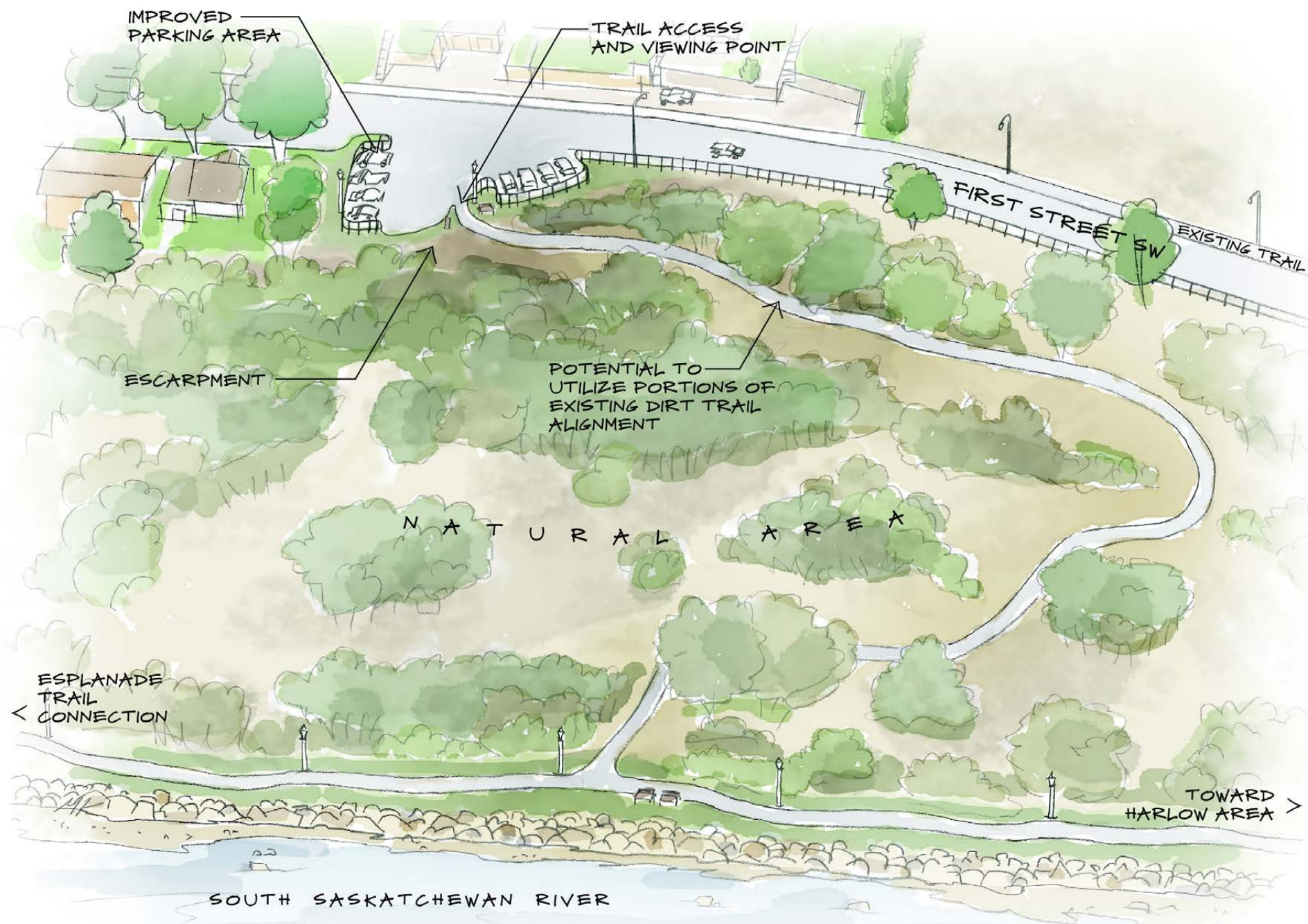


FIGURE 13 - Conceptual design of viewing plaza and trail connection.



An opportunity exists to connect a trail near the river's edge in the shown "Harlow Tangle" to an "Esplanade" trail, which could continue east to Downtown.



Gracey Stinson

Example of flood-tolerant trail adjacent to a body of water.



South Saskatchewan River bank (view towards Downtown).

Esplanade trail corridor



Developed as either a low impact trail, or a more substantially engineered 'Esplanade', this trail would close a major gap in the existing trail network between Harlow and Downtown. In addition to the benefits of expanding leisure trail connectivity, adding a public amenity, and connecting residents with the river valley, the Esplanade Trail Corridor (figure 14) would offer opportunities for mitigation of the impacts of erosion on the southern bank of the river due to flood events and the normal, long-continued action of water flow.



Esplanade Trail corridor (conceptual).



FIGURE 14 - Conceptual design of Esplanade Trail corridor.

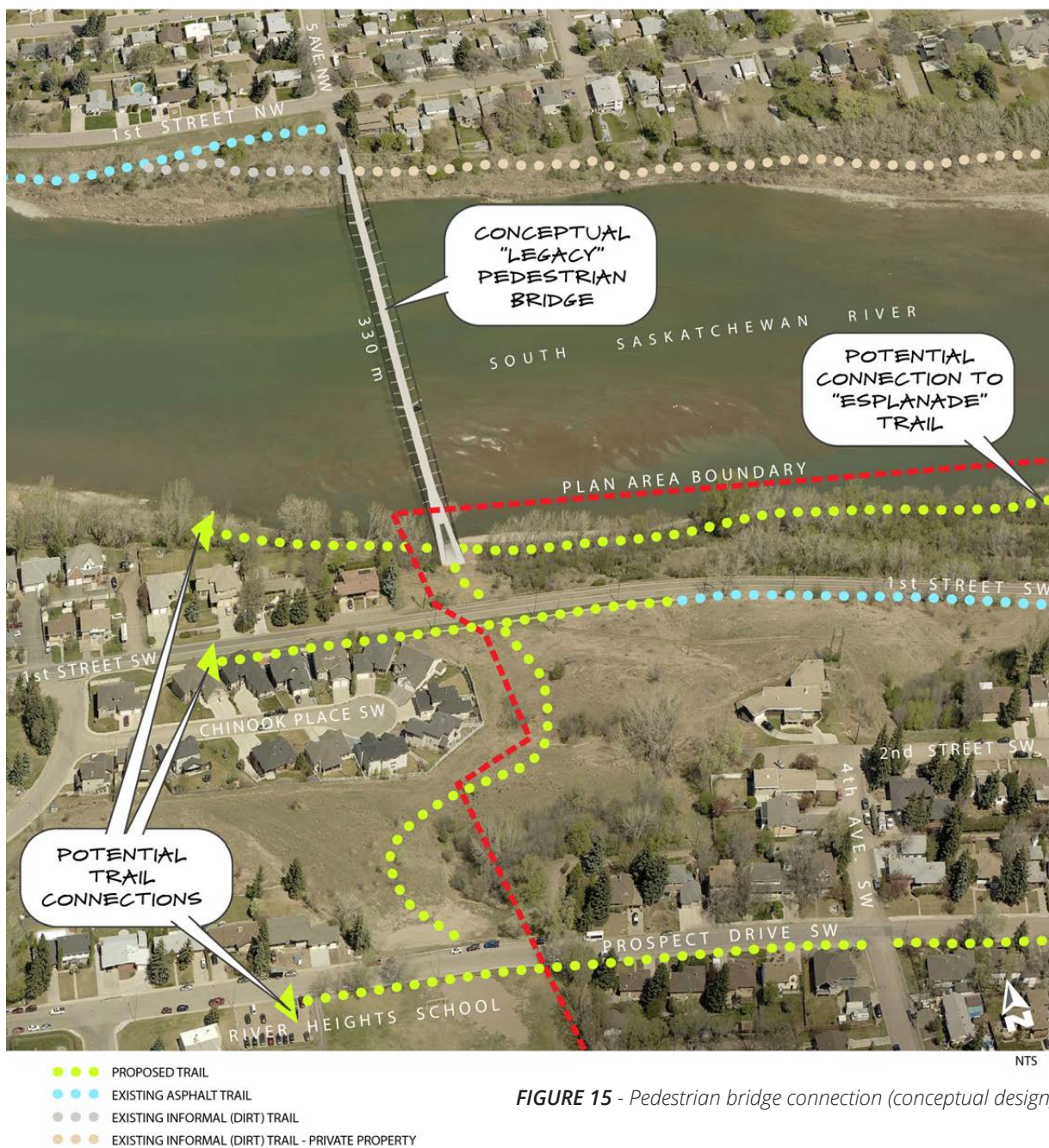


FIGURE 15 - Pedestrian bridge connection (conceptual design).



South Saskatchewan River, looking northwest.



Legacy pedestrian bridge

A potential future pedestrian bridge could connect the edge of the Herald and Harlow neighbourhoods on the south side of the South Saskatchewan River with Riverside neighbourhood along the north side of the river. Currently, the river creates a significant barrier to pedestrian movement as there are limited options for pedestrians to cross. Linking up with existing and potential future trails on either side of the river in a north-south direction would encourage and facilitate use of the City's trail network. The bridge would provide an outstanding public amenity to the entire City and an important component to future healthy living in Medicine Hat. (Figures 15 and 16).

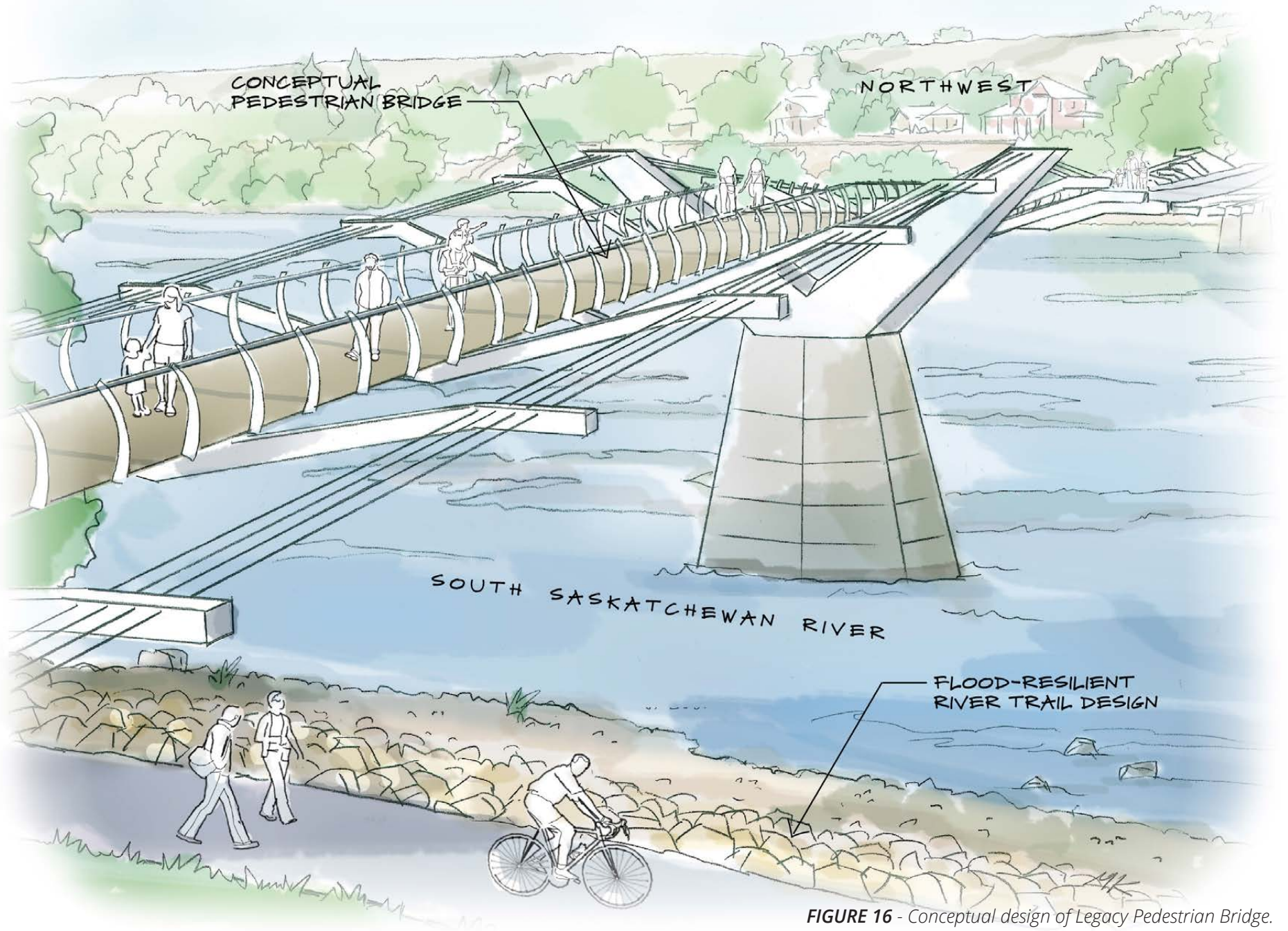


FIGURE 16 - Conceptual design of Legacy Pedestrian Bridge.



policies

open space district

General

6 (A) Parks and open space should be designed, wherever feasible, to:

- be accessible to people of all ages and abilities;
- meet community needs by providing age appropriate park amenities for residents in the area;
- accommodate the anticipated level of activity and amount of use in a manner which complements the character of the neighbourhood;
- be adaptable for year-round use;
- encourage active transportation such as walking and cycling;
- utilize trees and vegetative plantings that are drought and chinook tolerant and suitable for the Medicine Hat climate; and
- incorporate the principles of xeriscaping into landscape design.

Parks

6 (B) Parks should be integrated with the trail network.

6 (C) The existing parks (Ewart and MacCharles) should be designated as Municipal Reserve.

6 (D) Further development of MacCharles Park should give consideration to:

- preservation and enhancement of existing trees and vegetation;

- improvements to the existing trail network;
- development of a hard surfaced plaza gathering area;
- potential of expanding the park to include any remnant lands from improvements to the intersections at Gershaw Drive SW;
- additional public art, vendor opportunities, seasonal activities, and 'pop up' park events;
- a fence, landscaping, or other barrier between the park and 3rd Street in order to increase safety and buffer the impacts of the roadway on the park; and
- incorporating wayfinding at the trail junction.

6 (E) Further development of Ewart Park should give consideration to:

- incorporating the different grades into the design of the park;
- the safety and visibility of users within the park;
- the interface between the park and adjacent development; and
- opportunities for programming in the grass activity area.

6 (F) All parks should incorporate adequate:

- recycling and trash receptacles to help maintain a visually appealing and clean public space; and
- lighting and visibility from the street to create a more inviting and safer public space.

River valley

- 6 (G) The City should pursue, as opportunities become available, the acquisition and designation as Environmental Reserve of any privately owned land that is located between the legal bank of the South Saskatchewan River and a 10 m setback from the Top of the Escarpment to protect the Riparian Area and natural vegetation on the slope.
- 6 (H) The City shall pursue the designation of the undeveloped natural areas (Harlow Tangle, Barklay Reserve, and Herald Draw), as identified in *Figure 9*, as Environmental Reserve. A future study to determine the boundaries of each area to be designated as Environmental Reserve is required.
- 6 (I) The City may undertake a study to explore options for mitigating erosion and creating slope stability along the bank of the South Saskatchewan River.

Open space trail network

- 6 (J) The City should look to establish the network of trails as identified in *Figure 9*. Consideration should be given to:
 - the potential of developing a pedestrian bridge over the South Saskatchewan River;
 - the potential of developing the Esplanade Trail Corridor adjacent to the South Saskatchewan River;
 - the potential of developing viewing plazas at the parking area along 1st Street SW and the termination of Division Ave S and 1st Ave SW (*Figure 13*);
 - the condition and design of existing trails;
 - opportunities for improved landscaping adjacent to leisure trails;
 - opportunities for civic or heritage recognition in the naming of trails, natural areas, and the pedestrian bridge;
 - wayfinding installations; and
 - future connections to neighbourhoods outside of the Plan Area.



public infrastructure

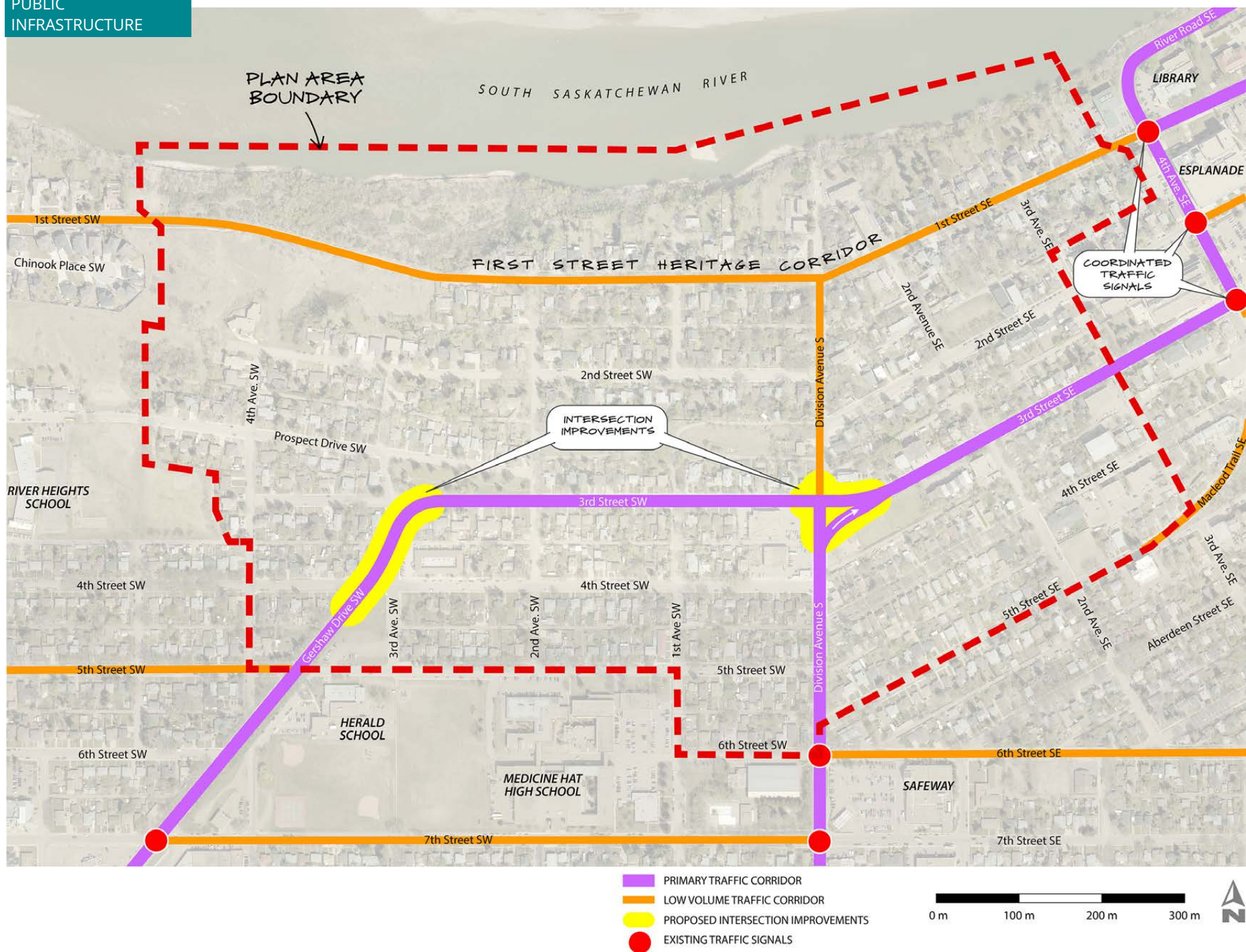


FIGURE 17 - Transportation network concept map.

Provision and maintenance of public infrastructure in established neighbourhoods can be a challenging endeavor for a municipality. The public infrastructure concepts and policies of this plan aim to provide a framework and guidance for future improvements.

7.1 TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

A balanced transportation network that accommodates vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian movement throughout the built environment enhances safety and efficiency when travelling through neighbourhoods. Walkable and connected neighbourhoods consist of an integrated transportation system of complete streets and multimodal intersections that make important links between land uses and residents. Long-term strategic improvements to the existing transportation network will facilitate healthy living and connect residents to neighbourhood amenities.

Transportation corridors

Major transportation corridors of the Plan Area include 1st Street S, 3rd Street S, Gershaw Drive SW, and Division Ave S. These roadways function as major connectors for residents and businesses within the Plan Area, as well as links to other neighbourhoods in the City. The corridors of 1st Street and 3rd Street S also function as western gateways to the Downtown.



3rd Street SE.



1st Street SE.



Division Avenue S.



Gershaw Drive SW.

Traffic study

A Traffic Study was performed as part of the research and preparation of this Plan. The purpose of this study was to review existing and forecasted traffic conditions and evaluate the level of service impacts on different roadway configuration scenarios. The study suggests that the existing transportation network will be able to handle current and anticipated future traffic needs without the development of additional roadways or widening of existing roadways.

The study also addressed a significant concern expressed by residents within the Plan Area; current traffic volumes experienced along 1st Street S, between Division Ave S and 4th Ave SE, are perceived as higher than desirable and are not representative of a 'heritage corridor' consisting primarily of single family homes. To address this concern the traffic study made recommendations for coordinated signals along 4th Ave SE between the 1st Street and 3rd Street corridors that would encourage and facilitate traffic flow along 4th Ave SE. Coordinated signalization in conjunction with a public awareness program could discourage the existing pattern of traffic; where Division Ave. S is utilized as the preferred connection between the 1st Street and 3rd Street corridors.

Additional improvements to the transportation network identified in the study include traffic calming measures and intersection and major corridor improvements. *Figure 17* depicts the transportation network concept of this Plan.

Complete streets

Creating 'complete streets' within the Plan Area forms the basis for much of the transportation network enhancements to be considered as public

infrastructure improvements occur. The Municipal Development Plan discusses the concept of designing for complete streets, stating that roadways should be planned and designed to accommodate users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and motorists. Complete street elements to be integrated into future roadway design within Herald include but are not limited to:

- multi-use trails that are separated from vehicle traffic to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians;
- sidewalk width that comfortably accommodates pedestrian use;
- boulevard trees between the roadway and sidewalk to slow traffic, create pedestrian separation from vehicles and add aesthetic value;
- soft landscaped boulevards on local roadways to provide separation from vehicular traffic and add aesthetic value;
- hard surfaced boulevards with tree wells on roadways adjacent to commercial uses, where pedestrian and cyclist traffic may be greater and street furniture may be installed;
- provision of street furniture where appropriate, including benches, bike racks, bollards, public art, wayfinding installations, waste bins, street lamps and signage; and
- on-street parallel and angled parking to increase parking availability and provide protection to sidewalks and multi-use trails.

Multi modal intersections

Intersections are where all modes of transportation come together, and the potential for conflicts between various users generally increases. Complete street networks consist of multimodal intersections designed

to safely and efficiently bring together all modes of transportation at these junctions. Complete street elements to be integrated into future intersections could include, but may not be limited to:

- appropriately sized vehicle lane widths;
- reduced corner radii;
- shorter pedestrian crossing distances;
- curb extensions;
- high pedestrian visibility;
- highly visible pedestrian crossing signs and markings (e.g. raised, painted, textured, or signaled);
- accessible crosswalk design; and
- accessible leisure trail integration.

Traffic calming measures

Traffic calming can be achieved through overall physical design of roadways and the inclusion of specific design elements. All traffic calming measures aim to proactively change the behavior of motorists in a positive manner that results in slower traffic speeds. There is significant overlap with the principles of traffic calming, complete streets and multi modal intersections.

Complete street roadway design

This Plan provides roadway cross section concepts for two common settings encountered within the Plan Area. The concepts are intended to portray complete street design elements that are desirable and should be used as a starting point to be modified and adapted to the specific

needs of each context. An example could be having angled parking, in place of parallel, in front of a neighbourhood commercial district where more parking is desirable. Furthermore, a street may contain elements from both cross sections where the context is different on each side of the street. An example of this would be where there is low density residential on one side of the street and commercial district on the other.

The “Local Street” cross-section (*figure 18*) is meant primarily for use within the Low Density Residential District or other locations with generally low levels of traffic. They are characterized by wide boulevards with landscaping and trees; sidewalk widths designed to accommodate two people; on street parking on both sides of the street; and vehicle travel lanes that are designed for slower speeds and primarily passenger vehicles.

The “Urban Street” cross-sections (*figures 19 and 20*) are intended for areas that either have a high intensity of land use (e.g. commercial, multi-unit residential, or a school) or have higher levels of traffic (e.g. Division Avenue or 3rd Street). They are characterized by boulevards that contain low maintenance hard landscaping; trees within wells; wider sidewalks and possibly multi-use trails; seating areas and other street furniture; and vehicle travel lanes that are designed for larger vehicles such as transit buses or commercial delivery trucks.

The future detailed design of complete streets, multi-modal intersections, and traffic calming measures will be determined through functional planning studies. All transportation concepts are intended to be used as a guide to achieving the objectives of this plan.

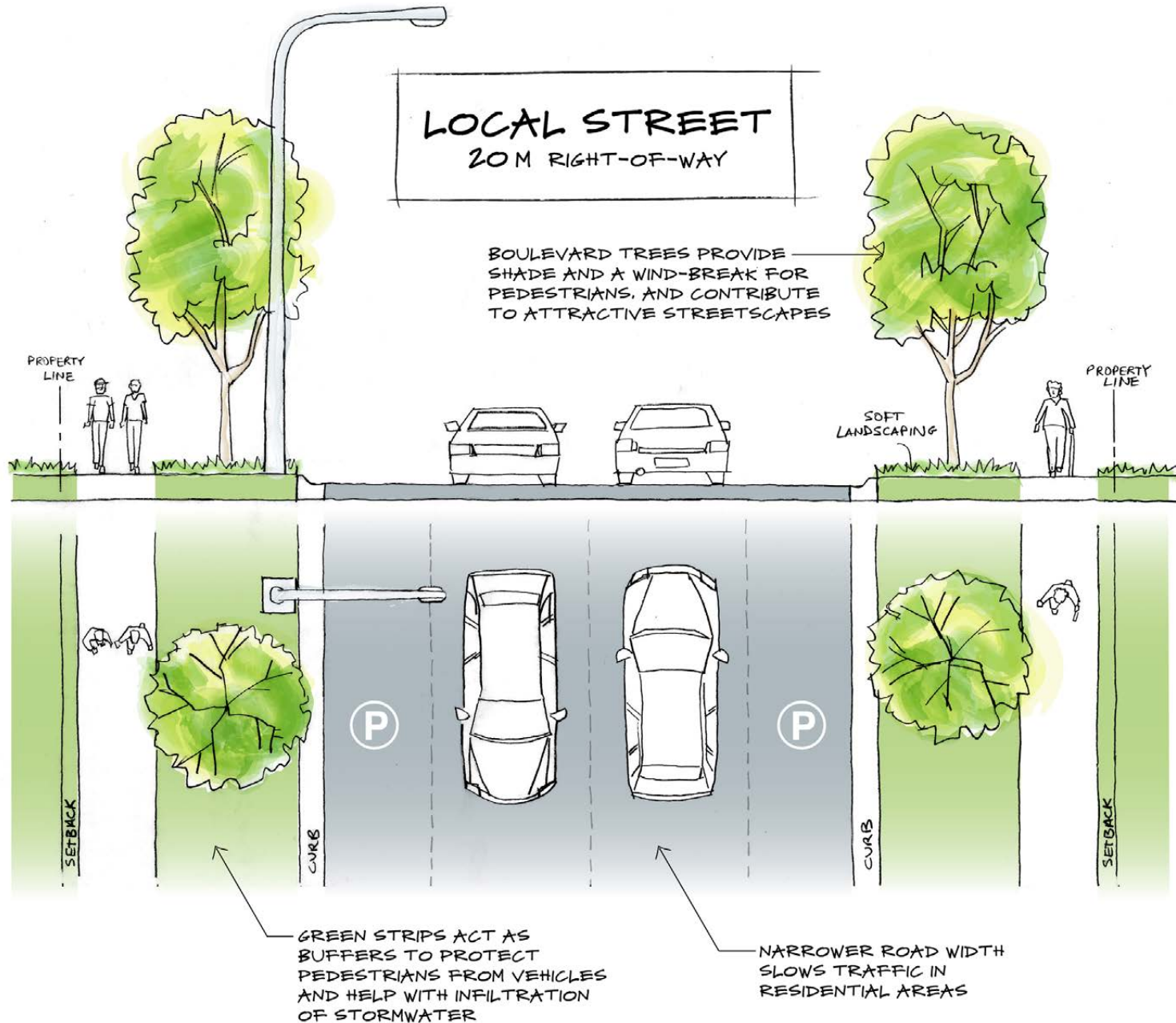


FIGURE 18 - Local street cross-section (conceptual design).

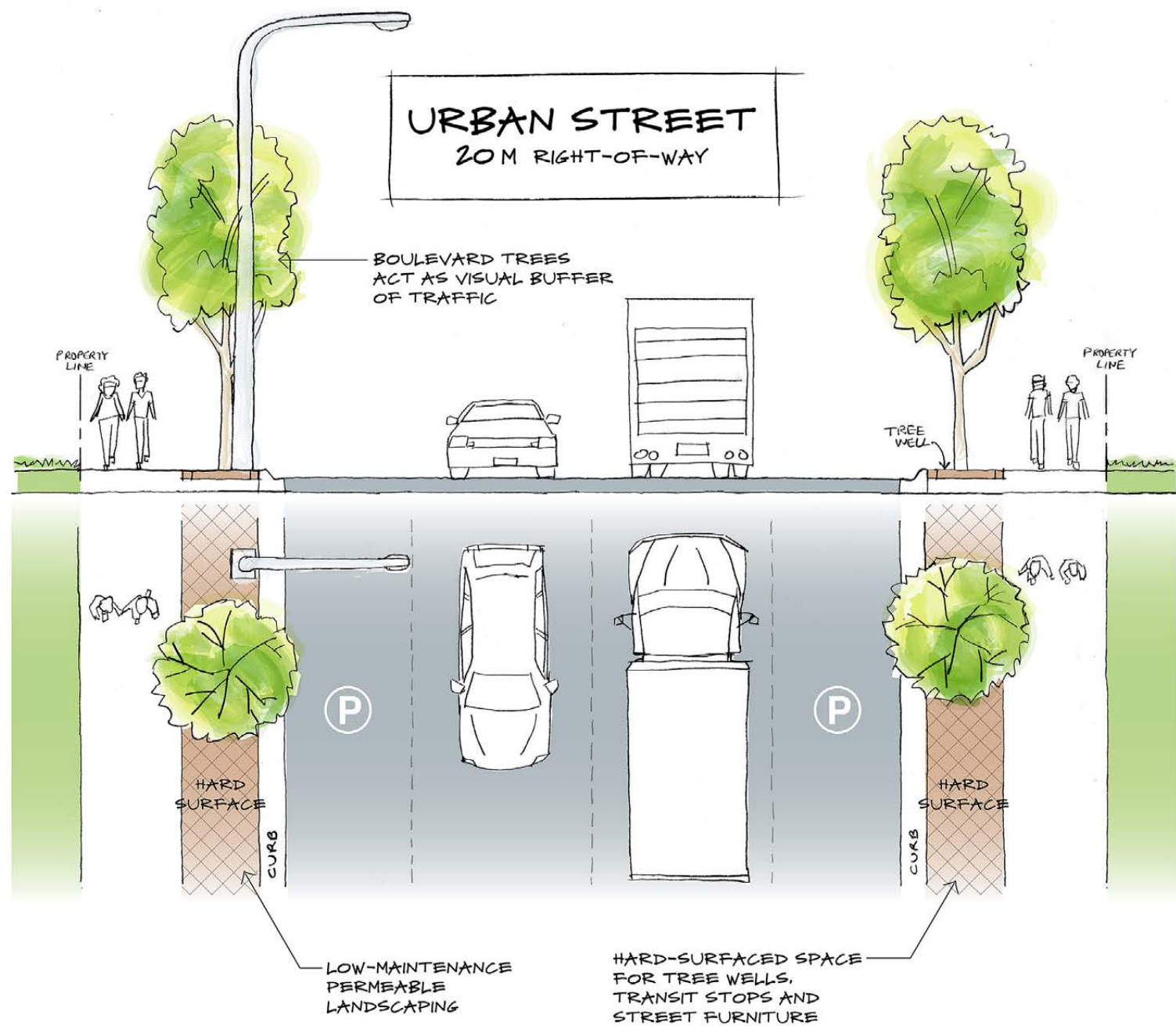


FIGURE 19 - Urban street cross-section (conceptual design).

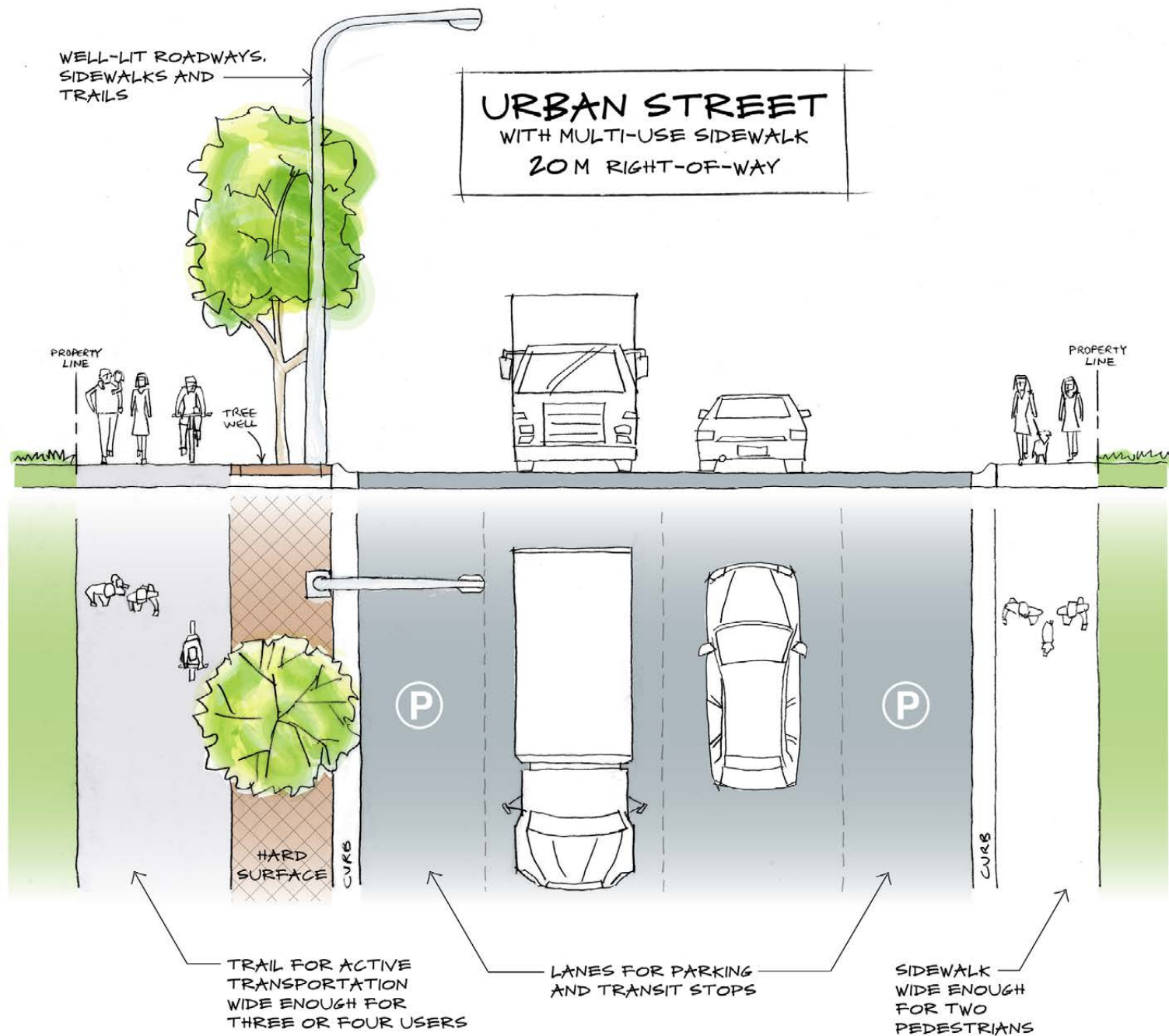


FIGURE 20 - Urban street with multi-use trail cross-section (conceptual design).

Pedestrian friendly intersections

Designing for pedestrian friendly intersections can be achieved throughout the Plan Area through the use of numerous design components without compromising traffic efficiency or level of service. Design features such as curb extensions, accessible crosswalk design and leisure trail integration will result in a transportation network that adequately accommodates all modes of transportation.

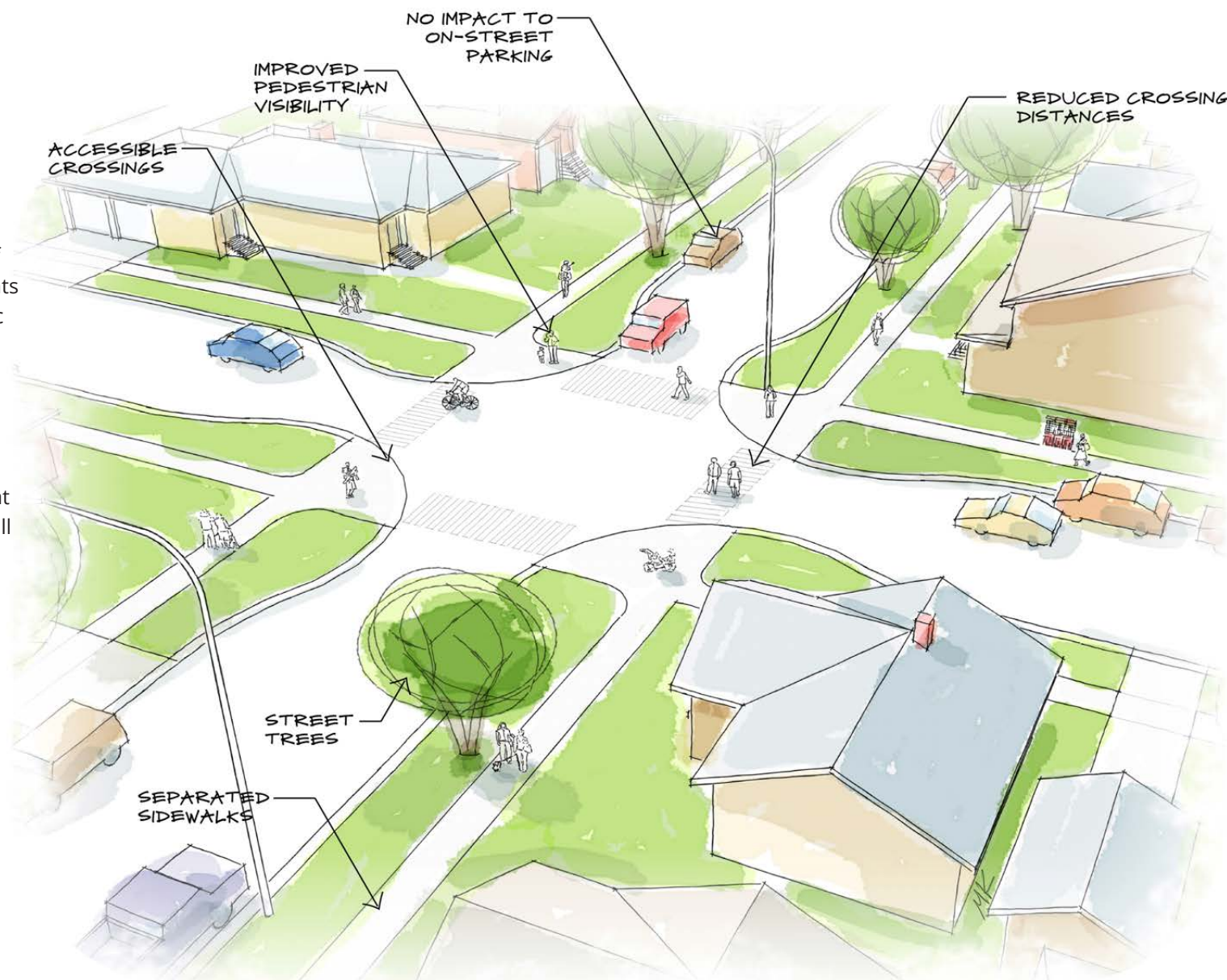


FIGURE 21 - Conceptual design of pedestrian-friendly intersection.

Landscaped traffic islands

Landscaped traffic islands are an effective and cost efficient traffic calming measure that can be implemented well within existing infrastructure. The ability to customize size, curb design and landscaping make traffic islands useful under many varying circumstances. Traffic islands are popular for encouraging safe speeds on local roadways, preventing short cutting, and reducing the severity of collisions.

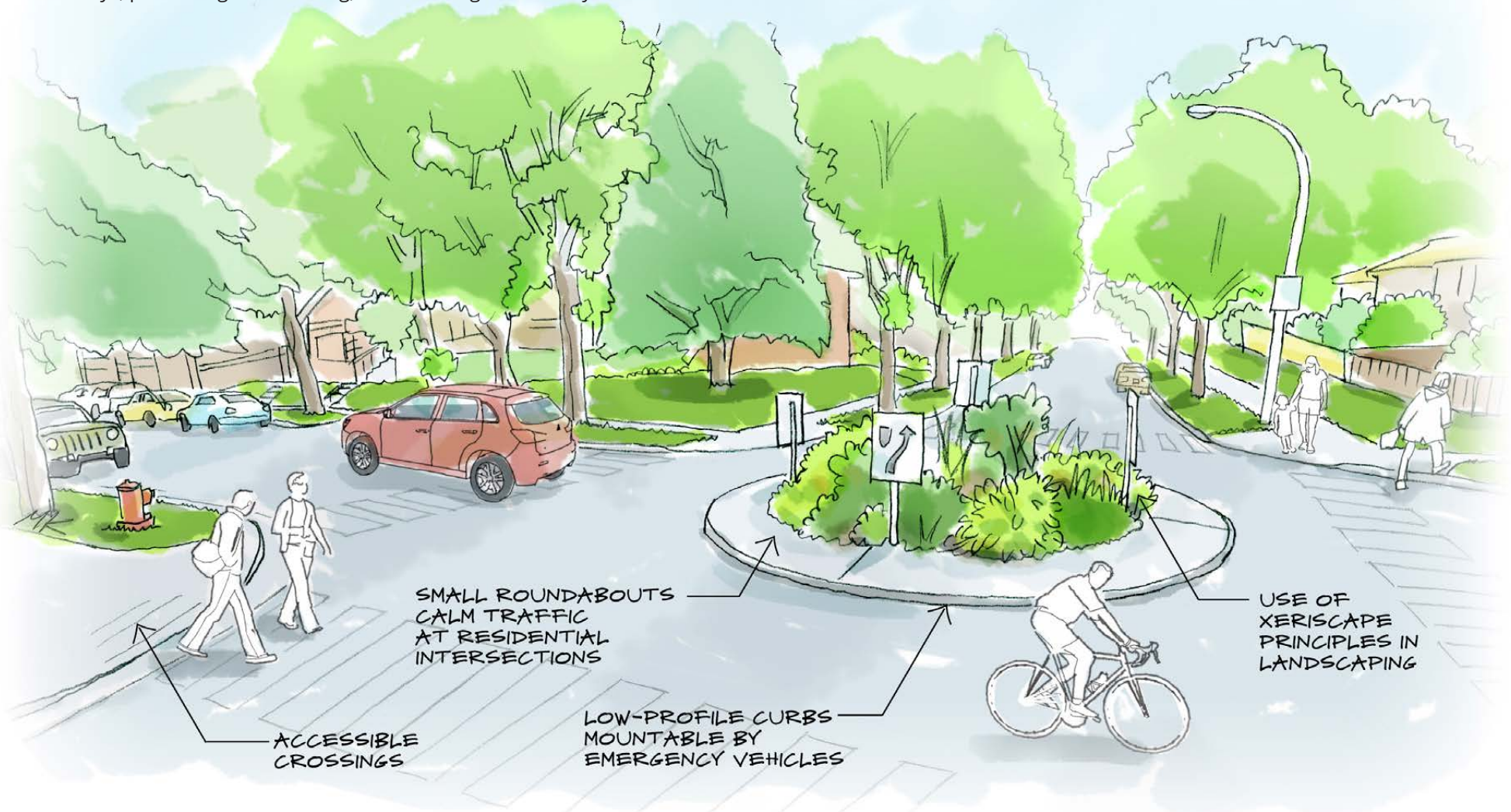


FIGURE 22 - Conceptual design of intersection with landscaped traffic island.

7.2 SERVICING INFRASTRUCTURE

Orderly and efficient servicing infrastructure upgrades and maintenance are essential to ensuring the sustainability of an existing neighbourhood. The infrastructure of the Herald neighbourhood is some of the oldest in the City with some pipes dating back to the early 1900s. As the lifespan of roadway and servicing infrastructure nears maturity, many of these systems will require replacement. Furthermore, the potential for density increases in and adjacent to the Downtown may also trigger the need for capacity upgrades. To meet these challenges, scheduled upgrades to ensure adequate levels of service must be ranked and sequenced in a manner that does not compromise the delivery of services.

Integrated servicing and transportation upgrades

Public infrastructure projects will require coordination among operating departments to ensure a “dig once” strategy is achieved. Ground disturbances to existing roadways will present opportunities to improve the transportation system through the implementation of complete street design to guide roadway reconstruction. This integrated approach to infrastructure and transportation upgrades are key to achieving consistency with the MDP and the vision of this Plan. This Plan does not propose definitive timelines for public infrastructure

upgrades; however, major infrastructure upgrades throughout the Plan Area will likely be required within the 20 year horizon of this Plan.

Storm water

Stormwater management involves the collection, transportation, and treatment of rainfall and snow runoff in urban areas. Networks of pipes, pumps and ponds make up the most common techniques for managing stormwater and keeping communities flood-free. Urban environments consist of a variety of impervious surfaces such as paved roads, driveways, parking lots, and roofs, which can result in higher peak flow rates and greater volumes of stormwater runoff. Implementation of conventional upgrades will have ‘upper limits’ in terms of meeting future capacity needs; and there are no apparent opportunities for construction of storm ponds within the Plan Area to assist with managing release and improved water quality. Options for building up the resiliency of a city are important considerations when faced with a potentially changing climate, more extreme weather patterns, aging infrastructure in existing neighbourhoods, and the high costs of infrastructure upgrades needed to effectively manage future needs.



Eugenia Beecher

Small bio-retention area integrated into open space.

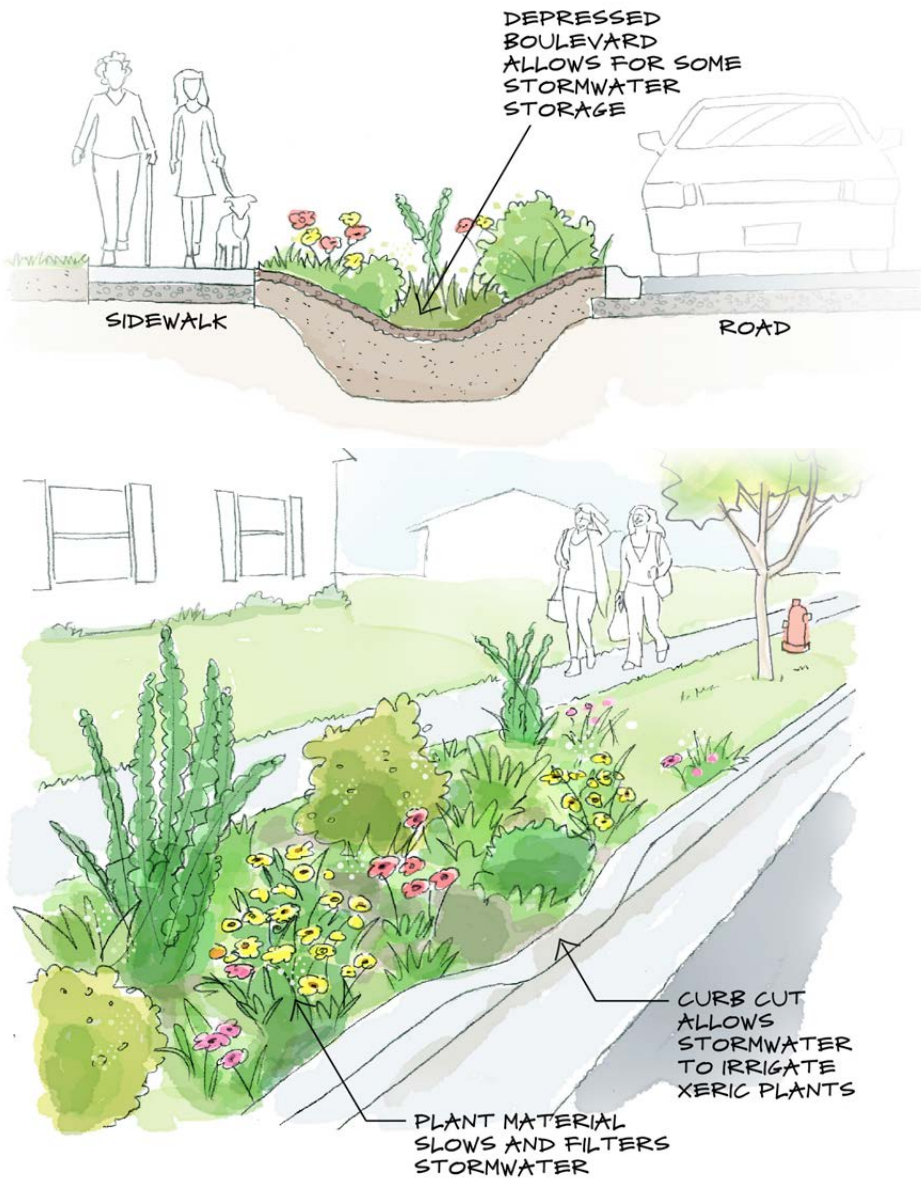


FIGURE 23 - Conceptual design of bioretention swale in boulevard (cross section illustration and street view illustration).

Green infrastructure

The concept of green infrastructure is used to describe a number of approaches that harness 'natural processes' to mitigate environmental problems associated with urban environments. Examples of green infrastructure include urban forests, constructed wetlands, green roofs and green walls; however, green infrastructure most often refers to a more sustainable approach to managing urban stormwater. The inclusion of green infrastructure as part of a storm water management system has the potential to improve storm water quality by removing sediment and chemicals. It also helps



Semi-permeable concrete allows more water infiltration.

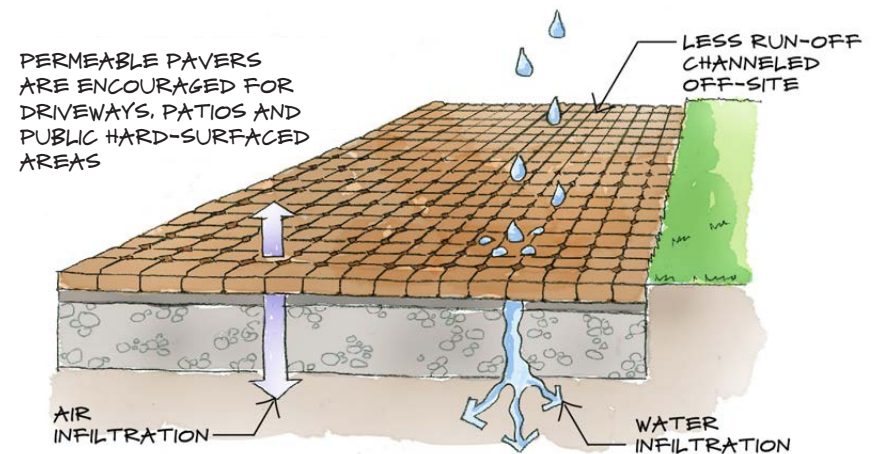


FIGURE 24 - Illustration of permeable hard landscaping

to mitigate localized flooding; making communities more resilient. Financial advantages include the potential for reduced costs of system upgrades, the ability for phased implementation at varying scales; matching budgets with expenses, and increased property values due to concentrated vegetation and a more aesthetically pleasing public realm.

Opportunities for green infrastructure

One of the easiest ways of building resiliency into an existing stormwater management system is to increase the permeability of surfaces to allow for increased infiltration of water into soil resulting in less water within the stormwater system. Bioretention swales work well in boulevards (figure 23), parks (figure 25) and natural areas where water is directed to support landscaped features and infiltrate down to the groundwater system. There are also various kinds of pavers that would work well to increase infiltration (figure 24) in both public and private settings such as public gathering spaces and private driveways.

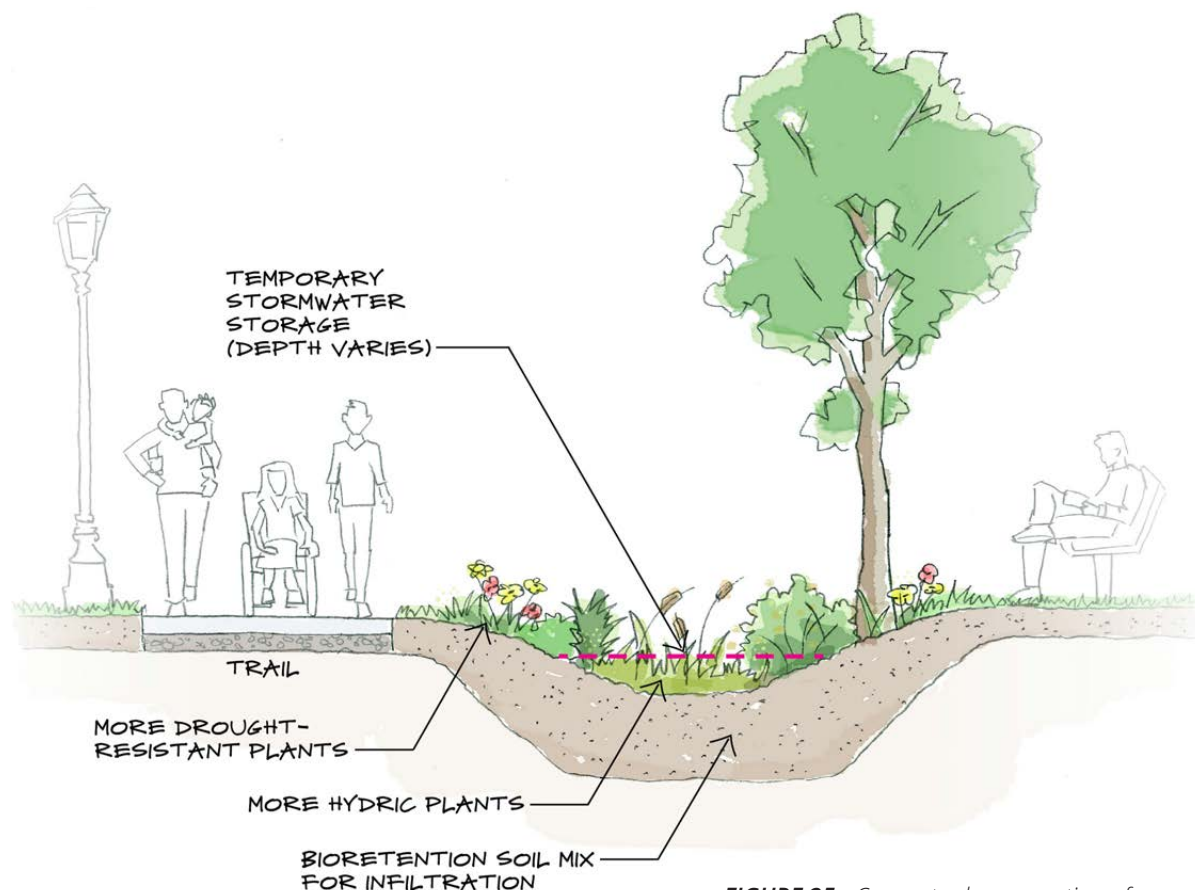


FIGURE 25 - Conceptual cross section of bioretention swale in open space.



policies

public infrastructure

- 7 (A) Redevelopment should be planned and designed to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and services.
- 7 (B) Servicing improvements should be planned in alignment with future needs and growth.
- 7 (C) Future functional transportation plans shall:
 - incorporate complete street elements contained within this Plan. Consideration shall be given to safety and efficiency for users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, cyclists, transit and private vehicles; and
 - consider ways to reinforce, through design elements, 1st Street S as a low volume heritage corridor.
- 7 (D) Opportunities to link commercial districts, places of interest, parks and open spaces through complete streets or “green corridors” should be considered during the design of future roadway enhancement and major infrastructure projects.
- 7 (E) Complete street and intersection improvements to the existing transportation network shall accompany all future infrastructure upgrades, whether major or minor in scale, where practically and economically feasible, and where provided for within the project budget.
- 7 (F) Complete street and intersection improvements should contribute, over the long term, to achieving a comprehensive multi-modal transportation network within the City.
- 7 (G) Transportation network improvements shall be consistent with achieving the overall traffic pattern included in this Plan.
- 7 (H) No new vehicle access points directly onto roadways designated as a primary traffic corridor in *Figure 17* shall be allowed. Existing vehicle access points are encouraged to be removed.
- 7 (I) Pedestrian connections to parks and transit stops should be clearly identified, visually and physically enhanced, and universally accessible in order to promote and facilitate alternative transportation.
- 7 (J) Street furniture should be contextual, consistent, and representative of the existing character of the Plan Area.
- 7 (K) Street lighting on local streets should be pedestrian oriented and scaled appropriately. Consideration should be given to using the traditional Medicine Hat gas lamp style street lights at key locations.
- 7 (L) Boulevard trees should be maintained, protected and replaced when warranted. Any boulevard tree maintenance and removal shall be in accordance with the Tree Preservation Bylaw and the Land Use Bylaw.
- 7 (M) Widening of boulevards and planting of new trees is encouraged wherever possible.
- 7 (N) Disruptions to the pedestrian network such as missing sidewalks along streets, driveway interruptions, and above ground utilities should be minimized throughout the Plan Area.
- 7 (O) Permeable surfaces such as spaced pavers or grass block paving are encouraged.
- 7 (P) The City should incorporate green storm water infrastructure into the streetscape design and existing parks and natural areas where feasible.
- 7 (Q) The City should consider including historical street names on street signage within the Plan Area.

A blue watercolor background with a sketch of a street lamp and trees. The street lamp is a tall, slender pole with a decorative lantern at the top. The trees are sketched with simple, wavy lines. The overall style is artistic and hand-drawn.

8

plan implementation

8.1 AUTHORITY OF THE PLAN

This Plan is a Council approved statutory document that will guide future land use and development decisions in the Plan Area. This Plan is to be used by Council, the Municipal Planning Commission, the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Administration, City departments, developers, and residents of the neighbourhood with respect to submission and evaluation of development proposals and public infrastructure projects.

8.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE PLAN

Map and concept interpretation

Unless otherwise specified within this Plan the boundaries and features depicted in maps or concepts are intended to be approximate and shall be interpreted as such. With regards to land use, the precise location of land use boundaries will be determined through the Land Use Bylaw.

Policy interpretation

This Plan uses language that can be interpreted as providing either general policy direction as well as very specific direction. Where general direction is given, flexibility should be used in the interpretation of the Plan. Where specific language is used, it is meant to give clear and unambiguous direction to all who must interpret the contents of the Plan.

Where the term 'shall' is used in a policy statement, the implementation of that policy will be considered mandatory; however, where mandatory policies refer to concepts, the concept may be deviated from provided that the deviation is necessary to address unique circumstances, and the general intent of the policy is still achieved. Where the term 'should' is used in a policy statement, it is the intent of this Plan that that policy statement is complied with; however, the policy may be deviated from in a specific situation where the deviation is necessary to address unique circumstances and the general intent of the policy is still achieved.

Plan limitations

Policies, concepts, or guidelines in this Plan are not to be interpreted as an approval for a use on a specific site. No representation is made that any particular site is suitable for a particular purpose, as detailed site conditions or constraints, including environmental constraints, must be assessed on a case-by-case basis as part of an application for re-zoning, subdivision, or development permit approval.

Any municipal improvements or City funded projects proposed or implied in the Plan are subject to City approval and budget and will be evaluated in relation to the needs of city-wide spending priorities. In accordance with section 637 of the MGA, the adoption of this Plan does not require the City to undertake any of the projects referred to herein.

Glossary

In this plan, the following terms have the meaning set out in this section.

Development Authority: the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) or the Development Officer or both, as the context provides. The Development Authority exercises development powers and performs duties on behalf of the municipality.

Geotechnical: relating to the application of technology to engineering problems caused by geological factors.

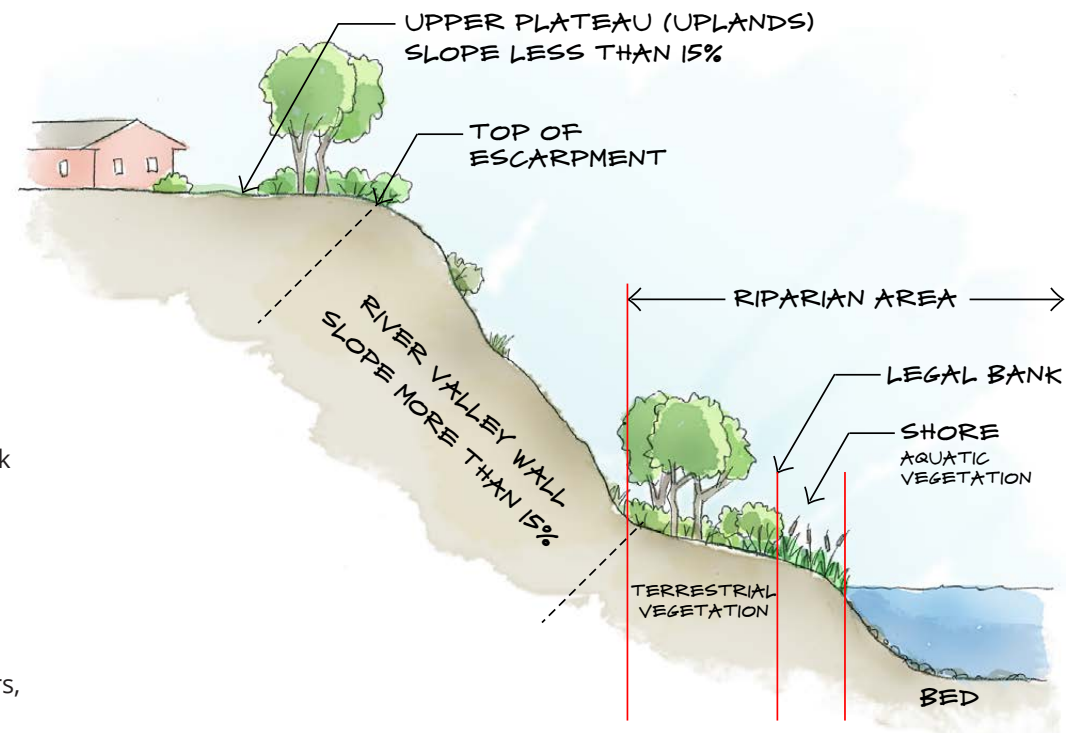
Geophysical Risk Lands: areas of the City where there may be risk resulting from natural conditions associated with steep and often unstable slopes, and areas historically susceptible to flooding.

Plan Area: the area of Medicine Hat addressed by the Herald Neighbourhood Plan.

Riparian Area: the lush vegetated lands adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, where the vegetation and soils are strongly influenced by the presence of water.

Top of Escarpment: means the uppermost breakline or the slope edge defining the most distinct break or topographic discontinuity in slope between the upper plateau and the river valley wall, where overall slope changes from greater to less than 15 percent (8.5 degrees).

Xeriscaping: landscaping which requires little or no supplemental water from irrigation.



Top of Escarpment and Riparian Area..

8.3

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

Plan Amendments

Area Redevelopment Plans are long-term planning documents. They promote a vision for a neighbourhood and put in place policies that work towards achieving that vision over time. ARPs may be amended from time to time either in relation to a City initiative or a re-zoning, subdivision, or development permit application. New concepts and ideas may arise that are not anticipated by this Plan and are constrained by or contradictory to specific policies. When such concepts and ideas meet the intent of the vision and neighbourhood objectives or offer a creative solution to a particular problem, efforts may be made to allow for their implementation, including where necessary, amendments to the Plan. As the needs of the community evolve, amendments to the Plan may become necessary to ensure the policies remain current and relevant. However, the vision of the Plan should remain consistent. Amendments to this Plan must be adopted by bylaw by Council.

Consistency of the Plan

This Plan shall be monitored and amended as required to ensure consistency and alignment with other statutory plans including but not limited to the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, the Tri Area Intermunicipal Development Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, and adjacent Area Redevelopment Plans.

Review of development applications

All development applications within the Plan Area are subject to the objectives and policies of this Plan. In reviewing development permit applications, it may be necessary for the Development Authority to consider proposals that do not meet the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw. In the case where this approach is necessary in order to achieve the longer term vision of the Plan, variances to the regulations within the Land Use Bylaw or rezoning may be required. At the discretion of the Development Authority, significant projects that do not meet the policy requirements of this Plan may be forwarded to Council for decision.

Herald

neighbourhood plan



www.medicinehat.ca