

Letter from Parkland CLASS to City Council Describing Administration Building Development
City of Red Deer City Council Agenda, Feb. 1, 2016
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Item No. 6.2.

City of Red Deer City Council Regular Meeting, 2016/02/01 - Page 335

Mayor and City Council
City of Red Deer
4914 - 48 Avenue
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 3T4

January 25th, 2016



**Re: Response to Waskasoo Neighbourhood Plan Bylaw 3567/2016
Land Use Bylaw Amendment 3357/A-2015**

Parkland Community Living and Supports Society, Parkland CLASS, is the registered owner of three large parcels of land that fall within the Waskasoo Neighbourhood, and as such we will be impacted by the above actions before City Council. Our three properties include the following:

- The existing Parkland CLASS office, located at 6010 - 45th avenue (Lot J2 – Block C – Plan 696 T.R.)
- Parkland School, located at 6016 - 45th avenue (Lot J1 – Block C – Plan 696 T.R.); and
- The future site of a new office building, maintenance shop, and various recreational facilities to be located on the recently subdivided Lot 4 – Block 1 – Plan 1522489.

Parkland CLASS supports both the Waskasoo Community Plan with its various Community Plan Recommendations, and the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan with its Character Statements. In light of the agency's planned development of its recently acquired Lot 4, we have carefully reviewed the above documents in an effort to better align our future operations with the plan.

As we have undertaken our review, we have identified and focused on five considerations and / or concerns that could impact our current and future developments. Each of the following items have been examined and responded to within this submission:

- a) Appropriate uses for the Former River Glen School Site (which includes Lot 4);
- b) Alignment with, and Support of, Applicable CP Recommendations;
- c) Consideration of Related Character Statements
- d) Impact of 42a Avenue Alignment
- e) Proposed Elements of Lot 4 Development

A. Appropriate Uses for Former River Glen School Site

Parkland CLASS is contemplating the future development of Lot 4, which was sub-divided from the River Glen School property. In an effort to align with the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan, consideration has been given to the land use priorities identified by the community for this particular site. The following are the top five priorities taken from the Waskasoo plan:

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1. Recreation and sport activities operated or sponsored by a governmental body or agency for the participation of the public at large.
2. Keep as is.
3. Assisted living facility.
4. Offices for community oriented groups which have recreation as part of their programs.
5. Hospice, private clubs, and organizations.

Parkland CLASS supports all of these stated priorities with the exception of #2. Our proposed development plans for Lot 4 specifically align with priorities 1, 4, and 5. The new office for our community organization will support the 350+ adults and children with disabilities who we work with, their families, and the staff who are trained to support them.

In alignment with priority 1, Parkland CLASS will add a variety of elements to its development that will encourage recreational and social gathering activities to occur on site. These components include an open-air pavilion, wheelchair accessible playground, grassed play areas, the continued use of paved bike and walking trails that pass through our property, and formal access to the newly developed City ball diamonds in the adjacent property to the east of Lot 4.

Parkland CLASS encourages the City of Red Deer to be thoughtful in its application and interpretation of the Waskasoo Neighbourhood Plan Bylaw to ensure that the end uses of the River Glen School lands align with the community priorities and the current Public Service zoning.

B. Alignment with, and Support of, Applicable Community Plan Recommendations

There are a number of Community Plan Recommendations that will impact Parkland’s current operations and proposed developments. Elements from the most relevant CP recommendations are restated below, along with a brief statement of response from our organization.

CP Recommendation 1 Improvements to Traffic

“The Waskasoo community brought forward a long-term solution regarding relocating 45th Avenue north of 59th Street as an extension of 42A Avenue. The relocation of 45th Avenue would divert traffic from a residential street (45th Avenue) to a non-residential street (42A Avenue), would provide an opportunity to return a major portion of the riverbank to riparian vegetation, and create a gathering space adjacent to the Red Deer River at the existing lookout northwest of the 45th Avenue and 59th Street intersection...

Additional studies are required to determine the viability of relocating 45th Avenue north of 59th Street as extension of 42a Avenue on the east side of Gateway Christian School & connect it to 45th Avenue near Kerry Wood Nature Centre / Parkland CLASS and close the remaining unused portion of 45th Avenue.”

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Parkland CLASS generally supports the proposed 42a Avenue extension. We recognize the impact that high traffic flows have within the Waskasoo community and along 45th Avenue beyond its intersection with 59th Street as it turns and tracks along the bank of the Red Deer River. However, in spite of this general support, we are sensitive to the impact that the 42a Avenue extension will have on LTCHS by increasing traffic through their school site and parking areas. Parkland CLASS is also concerned with the uncertainty of access to its own properties that are currently serviced from 45th Avenue. This matter is discussed in greater detail under Section D of this response.

CP Recommendation 4 - Gathering Places and Other Identity Options

“The Waskasoo Community Association, residents, and The City of Red Deer are encouraged to investigate, prioritize, design, and develop over time three gathering places at the playground, the lookout north-west of the 45th Avenue and 59th Street intersection, and where the Waskasoo Creek and Red Deer River meet. These stakeholders should also investigate, prioritize, design and develop the other community identity options that were developed by the Community Identity Workshop participants...”

Parkland CLASS fully supports the future development of the proposed gathering places as well as other identity elements. Developments such as these will contribute to the uniqueness and attraction of the Waskasoo community. We would also encourage The City of Red Deer to be flexible in its interpretation of the proposed Bylaw as a means of encouraging and even facilitating additional gathering and recreational elements that will enhance the community. To this end, Parkland CLASS wishes to incorporate specific “gathering elements” within its proposed development of Lot 4. These elements include enhancements to the accessible playground, the construction of a new covered pavilion that would accommodate approximately 180 individuals including those using wheel-chairs, and the expansion of the on-site parking. Parkland CLASS would also be open to the development of a joint-use agreement with the City of Red Deer to expand public access of these facilities to the community. These facilities are described in greater detail under Section E of this response.

CP Recommendation 8 - Vegetation Preservation and Invasive Species Control

“Existing mature healthy native plantings (trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses) should be preserved and efforts should be made to remove or prevent invasive species from spreading into the natural areas. Residents are encouraged to improve the urban forest by planting native trees and shrubs and consideration should also be given to native trees and shrubs that are a food source for humans and local wildlife. Chemical controls (are) discouraged.”

Parkland CLASS supports the desire for vegetation preservation and the control of invasive species. We also agree with the secondary stated objective that “the placement of new plant material, would preferably be plant material that is a food source for people, birds and animals, as this serves as a way to encourage wildlife into the community”. However, these two objectives may not always be compatible. When it comes to the future development of Lot 4, our desired landscaping is naturalistic planting beds that will be added using trees, shrubs and grasses known to be hardy in our climate zone, low maintenance & non-invasive. In adding to the urban forest, these plantings will provide habitat to attract wildlife for shelter & food. It will also increase enjoyment for the people spending time on the property. Wildlife food sources can often come from domesticated trees, shrubs, and grasses as well. We would encourage The City of Red Deer to be somewhat flexible in its application of the proposed Bylaw and Character Statement to ensure that future landscaping elements might include appropriate non-invasive plantings other than native trees, shrubs, and grasses.

C. Consideration of Related Character Statements

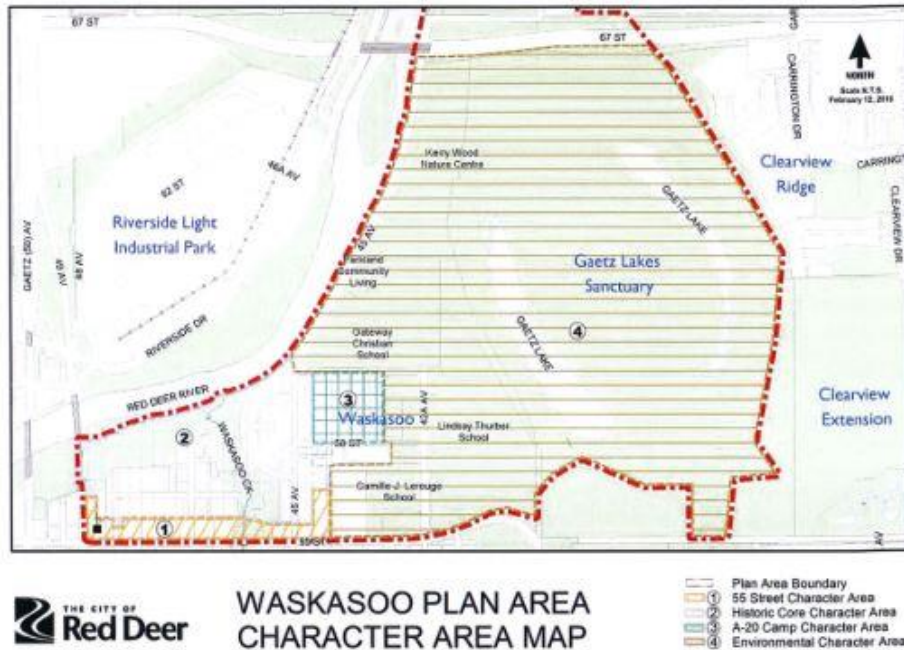
It would appear that based on the detailed map of the Environmental Character Area, that all of Parkland CLASS’s properties fall outside of this particular designated area. This assumption is based on the published Character Area map below.



**WASKASOO PLAN AREA
ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTER AREA**

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However, when we reference the overall Waskasoo Area Plan, we are led to a very different conclusion, which is that all of our properties actually fall within the Environmental Character Area. We have provided the broader Character Areas Map below as a reference.



The narrative in the planning documents adds to this confusion. The written description in the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan suggests that “The Environmental Character Area is made up of the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, and an undeveloped lot located at 4240 – 59th Street directly east of the Gateway Christian School.

The area north of 59th Street and east of 42A Avenue has a greater need for environmental protection and sensitive development due to the location of the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, and proximity to McKenzie Trails Recreation Area and the Red Deer River. The Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary is a Provincially regulated Bird Sanctuary, consequently development within the Sanctuary is not anticipated.”

Parkland CLASS needs clarification from the City of Red Deer of our placement within or outside of the Environmental Character Area. However, if it is determined that we fall outside the area, Parkland does recognize that environmental impacts could be felt by our development and that we should consider, but not be bound by, that area’s Recommended Design Elements.

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Environmental Character Area - Recommended Design Elements

1. Clustering buildings and other buildings should be done to concentrate development.
2. Mature street character, scenic vistas viewable from the road, and existing natural features of the area shall be maintained.
3. Buildings should be designed to include environmentally sustainable design features by incorporating the use of green technologies, ecological design, water conservation measures.
4. Low maintenance landscaping with native non-invasive plant material incorporating both xeriscaping and naturescaping is encouraged.
5. Landscaped areas and islands throughout parking and storage areas shall be provided to intercept precipitation, reduce surface heating, provide canopy shading, and enhance the appearance.
6. Permeable and semi-permeable paving surfaces should be provided to improve ground water recharge and reduce storm water runoff.
7. A system to capture and recycle roof runoff and rainwater should be provided for landscape watering.
8. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings and structures is encouraged.
9. All roads north of 59th Street within the character area should maintain their natural boundaries and native vegetation to preserve and enhance the wildlife corridor through this critical area adjacent to the Red Deer River.
10. Shared driveways are encouraged. Other reductions in impervious surfaces may be achieved through the elimination of curbing and the use of decorative pervious surfaces for sidewalks, driveways, and trails.
11. Disruption of any open space proposed to be disturbed during construction or otherwise not preserved in its natural state shall be shown on development plans and shall be restored with vegetation that is compatible with the natural characteristics of the site.
12. Excavated material may be used for the creation of berms or to provide a low fertility soil for the creation of wild flower meadows or similar semi-natural habitats to blend with the more naturalized character of the area.
13. Existing specimen conifer and deciduous trees shall be identified on a site plan and protected during site construction activities and after by ensuring buildings, services or hard surface areas are not sited too close.

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14. New trees planted should be of a similar species than what is currently found in the Waskasoo Environmental Character Area. Edible vegetation such as fruit trees and berry bushes should be included in landscaping.

15. New development should not adversely affect the character of the streetscape, as a result of being sited too close to the road, of inappropriate massing and form, of excessive height, or causing the loss of landscape features or other factors which may have a negative effect on the streetscape.

Within the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan a definition of green building has been provided as follows:

“Green Building (also known as green construction or sustainable building) refers to a structure and using process that is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building’s lifecycle: from siting to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition. In other words, green building design involves finding the balance between homebuilding and the sustainable environment.

This requires close cooperation of the design team, the architects, the engineers, and the client at all project stages. The Green Building practice expands and complements the classical building design concerns of economy, utility, durability, and comfort.”

Parkland CLASS is aware of the revised Alberta Building Code and the May, 2016 implementation of the new code’s energy efficiency elements. Green building is fast becoming a requirement rather than a recommendation. The new code NECB 2011 is an energy code that is designed to increase energy efficiency in buildings. Parkland has learned that the new energy code provides an improvement of about 25% over the previous version of the code.

A building built to NECB 2011 will provide a similar level of performance to a LEED building constructed under ASHRAE 90.1-2010. The code has specific sections and requirements pertaining to the exterior envelope, lighting, HVAC, service water heating, and electrical power systems.

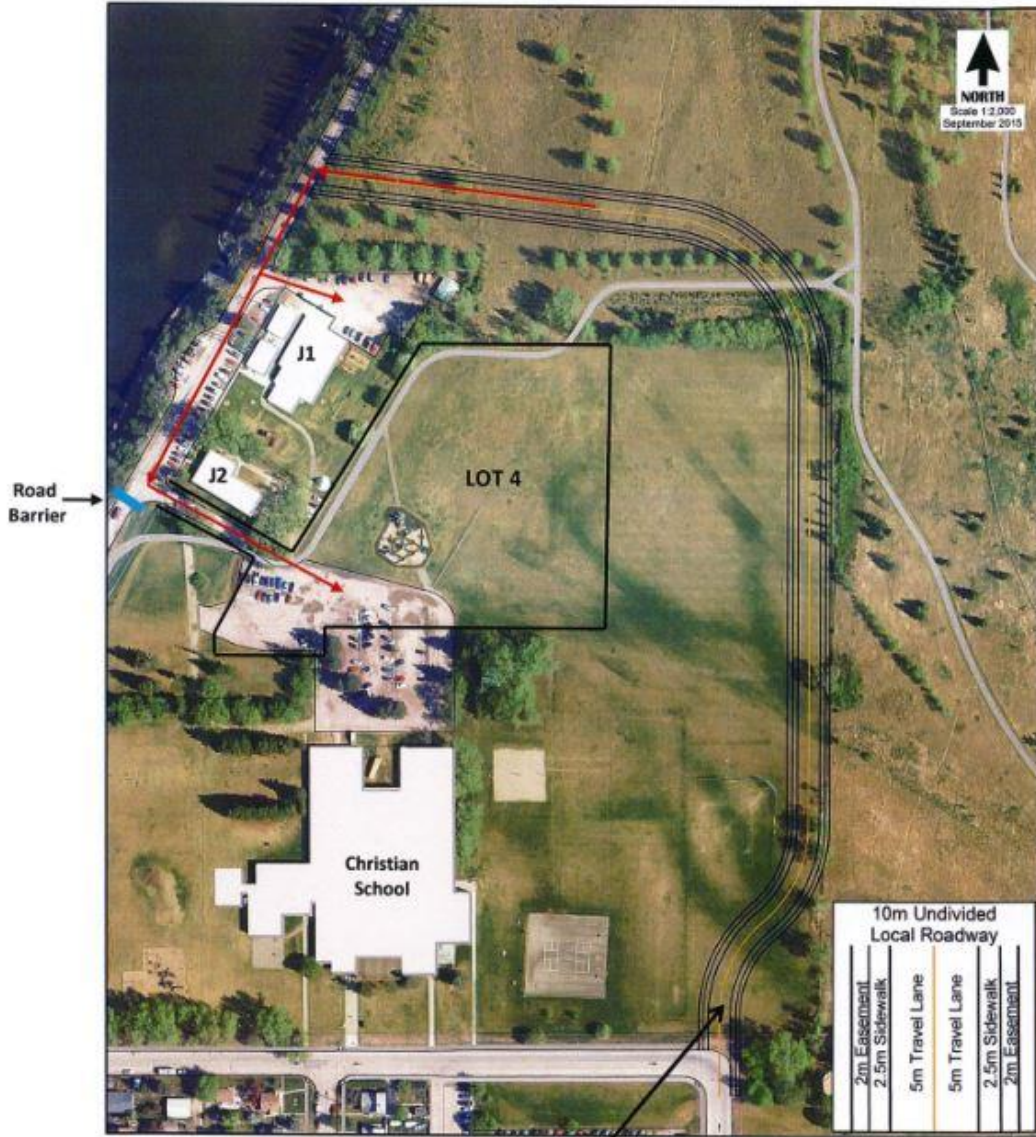
Parkland CLASS’s proposed office building on Lot 4, could be one of the first major structures in Red Deer to fully comply with the new building code; and as such it will be compatible with many of the key recommended construction elements contained in the Environmental Character Statement.

D. Impact of 42a Avenue Alignment

As previously stated, Parkland CLASS is generally supportive of the proposed 42a Avenue alignment. However, we feel that further clarification is required relative to the future access points to our properties. Rather than constructing new access points directly on 42a Avenue, we wish to maintain our front access from 45th Avenue as indicated in **RED** on the map below.

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Exhibit 1 - Parkland CLASS Proposed Property Access



Potential 42A Ave Alignment



Parkland's Proposed Property access is noted in RED, Road Barrier on 45th Avenue is in BLUE

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E. Description of Proposed Lot 4 Development

Parkland Community Living and Supports Society is a not-for-profit public service society, and a registered Canadian charity. Parkland's mission is "To improve the quality of life of disabled children & adults through individual choice, rights, and dignity." The agency's support services include programs for education, care-giving, housing, respite care, as well as social, leisure and recreational activities.

Lot 4 – Block 1 – Plan 1522489 is a 4.26 acre parcel of land recently subdivided from the former River Glen School property. The land is relatively flat and currently includes grass playing field, graveled & partially asphalt paved access road, graveled parking area, paved bicycle / walking paths and a wheelchair accessible playground. **Exhibit 2 sets out Parkland CLASS's proposed site development.**

The proposed project includes constructing 3 structures; an office building, shop and open-air pavilion. The large existing wheelchair accessible playground, grass fields and paved bicycle paths compliment the overall development. A parking lot is to be constructed with concrete curbs, sidewalks & asphalt paving. Other roads & parking areas to be provided in gravel. New landscaping is to include trees, shrubs & mulch planting beds. Grassed areas are to be repaired where damaged during construction.

The proposed development is in the Waskasoo neighborhood, and as such careful consideration was given to the Waskasoo Area Redevelopment Plan & Waskasoo Community Plan. Many design strategies have been used that align with the recommendations and Character Statements expressed in these plans.

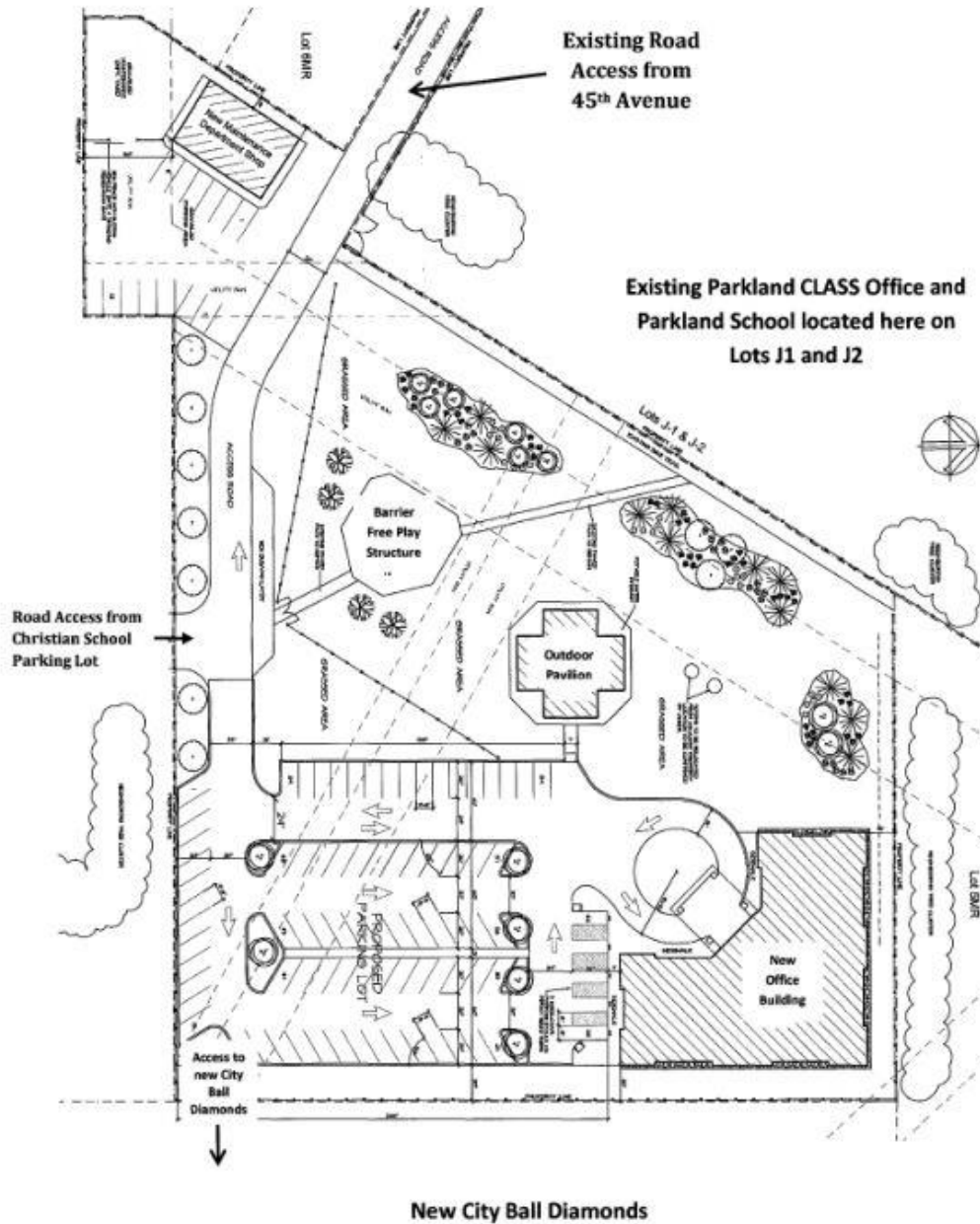
The office building will primarily house staff and benefit the clients and client families who access the society's programs. The shop is for staff who maintain the society's properties. The pavilion, playground, bike paths and grassed areas and are primarily for clients, their family members & care-givers, and potentially the general public to enjoy outdoor gatherings & recreational activities.

The office building design will meet new building and energy codes. These new codes have incorporated much stricter energy efficiency requirements than previous editions. These new code requirements impact insulation levels, area of windows & energy consumption of HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems. The result will be a very "green" building.

The land area of the proposed development is generous relative to the footprint area of proposed office building and shop. This has allowed Parkland CLASS to add components that encourage recreational & social gathering activities to occur on site. These components include the open-air pavilion, wheelchair accessible playground, grassed play areas, the continued use of a paved City bike/walking trail passing through the property, and formal access to the new City ball diamonds in adjacent property to the east. There is also potential for a joint use agreement between Parkland CLASS and The City of Red Deer for shared use of the pavilion, playground, & parking lot, thus creating an opportunity to expand the benefits of this development for the general public. **(Exhibit 3 and Exhibit 4 set out the Pavilion design.)**

Naturalistic planting beds will be added using trees and shrubs known to be hardy in our climate zone, low maintenance & non-invasive. In addition to the urban forest, these plantings will provide habitat to attract wildlife for shelter & food. It will also increase enjoyment for the people spending time on the property. Large areas of permeable ground cover such as grass and gravel will improve ground water recharge & reduce storm water runoff. Building placement will not negatively affect streetscape or cast shadows on residential properties.

Exhibit 2 – Parkland CLASS Proposed Site Development of Lot 4

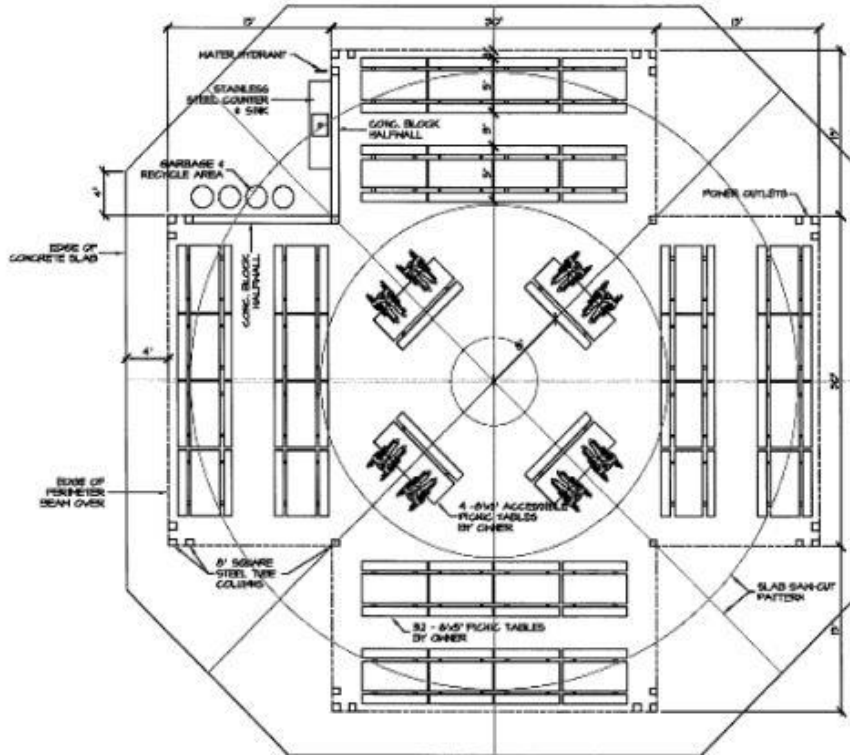


Parkland CLASS Pavilion

The Parkland CLASS Pavilion will be an open sided gathering space with fixed roof overhead to protect against the elements. The pavilion will have a combination of moveable and fixed metal picnic tables that will accommodate approximately 180 individuals sitting plus 8 individuals in wheel-chairs. Therefore, various configurations of sitting can accommodate various types of functions, events, and activities.

Subject to the potential negotiation and development of a joint use agreement with the City of Red Deer, the pavilion may become available to the broader community, families, and other community organizations for approved use.

Exhibit 3 – Parkland CLASS Pavilion Floor Plan

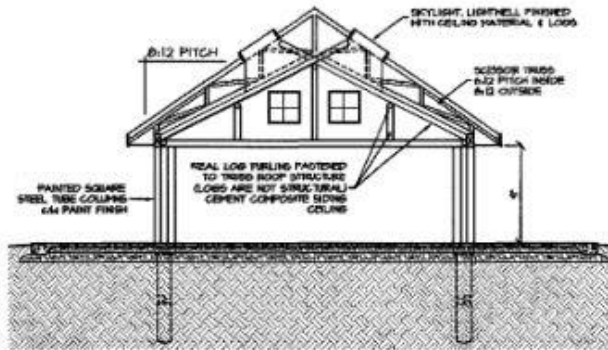


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Exhibit 4 – Parkland CLASS Pavilion Elevation and Section



Typical Elevation



Building Section

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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