

Geo-Energy Enterprises Ltd.

**Shawnee Park Outline Plan and Land Use Redesignation
-- The Past, Present and Sustainable Future**

Applicant's Submission

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History and Vision

This application prepared on behalf of Geo-Energy Enterprises Ltd. is for the consideration of the approval of an Outline Plan and Land Use Redesignation contained within the Shawnee Slopes community. The subject lands entitled "Shawnee Park" comprise the remaining 131 acres (53.32 ha) of the original Shaw family homestead located on the south side of Fish Creek.

The current Shawnee Slopes community surrounds and divides the subject property and is afforded views into an adjacent treed landscape, but has no physical access to that landscape. On the north boundary of the community, there is substantial access to Fish Creek Park, one of the largest urban parks in Canada.

Shawnee Park is a 131 acre (53.32 ha) land parcel surrounded and divided into two pieces by the existing 1980s Shawnee Slopes community. The golf course use of the former owners is closing and will be no more. The land has been sold and the new land owner is proposing that the vacated land incorporate a highest, best and complementary use of a residential community.

The proposed development consists of three basic development areas. The eastern end of the property contains a medium density Transit Orientated Development (TOD) area within 600 metres of the Fish Creek LRT Station. To the west lies the primary 80 acre low density development consisting of a series of strata parcels containing mainly larger single family detached homes. This area is characterised by the central "Grand Boulevard", a divided roadway featuring stands of mature trees in the median. A signature roadway, it allows access to single family frontage lots and behind them, clustered groups of predominantly single detached homes reaching towards the preserved perimeter tree belts. To the north abutting Fish Creek Park lies a further parcel featuring conventional low density estate type housing with a strata parcel to the east allowing for low profile estate detached units edging onto an original ravine.

The proposed Shawnee Park will capture the essence of "**Living in a Park**". A primary focus of the Shawnee Park development application is the maintenance of the current treed character and perimeter interface and the provision enabling the surrounding residents/communities to access, use and enjoy the Shawnee Park trails, parks and other facilities such as the new community centre.

Shawnee Park previously contained the Shawnee Slopes Golf Course. The land of the original course built in the 1960's has been modified over the years giving way to residential development. The most significant change was in 1981 when large tracts of land on the south and west edges of the course and in particular through the north and middle of the course, were redesignated and redeveloped for residential uses.

The changes approved in 1981 were significant. The golf course became much smaller, divided and reduced in size by the new 82 acre residential development approved in 1981. The approved outline plan for this residential development showed a shadow plan for residential development on the remainder of the golf course, and noted access points to accommodate this potential option built into the surrounding subdivision.

A restrictive covenant was registered on all residential lots which identified the golf course use to remain for a period of 10 years (1982-1992). This restrictive covenant still remains on title on almost all the lots surrounding or near the subject lands and the time frame mentioned is now outdated by almost 20 years.

Shawnee Park will be so much more than the conventional subdivisions of the 1980s which surround it. In stark contrast, Shawnee Park recognises the inherent value of the landscape and maintains and utilizes the urban woodlands legacy of the former use. Homes will be positioned between and amongst the trees to preserve the resource with common open spaces, parks, and pathways available to all residents in the community.

Shawnee Park will bring substantial benefits to the current community. The land which was previously inaccessible to the surrounding community will now be opened for everyone to enjoy, accessing and moving through a myriad of communal open spaces, parks and public pathways connecting together the surrounding residential areas. This open landscape will also in turn offer additional entry gateways to Fish Creek Park and beyond. Furthermore, access to the Fish Creek LRT station and a delightful local village square will be but a walk or a bike ride away.

The defining design principles of Shawnee Park are based on a series of interrelated development concepts. Foremost is the retention of much of the primary site element, the treed “urban woodlands”; and the sensitive integration of the housing into this mature landscape and landform. A further dimension to the planning concept is the use of sympathetic development types, in particular the use of strata titles combined with groupings of predominantly single family homes in clusters. These elements will be connected by significant comprehensive pathway systems with multiple links within the interior and to the exterior. The resultant system will place the pedestrian opportunity at the forefront of the lifestyle in Shawnee Park.

The use of strata clusters of detached homes dramatically increases the open space enabling “living in a park” and the maintenance of the visual appearance and edge conditions for the surrounding community. Unlike conventional subdivisions with 10% municipal reserves, the cluster developments with strata titles enables a communal landscape combining with public parks and ponds to produce an unprecedented 40-45% accessible open space in the main central development areas containing the clusters.

Careful consideration of the development interface with the adjacent surrounding development has been a top priority in the formulation of the Shawnee Park concept. The cluster development and open space design principles outlined will give an exceptional perimeter interface between the new and existing neighbourhood developments. The significant setbacks of the clusters and open space provisions are unlike any examples found in traditional development. The completed Shawnee Park development will incorporate so much of the current fabric of the land parcel and it will give an unprecedented opportunity for living surrounded by urban woodlands. Shawnee Park will be the most desirable of residential neighbourhoods.

Sustainability

In 2007, Calgary City Council approved the 11 sustainability principles for Land Use & Mobility to act as the overarching direction for the new Municipal Development Plan. The Shawnee Park development is designed to achieve these 11 principles of sustainability. The Shawnee Park design is also historically influenced by various places and concepts including the Garden City Concept (Great Britain), Radburn (New Jersey), Wildwood Park (Winnipeg), Village Homes (California) and The Cottage Company (Seattle). All of these developments have made significant contributions in their time to sustainability particularly in the use of existing landscapes and the provision of communal open space.

Appropriate consideration of the landscape, architecture and site design requires great care in responding to the constraints and opportunities of the existing mature pastoral landscape of Shawnee Park. The main goal of this neighbourhood open space design is to maintain the existing strong sense of place by developing in sympathy with the existing landform, vegetation and natural hydrology while incorporating recreational and pedestrian opportunities.

Within the proposed development, there are three main municipal reserve parcels, the larger containing a proposed community centre and play area. Also contained in the community park is a storm water pond which will provide an additional amenity to the community centre. The community centre will provide a central gathering space for residents and facilitate community oriented events. A linear park complete with pathways contained within an expanded median of the main entrance road to the community will form a key pedestrian link to the rest of the community and Fish Creek Park.

A portion of Shawnee Park is within the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zone because of its close proximity to the Fish Creek LRT Station. The design of the eastern portion of the development is consequently responsive to this desirable access to the rest of Calgary. The LRT influence extends further into Shawnee Park with a highly friendly pedestrian environment and additional accessibility to transit. Throughout the community, there is a constant focus on LRT with the mobility systems leading to the eastern approaches and this major transit node.

As a part of the TOD area, there is a proposed new urbanism based “village square” including a mixed use area with a modest number of local neighbourhood stores and services designed for the use of the residents of Shawnee Park and the immediate surrounding community. The location of this local service area will advance the convenience factor of the transit journey adding to the attractiveness of transit as a mobility choice for the Shawnee Park residents.

The proposed Shawnee Park storm drainage system will include wet ponds, dry ponds and diverse storage facilities such as underground storage, trap lows and bio-retention swales. In addition to flood protection and water quality enhancement, this system will provide attractive amenities to the community.

The development of Shawnee Park is unique to Calgary. The retention of an “urban woodlands” and a contoured landscape presents circumstances that the current development control bylaw could not have envisaged. In order for the concept to become reality, some modifications to the Bylaw 1P2007 are necessary resulting in the need for direct control districts.

Summary

The development of Shawnee Park represents a unique opportunity in the City of Calgary. The development of a site with substantial mature vegetation and diverse topography, with links to Fish Creek Park, is not an everyday occurrence. The residential development of such a private parcel of land in close proximity to the desired and established LRT mode of transportation is also an uncommon form, almost without precedent. Whereas many developments are established in lands cleared for development, the maintenance of the natural setting and landscape of Shawnee Park immediately offers both a challenge and an outstanding opportunity.

The choice to integrate development into this setting and to maintain much of the site character and landscape materials gives witness to the vision of a different approach to development, and to the offering of a new but at the same time, mature setting for residential settlement. The recognition of the maintenance of the existing and the integration of the new both feature in our changing views of the world. Change need not compromise, but can indeed benefit from the duality of the old and the new acting together.

In order to accomplish this goal, the developers have reached back into past experience and brought forward progressive ideas and development directions that themselves have evolved into a modern and timely change to both lifestyle and the social environment. There is a recognition, as in the past, of the fit of homes into the open spaces between the landscape, and a movement towards clustered social groupings. In Shawnee Park, these ideas come together with respectful positioning of development highlighting the given avenues of trees and vistas, all combining to offer testament to the final environment and a man made harmony with nature.

This development also reaches out into the surrounding community providing continuity of interface and the benefits of adjacency to the visual delights of Shawnee Slopes. While the park was previously a view, it can now become an experience. Whereas the interior setting was the privilege of a few, now the experience can be for all, enhanced and expanded.

An outward focus of this project is the mobility of the residents that it will serve. The City's appropriate and significant investment in transportation infrastructure component of the LRT system is a cornerstone of the directives for planning Shawnee Park. Comprehending and incorporating this advantage provides yet another approach to the living environment, as such, another social norm has been revised and this project will continue to encourage a better and more responsible urban way of life.

Embracing this opportunity will elevate choices for Calgarians. New kinds of development based on solid and proven planning principles, including SMART growth, and that demonstrate a sensitive response to the land, can create a vibrant, attractive, sustainable, and desirable new community of which we can all be proud.