

Inspiring sustainable thinking



## Alberta Parks

Draft Report

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Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan  
Fish Creek Provincial Park

April 2018





ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. is an award-winning full-service consulting firm dedicated to working with all levels of government and the private sector to deliver planning and design solutions for transportation, water, and land projects.



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## 1.0 Introduction and Methodology

### 1.1 Project Overview

ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. (ISL) was contracted by Alberta Parks (AP) to lead the strategic site planning and economic development project to re-envision the Sikome Aquatic Facility (Sikome) in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

This draft Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan (Plan) and Concept Design defines a long-term vision, programming opportunities, and capital upgrades for Sikome.

See Section 3.3 Plan Recommendations for a more in-depth look at recommendations for Sikome.

Key recommendations and changes proposed in this Plan are:

1. Addition of new recreation spaces, features, and amenities that provide an accessible and unified approach and striking identity. These features will improve the overall enjoyment of Sikome for a variety of visitors:
  - Outdoor classroom
  - Flexible/open spaces
  - Additional picnic areas
  - Nature play areas
  - Group day use sites and shelters
  - Fire pits
  - Café/concession
  - Shade structures and trees for sun protection
  - Visitor information
  - ADA Accessible water access platform
2. Improve site access and visitor flow patterns with the following features:
  - Special event/vendor spaces
  - Bus drop off locations
  - Enhanced accessibility throughout the site
  - Plaza areas
  - Two main entrances
  - Emergency access
3. Animating Sikome through the potential addition of programming:
  - Adventure Kids Program\*
  - Alberta Parks 101
  - Swimming lessons
  - Learn to Camp
  - Wildlife Awareness Program
  - Environmentally-friendly Outdoor Recreation/Eco-Tourism Program
  - Wilderness Survival Programs\*

*\* Could be offered by other providers*
4. Facility rentals and special events staging (e.g., renting the outdoor classroom space or special events space).

## 1.2 Project Rationale

Sikome is an artificial waterbody in Fish Creek Provincial Park that serves as a public swimming area during the summer months. It is currently open June 23 to September 3 from 10 am to 7pm. Visitation to Sikome has significantly increased since it opened in the late 1970's. There is a need to update the facility to provide a modern urban provincial park visitor experience that reflects current trends in programming, open space demands, and Alberta Parks' vision to inspire people **to discover, value, protect, and enjoy**.

Alberta's population has also significantly grown and urbanized. From 2011 to 2016, Calgary's population grew by 14.6 percent. This population growth increases the importance of Albertans' ability to access to parks and open spaces for health and wellbeing. Sikome is directly positioned to meet that need. Centralized within the largest urban park and the fifth largest city in Canada, Sikome needs an infrastructure and programming update to maintain its relevance inside a rapidly changing sociological canvas.

The primary objectives for the Redevelopment Plan are:

- To establish Sikome Aquatic Facility as an urban provincial park gateway within Alberta Parks' network;
- To create a sense of place that embodies Alberta Parks' identity;
- To define a unique and inclusive visitor experience;
- To modernize and upgrade existing facilities, and to improve the utilization of space;
- To explore viable all-season programming and maintain accessibility for low-income Albertans.

## 1.3 Project Methodology

The Plan for Sikome has been developed based on the following items:

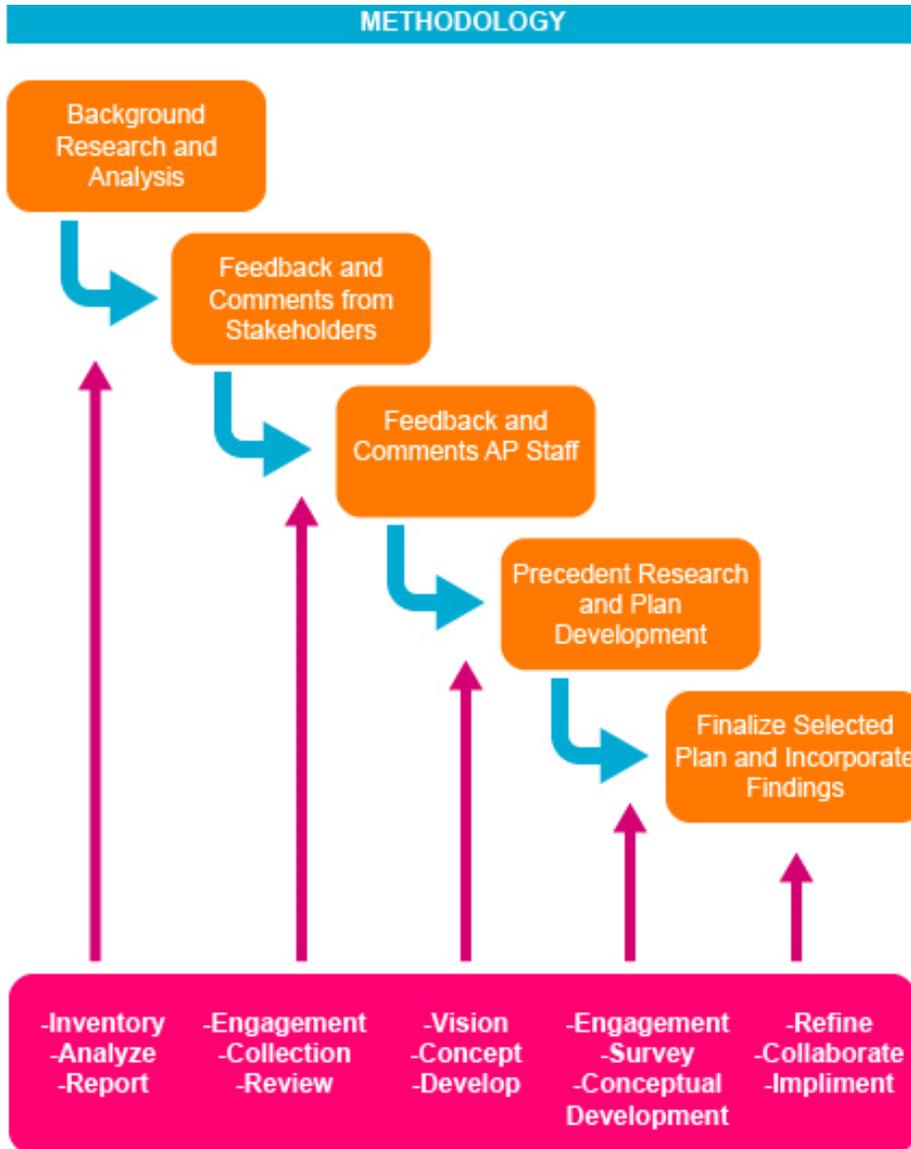
- Background research and analysis of the existing site and facilities;
- Feedback received from stakeholders and the public at public open houses, online surveys and idea boards in August 2017;
- Feedback received from Alberta Parks' staff between June 2017 and January 2018;
- Research conducted on competitive and complimentary facilities throughout the Calgary area, Alberta Region and Canada; and
- Research to explore viable programming and revenue generating options for summer, spring/fall and winter seasons.

The project started by gathering, reviewing and analyzing data to develop a Baseline Information Summary to define existing site features and conditions. The project team then gathered feedback about Sikome. The online and in-person engagement opportunities provided current and potential users with an opportunity to learn about the project, identify their likes and issues/challenges about Sikome, and provide their ideas for future features and a vision for Sikome.

Based on public feedback, the team developed a draft vision and prepared three draft concept designs for the Sikome facility. The concept stage of the design process for the Sikome Aquatic Facility incorporated versatility in program and form to examine the full potential of the area. ISL Engineering also explored different options for additional cost revenue vs capital costs. Alberta Parks' requirements outlined in the project rationale identified clear overarching principles to address rising populations and improving the user experience in the Sikome plan. The concepts investigated for the redevelopment plan aim to update infrastructure, improve visitor experience, adhere to Alberta Parks' core values and enhance inclusion and accessibility. Through an intensive engagement process and stakeholder review, site surveying and research, internal design consultation and client-consultant feedback, three concept designs were developed and vetted by Alberta Parks staff. Alberta Parks selected a single plan, presented in this document, that best met the requirements and achieved the vision for Sikome.



Figure 1.1: Project Methodology



## 2.0 About Sikome

### 2.1 About Alberta Parks

Alberta's parks system includes a spectrum of sites ranging from intensively developed recreation areas to pristine wilderness. These areas preserve natural landscapes, ecological processes and biological diversity. They also provide opportunities for heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and heritage tourism. Parks are special places where Albertans and visitors can experience, learn about, understand and enjoy our natural heritage.

There are approximately 500 sites in Alberta's provincial park system. This network of parks has grown since Alberta Parks inception in 1930. Each park is classified under Alberta Parks legislation. Management direction is provided in management plans, policy, and legislation. Alberta Parks, a division of the Province of Alberta Ministry of Environment and Parks, operates the provincial parks system.

### 2.2 About Sikome

Sikome is a man-made waterbody in Fish Creek Provincial Park in south east Calgary, which opened in 1978 (see Figure 2.1: Context Plan). Sikome is a unique facility within Fish Creek Provincial Park, Calgary, Alberta and Canada. It provides visitors with swimming and beach recreation opportunities from June to September each year.

Surrounded by multiple residential communities and situated within the largest urban park in Canada, Sikome is in a good location to provide a variety of programs and experiences within a park setting. While users currently enjoy swimming and water safety programs at the facility, this plan also introduces new activities and amenities at Sikome that will generate new experiences and better tie Sikome into the surrounding Fish Creek Provincial Park.

### 2.3 Location

Sikome is located in the south-east quadrant of the City of Calgary, within the Fish Creek Provincial Park, and is part of the Bow River basin (see Figure 2.1: Context Plan and Figure 2.2: Site Plan). Access is provided via Bow Bottom Trail from the north and Sunvalley Boulevard from the west. It sits at an elevation of 1,005m and has a surface of 0.4km. The water depth is variable and at its deepest point, near the center, Sikome is approximately 8 feet deep.

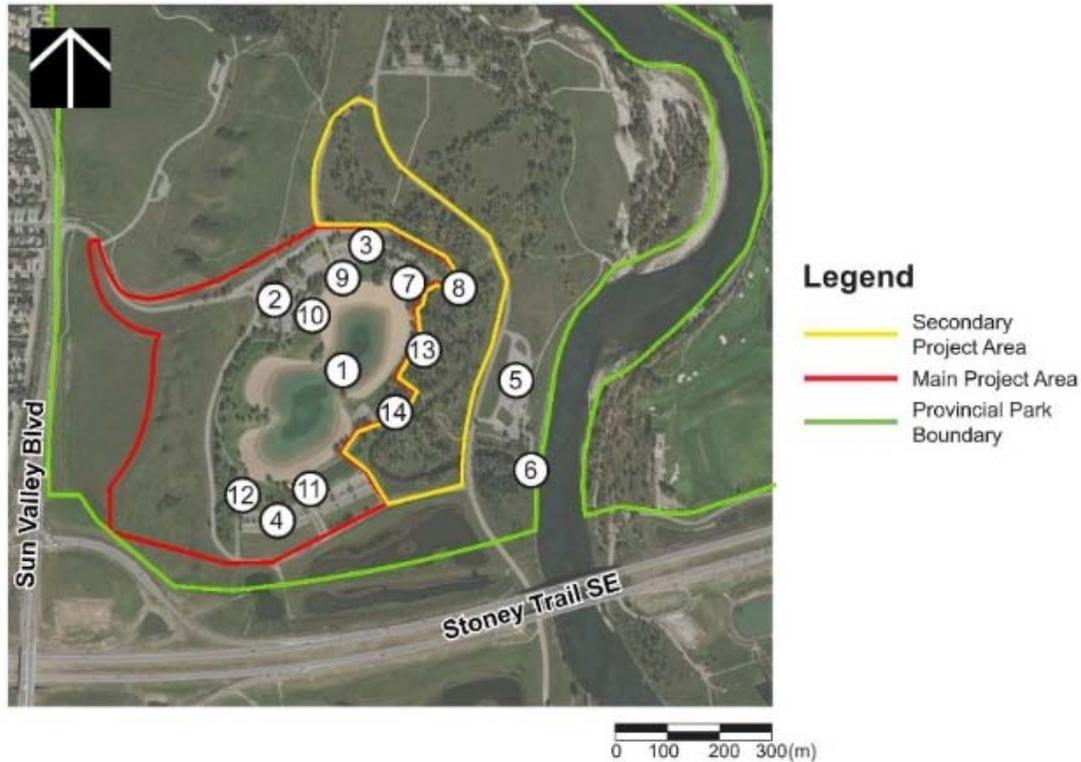


Figure 2.1: Context Plan



- ① Sikome Aquatic Facility
- ② Fish Creek Provincial Park
- ③ McKenzie Meadows Golf Club
- ④ Blue Devil Golf Club
- ⑤ Stoney Trail SE
- ⑥ Macleod Trail SE
- ⑦ Fish Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant
- ⑧ Bow Bottom Trail SE
- ⑨ Bow Valley Rancho Restaurant / Fish Creek Visitor Center

Figure 2.2: Site Plan



- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ① Sikome Aquatic Facility | ⑨ Playground                                   |
| ② Sundance Parking        | ⑩ Washroom, Change Rooms & Swim Skate Centre   |
| ③ North Parking           | ⑪ Washroom, Change Rooms & Former Skate Centre |
| ④ South Parking           | ⑫ Playground                                   |
| ⑤ Boat Launch Parking     | ⑬ Playground                                   |
| ⑥ Boat Launch             | ⑭ Water Treatment Plant                        |
| ⑦ Vacant Building         |  |
| ⑧ Lake Shop               |  |



## 2.4 Hours of Operation

In 2017, Sikome was open daily from 10:00 am to 7:30 pm from mid-June to the Labour Day weekend in September. In 2018, Sikome will be open daily 10:00 am to 7:00 pm from June 23 to September 3.

## 2.5 Current Situation – Key Issues and Gaps

Currently at Sikome, there are several underlying issues and gaps pertaining to facilities, amenities, and infrastructure. This plan addresses several gaps to improve site functionality, modernization, and efficiency of use. The following outlines key issues and opportunities:

1. Underutilization of areas and amenities including open spaces, volleyball courts, playgrounds, and food services.
  - Older facilities and a lack of facility usage are causing an underutilization of open space at Sikome. Upgrades to program and infrastructure will ignite operations on site. Most notably, the volleyball courts are underutilized and the playgrounds are outdated.
2. Building degradation and function
  - The buildings are old and require modernization and upgrades to allow for the spaces to be reconfigured or the buildings to expand. The washrooms and change rooms in Building B and the North Shower Building were updated within the last few years but the South Shower Building requires updating. Further to this, the water treatment plant, which is an essential element to the enjoyment of the lake itself, is outdated and requires updating.
3. Third-party food services (i.e., food truck location and hours)
  - Infrastructure currently discourages food trucks from visiting Sikome. Upgrades to include designated staging areas for such program will encourage food trucks to attend Sikome.
4. Lack of shade structures and trees
  - A more organic planting strategy, coupled with strategic placement of infrastructure will encourage users to remain in their groups and enjoy the site cohesively. There will be conditions interwoven to allow for groups to enjoy the site together.
5. Lack of internet
  - There is limited internet access for park staff and no Wi-Fi available for visitors.
6. Accessibility issues
  - A lack of pathways and access to the site creates an issue for users who have limited mobility. New pathway infrastructure will generate access to multiple areas on site and create a more inclusive experience. Access in and out of Sikome will be accessible at both south and north entrances and throughout the facility.
7. Public transportation
  - Lack of access to the site from surrounding neighbourhoods creates a problem for users travelling to Sikome. In the past shuttle services were provided but were not being utilized and thus transit was suspended. Future considerations will address new strategies for transit access.
8. Facility entrances
  - Entrances are not well marked and lack a sense of place, e.g., no benches, minimal signage, integration to circulation network.
9. Emergency access
  - New trail networks and entrances will create more accessible nodes for emergency vehicles if ever needed.
10. Staffing restrictions

- Currently there is not a high enough demand and too short of an operational season for additional staffing. Creating new infrastructure and programming will create new staffing opportunities.

## 2.6 Existing Facilities and Amenities

Facility	Description
Building A	Mechanical room, under-utilized kitchen with a light concession, and storage.
Building B	Mechanical room, lifeguard staff room, office on the second floor, and public change room facilities on the main floor.
North Shower Building	Mechanical room, decommissioned concession space, and shower facilities.
South Shower Building	Mechanical room, under-utilized kitchen space used as a light concession purpose, and storage.
Water Treatment Building	Mechanical and electrical equipment associated with water treatment processes for Sikome. Chemical storage room and an equipment room. Requires immediate upgrades and will eventually need to be replaced.
External Washroom	Closed. Outside of fence and to be removed.
Sikome Workshop	Main water service from onsite wells, electrical room, gas meter room, chemical storage room, maintenance area for light equipment repair, and office space.
Three Playgrounds	All in poor condition, outdated and to be replaced with nature play. See images below.
Beach Volleyball Court	Underutilized and to be removed.
Two Parking Lots	Lack of emergency lane, bus drop off, and accessibility issues. Includes 550 spaces and bike racks.
Picnic Tables	Lack of tables in grassy area. Lack of group picnic areas.
Shoreline	Surrounds entire waterbody. Lack of shading and trees. Natural shade is largely pushed to the perimeter of the site.
Three Entry Gates	To be reduced to two in order to streamline visitor flow and staffing needs.
Fencing	Surrounds the entire facility.

The Bow Valley Ranche Visitor Centre, located north of Sikome, houses a visitor centre with a series of interpretive displays showcasing the area's history and ecology, Provincial Park reception, and office space. This Plan does not include changes to the Bow Valley Ranche Visitor Centre. With the proposed upgrades, there is an opportunity to provide information services at Sikome as well.



Existing playgrounds on site  
Photos: Calgary Playground Review

Figure 2.3: Existing Facilities and Amenities





## 2.7 Existing Programs

Programming at Sikome currently focuses on aquatic skills, safety, and family togetherness. Specific programs include:

1. Swimming lessons for children and youth delivered by facility staff;
2. Water safety programs delivered by facility staff;
3. Kids Don't Float Life-Jacket program, a collaborative program between the provincial government and Lifesaving Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories. The program promotes involves the installation of a life jacket loaner station for children six and younger, and aims to increase child and water safety awareness through education.

## 2.8 Accessibility

Ensuring accessibility at this site is integral to site success, attractiveness, and contributing to Alberta Parks inclusion program. Sikome currently has a beach wheelchair for loan at the main entrance (Building A), which enables people with reduced mobility to access the beach and water. There remain, however, accessibility issues at several locations of Sikome. This plan addresses these accessibility concerns by outlining an inclusive strategy to allow for people with reduced mobility to easily access the facility and engage with programs. Proposed accessible amenities include washrooms, the parking lot, trail connections, picnic areas, fire pits, water access and program features.

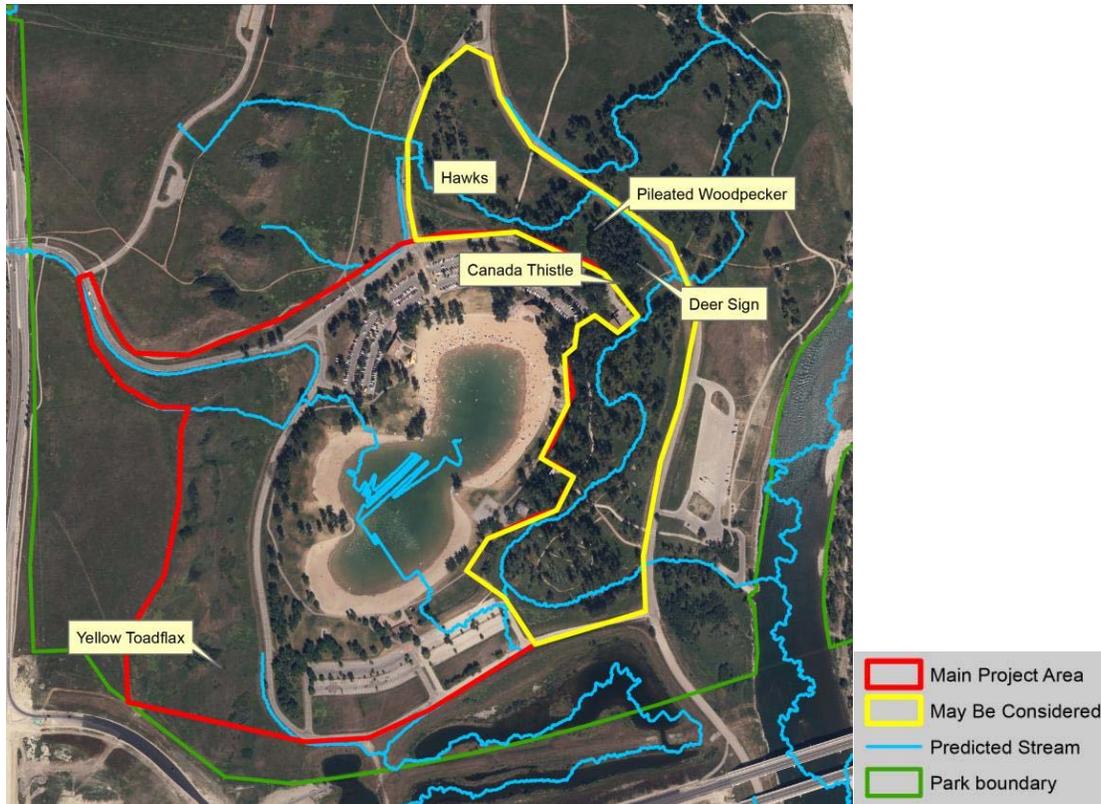
## 2.9 Environmental Considerations

Alberta Parks conducted a review of Sikome's existing environmental conditions, which included the current fenced area and adjacent areas. The overarching recommendation was to avoid increasing the footprint at Sikome due to sensitive cottonwood and riparian habitat. See Figure 2.4 below.

Below is a summary of the key findings.

- Rolling hills form a natural western boundary;
- The main project area has grassy slopes with scattered groups of Wolf Willow and Western Snowberry with possible native grasses and Smooth Brome;
- The southern boundary abuts several storm water retention ponds; and
- The eastern portion of the site is forested grassland and bordered by Bow Bottom Trail SE.

Figure 2.4: Project Boundaries for Environmental Review



## 2.10 Water Quality

Three fresh water wells supply the water for Sikome; no water is taken from the Bow River. An on-location water treatment plant ensures high quality water is circulated on site.

## 2.11 Topography

Within the main project area the site is generally flat. However, there is a floodplain to the east and slopes to the west.

## 2.12 Site Constraints

Several aspects may influence development of Sikome, including:

- Fencing around the main project area;
- Cottonwood forest, wildlife habitat and a floodplain to the east of the main project area;
- Slopes to the west of the main project area;
- Stormwater ponds and parking lot to the south of the main project area;
- Parking lots to the north of the main project area;
- Accessibility (including associated parking and beach access); and
- Lack of transit close to the site.



### 2.13 On Site Food and Drinks

Alberta Parks currently offers a small selection of food and drink at the concession stands located at the north and south entrance buildings, as well as several vending machines. The offerings include soda, bagged snacks, and hotdogs, but are very limited for full day users. Food truck and cart services have recently been added but are provided based on vendor availability. Food trucks are only permitted to access the site prior to opening through the north gates and are required to stay until the site closes; this constraint has limited the number of food trucks acquiring permits. The food trucks are powered by generators which causes noise pollution on site. They congregate inside the gates on the grass close to the north entrance.

### 2.14 Visitation

Sikome is a popular day use area during the summer months. The introduction of a day use fee in 2016 combined with a rainy summer led to lower visitation, but attendance began to increase again the following year. Table 2.1: Sikome Visitation Collected by Gate Attendants shows the number of people who visited Sikome from 2010 to 2017.

Table 2.1: Sikome Visitation Collected by Gate Attendants by Month and Year

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	17,913	181,300	107,378	99,708	121,132	129,371	61,717	98,264

The typical users at Sikome are young families and new Canadians that may not have these amenities in their own communities or are looking for a different experience. The majority of day passes sold in 2017 were to adults (22,186), followed by children under the age of 5 (4,913). Most users come for the water access and beach environment, bringing coolers and umbrellas with them. Introducing day-use fees in 2016 did change the overall visitor demographics. With the introduction of fees, fewer transient visitors are frequenting the site, thus increasing visitor safety and reducing the need for daily enforcement efforts.

### 2.15 Public Transit

The closest bus stop is located at the intersection of Sun Valley Blvd. and Sikome Rd SE, approximately a 10-15 minute walk from the north main entrance. Access to Sikome from the bus stop is along a 700m route down a slope, which is not ideal for groups bringing equipment and items down to the facility. While the travel distance is not an immediate issue, it is a convenience factor for site users as well as a restriction for users who have reduced mobility. Increased transit connections to Sikome are a part of future considerations and are not directly addressed within this plan. The City of Calgary is not being consulted at this time for increased transit routing and accessibility.

## 2.16 Strategic Connections

The Alberta Park's vision is to inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations. Sikome's redevelopment fits within the context of this overarching vision, while simultaneously working towards more site-specific improvements and upgrades to improve use. Other Alberta Parks guiding policies and documents, including the Plan for Parks, the Inclusion Plan, Pathways to wellbeing, and Parks for All are addressed below.

### 2.16.1 Plan for Parks

The actions of Alberta Parks are currently guided by the [Plan for Parks](#). The *Plan for Parks* is a 10-year blueprint for guiding management of Alberta's parks system to:

- Ensure sustainability of our natural landscapes;
- Enhance recreational opportunities; and
- Improve quality of life for Albertans.

Several strategies in the *Plan for Parks* are addressed in this redevelopment plan.

#### Strategy #1 – Involve Albertans

The views and needs of Albertans have been considered throughout this planning process. Alberta Parks engaged users at Sikome through various means on site and online. Results from initial engagement efforts were used to guide the contents of this plan, which will be released for public consultation. Results from that consultation process will influence the final plan contents.

#### Strategy #2 – Offer modern facilities, policies, and programs

One of the primary reasons for this redevelopment is to modernize existing facilities at Sikome, which will increase site attractiveness and efficacy of use. This plan also recommends programming amendments to appeal to the diversity of users at Sikome and to improve this location's ability to serve as a gateway to the other protected areas in the Alberta Parks system.

#### Strategy #3 – Provide recreation opportunities

Several water-based recreation opportunities are provided at Sikome. This plan provides for improvement to these existing opportunities by increasing safety, expanding programming, and updating facilities.

#### Strategy #4 – Conserve landscapes

Sikome is in the centre of Fish Creek Provincial Park, which is protected for its grassland and riparian ecosystem attributes. This plan will avoid sensitive riparian habitats to ensure their protection as well as educate users regarding the ecological uniqueness of this area.

### 2.16.2 Everyone belongs outside: Alberta Parks Inclusion Plan

Another key strategic influence for the future planning of Sikome is Alberta Parks' [everyone belongs outside: Alberta's Parks Inclusion Plan](#). The main outcomes of the inclusion plan are measured by the following key outcomes:

1. Decrease in physical and other barriers to accessing parks;
2. Increase in knowledge of park recreation and stewardship opportunities among diverse communities;
3. Increase in participation by diverse communities and new users in aspects of park programming such as experiences, consultation, volunteerism and employment and partnerships; and
4. Improved attitudes toward social diversity among visitors, partners and staff.

Sikome's proximity to a major urban centre enables it to attract users from all population demographics, including park users with limited mobility, new Calgarians, and existing users. The proposed plan aims to incorporate the core values of the inclusion plan to build a welcoming agenda that appeals to all Calgarians



and Albertans. A large part of this initiative is creating a fully accessible facility, improving awareness of the programs and amenities at Sikome, and expanding upon the typical demographic attracted to Sikome.

### 2.16.3 Pathways to wellbeing: A Framework for Recreation in Canada (National Recreation Framework)

The [National Recreation Framework](#) was endorsed and/or accepted by provincial, territorial, and federal recreation Ministers in February 2015. The framework outlines both a renewed definition and vision for recreation in Canada and includes priority action items for all stakeholders involved in recreation provision. The definition of recreation in the framework is:

*Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.*

**Framework Goals:** The framework is organized into five overarching goal areas:

1. Active living
2. Inclusion and access
3. Connecting people and nature
4. Supportive environments
5. Recreation capacity

Sikome already furthers a number of these goals and outcomes as it is a valued and popular recreation asset. This Sikome redevelopment plan contributes to the success of this framework by providing access for all Albertans to a water-based recreation facility in the heart of one of Canada's largest cities. Through programs that empower users to expand their knowledge and outdoor skills, users can feel comfortable expanding their park use to other protected areas or not. By focusing on accessibility, this plan ensures that all people can access the water safely. Using infrastructure to improve visitor flow on-site will increase the recreational capacity of Sikome and improve the user experience.

### 2.16.4 Parks for All

[Parks for All](#), developed in response to the National Recreation Framework, is another national initiative that outlines an action plan for Canada's parks community. *Parks for All* is based upon the following vision:

*Connected Canadian park lands and waters that support healthy nature and healthy people in harmony for generations to come, backed by an active, diverse parks community that cultivates shared goals, mutual respect, and collective action.*

The document outlines the various benefits of parks in Canadian society and has a number of specific calls to action for all levels of government to strengthen the parks community. Actions outlined in the document are organized into four key areas: Collaborate, Connect, Conserve, and Lead. The operations of Sikome can help to further a number of goals and action items associated with *Parks for All*, including, but not limited to:

1. **Enhance and Develop** connections between Canada's wilderness areas and urban natural spaces, using gateways like visitor centres, recreation centres, museums, and conservatories, so that people can understand that they are connected and part of the same system.
2. **Increase** access to nature for all Canadians using various means, including public transportation connections to urban and near-urban parks.
3. **Forge** connections between community parks and less accessible wilderness parks by sharing information and coordinating activities and campaigns.
4. **Engage** with nature-based interpretive programming and experiential learning as powerful environmental education tools for building a culture of conservation.
5. **Provide** a variety of recreational, interpretive, and creative experiences suitable to Canada's diversity of interests to ensure that everyone feels welcome in our parks.
6. **Increase** opportunities for child-directed play in parks.

7. **Nurture** healthy and positive communities through connections to land and water, and help to share their stories widely.
8. **Develop** grassroots nature-based programs and services, as well as special events to attract various audiences, to nurture generations of invested and passionate parks supporters.



## 3.0 The Future State of Sikome

### 3.1 Vision

Results of the first phase of public engagement for this project were used to craft a vision for Sikome, which will guide planning and management of the site in the years to come.

The Sikome Vision is:

*The Sikome Aquatic Facility is a unique urban provincial park facility that connects Albertans to nature through accessible outdoor recreation, nature play, and learning opportunities. Sikome is a facility for social connection, community enjoyment, outdoor active living, and park discovery.*

Sikome is a place where everyone can enjoy nature and be introduced to Alberta Parks. The aim and overall premise for the Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan and Concept Design is to provide a unified approach, a striking identity, and an enjoyable experience for the varied users of the facility and Fish Creek Provincial Park. The open space structure will ensure the relevant principles of the Alberta Parks' vision, best practices, creativity, and sustainability are promoted and enhanced.

The Plan for Sikome incorporates a better utilization of space to address issues/gaps, expanded and new facilities to enhance the recreation experience, and educational and recreation program opportunities to encourage safe exploration and sustainable recreation in other parks within the Alberta Parks' network. It also includes revenue generation opportunities for Alberta Parks and a potential extended operating season. Expansion of available programs will provide opportunities for revenue generation and event staging in the form of facility rentals, special events, and new recreation programming delivered by Alberta Parks or third parties.

### 3.2 Goals and Objectives

The above vision and supporting goals and objectives below are based on the results of public engagement and research. They reflect how Sikome can provide a valued water-based recreation experience and improve how Albertans connect with nature. Goals and objectives addressed throughout this plan are:

1. To enhance the Sikome Aquatic Facility as an urban provincial park gateway feature within Alberta Parks' network;
2. To enable Albertans and visitors to be active in and interpret nature;
3. To introduce new and existing park user markets Fish Creek Provincial Park;
4. To create a unique and inclusive visitor experience or urban residents;
5. To create an inspiring experience with nature that embodies Alberta Parks' identity;
6. To modernize and upgrade existing facilities and improve the utilization of space;
7. To build on the existing successes at Sikome by offering new recreation amenities and educational programming that generates revenue while maintaining accessibility for low-income Albertans;
8. To expand the seasonal opportunities available at Sikome by increasing use in the shoulder seasons of spring and fall; and
9. To enhance the visitor experience by providing better community gathering spaces, food truck accessibility, and improved concessions.

The facility's strategic vision can more readily be achieved through a six-month operating season, extending beyond its current 73 day season, to include spring and fall. Although the provision of winter activities was explored, it was deemed not feasible due to operational costs and the existence of alternative and in many cases competing free opportunities in the local area.

This plan for the Sikome Aquatic Facility recognizes its longstanding position in the community as a family oriented summer recreation area and builds on this reputation by upgrading facilities where needed, introducing new amenities, providing flexible programming, and retaining its program and economic value well into the future.

### 3.3 Plan Recommendations

Much of the proposed Plan details upgrades of existing infrastructure to modernize facilities, and facilitate the incorporation of new programs and amenities. Several improvements should be applied across the site to make the site more attractive and welcoming for various users, including:

1. Modernizing several buildings, which may entail reconfiguration of the space or expansion.
2. Naturalizing Sikome with additional trees, shrubs and flowers, particularly along the lakeshore and fence line;
3. Providing Wi-Fi for visitors and updating internet access for park staff;
4. Updating and implementing nature play elements at playgrounds to improve use and safety;
5. Implement a barrier-free design associated with education and recreation opportunities;
6. Provide programs for participants to expand their knowledge of nature, and local history;
7. Improving entrances to increase a sense of place (e.g., providing benches, signage, maps);
8. Improving designation of space for special events and associated temporary facilities (e.g., food trucks, tents); and
9. Incorporate spring and fall recreation and educational amenities and programs.

Several upgrades should be applied to facilities to make Sikome more user-friendly:

1. Improved seating;
2. Additional outdoor classroom spaces;
3. Additional food and refreshment offerings
4. Upgrading lighting to improve facility use in the spring and fall;
5. Update the washrooms and change rooms in the South Shower Building;
6. Improve main entries and gate infrastructure for clearer access and accessibility. Secondary north gate should be closed to the public and used for emergency access only. North entrance may include additional café space, outdoor seating, rental space, offices, retail and visitor information; and
7. Additional group shelters and associated facility rentals.

#### 3.3.1 Ecological Considerations and Zoning

The environmental review identified several ecological aspects to consider during planning. The eastern portion of the site contains a sensitive cottonwood community that provides important wildlife habitat and may play an important role in the larger Fish Creek/Bow River riparian corridor. For these reasons, no new development footprint was considered for this area; the eastern area will be converted to natural area zone to ensure protection of these riparian habitats (see Figure 3.1: Zoning Amendment Diagram.)

Native grassland ecosystems are generally at risk within Alberta; their protection and restoration are part of other natural area zoning changes. The area west of Sikome Circle SE and north of Sun Valley will be designated as a natural area zone and be the focus of restoration activities. The western area will be added to the adjacent natural area zone as it likely contains native grasses mixed with invasive species. Restoration of these areas will provide an environmental education opportunity.

A Level 1 Environmental Review has not yet been conducted for the specific facility improvements associated with this project plan



Figure 3.1: Zoning Amendment Diagram



### 3.4 Proposed Programs

Developing an infrastructure on site to facilitate new and existing programs for site users, community groups and clubs is a main goal for Sikome. The site will be inclusive and will be able to facilitate a multitude of programs for the city. Some of these programs may include:

1. Nature Gateway programming for children and adults. These programs are designed to highlight connections with other parks and can be targeted at day shoreline users or specific groups for overnight use. Nature Gateway programs currently include:
  - Adventure Kids – a two to three hour program for families already in the park. Program activities include swimming, canoe and camp craft activities;
  - Get into Nature – a simple camp craft program that operates periodically from May to October;
  - Overnight programs – targeted to groups with a similar focus on the camp crafts.
2. Events related to Fish Creek Provincial Park's role as a gateway to the Alberta Parks system, such as:
  - Special events during the shoulder and off-season from May to late June and September to end of October;
  - Evening interpretive and educational programs for various users. This includes family programs like the Bonfire Series, an evening of family entertainment with various performers and storytellers, or adult-specific programs with innovative lectures detailing unique area features and history;
  - Outdoor cooking and cook-offs on an open fire; and
  - Outdoor programs, such as nature photography or outdoor film making;
3. Facility rentals for day and overnight use for groups:
  - Various equipment rentals for day use by large groups for events like weddings and reunions;
  - Day use facility and equipment rentals for gateway programming targeted groups, such as Scouts and school groups; and
  - Overnight rentals for targeted groups (upon Alberta Parks' approval for such programming).
4. Long-term site rentals, which offer outdoor teaching spaces and shelters to targeted groups, such as nature schools or home school associations, who may require a particular space repeatedly.



## 4.0 A Framework for Animating Sikome

### Program Framework and Administration

Alberta Parks offers a variety of programs in park sites. The Interpretation and Education section coordinates the animation of sites through a combination of direct programming and contracted services. These activities are guided by four strategic pillars: 1. Biodiversity; 2. Cultural; 3. Recreation; and 4. Visibility.

The program framework for Sikome needs to fall within this existing structure, while being flexible and responsive to changing internal demands and external market shifts. Sikome programs may focus on recreational opportunities, but will also incorporate the other three pillars. Key considerations for programming at Sikome include:

- Program coordination;
- Program delivery modes and capacity;
- Program marketing; and
- Ongoing monitoring.

**Figure 4.1:** A framework for program creation and implementation at Sikome describing the factors requiring consideration by the Program Coordinator



It may not be possible to create and implement this framework for Sikome immediately; the animation of the site will need to evolve as resources permit. This could require reallocation of resources within the parks system initially, leading to the ultimate goal of achieving the framework as outlined above.

Flexibility will be key in animating the site as efficiently and effectively as possible. Alberta Parks will need to decide which programs will be delivered with internal staff, and which programs are better provided through collaborating with external partners. For example, internal staff may be better suited to providing programs relating directly to Alberta Parks. Programs such as craft camps or special events may require specialized skills and certifications, thus making them better suited to external contracts. This model also allows for flexibility by allowing contract program funds or resources to be fluid and better able to respond to internal and external shifts.

Ultimately, a Program Coordinator is required to provide overall direction, determine program details, and liaise with internal and external stakeholders. Working with internal stakeholders, the Program Coordinator will also set cost recovery rates. The Coordinator will hire staff as required and seek external contracts for program provision when appropriate. Contracts and collaborations can be defined with several existing outdoor program operators both in the not-for-profit and commercial sectors.

### Programming Recommendations

To achieve the vision for the site and to take a proactive approach to animating the spaces within it, Alberta Parks should:

5. Hire a Program Coordinator to determine which programs are relevant and in demand, and determine how they are best offered;
6. Hire program staff to deliver programs, if needed;
7. Seek collaborations with groups such as the University of Calgary Outdoor Programs, Mount Royal University ETOL program and others, deferring to partners with programming expertise where possible and appropriate;
8. Set cost recovery targets for different categories of programs. Gateway programs should have lower cost recovery expectations as they support the entire parks system not just Sikome;
9. Test relevance and demand for programs and market driven events on an ongoing basis; and
10. Research and gather user input on an ongoing basis to refine current programs and identify new areas of focus.

Further to what Alberta Parks does proactively to animate the site, there will also be market interest in continuing to rent facilities to host special events and deliver programs. All proposed events will fall under the existing terms and conditions associated with Alberta Parks Special Event and Guiding and Instructing permitting program. There is already market interest in this area, which will likely grow over time. Once Alberta Parks is able to hire a program coordinator, programming capacity will increase.

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Sikome Aquatic Facility concept framework diagram.



## 5.0 A Focus for Animating Sikome

### 5.1 Programming at Sikome

Sikome Aquatic Facility is unique in that it is a provincial park located in an urban setting. Alberta Parks contains a range of protected areas ranging from Sikome to vast wilderness areas and everything in between. To recognize its unique position in a programmatic manner, three themes will dominate Sikome into the future:

**1. Maintain and enhance Sikome as a highly valued family-oriented summer water destination**

Its unique setting of water and sand make it a regional draw and a part of family memories. Sikome will maintain and enhance where possible its slate of aquatics and water safety programs that Calgary residents have grown to rely on.

**2. Enhance Sikome as a hub of natural play and activity**

Sikome will leverage its current position in the community to become a hub for Alberta Park related activities. The plaza areas will be enhanced and a public interface will be added to provide a range of Alberta Parks information to all visitors. The new café will enhance visitor experiences regardless of motivation. Adding a nature playground, picnic and shaded areas, special events staging areas and shelters will also make the facility more flexible and responsive to a wide range of programming.

**3. Embrace role as a nature gateway program area**

Access and connection to nature is increasingly important as medical and health-driven literature espouses the benefits of nature. The nature gateway concept allows Sikome to leverage its urban position to introduce Albertans to the outdoors in a unique way. The gateway concept aims to deliver introductory, hands-on programs to Albertans with lesser experience and confidence in the outdoors. These programs will empower users to explore other protected areas outside of the city via three general approaches:

- a. Get into Nature, a DIY (do-it-yourself) program for adults and youth. This area includes the Adventure Program for children and youth attending the park with their families on a registered basis. Programming will teach everything from outdoor cooking to learning how to set up a wildlife safe camp.
- b. Gateway events throughout the operating season. These are events, such as family fireside and educational programs, that may or may not require registration and connect families to each other and Alberta Parks.
- c. Facility rental agreements (both short and long term) with private groups for reunions or parties, or professional groups for special events or educational programming (e.g., forest schools, non-profit organizations).

The following potential types of programs and associated target markets were explored to inspire this draft Plan and Concept Design and understand the feasibility of an enhanced and expanded Sikome. These were identified via research; however their ultimate implementation is dependent upon the capacity of park staff once park improvements are completed.

#### 5.1.1 Proposed Nature Gateway Programs

##### Get into Nature - Adventure Kids

**Target market:** families and children. In Calgary this target market represents 336,009 Calgarians who live in households with children at home. The immediate geographic market surrounding Sikome (Wards 12, 13, and 14), contains approximately 27,000 children between the ages of 6 and 14 and 20,000 children under

the age of 6 living at home. Research shows that 87% of local children and 78% of adults visit parks on a regular basis. A conservative estimate would be that Sikome programs may attract 10% of that market.

According to Calgary's 2016 census data there are 226,580 children between 1 and 14 years of age in Calgary. Capturing 10% of that population for educational programming sets a target of 22,658 which is not unrealistic when we consider the appeal of more unique and value laden programs.

Table 5.1: Participation in Select and Relevant Sports and Recreation Activities Children and Youth in Wards 12, 13, 14 compared to City Wide (City of Calgary 2015)

Item	City-Wide Children and Youth %	Ward 12 Children and Youth %	Ward 13 Children and Youth %	Ward 14 Children and Youth %
Jogging or running	46	41	42	52
Ice skating – outside	47	49	33	68
Yoga	13	10	11	12
Fitness classes	11	13	8	10
Hockey	18	20	12	27
Visiting a park	90	93	88	91
Visiting a playground	82	84	74	81
Volunteering	32	15	30	29
Music event	40	36	45	35
Food event	25	22	25	25
Dancing	27	35	28	34
Hiking group	10	8	9	3
Gardening (community)	9	4	12	8
Scouts, et all	10	14	11	16
Parent and tots group	9	17	12	9
Seniors club	-	-	-	-

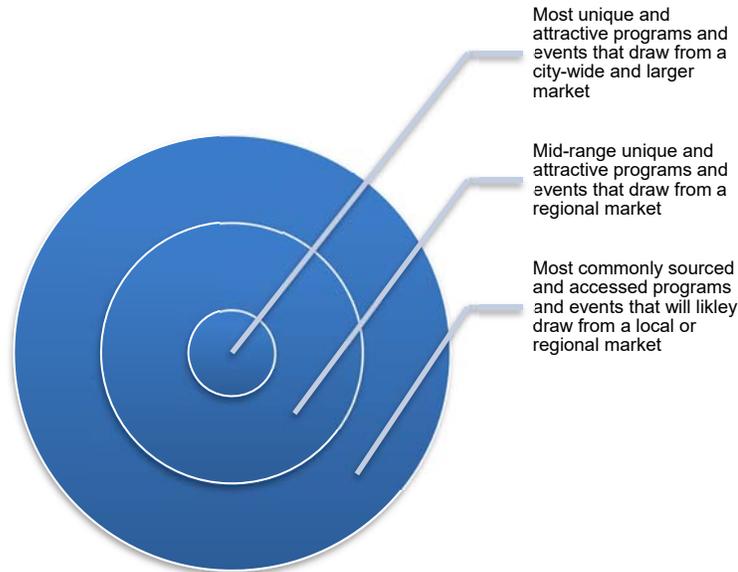
Table 5.1 above provides insight to the market of children and youth in the city of Calgary. Children and youth showed high participation levels in visiting a park or a playground, which is encouraging for a facility like Sikome. Children's activity in Wards 12 to 14 is generally similar to city-wide data with some variances among the sub-populations.

**Program Overview:** The Adventure Kids program is deemed an easy access program to introduce children and families to Sikome's new gateway direction. Adventure Kids will be a two to three hour registered program operating mornings and afternoons during the busy summer season. Adventure Kids will offer a mix of hands-on activities ranging from camp craft to simple water activities such as canoe and water safety. The idea is to get children immersed in nature in a fun and hands-on way while parents and other family members enjoy the aquatic experience.



**Get into Nature - Adults**

**Target market:** families and adults. The target market for programming varies with the type of program presented. Currently provided programs such as evening fireside science talks will likely attract a more local or regional market. Data shows, however, that 39% of Calgarians visit music events and 36% visit food events (Table 5.2). A unique event such as outdoor chili cook-off where participants would build their fires and prepare the chili outdoors would likely draw from the entire city (and maybe farther afield) due to its unique nature. While a bear safety program that are found in numerous other venues including to a lesser quality online, would likely attract from a much smaller geographic catchment area.



Following this simple concentric model, it is understood that people will travel farther for products deemed unique and attractive. Sikome has control over its potential market by the design of its products; the more unique and attractive the facility is perceived the larger its market catchment area.

Adult get-into-nature programs will also offer simple camp craft opportunities ranging from fire building and outdoor cooking to simple navigation, or from stargazing to Indigenous traditional use. Other topics include nature photography and outdoor filmmaking. The potential for different programs is great as is the ability to connect events to both nature and Alberta Parks messaging. Sikome’s geographic position and access to Calgary’s population makes it an especially useful venue for Alberta Parks to deliver events that support the agency’s broader aims. Special events around the site’s seasonal opening and closing, or statutory holidays can also present opportunities for these programs. Some programs may be delivered directly by Alberta Parks’ staff, particularly those related to Parks Day or similar events. While other programs are likely to be delivered by partner groups including Friends of Fish Creek Park, other not-for-profits and commercial groups.

Table 5.2: Participation in Select and Relevant Sports and Recreation Activities for Adults in Wards 12, 13, 14 compared to City-Wide (City of Calgary 2015)

Item	City-Wide Adults / Older Adults %	Ward 12 Adults / Older Adults %	Ward 13 Adults / Older Adults %	Ward 14 Adults / Older Adults %
Jogging or running	45	47	45	49
Ice skating – outside	27	40	26	38
Yoga	24	27	30	27
Fitness classes	22	23	26	25
Hockey	11	14	14	13
Visiting a park	80	86	78	84
Visiting a playground	48	58	48	48
Volunteering	48	49	47	53
Music event	39	39	37	36
Food event	36	30	37	34
Dancing	15	13	16	15
Hiking group	12	9	13	11
Gardening (community)	8	4	9	6
Seniors club	14	8	10	17

### Facility Rentals and Bookable Group Use Day Use Shelters

Facility rentals may also be referred to as events but it is generally inclusive of large group activities such as family gatherings and reunions. It may include site rentals for regular usage such as outdoor yoga, meditation programs, and fitness programs. There is a permitting structure for Special Events and Guiding and Instructing already in place for these types of rentals throughout Alberta Parks, which will need to be adhered to. Rental space includes the outdoor classroom, shelters, and other controlled areas.

### Long-Term Facility Rentals

Sikome houses shelters, cooking areas, and access to indoor washrooms, all of which are appealing amenities for a variety of groups providing outdoor experiences. Groups such as forest schools, and home schooling groups have potential interest in seeking long-term rentals for the duration of Sikome's season. The terms facility rentals, bookable group use shelters, and guiding and/or partner instruction are used in this report and it is important to understand the difference.

- Facility rentals refers to long term renters such as Forest Schools, homeschooling groups and others who intend to book the facility on a regular basis and consistent basis.
- Bookable group use shelters refers to short term and often one-off renters such as a family reunion and similar non-recurring event.
- Guiding and/or instruction refers to indirect program delivery described earlier and involves a contract arrangement with an external group to provide what will likely be outdoor recreation related instruction and with a not for profit or commercial organization.



## 6.0 Sikome in the Future

### 6.1 A Summary of Facilities at Sikome

Amenities	Existing	New	Description	Potential Uses	Additional Required Supporting Amenities
Lake area and beach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water body with beach	Spontaneous beach use, primarily in summer, swim lessons	Washrooms, parking
Natural playground	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Children oriented playground apparatus	Spontaneous use	Washrooms, parking
Outdoor classroom		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor educational / interpretive space structured in classroom / lecture format	Programmed use	Washrooms, parking
Fire pits, receptacles, and picnic tables		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social gathering, picnic space	Spontaneous use, rentals	Parking
Plazas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Park approach	Spontaneous use outdoor seating, food truck programming, special event staging areas	Food and beverage, washrooms, parking
Group day use		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social gathering event space	Primarily programmed, rental use	Food and beverage, washrooms, parking
Passive outdoor presentation area		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social gathering event space	Outdoor presentations, concerts, speakers, press conferences, movies	Food and beverage, washrooms, parking
Shade structures		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Structural shade structures in designated areas	Programmed and rental use, spontaneous use when not rented or programmed	Washrooms, garbage and recycling
Café		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retail amenity for sale of food and drink	Use for active users during scheduled hours	Washroom, garbage and recycling, parking
Information centre		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retail and information hub for active users internally and externally	Use for active users during scheduled hours, information, program schedules and permits	Washroom, parking

## 6.2 Sikome Concept Design

From public and stakeholder engagement, three main themes emerged: 1) minimize proposed facilities; 2) explore opportunities for revenue-generating programs; and 3) position Sikome as a gateway to the Alberta Parks system. From the comments and themes, three concepts were drafted and reviewed by Alberta Parks staff; the final concept presented here is a combination of these.

The first concept maintained most of the existing facilities and structures while providing sufficient programming space. This final concept adds new elements for the natural playground, outdoor classroom, shade structures, and day use sites, which reflect the project goals. The proposed concept can easily be adjusted based on the results of public consultation and market demand, particularly since there are many potential programming areas. Maps representing the concept details are appended at the end of this document.

For ease of presentation, the Sikome Plan and Concept Design has been split in to nine sections:

1. Northwest entrance plaza and approach – details proposed changes to site access and the main entrance;
2. South entrance plaza – alternate access to the site;
3. Nature Play Areas – an innovative play area for children located on the south side of Sikome;
4. Special event tent area – a dedicated special event area located adjacent to the northwest entrance;
5. Outdoor Cooking / Picnic Area – 12 dedicated group sites of varying sizes to accommodate small and big groups looking to have a picnic on site.
6. Group Day Use Areas – 2 dedicated spaces that can be used for day use rentals, special events and on site programming.
7. Outdoor classroom – Dedicated outdoor classroom space for education program and events;
8. ADA Water access platform - accessible approach to the water and beach through ADA approved infrastructure; and
9. Trail connections – increased accessibility though new trail alignments making Sikome truly accessible for all patrons.

## 6.3 Alternatives Considered

The three concepts originally presented to Alberta Parks were:

### Concept 1

Concept 1 focused on maintaining existing facilities and structures while enhancing Sikome's naturalized, educational, and gateway characteristics. Proposed programs and facilities were selected and arranged based on feedback received by the public and key Alberta Parks stakeholders. There were no major upgrades and reconfigurations on the existing buildings and structures, and no major earthwork in this concept. Concept 1 was essentially a refurbishment of the existing site.

### Concept 2

Concept 2 upgraded the first concept to enhance the naturalization and education elements. The major elemental difference in this design was the addition of berms to simulate the experience of hiking through the different regional zones in Alberta Parks. A trail network was proposed to act as a stepping-stone for people to prepare themselves for the bigger challenges of hiking on longer trails and in varied terrain. By planting different kinds of vegetation and using different surface materials, this trail network could replicate some of the ecosystem diversity seen in the Alberta Parks system. Educational and interpretive material could also be available along the trails, thus making a connection between city life and natural exploration.



### Concept 3

Concept 3 for Sikome was aimed at creating a major attraction to encourage visitation from all over Calgary and Alberta. Sikome has often been considered as a water recreation area destination. This concept added different activities to diversify the experiences and opportunities available for all age groups. This design also added a very modern twist to the park, attracting new city residents to the park.

## 6.4 Proposed Concept Design: Facilities and Amenities

A series of new amenities are recommended to improve the function and accessibility of Sikome. Removals will occur on site prior to new infrastructure being installed. These removals will include:

1. Volleyball courts;
2. Two playgrounds; and
3. Washroom facility outside the fence.

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the full Concept Design Plan and Circulation Diagram

Recommendations for improvements as outlined in the concept design for each of these specific amenities are as follows.

### 6.4.1 Northwest Entrance Plaza and Approach

The northwest entrance plaza with its approach should be upgraded and expanded. The northwest entrance has the highest usage and is considered the main entrance to Sikome. Upgrades to this entrance will be designed to make the area more inviting, accessible, and to accommodate higher usage. The north plaza provides visitors with internal and external services, such as food service, permit pick up, campsite booking, public restrooms, and rental services. A large portion of this plaza will require reconfiguration and expansion to allow for accessibility and new layouts for entry, food trucks, and external uses. A reconfiguration at the entrance will designate an area for food trucks that does not require them to cross the fence line, thus creating flexibility in their arrival and departure time. Power will also be added at this location so generators will not be required.

Proposed changes to the northwest approach will create an unobstructed and continuous pedestrian network inside and outside the project area, which will enhance the accessibility for pedestrians. The northwest approach will be enhanced by adding external uses, kiosks/visitor information, and clear trailheads.

#### Amenities proposed to the Northwest Entrance Plaza and Approach are:

- 1 feature bench
- 6 standard benches
- 5 bike racks
- 2 trash receptacles
- 3 information kiosks
- 4 picnic tables
- 6 canopy structures
- 1 bistro
- 1 café including a 30 m<sup>2</sup> patio and 4 café tables with chairs
- Allocated food truck stationing
- Bus pick up and drop off
- Rental office
- Expanded and renovated washroom facilities

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Northwest Entrance Plaza and Approach concept plan.

#### 6.4.2 South Entrance Plaza

The south entrance plaza is also recommended for an upgrade and expansion. Currently, the south entrance provides visitors with a washroom and minimal facilities. This concept plan proposes the south entrance be expanded and upgraded to include better trail connection points, picnic areas with fire pits, and a shade canopy.

##### Amenities proposed to the South Entrance Plaza are:

- 4 picnic tables
- 2 standard benches
- 1 trash receptacle
- 5 canopy structures
- Expanded and renovated washroom facilities

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the South Entrance Plaza concept plan.

#### 6.4.3 Nature Play Areas

The proposed Natural Kid Playground is a new attractive focal point for Sikome. This play area will interweave Sikome’s role as a gateway to the Alberta Parks system with a functional circuit enjoyable by all ages. The natural playground will be separated into different ecological and geographical zones with varied levels of experiential play connected through strong functional elements. This new playground will provide an interesting, challenging and educational space for kids of all ages to learn different skills physically and socially. A smaller natural play area is also proposed and will have similar elements on a smaller scale. The final layout of the Natural Kid Playground will be decided by the designer / supplier of the products. They will be determined through the tendering process to follow the planning phase. The following list is a concept and is not final.

##### Amenity proposed to the Nature Play Areas are:

- 1 landscaped berm
- 1 water fountain
- 1 trash receptacle.
- 1 natural material entrance gate
- Post and rail wooden fence deck structure
- 1 main play feature (may include but is not limited to boulders, logs, mesh features, tunnels, hill slides, sand pits, themed playscapes)

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Nature Play Areas Concept Plan

#### 6.4.4 Special Event Tent Area

A new special event area will be set up near the northwest entrance. There will be a secondary location with electrical hookup near the south entrance as well. This bookable day use area will offer a gathering space to socialize, dine and entertain, or host special events. With a series of event tents and a power station, this area will have the capacity to host numerous types of events, even during the inclement weather.

**Amenity proposed to the Tent Special Event Area are:**

- Power station for special event hook ups
- 1 Water fountain
- Space for pop up program

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Tent Special Event Area concept plan

**6.4.5 Group Cooking/Picnic Areas**

Twelve new group cooking and picnic areas will be implemented in designated spaces. There will be four sites equipped for groups of four, four sites equipped for groups of eight, and four sites equipped for groups of 16. Of the three groups of four, half will be outfitted with asphalt and adjacent to the asphalt path for accessibility and the other half will be outfitted with crushed limestone and adjacent to the limestone path. Some of these sites will be available on a first-come first-served basis while some can be reserved for an additional fee. Facilities on these sites will include accessible fire pits, picnic benches and stand-up grills. Firewood can be brought in by the user or purchased at the main gate for an additional fee.

**Amenities proposed to the Group Cooking/Picnic Areas are:**

- 28 accessible picnic benches
- 12 accessible fire pits
- 8 accessible stand-up grills
- Paved connections to the main and secondary pathways (asphalt or crushed limestone)

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Tent Special Event Area concept plan

**6.4.6 Group Day Use Areas**

Group day use areas are being proposed on site to be used as facility rentals and to facilitate special events when needed. They can also be integrated into on site program on an as needed basis.

**Amenities proposed to the Group Day Use Areas are:**

- Bench Seating
- Shelters

**6.4.7 Outdoor Classroom**

The outdoor classroom is a new element proposed in the concept design that designates space for educational events or programs. This will entail the installation of several rows of amphitheater-style seating in an open area with a shelter nearby as an alternative gathering location during inclement weather.

**Amenities proposed to the Outdoor Classroom are:**

- 1 amphitheatre-style wood seating area
- 1 canopy structure
- 1 wheelchair-accessible water platform

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Outdoor Classroom concept plan

#### 6.4.8 ADA Water Access Platform

A wheelchair-accessible water platform will be close to the outdoor classroom. This floating dock will extend into the water using a gentle grade and provide access to the water for people with limited mobility. Along with this amenity, the entire site has been designed to be accessible for all.

#### Amenities proposed to the Water Access Platform are:

- 1 wheelchair-accessible water platform

Please refer to “**Appendix A**” to see the Water Access Platform concept plan and full ADA Accessibility diagram.

#### 6.4.9 Trail Connections

The plan proposes a main promenade trail that surrounds the Sikome water body. The promenade will provide access to various picnic areas and connections to trails offering a variety of walking experiences. The existing pathway system around the park will be maintained with a new secondary pathway system to allow people to get to new facilities. Some of these trails will be fully accessible and connect directly to the main parking areas. The main trail will be an asphalt configuration that provides an accessible approach to site infrastructure and amenity. The secondary pathway system will be a limestone crush assembly and will serve as a tributary to site amenity including the lake itself, outdoor cooking and picnic areas, group day use areas and small nature play amenity.

#### 6.4.10 Building Upgrades

Both the north and south buildings will get upgrades to allow for additional internal and external uses. A visitor information and retail space is recommended for one of the north buildings, and a washroom and café recommended for the other. This will allow these buildings to service visitors to Fish Creek Provincial Park who may not wish to use the Sikome facility itself. Internal uses will include a space for rentals, internal café entrance and deck space. Both entrances will be revised to be fully accessible and will have information kiosks for visitors to review. An external washroom will be added to the south building. New building infrastructure will address and provide additional storage needs, maintenance needs, and facilitation and aquatic safety staff spaces.

### 6.5 Future Considerations for Sikome

The plan provides a framework for considerable future development including:

1. Adult playscapes / CrossFit
2. Enhanced transit options
3. Splash pad / water play area
4. Additional parking
5. Additional program options

### 6.6 Maintenance and Operational Considerations

Alberta Parks currently manages and facilitates all maintenance operations including:

1. Landscape maintenance and irrigation
2. Water quality control
3. Building maintenance and cleaning
4. Waste disposal



5. Site staffing
  - Lifeguards
  - Gate attendance
  - Concessions staff
6. Beach maintenance

All of these maintenance operations will require amendment based on plan implementation. Some additional operational considerations include:

1. Shade structure maintenance and cleaning
2. Recycling, compost and waste disposal
3. Site staffing
  - Rental shop staff
  - Visitor information staff
  - Special event facilitators
  - Program coordinators
4. Day use site and amenity cleaning
5. Fire pit maintenance

## 7.0 Engagement and Research

### 7.1 Public Engagement

There are several opportunities for engagement as part of this Plan.

#### Phase 1

Phase 1 of the engagement process occurred in August 2017 and included an open house, online survey, and idea boards to gather feedback. Public ideas and feedback were used to inform the vision, concept design, and programming options for Sikome. Below are the highlights of feedback received from participants in Phase 1.

#### Phase 2

Several opportunities for engagement in Phase 2 of the project will be available in April/May 2018, within the 30-day public participation period. The engagement process will include an open house, online survey and idea boards to gather feedback. The purpose of this phase of engagement is to present and gather feedback on the draft vision, concept design and programming options.

#### Phase 3

The final plan and concept design will be posted online in 2018 after a final decision on the project is made.



**7.1.1 Phase 1 Engagement – What We Heard Report Highlights**

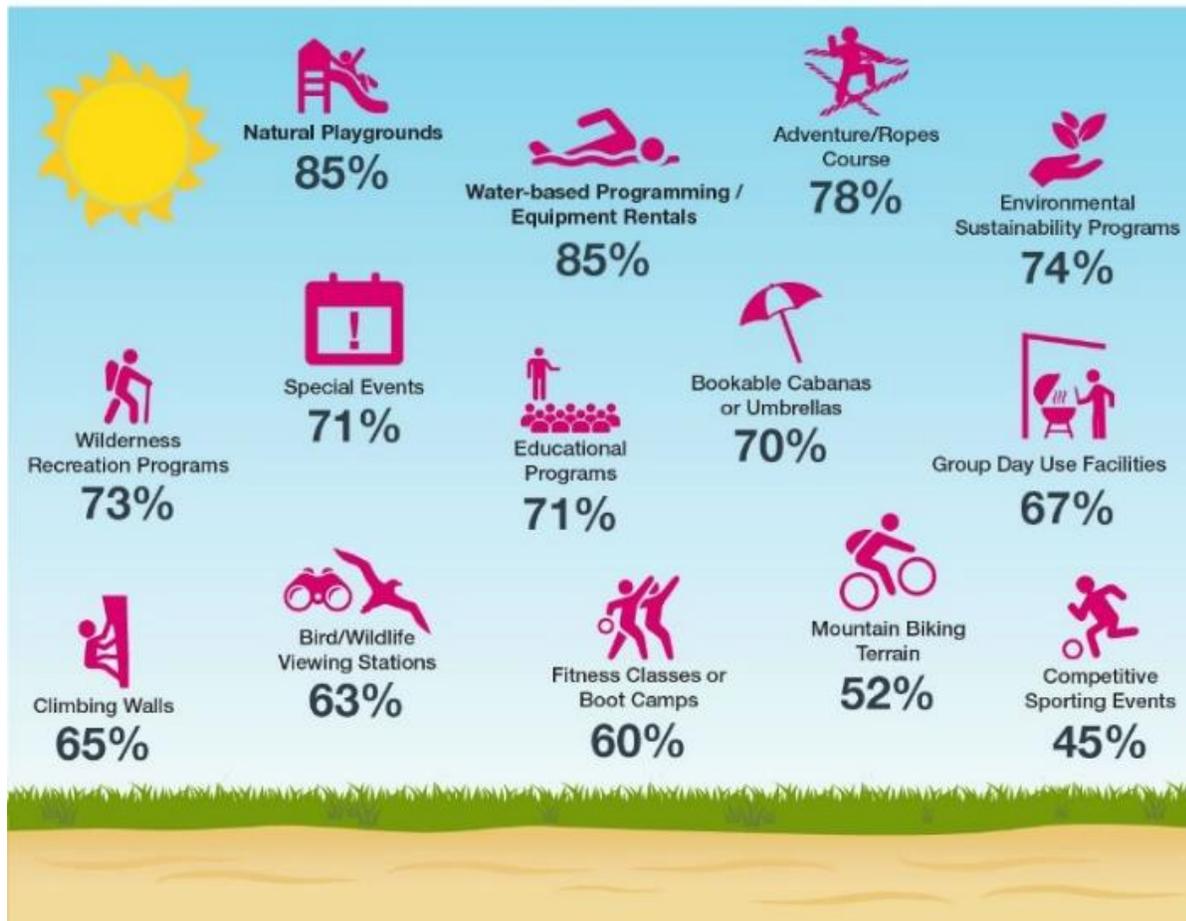
Aspects that were most important to participants at Sikome were site cleanliness, beach quality, quality of swimming, well maintained washrooms and change areas, and safety. Increasing the variety and availability of food options was also mentioned frequently.

Figure 7.1: Percentage of survey participants that rated the following aspects of Sikome as very important or important



The highest rated summer recreational facilities/services included were natural playgrounds, water-based programming, adventure courses, environmental sustainability programs, and wilderness recreation programs.

Figure 7.2: Percentage of survey participants who indicated that they were very interested or somewhat interested in the following aspects of Sikome





The highest rated winter recreational facilities/services included ice skating, snow tubing, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, warming huts, and special events.

Figure 7.3: Percentage of survey participants that rated the following aspects of Sikome as very interested or somewhat interested



As part of Phase 1 engagement, Alberta Parks asked participants if they were interested in winter recreational facilities/services. Participants indicated a high level of interest in winter recreational facilities and services, but an economic analysis demonstrated that winter operations are not feasible at this time.

### Phase 1 – Key Themes

Based on the primary objectives for the project, research conducted, and feedback received by participants and Alberta Parks staff in Phase 1, the key themes below were identified and informed the concept design, programming options and Plan for Sikome.

1. Enhanced amenities and programming options will help establish Sikome as a community hub and a place for social connection, community enjoyment, outdoor active living, and park discovery.
2. Enhanced amenities and programming options will provide an opportunity for users to experience nature, accessible outdoor recreation and learning opportunities.
3. Visitor information and programming opportunities at Sikome will help encourage users to experience and learn more about the Alberta Parks system.
4. Enhanced food and retail options will attract more users to Sikome and improve user experience.
5. Special event/vendor space and facility rental opportunities will encourage users to visit Sikome for community and family gatherings.

6. Access to amenities and programming options beyond summer will attract visitors to use Sikome for a longer portion of the year.

## 7.2 Research Summary

The Sikome Aquatic Facility can be better positioned as a stepping stone to the broader outdoor recreation market other than just swimming, picnicking or beach recreation. In brief, Sikome has the opportunity to provide a multi-activity outdoor recreation area. There are a number of key facility and market characteristics that have implications for the development and marketing of the proposed Sikome Aquatic Facility vision.

Implications to Sikome would include developing more programming and partnering with some of the existing public and private facilities and companies. Theming may present opportunities for some of the redevelopment and repositioning of the facilities at Sikome. Interpretive programs for the ecological and historical surroundings already attract visitors to the overall park but could be strengthened, as would fitness programs. The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society offer some outdoor programming, but extending those offerings would also increase visitor numbers, utilization and revenue.

Sikome may act as a 'gateway' park to larger and further afield parks attracting new visitors such as first time recreationists and people that wish to try new activities without traveling too far from home. Sikome also helps achieve broader outcomes at the provincial and federal levels. The facility provides a place for Albertans and visitors to be active and more connected to nature. It also provides experiences that Albertans value most, such as walking, hiking, swimming, and nature interpretation.

### 7.2.1 Resource Document Summary

Research was conducted to better understand the competitive and comparable facilities in the region. Key findings of this research are outlined below:

- Sikome could improve its role as a stepping stone to broader outdoor recreation opportunities other than just swimming, picnicking or beach recreation.
- Sikome has the opportunity to provide a multi-activity outdoor recreation area for both local residents and visitors. Due to Sikome's proximity to the Calgary urban region, first time and less experienced visitors can get a feel for the outdoor life in their own backyard before venturing further afield to a larger provincial or national park.
- Developing more programming, hiring a programmer, and/or partnering with some of the existing public and private facilities and companies could provide opportunities for more programs and revenue and attract more users to Sikome.
- Recreational programs and interpretive programs about the ecological and historical surroundings could be strengthened to attract even more visitors to the park.
- Developing a theme for Sikome may present opportunities for some of the redevelopment of the facilities at Sikome. For example, the Bow Valley Ranch at Fish Creek Provincial Park would provide a great base for a cultural/historical theme that could extend into Sikome.
- Partnerships with other program providers such as The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, who already offer programming, could provide opportunities for more programs and revenue and attract more users to Sikome.
- Based on its location within The City of Calgary, Sikome has an excellent opportunity to be the stepping stone or 'gateway' to other Alberta Parks by attracting new visitors such as first time users that wish to learn more about and experience what Alberta Parks has to offer and try new activities without traveling too far from home.



A summary of key outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, outdoor adventure and high-level health/wellness tourism trends occurring in North America identified other key trends pertinent to the development of Sikome:

- Increasing demand for nature related outdoor recreation and ecotourism;
- New tourism equates to higher levels of environmental and cultural awareness;
- Albertans value leisure more than work but are challenged to integrate it into their daily lives;
- Parks and outdoor spaces are the most preferred location for activities over an indoor recreation facility ;
- Participation in health and wellness activities continues to grow approximately 20% per year;
- Health and wellness continues to broaden from historical upscale to a diversity of socio-economic markets;
- Destinations that are nature based and are aligned with high adrenaline activities are increasingly in demand;
- Relaxing mind-body effect is increasingly important and connected to time spent in nature;
- Escaping urban pressures and stress reduction is becoming more of a necessity in urban environments;
- Green/sustainable practices are increasing in popularity;
- Increasing interest in environmental stewardship;
- Convenience, ease of use/intro to activities, programs is increasing in demand;
- Shorter and closer to home trips are in demand; and
- Authenticity is sought after.

Overall, the success of Sikome will be dependent on how Alberta Parks builds and markets the various amenities and programs. By developing a theme and aligning to the trends, it will enhance the customer experience and attract more visitors. Offering unique programming and/or events, with sustainable activities will increase Sikome’s visitation and utilization making it an even more unique facility in the Alberta Parks network.

Table 7.1: Key Characteristics

Key Characteristic	Implication
Water-Based Activities	Potential to offer more water based activities than just swimming and lessons. There is future potential to offer water based activities for varying age groups as program progresses.
Programming	Offer space for programs that follow a theme such as guided hikes, education programs or wellness, fitness programs such as yoga. Programs not currently offered by Alberta Parks may be provided by other program providers.
Winter-Based Activities	The opportunity to introduce winter-based activities were explored as part of the redevelopment plan. Based on our feasibility review, it was determined that keeping Sikome open in winter and offering winter-based activities was not viable.
Theme	Offer a theme(s) to the park to coincide with its history or environment to provide a cohesive feel to the park. Incorporate something unique to the area or the park to create a theme from.

### 7.2.2 Alberta Recreation Survey

The Alberta Recreation Survey is commissioned every four to five years by Alberta Culture and Tourism and provides insight into the activity preferences of Albertans. The recent (2017) survey found that Albertans continue to enjoy an array of physical activity, recreation and leisure pursuits. In 2017, the results of the

survey were organized into the five main goal areas of the National Recreation Framework. Most pertinent to the future of Sikome, the following trends were identified:

1. Active Living: foster active living through physical recreation.
2. Nearly all Alberta households (96%) and adults (95%) participated in an active living activity in the past year. Active living accounts for nearly a quarter of total leisure or recreation activities.
3. The most popular active living activities among adults include walking (80%), gardening (55%), bicycling (46%), fitness/aerobics (44%), and jogging/running (32%).
4. Walking is one of the top three favourite activities for nearly a quarter of Albertans (23%). Those who walk favour parks or outdoor spaces and are motivated to walk primarily for exercise, but also to enjoy nature, to relax, and for pleasure/fun.
5. Recreation can help connect people to nature.
6. Participation in activities that connect people to nature is high with 84% of households and 82% of individuals having done so in the past year.
7. Land-based activities (e.g., day hiking, overnight camping, picnicking, ATV/off-road vehicles) are most common (78%), followed by water activities (e.g., swimming in lakes, rivers, ponds; fishing; motor boating; canoeing; kayaking) (47%).
8. Fewer people participate in snow activities (e.g., snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling) (17%). Fewer people over 55 years of age participate in land, water, and snow-based activities compared to their younger counterparts.
9. Camping (17%) and hiking (14%) are the second and third most favourite activities among Albertans, behind walking (23%). Albertans prefer to go camping and hiking in parks or outdoor spaces, and are motivated by relaxation, fun, spending time with family, and enjoying nature, and those who favour hiking are also motivated by exercise.
10. Over half of Albertans believe one of the very important benefits of recreation is that parks and open spaces provide opportunities for the preservation of Alberta's landscapes, plants, and animals.

Further to these overarching statements, the survey indicated that the favorite activities of Albertans are walking, camping and hiking. It also explains that the majority of recreation activity in the province occurs in parks or outdoor spaces. Future activities Albertans would like to participate in or are interested in relevant to Sikome include:

1. Foster active living through physical recreation (e.g., swimming, programs, nature play)
2. Connect people to nature through programs, amenities and spaces
3. Walking (via trails throughout Sikome)
4. Swimming
5. Natural play areas
6. Water-based programming
7. Several programming options (some of which will be offered by other program providers)
8. Special events (e.g., bike races, demo days)
9. Picnicking (e.g., in picnic and shaded areas and in group day use sites and shelters)
10. Outdoor classroom
11. Enhanced accessibility



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# APPENDIX 'A'

## SIKOME AQUATIC FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN CONCEPT DESIGN PLANS

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design



## LEGEND

### 1 NORTHWEST ENTRANCE PLAZA & APPROACH

- PERMIT PICK-UP
- CAMPSITE BOOKING
- DINNING
- RENTALS
- INFORMATION KIOSK
- PARKING FACILITIES
- WASHROOM FACILITIES

### 2 FOOD TRUCK STAGING

### 3 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

- AMPHITHEATRE SEATING
- EDUCATIONAL BASED PROGRAM
- ECO-TOURISM PROGRAM

### 4 PROMENADE

- ACCESSIBLE TRAILS
- RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE

### 5 GROUP COOKING/PICNIC AREA

- 12 DAY USE PICNIC AREAS
- FIREPITS
- GRILLS
- FAMILY SEATING
- ACCESSIBLE FEATURES
- DAY USE RENTAL

### 6 ADA WATER ACCESS PLATFORM

- LEARN TO SWIM PROGRAMS
- WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

### 7 SMALL NATURE PLAY AREA

### 8 GROUP DAY USE AREA

- THIRD PARTY SPACE RENTAL
- SPECIAL EVENTS - REUNIONS, BIRTHDAYS ETC.

### 9 LARGE NATURE PLAY AREA

### 10 SOUTH ENTRANCE PLAZA

### 11 SPECIAL EVENT TENT AREA

- STAGING FOR POP UP PROGRAM AND SPECIAL EVENTS
- POWER HOOKUPS FOR VENDORS
- DEMO DAYS
- FESTIVAL EVENT SPACE

### 12 BUS DROP-OFF

1:800 0 10 20 40m



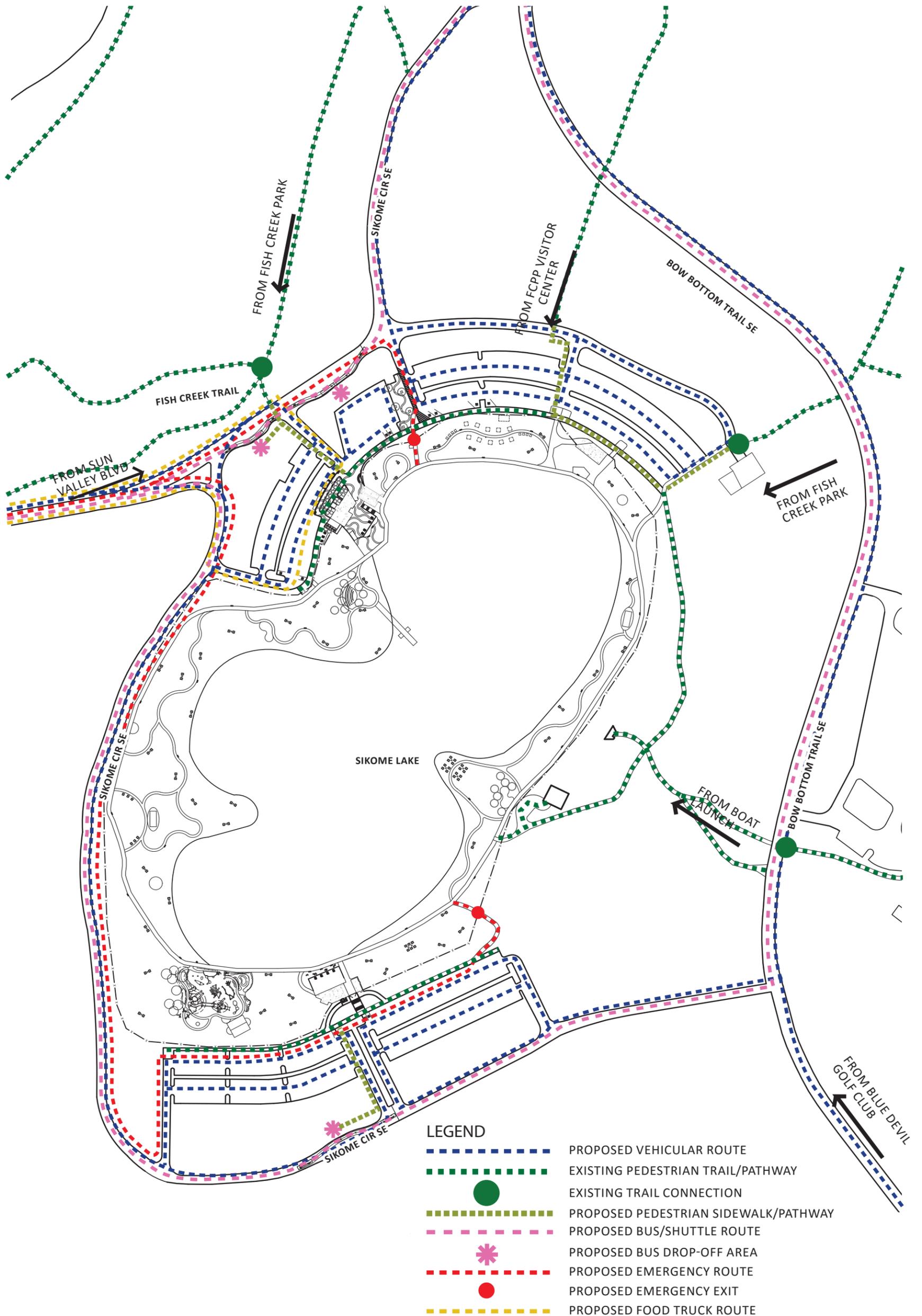
# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## CONCEPT FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



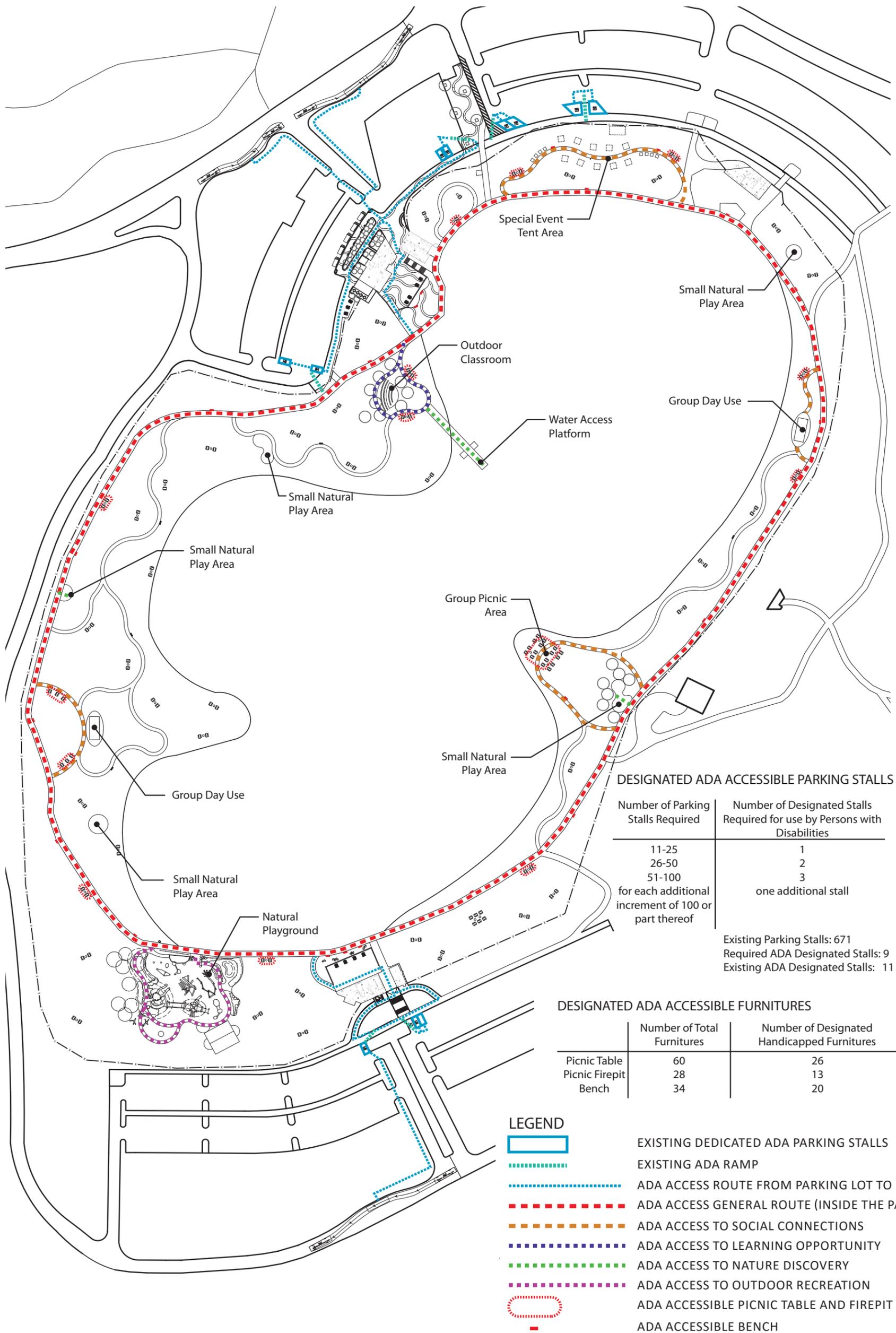
# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



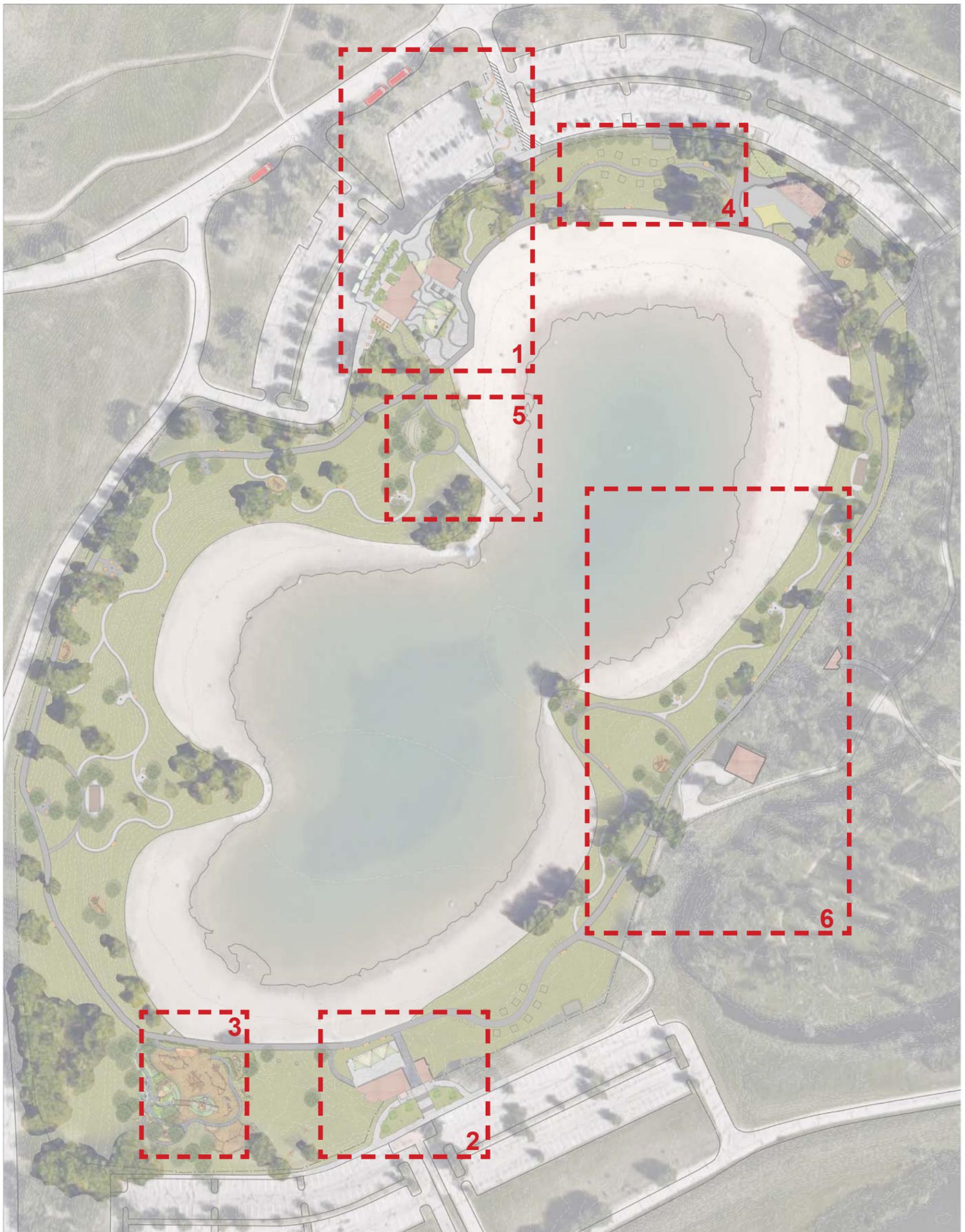
# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## ADA ACCESSIBILITY DIAGRAM



# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## ENLARGEMENT PLAN KEY MAP



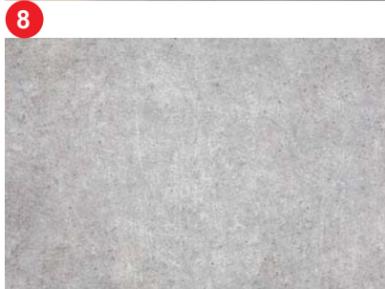
### LEGEND

- 1 NORTHWEST ENTRY PLAZA AND APPROACH
- 2 SOUTH ENTRY PLAZA
- 3 KID NATURAL PLAYGROUND
- 4 TENT SPECIAL EVENT AREA
- 5 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND WATER ACCESS PLATFORM
- 6 GROUP COOKING/PICNIC AREAS

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## 1. NORTHWEST PLAZA AND APPROACH

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.



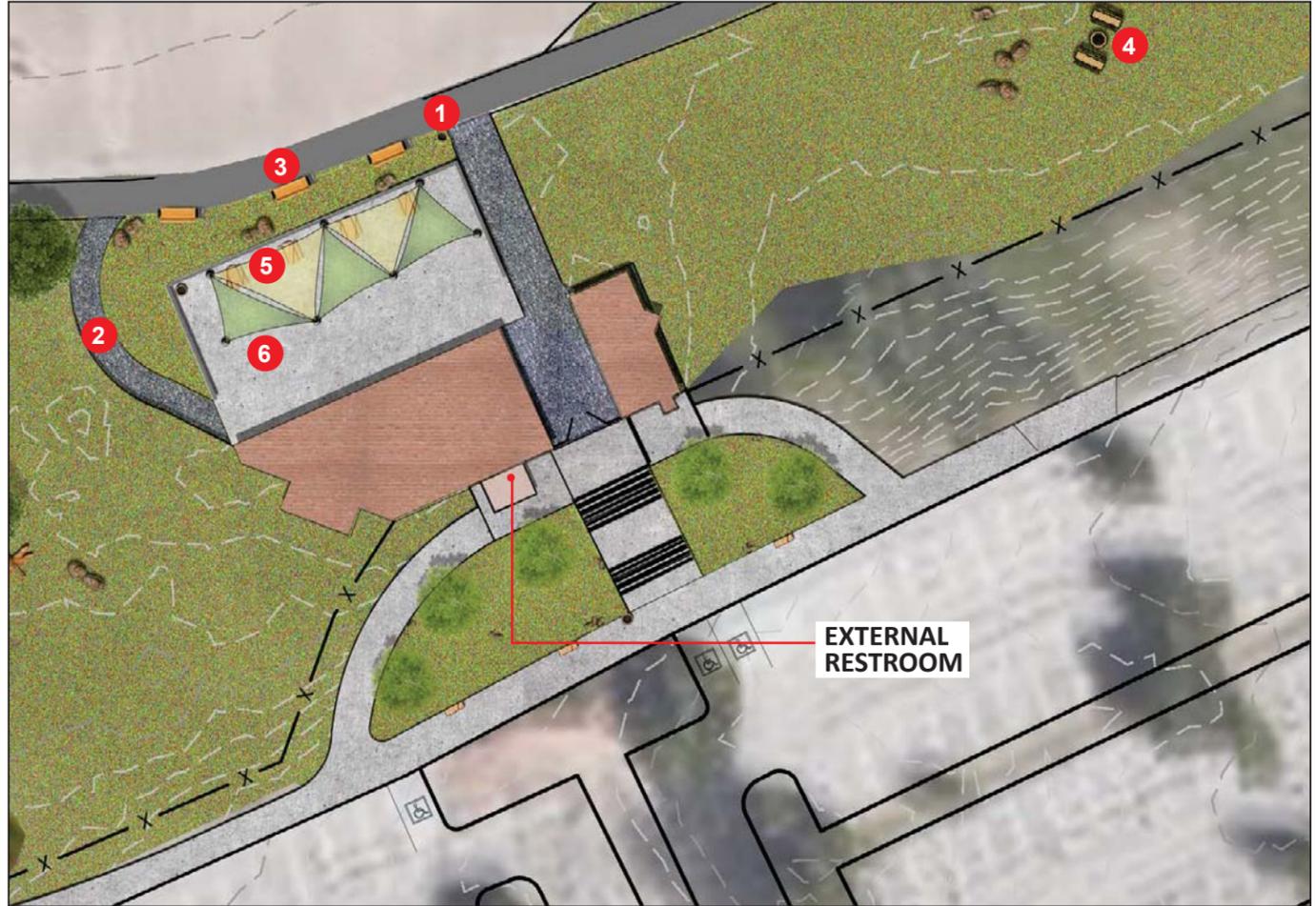
### LEGEND

- 1 WAVY WOODEN BENCH
- 2 BIKE RACK
- 3 LIGHT BOLLARD
- 4 TRASH RECEPTACLE
- 5 EXPOSED AGGREGATE PAVING
- 6 CANOPY
- 7 BENCH
- 8 KIOSK
- 9 CONCRETE
- 10 CAFE/CONCESSION
- 11 FOOD TRUCK
- 12 BUS DROP-OFF

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## 2. SOUTH ENTRANCE PLAZA

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.



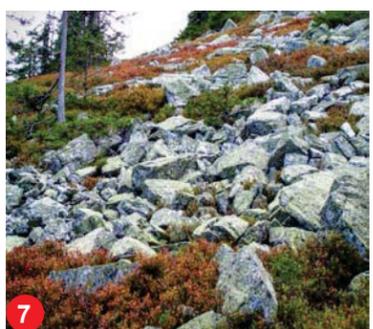
### LEGEND

- 1 TRASH RECEPTACLE
- 2 GRAVEL PATHWAY
- 3 BENCH
- 4 PICNIC TABLE AND FIREPIT
- 5 CANOPY
- 6 CONCRETE

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## 3. LARGE NATURE PLAY AREA

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.

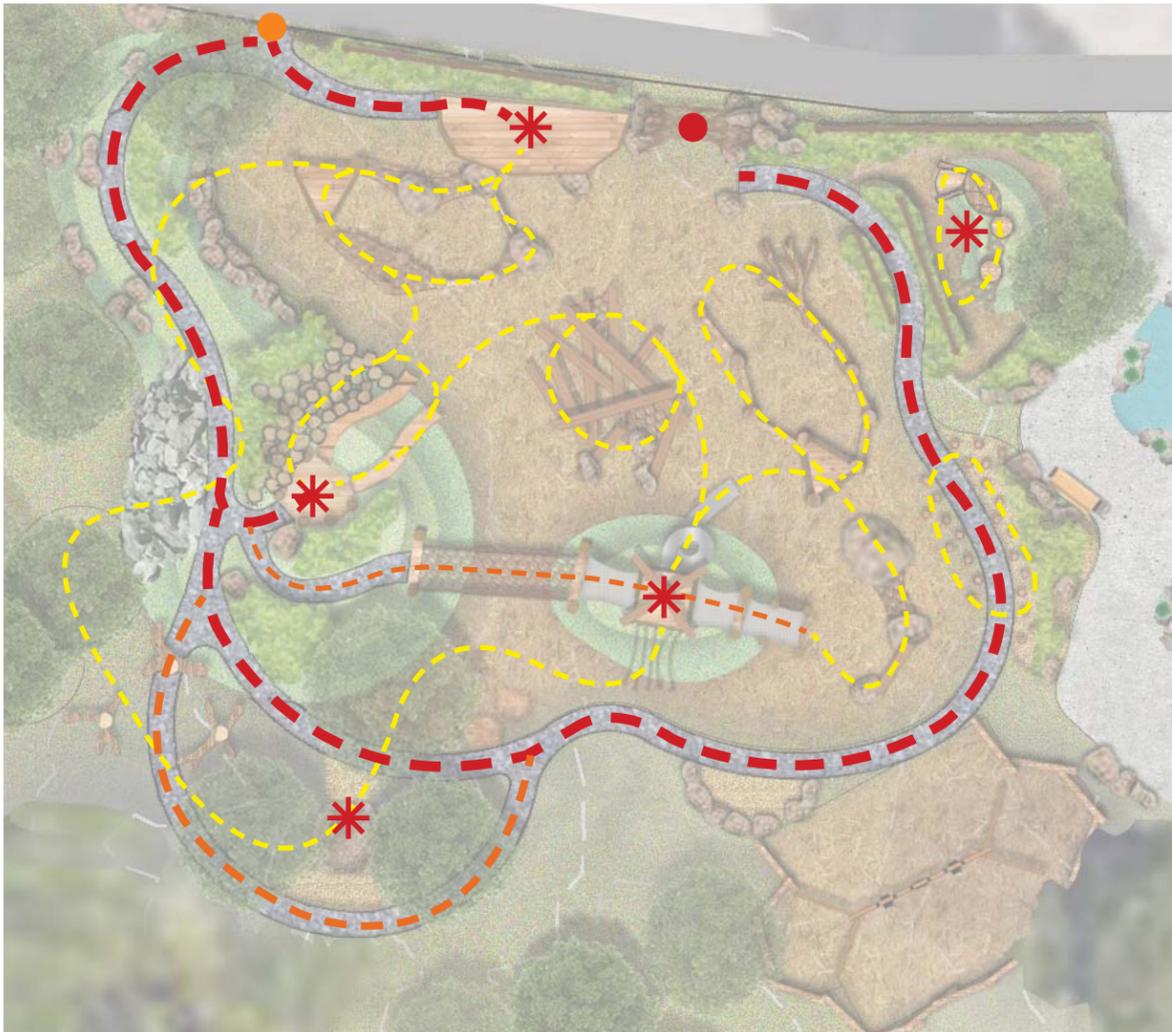


### LEGEND

- |  |                                       |                         |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 GATEWAY                                  | 11 BIRD NEST FOR KIDS PLAY            | 19 NATURAL WOODEN SWING |
| 2 LOW WOODEN FENCE                         | 12 MESH TUNNEL/BRIDGE                 | 20 TODDLER LOW SLIDE    |
| 3 WOODEN DECK - PARENTS SITTING AREA       | 13 SWIRLING SLIDE                     | 21 FIBER MULCH          |
| 4 BOULDER, DECK, LOG AND MESH PLAY FEATURE | 14 BOULDER, LOG AND MESH PLAY FEATURE | 22 GRAVEL PATHWAY       |
| 5 NATURAL BOULDER CLIMBING WALL            | 15 LOG JAM                            |                         |
| 6 LOG STEPS                                | 16 LOG JAM WITH FALLER TREE           |                         |
| 7 NATURAL STONE LANDSCAPE FEATURE          | 17 WOODEN STAKES PLAY FEATURE         |                         |
| 8 HILL SLIDE                               | 18 SAND PIT                           |                         |
| 9 DEADWOOD ARCH                            |                                       |                         |
| 10 WOODEN DECKS WITH LOGS                  |                                       |                         |

## LARGE NATURE PLAY AREA DIAGRAMS

### FUNCTIONAL LOOP DIAGRAM



- PRIMARY GATEWAY
- SECONDARY GATEWAY
- ✱ DESTINATION ALONG PATHWAY
- - - PRIMARY PATHWAY
- - - SECONDARY PATHWAY
- - - INTERNAL LOOP/CIRCUIT

### AGE ZONE DIAGRAM



- TODDLER ZONE
- INTERGENERATION ZONE (TRANSITION ZONE)
- JUNIOR PLAY ZONE (ADVANCE ZONE)

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## 4. SPECIAL EVENT TENT AREA

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.



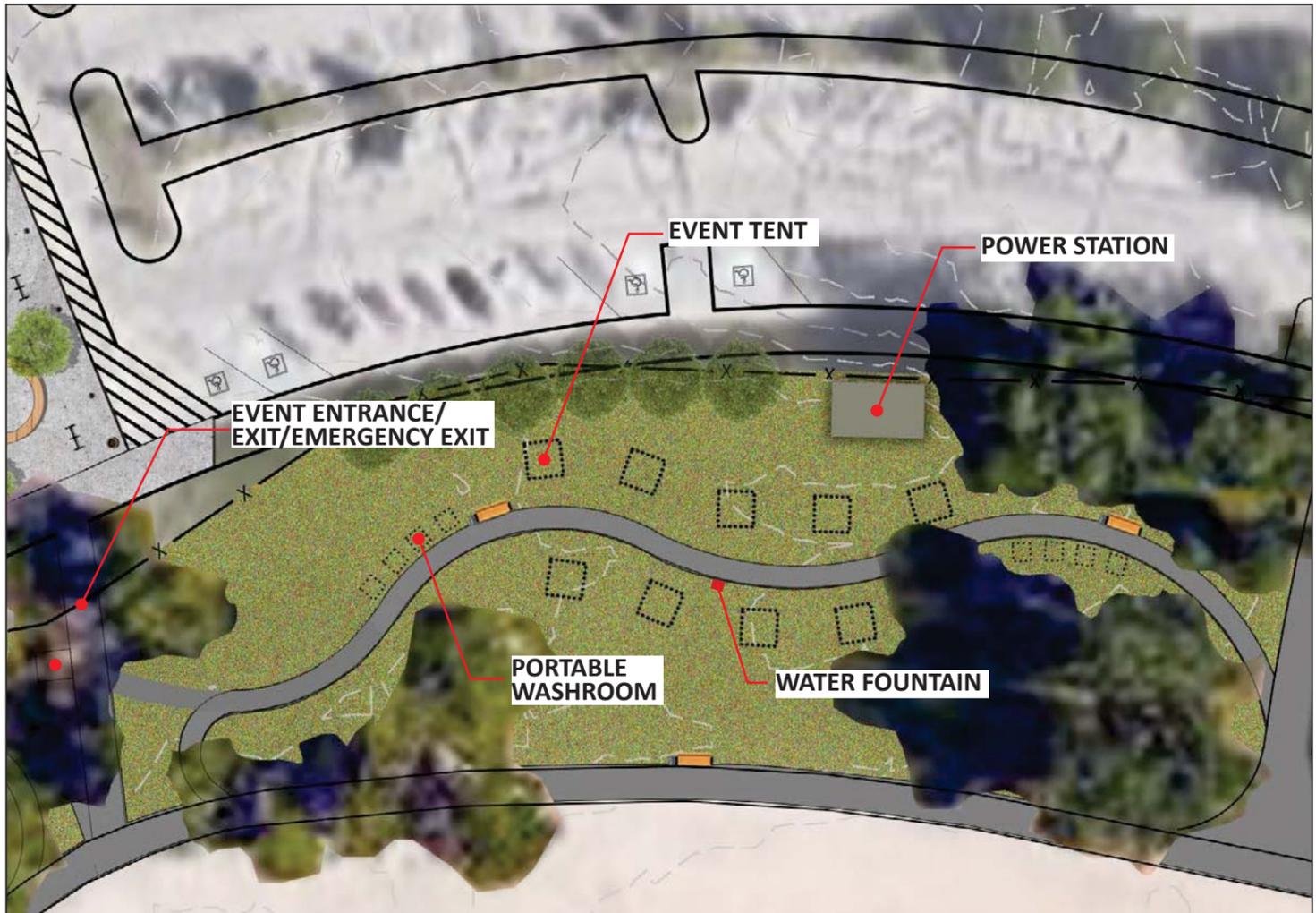
FOOD FESTIVAL



DEMO DAY EVENT

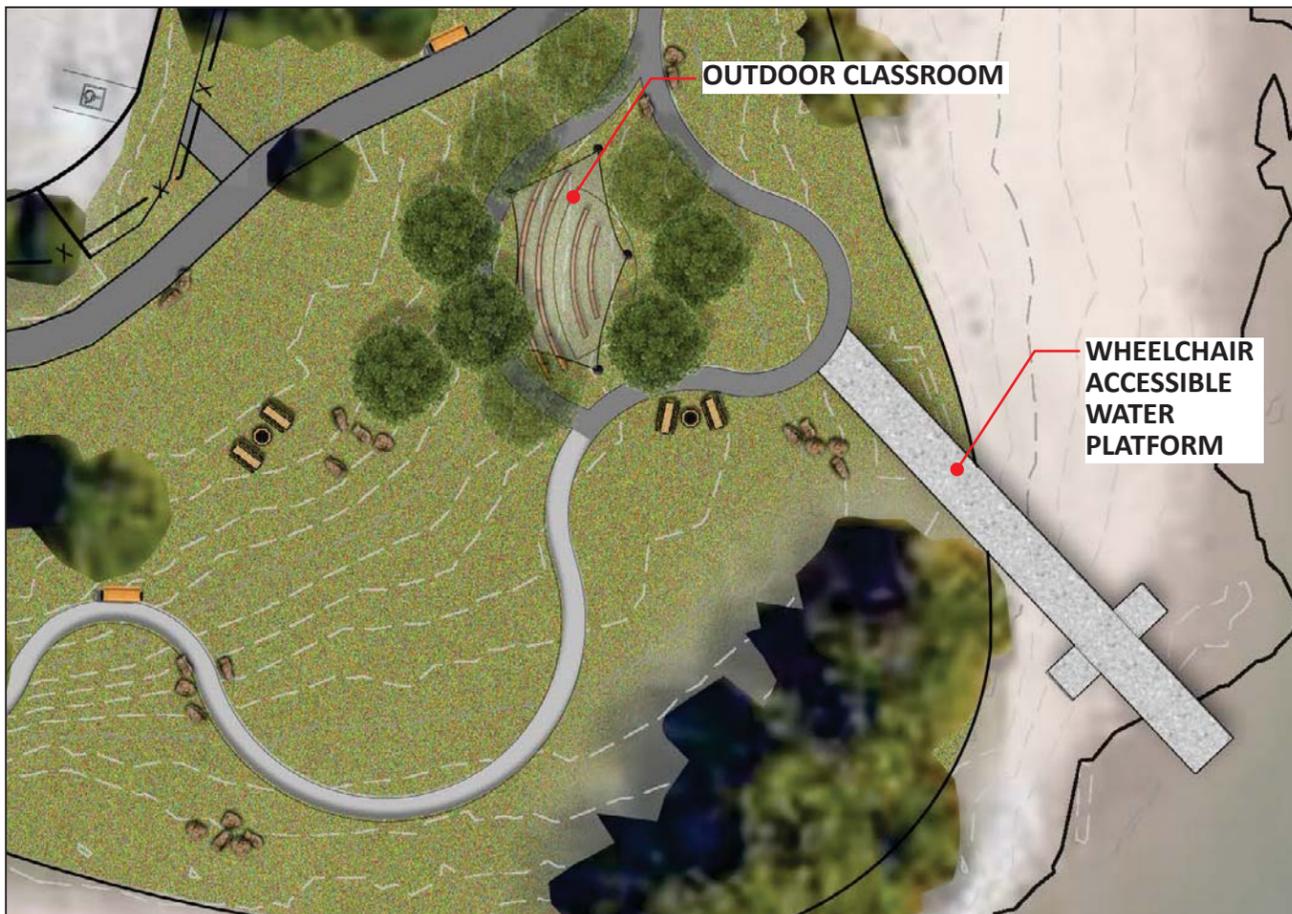


DEMO DAY EVENT



## 5. OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND WATER ACCESS PLATFORM

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM



WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE WATER PLATFORM



WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE WATER PLATFORM

# Sikome Aquatic Facility Redevelopment Plan Draft Concept Design

## 6. GROUP COOKING/PICNIC AREAS

\* PICTURES ARE EXAMPLES AND FOR REFERENCE ONLY.



3A TYPE PICNIC AREA

2A TYPE PICNIC AREA

3B TYPE PICNIC AREA

1A TYPE PICNIC AREA

2B TYPE PICNIC AREA

SEE ENLARGEMENT

1B TYPE PICNIC AREA

1A = 4 PERSON  
STANDARD PICNIC  
AREA

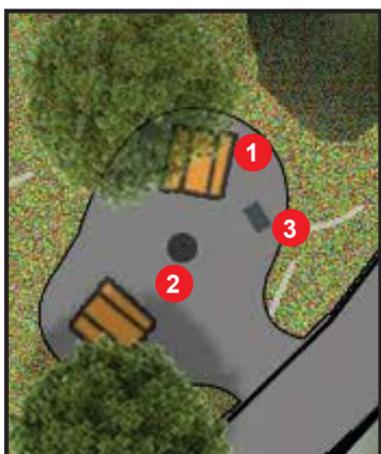
1B = 4 PERSON ADA  
ACCESSIBLE PICNIC  
AREA

2A = 8 PERSON  
STANDARD PICNIC  
AREA

2B = 8 PERSON ADA  
ACCESSIBLE PICNIC  
AREA

3A = 16 PERSON  
STANDARD PICNIC  
AREA

3B = 16 PERSON ADA  
ACCESSIBLE PICNIC  
AREA



### ENLARGEMENT



1 PICNIC TABLE



2 PICNIC FIREPIT



3 PICNIC GRILL