

Town of Olds – Future Tree Reserve Options

Background

As part of the Municipal Development Plan review, Town Council has asked that options to create additional tree reserve areas be identified for further discussion. Residents have expressed appreciation for the existing tree reserve area in the southwest part of town (area pictured in photo below) and a desire for more areas like this in other parts of town.

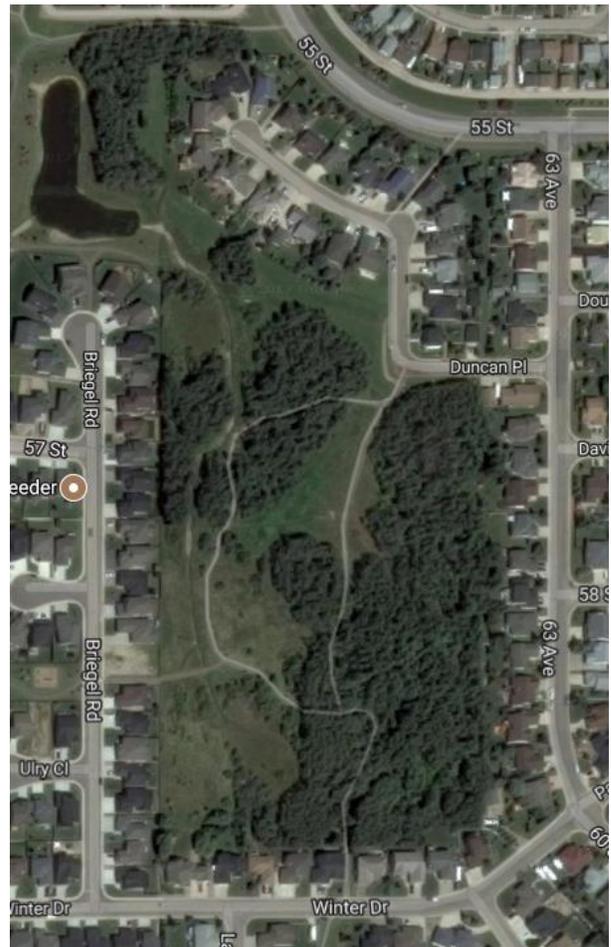
The tree reserve is a unique space due to the tree canopy and amount of vegetation that provides the user with a different experience when walking the trails that loop through the space (e.g. pleasurable stroll in the shade with more natural views compared to views of backyards and buildings).

The information presented provides a brief overview of the nature of the desired amenity space and identifies seven options that are available. It includes a set of criteria around which these seven options can be evaluated so that a decision on what approach to include in the Municipal Development Plan can be made.

Nature of Desired Space and Function

The existing tree reserve is located west of 60 Street and north of Winter Drive. It is an 18 acre block of land that is approximately 60% covered with mature trees. The remaining 40% forms a series of small open meadows. Trails lead north-south through the area and there is one paved trail loop through the middle of the parcel. Trails branch off and connect to the surrounding residential areas. Unpaved trails provide other routes through the trees.

The area is left in a natural state, except for the trails, and is not used for any other formal outdoor recreation purpose. Trails, benches, signage and waste receptacles are the main constructed amenities.



Criteria for Evaluating Options

To assist with making a selection from the available options, some topics for consideration have been established and are as follows:

1. Ability to use Municipal Reserve (MR) dedication for tree reserve site without displacing other planned recreation or park spaces
2. Located within current town boundaries (i.e. no need to obtain County permission to acquire land)
3. Location within a quadrant of town that has the least amount of existing and planned recreation and parks facilities and spaces
4. Access to existing or planned roads for visibility, emergency access and ability to address vehicle parking for those using the space
5. Opportunity to connect to existing and planned trail system
6. Impact on existing area structure plans (minimal impact desired)
7. Large enough space available and ability to scale the size of the desired park space up or down
8. Shape of the site is generally rectangular and allows flexibility for the future design and layout of a trail pattern
9. Compatibility with adjacent existing and planned land uses
10. Ability to provide water services at the perimeter of the site for emergency response and irrigation purposes
11. Presence of existing vegetation or other natural features that could be incorporated into the park space
12. Cost of land based on negotiations with the landowner (function of area and cost per acre)

Available Options

Seven possible options have been identified and are shown on the attached drawing. The area of each option is also shown on the drawing. A brief description of each option follows below.

Option 1: Acquire and combine the portion of the parcel in the south part of the NE 5-33-1-5 west of Sierra Drive with future MR dedication and land purchase from the balance of the NE 5.

- 13.88 acre site
- can be adjusted to increase or decrease the size of parcel by changing the west or north boundaries
- extension of Sierra Drive along east boundary provides access and ability to have municipal water
- Estimated that up to 2 acres of the MR dedication from the NE 5 could be allocated to the creation of the site without impairing the distribution of local park space in the NE 5
- requires amendment to the Discovery Plains Area Structure Plan (MDP process has also identified a need to amend this ASP given the changes required in the arterial road network)

- No existing tree cover
- Existing and future land uses around the site are residential
- Future connections to a trail network are possible
- There is a 3m wide MR strip that could provide a narrow trail link to Shannon Drive to the south and the existing trail in the MR south of Shannon Drive.

Option 2: Acquire a block of land in the SE 7-33-1-5 between the water body and the future collector road to the east of the water body and south of the future arterial road.

- 15.45 acre site
- Size can be decreased by changing the south boundary. Moving this boundary north 90m would allow a residential street south of the area with access off the collector road
- Estimated 1 acre of MR dedication from the SE 7 that could be allocated to create the site
- Access is possible along the east boundary with the extension of a collector road north from the Vistas neighbourhood. This same route would provide municipal water service.
- Site may be competing with the location of a storm water management pond that would serve the SE 7
- Site has no meaningful tree cover.
- The small lake and future environmental reserve parcel would give a greater sense of openness to the site
- Trail connections around the lake and future connections to a trail network may be possible
- Future planned uses around the site are residential
- No approved area structure plan in place

Option 3: Acquire a block of land in the SW 7-33-1-5 between the water body and the future collector road to the west of the water body and south of the future arterial road.

- 16.00 acre site
- Size can be decreased by changing the south boundary
- Moving south boundary north 90m would allow a residential street south of the area
- Arterial road and presence of the small lake constrain the site to the north and east
- Approximately 2 acres of MR dedication from the SW 7 could be allocated to create the site
- Access possible along the west boundary with the extension of a collector road north from the West View neighbourhood. This same route would provide municipal water service.
- No meaningful tree cover

- Small lake and future environmental reserve parcel would give a greater sense of openness to the site
- Future planned uses around the site are residential
- No approved area structure plan exists for the SW 7.
- Future connections to a trail network are possible for lands to the north, east, and west and southwest. A connection to the trail along the east-west arterial road is also possible.

Option 4: Acquire a block of land in the SE 8-33-1-5 north of the east-west arterial road and west of the north-south arterial road.

- 23.29 acre site
- Size can be adjusted to increase or decrease by changing north boundaries
- West boundary provides access to the area through the extension of a future collector from the Discovery Plains neighbourhood. Municipal water could also be extended along this boundary.
- Estimated that up to 2 acres of the MR dedication from the SE 8 could be allocated to the creation of the site without impairing the distribution of local park spaces or creation of the larger school site
- No existing tree cover
- Future land uses planned for the area around the site are residential to the north, south and west. Industrial use for the area east of the north-south arterial that would form the east boundary of the site.
- Treed area would create a transition from the industrial to the east and the residential to the west.
- There is no approved area structure plan for the SE 8.
- Future trail connections possible for the undeveloped lands to the north, south and west. A connection to the trails along the east-west arterial road and north-south arterial road is also possible.
- Presence of existing farm and residential buildings will impact the boundaries of the site (e.g. work around existing buildings) and the cost to acquire the land.

Option 5: Use future MR dedication to assemble a parcel along the drainage course in the NE 1-32-2-5 and SE 1-32-2-5.

- 21.79 acre site
- Size can be adjusted to increase or decrease by changing east, west or north boundaries
- South boundary provides access to the area through the extension of future collector off 70 Avenue. Municipal water could also be extended along this boundary.
- Estimated that the majority of the site could be assembled using the MR dedication from the NE 1 and SE 1. The drainage course itself may be a public utility lot or environmental reserve parcel. As the future land use in the NE 1 and

SE 1 is identified as industrial and commercial there are few local open space needs to be addressed (e.g. no local playgrounds).

- No existing tree cover
- No approved area structure plan for the NE 1 or SE 1
- Future connections to a trail network are possible for the undeveloped lands to the north, south and an east-west trail corridor between the dog park/wetlands and the sports fields in Cornerstone could intersect the site.

Option 6: Acquire land in the NE 25-32-2-5 and SE 36-32-2-5 along the west side of 70 Avenue.

- 19.03 acre site
- Size can be adjusted to increase or decrease by changing the north boundary. The east and west/south boundaries are constrained by 70 Avenue and a water body respectively. A future road along the north boundary would have to be provided for access and the supply of municipal water.
- Unlikely that MR dedication can be used to create the site
- Site has some existing tree cover
- Water body to the west gives a greater sense of openness. It is not likely to be dedicated as environmental reserve as this quarter section is not identified for long term town growth.
- Triangular shape of the site will limit design options in the narrower south end of the site.
- Presence of existing residential buildings will impact the cost to acquire the land.
- Future land uses near the site include residential to the north and to the east across 70 Avenue. Open space is expected to the west and northwest as environmental reserve due to the presence of wetlands and water courses.
- No approved area structure plan for the NE 25 or SE 36
- Future connections to a trail network possible

Option 7: Acquire area east of 57 Avenue and west of the railway and south of the future east-west arterial road and parcel in the SW 29-32-1-5.

- 13.10 acre site
- Size effectively cannot be adjusted as it is constrained on three sides by 57 Avenue, the railway right of way and the future east-west arterial road.
- Access available only off two future arterial roads with 57 Avenue being the more likely selection. Municipal water supply could be provided with an extension of a line from the residential area to the west or north.
- Unlikely that any meaningful amount of MR dedication can be used for the site
- Future nearby land uses are identified as residential to the north and south. The lands east for the railway are identified for future industrial use.
- Presence of existing residential buildings will impact cost to acquire the land.
- Limited existing tree cover.

- Triangular shape of the site will limit design options in the narrower south end of the site.
- There is no approved area structure plan for the SW 29. The portion of the site in the NW 29 would require an amendment to the Miller Meadows Area Structure Plan. This plan will need to be amended to accommodate the east-west arterial road identified in the Transportation Master Plan and the Municipal Development Plan.
- Future connections to a trail network are possible by connection to the future trail along the 57 Avenue arterial road and the east-west arterial road.

Assessment of Amenities per Quadrant of Town

In the event that the Town can only afford to create one new tree reserve site, the question turns to which quadrant of town should be the target for the new park space. A summary assessment of the distribution of existing park and open space amenities reveals the following:

1. The SW quadrant currently has the highest amount of population/residential area and is well served with future and existing open space areas. This includes the existing tree reserve, future open space areas west of 70 Avenue and two existing school sites. There are no major indoor recreation facilities in this quadrant. Two future school sites are expected as the area becomes fully developed.
2. The NW quadrant appears to be well served with existing open space and the sports fields that are under construction. The residential population of this area has been growing and there is considerable future potential. Future open space will also be available west of 70 Avenue and to the north around the small water body. There are no indoor recreation facilities at present though there is possibility of some future facility at the Cornerstone sports fields. Two future school sites are also expected.
3. The SE quadrant contains all of the Town's indoor recreation facilities, the campground, skate park, Centennial Park, aquatic centre, College Lands and one existing school. Of the four quadrants it is the one most fully developed with open spaces and recreation facilities in relation to its future population potential.
4. The NE quadrant has a number of smaller neighbourhood parks and trail connectors. There are no indoor recreation facilities in this area. The future plans call for two school sites and additional expansion of the residential area. Existing residential areas and future residential potential make this the second largest quadrant in terms of future number of residents.