

Zone Concepts

The following section introduces the Master Plan visitor journey from the beginning to the end of the experience, exploring the areas and zones through a high-level overview of the focus concepts, precedent and reference imagery, visitor journey narratives demonstrating what the experiences feels like from an audience perspective, enlarged site plans, functional program overview, and concept renderings. Later sections of the Master Plan report will explore particular focus areas, such as guest amenities, site circulation, or facilities and infrastructure, and the detailed functional program breakdown of each zone is included Appendix B.

The Master Plan is a flexible, living document with the ability for species and habitats to adjust based on the needs through design. The Master Plan guides the direction, theming, and choices in each zone, while not being so prescriptive as to not allow for flexibility. Habitats could rotate, adjust in sizing, or change species based on availability, but the overall zone intent remains the same.

The zone names demonstrate the conceptual strength of the animal species and habitat types chosen and define the visitor experience intended for each zone. Strong, thematic site organization is best practice and a requirement for obtaining AZA accreditation. The names themselves are placeholders which can be refined or finessed in the future as zones are developed but should maintain the integrity of the thematic organization and intent.





WELCOME AND PARKING

YOU ARE HERE: OUR PLACE IN THE
EDMONTON RIVER VALLEY

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The experience of approaching and entering the Edmonton Valley Zoo parking lot establishes a sense of place and warmly welcomes visitors at the beginning of their journey. The approach along Buena Vista Road is clearly marked with updated wayfinding signage and a large sculptural art element, building anticipation and excitement.

The parking lot utilizes nature-based and Low Impact Drainage (LID) solutions to address stormwater needs, including soil vaults and bio-swales that improve water quality and reduce runoff going into the constructed wetland. Trees and solar elements provide shade, and the design adds to the aesthetic, creating a pleasant, welcoming experience. The parking layout maximizes stall efficiency, improves vehicular flow, bus parking and loading, and exceeds accessibility requirements.

The parking lot is screened by planting surrounding a large, constructed wetland that also functions as a stormwater management facility. The wetland creates habitat for local and native plant and animal species, and a boardwalk allows guests to closely observe them. This interpretive boardwalk grounds guests in the local context of the zoo, understanding the relationship between the site and the River Valley ecosystem, within the broader Central Parkland Natural Subregion. It is an opportunity to build deeper awareness and appreciation of relationship between First Peoples and the land through Indigenous art, stories and language. The combination of ecological and human stories creates powerful placemaking, deepening connectivity between the park and the Zoo site.

Visitors venture from the boardwalk to a pedestrian path with wayfinding elements drawing them through the parking lot to the main zoo entry and learn about animals on their way.

The entry plaza is an attractive gathering space, where amenities can be accessed without paid admission. The new pathways, signage, and boardwalk act as a central spine directing traffic from the park and the parking lot to the plaza, driving traffic to utilize the café area, engaging both Zoo and adjacent park users and increasing revenue.

The interpretive focus on local stories continues, with the playful water sturgeon element. Upon entering the zoo, guests have a choice of starting their journey to the left or right. The map provides a clear choice of what awaits down either path. Guests have their first animal viewing opportunity, watching the playful North American river otters splash adjacent to the EdVenture lodge.



EVZ IMAGE: RIVER OTTER HABITAT



PRECEDENT IMAGE: WETLAND BOARDWALK



PRECEDENT IMAGE: SAMPLE BEAR PLACEMAKING STATUE



EVZ IMAGE: ENTRY PLAZA



EVZ IMAGE: ENTRY PLAZA STURGEON FEATURE



PRECEDENT IMAGE: INDIGENOUS PUBLIC ART

VISITOR JOURNEY - WELCOME AND PARKING

Kelsey and Mitchell are a young family with two children aged 4 and 6, Reid and Abby. They live in Whitecourt, and frequently make day trips to Edmonton to shop at Costco and enjoy activities that they don't have at home. They have chosen to visit the Edmonton Valley Zoo for the first time.

“Are we there yet?”

Driving down Lake Buena Vista Road, Kelsey and Mitchell wonder if they're in the right spot because all the homes are residential, but they quickly spot the clear, visible Edmonton Valley Zoo road sign. Up ahead, they can see the polar bear sculpture. Reid and Abby are so excited, and Reid shows his polar bear stuffy to the sculpture as they drive by.

Everybody wave to the polar bear! We're here!”

The parking lot is getting full, but they find a shady spot under the trees, next to a beautiful wetland. The kids skip down the boardwalk, spotting local River Valley critters hidden in the railings. They play I spy, taking turns seeing who can find the next animal. Mitchell notices the illustrations were done by local Indigenous artists. He reads a little sign to the kids that talks about where the zoo is and how important it is to celebrate the relationship between the land, animals and the communities of people who have called this area home for generations.

The family heads up to the entrance, pausing for the kids to splash with the sturgeon while Mom and Dad buy tickets. The plaza is a perfect spot for a quick coffee and snack after the drive.

They head in, where the splash of otters catches their attention. The playful swimmers captivate Abby and Reid, who follow them from window to window. Kelsey and Mitchell take a quick class at the map, and see two clear path options in front of them.

“Where do you want to go first?” “Polar bears!” “Red Pandas”

A quick round of rock-paper-scissors has them follow the Waterways to the World path to the left, starting their adventure at the Edmonton Valley Zoo.



Legend

Site Infrastructure

- Visitor Building/Animal Indoor Habitats
- Operational Buildings
- Service/Parking
- Public Pathway
- Landscaped Area

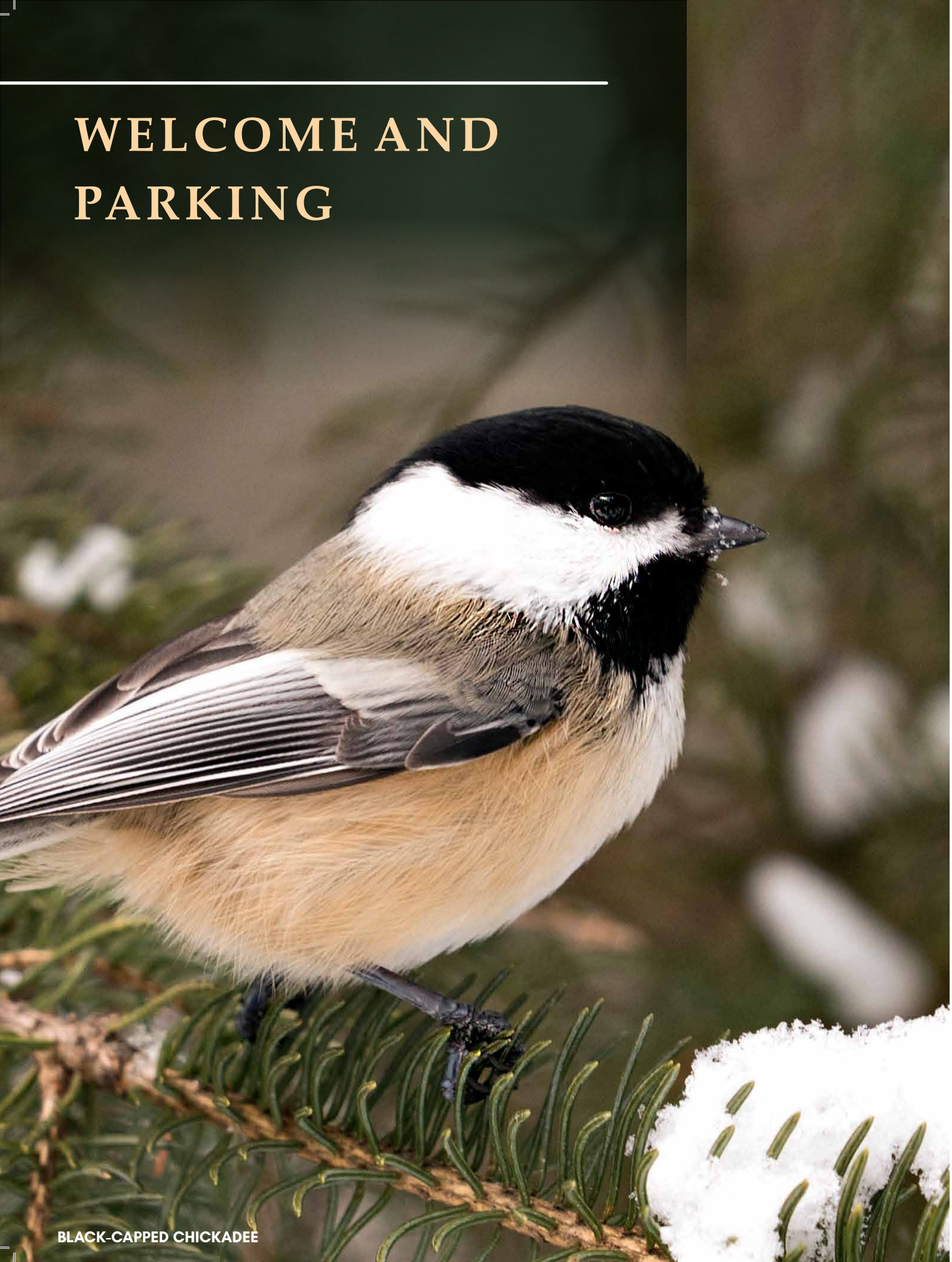


ENLARGED SITE PLAN
WELCOME AND PARKING: PARKING LOT, INTERPRETIVE WETLAND BOARDWALK, ENTRY PLAZA



NOT TO SCALE

WELCOME AND PARKING



BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

FUNCTIONAL PROGRAM

The complete functional program for the parking lot, interpretive boardwalk and entry including: sizes, components, levels of service requirements, critical asset identification and risk is included in Appendix B.

The functional program largely reflects new or modified infrastructure, with existing infrastructure (items to be maintained are discussed on page 127) is listed in Appendix C.

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

- Zoo signage & sculpture
- Constructed wetland & stormwater management facilities
- Interpretive boardwalk
- Photovoltaic shading elements
- Parking lot improvements
 - 246 large stalls
 - 45 compact stalls
 - 17 priority stalls
 - 10 accessible stalls
 - 36 staff stalls
 - 10 buses
- General components - public areas (pathways, landscaping & fencing); signage (wayfinding); trees; utilities; zone lighting





CONCEPTUAL RENDER
INTERPRETIVE WETLAND BOARDWALK



CONCEPTUAL RENDER
CENTRAL PEDESTRIAN PATH