

Urban Design Brief

Richford Urban Village

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1. Introduction and Project Overview



Figure 1: Location Map

1.1 Purpose

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared by Invistec Consulting Ltd. on behalf of Urban Village by Alliance in support of a Plan Amendment and Rezoning application. The application proposes to amend the Richford Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) and to rezone 10950, 11004, and 11020 Ellerslie Road SW (Plan 2146TR, Block 2, Lot 22) to facilitate the development of a mixed-use urban village. This development will be referred to in this document as the Richford Urban Village. This document provides a high-level overview of the design principles that will guide the development of the site and intends to demonstrate the vision that will inform the final design and built form.

The Urban Design Brief will:

- Describe the site's general character within the context of the surrounding neighbourhood;
- Provide a high-level design analysis of the site, including access points and circulation, land uses, height, and density; and
- Assess the alignment of existing policies and regulations applicable to this location.

As this application is being formed under conventional zoning and not a direct control district, the site design presented in this brief is conceptual based on what is permitted under the subject zones. The site plan is conceptual and is subject to revisions and modifications.

1.2 Background

Richford Urban Village is located within the Richford Neighbourhood and is governed by the Richford Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) in south Edmonton (see *Figure 2: Context Map*). This neighbourhood is uniquely characterized by its relatively small size and proximity to the Blackmud Creek Ravine, forming a natural neighbourhood boundary to the north and east. The site is approximately 10.2 hectares (25 acres), making up a large portion within the Richford NASP’s 54.67 ha boundary.

The site is adjacent to a major intersection of arterial roadways, Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW, and is approximately 700 m from Anthony Henday Drive to the north, and 1 km from Highway 2 to the east. All of these roadways provide direct and indirect access to the site.

The site is bound by 5 Avenue SW (Richford Road) to the north where country residential residences are established along the frontage, with the exception of two commercial parcels that were rezoned in recent years. Ellerslie Road SW forms the south boundary of the site, and 111 Street SW is to the west. The east boundary is formed by the existing low and medium density residential development called the Royal Gardens.

Of note, a 1.6 ha parcel has been subdivided and developed as a 4-storey low-rise, and a 6-storey medium-rise apartment, with a portion remaining vacant and undeveloped directly abutting the site boundary at its southwest corner.

Prior to the purchase of the lands, they were privately owned and operated by the Ellerslie Rugby Park since 1975. It was developed and used as a banquet/conference facility, several outdoor rugby fields, and a surface parking lot. The site is bordered almost along the entire perimeter by trees of varying degrees of health.

A unique feature of the site is that it has remained as an undeveloped open space almost entirely surrounded by a developed suburban area, with the exception of historically established country residential estate lots located north of the site. These lots are situated along the north side of 5 Avenue SW backing onto the Blackmud Creek Ravine. Other surrounding areas have been developed into primarily suburban neighbourhoods with mixed uses and commercial areas at neighbourhood edges.

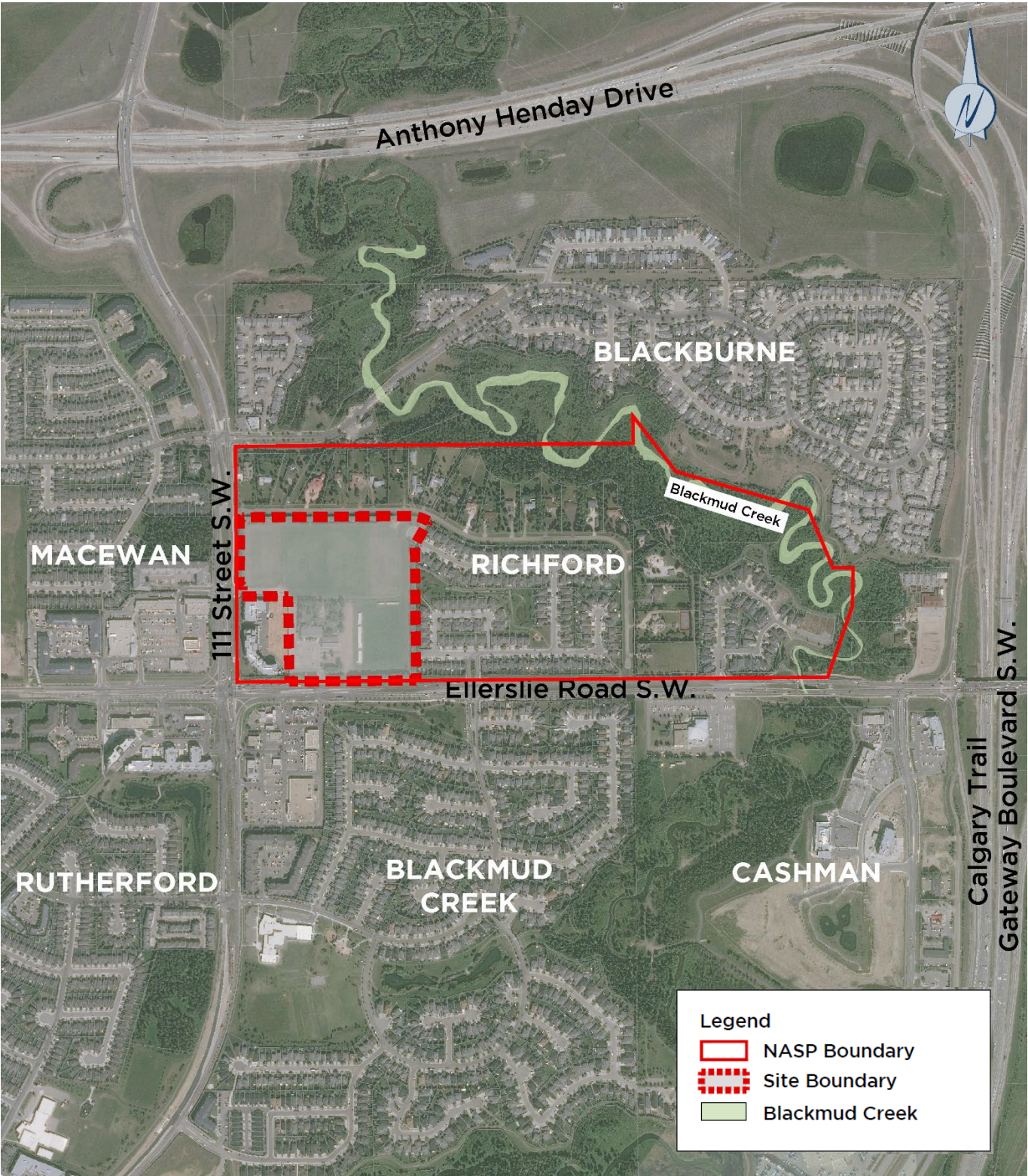


Figure 2: Context Map

2. Site and Neighborhood Context



Figure 3: Site and Surrounding Area Key Map



The site has been traditionally used for recreation purposes, and its redevelopment will inevitably change its nature, including its uses, character, and function. This large lot presents a unique development opportunity to integrate a well-planned, mixed-use urban infill development that will include a range of housing forms while providing neighbourhood services and amenities. The development of this site enables the efficient use and enhancement of infrastructure that will contribute to a comprehensive and complete neighbourhood. Richford Urban Village proposes a similar scale in development patterns as seen in the adjacent established areas.

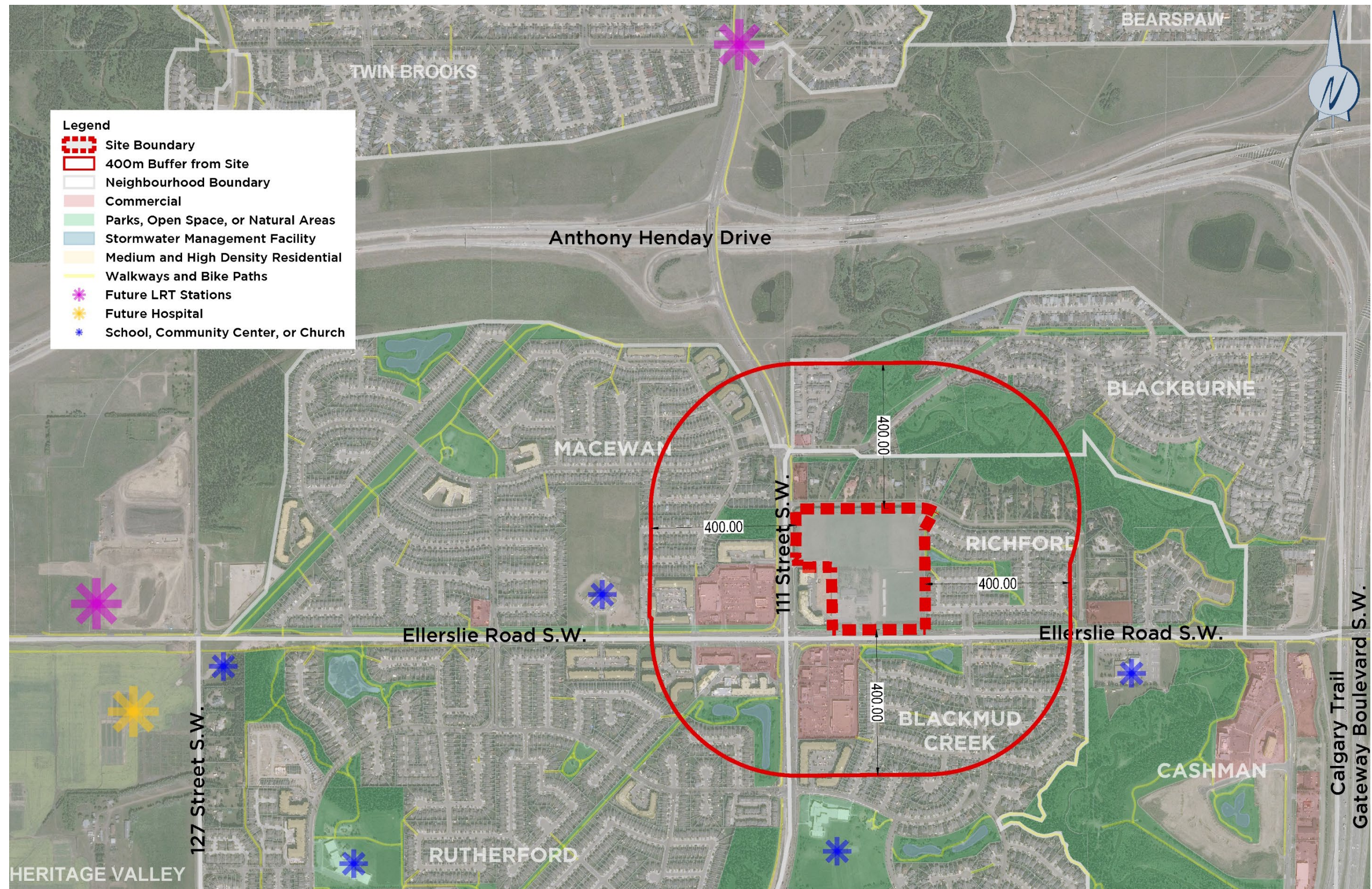


Figure 4: Open Space and Features Map

2.1 Surrounding Character

While the majority of Richford has developed as a lower density residential neighbourhood (single detached and semi-detached housing, and country residential lots making up a significant portion), high density residential housing has been developed at the southwest corner of the neighbourhood at the intersection of Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW. This is in character with the development pattern of the surrounding neighbourhoods of MacEwan, Rutherford and Blackmud Creek, to the west, southwest and south, respectively. Surrounding the intersection of Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW, development is defined through established commercial uses, medium to high density residential housing, public transit along major collector roadways, and neighbourhood connectivity through active transportation networks.

In addition, two country residential lots within Richford, one to the north of the site and the other further east, were recently rezoned to allow for low intensity commercial uses, suggesting that there is an emerging demand for commercial uses in the area.

Area Destinations

While the Richford Neighbourhood has not planned to incorporate their own school, three Public and Catholic schools (Johnny Bright Elementary, Roberta MacAdams Elementary and Monsignor Fee Otterson Elementary/Junior High School) are located in adjacent neighbourhoods. In addition to schools, community gathering places include places of worship such as the Ellerslie Road Baptist Church, St. Margaret’s Anglican Church, and Christ the Way Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Commercial destinations are concentrated at the intersection of Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW, where four neighbourhoods meet. Commercial amenities include neighbourhood conveniences such as grocery, food services, service stations, banks, personal and health services. Medium and high density residential are found in close proximity to commercial areas, characterizing mixed-use suburban nodes.

The future expansion of the Capital Line South will have impacts on the site and surrounding area. The expansion will bring two transit stations within the vicinity of the site. They include the Heritage Valley Transit Station to be located approximately 2 km west along Ellerslie Road SW, and the Twin Brooks Transit Station, located approximately 1.5 km north along 111 Street SW. Lastly, the future Southwest Hospital is a major provincial capital project planned for a site south of the future Heritage Valley Transit Station, at Ellerslie Road SW and 127 Street SW.

Open Space, Natural Areas, and Trees

The Richford Neighbourhood is surrounded by natural areas along its north and east boundaries. Parts of the Blackmud Creek Ravine are accessible further east from the site and from other surrounding neighbourhoods. Richford Urban Village will include an area dedicated to a dry pond that will expand upon the existing pond on the site to the east. Landscaping and amenity elements will enhance this open area for existing and future residents.

Tree stands of varying health conditions line the site along its perimeter, creating a buffer from the roadways and adjacent uses. The intent is to retain as many trees as possible, particularly along the north edge of the site boundary, limiting impacts of development to the existing country residential estate lots. Further assessment will be completed to determine the feasibility of retaining trees at the time of detailed site design.

Medium and High Density Residential

The surrounding neighbourhoods across Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW have developed in a mixed-use suburban character that locate medium and high density residential at the neighbourhood edges along major corridors or placed adjacent to commercial uses before transitioning to lower density built forms. The addition of medium and high density residential within the site aligns with the development pattern of surrounding neighbourhoods.

Richford Neighbourhood’s southwest corner is currently anchored by high density residential. The proposed development will place additional high density residential at the center of the site, away from low density residential at the neighbourhood’s north and east peripheries. Sensitive transitions in density and height will be implemented to ensure that intensities gradually reduce towards the site’s edges. The addition of medium and high density residential will establish a stronger mix of housing forms and levels of affordability that support complete neighbourhoods and aging in place. Potential impacts caused by additional traffic will be minimized through internal site and roadway design, providing adequate access points to the site and proposed buildings, and allocating sufficient space for parking.

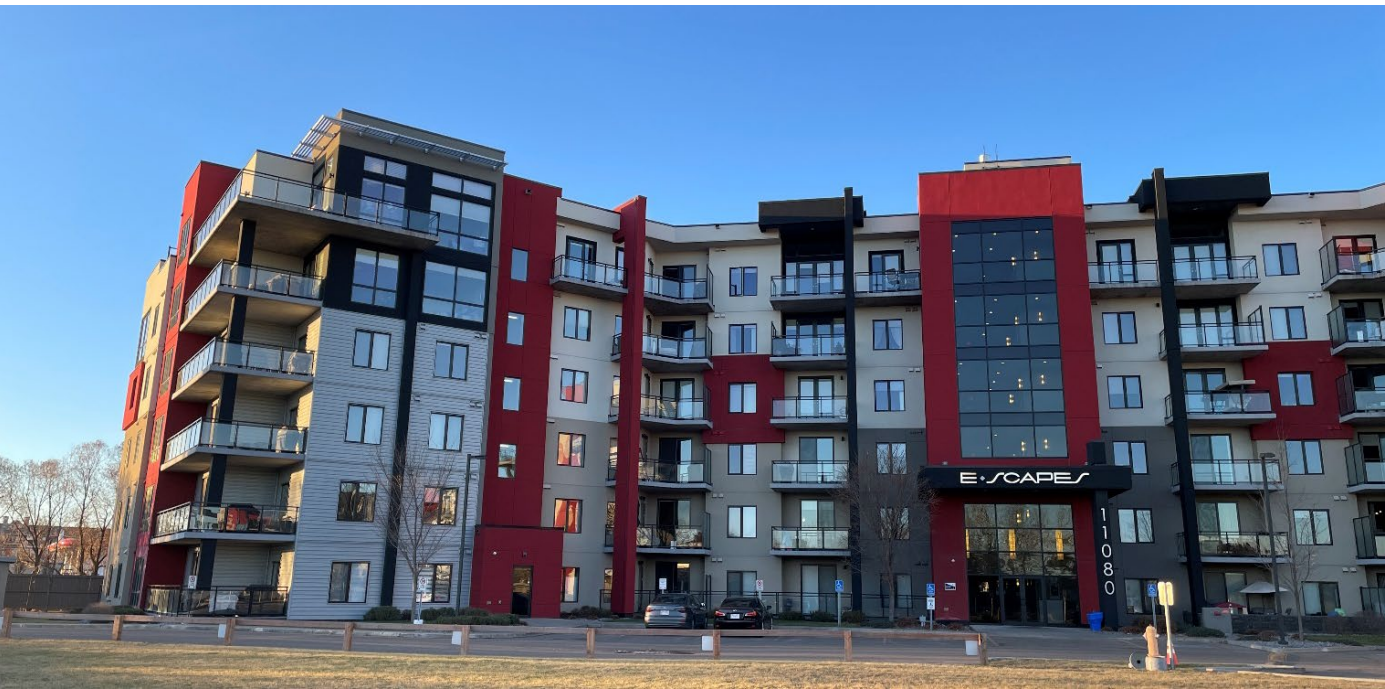


Figure 5: Existing High Density Residential at the SW Corner of Site

Commercial Sites

The intersection of Ellerslie Road SW and 111 Street SW is a neighbourhood commercial destination for surrounding communities. The intent of adding commercial sites within Richford Urban Village is to provide a mix of low intensity services that complement and enhance the overall services for the surrounding neighbourhoods. While tenants have not been confirmed in this early planning stage, examples of low intensity commercial uses permitted under the proposed zoning include retail sales, restaurants, professional and personal services, and health services. Future area considerations that could influence the types of services to be offered include the South Edmonton Hospital (no estimated competition date), which will catalyze the development of health care and support services in the area. The site conceptually locates commercial development along its south portion (see *Figure 8*), adjacent to Ellerslie Road SW for high visibility and convenient access.



Figure 6: Commercial and Residential Development Along of Ellerslie Rd SW and 111 St SW



Figure 7: Commercial South of Ellerslie Rd SW

2.2 Zoning

Richford Urban Village will feature a variety of zones, including CG - General Commercial Zone, RSM - Small-Medium Scale Transition Residential Zone, RM h16.0 and RM h28.0 - Medium Scale Residential Zone, and PU - Public Utility Zone to facilitate the development of a mixed-use urban village, intended to provide a range of residential and non-residential uses that are complementary and integrated into the existing community.

Regulations within the proposed Zones will guide the site’s development to be sensitive in scale with the surrounding area. The proposed high density residential has been situated closest to the already two existing high density residential buildings at the southwest portion of the site. Higher densities have also been situated toward the centre of the site to facilitate a gradual transition towards lower density residential at the periphery. The site layout also places commercial uses away from existing low density residential, with medium density residential used as a buffer between the two land uses. The development regulations, height, scale, and uses allowed within the proposed CG - General Commercial Zone will be in scale and compatible with adjacent lands.

Zones in the adjacent areas are as follows:

- To the north
 - RR - Rural Residential Zone (country residential estate lots)
 - CN - Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (recently rezoned from RR)
- To the south
 - CG - General Commercial Zone (shopping centre)
 - PU - Public Utility Zone (open space and trails)
- To the west
 - CG - General Commercial Zone (shopping centre)
 - DC2 - Direct Control District (medium density residential development)
 - PSN - Neighbourhood Parks and Service Zone (North Virginia Park Woodland)
 - RM h23 - Medium Scale Residential Zone (two existing multi-family developments)
- To the east
 - RSF - Small Scale Flex Residential Zone (existing residential)
 - RSM h12 - Small-Medium Scale Transition Residential Zone (existing residential)
 - PU - Public Utility Zone (stormwater pond)

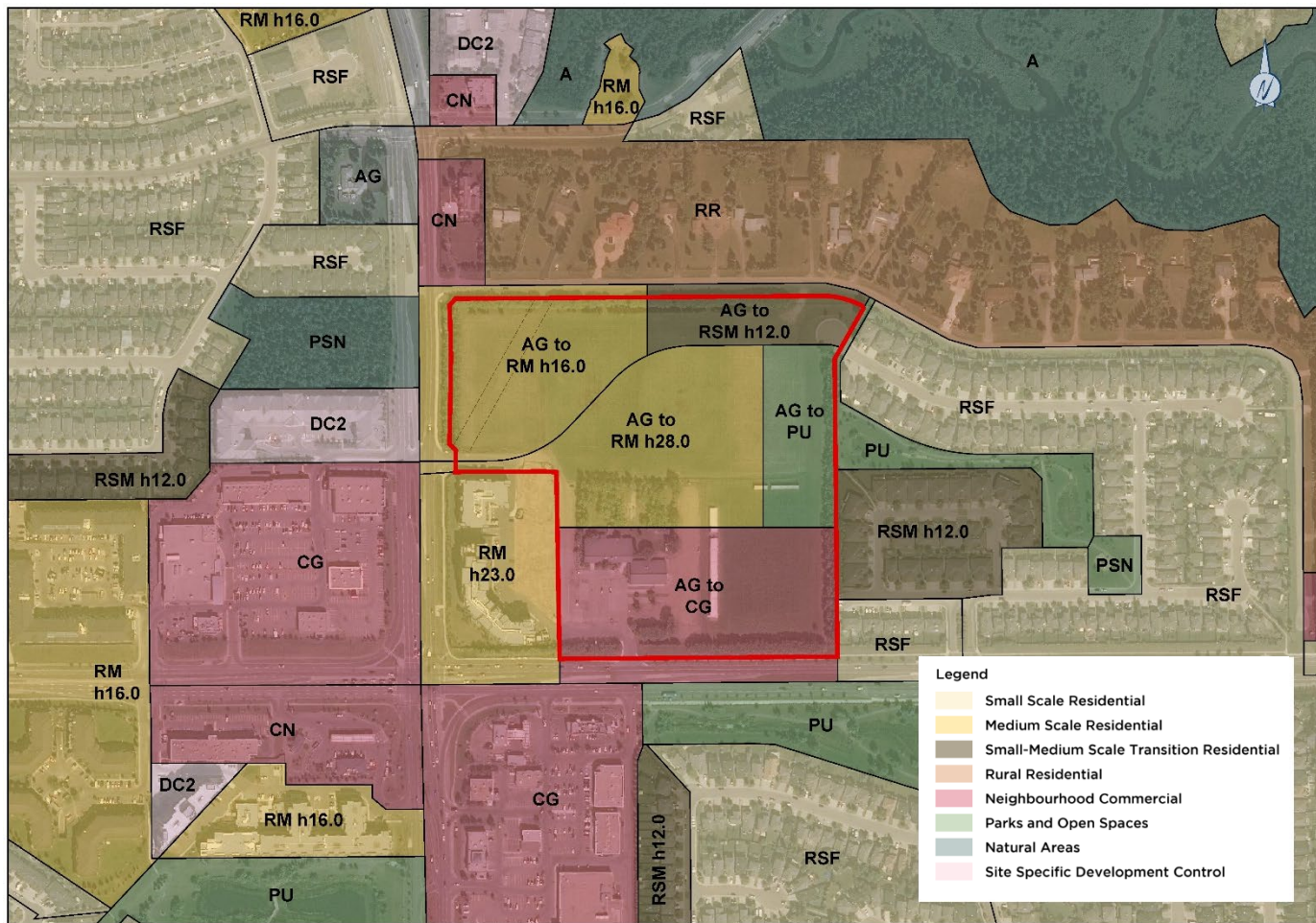


Figure 8: Zoning Map

3. Urban Design Analysis

3.1 Design Intent

The vision for Richford Urban Village is to create a vibrant, mixed-use urban village with amenities to meet the needs of current and future residents. This includes having a complementary range of residential housing forms and densities, a mix of commercial uses that will provide services to the area, and public amenity areas that include open spaces and pedestrian connections. This site will:

- Increase the household type/size diversity, services, and neighbourhood amenities within the Richford NASP;
- Balance the type and variety of new housing forms by creating options that support a mix of household incomes and sizes; and
- Contribute to a compact and connected neighbourhood.

3.2 Access and Circulation

The site can be accessed by two existing access points, first one from the west (111 Street SW), and the second one from the south (Ellerslie Road SW), both of which are arterial roadways.

The west access will see a local roadway extend from 111 Street SW towards the east to the existing 6 Avenue SW. This roadway will serve as the main entryway into the northern residential portion of the site.

The south access from Ellerslie Road SW will be upgraded as the main access to the commercial area, with the existing legal mutual access agreement remaining in place for the multi-unit residential at the southwest corner of the site (E'Scapes Condominiums).

The conceptual site plan (see *Figure 9: Conceptual Site Plan*) envisions 2.83 ha of commercial to be located at the south edge of the site to optimize access and visibility to the arterial roadway (Ellerslie Road SW). Placement of commercial at this location will minimize vehicular traffic within the site's residential areas, providing an appropriate separation between uses. Internal vehicular circulation will be established at future stages of this project.

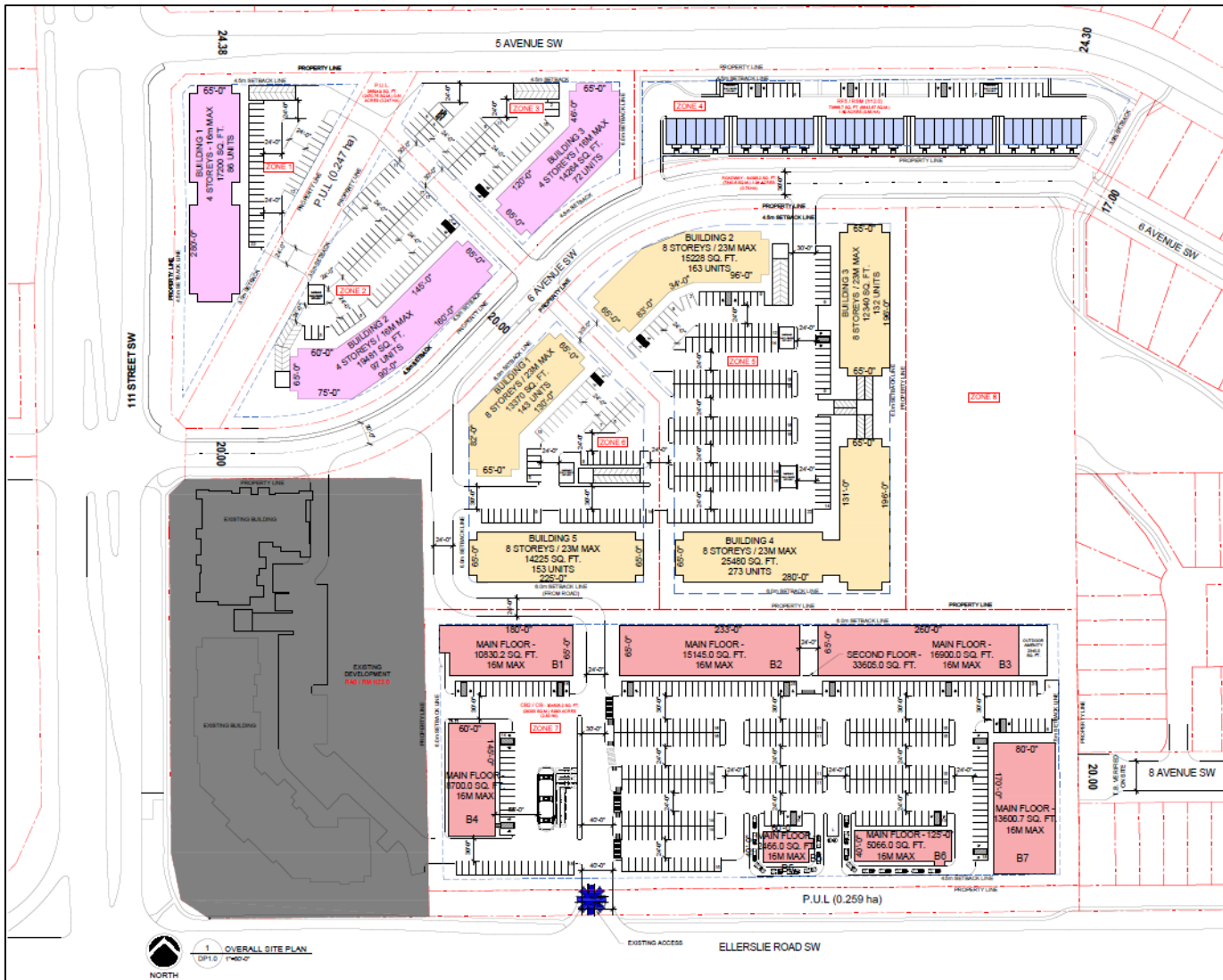


Figure 9: Conceptual Site Plan

3.3 Sun Shadow Study

A Sun Shadow Study was prepared by Planworks Architecture Inc., reflecting the impacts of the conceptual site plan on the surrounding area (see *Figure 10: Sun Shadow Study*). It showcases the longest and shortest days of the year (June 21 and December 21), as well as the Spring equinox (March 21). However, the shadow representation for the Spring equinox also applies to the Fall equinox. Within those dates, the study features shadow impacts in the morning, afternoon, and late afternoon.

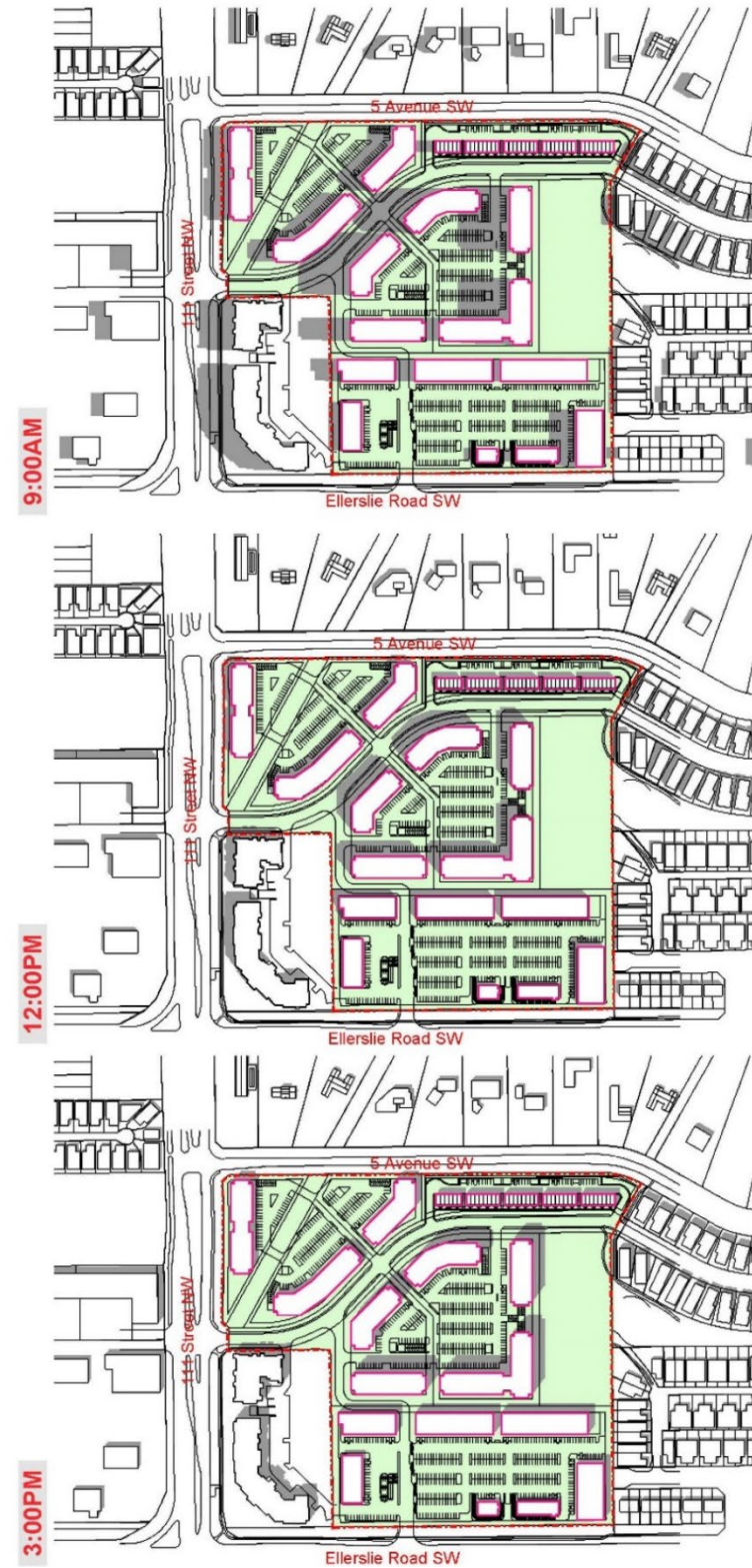
June 21 shows no shadow impacts on the surrounding areas, with shadows generally not intruding past the property line of the site. On March 21/September 21, similarly, there are no significant impacts on the surrounding areas. Residential to the north and the west are not expected to be overshadowed by the proposed building placement and heights. There is slight shadowing on the existing commercial site to the west during the morning hours, but the brief shadows disappear by the late morning. The darkest time of the year is represented on the shadow impacts for December 21. There is shadowing on some of the country residential lots to the north at noon and 3 pm, and very slight shadowing in the back yards of residential to the east (although there are already shadows that are cast from existing trees as well as the buildings within those parcels).

The two existing multi-family developments directly southwest of the site (E'Scapes Condominiums) do not generally appear to be impacted by shadows cast by the proposed development.

SHADOW STUDY - MARCH EQUINOX - MAR. 21



SHADOW STUDY - SUMMER SOLSTICE - JUNE 21



SHADOW STUDY - WINTER SOLSTICE - DEC. 21

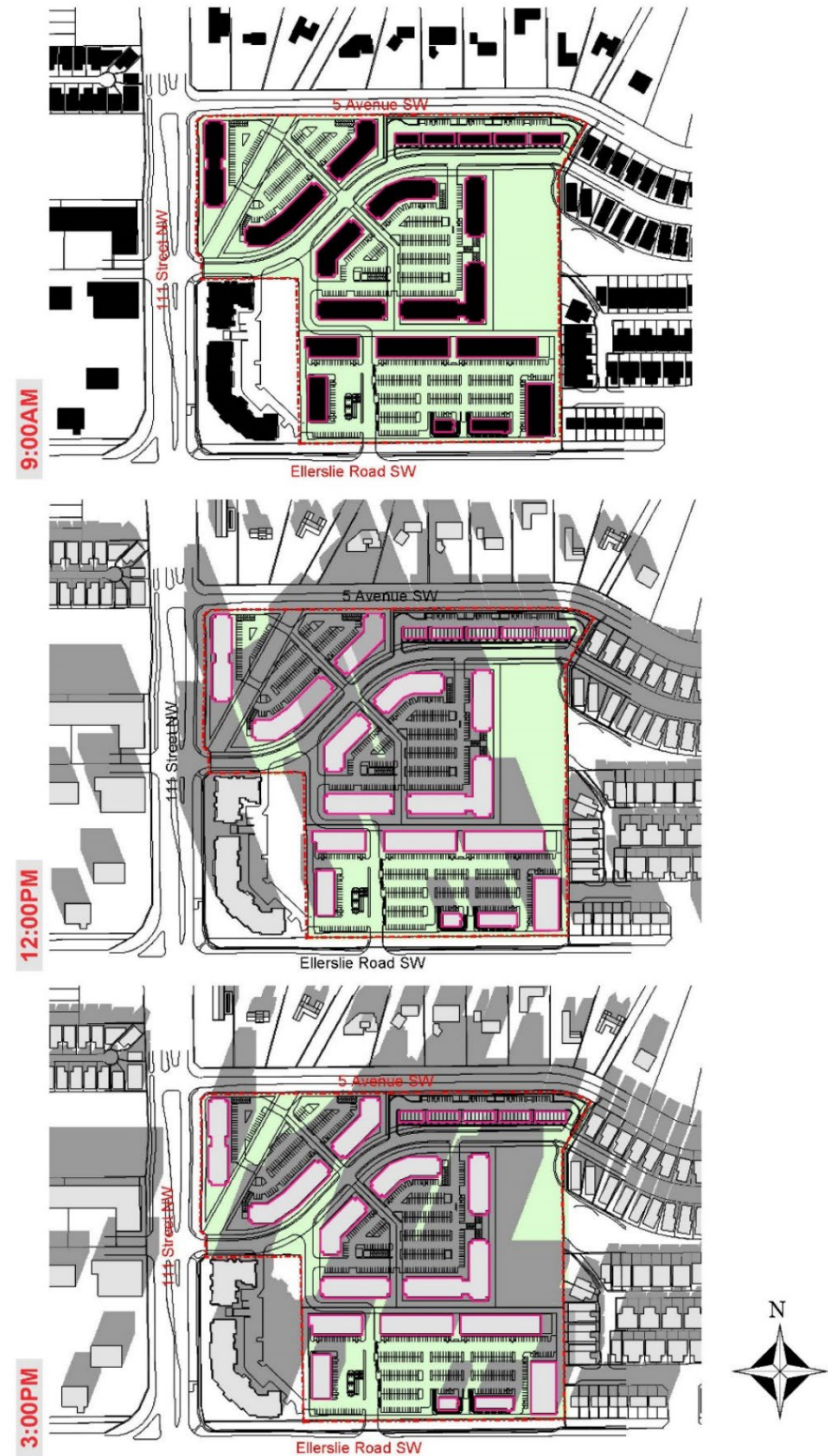


Figure 10: Sun Shadow Study

3.4 Massing and Modeling

Massing figures were created to showcase the Richford Urban Village and assess its suitability for the area.

Figure 11: Proposed Development - View to the East shows an aerial view to the east, focusing on the existing E'Scapes Condominiums and proposed four-storey residential situated along 111 Street SW. The existing tree stand acts as a significant screening mechanism for the site. It is likely that some of the trees close to the E'Scapes Condominiums will be removed for intersection sightline purposes, however, at this time there is no intent to remove the remainder of the trees.

This figure also highlights how the proposed internal roadway will align and connect with the existing 6 Avenue SW as it passes through residential development along both sides. There is no access proposed from 5 Avenue SW (roadway at the north interface of the site, along which country residential estate lots are situated). This allows for maximum retention of the tree stand along the north boundary of the site, which in some places has a double row of trees, and provides screening for the existing country residential estate lots across from 5 Avenue SW.

Figure 12: Proposed Development - View to the North provides an aerial view to the north, focusing on the frontage along Ellerslie Road SW. The proposed commercial development is set back from the roadway, with parking situated between the buildings and the road, and similarly to the above aerial, it is screened by existing tree stands. With the main access to the commercial development planned along Ellerslie Road SW, some trees may be removed due to sightline requirements along that access point. According to the conceptual site plan, the interface between the E'Scapes Condominiums and the proposed commercial development is almost non-existent, as there is a large buffer (almost 50m) from building to building. This is mostly due to the large parcel that the E'Scapes Condominiums are situated on, as well as their large setback from the interior lot line situating them close to 111 Street SW. This may change in the future if the undeveloped lands on the E'Scapes Condominiums parcel are developed in the future.

Directly behind the commercial development are the proposed residential towers, sitting at a maximum of 28m (according to the proposed zone). They are strategically situated at the centre of the site, keeping a considerate buffer from the existing E'Scapes Condominiums, the country residential lots to the north, and the existing residential lots to the east (with an additional buffer from the dry pond and existing tree stand).

Figure 13: Proposed Development - View to the Northeast and *Figure 14: Proposed Development - View to the Southeast* provide additional aerial visuals to the points discussed above.

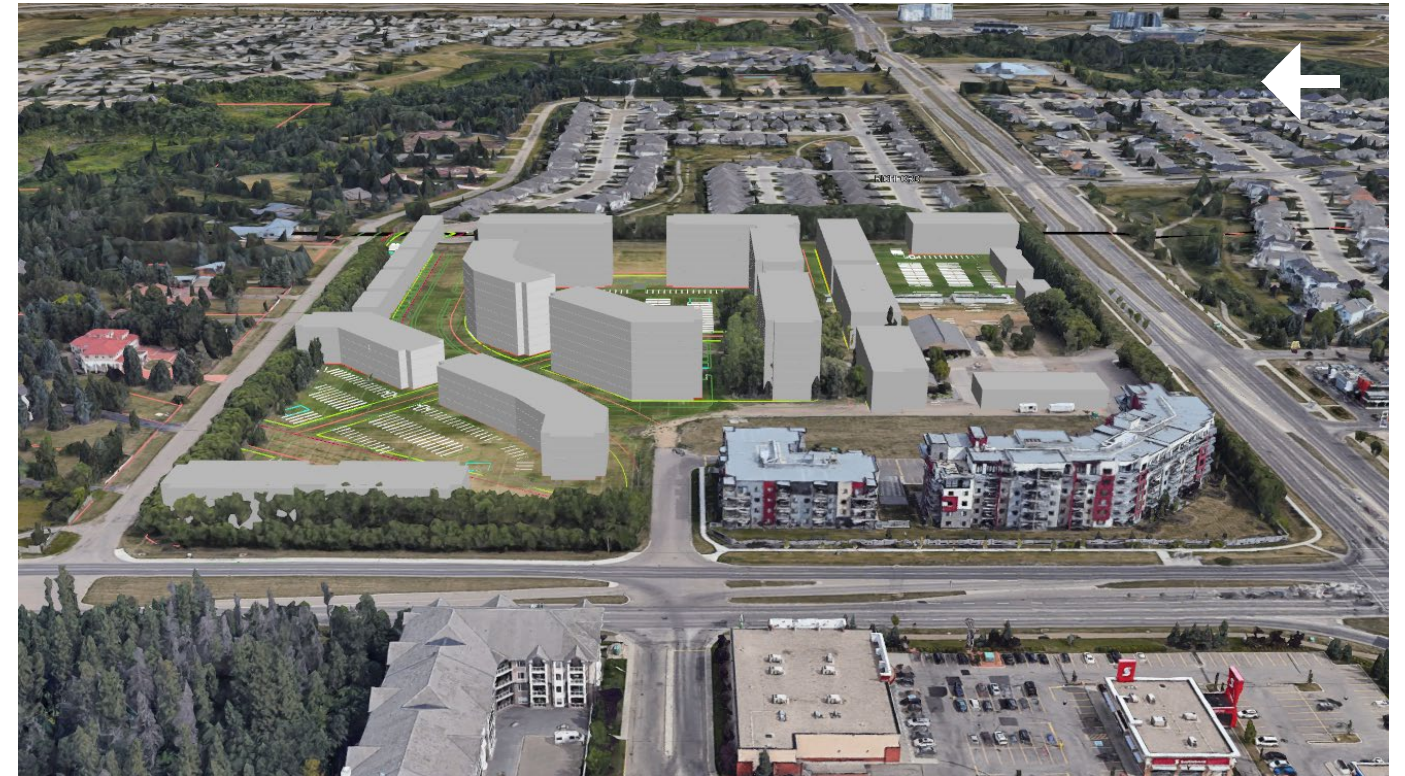


Figure 11: Proposed Development - View to the East



Figure 12: Proposed Development - View to the North



Figure 13: Proposed Development - View to the Northeast



Figure 14: Proposed Development - View to the Southeast

4. Alignment With Plans

The City Plan

Edmonton's City Plan sets a strategic direction for the way the City grows, and outlines a strategic direction in environmental planning, social planning, and economic development. The City Plan outlines policies to support access to diverse and affordable housing options in Edmonton's communities. Specific policies include: 2.2 Edmontonians have the ability to live locally, with access to diverse and affordable housing options that support their daily needs; 2.2.1.6 Enable ongoing residential infill to occur at a variety of scales, densities, and designs within all parts of the residential area; and 2.2.3.4 Enable the development and redevelopment of small commercial sites and centres to support mixed-use local nodes city-wide.

The proposed development aligns with these policy intensions for residential infill to occur at a variety of scales, densities, and designs, and further enables the development of small commercial sites to support mixed-use local nodes. The proposal also enhances equitable access to housing choice, balanced with non-residential amenities through small scale commercial destinations that will strengthen the local Nodes and Corridors Network.

The proposed development is located at the intersection of two Secondary Corridors, as identified in The City Plan Nodes and Corridors map. Secondary Corridors (see *Figure 15: List of Corridors Map Excerpt from the City Plan*) are described as vibrant residential/commercial streets that serve as local destinations for surrounding communities. The proposed development aligns with this intent, being more residential in nature, providing commercial clusters and destinations along the corridors which have an identity that is reinforced through ongoing redevelopment, investment, and growth. The redevelopment of this site strives to fulfil strategic directions of the City Plan and aims to accomplish this through the proposed plan amendment and rezoning to facilitate future growth of this area.

Richford Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP)

The Richford NASP provides a framework to facilitate the orderly and efficient development of the Plan Area by outlining the general development pattern including the composition of land uses, pedestrian and vehicular connections and movements, servicing, and development staging. Strategies express support for a range of housing options to be available within the neighbourhood and that opportunities for mixed use developments be established to increase livability.

The NASP contains policies that address the interface and compatibility of land uses as the area develops expressing consideration in placement and orientation of uses. The proposed land uses are configured in a manner compatible with the surrounding context, considering use, scale, and massing by locating highest densities closest to existing High Density Residential and Commercial uses then transitioning to Medium and Low Density Residential towards areas where lower densities exist to create an adequate buffer.

The site being of considerable size, accounting for nearly one fifth of the NASP area, presents an opportunity and responsibility to accomplish development goals of the NASP by balancing land uses across the neighbourhood. Richford Urban Village features increased residential

density including additional housing forms, contributing to housing choice and affordability. Building siting will carefully consider sensitive transitions to surrounding lands, ensuring that the intensification of the site minimally impacts existing uses. Not only does the NASP support low, medium, and high density housing, Richford Urban Village also incorporates commercial uses, aligning with strategies of the NASP for access to services and business opportunities within the established neighbourhood. The introduction of a commercial site also enhances the opportunity for a balanced, complete community by establishing non-residential destinations.

Increasing residential density is becoming imperative where opportunities to do so are available and suitable not only to help address the housing crisis that Canadian municipalities are confronting by creating more homes, but also in support of energy efficiency by enabling a range of more compact household sizes that create fewer emissions than larger homes.

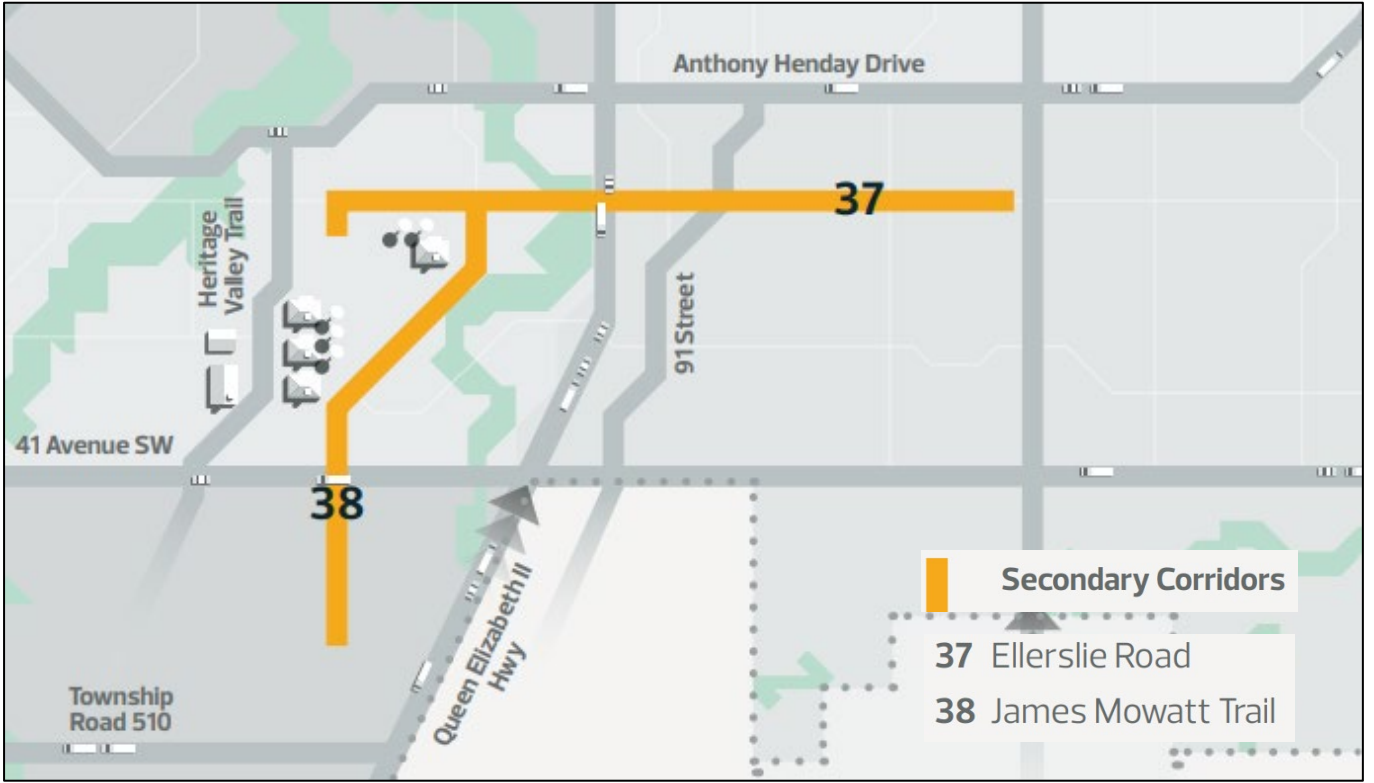


Figure 15: List of Corridors Map Excerpt from the City Plan

5. Summary

Analysis of existing site conditions, neighbourhood and surrounding context development patterns and site suitability has been provided in this Urban Design Brief. Richford Urban Village will enhance equitable access to housing and provide commercial amenities and services by developing low intensity commercial sites contributing to a balanced complete community. Given the size and location of the site, the proposed development has taken into consideration the existing surrounding uses and applies a balanced approach create a plan that is inclusive and diverse to accommodate growth that is within reason to support policies in the City Plan to address housing needs and to accommodate growing communities that meet the needs of its' residents.