
Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

October 13, 2016
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Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

Capital Region Board, October 13, 2016
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

I am very pleased to bring forward the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan - Re-imagine. Plan. Build, on behalf of the Capital Region Board.

It is a significant made in the Region guide for thoughtful and strategic long term planning to enable the Edmonton Metropolitan Region “to maintain its place as a strong and confident heart of a more competitive and resilient Alberta”.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region is a collection of diverse communities, cooperating to bolster each other’s strengths, enhance connections and represent our strength to the world. Together our communities form a complete and sustainable growing Region, with something to suit every ambition.

We already represent almost 30% of the Province’s gross domestic product (GDP) and over the next 30 years we will move from a population of 1.2 to 2.2 million people and from 725,000 to 1.2 million jobs. This Plan, which will continue to be updated in response to new information from data monitoring, will keep us on track towards our long term vision.

Leadership in regional growth planning is the fundamental work of the Board, where 24 independent and diverse municipalities gather to think as a Region, enabling, shaping and promoting the best future for all residents.

Certainly the Edmonton Metropolitan Region is complex, making the Capital Region Board itself a formidable collaboration. Consensus does not come easily. Importantly, together, we have updated and advanced our roadmap for the future, for enduring prosperity and an enviable quality of life, in joint recognition of this remarkable Region.

Mayor Nolan Crouse
Board Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE CHAIR

Over the last few decades, the 24 municipalities that form the Capital Region Board have experienced a dramatic transformation from individual communities – villages, towns, cities and counties – to an interconnected Region of immense, collective potential and inherent worth.

This Plan is a comprehensive update that builds upon the foundation of the original 2010 Capital Region Growth Plan. I am proud of our thorough review process, guided by clear principles. Our work was grounded in extensive and broad consultations with all interested stakeholders and benefited from their diverse wisdom over the past two years.

Among the innovations of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan is its recognition of the need for additional policy areas for agriculture and economic development, while addressing the issue of climate change. Most importantly, there is a specific Implementation Plan that includes performance measures to monitor, compare and inform the next Growth Plan update.

In short, the Plan sets the path for balanced, steady planning toward our regional vision, allowing us to better navigate and succeed together through the inevitable and unpredictable changes ahead.

I sincerely thank the members of the Task Force. Coming together for this Plan was no small feat. In addition to significant responsibilities in their own municipalities, members took countless hours to become familiar with and make decisions on the technical details and regional impacts of long term planning. Working with technical experts and referring to other international, economically successful city regions, they have crafted a flexible, inclusive and visionary template for guiding this Region forward. It is truly a unique made in this Region success!

Finally, I must recognize the sincere efforts and excellent work of Project Manager Sharon Shuya; the leadership of CEO Malcolm Bruce; the tremendous input of the Regional Technical Advisory Committee; and the project’s subject matter expert consultant team - ISL Engineering and Urban Strategies. Their support helped move us forward from a good plan to a great plan.

Mayor Roxanne Carr
Task Force Chair
50 YEAR VISION

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region is the dominant hub for northern Alberta and is recognized globally for its economic diversity, entrepreneurialism, leadership in energy development, environmental stewardship and excellent quality of life.

The Region is anchored by a thriving core that is interconnected with diverse urban and rural communities.

The Region is committed to growing collaboratively through the efficient use of infrastructure, building compact communities, and fostering economic opportunities and healthy lifestyles.
1 Collaborate and coordinate as a Region to manage growth responsibly.
We will work together to create a Region that is well managed and financially sustainable with a shared commitment to growing responsibly and achieving long term prosperity.

2 Promote global economic competitiveness and regional prosperity.
We will foster a diverse and innovative economy that builds upon our existing infrastructure and employment areas to achieve sustained economic growth and prosperity.

3 Recognize and celebrate the diversity of communities and promote an excellent quality of life across the Region.
In planning for growth, we will recognize and respond to the different contexts and scales of communities and provide a variety of housing choice with easy access to transportation, employment, parks and open spaces, and community and cultural amenities.

4 Achieve compact growth that optimizes infrastructure investment.
We will make the most efficient use of our infrastructure investments by prioritizing growth where infrastructure exists and optimizing use of new and planned infrastructure.

5 Ensure effective regional mobility.
Recognizing the link between efficient movement of people and goods and regional prosperity, we will work towards a multi-modal and integrated regional transportation system.

6 Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.
In the context of metropolitan growth, we will ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector.

7 Protect natural living systems and environmental assets.
We will practice wise environmental stewardship and promote the health of the regional ecosystem, watersheds and environmentally sensitive areas.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE CAPITAL REGION BOARD, 2016
“This kind of broad based regional planning gives every municipality a part to play in creating the greater whole. Our collaborative leadership is transformational.

I am proud of this Growth Plan. It is for everyone, and it will enhance the Region's attractiveness, competitiveness and effectiveness and continuing good fortune.”

Mayor Lisa Holmes, Town of Morinville

GROWTH PLAN UPDATE

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50 Year Vision

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region is the dominant hub for northern Alberta and is recognized globally for its economic diversity, entrepreneurialism, leadership in energy development, environmental stewardship and excellent quality of life.

The Region is anchored by a thriving core that is interconnected with diverse urban and rural communities.

The Region is committed to growing collaboratively through the efficient use of infrastructure, building compact communities, and fostering economic opportunities and healthy lifestyles.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (the “Plan”) adopts this spirit and sets an innovative path to plan growth across the Region in a responsible manner that sustains and advances regional prosperity and well being. This Plan provides a substantive update to the 2010 Capital Region Board Growth Plan and builds on the Plan’s successes, while recognizing the Region’s diverse rural and urban context. This Plan focuses on the Region’s strengths and competitive advantages. It adopts a forward looking approach to addressing challenges today to strongly position the Region over the next three decades, and to advancing the Region’s global economic competitiveness based on leveraging its key economic assets and competitive advantages. Addressing the challenges of the future means planning for and managing growth with different tools and strategies to maintain the Region’s high quality of life and economic prosperity.

By 2044, it is anticipated that the Region will be home to 2.2 million people and 1.2 million jobs. The doubling of the population is a significant transformation that will result in a complex metropolitan region requiring deliberate and determined collaboration and leadership.

This Growth Plan provides a compelling vision, guiding principles and six interrelated regional policy areas to guide growth and development over the next 30 years. It recognizes the symbiotic and integrated nature of growth.

Regional growth has many dimensions – including population, jobs, businesses, economic productivity, economic diversity and prosperity, culture and natural living systems – and has a distinct meaning when applied in the rural and urban context. Planning for and managing growth on a regional scale aims to increase the prosperity, vitality, livability and sustainability of the Region’s people, communities and economy.

This Plan places an emphasis on responsible growth through minimizing the expansion of the urban footprint, integrating land use and infrastructure decisions, building resilient, adaptable and complete communities, ensuring the Region’s transportation systems are interconnected and enable economic prosperity, protecting the environment and encouraging the growth of the agriculture sector.

Just three words, but they convey the spirit that underlies the Edmonton Metropolitan Region (the “Region”). With an economy based on the boom and bust cycles of the energy industry, the Region must continually Re-imagine. Plan. Build.


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (the “Plan”) adopts this spirit and sets an innovative path to plan growth across the Region in a responsible manner that sustains and advances regional prosperity and well being. This Plan provides a substantive update to the 2010 Capital Region Board Growth Plan and builds on the Plan’s successes, while recognizing the Region’s diverse rural and urban context. This Plan focuses on the Region’s strengths and competitive advantages. It adopts a forward looking approach to addressing challenges today to strongly position the Region over the next three decades, and to advancing the Region’s global economic competitiveness based on leveraging its key economic assets and competitive advantages. Addressing the challenges of the future means planning for and managing growth with different tools and strategies to maintain the Region’s high quality of life and economic prosperity.

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A Framework for Responsible Growth

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan provides a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for planning for growth tailored to the regional context. The Plan provides guidance on how to grow in a responsible manner through compact and contiguous development. Compact and contiguous development means planning for and developing lands in an adjacent, logical manner that minimizes the expansion of the Region’s development footprint. This type of development will help support viable multi-modal transportation options, facilitate a mode shift away from the private automobile, and also foster the creation of complete communities.

Responsible growth means using land and resources efficiently for the benefit of current and future generations. This means ensuring growth is financially sustainable, optimizes public investment and maximizes the use of existing and planned infrastructure and services over the long term. Responsible growth conserves the Region’s agricultural land base for farmland to ensure long term viability and regional food security, and conserves the Region’s natural assets for future generations.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044 (Schedule 2, page 27) provides the foundation for managing employment and population growth in the Region. The regional structure consists of three policy tiers: the rural area, metropolitan area and metropolitan core. These tiers reflect and respond to the diversity of communities within the Region. The policy tiers provide a mechanism for defining policies and targets that respond to different urban and rural contexts, addressing unique growth challenges in the Region.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044 also identifies a series of other geographic components including centres, major employment areas and infrastructure corridors. These components and related policies help plan areas of regional significance and reflect differing roles, levels of service and places to accommodate growth.

Policy Tiers

RURAL AREA

METROPOLITAN AREA

METROPOLITAN CORE
Regional Policies
This Plan includes six interrelated regional policy areas to support where and how to manage growth.

**ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS & EMPLOYMENT**

**Guiding Principle**
Promote global economic competitiveness and regional prosperity.
We will foster a diverse and innovative economy that builds upon our existing infrastructure and employment areas to achieve sustained economic growth and prosperity.

**Objectives**
1.1 Promote global economic competitiveness and diversification of the regional economy
1.2 Promote job growth and the competitiveness of the Region’s employment base
1.3 Enhance competitiveness through the efficient movement of people, goods and services to, from and within the Region
1.4 Promote the livability and prosperity of the Region and plan for the needs of a changing population and workforce

**NATURAL LIVING SYSTEMS**

**Guiding Principle**
Protect natural living systems and environmental assets.
We will practice wise environmental stewardship and promote the health of the regional ecosystem, watersheds, airsheds, and environmentally sensitive areas.

**Objectives**
2.1 Conserve and restore natural living systems through an ecological network approach
2.2 Protect regional watershed health, water quality and quantity
2.3 Plan development to promote clean air, land and water and address climate change impacts
2.4 Minimize and mitigate the impacts of regional growth on natural living systems

**COMMUNITIES & HOUSING**

**Guiding Principle**
Recognize and celebrate the diversity of communities and promote an excellent quality of life across the Region.
In planning for growth, we will recognize and respond to the different contexts and scales of communities and provide a variety of housing choices with easy access to transportation, employment, parks and open spaces, and community and cultural amenities.

**Objectives**
3.1 Plan and develop complete communities within each policy tier to accommodate people’s daily needs for living at all ages
3.2 Plan for and promote a range of housing options
3.3 Plan for and promote market affordable and non-market housing to address core housing need
INTEGRATION OF LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Guiding Principle
Achieve compact growth that optimizes infrastructure investment.
We will make the most efficient use of our infrastructure investments by prioritizing growth around existing infrastructure and optimizing use of new and planned infrastructure.

Objectives
1. Establish a compact and contiguous development pattern to accommodate employment and population growth
2. Enable growth within built-up urban areas to optimize existing infrastructure and minimize the expansion of the development footprint
3. Plan and develop greenfield areas in an orderly and phased manner to contribute to complete communities
4. Plan for and accommodate rural growth in appropriate locations with sustainable levels of local servicing
5. Plan for and develop mixed use and higher density centres as areas to concentrate growth of people and jobs
6. Prioritize investment and funding of regional infrastructure to support planned growth
7. Ensure compatible land use patterns to minimize risks to public safety and health

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Guiding Principle
Ensure effective regional mobility.
Recognizing the link between efficient movement of people and goods and regional prosperity, we will work towards a multi-modal and integrated regional transportation system.

Objectives
1. Develop a regional transportation system to support and enhance growth and regional and global connectivity
2. Encourage a mode shift to transit, high occupancy vehicles and active transportation modes as viable and attractive alternatives to private automobile travel, appropriate to the scale of the community
3. Coordinate and integrate land use and transportation facilities and services to support the efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services in both urban and rural areas
4. Support the Edmonton International Airport as northern Alberta’s primary air gateway to the world
5. Ensure effective coordination of regional transportation policies and initiatives between all jurisdictions

AGRICULTURE

Guiding Principle
Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.
In the context of metropolitan growth, we will ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector.

Objectives
1. Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local food source for future generations
2. Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses
3. Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system
Implementing the Plan

The success of this Growth Plan depends on regional collaboration on implementation between member municipalities, other orders of government and regional stakeholders.

To transition to this Growth Plan, member municipalities will need to prepare regional context statements (RCS) within one year to define the local transition strategy. RCS will identify how existing municipal development plans (MDP) conform or diverge from the new Growth Plan, and how municipalities will bring their MDPs into conformity. The Capital Region Board (CRB) also recommends to the Government of Alberta that member municipalities be required to update their MDPs to bring them into conformance within three years.

The Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) will continue to be the principal mechanism for evaluating the conformance of new statutory plans with the Growth Plan. The CRB will work with the Government of Alberta to update legislation and, in particular, the REF process and to identify implementation resources. A number of future studies will need to be completed to support the implementation of this Plan. These studies will be coordinated through the CRB business planning process as part of the implementation of this Plan. The CRB will work with member municipalities to monitor and track progress on an annual basis through key performance indicators and the use of Capital Region – Geographic Information Services (CRGIS). Through monitoring, the CRB will be able to identify areas of on the ground success and areas to strengthen the Plan through the review and amendment process.

Through the adoption and implementation of this Growth Plan, the CRB member municipalities, other orders of government and regional stakeholders will work together, as one metropolitan region, to become globally competitive, sustainable and prosperous.
“I am convinced that this Plan for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, which our children and grandchildren will inherit, will be a showcase for the benefits of responsible growth planning. Their prosperity will be born of this Plan’s focus on connection and interdependence. It is evidence of what we can accomplish today for the future when we wear our “regional hats”. Big win for the Board and for the residents of the Region.”

Mayor Gale Katchur, City of Fort Saskatchewan