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ISL Engineering and Land Services

# Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park Master Plan

What We Heard: Stakeholder Workshop

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4/28/2012

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of Stakeholder Workshop

- To modify and/or confirm the Vision Statement
- To discuss preferred uses for the park and park improvements associated with these
- To discuss potential uses for Yorath House

### Stakeholder Workshop Outputs (the products or results of the event):

- Increased understanding by both participants and the Design team about the potential uses and improvements for the park, its amenities and Yorath House.
- A draft vision statement that has been confirmed by the participants
- A list of preferred uses for the park and potentials park improvements and amenities that will support these uses
- A list of potential uses and improvements for Yorath House

### Format of the Stakeholder Workshop:

Participation in the Stakeholder Workshop was by invitation, including members of the project Advisory Committee and representatives of Community Leagues, identified user groups and City departments responsible for management and operation of Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park. A total of 56 organizations were invited to send a representative to participate in the Workshop, resulting in 22 participants attending the session.

The half day session on April 28, 2012, started with a short presentation that included a brief history of the project and Yorath House, opportunities identified in previous sessions, and constraints that will limit use and development. The Public Involvement process was reviewed, noting that input gathered from the March 21 Visioning Session, the Advisory Committee, Stakeholder Interviews, as well as from previous consultation regarding BVLP was considered by the Design Team and City in developing the draft Vision Statement that was being reviewed.

Participants were then divided into four groups that included a mix of user groups and interests for four rounds of small group discussion about specific topics. The four rounds included:

1. Round 1 – Introductions and Vision Discussion
  - What organizations are represented?
  - What communities are represented?
  - How do you/your organization use the park?
  - Given how you and your organization use the park, does your use fit within the draft vision? If it does not fit, why not?
  - What parts of the draft vision reflect what you value about the park?
2. Round 2 – Current Uses of the Park
  - What current uses of the park do you see fitting within the draft vision? Where might they take place in the park? (Draw on the map)
  - What amenities could be added or changes made to the park to support these uses?
  - What synergies or tensions do you see arising from the multiple uses of the park? How should these be addressed?

3. Round 3 – New Uses of the Park
  - What potential new uses of the park do you see fitting within the vision? Where might they take place in the park? (Draw on the map)
  - What potential new features or amenities could be added to support these uses?
  - What synergies or tensions do you see arising from the multiple uses of the park? How should these be addressed?
  
4. Round 4 – Yorath House and Grounds
  - Keeping the vision in mind, if Yorath House was to remain, what potential uses do you see for the house and property? (Draw on map as appropriate). Who should operate this facility?
  - What changes would need to be made to the facility to support these uses?
  - What synergies or tensions do you see arising between this use of Yorath House and others uses in the park? How should these be addressed?

A short summary report from each small group was provided to the full workshop following each round of discussion. Maps were provided in the groups to allow participants to graphically portray their comments and ideas.

The input received from the small group discussions has been combined and sorted into themes relative to each of the discussion topics. These are presented below, not listed in order of priority.

A full listing of input received in the small group discussions and information collected from the maps is provided in the appendix to this document.

### **ROUND 1: VISION**

**DRAFT VISION:** “A Park on the Edge” – A park characterized by an interplay between two distinct settings: maintained and natural. These settings support a diverse range of year-round outdoor activities, provide access to the North Saskatchewan River and connect park users to attractions in the west end of the City’s river valley.

It was generally felt by participants that the uses currently made of the park fit within the draft Vision, and that the Vision reflects what they value about the park. It was noted by one group that the overall Vision statement of “Edge” is a risky/dangerous connotation, but conceptually fine.

#### **Differences between Buena Vista and Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park**

- Opportunity to be a gem in the river valley
- Vision recognizes distinct uses; Lumping parks together but they are so separate
- Buena Vista – quiet; Dog walkers & walkers enjoy the peaceful walk along the river trail
- Laurier Park – very busy in summer and fall & on weekends; lot of events; picnic spots used
- Yes, boundaries need to be better defined re: dog walkers
- Interplay between uses, appreciate being able to use river valley –want it to stay natural
- Experience –a range of settings
- “Uses” –distinct/overlap edge (transition)

#### **Year Round Use**

- Year round extremely important; Year round outdoor activities used by city as a whole

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- LP closes now, but would like to see it open year round

#### **River Access**

- Need to protect rowers access to the river
- Providing access to river might be a problem for dog walkers
- River access is difficult (steep –need ramp)
- Need better maintenance/access to paddler/rowers clubs
- Bridge (etc.) to mitigate trail/boat ramp conflict

#### **Connections**

- Pedestrian Bridge was built 10 - 12 years ago, but still limited use & services in north end of BV Park other than dog walking & pass through; limited connection value except during Heritage Days when people park at Zoo
- Connecting attractions (ie. Parks) in river valley

#### **Access**

- Access is important; public access to LP and Zoo area is poor; should be public transit; Bus comes to the zoo hourly on Sat and Sun, not during week
- “Access” includes access to washrooms, as well as to BVLP by public transit, via roads, trails, bridge, bicycles, mobility impaired, etc.
- Class 1 trail through park; wish main trail was paved
- More additional reference to single track trail connector to other parks; If called commuter trail – people will treat it differently and respect it more

## **ROUND 2: CURRENT USES OF THE PARK**

#### **Current Uses of the park identified as fitting within the Vision include:**

- Trails (walking, bicycling, running)
- Cross-country skiing
- Access to the river
- Rowing Club (seasonal)
- Paddlers: High flow (late June/early July)
- Public boat launch/canoe launch are same entity, but parking is insufficient
- Pick up/drop off for canoe rentals (shuttle to Devon)
- Dog walking
- Dog off leash area
- Training of service dogs
- Small contained events, school events, races
- Picnics
- Family gatherings (family use of ball diamond, playground, etc.)
- Zoo access
- Zoo day camp in park

#### **Amenities that could be added or changes made to the park to support these uses:**

##### **Dog Walking**

- Fenced area –small dogs/services dogs/ elderly/disabled (Like spruce grove/Leduc, could be permanent or movable); Dogs with Wings would take leadership role; include parking in same area,

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benches for seniors

#### **Parking**

- More parking (noted on map)
- Parking/access is an issue especially around rowing tank and dog park
- Additional parking for boat launch; Parking by boat launch has only 8 places to park jet boat trailer, very small, poor signage & no enforcement of parking only for boat trailers (see map)
- Parking - perhaps some possible extra parking along 132 St if need (dry pond area – see map), could one or two rows

#### **Washrooms/Water Service**

- Port-a-potty by rowing club for their use but used by everyone; add permanent facility (year round)
- 4 season washrooms in BV
- Should be a washroom at / beside the boat launch (Port-a-potty there for 2 days a year during Sourdough Raft Races); Destination from other boat launches up and down the river. Where are washroom and amenities for boaters in transit?
- Real washroom at D.P. parking lot
- When washrooms/ building upgraded, include external power and hose bibs
- Water service (i.e., Pump/tap) for dog walkers
- Zoo always have port-a-potties near LP end

#### **Trails**

- Paved loop for disabled walkers
- Define and understand which is the Trans-Canada trail. This is a key commuter trail and potentially a higher speed trail; manage how it relates to off leash
- More benches
- Cross country ski trails and mountain bike trails on North side of BV

#### **Boat Launch/Ramp**

- Boat Launch - barely sufficient today with 2 ramps to launch boats; Is there area to expand along the bank?
- Better ramp for paddlers
- Keep dogs away from boat launch

#### **Pond**

- Paddlers pond (U-shape 100x50 yards); Need refreshing system (drainage/flow) / Need water source (need service); Currently use Rundle Park
- Pond with fish and fire pits
- Fountain in pond

#### **Maps/Signage/Lighting**

- Maps or signage – encourage visitors to take a stroll through area and see what else is connected/available (e.g., bridge to Hawrelak Park)
- Lighting in BV

#### **Other**

- Add basketball hoops
- More garbage cans in BV
- Events need 220 service (locations on map in LP)

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- Is Dry pond a drainage pond? Other possible uses (flood for skating?)

**Synergies or tensions that may arise from multiple uses & possible ways to address these:**

**Dogs Off Leash/Rowers/Trail Users**

- Dogs vs. cycling commuters and mountain bikes; Allow bike right of way
- Dogs off leash in Laurier Park
- Conflicts with dogs running under rowers feet when carrying boats; on leash area isn't respected
- Issues between dogs/bikes; Properly designed and maintained single track trails is a way to address
- Rowers club dock is private; must be communicated that dogs can't be on the dock at same time
- Conflicts between animals/pedestrians/cars around rowing house (currently); what if access was better looped in this area?
- Only way to cross trail from river into dog area is through paddler/rower area; need better trail connection from river
- "River trail" crosses paddler/row access. This can be bridged and ramped.

**River Access**

- Need more ways to access water area; Maybe another river access point
- Dog beach is key and a top priority for dog walkers
- Park boundary moved so it's legal for dogs to be off leash at dog beach area

**Trail Users / Signage**

- Better definition of single track trail network
- Pay attention to narrow trail design
- Signage is key / Better signage will help
- Junction at pedestrian bridge is a high tension zone –add an info kiosk here
- On leash area better designated through signage
- Add distance markers on trails for runners
- Add cross country ski trails on road around LP. Add removable speed bumps to facilitate grooming
- Tell people where they can go vs. where they can't go

**Manage Use of Areas**

- Tension – too many types of users; Manage use of areas; segregate conflicts
- Meet the needs of larger picnic groups
- Walkers - concern about increasing area of boat launch; would impact the walking experience

**Parking Pressures as Use Increases**

- Concerns about pressure to add more parking in the Yorath House Grounds
- Zoo parking only full on Canada Day and free access days; However, anticipate parking will be sufficient for zoo use going forward, but will be a challenge if continued used of zoo parking for dog walking and other uses
- Zoo lot currently used by other users, but not want to encourage it since it will potentially become a challenge in future
- Concerns by residents adjacent to park about people parking in front of their houses

**Need for more Washrooms**

- Need year round use washrooms
- Need washrooms in different areas of park, including near Bridge, by boat launch

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- Canoe access – 3 to 4 minute walk to washrooms, so people use the bush; use of river increasing, so demand for easily accessible washrooms will increase

**ROUND 3: NEW USES OF THE PARK**

**Potential new uses that fit within the vision, where might they take place & features or amenities needed to support them:**

**Natural Areas / Open Space**

- Naturalize open off leash area at park entrance (mowed lawn area); Balance nature/manicured
- Open “open spaces” more to make it more safe feeling and open
- Needs to be balances with nature (i.e., Nature deficit)
- Arboretum - remove caragana; plant native trees that are more resistant to drought; some areas becoming quite damaged; have demonstration of trees appropriate to the local climate
- Community Garden

**Signage / Entrance / Lighting**

- Gate at the entrance to the park
- Have a sign at entrance of park
- Electronic sign that tells of special events, parking is limited, etc.; signs should be located at bottom of hill; should also be sign by circle or at top of hill
- Signs re: where dogs on leash can be, where dogs are not allowed in LP; not in open space but could be on trails
- Lighting to make it safer in winter
- Light at the rowing club

**Benches/Seating Area**

- Seating area
- Benches enhance use of park (enjoy park, resting spots)

**Trails**

- Pave main trail to better define it
- Walkers would like fewer paths, but more distinct paths that are better marked; one main paved trail and better marked side trails
- Main trail - paved for wheelchairs, biking; motorized wheel chair; Rest of trails granular - not muddy, infringes on natural area
- LP –some areas (smaller trails) feel unsafe (maybe need to be opened up)
- Identify which is the Trans Canada trail –the key commuter trail (Fort Sask to Devon). Manage off leash access along this trail which can be a higher speed trail
- Create a raised boardwalk in the high tension area at the bridge

**Washrooms**

- New washroom in more locations in BV
- New accessible washroom (near training area)
- Year round washroom in LP
- Need washrooms in BV - people are using the bush; At minimum have camouflaged port-a-potties, but need to have them close
- Amenity building off Fox Drive, one in LP - need to have something in BV

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- People won't walk a long way to a washroom - could be one near the paddlers area that might serve the northern part of BV; also option near the bridge

#### **Parking**

- Need better parking plan for park - including signage, enforcement; impacts on all uses

#### **Playground**

- Spray park for kids
- Improve playground
- Bigger playground in LP
- Senior friendly playground; include seniors equipment to increase intergenerational interaction
  - Use facilitated approach with exercise stations and 2 chairs as opposed to benches to prevent sleeping. Place chairs frequently and strategically for those who can't walk far distances

#### **Sports Activities**

- A kids bike park – natural including jumps, pump track
- Add BMX boardwalk park (Canmore example) –single track, bike skills
- Add basketball courts/hoops to attract youth demographic
- Area that supports activities such as Frisbee/disc golf, appealing to younger generation; this is lacking right now
- Soccer field

#### **River Access / Use**

- River access –several points of access needed
- Gabions/steps etc. to allow better access to dog swimming area –slippery slope
- Restore areas along river where access shouldn't be accessed
- Designate off-leash dog swimming area near pedestrian bridge
- Canoe polo (currently played on river); playing in moving water is difficult
- Need better public paddling facility that is in better quality/condition
- Add another dock
- Should be more enjoyment options in the boat launch area; very underdeveloped; 2 ramps but zero recreational opportunities; perhaps a couple of picnic stalls overlooking the boat launch (could be reservation); removal of mostly dead trees on river side of LP Road, most trees falling into river, negatively impact view to the river from the road, can't see the boat launch from the road and no sign saying boat launch - but present use includes fishermen, canoeists, boaters, dog walkers, jet skiers (practice for jet ski racing); and facilities are lacking
- Like it when its quiet, but that is bad re: appreciating use of the river
- Water based sports activities focus of park

#### **Access**

- Access - also means access to washrooms, as well as mobility for mobility impaired, roads, etc
- Seniors/mobility issues; Add benches and places to rest
- Wheel chair access to boat launch area, trails,
- Improve access/directions to the boat launch; One way access to boat launch is confusing - need to simplify the flow - keep all one way, but clear directions for different things
- Road through LP - too narrow, speed bumps dangerous for boat trailers; small area between BV Road and launch 2-way to have better access/egress for boat trailers; Would increase problems if force boaters to drive around

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- Access to Hawrelak Park - not dogs off leash, leashed only across the bridge
- Move road around pond (see map)

#### Year round Use

- Winter picnicking
- Cross country skiing, could use the flood plain and flood and freeze it for a skating pond - want to get people out in winter
- Skijoring (dog cross country skiing) - LP would be great, but would be introducing dogs into park
- Keep road open in winter (can't clear road because of speed bumps); would like to see LP road open in winter to encourage more winter use
- Find it odd that BV is open but LP is not open
- Not enough area for x-country skiing in BV but would work in LP (properly plow and track)
- Maybe use Yorath as warm up area
- Skating in the winter / Maybe skating where baseball diamonds are in the winter

#### Maintenance / Operations

- Dog bag dispensers in area is always empty
- Better level of maintenance in BV
- BV Road needs paving - has been patched for years, need to improve access to Zoo and Park
- Repair road to Rowing club is terrible (sand, but low spot, pot holes, very bad shape)
- 311, don't know any of the parks & want to have address; not appropriate to have to provide a street address within a city park (Same issue with 911 not knowing Edmonton parks, landmarks)
- 3 things were addressed in Management Plan: bathrooms, benches, garbage cans (in dog walking area, at boat launch); need benches to sit and enjoy the park & for boomers

#### Synergies or tensions that may arise from multiple uses & possible ways to address these:

#### Parking / Signage

- Parking and signage
- No signage re: multi-use trails
- Signage at traffic circle
- Signage in washrooms re: areas of use
- Rowing club isn't well marked through signage –in case of emergency it's hard to get responders to location
- Signage (bike/dog) –better communication on MUT running through BV and well defined areas, appropriate placement
- Concern re: demand for more parking, reduce park space, bird watching, dog walking, etc.
- It was noted that there used to be larger parking lots - one off 132 St and one east end of Zoo
- 8 stalls at top of boat ramp perfect location for boat trailer parking, if there is proper education & signage/enforcement would likely be adequate; but currently picnic users park here rather than trailers; Hard to see how can make a good compromise
- BV Road Safety Cttee (road related) home owners very organized - when zoo or other park uses infringe on them, especially after hours (11 pm); frustrated with park, especially during special events, Heritage Days (parking to access Hawrelak Park, not regular users) -

#### Trail Use

- Tension –Trans Canada Trail/Commuter route and dogs off leash
  - Solutions: key messaging –message is simple and with flashing lights

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- Maybe a hedge to separate bikes from dogs line of sight
- Cross country skiing does not mix well with some other activities
- Great idea for bridge/raised walkway at pedestrian bridge.

**Access**

- Paddler access needs to be gated (as it currently is). Previously open road caused problems
- Shared use for paddling and proper ramp
- All agree need more public transit access -
- Low mobility area is excellent for setting the tone in the park

**Boat Launch Area Development**

- Mixed views re: development of boat launch area; appreciate access for canoeing, but not sure want to see narrow LP turn into access to river; concern about removing trees and trees that are falling down; old trees are valuable for nesting birds, etc. but also dangerous
- Could see whole area of boat launch cater to boaters, canoers - commercial (500 canoes a summer) plus public use; can have 2 trailers launching at same time

**Other**

- Fire pits in off leash are –maybe problems with kids using the park at night
- Ball diamonds –why aren't they being used? Could space be used for other things?
- Extreme croquet.

**ROUND 4: YORATH HOUSE & GROUNDS**

**Potential Uses for Yorath House and property if it was to remain, keeping the Vision in mind, who would operate it & changes needed to support the use**

**Special Events**

- Rent out for weddings/special events –upper floors; lower floor other uses
- Event facility – rental hall etc; mixed use facility
- Wedding facility with lovely gardens
- Could be for special event use; weddings; have tents up for rowing club events, great location (can accommodate 250 people if outdoors); can shuttle people to the facility
- Weddings – would need to knock out walls

**Historic / Interpretive Centre**

- Interpretive centre
- Historical recognition about what happened in area (e.g., Gibbens possibly original land donor, forefathers with vision of Ribbon of Green, history of settlement in area, etc.)
- Needs to keep inside heritage if remodeled
- Restricted by historic site

**Gardens / Arboretum**

- Rockery - café, patio, rock garden & paths through garden and along the river; partly educational, signage, plant names
- Arboretum - native plants, could be an extension of garden
- Sell plants (greenhouse) - eg., Ellerslie Greenhouse, sell plants as well as small cafe
- Were also orchards in the area - micro-climate

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- Gardens –community and re-establish the formal gardens
- Wedding pictures
- Mobility trails around Yorath

#### **Café / Tea House / Warm up Area**

- One concept put forward in 2011 - Kids on Track - summer programs, small community café
- Community based centre –culture, art, café
- Tea house
- Split-use; warm-up area for skiing and café
- Tea/sandwich/hotdog –people won't go up to the Zoo
- Café - trailer?

#### **Shared Group Space / Miscellaneous**

- Shared use –rotate groups in and out, shared buildings
- Not-for-profit group space, City has long list; City would need to manage/pay for operations
- Artists facility/gallery space / Artist studio work - lighting in building lends itself well to studios
- Yoga studio, architectural society, horticultural group
- Daycare –would work as is –upgrades need to be done
- Kids on Track –is this an overlap with the zoo?
- Use as a space to congregate people
- Skating area –flood lawn and use it as a skating building
- Vet clinic (for Zoo); wildlife rehab services, interpretation & education (now Zoo providing much of that) - animal hospice potentially of interest
- Use for hostel
- Catholic school board lease to use as a service centre for activities
- Satellite to John Janzen

#### **Operations Ideas**

- A lot of work needs to be done - expensive. Updating needs to be done by the city
- City runs it entirely or updates it and leases it out to profit or non-profit
- Public and private use to pay for and operate
- Would the city pay utilities?
- Could be managed/maintained by “Friends of the Park” group.
- Turn into business to generate income
- A lot of concern as to whether it should stay
  - Too expensive for what it is worth
  - Will it fulfill the needs of any non-profit group
  - Other ways to acknowledge the history
  - Most people don't even know it's there
  - It is in floodplain (1 in 50 year?)
  - Too much work needs to go into
  - Too expensive to rent if it is charged out on cost recovery model
- Cost to bring up to fire code
- Can we take out walls etc.?

#### **River Access Camping**

- River camping - public access trail from river, walk in only tent sites spaced apart, fire pits; river access only; café or cafeteria that could be used by campers; small source of revenue
- Symbiotic use if a river access campground

**Synergies or tensions arising between use of Yorath House and other uses in the park**

**Access and Parking**

- Would be a stand-alone destination; if enough parking it wouldn't conflict with park uses
- Need access and parking
- Commuter trail may have to move if house is utilized

**Viability / Competing Uses with Zoo**

- Café - nice, but hard to make a business case for it (Zoo has hard time)

**Enforcement**

- Would need more enforcement if site developed

## APPENDIX: NOTES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### ROUND 1: INTRODUCTIONS & VISION

#### What Organizations/Communities are represented?

- Dog Walkers
- Park users
- Edmonton Rowing Club
- North West Voyageurs Canoe and Kayak Club
- Canoeheads
- Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance
- Alberta Trail Net Society
- Edmonton Nature Club
- Wild Rose Ramblers
- Edmonton Sport Council
- Zoo Director (also responsible for John Janzen Nature Centre)
- City of Edmonton (including Park Ranger, Planning)
- Communities / Community Leagues (Crestwood, Laurier Heights, Lynnwood, Windsor Park, Beverly Heights, Argyll, Alberta Avenue, Gold Bar, Glenora, North Glenora, Parkview, Highlands, Terwillegar, acreage)

#### How do you and your Organization use the Park? (Uses represented by participants)

- Dog walking (on and off-leash)
- Service Dog Training
- Picnicking
- Family gatherings
- Walking (single track trails)
- Running / cross country running
- Cross country ski/snowshoe
- Bicycling
- Water based activities (rowing, paddling, paddling events)
- Boat launch
- Canoe rentals
- Fishing
- Sport community uses / Baseball diamonds
- Visit Zoo
- Park enforcement

#### Given how you and your Organization use the park, does your use fit within the draft vision?

#### If it does not fit, why not?

**DRAFT VISION:** “A Park on the Edge” – A park characterized by an interplay between two distinct settings: maintained and natural. These settings support a diverse range of year-round outdoor activities, provide access to the North Saskatchewan River and connect park users to attractions in the west end of the City’s river valley.

- “Edge” –risky/dangerous connotation, but conceptual fine
- Opportunity to be a gem in the river valley
- “Uses” –distinct/overlap edge (transition)
- Vision recognizes distinct uses; Lumping parks together but they are so separate
- Buena Vista – quiet
- Dog walkers & walkers enjoy the peaceful walk along the river trail

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- Noted that dog walkers feel harassed by law enforcement
- Yes, boundaries need to be better defined re: dog walkers
- Laurier Park - busy in summer and fall; lot of events that occur; very busy on weekends, picnic spots used, very busy
- Lovely place for picnic - walk from John Janzen
- Need to start providing park areas somewhere other than Hawrelak Park - too much focus there
- "Maintained" –need better maintenance/access to paddler/rowers clubs
  - River access is difficult (steep –need ramp)
  - Bridge (etc.) to mitigate trail/boat ramp conflict
- Yes, need to protect rowers access to the river
- Providing access to river might be a problem for dog walkers
- Connecting attractions (ie. Parks) in river valley
- "Attractions" –definition of?? (general activities vs. specific facilities/sites)
- Yes, bicycle
- Class 1 trail through park
- More additional reference to single track trail connector to other parks; If called commuter trail –people will treat it differently and respect it more

**What parts of the vision reflect what you value about the park?**

- Experience –a range of settings –not a holistic statement.
- The interplay between uses, appreciate being able to use river valley –want it to stay natural –love that.
- Maintain natural
- Year round extremely important; Year round outdoor activities used by city as a whole
- Interested in year round - Zoo & off leash are year round
- LP closes now, but would like to see it open year round
- Currently not much to drive people here other than zoo and dog walking & rowing/paddling
- Connections / Experience – Pedestrian Bridge was built 10 - 12 years ago, but still limited use & services in north end of BV Park other than dog walking & pass through; no connection value except during Heritage Days when people park at Zoo; no formal vision of use; this is way overdue since spent millions to build bridge, but nothing really connecting
- Wish main trail was paved - more strongly noted
- Access is important – public access to LP and Zoo area is poor; should be public transit; Bus comes to the zoo hourly on Sat and Sun, not during week
- It was noted that "access" includes access to washrooms, as well as to BVLP by public transit, via roads, bridge, bicycles, etc.
  - No washrooms in north end of BV, but not all necessarily support more washrooms in BV
  - Perhaps washrooms in Yorath - not want to see major building development

**ROUND 2: CURRENT USES OF THE PARK**

**What current uses of the park do you see fitting within the vision? Where might they take place in the park? (Draw on map)**

Orange Group:

- Rowing Club
- Dog off leash area
- Bicycles –single track

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Red Group:

- Paddlers: High flow (late June/early July)
  - Too dangerous for novice paddlers
  - Would like a pond (U-shape 100x50 yards)
  - Need refreshing system (drainage/flow)
  - Need water source (need service)
  - Currently use Rundle Park
- Fenced training area (service dogs only)
- Also used to protect service dogs and disabled owners
- Current events
  - A default site when other parks are full, but some like small site
  - Little fun run
  - Small contained events
  - Parking is an issue, but they are one day events so not a huge issue

Blue Group:

- Access to the river
- Additional parking for boat launch
- Cross country ski trails and mountain bike trails on North side of BV
- Partnership with other paddling groups on leases

Green Group:

- Picnics - family use of baseball diamonds
- Dog walking - BV park is great the way it is, meets needs of dog walking
- BV - perfect for dogs and glad if nothing changes, but concern about parking
- Walking - connections to Hawrelak, quiet area
- Public boat launch/canoe launch are same entity, but parking is insufficient for boat & canoe launch (Is there going to be a boat launch at Dawson Park?)
- Want to see canoes on the river - but LP is a very narrow park, picnic sites, a shelter
- Boat rental - pick up here, transfer to Devon (8 - 14 canoes coming down the river); then end up back at the boat launch, put the canoes on trailers; Customers park at 2 lots on either side of launch, or also Zoo parking
- Valley well used, but few people connect with the river, although that is changing
- Zoo uses park for day camp, does connect to Hawrelak and trails
- Dry pond - is it a drainage pond? What possible uses are there for the dry pond?
- There are 2 baseball diamonds, but suitable only for recreational and not league play (families & family gatherings, family recreational use); not room for full size soccer field or ball diamond
- Use park for races and walks, schools events
- Zoo always have port-a-potties near LP end

**What amenities could be added or changes to the park made to support these uses?**

Orange Group:

- More parking (noted on map)
- Port-a-potty by rowing club for their use but used by everyone –need more added or add permanent facility (year round)

Red Group:

- Water service (i.e., Pump/tap) for dog walkers
- Real washroom at D.P. parking lot
- Paved loop for disabled walkers

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- Fenced area –small dogs/services dogs/ elderly/disabled (Like spruce grove/Leduc)
  - Dogs with wings would take leadership role
  - Include parking amenities in same area
  - Make it less exclusionary
  - Could be permanent or movable
  - Benches etc. for seniors
- Paddlers pond and better ramp
- Events - 220 service (locations on map in LP)
- When washrooms/ building upgraded, include external power and hose bibs
- Parking/access is an issue especially around rowing tank and dog park

Blue Group:

- Add basketball hoops
- Parking
- More garbage cans in BV
- More benches
- 4 season washrooms in BV
- Lighting in BV
- Pond with fish and fire pits
- Fountain in pond
- Define and understand which is the Trans-Canada trail. This is a key commuter trail and potentially a higher speed trail; manage how it relates to off leash

Green Group:

- Now people are starting to use the access to the river, ferrying from 50<sup>th</sup> St, from Devon
- Parking by boat launch has only 8 places to park jet boat trailer, very small, poor signage & no enforcement of parking only for boat trailers (see notes on map)
- Boat Launch - barely sufficient today with 2 ramps to launch boats; Is there area to expand along the bank?
- Destination from other boat launches up and down the river. Where are washroom and amenities for boaters in transit?
- Port-a-potty for 2 days a year during Sourdough Raft Races at boat launch; Should be a washroom at / beside the boat launch
- Parking - perhaps some possible extra parking along 132 St if need (dry pond area – see map), could perhaps keep pushing further west, for a second row of parking; now parking on lawn where ever they can, getting more congested
- Maps or signage – encourage visitors to take a stroll through area and see what else is connected/available
- Signage could be in place in LP to suggest going across the bridge to Hawrelak park for picnic – but not likely people want to walk that far for a picnic; may encourage them to come back another time to one or other of the parks

**What synergies or tensions do you see arising from the multiple uses of the park? How should these be addressed?**

Orange Group:

- Conflicts with dogs running under rowers feet when carrying boats; on leash area isn't respected
- Need more ways to access water area
- Sometimes issues between dogs/bikes
  - Properly designed and maintained single track trails is a way to address
- Pay attention to narrow trail design

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- Better signage will help
- Better definition of single track trail network
- On leash area better designated through signage
- Park boundary moved so it's legal for dogs to be off leash at dog beach area
- Rowers club dock is a private dock; it has to be communicated that dogs can't be on the dock at the same time
- Maybe another river access point
- Tell people where they can go vs. where they can't go
- Allow bike right of way

Red Group:

- Conflicts between animals/pedestrians/cars around rowing house (currently); what if access was better looped in this area?
- Only way to cross trail from river into dog area is through paddler/rower area; need better trail connection from river
- "river trail" crosses paddler/row access. This can be bridged and ramped.

Blue Group:

- Tension – too many types of users
- Manage use of areas; segregate conflicts
- Signage is key
- Dog beach is key and a top priority for dog walkers
- Dogs vs. cycling commuters and mountain bikes
- Junction at pedestrian bridge is a high tension zone –add an info kiosk here
- Add distance markers on trails for runners
- Add cross country ski trails on road around LP. Add removable speed bumps to facilitate grooming
- Meet the needs of larger picnic groups

Green Group:

- Concerns about pressure to add more parking in the Yorath House Grounds
- Zoo parking only full on Canada Day and free access days; However, anticipate parking will be sufficient for zoo use going forward, but will be a challenge if continued used of zoo parking for dog walking and other uses
- Zoo lot currently used by other users, but not want to encourage it since it will potentially become a challenge in future
- Concerns by residents adjacent to park about people parking in front of their houses
- Walkers - concern about increasing area of boat launch; this would impact the walking experience
- Canoe access - too far to walk to existing washrooms (3-4 minute walk), so people not using proper facilities; Use of river increasing (10 fold increase over past few years)
- Also need washroom in east and west end of park
- Need year round use washrooms
- There are not supposed to be dogs in much of LP - but people do bring in their dogs, also many dogs off leash in LP - need better signage and enforcement; Forced to chase dogs away from boat launch all the time

### ROUND 3: NEW USES OF THE PARK

**What potential new uses of the park do you see fitting within the vision? Where might they take place in the park?  
(Draw on map)**

#### Orange Group:

- Don't advertise park
- Have a sign at entrance of park
- Adding another dock
- Lighting to make it safer in winter
- Not enough of a segregated area for x-country skiing in BV but would work in LP (properly plow and track)
- Maybe use Yorath as warm up area
- Maybe skating where baseball diamonds are in the winter
- A kids bike park – natural including jumps, pump track
- Spray park for kids
- Seating area
- Area that supports activities such as Frisbee/disc golf, appealing to younger generation; this is lacking right now
- Yorath –memorial or interpretive centre
- Done in natural way -stones

#### Red Group:

- Need better public paddling facility that is in better quality/condition
- Canoe polo (currently played on river); playing in moving water is difficult
- Skijoring (dog cross country skiing) - LP would be great, but this would be introducing dogs into the park
- Designate off-leash dog swimming area near pedestrian bridge
- Naturalize open off leash area at park entrance (mowed lawn area); Balance nature/manicured
- Senior friendly playground

#### Blue Group:

- Identify which is the Trans Canada trail –the key commuter trail (Fort Sask to Devon). Manage off leash access along this trail which can be a higher speed trail
- Create a raised boardwalk in the high tension area at the bridge
- Add BMX boardwalk park (Canmore example) –single track, bike skills
- Add basketball courts/hoops to attract youth demographic

#### Green Group:

- Should be more enjoyment in the boat launch area; very underdeveloped; 2 ramps but zero recreational opportunities; perhaps a couple of picnic stalls overlooking the boat launch (could be reservation); removal of mostly dead trees on river side of LP Road, most trees falling into river, negatively impact view to the river from the road, can't see the boat launch from the road and no sign saying boat launch - but present use includes fishermen, canoeists, boaters, dog walkers, jet skiers (practice for jet ski racing); and facilities are lacking
- Like it when its quiet, but that is bad re: appreciating use of the river
- Improve access/directions to the boat launch; One way access to boat launch is confusing - need to simplify the flow - keep all one way, but clear directions for different things
- Road through LP - too narrow, speed bumps dangerous for boat trailers; small area between BV Road and launch 2-way to have better access/egress for boat trailers; Would increase problems if force boaters to drive around
- Need better parking plan for park - including signage, enforcement; impacts on all uses
- Access to Hawrelak Park - not dogs off leash, leashed only across the bridge

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- Cross country skiing, could use the flood plain and flood and freeze it for a skating pond - want to get people out in winter
- Keep road open in winter (can't clear road because of speed bumps); would like to see LP road open in winter to encourage more winter use
- Find it odd that BV is open but LP is not open

**What potential new features or amenities could be added to support these uses?**

Orange Group:

- Pave trail to better define it

Red Group:

- New washroom in more locations in BV
- New accessible washroom (near training area)
- LP –some areas (smaller trails) feel unsafe (maybe need to be opened up)
  - Improve playground
  - Open “open spaces” more to make it more safe feeling and open
  - Needs to be balances with nature (i.e., Nature deficit)
- Restore areas along river where access shouldn't be accessed
- Playground –include seniors equipment to increase intergenerational interaction
- Dog bag dispensers in area is always empty
- Better level of maintenance in BV
- Gabions/steps etc. to allow better access to dog swimming area –slippery slope

Blue Group:

- River access –several points of access needed
- Seniors/mobility issues
  - Add benches and places to rest
  - Use facilitated approach with exercise stations and 2 chairs as opposed to benches to prevent sleeping. Place chairs frequently and strategically for those who can't walk far
  - Potentially around the Yorath House and the Pond
  - Community Garden
  - Year round washroom in LP
  - Gate at the entrance to the park
  - Light at the rowing club
  - Skating in the winter
  - Soccer field
  - Move road around pond (see map)

Green Group:

- Need electronic sign that tells of special events, parking is limited, etc.; signs should be located at bottom of hill; should also be sign by circle or at top of hill
- Signs re: where dogs on leash can be, where dogs are not allowed in LP; not in open space but could be on trails
- Winter picnicking
- Bigger playground in LP
- Arboretum - remove caragana; plant native trees that are more resistant to drought; some areas becoming quite damaged; have demonstration of trees appropriate to local climate
- Walkers would like fewer paths, but more distinct paths that are better marked; one main paved trail and better marked side trails

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- Main trail - paved for wheelchairs, biking; motorized wheel chair; Rest of trails granular - not muddy, infringes on natural area
- Wheel chair access to boat launch area, trails,
- Had to call 311, don't know any of the parks & want to have address; not appropriate to have to provide a street address within a city park (Same issue with 911 not knowing Edmonton parks, landmarks, etc.)
- Need washrooms in BV - people are using the bush and don't like to use port-a-potties; could be nice buildings or camouflaged port-a-potties; At minimum have camouflaged port-a-potties, but need to have them close
- Amenity building off Fox Drive, one in LP - need to have something in BV
- People won't walk a long way to a washroom - could be one near the paddlers area that might serve the northern part of BV; also option near the bridge
- 3 things were addressed in Management Plan: bathrooms, benches, garbage cans (in dog walking area, at boat launch); need benches to sit and enjoy the park & for boomers
- Benches enhance use of park (enjoy park, resting spots)
- Water based sports activities focus of park
- BV Road needs paving - has been patched for years, need to improve access to Zoo and Park
- Repair road to Rowing club is terrible (sand, but low spot, pot holes, very bad shape)
- Access - also means access to washrooms, as well as mobility for mobility impaired, roads, etc

**What synergies or tensions do you see arising from the multiple uses of the park? How should these be addressed?**

Orange Group:

- Parking and signage
- Signage at traffic circle
- Rowing club isn't well marked through signage –in case of emergency it's hard to get responders to location

Red Group:

- Paddler access needs to be gated (as it currently is). Previously open road caused undesirable activity
- Cross country skiing does not mix well with some other activities; When on-lease BV –there were lots of trails
- Signage (bike/dog) –better communication on MUT running through BV and well defined areas, appropriate placement.

Blue Group:

- Great idea for bridge/raised walkway at pedestrian bridge.
- Shared use for paddling and proper ramp
- Tension –Trans Canada Trail/Commuter route and dogs off leash
  - Solutions: key messaging –message is simple and with flashing lights
  - Maybe a hedge to separate bikes from dogs line of sight
- Low mobility area is excellent for setting the tone in the park
- Signage in washrooms re: areas of use
- Fire pits in off leash are –maybe problems with kids using the park at night
- Ball diamonds –why aren't they being used? Can the space be used for other things?
- Extreme croquet.

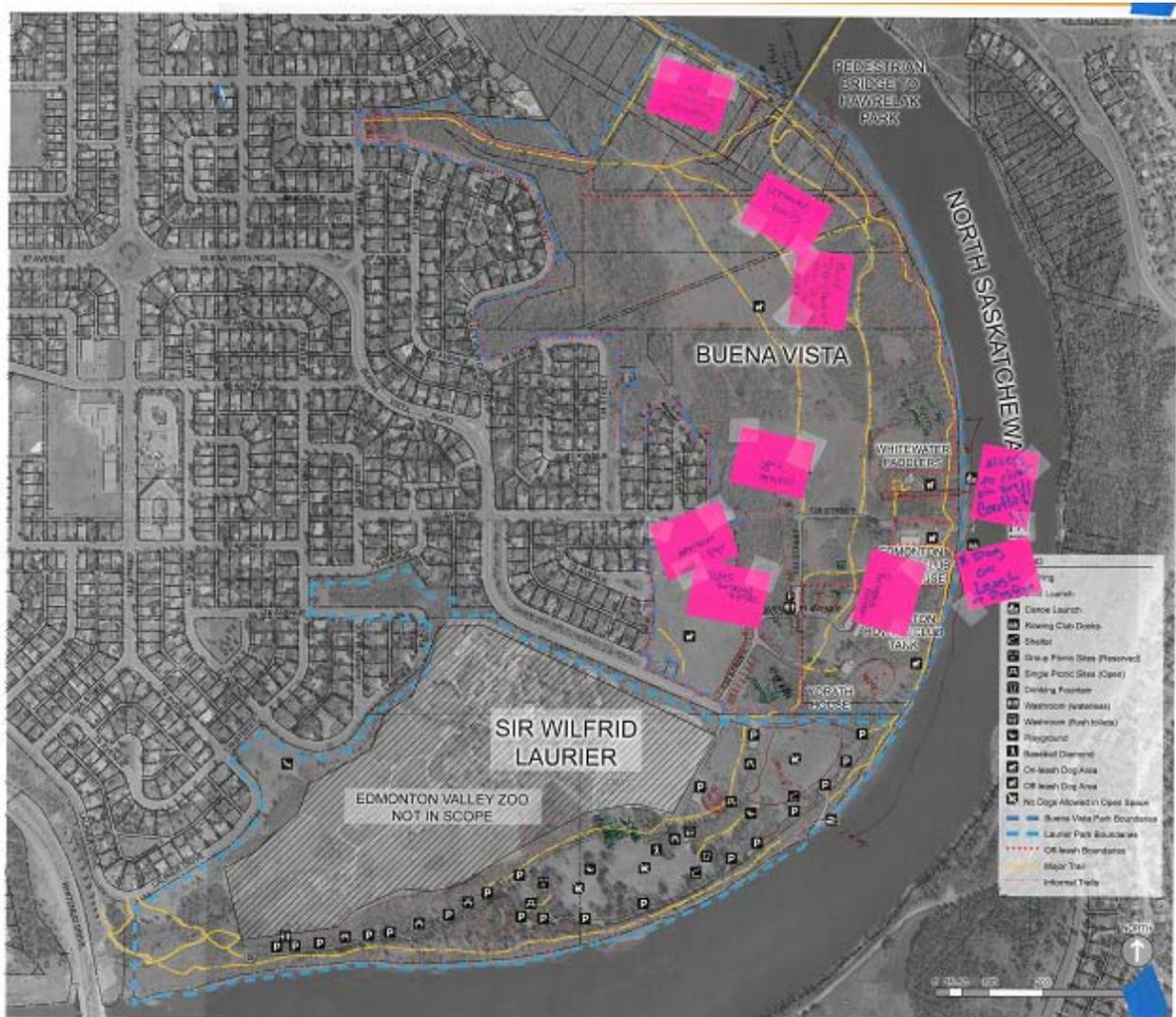
Green Group:

- Mixed views re: development of boat launch area; appreciate access for canoeing, but not sure want to see narrow LP turn into access to river; concern about removing trees and trees that are falling down; old trees are valuable for nesting birds, etc.
- Note - many trees are dead - may be useful as habitat, but can also be dangerous
- Concern thin edge of the wedge - don't want to spoil park experience re: walking, nature

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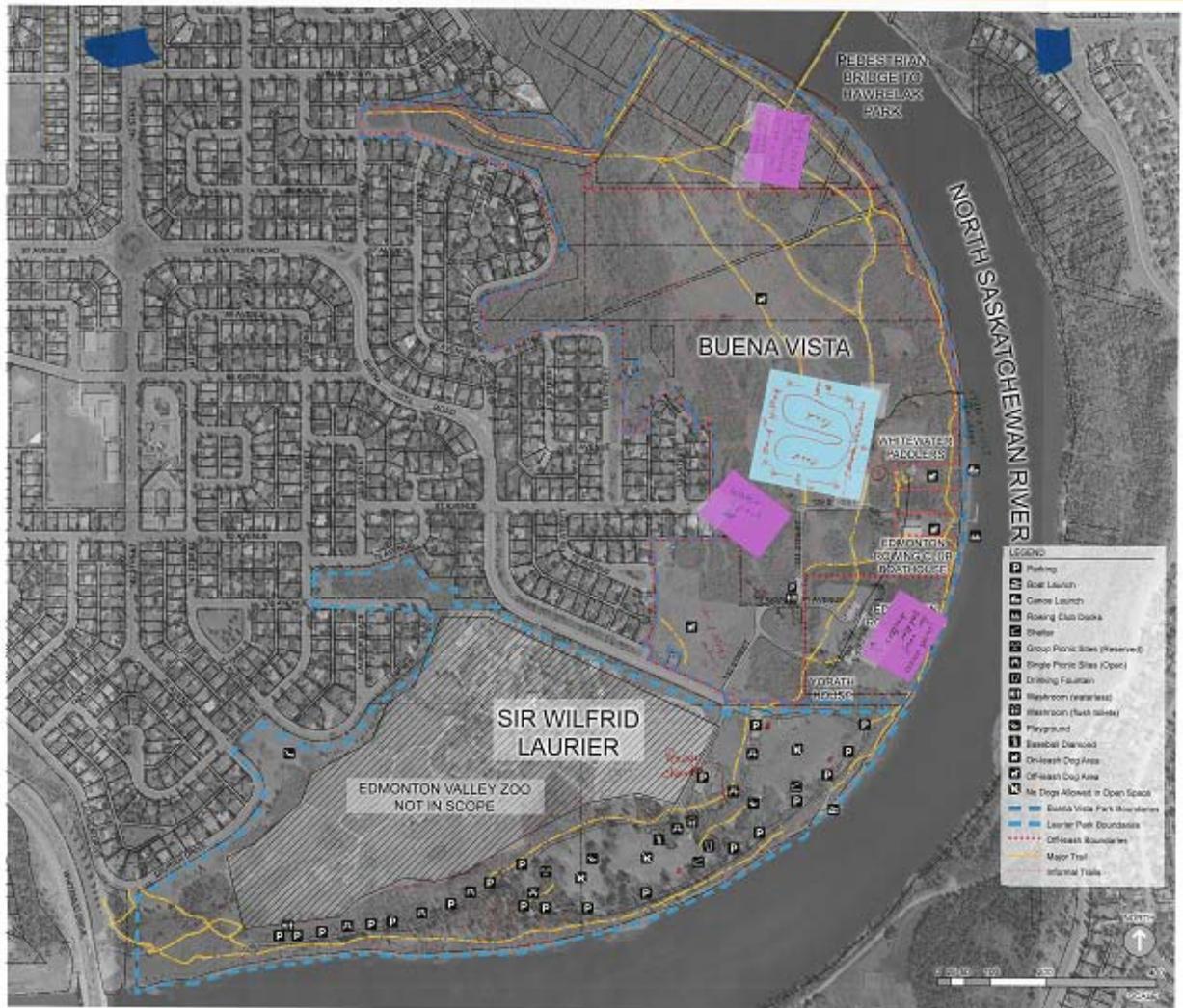
- Could see whole area of boat launch cater to boaters, canoers - commercial (500 canoes a summer) plus public use; can have 2 trailers launching at same time
- 8 stalls at top of boat ramp perfect location for boat trailer parking, if there is proper education & signage/enforcement would likely be adequate; but currently picnic users park here rather than trailers; Hard to see how can make a good compromise
- All agree need more public transit access -
- BV Road Safety Ctte (road related) home owners very organized - when zoo or other park uses infringe on them, especially after hours (11 pm); frustrated with park, especially during special events, Heritage Days (parking to access Hawrelak Park, not regular users) -
- No signage re: multi-use trails
- Concern re: demand for more parking, reduce park space, bird watching, dog walking, etc
- It was noted that there used to be larger parking lots - one off 132 St and one east end of Zoo

### ROUNDS 1 TO 3: MAPS BY GROUP



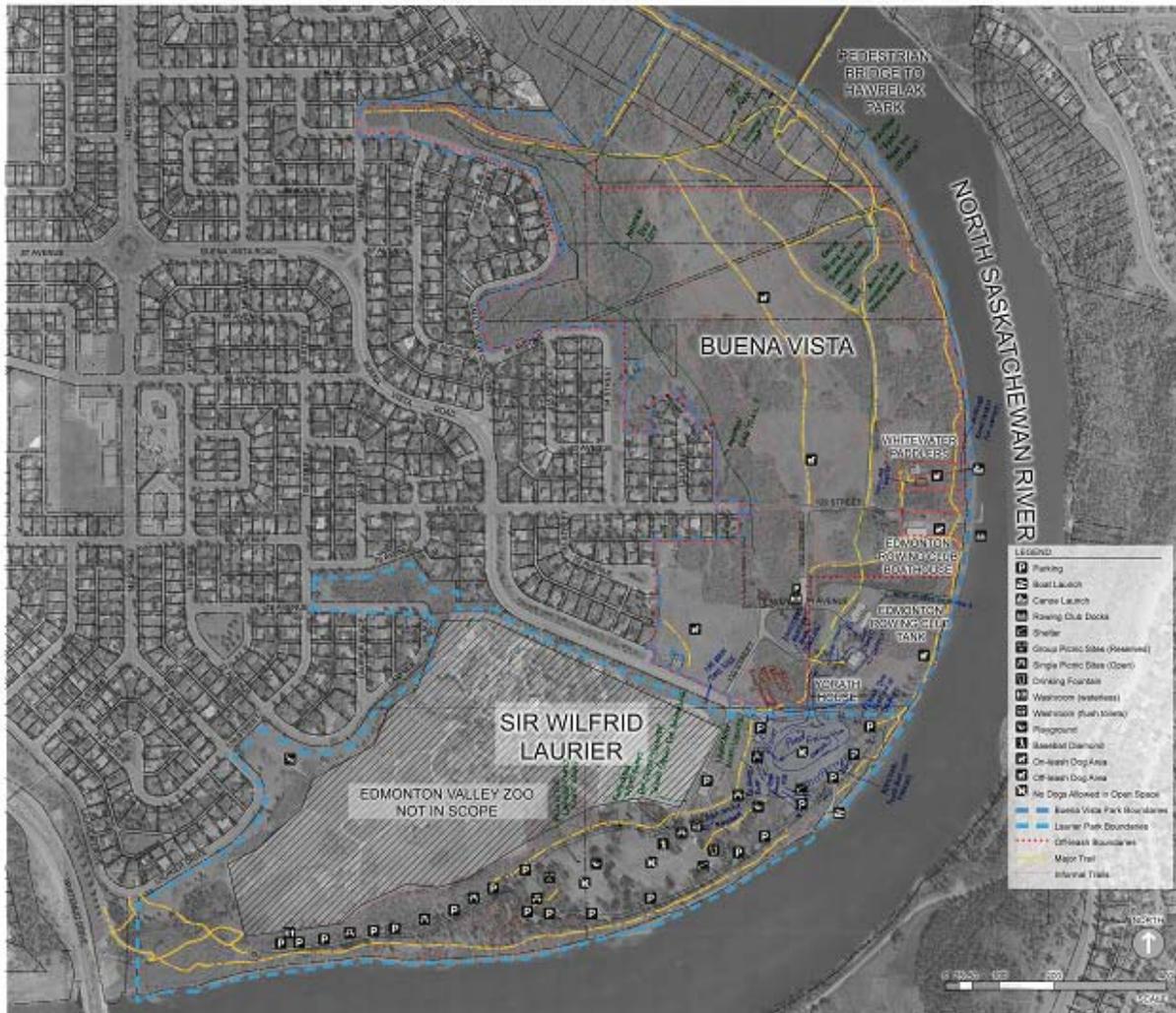
**Orange Group**

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Red Group

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Blue Group

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Green Group

**ROUND 4: YORATH HOUSE & PROPERTY**

Keeping the vision in mind, if Yorath House was to remain, what potential uses do you see for the house and property? (Draw on map as appropriate) Who would operate this facility?

Orange Group:

- Daycare
- Split-use warm-up area and café
- Rent out for weddings/special events –upper floors; lower floor other uses
- Tea house
- Maybe non-profit
- Turn into business to generate income
- Warm up area for skiing
- Catholic school board to lease to use as a service centre for activities –satellite to John Janzen
- A lot of work needs to be done - expensive. Updating needs to be done by the city
- Use as a space to congregate people

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- Needs to keep inside heritage if remodeled
- City runs it entirely or updates it and leases it out to profit or non-profit

Red Group:

- Event facility – rental hall etc.
  - Community based centre –culture, art, café
  - Mixed use facility
- Kids on Track –is this an overlap with the zoo?
- Shared use –rotate groups in and out, shared buildings
- Skating area –flood lawn and use it as a skating building
- A lot of concern as to whether it should stay
  - Too expensive for what it is worth
  - Will it fulfill the needs of any non-profit group
  - Other ways to acknowledge the history
  - Most people don't even know it's there
  - It is in floodplain (1 in 50 year?)
  - Too much work needs to go into
  - Too expensive to rent if it is charged out on cost recovery model

Blue Group:

- Mobility trails around Yorath
- Artists facility/gallery space
- Tea/sandwich/hotdog –people won't go up to the Zoo
- Wedding facility with lovely gardens
- Yoga studio, architectural society, horticultural group
- Public and private use to pay for and operate
- Interpretive centre
- Would the city pay utilities?
- Could be managed/maintained by "Friends of the Park" group.

Green Group:

- Premier or Lieutenant Governor should live here
- Historical recognition needed about what happened in area, historical component
- Question was raised re: James Gibbens - original donor of land? Base for gold mining; Put story re: history (was housing in area, kudos to forefathers of the River of Green vision) - land title searches can be done re: finding names of original land owners
- Were also orchards in the area - micro-climate
- Cairn on site (Wilkins - Betty Yorath's parents – not actually buried there)
- Artist studio work - lighting in building lends itself well to studios
- Could be for special event use; weddings; have tents up for rowing club events, great location (can accommodate 250 people if outdoors); can shuttle people to the facility
- Rockery - café, patio, rock garden & paths through garden and along the river; partly educational, signage, plant names
- Arboretum - native plants, could be an extension of garden
- Sell plants (greenhouse) - eg., Ellerslie Greenhouse, sell plants as well as small cafe
- Focus on river as highway (historical); campground in Devon by river (very accessible from river and full all the time); Ft Sask developing new landing, some connection to campground near by
- River camping - public access trail from river, sparse river access, walk in only private tent sites space apart, fire pits; Big Island (across from River Ridge GC) would be best place for a campsite or at gravel pit site at extreme end of 199 St (3.5 hours by canoe from 199 St to LP); river access only; café or cafeteria that could be used by campers; small source of revenue

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- Café - trailer?
- One concept put forward in 2011 - Kids on Track - summer programs, small community café
- Vet clinic (for Zoo); wildlife rehab services, interpretation & education (now Zoo providing much of that) - animal hospice potentially of interest
- Not-for-profit group space, City has long list; City would need to manage/pay for operations
- Use for hostel

**What changes would need to be made to the facility to support these uses?**

Orange Group:

- Weddings –knock out walls
- Daycare –would work as is –upgrades need to be done

Red Group:

- Event facility

Blue Group:

- Restricted by historic site
- Can we take out walls etc.?
- Cost to bring up to fire code
- Gardens –community and re-establish the formal gardens
- Wedding pictures

**What synergies or tensions do you see arising between this use of Yorath House and other uses in the park? How should these be addressed?**

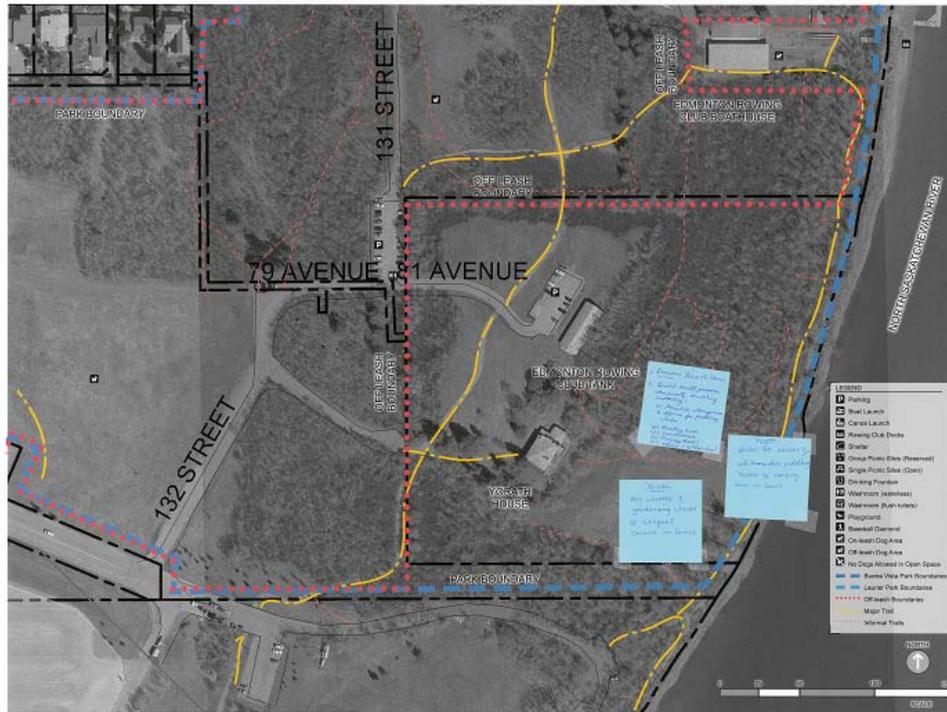
Orange Group:

- Would be a stand-alone destination as long as there is enough parking it wouldn't conflict with park uses
- Need access and parking
- Commuter trail may have to move if house is utilized

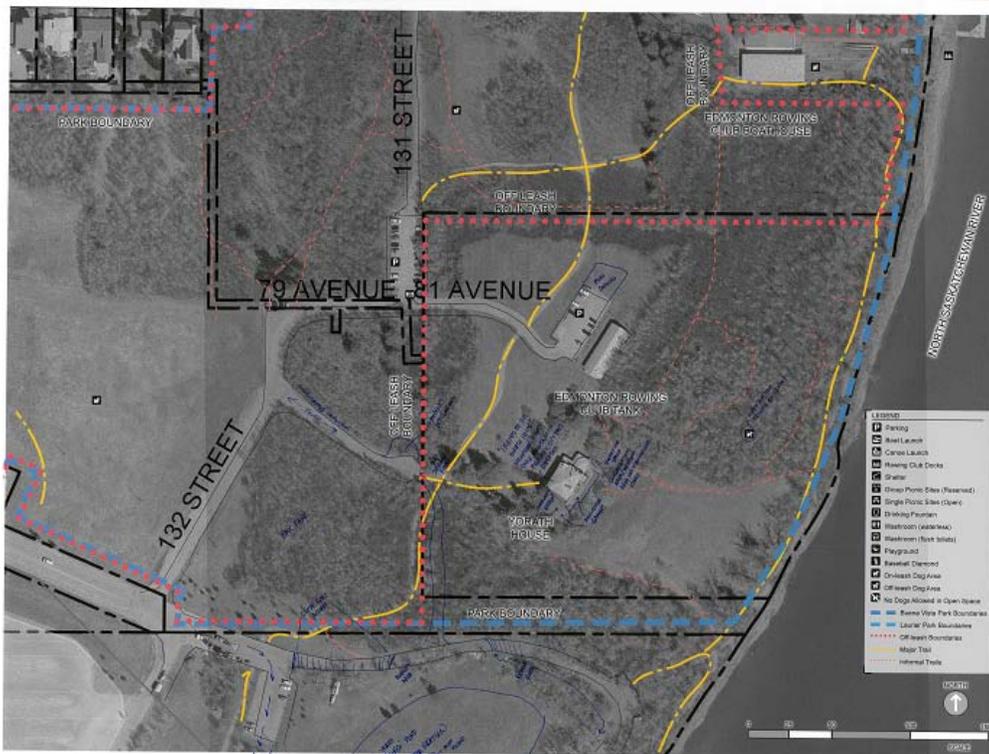
Green Group:

- Café - nice, but hard to make a business case for it (Zoo has hard time)
- Symbiotic use if a river access campground
- Would need more enforcement

YORATH HOUSE & GROUNDS MAPS BY GROUP – ROUND 4



Red Group



Becky's  
MAP

Blue Group

Stakeholder Consultation  
 Yorath House  
 April 2012

Figur  
**2**

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**Green Group**

**OTHER NOTES**

Orange Group:

- Need parking
- MacKinnon/Hawrelak users flow through park
- Signage for bike trails –so people are
- Maybe more parking around Yorath house
- Don't change Yorath house

Red Group:

- Extend dog park boundaries to north boundaries –it is being used anyways
- Ballooners –what's the issue dogs vs ballooners?
  - Do they have other sites?
  - Dogs with wings have never heard complaints

**REPORT BACK SUMMARY NOTES:**

Vision:

- More uses described
- Gem in the river valley –connections

2-3 Changes:

- Pond stocked with fish
- Fenced area for dogs and people with disabilities

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- Servicing for?
- Parking
- Water service and amenities
- Improved boat launch area –washroom and parking
- More access to water
- Clearer uses
- Better designation of off leash
- Adjust boundaries of off leash
- Removable speed bumps in LP with groomed trail for Cross country skiing

Innovative uses/Features (task 3)

- Benches...
- Arboretum
- Parking plan
- Year round access to LP
- Added facilities and boat launch
- Paddling pond
- Cross country skiing
- Designated dog swimming area
- Update equipment play grounds
- ID Trans Canada Trail as commuter route
- BMX boardwalk park
- Senior exercise stations and rest areas
- Extreme Croquet
- Sign at entrance
- More lighting
- Skating area by LP
- Disc Golf
- Spray park
- Interpretive centre
- Pave spine trail
- Focus on intersection at bridge

Yorath House:

- Tea house –friends of park group
- Gardens re-established
- Day care/events space
- Warm up area –community
- Keep heritage
- Community Centre
- Shared use space
- Skating in winter on lawn
- Lieutenant Governors House
- Education
- Art Studio
- Café
- Arboretum
- Green house
- River Highway (walk in camp area, tent only)