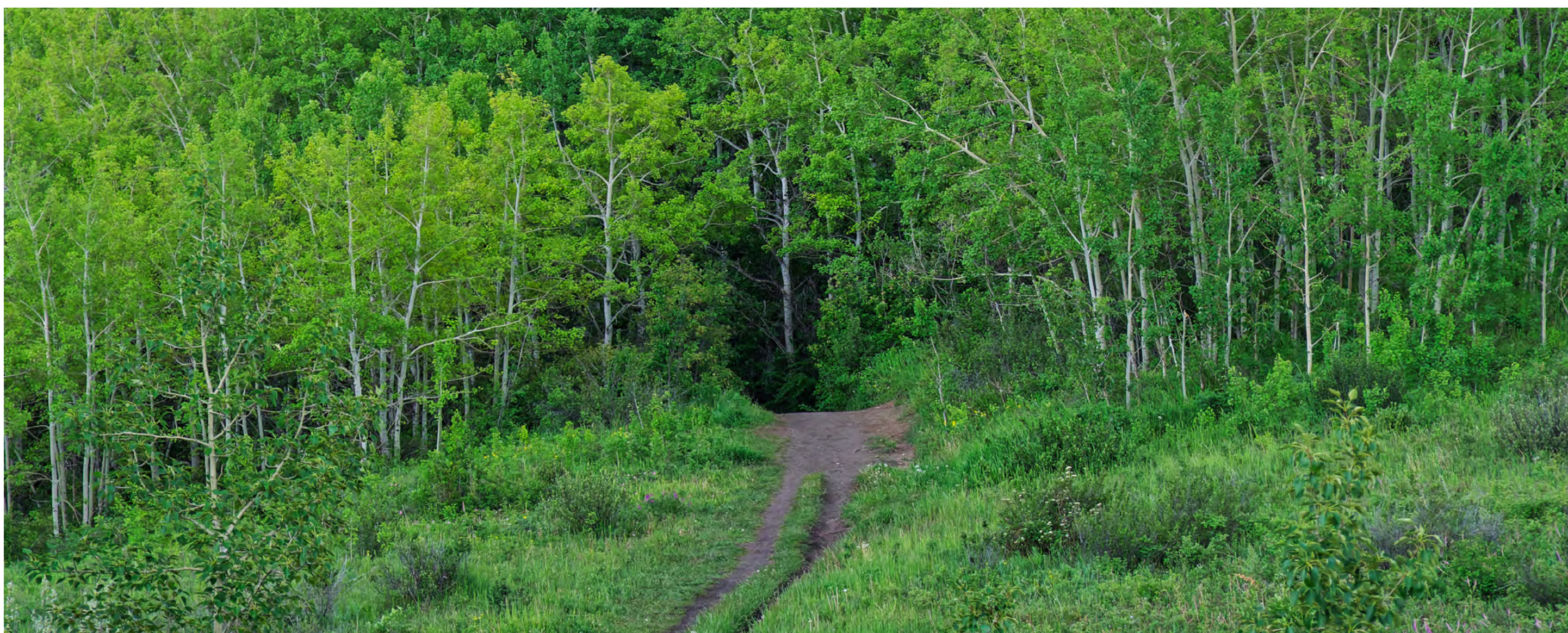


Medicine Hill/Paskapoo Slopes

Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes is a living cultural landscape with deep and ongoing Indigenous significance.

The Park is also a valued natural area used by surrounding communities and visitors from across Calgary. This Park Plan is being developed to help guide future use and care of the land in a way that supports ecological health, respectful access, and cultural stewardship.



Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes is located within the ancestral and traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wicastabi First Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations); and the Tsuut’ina First Nation. This area is also within the homeland of the historic Northwest Métis and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation Battle River Territory, including Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6.



Within the last century, land uses in and around the area have shifted, from homesteading and quarry activity to recreation serving nearby neighbourhoods, WinSport programs, and school groups learning on the land. As use continues to grow, thoughtful planning is needed to reduce impacts on the landscape. This includes protection of sensitive ecosystems and cultural sites, improvements for safety and access for everyone and reductions in informal trails.

For thousands of years, this area has been part of a broader network of seasonal camps, travel routes, harvesting areas, and places of cultural and spiritual significance connected to river corridors, natural features, and other landmarks across the region. Those relationships to the land continue today.



Today, Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes refers to approximately 350 acres (142 hectares) of land bounded by the Trans-Canada Highway, Canada Olympic Park, Sarcee Trail W, and the communities of Cougar Ridge, Patterson Heights, and West Springs.

About the Park Plan

A park plan is a long-term guide that helps shape how a park is cared for, improved, and experienced over time.

What is a park plan and why do we need one?

Once made up of a mix of privately owned lands, Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes has gradually come under City stewardship in recent years.

The City is developing a Park Plan to guide future decisions about:

- Access, safety, and how people move through the site
- Gathering areas and visitor experience
- Protecting natural areas, water, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat
- Supporting Indigenous cultural expression, stewardship, and learning
- Conserving and appropriately managing archaeological and culturally significant areas
- Trails and managing informal paths

This Park Plan will be a strategic, living document that brings together maps, design principles, and priorities into one cohesive approach. It will also outline a clear path forward, including how and when improvements could be implemented over time.

This park plan fits with the City's commitments outlined in the **White Goose Flying Report**, **Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan** and the **Calgary Plan** (in development).

Learn more about related City policies at calgary.ca.

Why can't we leave it as is?

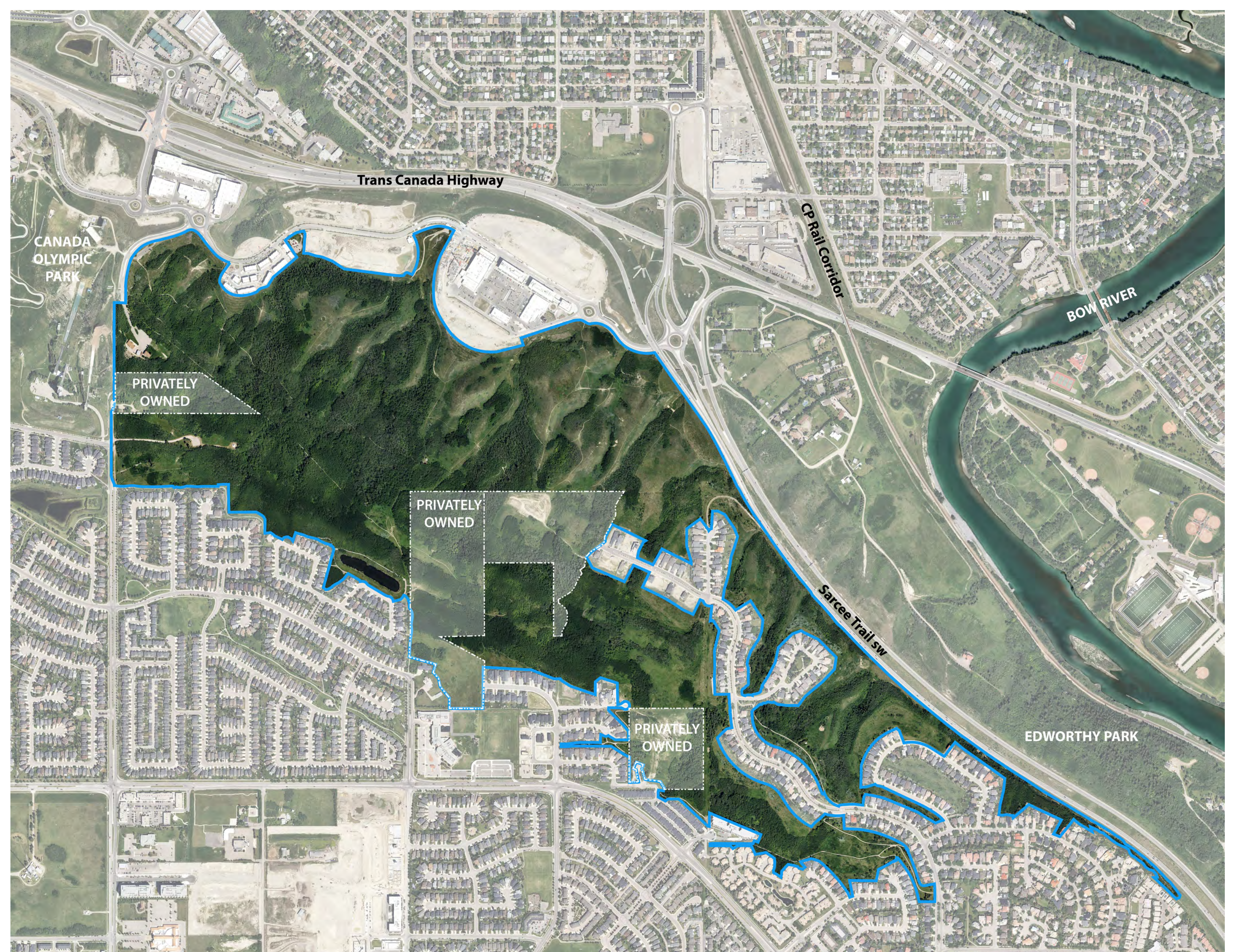
We recognize that many people cherish this natural area exactly as it is, and we agree that it's a beautiful gem within our city. At the same time, natural areas do not remain healthy on their own. As use increases, leaving an area "unchanged" without intentional planning can unintentionally lead to damage over time. Thoughtful planning helps protect what people value most about this place, now and into the future.

Without a Park Plan, challenges can emerge including:

- trail widening, erosion, and soil compaction
- damage to sensitive ecological, cultural, and archaeological areas
- habitat fragmentation and disturbance to wildlife
- spread of invasive plant species
- increased wildfire risk
- conflicts between user groups
- safety concerns from informal trail creation and unauthorized features
- growing pressures related to access, parking, and circulation

This work also includes the development of a **Habitat Management Plan**, which will guide how natural systems, such as vegetation, wildlife habitat, and waterways are protected, restored, and managed over time.

By planning now, The City can take a proactive, respectful approach that prioritizes conservation, cultural stewardship, safety, and appropriate access, rather than reacting later to damage that is harder, or impossible, to undo.



Archaeology

Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes is home to an archaeological landscape of provincial significance.

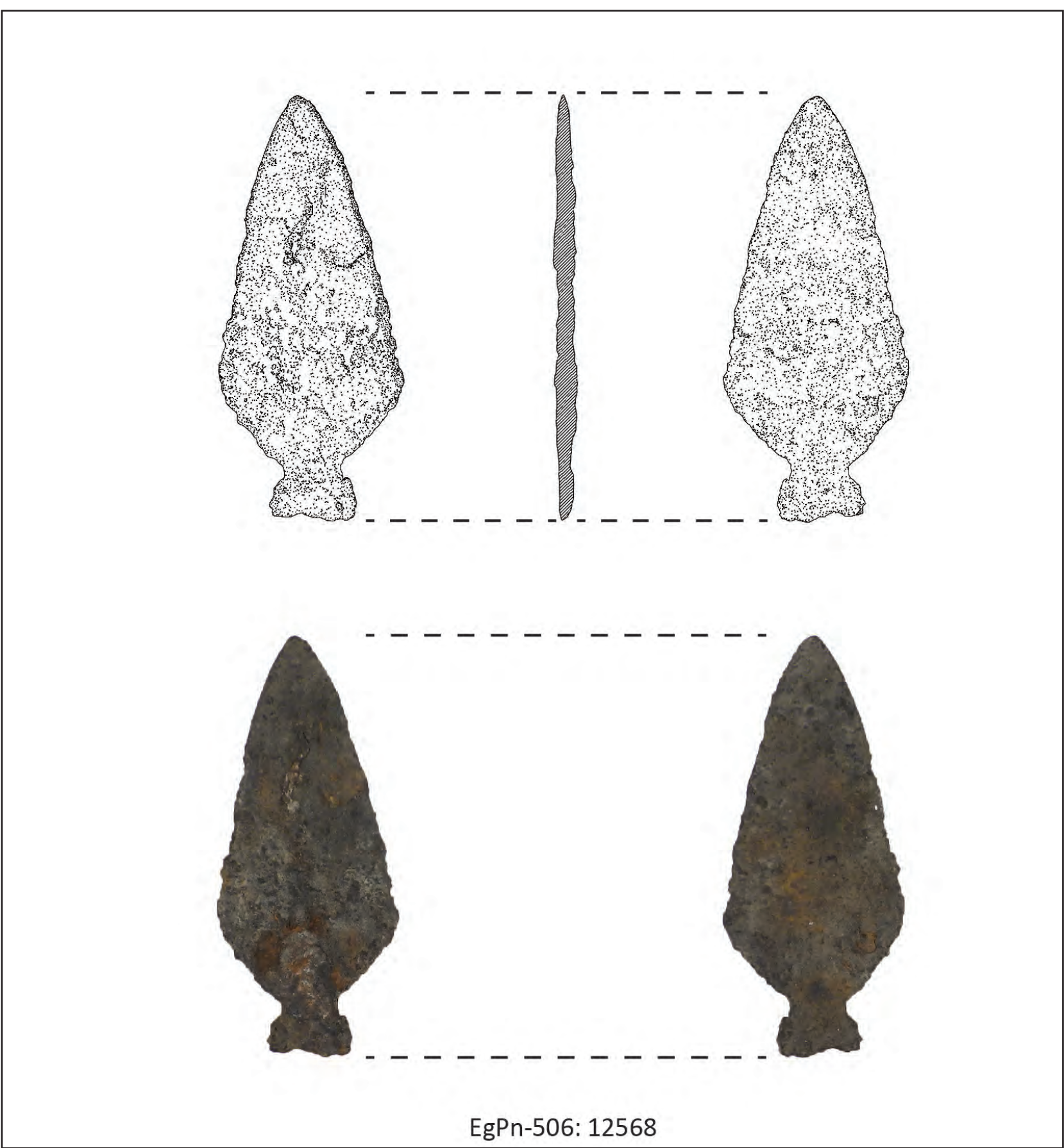
Why this area is significant

More than **50 archaeological sites** have been identified across the landscape to date. The features of the landscape made it the perfect location for hunting bison using the pound method.

For more than 2,000 years, people repeatedly chose Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes as a hunting location. This was not because there were no other options, but because this place worked exceptionally well. The natural landscape, along with access to wood and water, supported effective and sustainable hunting practices. The repeated use of Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes over many generations speaks to the success of this approach and the deep connection people had to this land. Our goal is to strike that balance, preserving the area’s rich history while supporting safe and respectful public use now and into the future.



Excavation at Medicine Hill



Metal point found at Medicine Hill



A roasting pit, to dry and prepare bison meat

How we will take this into consideration

A **Historical Resources Management Plan** is being developed to identify key approaches for the area, with site locations kept confidential per Provincial requirements.

Areas with shallow or exposed archaeological materials will receive extra protection, and any nearby changes will trigger further study. Sites with materials buried deeper underground are considered less vulnerable to regular park use but will still be monitored.

All ground disturbances within the park are reviewed for potential archaeological impact, and Historical Resources Act approval is required for any development or rehabilitation work.

Design strategies will include:

- Avoiding impacts where possible, including rerouting or decommissioning trails that affect archaeological resource
- Undertaking mitigation measures, such as salvage excavations, when impacts cannot be avoided
- Developing interpretive content to help visitors understand and respect the area’s significance
- Targeted improvements to specific trail segments to reduce erosion and stabilize trail surfaces



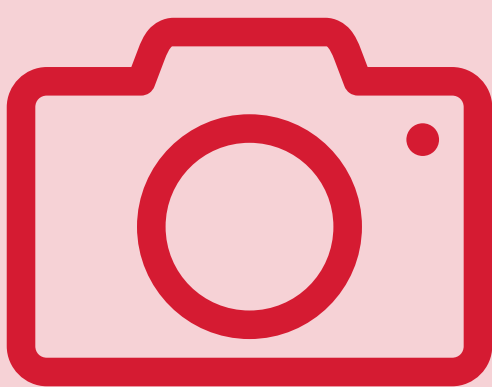
Bison skull excavated in Calgary

What to do if you find something:



Do not remove

Archaeological materials are protected under the Alberta Historical Resources Act



Record the location

Take a photo of the artifact (close-up and wide angle) and note the area without damaging the site



Report to the City

Contact 311 to request the Parks Cultural Landscape team be notified

Indigenous Engagement

Each Nation has its own unique history, relationship, and responsibilities connected to this place. Guidance shared through Indigenous engagement has informed site planning, including principles related to access, protection, interpretation, and long-term stewardship.

Throughout 2025, and on an ongoing basis, the City has been meeting with the Treaty 7 Nation Consultation Offices, Elders, youth, land technicians, and community members of the:

- Siksika First Nation, Piikani First Nation, and Kainai First Nation including the Blackfoot Confederacy
- Chiniki First Nation, Bearspaw First Nation, and Goodstoney First Nation of the Stoney Nakoda Nations
- Tsuut'ina First Nation
- Members of the Otipemisiwak – Métis Nation within Alberta
- Urban Indigenous individuals and organizations

Conversations were hosted through one-on-one meetings, workshops, and site visits.

Reconciliation in practice

Reconciliation is an ongoing way of working. For Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes, this means:

- Recognizing the site first as a place of living Indigenous significance
- Protecting the Indigenous cultural landscape
- Ensuring Indigenous knowledge and land relationships inform planning decisions
- Designing with respect and restraint, sometimes choosing not to build is a form of care

This approach is guided by the White Goose Flying Report, which is actively being implemented and refreshed through ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Nations and communities.



Indigenous Connections

While each Indigenous Nation raised their own perspective, the engagement identified some overlapping design principles that are important for the site. These principles will help ensure that Indigenous presence and culture—historical, contemporary, and future—are woven into the concept.



Phase 1 Engagement

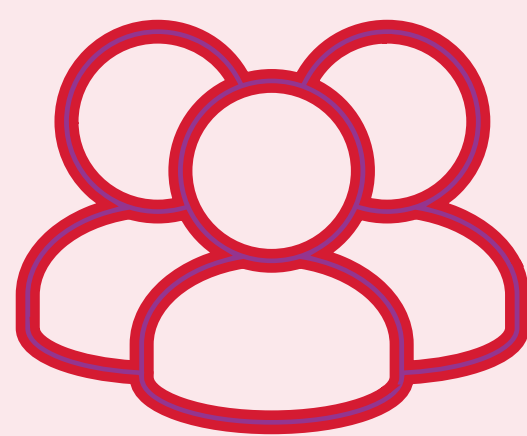
Public engagement was open for feedback between June 16-July 21, 2025. Engagement focused on understanding the values and priorities of the community, exploring how the park is used today, what is working well, what could be improved, and what should be prioritized in the plan.



7,044
online visitors



1,103
online contributions



648
in person participants

What We Heard



Preserve the natural character of the area

Ensuring the area remains wild and undeveloped, with strong opposition to housing or commercial development in and around the area.



Importance of natural area recreation

The importance of the site for a range of low-impact recreational activities, including mountain biking, hiking and running.



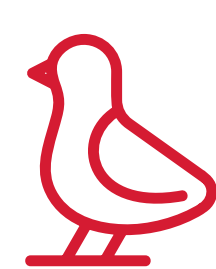
Care and accountability for the park

The importance of care and accountability in managing the park space for users, stewards, and The City.



Trail management

Sustainable trail management and maintenance, including thoughtful design, and connections to the broader network.



Wildlife and ecosystem protection

Protecting wildlife, habitats, and sensitive ecosystems while preserving biodiversity and water sources.

What We Did

The draft plan is intentionally low-impact, with minimal development and a focus on maintaining the area’s wild, natural character. Most proposed changes are limited to key points of interest.

Supporting circulation and trail-based recreational activities of the site have been incorporated into the trail hierarchy, providing various user groups with enhanced experiences and clear wayfinding.

The draft plan reinforces the City’s role in caring for and managing the park by supporting responsible use, stewardship, and education. It identifies opportunities for clearer park etiquette, improved waste management, and partnerships with community and stewardship groups who want opportunities to support monitoring and maintenance activities of the park.

A draft network has been developed with a clear hierarchy and formalized priority routes. The draft plan identifies key locations for improved wayfinding, access points, accessibility, and areas at risk of erosion. A detailed trail strategy is recommended to guide long-term design and maintenance.

The draft plan will include a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) that prioritizes wildlife and ecosystem protection. It will identify regionally and culturally significant plant communities for preservation and restoration, support wildlife by increasing habitat and biodiversity and provide guidance on protecting water as a defining feature of the park.

Vision and Goals

A draft shaped by early engagement, your feedback will help refine them

Vision

Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes is a protected landscape where nature thrives, cultures are honoured, and communities connect. Home to unique plant communities, natural springs, diverse wildlife, and rich archaeological resources, it honours deep cultural connections to the land. Through respectful relationships, learning, trail-based recreation, and shared stewardship, the park will be sustained and celebrated for generations to come.

Goals

These draft goals describe what matters most as planning for Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes moves forward.



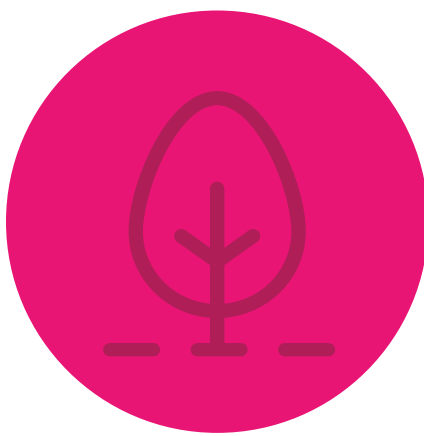
Conserve natural character and restore ecosystems



Honour Indigenous heritage and culture



Conserve and respect archaeology



Support circulation & trail-based recreation



Build community stewardship and accountability

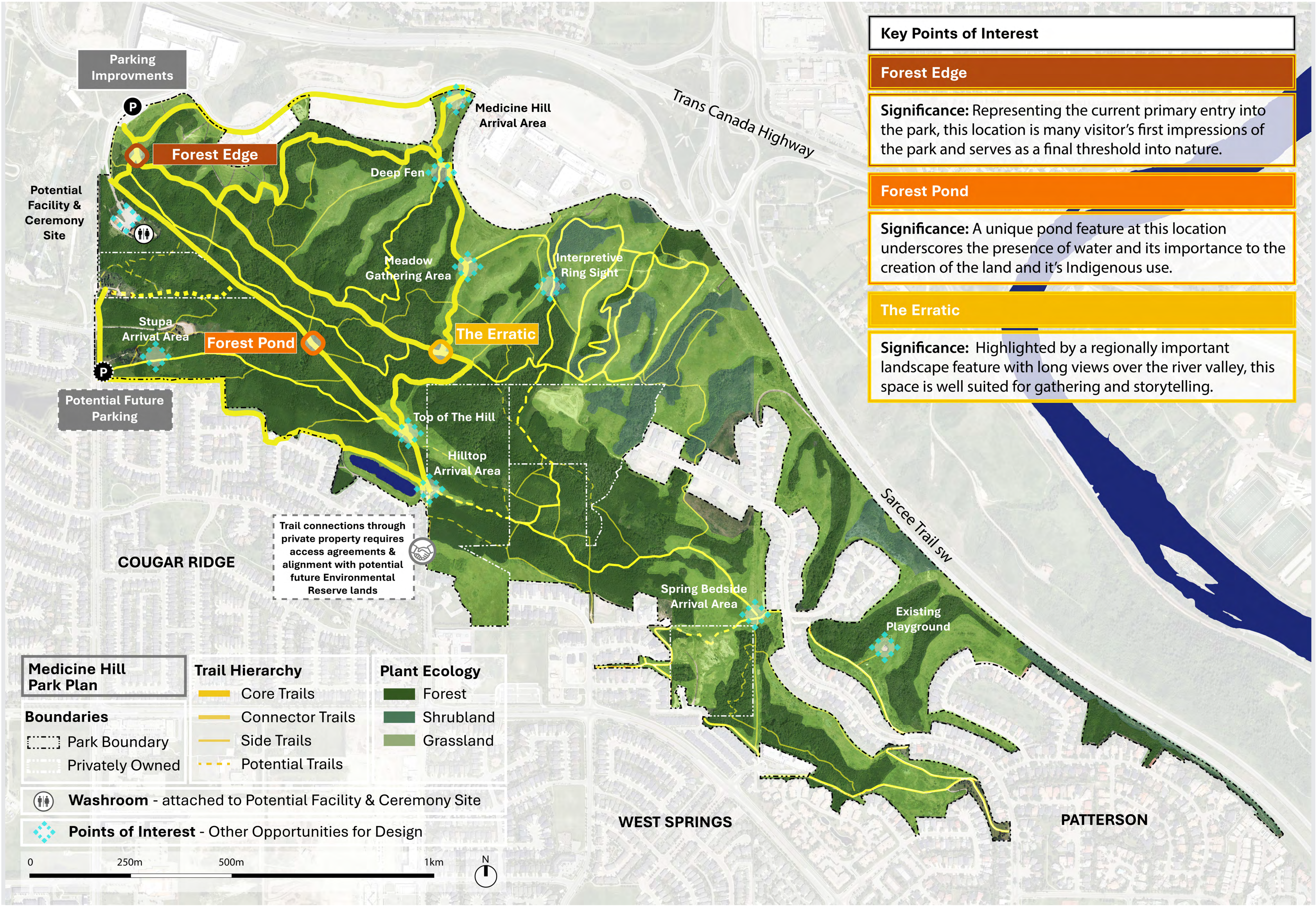


Foster learning and connections

Is there anything important that we missed in the vision?

Is there anything important that we missed in the goals?

Draft Concept Plan



This draft park concept presents a high-level vision, illustrated through a map of key areas and connections across the landscape.

Key Ideas Shaping the Draft Concept Plan:

A clearer, more intentional trail network

Improving trail routing, wayfinding, and access to better manage movement through the site.

Respectful recognition of Indigenous history and ongoing presence

Honouring Indigenous cultures and enabling ongoing cultural practices through planning and future guidance.

Stronger protection of natural and sensitive areas

Prioritizing ecological restoration and protecting waterways, habitat, archaeology, and culturally significant areas.

Improved access and visitor experience

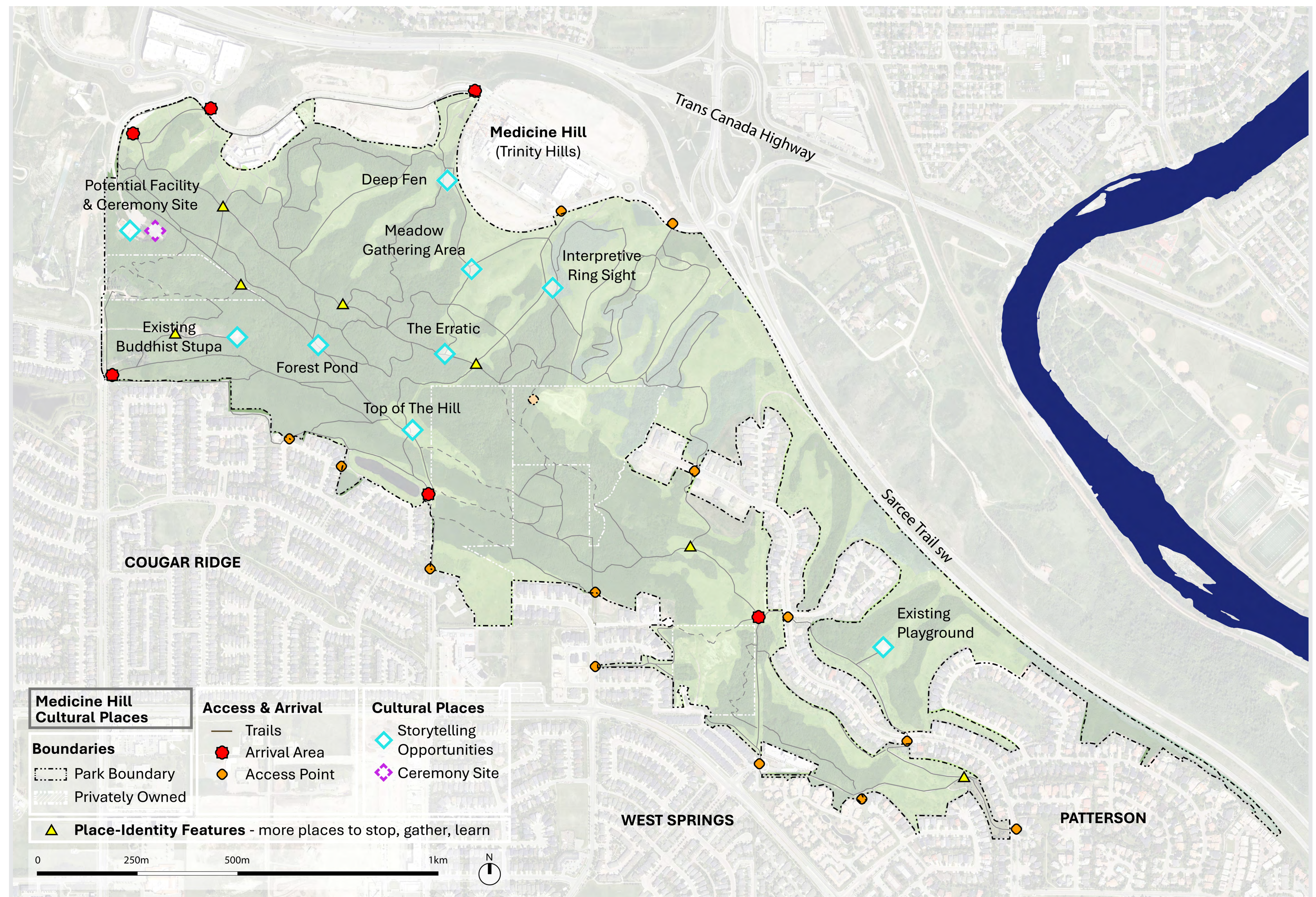
Exploring parking, washrooms, access points, and key activity areas to support safe and appropriate use

Spaces that support learning, culture, and stewardship

Identifying locations for education, Indigenous cultural presence, and stewardship opportunities.

Key aspects of the concept are explored in the following boards

Culture and Learning Concept



The park landscape reflects an intersection of culture(s) where conservation and learning will be key aspects of Medicine Hill.

The City has a multifaceted approach to cultural conservation that can be explored through the following tactics:

- Creating a Ceremony Site to support Indigenous traditional practices and gatherings.
- Identifying unique Cultural Places to share culture through storytelling, educational programming, and interpretive art.
- Increasing awareness of Indigenous knowledge sharing.
- Increasing awareness of and access to archaeology when it takes place as well as developing a park specific Historic Resources Management Plan.
- Collaborating with groups committed to cultural conservation of the landscape.
- Identifying the location for a potential future facility related to interpretation, archaeology, and placemaking; however, most details would occur through a separate future process.



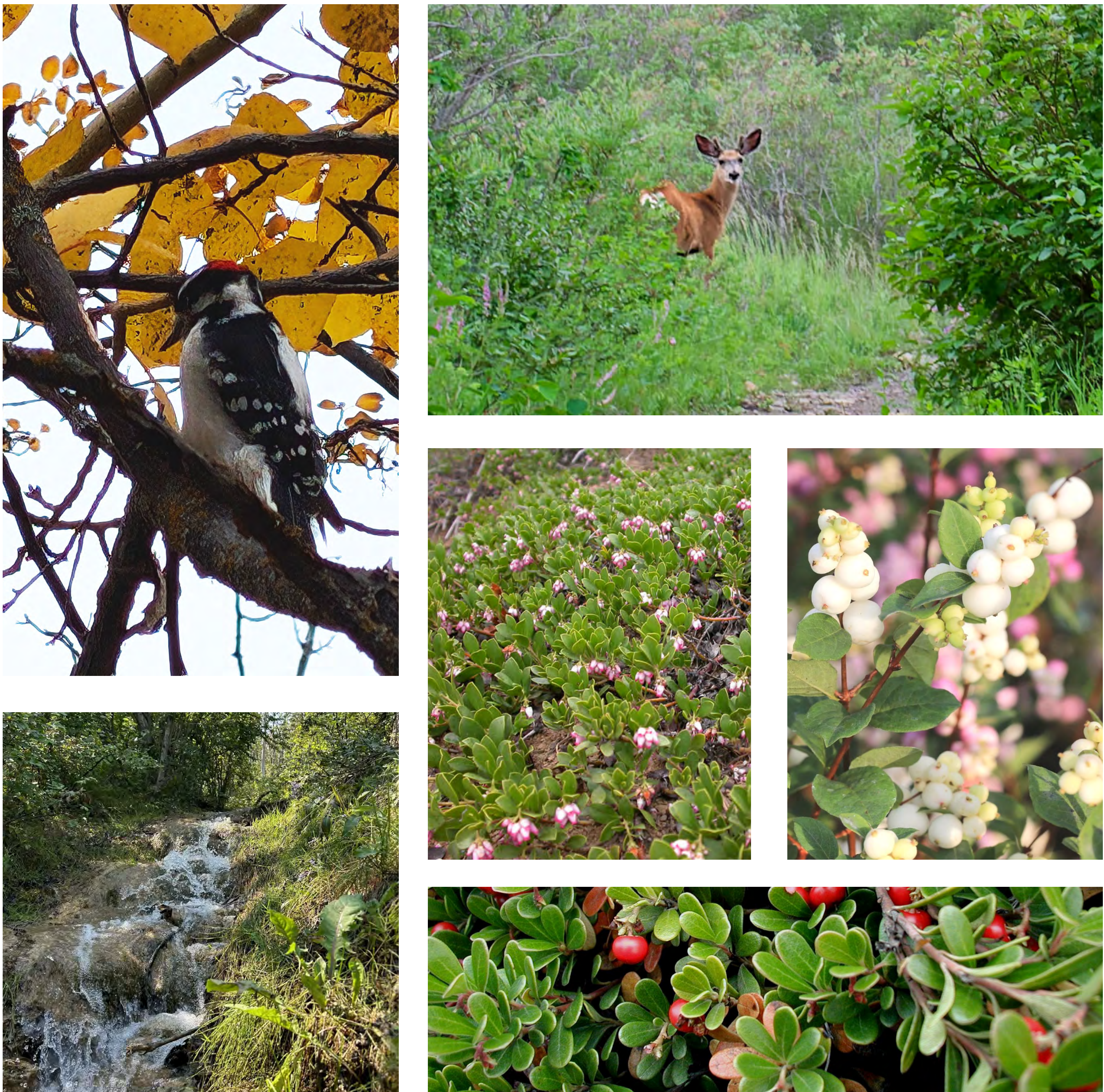
Ecology Concept



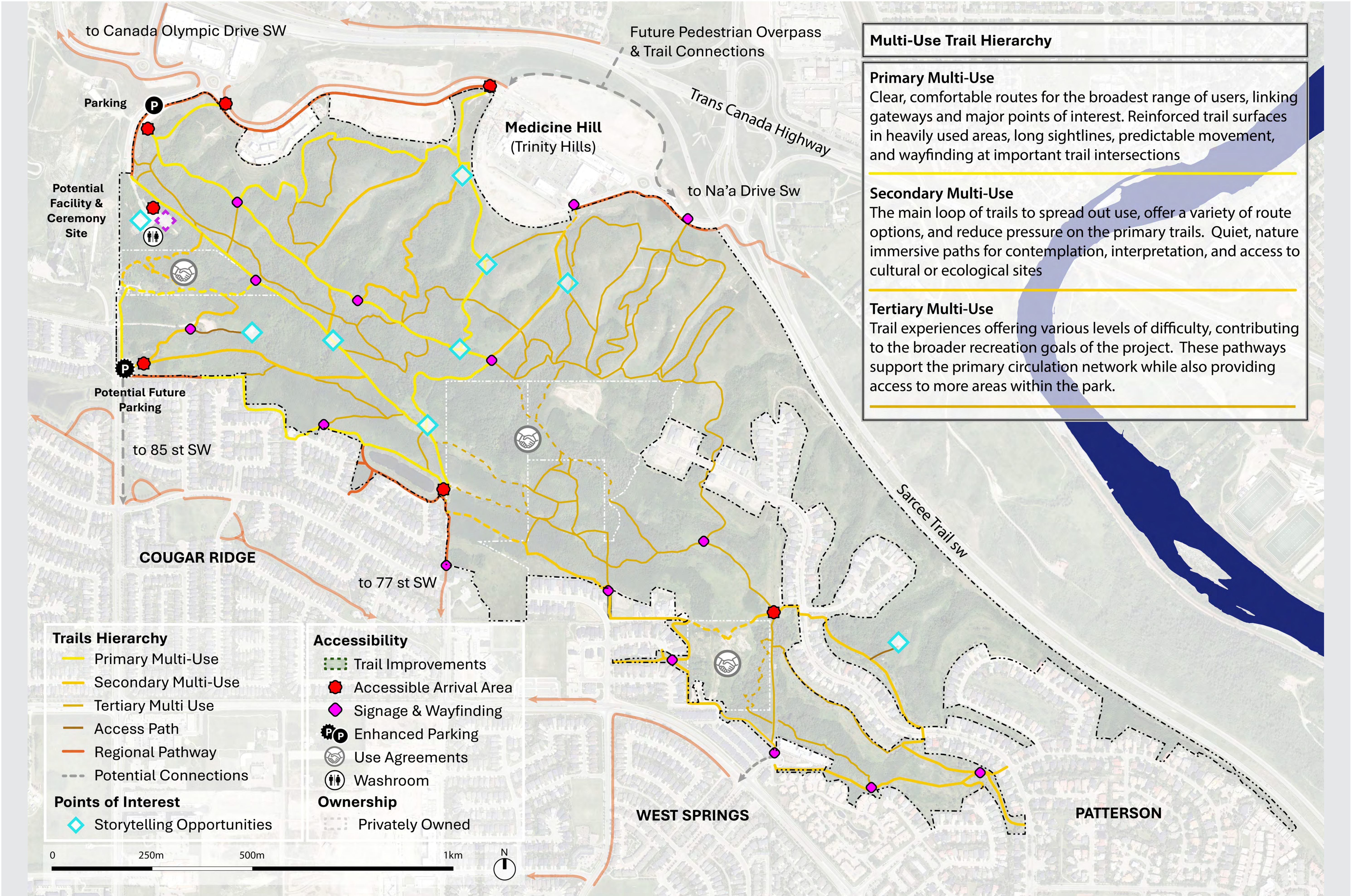
The site has a mix of foothill ecologies and habitats that showcase Calgary’s unique regional character.

The City is developing a more proactive approach to protect, enhance and expand these features through the following tactics:

- Remove invasive species
- Decommission trails and re-route where needed
- Use natural land-care methods like controlled burns, clearing built-up plant material, and grazing
- Restore disturbed grassland areas by improving soil health, loosening compacted soil, and replanting native grasses and plants.
- Remove pollutants from waterways
- Restore water channels and address erosion



Movement Concept



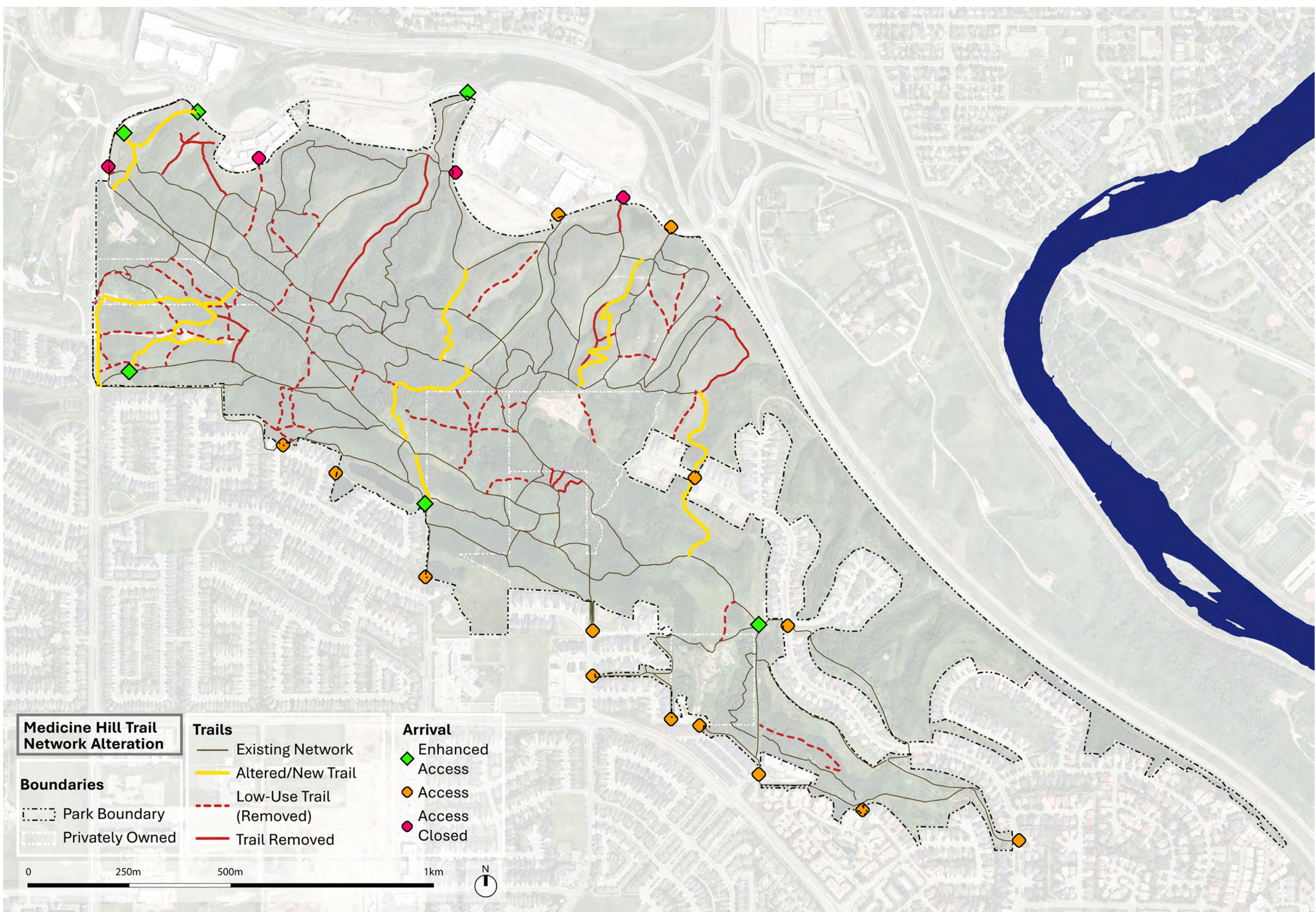
The trail network at Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes is being updated to better support existing trail use while protecting the park’s natural, cultural, and archaeological values.

The draft concept focuses on improving trail flow, clarifying routes, reducing user conflicts, and minimizing impacts on sensitive landscapes, while preserving the immersive, nature-based experience people value. All trails remain multi-use, supporting walking, running, biking, and winter activities. Changes to the network are targeted and intentional, balancing recreation with long-term stewardship of the land.

Accessibility - Movement Considerations

While site topography limits universally accessible trails, the movement concept considers:

- Accessible arrival and orientation, including barrier-free parking, washrooms, and clear wayfinding to support informed route choices.
- Opportunities for a potential accessible experience node, where feasible, along the heritage/interpretive trail, supported by stabilized surfaces and nearby rest areas.
- Inclusive access to interpretation, through a combination of on-site accessible features and virtual options.

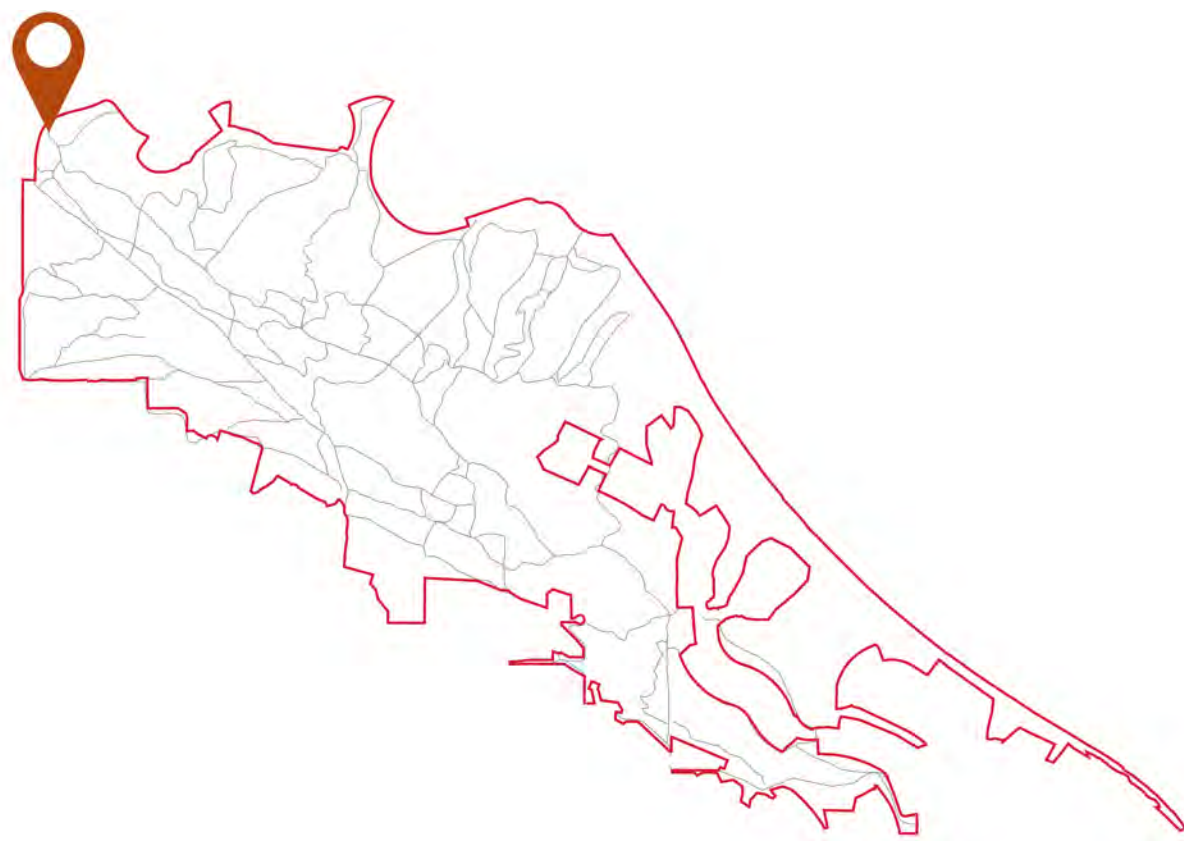


Closures and Restoration

- A small number of low-use trails are proposed for decommissioning to reduce habitat fragmentation and support ecological restoration.
- Trails shown in red on the map are proposed for closure. These are known by some trail user groups as Zeus, Mr. T, and Back East.

Draft Concept

Forest Edge



The Forest Edge is a key entry point into Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes from the Paskapoo parking lot.

This point of interest is intended to:

- Provide a welcoming and more accessible entry into the park
- Improve wayfinding and orientation from the parking area
- Offer opportunities for education and gathering near the trailhead

Below are two options that we believe will accomplish the intentions outlined above:

These concepts are illustrative and not a vote between final designs. Your feedback helps us understand what works, what concerns you, and which values should guide decisions about the experience of the park’s core areas as the concepts evolve

Gateway

The Gateway option, with the addition of a re-graded and accessible connection, provides a gradual transition from the parking lot into the natural landscape, creating a sense of leaving the city behind and entering a special space.

This option emphasizes:

- A minimal, nature-first arrival experience with strong visual connections to the nearby grassland and forests
- Wayfinding and accessibility upgrades to the trail
- Interpretive signage and art that introduces the land’s natural and cultural significance



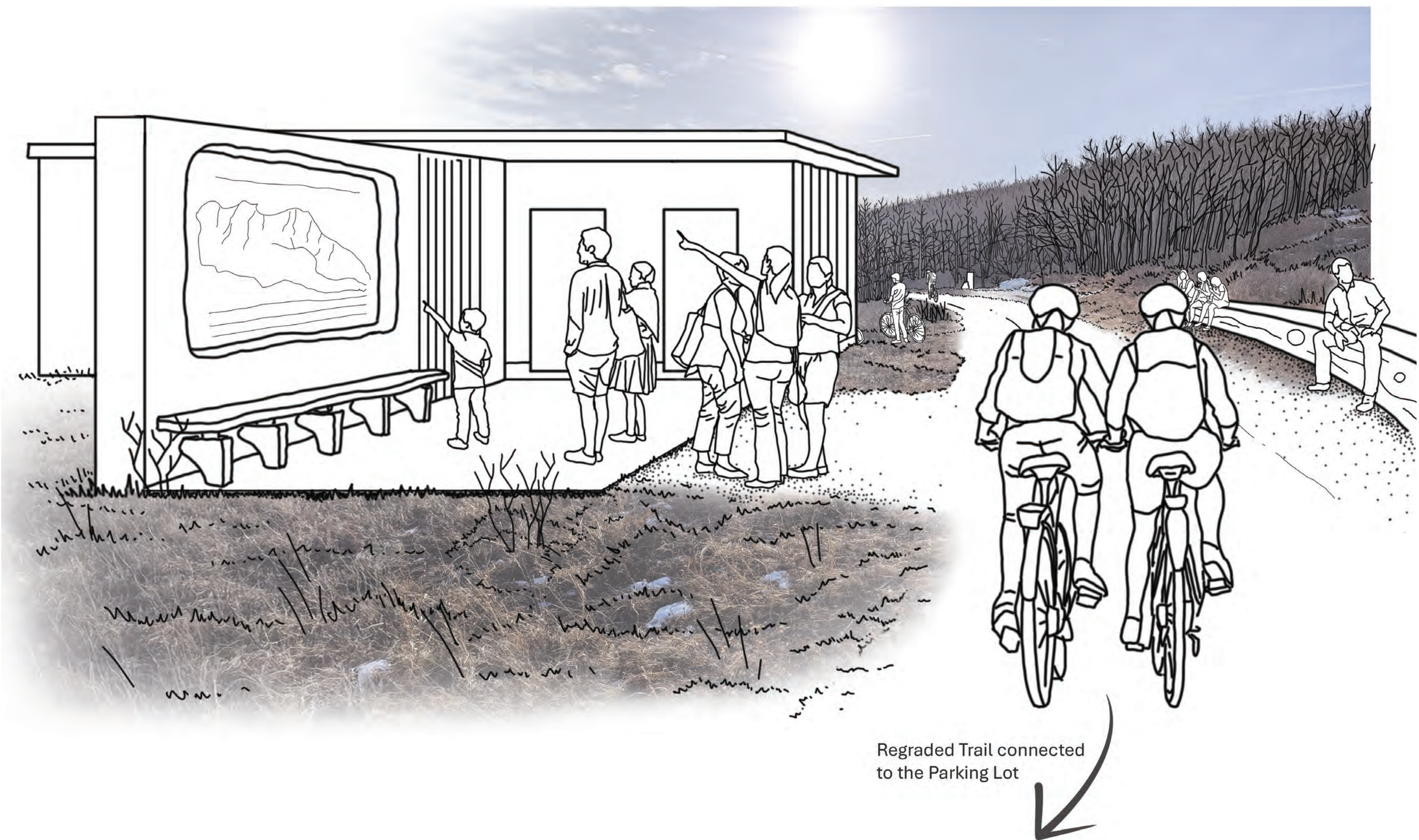
What stands out to you about either the Gateway or Pavilion?

Pavilion

The Pavilion option expands the entry with amenities to help visitors prepare for their visit in a new gathering space at the forest edge, acting as a “foyer” between the city and the park.

This option emphasizes:

- Expanded opportunities for education on ecology
- Enhanced trail experience through rest stop and potential amenities like bike parking
- A well-defined starting point with interpretation/ storytelling, orientation, and potential to support stewardship groups (e.g., equipment storage)



» Your feedback will help determine which elements best reflect how people want to arrive, gather, and begin their experience at Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes.

Draft Concept

Erratic



The Erratic, also known as the Big Rock, is a large, well-known glacial rock located at the centre of the park

This point of interest is intended to:

- Support learning and storytelling connected to the land and its history
- Provide opportunities for gathering and reflection
- Help visitors connect with the significance of the Big Rock and surrounding landscape

Below are two options that we believe will accomplish the intentions outlined above:

These concepts are illustrative and not a vote between final designs. Your feedback helps us understand what works, what concerns you, and which values should guide decisions about the experience of the park’s core areas as the concepts evolve

Big Rock Landing

The Big Rock Landing option transforms the area around the Erratic into a defined gathering space. Terraced seating is arranged to face the rock and the river valley beyond, creating a place where people can slow down, gather, and take in the views.

This option emphasizes:

- Respectful engagement with a significant feature with clear views to the surrounding landscape
- Encouraging visitors to pause for quiet reflection through the design and materials
- Small outdoor classrooms, performances, or demonstrations in a central gathering and learning space



What stands out to you about either Big Rock Landing or Visions of Past & Present?

Visions of Past & Present

The Visions of Past & Present option takes a lighter-touch approach, using small physical elements and digital storytelling to deepen understanding of the site and experience the past and present together.

This option emphasizes:

- Minimal physical intervention in the landscape
- Gently guiding visitors to key views and landscape features using signage, QR codes, or scenic binoculars
- Storytelling through digital and immersive experiences to share Indigenous voices and experience



» Your feedback will help determine which elements best reflect how people want to arrive, gather, and begin their experience at Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes.

Draft Concept

Forest Pond



The central route through the park is known for its streams, gentle slopes, and quiet character.

This point of interest is intended to:

- Create engaging stopping points along the trail
- Integrate art and interpretation that tell the site’s natural and cultural stories
- Improve trail comfort and usability while highlighting natural features
- Support stream restoration by relocating abandoned vehicles out of the stream

Below are two options that we believe will accomplish the intentions outlined above:

These concepts are illustrative and not a vote between final designs. Your feedback helps us understand what works, what concerns you, and which values should guide decisions about the experience of the park’s core areas as the concepts evolve

Paskapoo Artifacts

The Paskapoo Artifacts option uses artistic and interpretive objects to tell the story of the land along the trail. These objects are designed to be explored up close, helping visitors connect with the area’s cultural history, ecology, geology, and past uses.

This option emphasizes:

- Relocating the Cars of Paskapoo from the pond to a new setting along the trail, allowing for a safer and more interactive experience
- An enhanced interpretive and educational trail experience with seating
- Clear storytelling about culture, history, and landscape through hands-on learning



What stands out to you about Paskapoo Artifacts or Moments of Respite?

Moments of Respite

The Moments of Respite option focuses on the natural qualities that already define the trail—especially the streams that flow and cross the path. Design changes are subtle and minimal, drawing attention to water, terrain, and quiet shifts in the landscape.

This option emphasizes:

- Calm reflective experiences in nature with minimal, low-impact design
- Places to sit and rest for a sensory experience of water and movement
- The Cars of Paskapoo are reused as creative signage acknowledging the area’s history as Old Bowfort Road



» Your feedback will help determine which elements best reflect how people want to arrive, gather, and begin their experience at Medicine Hill / Paskapoo Slopes.