

CULTURE

theme overview

planning & design decisions

goals

create a unique and strong sense of identity for the village
celebrate the local cultural and natural identity and heritage

detailed design tasks

fostering sustainable living

The character, culture, and heritage of many communities has been stripped by modern development practices that tend towards an overall “sameness.” This undermines community identity and often diminishes ownership and stewardship amongst community members. Sustainable urban neighbourhoods provide places and spaces in which a diverse culture and vibrant community can be conserved or created, fostering community expression, connection, and participation.

theme overview

why is this theme important?

Culture and heritage can be defined by the character of a place. "Communities with a strong character and identity are more attractive as places for living, commerce and leisure, provide opportunities for a richer range of experiences, and generally offer a higher quality of life than other locales."¹ By avoiding suburban sprawl, big box stores, highway strip development and an overall "sameness" characteristic of many communities², the character, culture, and heritage of a place has the opportunity to thrive, and this can in turn create a shared sense of pride, ownership and stewardship within community members.

why is culture important to emerald hills urban village?

While the land outside of Sherwood Park has historically been dominated by agriculture³, this is beginning to change. Within Strathcona County, rural "character", and thereby cultural heritage continues to change as well, as land is subdivided for acreages and other developments⁴. The context of any new development provides the backdrop

against which the community grows. Acknowledging the diversity of this context throughout design is important as it can instill a powerful sense of place in members of the community which then promotes social inclusiveness, awareness and stewardship to create a safe, vibrant, and unique place to live, work, play and visit.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

When spaces and opportunities are identified and designed for cultural activities at the onset of a community-building process, cultural expression and social inclusivity can be created and sustained.

Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to create a community plan which will facilitate community identify and ongoing participation. Through contextual and integrated building and neighbourhood design, a foundation will be created for public programming opportunities that engage residents and promote community cohesiveness and identity.

summary table of goals and strategies for water

goals	charrette process strategy
Create a unique and strong sense of identity for the Village.	Provide welcoming gateways into the Village that support a strong identity.
	Incorporate public and local art into public and semi-public spaces.
	Animate the ground plane of the Village.
Celebrate the local cultural and natural identity and heritage.	Reference the natural, cultural and historic features of the site in urban design, buildings, and public art.

1. Cam Campbell. 2006. Character Foundation Research Bulletin. Smart Growth on the Ground.

2. Ibid

3. Dr. Brad Stelfox et al. n/d. Looking Ahead: Possible Future Land Use in Strathcona County.

4. Ibid

planning & design decisions

general intent of this strategy / Announcing the entrances to the Village with welcoming gateways helps to create a sense of identity and provides an open door to the broader community. They also provide a location for public art and for showcasing the character of the Village.



Primary and secondary gateways are located at the different entrances to the Village
(Sketch taken from design charrette).

planning & design decisions

general intent of this strategy / Public art provides a mechanism for combining community expression and interaction. By referencing the cultural, historical, geographical, climatic, and/or ecological context of the Village, it can help to reinforce community cohesiveness and identity.



Public art is incorporated at the ground level, into a children's game.



Public art can be built into public infrastructure.



Public art can be incorporated in large and small spaces (Sketch taken from design charrette).



Public art can be integrated into functional amenities such as lighting, street furniture, and other uses.



Artistic expression can be built into the community gardens by Village residents.

goal / create a unique and strong sense of identity for the village.

strategy two / incorporate public and local art into public and semi-public spaces.

area i: institutional, residential, commercial

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the sun courts, and provide locations for public art.

area ii: residential, commercial

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyard, and provide locations for public art.

area iii: residential, commercial

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyard, and provide locations for public art.

municipal reserve & public utility lot

- The central open space provides a key gathering place, and is designed to incorporate public art.
- Greenway corridors provide locations for public art to be incorporated.
- The community gardens provide an opportunity for public art to be incorporated.

area iv: residential

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyard and laneways, and provide locations for public art.

area v: residential

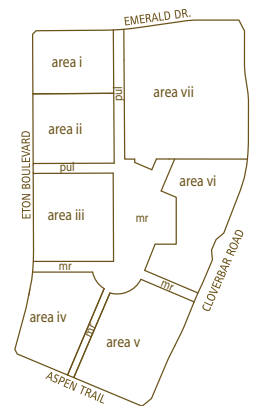
- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyard and laneways, and provide locations for public art.

area vi: residential, commercial

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyards and laneways, and provide locations for public art.

area vii: commercial, residential

- Small character spaces are incorporated into the courtyards and laneways, and provide locations for public art.



planning & design decisions

general intent of this strategy / Designing identifiable and strongly articulated buildings and other features helps to maintain a sense of place, especially when animation occurs at a pedestrian-scale. Ensuring that spaces throughout the neighbourhood are appropriately scaled and characteristically different based on their exposure, accessibility, and location also helps to reinforce a sense of community identity.



The ground plane is animated with natural form as well as built form.



Amenities located on corners and at grade help to animate the ground plane.



The bottom floors of buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.

goal / create a unique and strong sense of identity for the village.

strategy three / animate the ground plane of the village.

area i: institutional, residential, commercial

- Public amenities and activities are located on the ground floor and are visible to passers-by.
- The bottom floors of the apartment buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.

area ii: residential, commercial

- Public amenities and activities are located on the ground floor and are programmed with activities that activate the outdoor spaces.
- The bottom floors of the apartment buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.

area iii: residential, commercial

- Public amenities and activities are located on the ground floor and are programmed with activities that activate the outdoor spaces.
- The bottom floors of the apartment buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.

municipal reserve & public utility lot

- The main plaza is designed to accommodate programmable activities such as a farmers' market, craft fair, public displays, etc.
- The community gardens incorporate an active and highly memorable feature in the Village.
- The greenway corridors are designed to incorporate benches, lighting, and other furniture that supports a strong sense of place.

area iv: residential

- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.
- The ground-oriented units and individual gardens incorporate variety to the urban design.

area v: residential

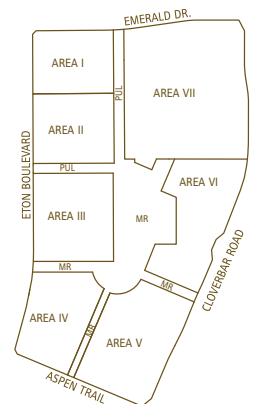
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.
- The ground-oriented units and individual gardens incorporate variety to the urban design.

area vi: residential, commercial

- Public amenities and activities are located on the ground floor and are programmed with activities that activate the outdoor spaces.
- The bottom floors of the apartment and office buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.

area vii: commercial, residential

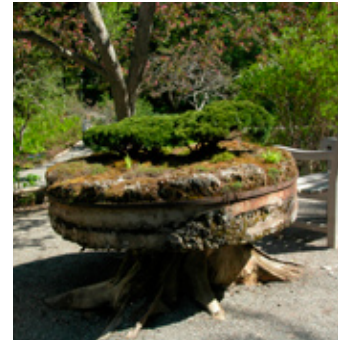
- Public amenities and activities are located on the ground floor and are programmed with activities that activate the outdoor spaces.
- The highrise building is turned to face into the central open space.
- The bottom floors of the buildings are designed with a friendly face and human scale.
- The narrow set-backs help to maintain an active and animated ground plane.



planning & design decisions

general intent of this strategy / Incorporating references to the culture and heritage of the Village creates a shared sense of pride, ownership, and stewardship, and helps to nourish and sustain a strong character and identity. It provides meaning and diversity to the physical expression of the community and reinforces the emotional connection to the Village.

“In the Shadow of the Elm”:
a reference to the landscape.



“Street furniture” is created
from original physical forms.



The natural hydrology of prairie kettle ponds is emulated along the
greenway corridors.



Lighting is designed
to incorporate artistic
references to culture and
history.

goal / celebrate the local cultural and natural identity and heritage.

strategy / reference the natural, cultural and historic features of the site in urban design, buildings, and public art.

area i: institutional, residential, commercial

- The landscaping plan for the sun courts incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

area ii: residential, commercial

- The landscaping plan for the courtyard incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

area iii: residential, commercial

- The landscaping plan for the courtyard incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

municipal reserve & public utility lot

- The landscaping plan for the central open space and the greenway corridors incorporate native vegetation and emulate the natural hydrological regime.
- Street furniture and lighting are designed to incorporate natural and cultural features.

area iv: residential

- The landscaping plan for the courtyard incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

area v: residential

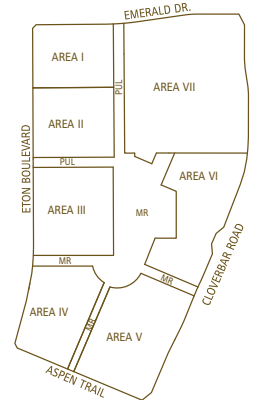
- The landscaping plan for the courtyards incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

area vi: residential, commercial

- The landscaping plan for the courtyard incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.

area vii: commercial, residential

- The landscaping plan for the parking field incorporates native vegetation and emulates the natural hydrological regime.



detailed design tasks

general intent / This section highlights design tasks flagged during the charrette process as needing to be addressed during the detailed design process. LEED for Neighbourhood Development prerequisites and credits are to be satisfied.

detailed design tasks

- Incorporate materials, form and identity that is specific to Strathcona County in the design of the gateways.
- Design the gateways to reflect the character of the Village overall, or of the specific areas on which they are located.
- Incorporate one or more unique innovations that identify the Village as a leader in sustainable development.
- Integrate rainwater and stormwater functions into artistic water features.

related leed-neighbourhood development credits

No credits available for Emerald Hills Urban Village.

See www.usgbc.org for more information.



Feature local art throughout the village.



Sustainability centre is integrated into community energy centre.



Storm-drain water function is integrated into artistic water feature.

fostering sustainable living

general intent / The detailed design decisions that enable sustainable development at Emerald Hills Urban Village must also foster sustainable living. The Strategies and Initiatives/Activities identified below represent an initial framework and point of departure for generating a Fostering Sustainable Living Program at the Urban Village. They are intended to provide the integrated design team with the sustainable living lens that is to be applied to all detailed design decisions. It is recognized that these lists will evolve and be refined as the detailed design for the Urban Village emerges.

strategies

- Ensure detailed design of built environment supports culture and heritage opportunities.
- Engage all Village citizens in creating a 'culture and heritage' program.
- Encourage social interaction and understanding between all community members.
- Create partnerships with local NGOs working on culture and heritage issues.
- Celebrate the cultural heritage of the community in meaningful ways.
- Position the Village as a leader in sustainable development.
- Promote awareness-building and community mapping.

initiatives / activities

- Design creating a unique sense of identity and place.
- Historical, cultural interpretive signage and art throughout the Village.
- Street names reflect local history and heritage.
- Story-telling Café.
- Partner with First Nations groups to raise aboriginal awareness.
- Coffee-table book on history of area.
- Year-round events celebrating Village ecology, history and diverse cultures.
- Resurrect historic celebrations.
- Aboriginal Awareness Day.
- Art Festival.
- Performance Art Weekend.
- Traditional Aboriginal food event.
- "Bridging to the Future" section in the "Living Smart at the Village" intranet handbook.
- Village / community mapping of culture and heritage locations.



Celebrate our diversity.



Celebrate art.



Celebrate our heritage.