

# PARSONS CREEK

## urban design plan

Phase 1 and 2



Prepared for:  
Government of Alberta  
Ministry of Infrastructure

Submitted to:  
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

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REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO  
Fort McMurray, AB

Parsons Creek  
Urban Design Plan, Phase 1 and 2  
Prepared by: Stantec Consulting Ltd  
April 2013

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# 1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

## PLAN PURPOSE

The Government of Alberta is undertaking the process of making the lands known as Parsons Creek ready for the development of a vibrant new community. The design of the project was started in June of 2009 and is anticipated to continue well into 2012. This Urban Design Plan outlines the process and outcomes of the design process, and provides expectations on how new development in Parsons Creek is envisioned to occur.

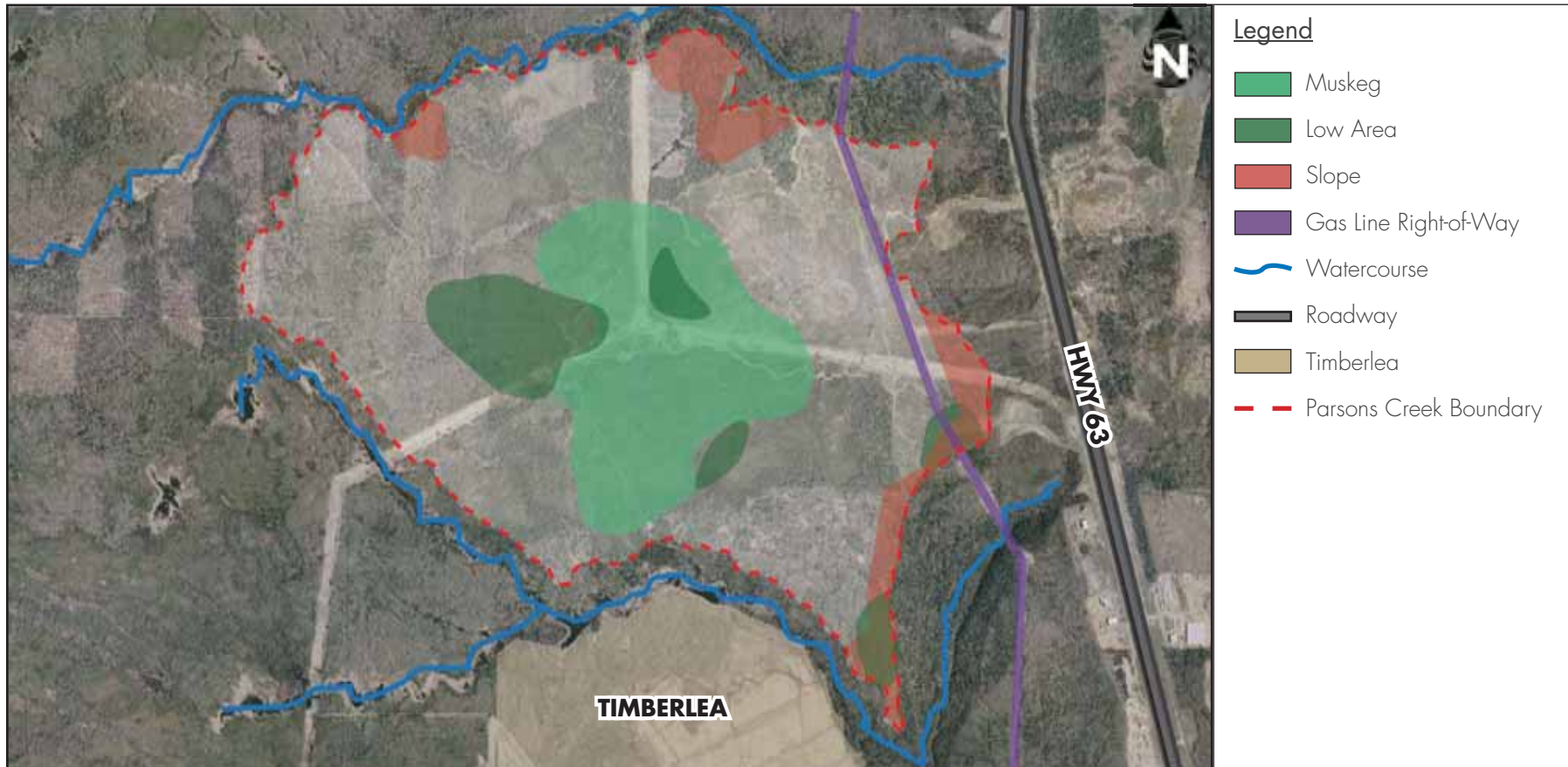
While detailed engineering services and associated feasibility reports are not part of this Urban Design Plan, these documents have been comprehensively reviewed in the development of this Plan.



## PROJECT ANALYSIS

In reviewing the Plan Area, several existing conditions were identified as requiring further analysis and consideration prior to designing the site layout.

- Gas Line ROW
  - › Could be integrated with the open space, trails, and pathways throughout Parsons Creek.
- Topography
  - › The site is atop a relatively flat plateau.
- Muskeg
  - › Deeper areas of muskeg could be preserved.
- Site Drainage
  - › Due to a need for on-site water detention; there is an opportunity to create large stormwater management ponds which can be incorporated into the open space network.
- Proximity to Highway 63
  - › This roadway will provide the main access to Parsons Creek.
- Proximity to Timberlea
  - › Parsons Creek, located immediately north of the adjacent Timberlea subdivision, can provide connections to the south into Timberlea.





## 2.0 SITE SPECIFICS

### SITE LOCATION

The Parsons Creek site is located in the northern portion of Fort McMurray along Highway 63, north of the Timberlea residential subdivision.

### PROJECT SIZE

The total area of the Parsons Creek site is approximately 817 hectares (2018 acres) and encompasses approximately 14 quarter sections of land, as illustrated on the accompanying map.

### LAND OWNERSHIP

The Parsons Creek site provides an excellent opportunity for development as all lands in the Plan Area boundary are owned solely by the Government of Alberta. Both surface and mineral rights are owned by the Government of Alberta.



# 3.0 SITE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Parsons Creek site has the potential to become a high quality community development. The site itself is undeveloped with excellent access to nearby neighbourhoods and transportation routes. The following summarizes the development potential of the area.

### High Development Potential:

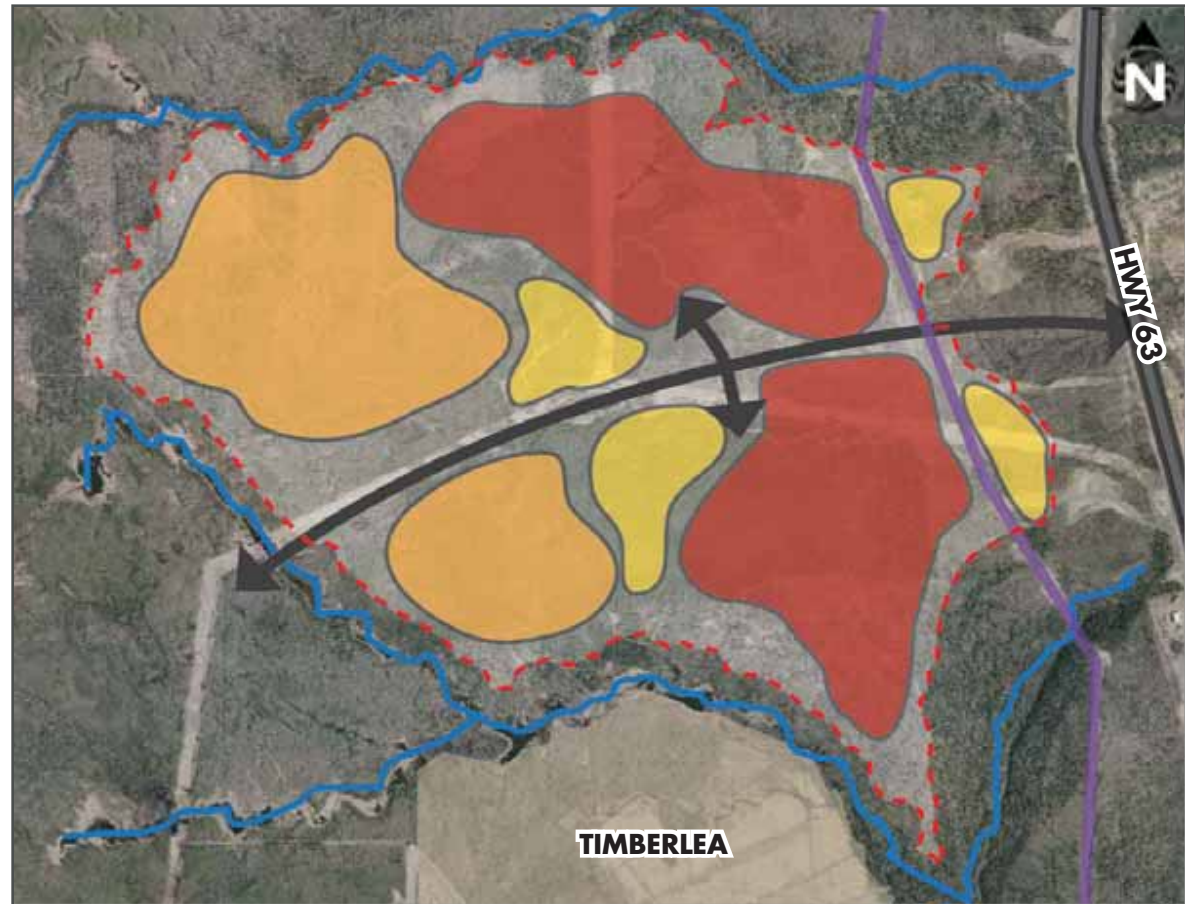
While the entire site is vastly developable, the eastern, and more specifically, the northeast portion of the site has the highest potential for development due to its proximity to Highway 63. This rating is also based on the site's minimal constraints and the relatively flat topography. The high development potential areas in Parsons Creek areas are envisioned to have the project's most intense development including multi-family housing and commercial/retail uses.

### Medium Development Potential:

The northwest portion of the site, while very much developable, has been given a rating of medium development potential due to its distance from direct access as well as the need to extend infrastructure into the area. Due to its proximity to major transportation routes, this area should be utilized for residential and recreation uses.

### Low Development Potential:

These areas have been identified with low development potential due to either geotechnical or environmental constraints.



### Legend

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> High Development Potential      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Gas Line Right-of-Way |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Medium Development Potential | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; border-bottom: 2px solid blue;"></span> Watercourse   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Low Development Potential    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; border-bottom: 2px solid black;"></span> Highway 63   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; transform: rotate(-45deg);"></span> Proposed Roadway                   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; border-bottom: 2px dashed red;"></span> Parsons Creek Boundary                                  |



# 4.0 COMMUNITY VISION

## PARSONS CREEK - COMMUNITY VISION

"The community of Parsons Creek will be home to over 24,000 residents. The community will be composed of transit-oriented neighbourhoods providing a range of housing types for a diverse population including families, singles, and people of all ages. The neighbourhoods are designed around transit nodes where retail, recreation, open space, schools and high density housing connect through a network of trails. Parsons Creek will be known for its environmental quality, commitments to sustainable practices and the vibrancy of its public spaces. Large areas of the natural landscape will express the unique northern character of Fort McMurray and sense of place whilst providing a place to live, work, and shop with safety and convenience."

-Parsons Creek Community Vision & Design Brief

The following are keywords that were identified during the early public consultation process to shape and describe the envisioned character of Parsons Creek:

- Family
- Community
- Play Spaces
- Recreation
- Open Spaces
- Trails



# 5.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An extensive public participation process was undertaken to assist in the design and development of Parsons Creek. The public participation process included sessions and meetings that were open to the general public and/or by invitation. Public information sessions were held during the project initiation stage; overall development Concept Plan stage; and continued for project-specific matters such as individual phase design, transportation layout, and open space development.

### Stakeholder and Public Notification

Through communications with the Municipality and the Developer, three stakeholders groups were identified for the Parsons Creek project: Industry and Agency, Public Advisory, and the general public.

In the three groups, many stakeholders and key people were identified and contacted via mail, e-mail, and telephone. Those who responded were invited to join the public participation process.

Public notification for open houses and public information sessions was done using a variety of techniques including placing advertisements in local newspapers, advertising on local radio stations, and hand-delivering invitational brochures to residents of adjacent neighbourhoods.

### Industry and Agency Meeting

A series of Industry and Agency meetings were held throughout each stage of planning for Parsons Creek to present and review the various plans while gathering comments. These meetings were typically held on the same date of an open house or public information session: three meetings were held during planning of Phase One, and three meetings were held during the planning of Phase Two.

During these meetings, discussion focused on overall design, schedule, operations, land use, detail design, transportation, and servicing. Comments made during the meetings were recorded and applied to the various Plans where appropriate.

## Public Advisory

Like the Industry and Agency meetings, Public Advisory meetings were held throughout the planning process of Parsons Creek on the same dates as public meetings to present and review the various Plans while gathering comments. Discussion during these meetings centered around overall design, schedule, operations, land use, detail design, transportation, and servicing. Again comments were recorded and applied to the various Plans where appropriate.

## Open Houses

The first public open house for the Parsons Creek development was held October 14, 2009 at the Radisson Hotel in Fort McMurray with twenty-seven people in attendance. At this time, the public was presented with relevant background information and detailed base plans of the area. Furthermore, the public was presented with key development factors being considered in planning for Parsons Creek.





The second public open house was held November 19, 2009 at St. Martha's School in Fort McMurray. Updates to the Parsons Creek Concept Plan were presented to the attendees followed by a discussion period.

A third open house was held January 21, 2010 at Merit Hotel in Fort McMurray to provide attendees with an update of the project and the process moving forward. A question and answer period was held to conclude the open house. This meeting was the final open house for Phase One of Parsons Creek.

The first open house held for Phase Two of Parsons Creek took place on August 19, 2010 at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre in Fort McMurray. This meeting was held to introduce Phase Two to attendees and explain the various districts envisioned.

The second open house for Phase Two was held on February 2, 2011 at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre in Fort McMurray. The intention of the Neighbourhood and Town Centre Districts were highlighted during this meeting.

The final open house for Phase Two of Parsons Creek was held on June 23, 2011 at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre in Fort McMurray. During this meeting the final Concept Plan for Phase Two was presented to attendees.

An additional open house was held May 13, 2013 at the Chateau Nova in Fort McMurray to present land use changes to Phase One and discuss the development with the public.

Feedback via forms, discussions, and e-mails from all stakeholders and open house attendees were taken into consideration and proved instrumental in shaping the design of Parsons Creek.





## 6.0 PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

The *Parsons Creek Urban Design Plan* embraces the vision and design principles outlined in the *Parsons Creek Community Vision and Design Brief* of 2009. It also is reflective of the vision and design characteristics derived through the public consultation process.

All of the principles and strategies outlined in this Plan have been identified and followed in anticipation of planning Parsons Creek as a "complete community". As a complete community, Parsons Creek is envisioned to provide all of the services and opportunities for residents to live, work, and play in one common area. In this way, Parsons Creek will provide everything a person would need at all stages of life.

It is the Developer's intention that Parsons Creek will meet this goal by including the following:

- A wide variety of housing types to meet the needs of all market segments including both larger homes and smaller more affordable dwelling units
- A mix of employment opportunities and services in close proximity to residential areas
- Distributed and accessible recreational spaces that can be used year-round by not only the residents of Parsons Creek but also those from surrounding communities
- A walkable and transit-focused community that encourages safe and environmentally-friendly methods of transportation



**The landscape is the single most important element contributing to visual character and environmental quality.**

- *The design of Parsons Creek will endeavor to retain ecological integrity where feasible. While a majority of the muskeg on site is ultimately developable, the design of the Parsons Creek community will retain a large portion of muskeg in the southern portion of the site.*
- *Special care will be taken during the design of open spaces to utilize indigenous vegetation and plant species that are climatized to northern Alberta.*
- *Located around the perimeter of the site, a regional trail will be designed to function as a backbone of the pedestrian circulation network and provide a firebreak, as required by FireSmart design practices.*



**Parsons Creek shall have a unique sense of place that expresses the landscape and culture of northern Alberta.**

- *The scale of Parsons Creek and associated land uses will immediately create a unique sense of place that is different from other neighbourhoods in Fort McMurray.*
- *The design of the community will take into consideration the unique "sense of place" associated with the region. Design considerations such as housing types, roadways, recreational opportunities, and other development characteristics identified throughout the public consultation process have been integrated into the design where appropriate.*
- *The final design, architecture, and style in Parsons Creek will reflect the culture of the region.*



Extremes of climate shall be modified through site planning, building massing, and architectural and landscape design so that Parsons Creek will be known for its four season/all time comfort and use as a livable winter city.

- The street design for Parsons Creek will consider building orientation and materials be able to lessen the impacts of climate extremes.
- Parsons Creek will be designed as a "liveable winter city". It will provide shelter in an effort to artificially increase comfort from the harsh climate and embrace the winter through design to maximize all year enjoyment.



Provide a range of housing types to accommodate a diverse population.

- Parsons Creek is first and foremost a community that is being developed to provide housing and recreation opportunities to the citizens of Fort McMurray and surrounding area. To provide these opportunities, a variety of housing types are envisioned to be available in Parsons Creek ranging from "studio" style lofts to larger style homes.
- The type of homes available in Parsons Creek will attempt to respond to current market conditions by providing both single family and multi-family residential housing opportunities.
- The Government of Alberta's mandate for Parsons Creek is to not only provide housing, but also affordable by requiring that a percentage of the housing be "affordable housing" for purchase by qualified buyers.



A mix of uses shall be at the heart of the neighbourhood nodes to provide residents with the opportunity to live, work, shop, study, and relax in a vibrant, livable, and walkable area.

- Parsons Creek will be designed to provide a mix of uses, services, and housing types that can be easily accessed by residents of Parsons Creek and the surrounding community.
- The community will be designed with several centrally-located Mixed Development areas where residential and commercial uses intertwine. Transportation nodes will also be located in these areas to facilitate the areas' role as locations where residents will be able to live, work, and play all in the same district.
- A regional park site will be located in Parsons Creek to meet the passive recreational needs of the area. A regional recreation facility may also be located in the project site.
- By using transit-orientated design principles and creating nodes of development, employment opportunities will be found in walking distance of most homes.



Urban form should respond to the unique transportation, circulation, and parking requirements found in the Urban Service Area.

- *Transit Oriented Development principles will be utilized in the design and vision of Parsons Creek. Based on these principles, transit nodes identified throughout the community will be developed with higher density land uses.*
- *The unique transportation issues related to the Diversified bussing system, as well as the large scale trucks used by residents of the area, will be considered during the design of roadways and the transportation network in Parsons Creek.*
- *Transit transfer stations may be placed in Parsons Creek to assist in lessening the bus traffic in neighbourhoods as well as create transfer positions to be used in the future for a potential Bus Rapid Transit system between Parsons Creek and other destinations.*



The public realm should be considered as the basic framework of infrastructure.

- *An intensity of uses will be located at transit nodes in an attempt to focus popular community destinations in areas that are easily accessible.*
- *Public open spaces and recreational parks will be located in areas where higher-density residential uses occur to allow residents without a yard a place to recreate.*
- *The location of most parks will be designed so that surrounding residents and transportation routes will have visual access to them. This allows for "eyes-on-the-street" surveillance and encourages social interaction in open spaces.*
- *Potential risks will be minimized through the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.*



Urban form should lead to environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable neighbourhoods.

- *Environmental sustainability will be addressed in Parsons Creek by focusing higher densities in a single location rather than allowing "urban sprawl". The higher intensity of uses will also allow for preservation of open spaces and natural lands in the surrounding region.*
- *Economic sustainability will be addressed through providing consumer and employment related opportunities in Parsons Creek. By grouping more intense uses together, the cost of unnecessary infrastructure and service duplication may be avoided.*
- *Social sustainability will be addressed by providing community and municipal based services in Parsons Creek to meet the needs of the residents.*



## 7.0 SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association defines sustainable projects as those “that make economic sense today and logically move the community towards a future of social inclusiveness, cultural vibrancy, environmental stewardship, and strong governance practices” (AUMA, 2007). As a greenfield development, Parsons Creek has the opportunity to be a project that incorporates sustainable practices. In order to design a community that can meet the wants and needs of residents today and into the future, a variety of sustainable community design techniques have been taken into consideration.

Parsons Creek is envisioned as a community with compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use neighbourhoods and connections to adjacent neighbourhoods. Parsons Creek has been designed with these objectives in mind by implementing a grid street network, mixed use areas, pedestrian scaled community centres, and extensive trail system.

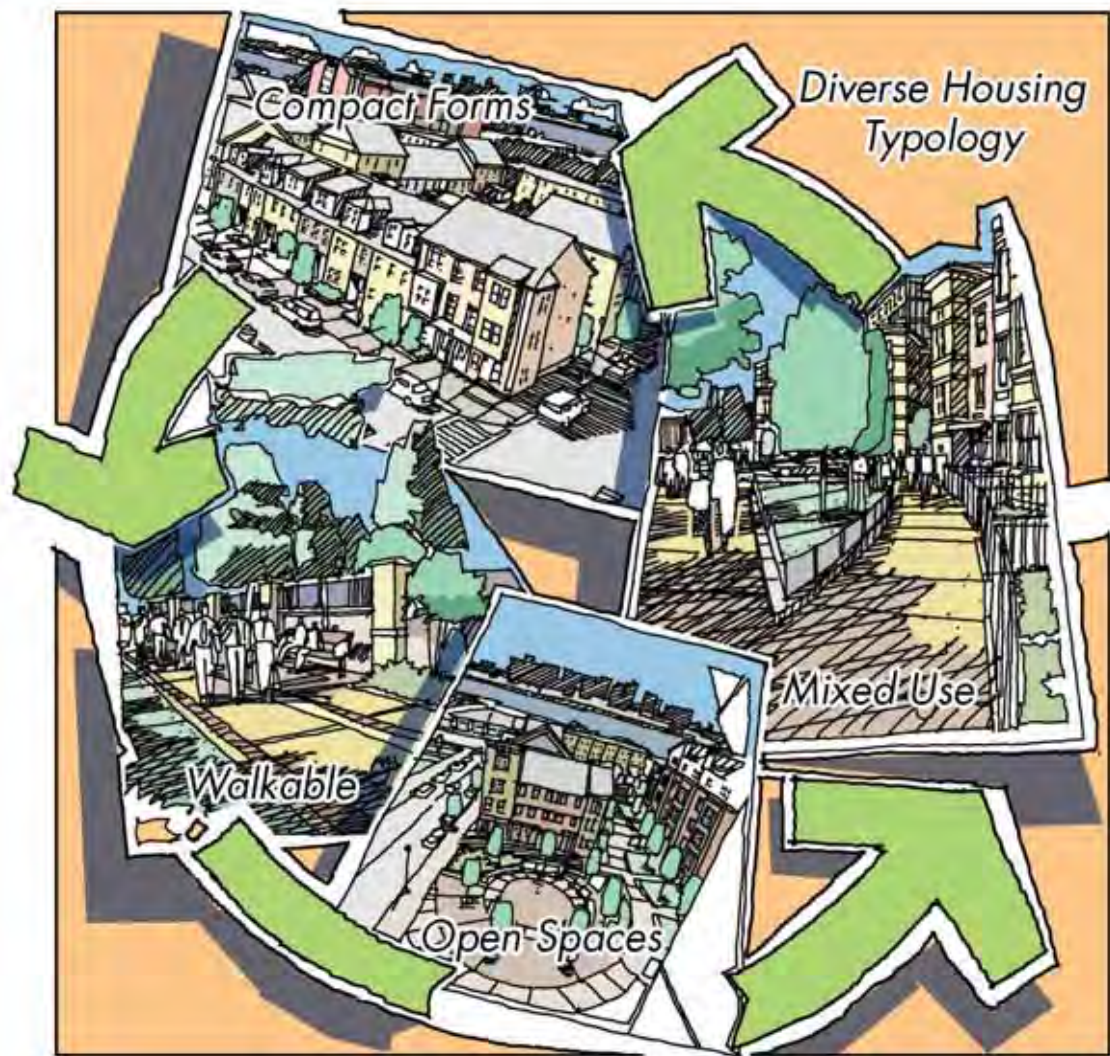
As a walkable mixed use community with several public transportation nodes, residents of Parsons Creek will be encouraged to use non-vehicular forms of transportation when traveling in the community and throughout the rest of the Urban Service Area. The reduced reliance on private vehicles will lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase face-to-face interactions creating a stronger sense of community. Networks of open space and connections to the natural environment will also encourage physical activity while protecting environmental systems.

Truly sustainable communities also emphasize the relationship of the infrastructure and buildings in the development. Energy related studies have been completed for Parsons Creek recommending increasing energy efficiency through building materials to reduce energy demand of the community. The design of Parsons Creek has taken

these initiatives into consideration and should be able to accommodate them through the Parsons Creek Design Guidelines or other initiatives.

By designing Parsons Creek with sustainable practices in mind, residents will be able to enjoy the benefits of connections to natural open space,

reduced energy costs, reduced transportation costs, lowered emissions, and increased interaction among residents.



# 8.0 COMMUNITY DESIGN

## DESIGN CONCEPT

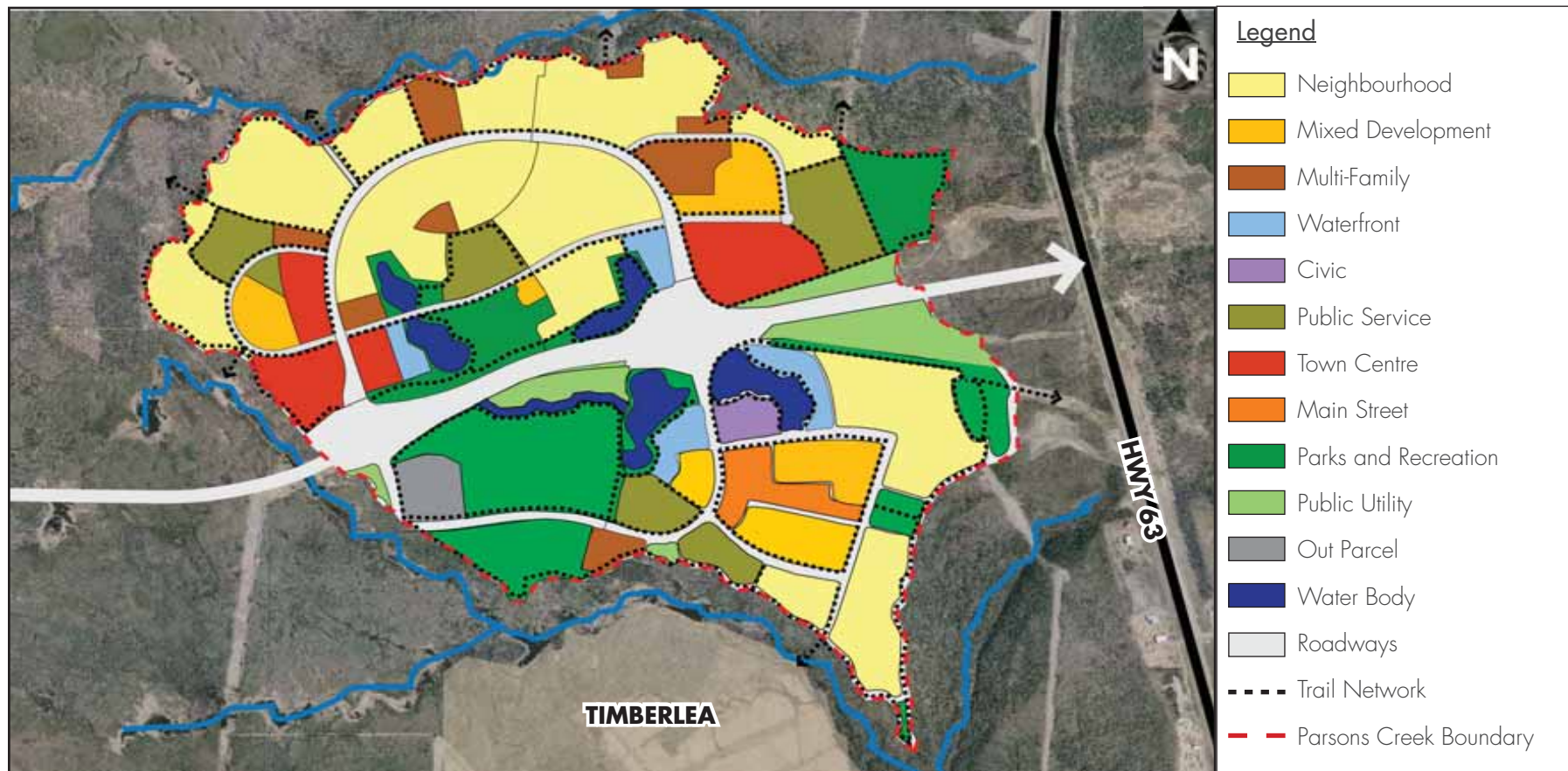
The Concept Plan shown below illustrates the Developer's intent for Parsons Creek. This design takes into consideration requests from local agencies, industries, residents, and various municipal departments. The design concept is further described in the remainder of this Urban Design Plan.

## POPULATION OUTLOOK

An estimated 734.55 hectares (1814 acres) of net developable land has been identified for development of Parsons Creek. Due to transportation constraints, Parsons Creek has a total population outlook of 24,000 people. Should those constraints ever be mitigated, the population outlook for Parsons Creek may be modified

## HOUSING OUTLOOK

In order to accommodate the current target population of 24,000, Parsons Creek will require approximately 8,000 dwelling units. Based on the vision and sustainability principles outlined in this Plan, residential opportunities will be present in the Neighbourhood, Multi-Family, Mixed Development, Main Street, and Waterfront character areas. Proposed housing forms will include single family and multi-family units to accommodate residents of various incomes, lifestyles, and stages of life.





## EMERGENCY SERVICES

One emergency service location has been identified for in Parsons Creek. This centralized area was chosen in consultation with the Fort McMurray Fire Department to provide efficient response times to the community of Parsons Creek.

The potential emergency service area is envisioned to accommodate either a single use or a combination of services that may include a fire hall, police station, or emergency response center.

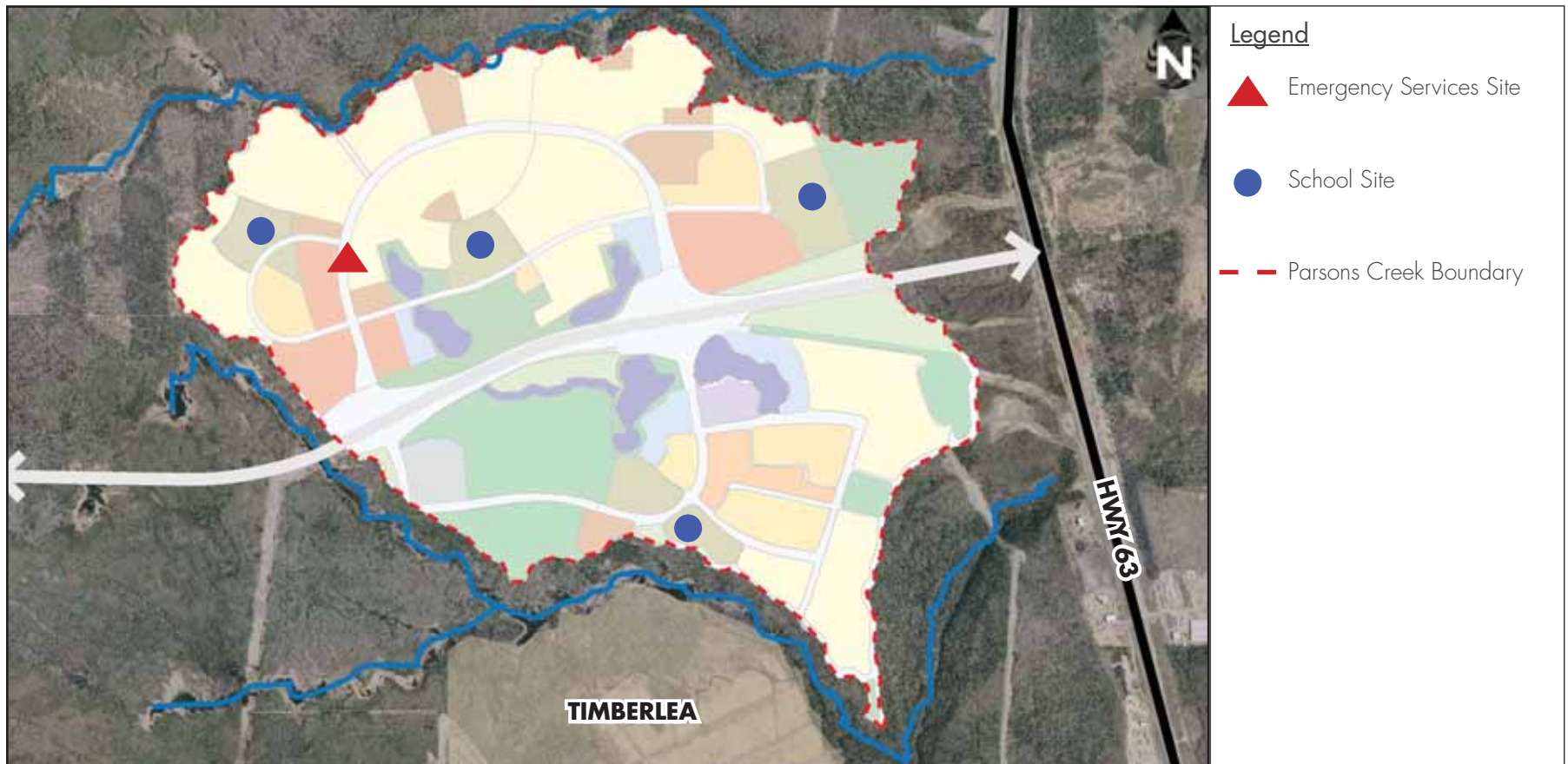
## SCHOOL SITES

Parsons Creek has been designed to accommodate three joint elementary school sites and one joint high school site. These school sites have been developed in pairs to reduce the amount of land used, ensure they are centralized, and allow the schools to share facilities.

Each school site has been located based on consultation with the Fort McMurray school divisions.

## TRANSIT STATIONS

In order to promote walkability and encourage alternative forms for transportation, Parsons Creek will be designed to accommodate public transit. The location of associated transit stations will be determined by the RMWB during the time of transit routing. It is anticipated that these stations will be centrally-located in higher density areas that are within close proximity to commercial and recreation facilities.





## TRANSIT ORIENTED DESIGN

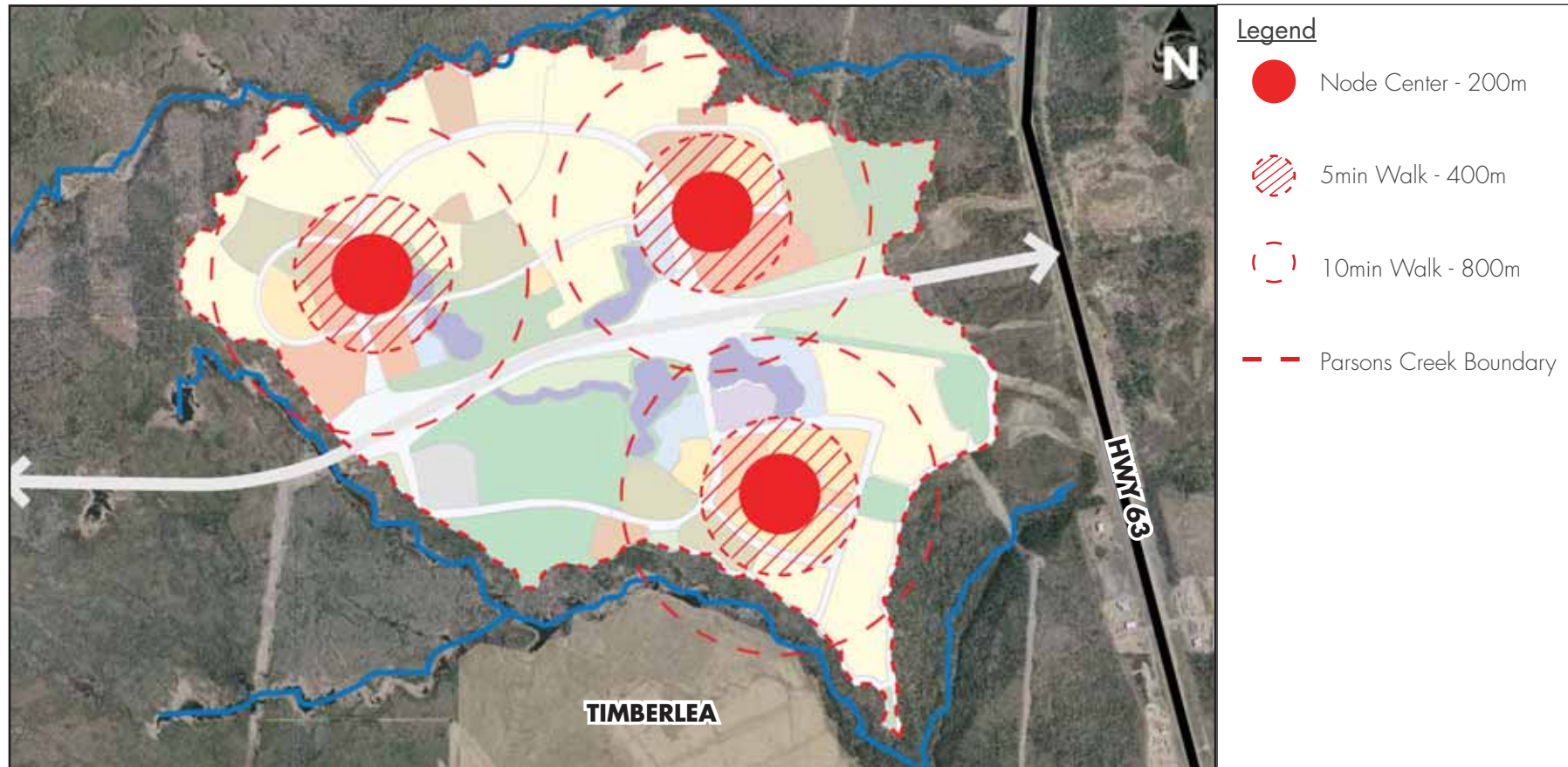
The intention of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is to create higher density, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use environments near transit nodes which optimize use of the transit infrastructure. These areas, referred to in this Plan as neighbourhood nodes, are designed to facilitate public transportation and work seamlessly with the Diversified bus systems thereby providing a range of transportation options for the community.

TOD focuses on creating a mixed use environment that offers residential, retail, offices, open space, and public uses in a comfortable walking distance. Developments designed in this way are typically

located in core commercial areas near a transit node which provides residents and employees the option to travel either by transit, vehicle, bicycle, or foot.

There are three key neighbourhood nodes identified in the Parsons Creek Concept Plan. These nodes are based on TOD principles previously described and will provide services for the community in higher density developed areas. These neighbourhood nodes will be easily identifiable due to their higher densities, distinctive architecture, size, and scale. Neighbourhood nodes will also serve as gathering places, with the intent of offering a range of easily accessible services and promoting interaction among neighbours.

The figure below shows catchment areas from each neighbourhood node of 400m and 800m which represent walking times of 5 minutes and 10 minutes respectively. The node itself is shown with a 200m radius to account for a varying location of the neighbourhood node's center.



## COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREAS

During the design process of Parsons Creek, certain "Character Areas" began to emerge. These character areas went beyond simple land uses such as residential or commercial uses; they can better be defined as specific areas in the project boundary that share a unique and common purpose.

Typically centered around a mix of land uses envisioned to serve a specific purpose, the character areas were further identified using District names as shown on the figure below and further described in this document. These Districts were not designed around existing districts from the RMWB

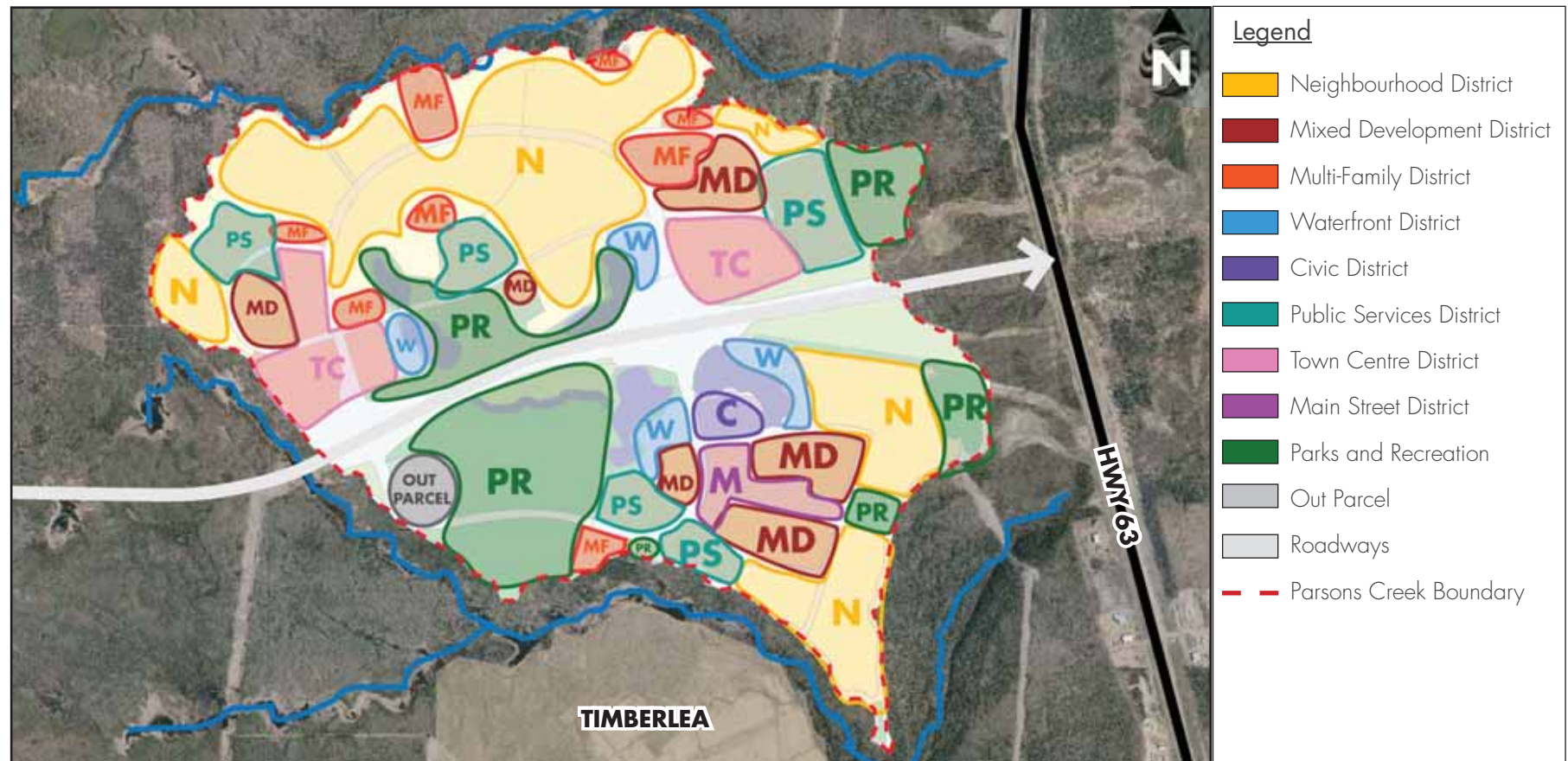
Land Use Bylaw, they were meant to describe how the area would be used and not necessarily how they would be zoned.

To further shape the character areas, the Parsons Creek Design Guidelines were created to act as a supplemental tool guiding development towards the intended vision of each area. In addition, all parcels of land will be sold using an RFP process to ensure that one developer completes each section having a thorough understanding of the District's vision and is committed to adhering to the community guidelines and expectations.

The vision of each Parsons Creek character area is described in more detail in **Section 9.0 - Parsons Creek's Character Areas**. In general, residential

uses will be located in the Neighbourhood, Multi-Family, and Mixed Development Districts whereas the commercial uses will be located in the Town Centre and Main Street Districts. To complement these areas, the Public Services, Civic, and Waterfront Districts will accommodate community and recreation areas thereby supporting Parsons Creek's vision of being a complete community.

In addition to these character areas, an out parcel has been identified in southeast Parsons Creek. This site is intended for the development of a major public works facility.





## OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Parsons Creek will incorporate a multi-functional open space system to accommodate the active and passive recreational needs of future residents. This system will provide a comprehensive network of pedestrian and non-vehicular linkages throughout the community allowing access to and from surrounding communities. The open space system will also provide convenient walking routes to local destinations.

Throughout Parsons Creek, open space areas will include school reserves, municipal reserves, regional trail corridors, stormwater management facilities, and environmental reserves. The arrangement of open space will provide a high degree of connectivity in the community and allow the public to conveniently access and enjoy the open space.

### Parks

Two locations have been identified for the creation of major recreation areas in Parsons Creek. These areas are envisioned to provide recreation opportunities for the residents of Parsons Creek and surrounding communities.

Additional parks will be situated along the waterfront, between the stormwater ponds, and dispersed throughout the Neighbourhood area. These features will provide year round recreational and cultural opportunities for activities such as skating, cross-country skiing, paddle boating, picnics, touch football, kids festivals, and various other outdoor activities during both the summer and winter months.



### Reserve Areas

The Municipal Reserve areas will be configured to support the ecological integrity of existing natural features, while enhancing community recreation opportunities. Municipal Reserve dedication will be provided to supplement key natural features and areas, particularly in the form of open space adjacent to wetland areas, as well as appropriate locations in the vicinity of residential areas.

### System of Trails

In addition to the open space network, a continuous trail system will be created around the perimeter of the Parsons Creek development. To ensure the trail is accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and maintenance vehicles, this trail system will be constructed with a 3.0 meter wide asphalt pathway.

All trails throughout Parsons Creek will be used to link residential areas to natural features, and function as interpretive trail systems that can be used to teach residents about the environmental systems that surround their community.



## 9.0 PARSONS CREEK'S CHARACTER AREAS

### NEIGHBOURHOOD DISTRICT

The Neighbourhood District is intended to provide a diverse range of low density housing opportunities to accommodate the needs of various incomes, ages, and lifestyles. A combination of recreational, institutional, and small-scale commercial areas will supplement this primarily residential district to form a convenient, enjoyable, safe area for residents to call home.

The intention of the Government of Alberta, when undertaking the creation of Parsons Creek, was to provide additional housing for the rapidly growing Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo where vacancy rates were quickly decreasing; the amount of land designated for low density housing in Parsons Creek is reflective of this priority.

Design Guidelines have been created for Parsons Creek to ensure all development meets or exceeds what is envisioned and outlined in this Urban Design Plan. The recommendations made for use in the Neighbourhood District include a focus on human scale architecture and interconnection with pedestrian space. A series of regional and local pathways, linear parks, continuous sidewalks, and walkway systems will also be used in the Neighbourhood District to connect residential spaces to commercial, recreational, and educational areas.





## MULTI-FAMILY DISTRICT

The Multi-Family District will be used to accommodate medium and high density housing in the form of multiunit residential buildings. Distributed throughout Parsons Creek, the Multi-Family District will provide a range of housing types to residents and be located in close proximity to a variety of amenities offered in the community including open spaces, commercial areas, and transit routes.

Building forms in the Multi-Family District will range from apartments, triplex and fourplexes, to town homes and cluster housing.





## MIXED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Mixed Development District will be used to accommodate a variety of higher density residential and commercial uses. The residential areas in the Mixed Development District are envisioned to be more urban in nature than those found in the Neighbourhood area meaning they will be of higher density and in closer proximity to commercial areas. The Mixed Development District is also envisioned to be the location of the transit nodes located throughout Parsons Creek. These areas will be designed to provide a variety of amenities in a compact location to ensure ease of walkability for pedestrians using the transit system.

Residential units in the Mixed Development District will be multi-family ranging from multi-storied apartment and condo buildings to high density row and townhouses. Possible commercial tenants in this area may range from office buildings and hotels to lifestyle based retailers, restaurants, and coffee shops. The creative set of land uses will provide the area with a balanced daytime and nighttime population of both residential and commercial elements





## WATERFRONT DISTRICT

Parsons's Creek Waterfront District has been designed to transform the stormwater ponds centrally located in Parsons Creek into a unique place for retail, office, entertainment, and residential uses; and also provide residents and visitors with a variety of recreation opportunities.

A boardwalk is envisioned to surround the water in areas bordered by commercial development to create a public interface with this exceptional element. Due to the presence of this boardwalk, and recreational opportunities associated with the water, the Waterfront District will offer a pedestrian friendly environment that is focused on the relationship of the structures and pedestrian walkways with the water. A variety of recreational activities that may be accommodated in the Waterfront District including: paddle boating, kayaking, and ice skating.





## CIVIC DISTRICT

The Civic District is a very unique area envisioned to house civic minded uses in a single location. Facilities and initiatives that support the community, and are often supported by the government or municipality, will be accommodated in the Civic area. Examples of uses envisioned for location in this area include: libraries, interpretive centers, museums, performing arts centers, and government buildings.



## PUBLIC SERVICES DISTRICT

The Public Services District is similar to the Civic District in that it is intended to accommodate uses that are supportive of the community and often those that are government funded.

The Public Services District has been primarily used in areas envisioned for firehalls, emergency response dispatch centres, police stations, care facilities, or school sites. The location of the Public Services District throughout Parsons Creek has been based on necessity, catchment distances for emergency services, and walking distances to schools.





## MAIN STREET DISTRICT

This character area is envisioned to be one of the most unique areas of Parsons Creek. The Main Street District is intended to reflect a traditional downtown design and be highly walkable with a variety of commercial opportunities lining the streetscape.

Tree lined streets, wide sidewalks, and the use of a modified grid street network providing multiple access routes will promote the Main Street District as a pedestrian-friendly area and create an environment that encourages walking and other non-vehicular modes of transportation. The site design in this area will incorporate internal pedestrian routes linking urban parkettes and gathering spaces to shops and smaller-scale businesses.

The Main Street District will create a unique sense of place for commercial development in this area thereby attracting tenants and providing employment and commercial opportunities for the residents of Parsons Creek and surrounding communities.





## TOWN CENTRE DISTRICT

The Town Centre District, located in Phase Two and Three, is intended to accommodate larger commercial retailers that typically would only have one location in Fort McMurray.

A study entitled the *Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study*, completed in 2010, reported that the RMVB is currently under-served for commercial uses by at least 1,000,000 sf of rental space; the Town Centre District will help to decrease this shortage by providing a large land base for destination commercial uses. Focus in this commercial area will be on larger scale commercial developments such as department, supermarket, home improvement, clothing, and electronic stores.

This area will be developed with comprehensive site designs in order to incorporate high standards for architecture, colors, materials, hard surfacing, signage, and landscaping. The Town Centre District will also encourage safe and direct pedestrian travel via hardscapes, trails, and pedestrian routes creating an area where visitors will feel comfortable walking from store to store rather than relying on their vehicles.





# 10.0 TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

## ROAD NETWORK

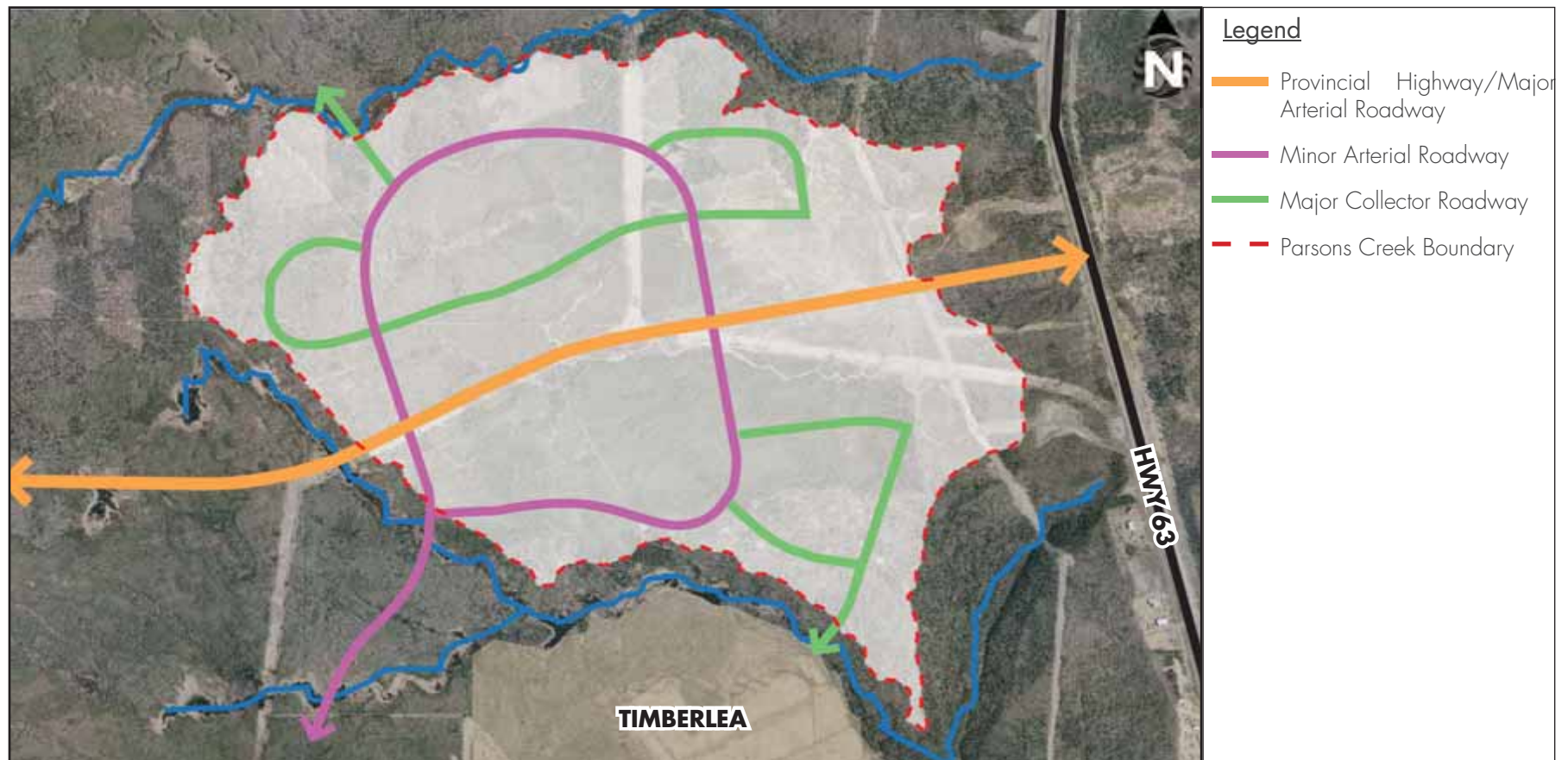
Originally laid out in the *Parsons Creek Community Vision and Design Brief*, the roadway network, as shown below, consists of a series of arterial, collector, and local roadways to service the development. The primary access used to connect Parsons Creek to existing areas in the Upper Townsite is Highway 686, which runs east to west through the community, via Highway 63.

Rainbow Creek Drive, in the residential subdivision of Timberlea will provide an additional access by extending north into Parsons Creek. This roadway will be the primary access point to Parsons Creek until Highway 686 is constructed.

A ring road will provide internal access in Parsons Creek by branching off of Highway 686 and connecting to major collector roadways in each

development area. A series of local roadways will reach further and facilitate access to individual parcels in Parsons Creek.

To provide an access to future development located north of Parsons Creek, a major collector located in northwest Parsons Creek has been provided.





## ROAD LAYOUT

The roadway network in Parsons Creek has been designed using the principles of Transit Oriented Development which uses typical walking distances to ensure communities are designed to be comfortably accessible for pedestrians.

In Parsons Creek, major roadways have been strategically located to ensure most residents are in 400 meters of either a collector or arterial roadway. These high-capacity roads will be where transit stops (e.g. private and municipal buses) will be routed thereby avoiding heavy traffic on local residential streets.

As described in **Section 8.0 - Community Design**, 400 meters represents approximately a 5 minute walking distance which research has shown is a typical distance passengers are willing to walk to access a bus stop. The design of Parsons Creek, based on transit nodes, is further discussed in **Section 8.0 - Community Design**.

The modified grid road network used in each phase of Parsons Creek has also been designed based around TOD principles to provide a variety of route options for vehicles and pedestrians. Curvilinear street patterns and cul-de-sacs have been avoided wherever possible to promote efficiency, walkability, and alternative route option.

## BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) are high level public transit systems that provide station to station transportation using dedicated BRT/transit lanes and stops. This system, as utilized in Parsons Creek, will be serviced by the local transit system which collects and distributes passengers from local bus stops and delivers them to the BRT/transit stops.

The BRT system creates faster and more reliable service, minimizing the number of system wide passenger transfers by providing more direct routes to high volume destinations such as major employment centres; providing shorter walking distances to bus stop locations; and providing a system that is safe, easy to use, and convenient.

In addition to accommodating BRT service in Parsons Creek's roadway network, a series of supportive initiatives are recommended to be further examined by the Developer and the Municipality during the detailed design of Parsons Creek. The initiatives include: traffic signal priority for buses, increased pick-up service during peak periods of the day, sidewalk extensions via intersection bulbing for bus stops to avoid buses having to pull in and out of traffic, bus stops located approximately every two blocks, the use of high quality bus stops with heated shelters, car-share and bike-share programs, and community bus pass programs.

## HIGHWAY/MAJOR ARTERIAL

The major roadway in Parsons Creek branches off of Highway 63 and stretches east up approximately 6% slope 130 meters to the Parsons Creek Plateau. Travelling west through Parsons Creek, Highway 686 will eventually connect to the west access road.

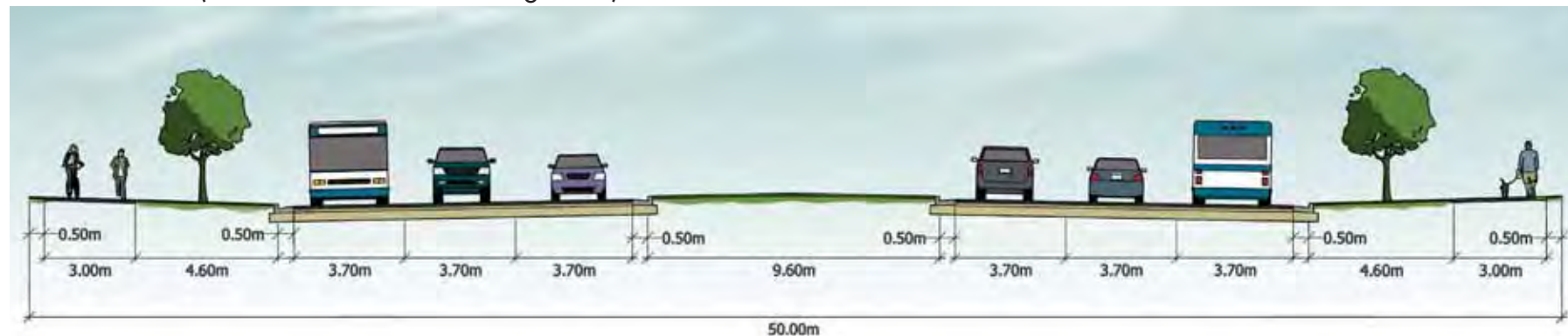
This roadway is required to serve the population Parsons Creek and future development of the future West Growth Area identified in the 2007 *Fringe Area Development Assessment Report*. A traffic impact assessment further describing Highway 686 and its role has been completed for Parsons Creek and is available under separate cover.

The major roadway network for Parsons Creek will consist of the following system:

- A four lane roadway, running east to west through Parsons Creek
- The Parsons Creek ring road, a four lane minor arterial, will connect all portion of Parsons Creek together.

Both Highway 686 and the Parsons Creek Arterial Ring Road will be designed to facilitate BRT by accommodating an exclusive transit lane as the outermost lane going either direction. This lane will also serve as the right-hand turning lane.

### 50.0m Arterial (Parsons Creek Arterial Ring Road)



## COLLECTOR ROADWAYS

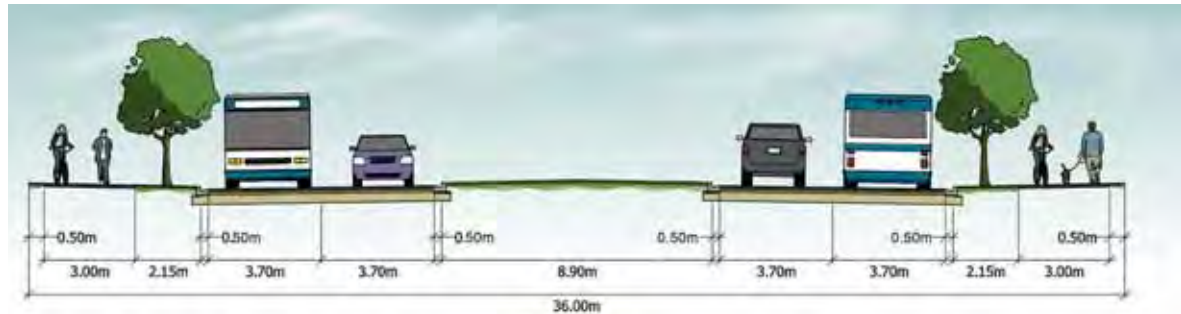
A series of collector and local roadways will be used in Parsons Creek to provide access from the arterial network to individual development cells. Collector roadways in Parsons Creek will range in size from 37.0m wide rights-of-way to 25.0m wide depending on their anticipated use.

Cross-sections of the Parsons Creek major roadways are shown to visualize each roadway's width, sidewalks, and landscaping areas. As illustrated, separated sidewalks will be implemented throughout Parsons Creek wherever possible to provide shelter, shade, and enhance the pedestrian environment. Landscaping in the roadway rights-of-way is envisioned to be accommodated in the center medians and side boulevards of the roadways. Using the medians for planting is an important element in moderating many of the micro-climate effects felt in the community by pedestrians, notably the winter wind, and in creating a sense of place.

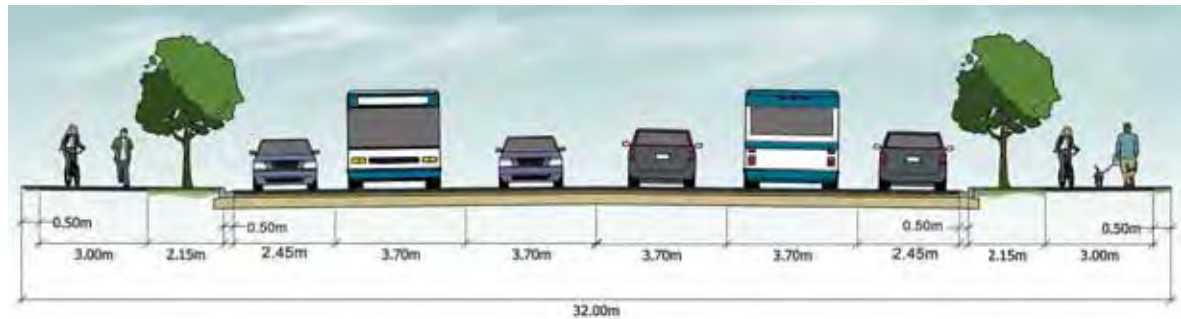
### 37.0m Four Lane Major Divided Collector (with Parking)



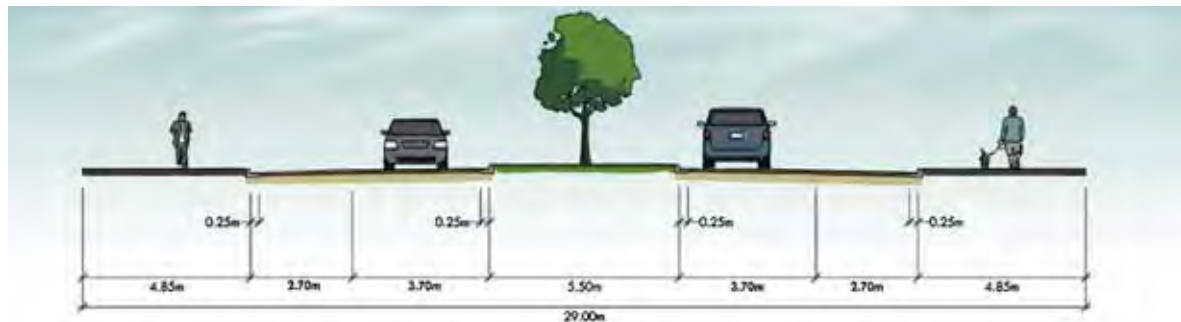
### 36.0 Four Lane Divided Collector



### 32.0m Four Lane Undivided Collector



### 29.0m Two Lane Divided Collector





## LOCAL ROADWAYS

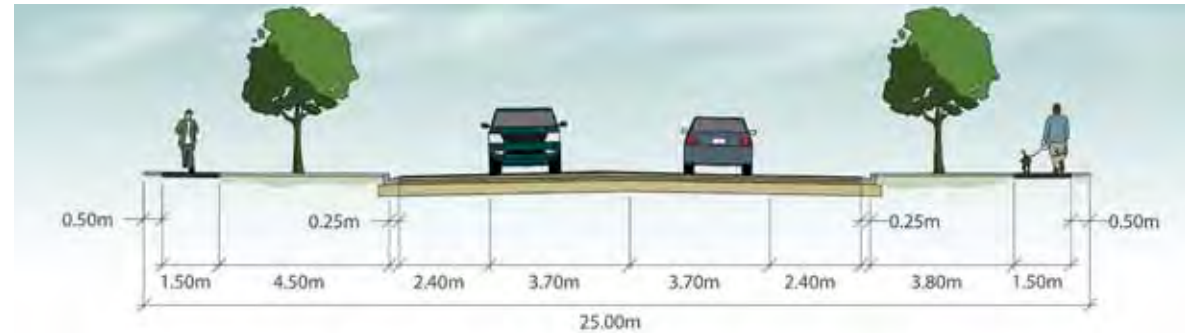
Local roadways have been designed with 18.0 meter wide rights-of-way incorporating either separated or mono sidewalks depending on their location. Modified grid alignment of local roadways have been used during the layout of the local roadway network rather than curvilinear patterns in an attempt to create a more efficient transportation network.

## LANES

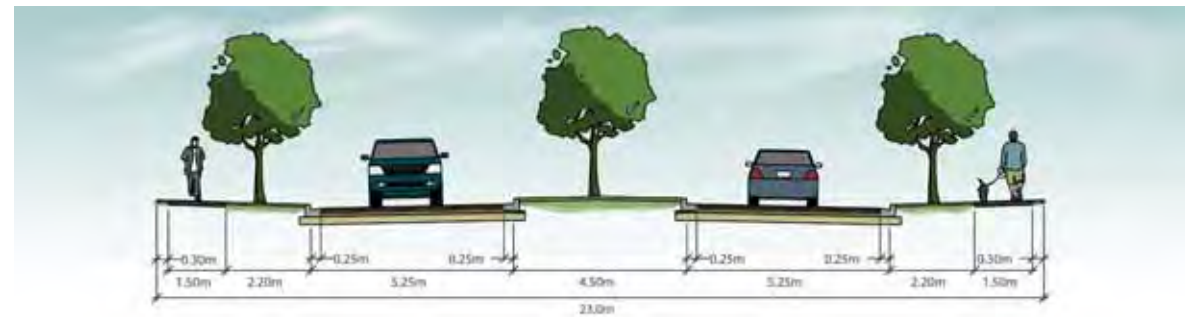
Two lane standards have been provided in Parsons Creek: 8.0m wide right-of-way and 6.0m wide right-of-way. These standards have been used to ensure every district in Parsons Creek is able to be properly serviced and accessed.

All roadways in Parsons Creek will be designed in accordance to the RMVVB's Engineering and Servicing Standards at the time of development.

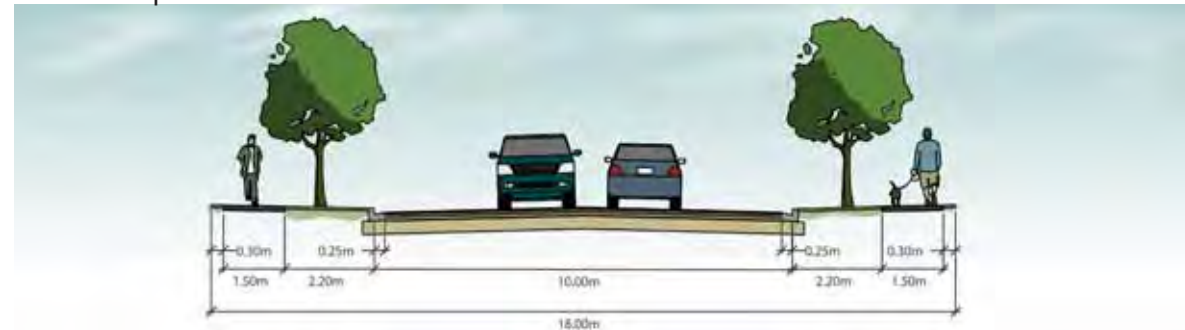
### 25.0m Two Lane Undivided Collector



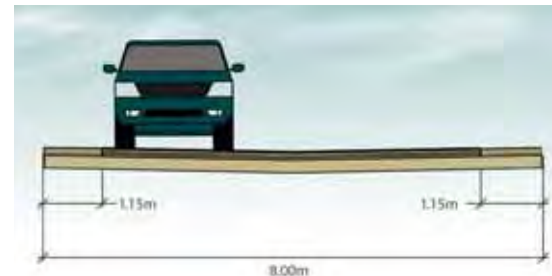
### 23.0m Divided Local



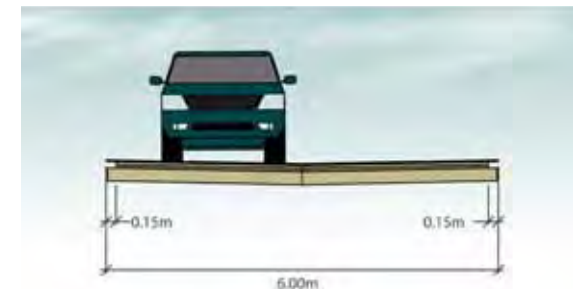
### 18.0m Separated Sidewalk Local



### 8.0m Lane



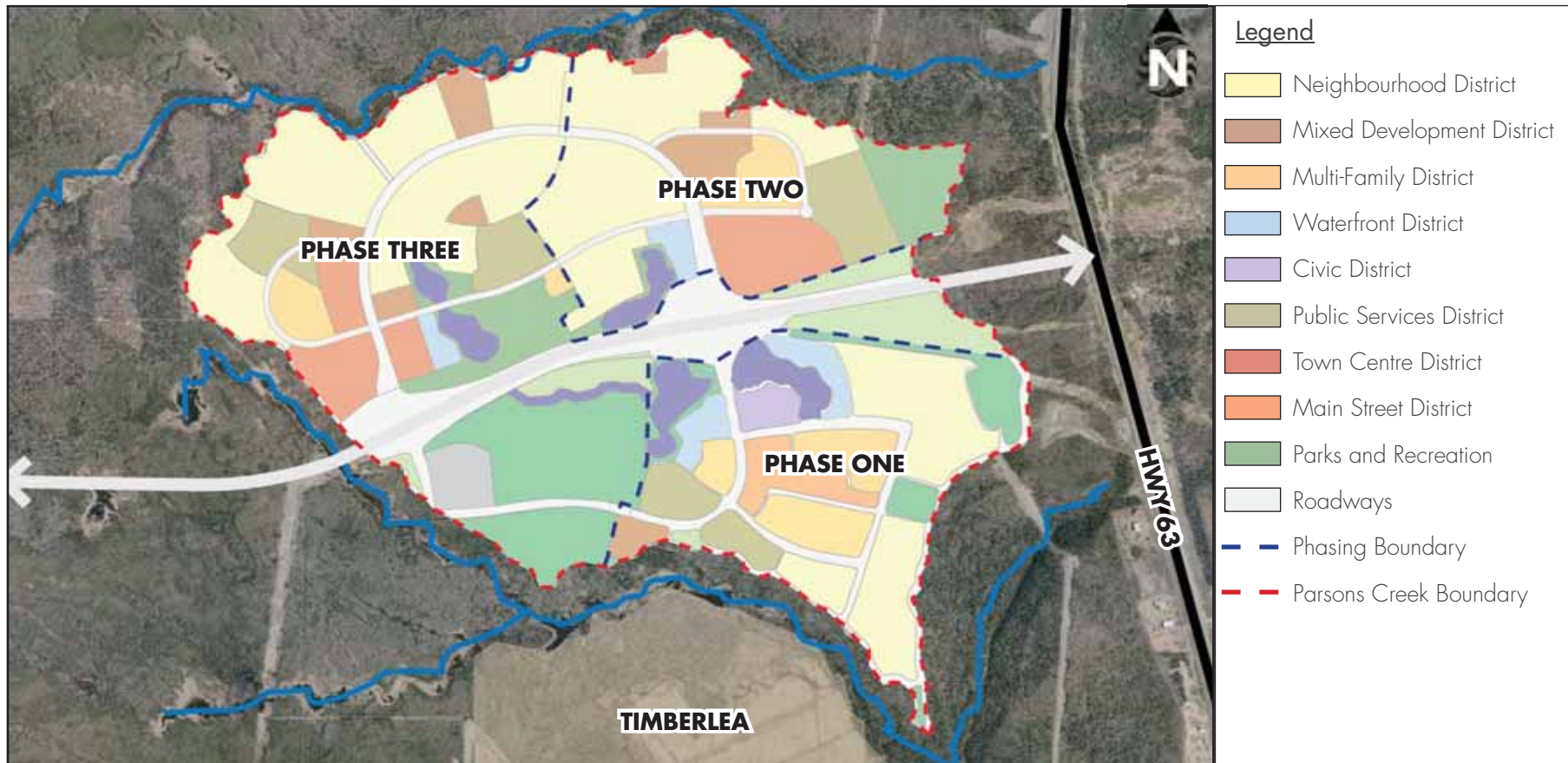
### 6.0m Lane



# 11.0 PHASING

Each phase in Parsons Creek has been designed with a different overall focus and will therefore include varying character areas to achieve the focus envisioned. In the following chart, the character areas present in each phase are identified.

	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
Main Street District	Yes	No	No
Civic District	Yes	No	No
Neighbourhood District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waterfront District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mixed Development District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Services District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multi-Family District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Town Centre District	No	Yes	Yes



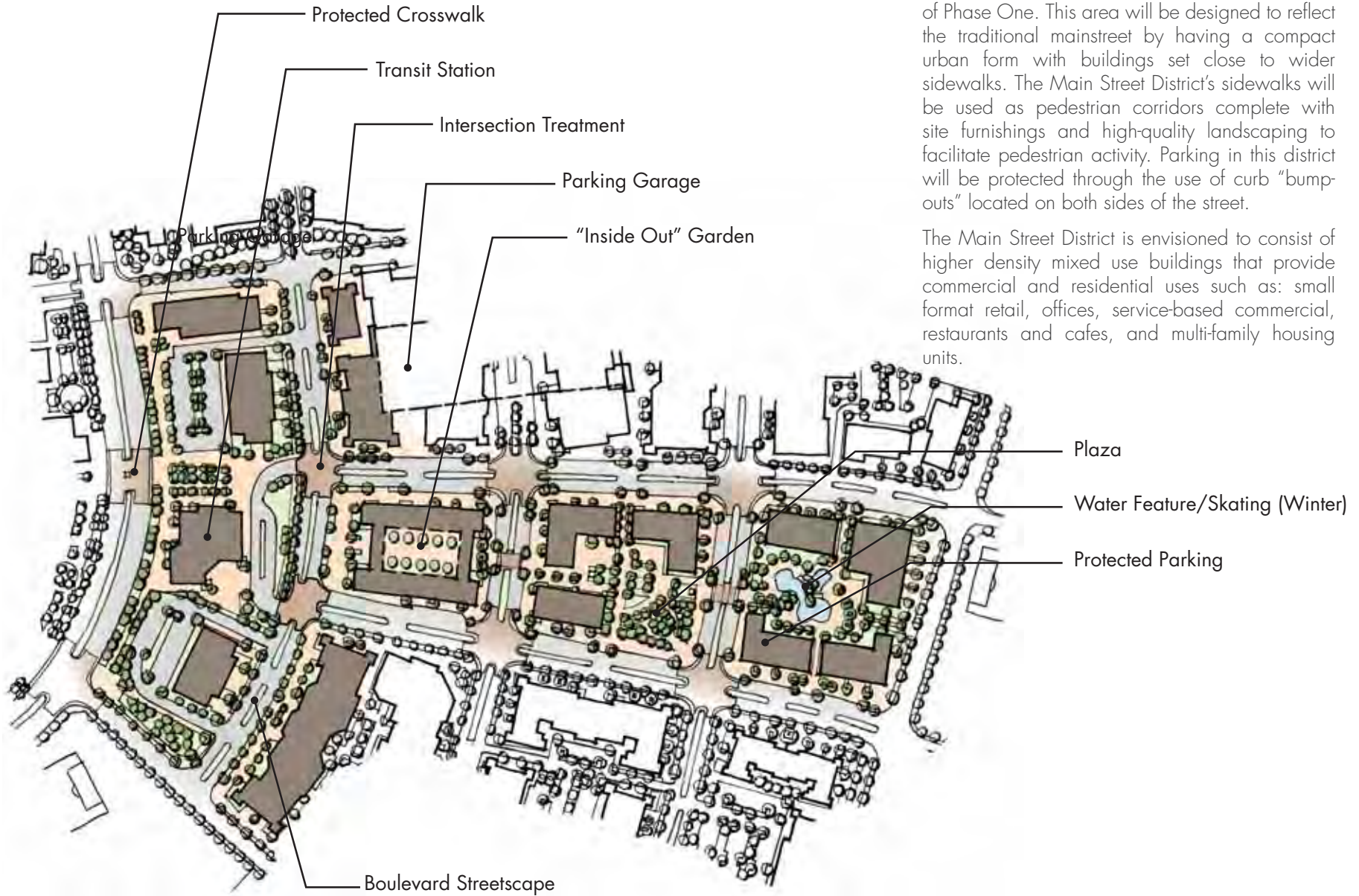


## MAIN STREET DISTRICT

### Phase One

The Main Street District is envisioned as the heart of Phase One. This area will be designed to reflect the traditional mainstreet by having a compact urban form with buildings set close to wider sidewalks. The Main Street District's sidewalks will be used as pedestrian corridors complete with site furnishings and high-quality landscaping to facilitate pedestrian activity. Parking in this district will be protected through the use of curb "bump-outs" located on both sides of the street.

The Main Street District is envisioned to consist of higher density mixed use buildings that provide commercial and residential uses such as: small format retail, offices, service-based commercial, restaurants and cafes, and multi-family housing units.

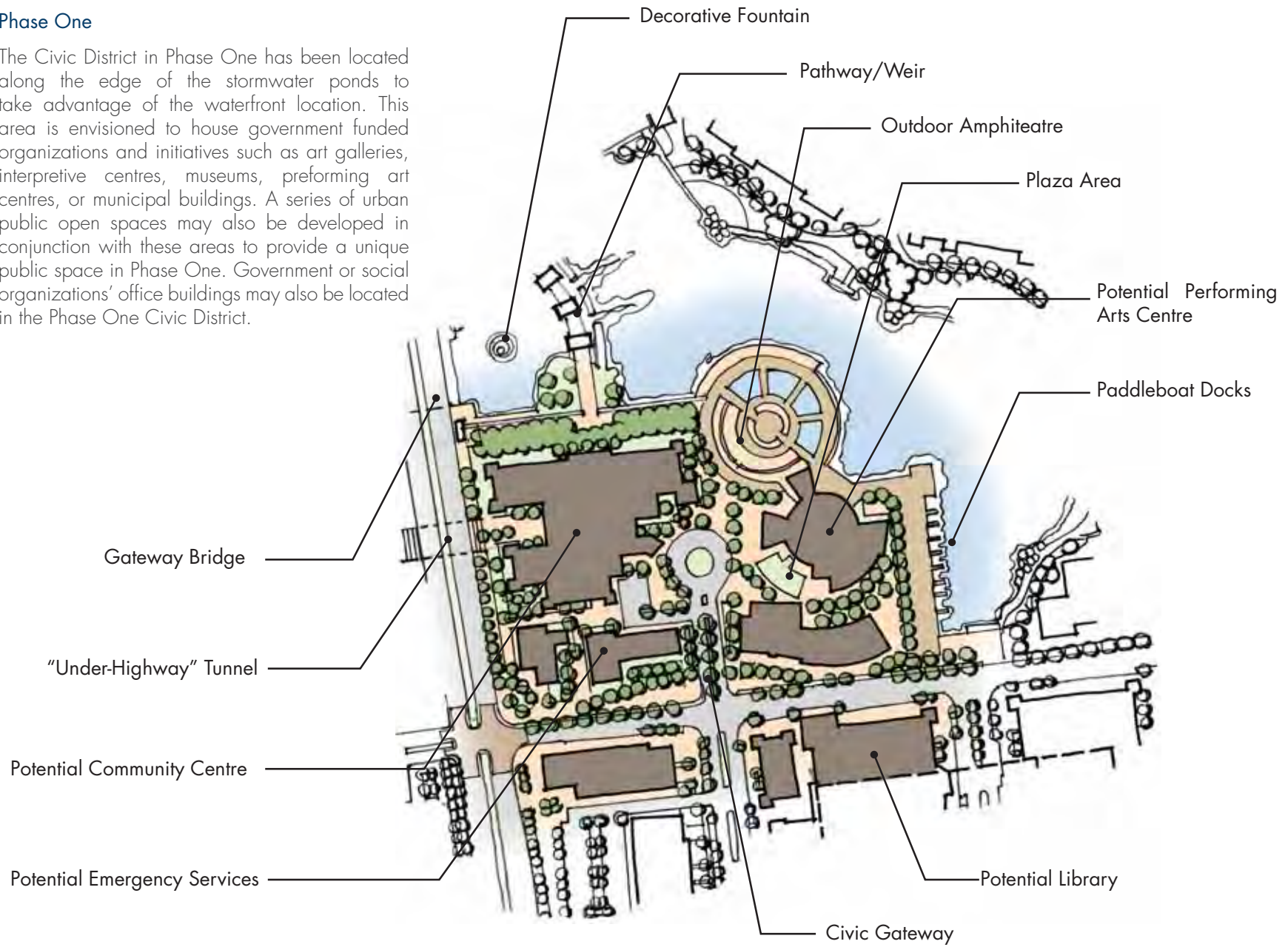


Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

## CIVIC DISTRICT

### Phase One

The Civic District in Phase One has been located along the edge of the stormwater ponds to take advantage of the waterfront location. This area is envisioned to house government funded organizations and initiatives such as art galleries, interpretive centres, museums, performing art centres, or municipal buildings. A series of urban public open spaces may also be developed in conjunction with these areas to provide a unique public space in Phase One. Government or social organizations' office buildings may also be located in the Phase One Civic District.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD DISTRICT

### Phase One

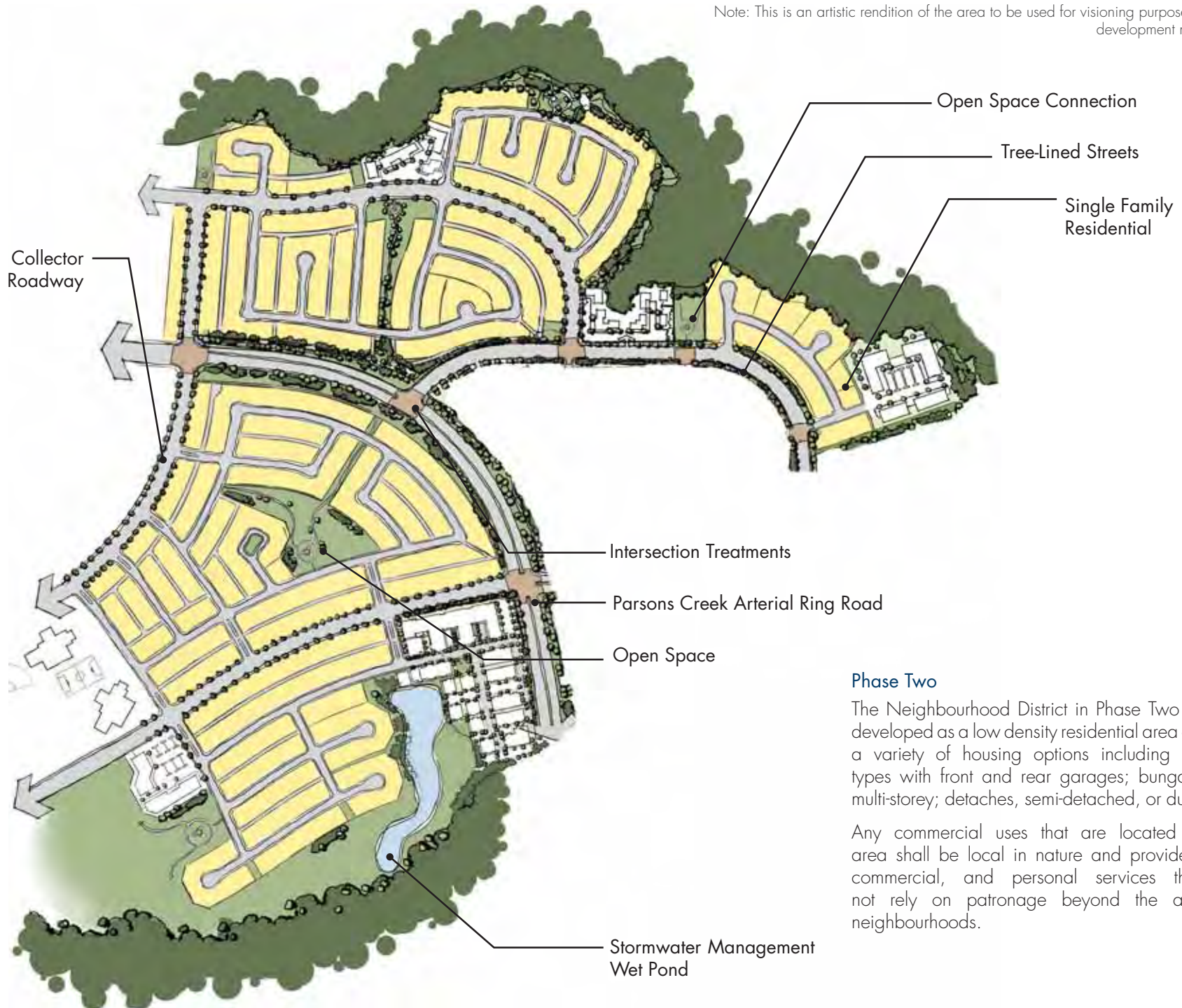
The size of the Neighbourhood District in Phase One has been based on a response to the decreasing vacancy rates experienced in the Municipality.

The Neighbourhood District has been located in such a way so as to minimize any potential conflicts with Highway 686 or the higher density areas in Phase One and provide connections to natural open spaces. The design of the area has a street layout that is reminiscent of tradition urban neighbourhood.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.



### Phase Two

The Neighbourhood District in Phase Two will be developed as a low density residential area offering a variety of housing options including product types with front and rear garages; bungalow or multi-storey; detaches, semi-detached, or duplexes.

Any commercial uses that are located in this area shall be local in nature and provide retail, commercial, and personal services that do not rely on patronage beyond the adjacent neighbourhoods.





## WATERFRONT DISTRICT

### Phase One

The Waterfront District located in Phase One will be one of the most unique areas found in Parsons Creek. This area of Phase One will provide opportunities for commercial, residential, and recreational uses that take advantage of their shoreline locations for patios, a boardwalk, skating locations, paddle boats, and scenic views.

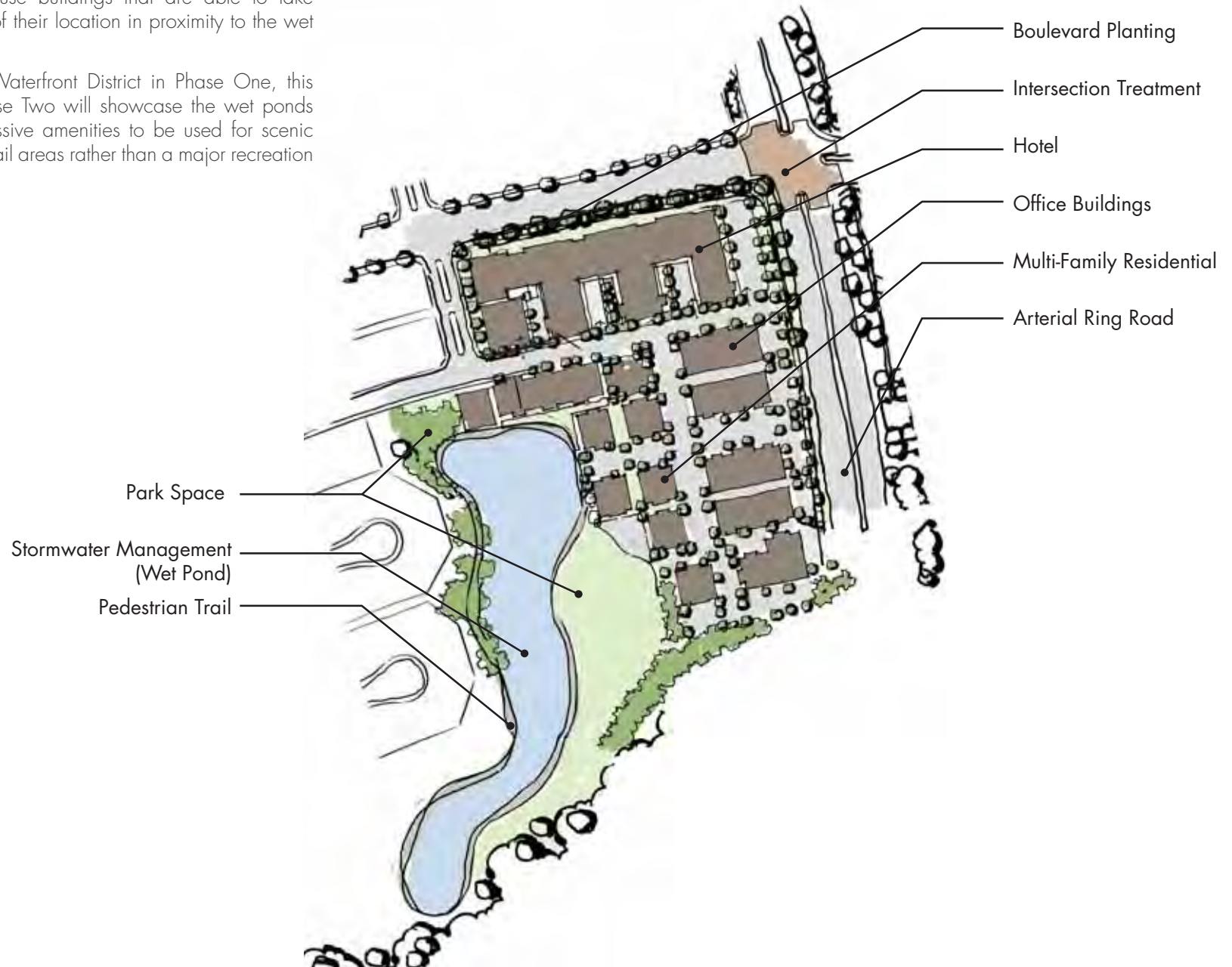
Although private buildings will be developed in the Waterfront District, the shoreline is envisioned as a recreation destination in Parson Creek and will be publicly accessible for all to enjoy.

Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

## Phase Two

The Waterfront District in Phase Two has been used to accommodate commercial, residential, and mixed use buildings that are able to take advantage of their location in proximity to the wet ponds.

Unlike the Waterfront District in Phase One, this area in Phase Two will showcase the wet ponds more as passive amenities to be used for scenic views and trail areas rather than a major recreation destination.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.



## MIXED DEVELOPMENT

### Phase One

In Phase One, the Mixed Development District is envisioned to primarily house retail and multi-family residential uses. Housing forms in this district may range from 6 storey apartment and condo buildings to mixed use buildings and high density row or townhomes.

Commercial uses frequented by passersby; such as retailers, services, or restaurants; will line the streets in this area to encourage interactive streetscapes.

The Phase One transit node is also envisioned to be located in the Mixed Development District to promote a live/work/play environment that is easily accessible via transit.



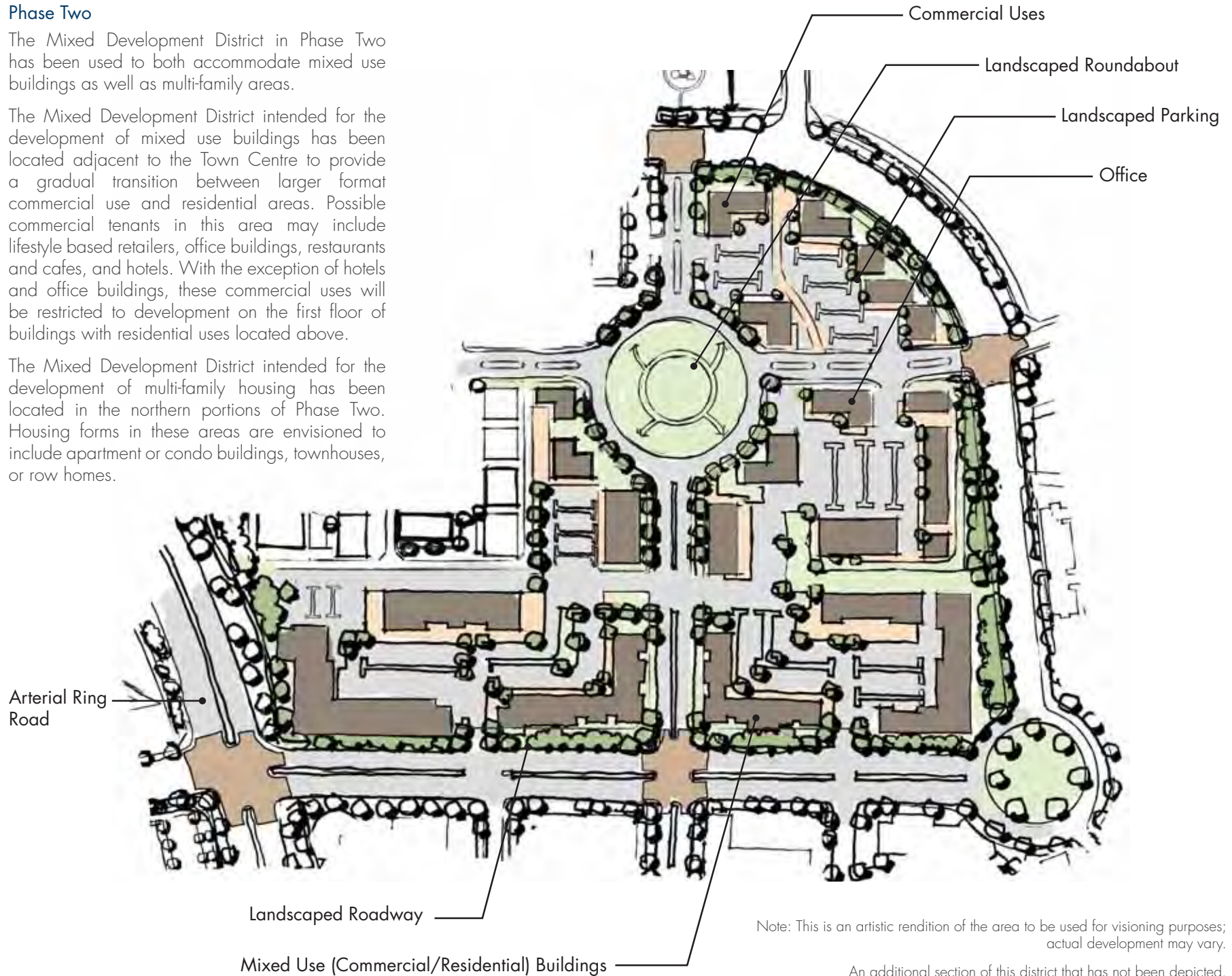
Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

## Phase Two

The Mixed Development District in Phase Two has been used to both accommodate mixed use buildings as well as multi-family areas.

The Mixed Development District intended for the development of mixed use buildings has been located adjacent to the Town Centre to provide a gradual transition between larger format commercial use and residential areas. Possible commercial tenants in this area may include lifestyle based retailers, office buildings, restaurants and cafes, and hotels. With the exception of hotels and office buildings, these commercial uses will be restricted to development on the first floor of buildings with residential uses located above.

The Mixed Development District intended for the development of multi-family housing has been located in the northern portions of Phase Two. Housing forms in these areas are envisioned to include apartment or condo buildings, townhouses, or row homes.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

An additional section of this district that has not been depicted.

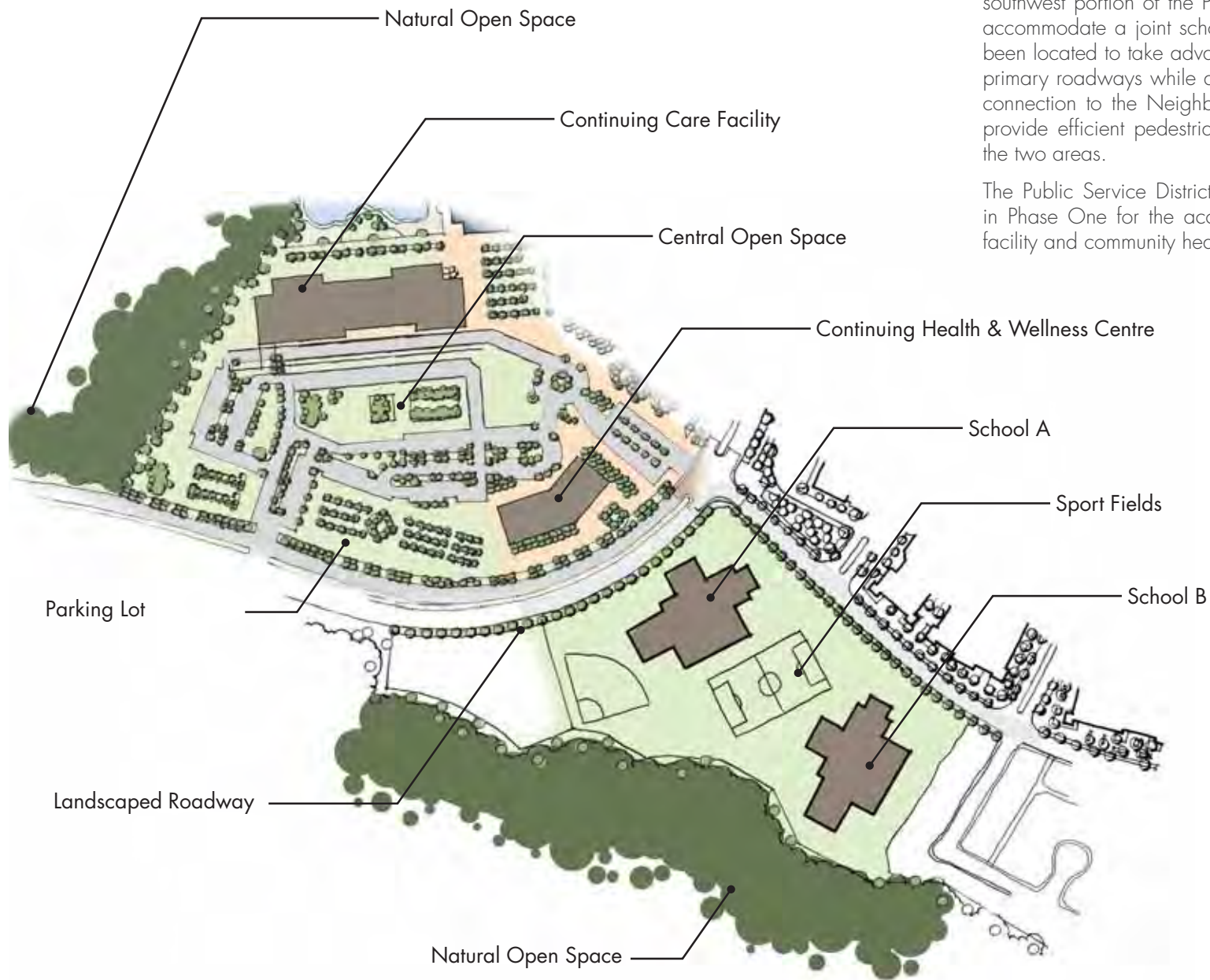


## PUBLIC SERVICE

### Phase One

A Public Service District has been located in the southwest portion of the Phase One Plan Area to accommodate a joint school site. This district has been located to take advantage of its proximity to primary roadways while also maintaining a close connection to the Neighbourhood area so as to provide efficient pedestrian connections between the two areas.

The Public Service District has also been utilized in Phase One for the accommodation of a care facility and community health and wellness centre.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

## Phase Two

Two Public Service District have been located in Phase Two, both accessible via a looping major collector roadway. Each of these districts will accommodate uses that are supportive of the neighbourhood such as education, recreation, or community facilities.

The northeast Public Service District is envisioned to accommodate an integrated joint high school site and public recreation facility. This site will be designed with consultation from both of Fort McMurray school divisions as well as the RMVB Parks, Recreation, and Culture department.

The northwest Public Service District is envisioned to accommodate smaller scale community facilities.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

An additional section of this district that has not been depicted.

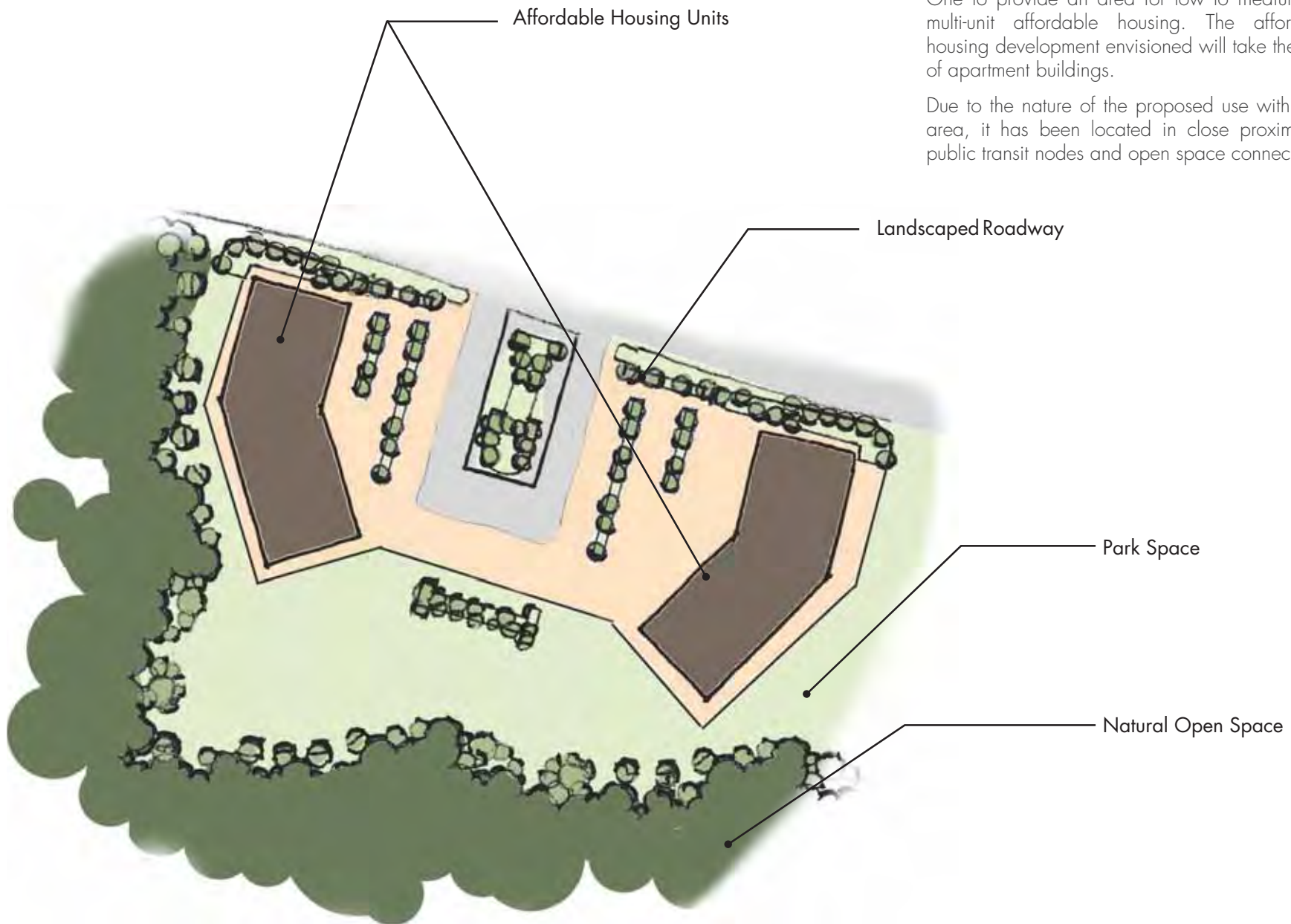


## MULTI-FAMILY

### Phase One

The Multi-Family District has been located in Phase One to provide an area for low to medium rise multi-unit affordable housing. The affordable housing development envisioned will take the form of apartment buildings.

Due to the nature of the proposed use within this area, it has been located in close proximity to public transit nodes and open space connections.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

## Phase Two

The Multi-Family District has been located in Phase Two to provide areas for low to medium rise multi-unit residential development. In this district, housing forms will range from townhouses or rowhomes to multiplex condo buildings.

This District has been located to be in close proximity to public transit nodes and open space connections.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.

An additional section of this district that has not been depicted.

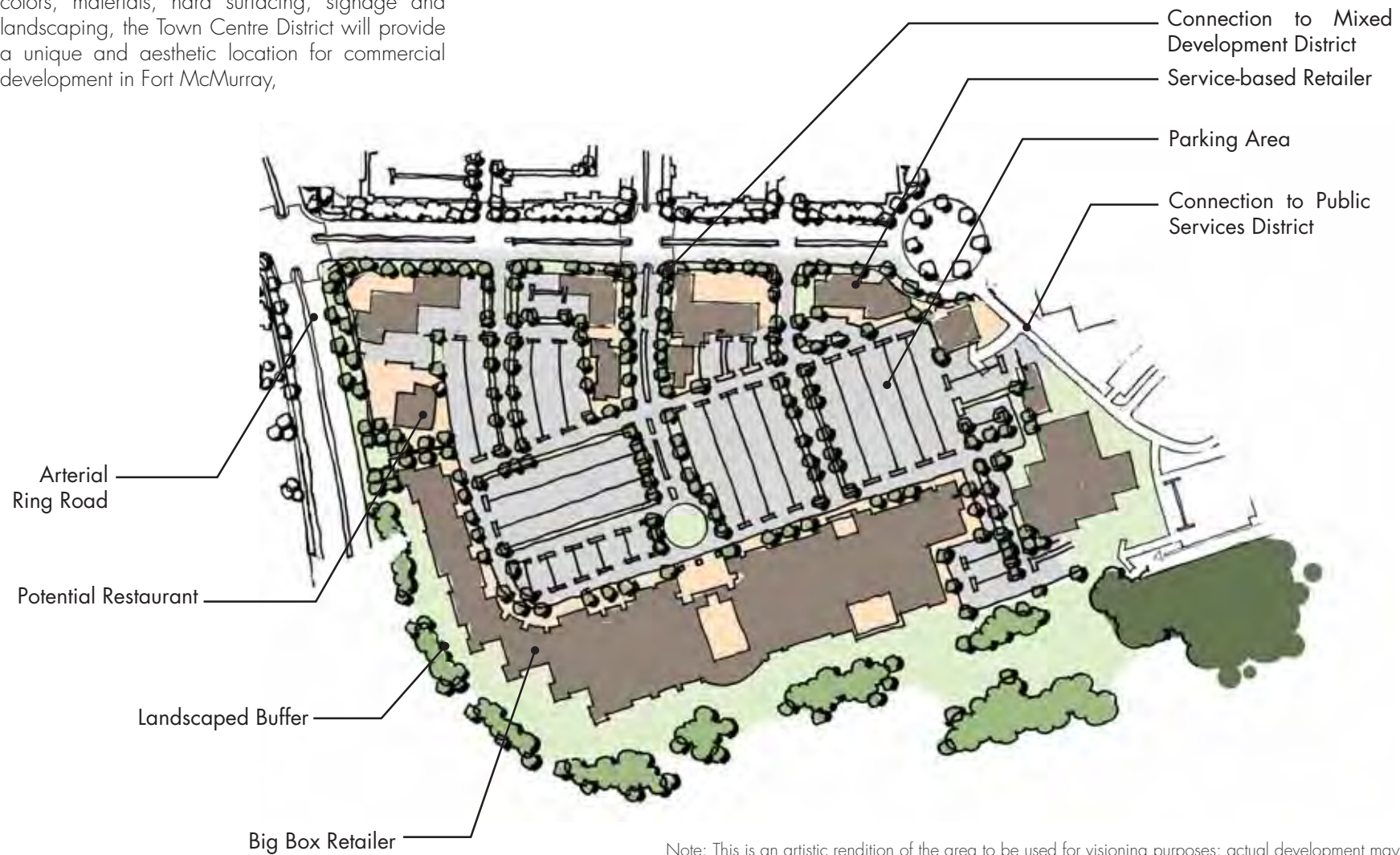


## TOWN CENTRE DISTRICT

### Phase Two

The Town Centre District in Phase Two has been sized to help decrease the commercial land deficit experienced by the RMWB. This area is envisioned to consist of large format commercial retailers such as grocery, electronic, hardware, or specialty stores. A variety of restaurants and service-based businesses may also located in this area. Designed with high standards for architecture, colors, materials, hard surfacing, signage and landscaping, the Town Centre District will provide a unique and aesthetic location for commercial development in Fort McMurray,

The Town Centre District has been strategically located in Phase Two to take advantage of its proximity to Highway 63 and the connection it provides with the rest of region.



Note: This is an artistic rendition of the area to be used for visioning purposes; actual development may vary.