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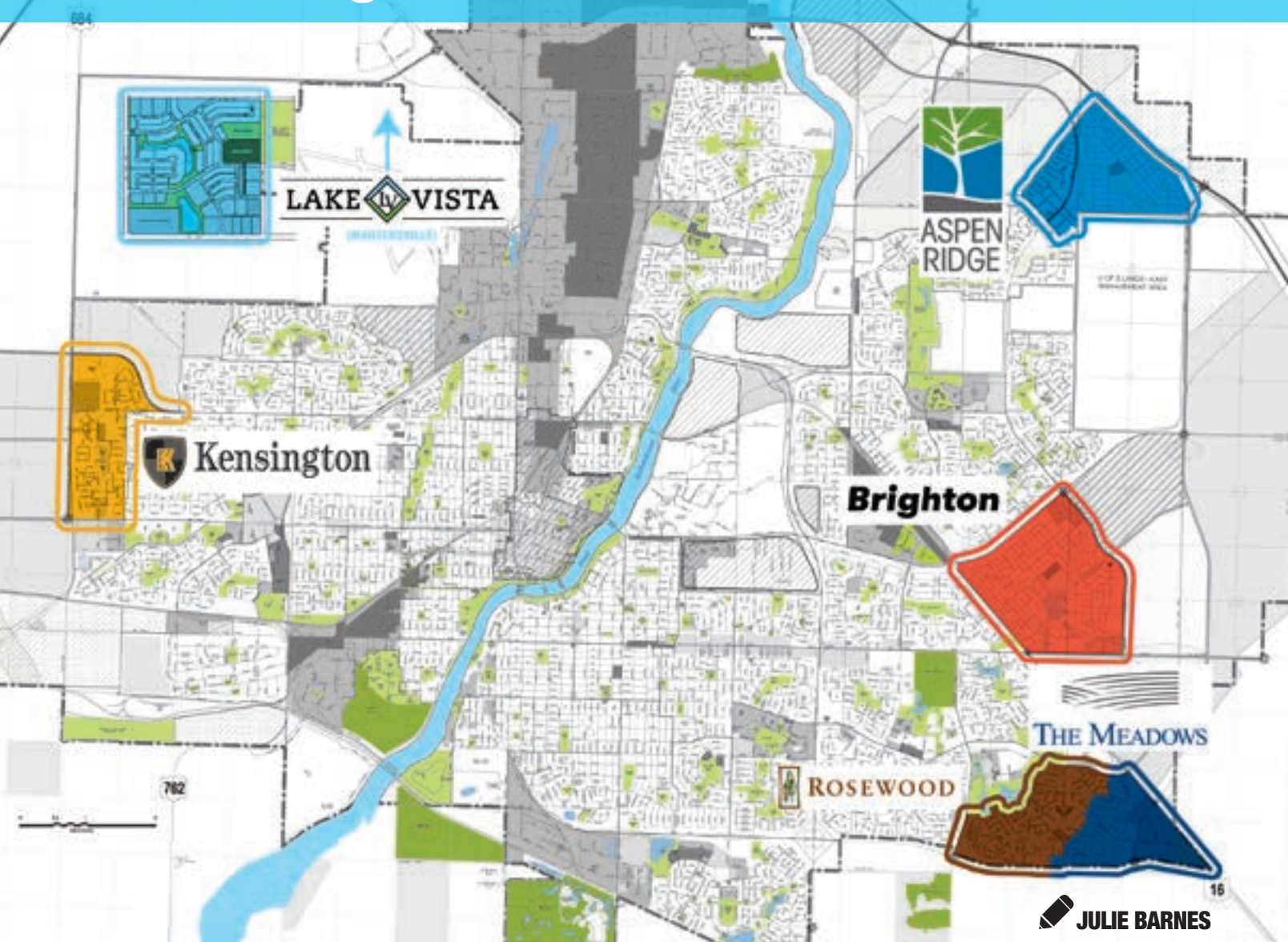
New Neighbourhood Development

Reinventing Suburbia

Fairy Tale Character Home

NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Reinventing Suburbia



In his book, *Walking Home: The Life and Lessons of a City Builder*, author Ken Greenberg writes that a city is “a creation that is always ‘becoming’ but never ‘finished.’” With Saska-

toon’s ever-evolving suburban areas, it’s a reflection that certainly applies here at home.

Both the City of Saskatoon and private companies develop our new neighbourhoods—and

that’s unique. In most Canadian cities, neighbourhoods are planned and developed solely by private companies, although there are often city-imposed regulations they must follow.

In Saskatoon, some neighbourhoods are completely developed by a private company. Others, like Aspen Ridge, are City-led developments. In this case, Saskatoon

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Land will allocate 90 per cent of the residential lots to their builder customers (from an approved list of eligible contractors) and the remaining 10 per cent of lots are made available to individuals through lot draws. Other new neighbourhoods, such as Kensington, are created through public-private partnerships.

Design Control Difference

"One of the things we try to do here at the City is to operate on a level playing field with the private developers, so a lot of the things you see in our neighbourhoods you're seeing in private development as well," says Frank Long, director of Saskatoon Land, in regards to public versus private development.

However, one differentiator that is often found is the design controls. "We tend to stay away from prescriptive architectural styles," he says. "That's up to our individual builders, but we do have minimum development controls we apply to all of our lots and we enforce them with our builders." That's why City-led development tends to result in a more eclectic mix of housing styles, while privately

developed areas often have a more consistent architectural style.

New regulations are redefining neighbourhood design. The integration of mixed-use developments, introduction of complete streets and a focus on improving choices for getting around are all breathing new life into the 'burbs. The creation of pedestrian- and bike-friendly neighbourhoods studded with pocket parks and centred around village squares is establishing a sense of place and is building a community feel.

Areas Examined

In this article we've focused on areas in the planning and early development stages to illustrate some of the latest choices when it comes to new neighbourhoods. So while there are areas such as Evergreen that are bustling with new development, they are not included in this article as they are well underway and planning is mostly complete.

We'll start in west Saskatoon, moving clockwise around the city, and then explore Martensville's newest neighbourhood. ➤

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Kensington

Kensington

Public-Private Partnership

Situated in west Saskatoon, Kensington is bordered by 22nd Street on its south side, and lies adjacent to the western borders of Confederation Park and Pacific Heights. An example of a public-private partnership development, the design was led by the City with the input of Dream Development, who is developing 30 per cent of the neighbourhood (an area called South Kensington).

"We wanted to provide housing choices to fulfill market demand," says Frank Long. "It

allows someone to potentially live in the community their whole life. They can raise a family in a single-family home, move into a condo development once the kids are gone and then there are even residential care homes that we have located throughout the community. It's something we do in all of our developments."

Like other new neighbourhoods, walkability is a priority. "We've got some great pedestrian connections that run north-south through the neighbourhood that take people to our central walking space, which is through linear parks and along storm water ponds," says Frank, adding that the paths will also accommodate cyclists. "We have walkable access to the new Shaw Centre and some of the shopping amenities that have

recently been developed in the Blairmore Suburban Area. Dream will also have some shopping that they'll bring in at the entrance to 22nd Street."

Although the transit plan is still under review, the area will likely be served by a couple of existing bus routes that will come through the neighbourhood and offer residents transit service within a ten-minute walk from their home.

Frank says the storm water ponds are a distinct feature. Although many suburban areas feature these ponds, Kensington's won't look like "big bathtubs." Lined with cattails and shrubs, they'll be created to look like natural ponds that would have existed before the area was developed.

The City estimates that, once complete, about 8,000 people will call Kensington home.



Aspen Ridge

City-Led

Located in northeast Saskatoon, Aspen Ridge is defined by the northeast swale to the west, a proposed perimeter highway to the east and Fedoruk Drive and University of Saskatchewan research lands to the south. The adjacent swale sets Aspen Ridge apart, says Frank. "We have this 600 acre piece of land that we're going to preserve in perpetuity. It has a number of rare grasslands and a lot of wildlife, so we want to bring our current environment into harmony with nature."

The design of Aspen Ridge incorporates a connection to the swale. At some point, Frank

says, that pathway will link to the riverbank and future neighbourhoods to the south. "You'd be able to get on your bike, cruise down through the swale, down to the riverbank and all the way downtown."

The City plans to bring much of the neighbourhood's density (achieved through multi-family housing) closer to McOrmond Drive, which slices through the subdivision. Such density makes public transit along the arterial road more viable. If the bus rapid transit (BRT) plan is approved by council as set out in the *Growing Forward* plan, Frank hopes to see it implemented along McOrmond; but even without BRT, the roadway will be served by buses.

"We want to bring that inti-

mate complete street feel to that portion of McOrmond. It will be the first neighbourhood we try it on in a suburban location," says Frank. He explains how, years ago, neighbourhoods were built so that commercial spaces turned their backs to the arterial roads (think of driving into Stonebridge on Clarence). "We're going to turn those development sites around and have them face that arterial road," he says, adding that it will have a Broadway Avenue feel. "That's where we're hoping we'll get some interest in the provision of retail services that will serve this particular area."

The City anticipates Aspen Ridge will have a population of 12,500 at completion. ➤

Brighton

Brighton

*Private Sector Led—
Dream Development*

Brighton will be the first neighbourhood within the Holmwood suburban development area. Being developed by Dream, the area is bordered by 8th Street to the south, College Drive to the north, College Park East to the west and agricultural lands to the east.

"The vision for Brighton," says Don Armstrong, vice president of land at Dream, "is to integrate existing natural

features into open spaces and develop a walkable neighbourhood that integrates all uses, including residential, commercial, educational, park space, amenities and nature in a cohesive manner."

Dream plans to accommodate a wide range of housing styles to meet the needs of a variety of incomes, ages and lifestyles. Residents will be able to choose between renting an apartment and purchasing a multi-family dwelling, town home, single-family or semi-detached home. Mixed-use developments will combine residential and commercial space all under one roof.

A linear park system will offer pathway linkages throughout the neighbourhood, making walking and cycling a more convenient

method of getting around, while an integrated transportation system will help balance the needs of motorists, transit users, pedestrians and cyclists. Arterial roadways including McOrmond Drive and 8th Street East will follow the complete streets design concept, which will help unite the surrounding neighbourhoods rather than separate them.

"The needs of residents are met closer to home with more opportunities to pursue leisure activities, shop and work, thereby reducing commute times," says Don.

Once finalized, Brighton will be home to over 15,000 residents.



ROSEWOOD

Rosewood

Public-Private Partnership

Located south of Briarwood, Rosewood's boundaries are Boychuk Drive to the west, Highway #16 to the south and Taylor Street to the north. While Boychuk Investments is the lead developer of Rosewood, they've collaborated with the City and a few private companies to create Saskatoon's first green-themed neighbourhood.

Rosewood includes a wetlands area, which is one of the largest preserved green spaces in Saskatoon. Ducks

Unlimited and the Saskatoon Wildlife Foundation provided both expertise and funding towards conserving and maintaining the wetlands project—and they've earned national recognition for their efforts.

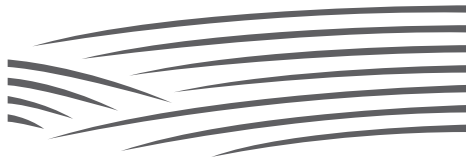
"The 65-acre wetlands conservation area is the highlight of the subdivision," says Ron Olson, general manager at Boychuk. "The natural wetlands will be conserved and integrated into the community, connected by a series of linear parks, walking and bicycle paths. You can live in the neighbourhood and not require an automobile to access all the amenities."

As with Saskatoon's other new neighbourhoods, Rosewood incorporates a mix of housing styles for a variety of budgets and lifestyles. A

central village square will act as a gathering place for neighbours. With commercial developments, a community centre, baseball diamonds and potential schools, the square will serve as a lively hub of activity for Rosewood's residents.

Architectural controls are in place throughout all of Boychuk Investments-owned lands in Rosewood. They help to ensure a harmonized streetscape while protecting property values for the homeowners. Controls apply to house style, size, rooflines, exterior finishing and placement of the home on the lot.

Once complete, over 11,000 people will reside in Rosewood.



THE MEADOWS

The Meadows at Rosewood

*Private Sector Led—
Arbutus Properties*

Just east of Rosewood at the end of Taylor Street East, you'll find The Meadows. This development offers a full suite of housing choices including town homes, semi-detached bungalows, laneway homes and single-family homes.

The design approach of The

Meadows is meant to foster a sense of community among neighbours, says Jeff Drexel, president of Arbutus. "Front porches dominate house facades for visiting and landscaping is completed so that people want to be outside and together. The Hyde Park trail access encourages walking and biking and homes are walking distance to amenities and shopping—all features that offer opportunities for neighbours to interact. We are focused on community building rather than a building a collection of isolated residences."

When fully built, the 100-acre Meadows Market will include 1,000,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. It will feature restaurants, a wide variety of shops

and services and a pedestrian-friendly main street. The first major store will open in 2016. The neighbourhood will also host parks, biking and walking trails and two schools.

The team at Arbutus researched enduring architectural and community planning styles across North America and feel they are creating a living environment different from anything else found in Saskatoon. Detailed architectural guidelines were created to provide a harmonious streetscape, and Jeff says this helped them achieve the uniqueness they were aiming for.

Approximately 2,500 families will live in The Meadows at completion. ➤

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LAKE VISTA

Lake Vista, Martensville

Private Sector Led—North Ridge Development

Developed by North Ridge's land division, Lake Vista is situated on the east side of the Martensville, bordered by 10th Avenue North on the west, and by Main Street to the south. It's the city's first master-planned neighbourhood. In the past, most development in the area was done on a piecemeal basis.

"The vision for Lake Vista is a lake community," says Jessica Bonish, marketing manager at North Ridge.


"The streets were named after Saskatchewan lakes and there will be two large man-made ponds, which will offer large amenity spaces around them. Also, it's the first 'complete' neighbourhood in Martensville, meaning people will be able to live and work within the neighbourhood and it will encompass all amenities within it."

Jessica adds that the neighbourhood was designed to maximize walkability and connectivity, citing that there are no cul-de-sacs, allowing neighbours to connect with each other and access various amenities in a more direct manner.

"North Ridge Developments, our home building side, have already built a number of

homes in Lake Vista," says Jessica. "But we also welcome other home building companies as well as individuals who want build a home in the area. Anyone is welcome to purchase a lot." Each phase of development will offer a variety of choices when it comes to housing types, lot sizes and price points.

A new school has already been confirmed for the neighbourhood, with an estimated completion in 2017, allowing the school to open in September of that year.

North Ridge anticipates Lake Vista will create housing for approximately 3,000 people upon completion. 

Julie Barnes

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