PART A

Setting the Context
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION


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.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (the “Plan”) is a 30 year regional plan with a 50 year vision for a diverse, thriving and competitive metropolitan region. The Region is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Canada and will continue to be a magnet for people, business and investment. It is made up of vibrant rural and urban communities, abundant natural assets, rich resources and high quality agricultural lands. Energy has been the primary driver for growth for decades and has created wealth, jobs and prosperity. As a result, our communities have grown and developed quickly, attracting people looking for a high quality of life and good jobs. People, communities and businesses in this Region have embraced opportunity, taking risks to innovate and reinvest in ourselves, and ultimately be more competitive.

But we cannot plan for our communities of the future by relying on the strengths of the past. Planning for long term growth requires forward and collaborative thinking at a regional scale. The recent market downturn in the energy sector brought on by technical advancements and an increasingly globally competitive marketplace reinforces the need to work together to sustain and advance prosperity.

The next 30 to 50 years will see significant change in the Region, Alberta and across the world. Global shifts in green energy, smart technology and the knowledge economy will impact the types of jobs in the Region, the way people move through the Region, and where and how we grow our food. The composition of our communities will continue to evolve with the influx of young adults and immigrants, and an aging population.

### Population Growth Rates in Major Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Calgary</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Edmonton</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Saskatoon</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regina</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
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<td>5. Winnipeg</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Toronto</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
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<td>7. Vancouver</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
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<td>8. St Johns</td>
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<td>9. Ottawa</td>
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</tr>
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<td>10. Moncton</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Halifax</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
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<td>12. Montreal</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Quebec</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Victoria</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2014; 2013-2014 growth rates

### Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area Population Growth Rate

- **Natural increase**: 7.6%
- **Intraprovincial Migration**: 3.0%
- **International Migration**: 11.5%
- **Interprovincial Migration**: 10.4%
In the context of this massive transformation, the Region needs to embrace change. We need to work together to leverage our competitive advantages to be successful and compete here in Alberta, within Canada and around the world. As our communities grow and develop, we need to work together to plan for and manage growth as one metropolitan region. We must plan for all the multifaceted components of growth and build our communities in an integrated and responsible manner in a way that enhances global economic competitiveness, creates vibrant places to live and work, attracts people and jobs, facilitates a mode shift to public transit and active transportation, and conserves the environment and prime agricultural lands for future generations.

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. The focus and mandate of the Plan is to plan and manage future population, job growth and related infrastructure investment to ensure the attractiveness, livability and economic prosperity of the Region for future generations.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan is our regional plan for the future. It does not apply a “one size fits all” solution, but recognizes, plans for, and celebrates the diversity of this Region. This evidence-based Plan will guide growth and development for 30 years with a forward thinking 50 year vision and guiding principles. The Plan update started with a simple idea and a shared commitment to “plan without boundaries” and “think regionally” when making tough decisions about the future. The implementation of this Plan and achieving our vision will require an ongoing commitment to this approach and deliberate, determined and decisive leadership from the Capital Region Board Members.

Ultimately, this Plan enables a sustainable future for this Region based on a shared commitment to Re-imagine. Plan. Build. an attractive, livable and prosperous place for future generations.
1.2 Toward the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

This Plan builds on a tradition of regional planning and collaboration. The 2010 Capital Region Growth Plan: Growing Forward was the first regional plan in over fifteen years, following a period of significant and uncoordinated rapid growth. This Plan provides a substantive update and replaces Growing Forward, incorporating its strengths and key planning directions from numerous other CRB led regional studies and initiatives. It incorporates a metropolitan regional planning perspective, building on the legacy and history of collaboration in planning for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.
The CRB Mandate and Scope of this Plan

The CRB was formed by the Government of Alberta in 2008 by the Capital Region Board Regulation (AP49/2008) under the Municipal Government Act. The Regulation lays out the Board’s membership, the voting rights of members, its powers and duties, and calls for the creation of a Capital Region Growth Plan. The Regulation sets out the objectives of a regional growth plan which are to:

a. promote an integrated and strategic approach to planning for future growth in the Region;
b. identify the overall development patterns and key future infrastructure investments that would best complement existing infrastructure, services and land uses in the Region and maximize benefits to the Region; and
c. coordinate decisions in the Region to sustain economic growth and ensure strong communities and a healthy environment.

To assist in implementation at the local municipal level, the CRB has authority, through a Ministerial Order, to evaluate and approve municipal statutory plans through the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) to ensure compliance with the Growth Plan.

Implementation of Growing Forward and CRB Regional Planning

Since the approval of Growing Forward in 2010, the CRB has completed a number of other plans and studies to support the implementation of the regional Growth Plan and further regional collaboration. These include but are not limited to:

- **Transportation** – an Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (IRTMP) and annual prioritization process for regional infrastructure;
- **Intermunicipal Transit** – a 30 year service plan, a regional fare strategy and exploration of alternate governance models to advance a regional transit system;
- **Housing** – Regional Housing Needs Assessments to inform a standardized approach for determining housing priorities by sub-regions and Our Affordable Future: Market Affordable Policy Framework to identify creative approaches to increase housing supply;
- **Energy** – a Regional Energy Corridors Master Plan to establish a regional energy corridor strategy to protect energy corridors for the future;
- **Economic Development** – CAPITALIZE: The Economic Roadmap for Alberta’s Capital Region to promote and support regional economic development; and
- **Geographic Information Services** – the operation of a Capital Region GIS database and web portal to support regional planning and decision making.

Through this work and other initiatives, the CRB member municipalities have demonstrated a commitment to work together, debate complex issues around one regional table, and advocate to other orders of government. This Plan builds on this foundation and collaborative spirit.

Growth Plan Update Process

In 2013, the CRB initiated the update of the Growth Plan with the creation of a Project Charter, an independent review of Growing Forward, and the appointment of a Growth Plan Update Task Force. The independent review identified strengths and successes in Growing Forward, but also gaps and areas for improvement.

This Plan was prepared through extensive consultation with the provincial cross-ministerial committee, member municipalities and their Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and other regional stakeholders. This consultation process clarified the opportunities and challenges facing the Region, and how to best respond, through an integrated approach. The Growth Plan Update Task Force led the update process and worked with CRB administration, regional technical advisors and consultants on the analysis, visioning and preparation of this Plan.

“It’s exciting. In this process much was learned through broad engagement from many different perspectives. We have hit the right notes for the long term prosperity for all parts of our Region – big and small.”

Mayor Ralph van Assen, Village of Warburg
Plan Overview

This Plan provides a comprehensive update and replaces the 2010 Capital Region Growth Plan: Growing Forward and integrates the policy directions from other CRB plans and studies. It provides an integrated policy framework to plan for and manage all of the multifaceted components of growth through a holistic approach. The Plan includes a vision, guiding principles, a framework for responsible growth with six overarching strategies, a Metropolitan Regional Structure, six policy areas with objectives and policies, and an implementation plan. Together, these components provide the CRB member municipalities with a clear and robust direction to facilitate responsible growth and create a prosperous and sustainable Edmonton Metropolitan Region.
Outcomes of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

- Compact development & efficient infrastructure
- Complete communities & housing diversity
- MAJOR EMPLOYMENT AREAS
- BUILT-UP URBAN AREAS
- A multi-modal & integrated regional transportation system
- A diverse, globally competitive economy & prosperous Region
- A thriving agricultural sector & an integrated regional food system
- RURAL AREAS
- Healthy natural living systems & climate change adaptability

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGION GROWTH PLAN RE-IMAGINE. PLAN. BUILD.
CHAPTER 2:

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Realizing our vision for the future starts with acknowledging our history, defining our shared assets, understanding the opportunities and challenges ahead and re-imagining the Region to 2044.

2.1

The Transformation to a Metropolitan Region

Indigenous peoples, the earliest inhabitants of the Region moved through the western plains along the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Beaver Hills. In 1876, the Canadian Monarch and the Plains and Wood Cree Nations signed Treaty 6. This resulted in Indigenous peoples ceding their interest in the land to the Crown in exchange for certain government provisions. With this agreement, European settlers and the Crown were granted the use and title over the land with an obligation to share prosperity of the territory. Since that time, the Region has undergone a number of growth led transformations.

The investment in the national railway system at the turn of the 20th century accelerated farming activity and agricultural production across western Canada. With the arrival of the railway in the early 1900s, the Region grew as a compact city core and connected agricultural settlements, villages and towns.

The discovery of oil in 1947 and the post war housing shortage led to accelerated urban growth and expansion. Since then, the Region has grown predominately in the form of low-density satellite communities around a central city core, with energy as the primary regional economic driver. Country residential development also expanded in this period to provide rural housing without a farming purpose, a trend that has subsided since the 1970s.
The Transformation to a Metropolitan Region...
From Pre European Settlement to Today

2800 years ago - 1700s
First Nations move across western plains and establish camps in Beaver Hills and through North Saskatchewan River Valley

1880s
Fort Edmonton established on banks of river as major trading posts for Hudson’s Bay Company

1947
Postwar housing shortage and discovery of oil in Leduc leads to mass growth and expansion

1950 - 1980s
Early seeds for metropolitan planning and growth management

1990s - 2010s
Metropolitan and regional planning decline and resurgence

1876
Treaty Six signed between Plains and Wood Cree People and Canadian monarch

1900 – Prewar Era
• Development of Canadian Northern Railway leads to advances in farming and trade across western Canada
• Accelerates growth and development of compact city core and connected agricultural settlements, villages and towns

1950s - 1970s
• Post war suburbanization and mass growth
• Region grows with development of low density satellite communities around central city core
• Oil and gas industries develop around Edmonton as key regional industry and driver of growth
• Postwar development of industry in Industrial Heartland and around Edmonton International Airport
The Region’s Development Footprint

Over the past 40 years, the Region has doubled its population from 500,000 people to 1.2 million people, while tripling its urban development footprint from 22,260 hectares to 69,930 hectares. Under the policies of the 2010 Growth Plan, the urban footprint could expand with an additional 443 quarter sections of land for urban residential growth, and 322 quarter sections of land for rural residential growth, resulting in a significant loss of productive farmland.

This pattern of development, predominantly in the form of single family suburban neighbourhoods is not sustainable. Looking globally, this form of development contributes to climate change and the overconsumption of the planet’s resources. Locally, this pattern of development contributes to traffic congestion, increasing commute times, mounting infrastructure deficits, decreases in health and wellness, impacts to natural living systems, and the loss of productive high quality farmland among other consequences. We need to plan for the future differently.

Today, the Region’s cities, towns and rural communities form a single metropolitan region with a distinct settlement pattern. Within the urbanized area, there is a dense metropolitan core in the City of Edmonton, providing regionally significant amenities and services such as post-secondary educational institutions, cultural and sports attractions, and major healthcare facilities.

Over the past decades the areas outside the core have experienced significant population and employment growth and the development of large scale industrial and energy related employment areas, resulting in a dispersed suburban form.

Edmonton’s suburbs and the surrounding urban communities of Beaumont, Fort Saskatchewan, the City of Leduc, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, St. Albert and Stony Plain provide services and amenities for local and surrounding communities. Beyond these urban communities is a significant rural working landscape, comprised of farmland, natural and recreational areas, resource extraction areas, towns, villages and hamlets and country residential areas. Together, the core, suburban communities, employment areas and rural working landscapes form the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

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* Based on registered survey plans within urban communities and major employment areas. Excludes country residential and other rural areas.
2.2

A Strong, Diverse and Interconnected Region

Above and beyond managing growth in people and jobs across the Region, the Growth Plan responds to the distinct and varied characteristics of CRB member communities: it is a complex and evolving metropolitan region of 24 municipalities with over 1.2 million people spread over 12,000 square kilometres, encompassing urban and rural landscapes, with three First Nations reserves within its boundaries, and Metis settlements, Inuit and several other bands with land holdings that may be affected.

The 50 year vision acknowledges that these diverse communities are interconnected and share a common economic, social, cultural and institutional core in Edmonton. The Plan recognizes that each municipality has its own attributes, strengths and ambitions. These include historic settlement patterns, natural living systems and economic drivers, all of which play a role in creating this diverse and interconnected metropolitan region.

The Canvas of Regional Assets

Through the process to create this Plan, member municipalities and stakeholders were asked to identify assets and distinct strengths that drive the Region’s current success and provide the foundation for a prosperous future.

Excellent quality of life – a rich array of cultural, wellness, educational and recreational amenities.

Economy rooted in the energy sector – a historically strong economy and employment base rooted in the resource and energy sector and distributed across the Region.

Ease of moving people, services and goods – a well developed regional, national and international transportation system for carrying people, services and goods.

Efficient infrastructure – shared regional infrastructure for water, wastewater, waste management, energy pipelines and infrastructure to support a thriving economy.

Abundance of natural and environmental assets – a wealth of lakes, rivers and other natural features provide a healthy environment and opportunities for recreation.

Legacy of agricultural resources and rural communities – high-quality agricultural land and an innovative and diverse agricultural sector and numerous rural communities.

Choice of housing and lifestyle – housing options to meet a range of life stages, income levels and lifestyle preferences. The mix of small towns, cities and rural communities enhances the choices available to residents of the Region.

Demonstrated collaboration – the CRB and member municipalities form partnerships at the regional and sub-regional level to address shared challenges.

The Plan builds on these strengths, celebrates the diverse character of member municipalities and creates a planning framework that can effectively manage growth in this context.
Canvas of Regional Assets

- Refer to reference sources on page 124.
2.3

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The growing Region has challenges to overcome and opportunities to capture. The trend of rapid growth and change will continue over the next thirty years and beyond and the Region will have to be prepared to adapt to capitalize on the opportunities created in the areas of: manufacturing, logistics, technology, communications, energy and resource development, finance and healthcare.

We cannot afford to build for the next million people in the same way we built for the first million people. The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan is a significant opportunity to establish a critical new direction for the Region to grow responsibly, minimizing the expansion of the development footprint by approximately 250 quarter sections in the next 30 years, as we Re-imagine, Plan and Build for the next generation.

Global Economic Competitiveness and Diversification

Regions today compete in the global marketplace. The primary driver of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region’s economy is energy – and will continue to be in the future. The cyclical nature of the energy sector demands a diversified economy that is resilient to external shocks. The Region needs to leverage its strengths in the energy sector, grow its knowledge-based businesses, and be ready for a global shift to green energy. Some of the building blocks for regional economic diversification are in place – the Region has a skilled labour force and a high proportion of retail, health, construction and government services. The lack of sufficient and adequate infrastructure, transportation choice and housing diversity to serve the metropolitan region are impediments to our competitiveness and ongoing growth. Coordinating and optimizing regional infrastructure, investing in transit, and planning complete communities to attract workers all shape the Region’s ability to compete on a global stage and contribute to regional prosperity. Improvements in these three areas are key for the Region to enhance its profile as a player in the global economy. This will require strong regional leadership, close collaboration with the private sector, and key commitments and directions from the Government of Alberta.

Climate Change and Environmental Impacts

The Region needs to deal with new and escalating challenges over the next thirty years relating to climate change and the environmental impacts of growth. The Region must consider these challenges in planning for growth – both to ensure its own resiliency and to shoulder its global responsibility. Urban expansion has impacts on natural living systems that can be mitigated through collaborative regional environmental planning. Patterns of development, land use and mobility are linked to greenhouse gas emissions and human health. The Plan presents a significant opportunity to address these and to manage growth to mitigate health and environmental consequences.

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1 The land need analysis prepared as part of this Growth Plan Update estimates that the policies and related density targets will result in a reduction of approximately 250 quarter sections of land need over the next 30 years.
Housing Diversity and Supply of Non-Market Housing

Housing choice across the Region is somewhat limited and does not address the needs of some members of our communities today or in the future. In terms of affordable housing, provincially and across Canada, there has been a lack of commitment to provide sustained funding for affordable housing for over a generation. As a result, there is a critical shortage of affordable housing across the Region.

The CRB’s Housing Needs Assessments have identified a “supply mismatch,” in that the housing available does not match the portion of income that households can afford to pay for housing. Moving forward, these issues will become more pressing with an aging population and increasingly diverse population.

~90% of Region’s affordable housing within Edmonton

### Housing Tenure

- **Region**: 30% Owner, 70% Renter
- **Outside Edmonton**: 14% Owner, 86% Renter
- **Edmonton**: 35% Owner, 65% Renter

### Housing Types

- **Region**: 33% Low density, 67% Multi-family
- **Outside Edmonton**: 12.5% Low density, 87.5% Multi-family
- **Edmonton**: 40.5% Low density, 59.5% Multi-family

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011
Long Term Cost of Growth and Infrastructure

Population growth in the Region over the past forty years has been accommodated predominantly through an outward spread of low-density residential housing. The development model requires developers to pay upfront capital costs associated with roads and basic hard infrastructure, a model that responds to development rather than anticipates it. Municipalities pay long term maintenance and operating costs, and often lack revenue tools to support sustainable growth and renewal. Municipal studies have shown that low-density residential development does not pay for itself and is financially challenging for municipalities once soft services and ongoing maintenance costs are factored into the equation. As communities age, municipalities are faced with diminishing capacity of existing infrastructure and escalating renewal costs. This is an inefficient and unsustainable model. Municipalities will need to consider the financial, environmental and social impacts of growth and make decisions mindful of the long term costs of infrastructure maintenance and renewal, and the consequences for future generations.

Transportation Choice

There is an extensive roadway network that extends across the entire Region. The Region has the components for an interconnected transportation system and has demonstrated commitment to pursuing multi-modal transportation options as viable alternatives to the car. However, outside of Edmonton’s core, the car is the dominant mode of travel across the Region. Dispersed land uses and low-density forms of development make it very difficult to provide viable public transit service. Consequently, the Region’s rural and urban roadway network is experiencing relatively high congestion levels at peak periods. If the Region continues to grow outward with a low-density development pattern, efforts to offer convenient and cost effective transportation choices will continue to be undermined. In addition to the economic costs to individuals, businesses and governments, the effects of congestion and increasing commute times will diminish the quality of life for the Region’s residents and hamper the Region’s ability to attract and retain people, employers and employees.
Viability of the Agriculture Sector

Agriculture is the largest single land use in the Region, a key economic sector and an irreplaceable resource for local food security. During the Region’s recent period of rapid uncoordinated growth, neither the Province nor municipalities considered ways to conserve prime agricultural lands for farmland. Existing and planned urban development is encroaching on high quality agricultural soils and placing pressure on the Region’s agricultural land base. From 2002 to 2012, a total of 38,250 hectares of farmland have been converted to non-agricultural uses, with over 60% of loss being lands prime agricultural lands.2

The agricultural sector is experiencing significant change – with a decrease in the overall number of farms and operators, but an increase in farm productivity and profits. Although Region-wide, agriculture represented only 1% of all jobs in 2014, it provides 10 to 20% of employment in many regional municipalities.3 This Plan recognizes the importance of a viable agricultural sector as a key asset, economic sector and strategy for enhancing local food security.

Changing Political and Governance Context

The CRB operates in a changing economic, social and political environment. In 2015, a new provincial government was elected with new priorities. At the provincial level a number of new legislative and policy changes are underway. This includes the modernization of the Municipal Government Act and a new North Saskatchewan Regional Plan, among other plans and initiatives. Within the Region, there are new regional and sub-regional partnerships forming to advance global economic competitiveness and regional growth planning. Moving forward in the future, the CRB will need to continue to demonstrate regional leadership and collaboration, and explore and pursue improved governance models to successfully plan for growth, deliver seamless infrastructure and sustain the quality of life across the Region.

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2 Alberta Land Institute, 2015
3 Statistics Canada, 2011
The Region in 2044: Population and Employment Projections

By 2044, the Region will be significantly larger and more complex. The Region will grow by an additional one million people and 470,000 jobs. Schedule 1: Population and Employment Projections 2014 to 2044 provides population and employment projections to 2044 by member municipality. These are long term projections, based on the best available data today, and acknowledge that within this 30 year planning period, there will be economic cycles and demographic shifts.

To sustain long term population and employment growth, the Region needs to retain and attract residents, employees and employers. Growth will rely on national migration and immigration, and in particular attracting young adults and families. This is in keeping with the Region’s current demographic profile as the youngest metropolitan area in Canada, with 40% of the Region’s population under 30. At the same time the population is aging. It is imperative to plan growth in a manner that will continue to draw and retain this population and its evolving needs. This includes more housing choice, more services and amenities, and viable transportation options to meet the evolving needs of young people, newcomer families and seniors. To be prepared for the demands of the future, the Region needs housing, transit, infrastructure and transportation networks connect people, services and jobs to employment areas and global markets.

Given the rapid growth forecast over the next thirty years and the anticipated complexity and scale of the Region by 2044, it is imperative that we get it right. Chapter Three outlines a framework to do so.

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4 Statistics Canada, 2011
**SCHEDULE 1:**

Population and Employment Projections 2014 to 2044

These are the consolidated CRB accepted employment and population projections from 2014 to 2044.***

Population adjustments have been made to reflect the results of 2014 municipal censuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Municipality</th>
<th>Population Projections*</th>
<th>Employment Projections**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Beaumont</td>
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<td>Edmonton</td>
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<td><strong>Excluding Edmonton</strong></td>
<td>376,600</td>
<td>595,000</td>
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*Accepted by Board Decision, May 14, 2015.
**Accepted by Board Decision, February 11, 2016.
***These projections reflect adjustments to the 2013 projections based on updated municipal census data and further analysis of existing employment data.
CHAPTER 3:

FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

This Growth Plan provides a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for managing growth and implementing the 50 year vision and guiding principles, one which is tailored to the context of the Region. The framework incorporates six overarching strategies for planning and managing both population and employment growth through a holistic approach.

The Plan is not a “one size fits all” solution, but applies the same principles, strategies and objectives across the Region in a contextually sensitive manner. It provides direction for managing growth to conserve and protect what is valuable, striving to increase livability and global economic competitiveness.

3.1 Key Strategies for Planning and Managing Growth

Global Economic Competitiveness

The future well being of the Region and its residents depends largely on its economy and the ability to compete on the national and world stage. There is ample opportunity to use our economic strengths and social and educational resources to diversify and enhance the Region’s economy. The Plan’s policies provide direction to achieve and sustain global economic competitiveness and increase economic resiliency.

Responsible Growth

The Region is committed to pursuing responsible growth – using land and resources efficiently for the benefit of current and future generations. Within this context, responsible growth includes: wisely managing the Region’s prime agricultural land base to ensure long term viability and food security, maximizing the use of existing and planned infrastructure and services, conserving the Region’s natural assets, and ensuring financially sustainable regional growth over the long term.
Integrating Land Use and Infrastructure

Infrastructure and land use planning are two integral components of any growth plan. The efficient use of infrastructure and land requires planning these two elements together rather than in isolation. Planning for growth in a responsible manner requires aligning existing and planned infrastructure with development. Key to success is thinking in an integrated manner about where people live, work, shop, how they move through the Region, and planning how best to connect those places together.

Compact and Contiguous Development

Compact and contiguous development helps to achieve responsible growth through the efficient use of land and resources. A compact land use pattern can include a mix of uses and higher density development such as detached and semi-detached houses on small lots as well as townhouses, walk up apartments, multi-storey commercial developments, and apartments or offices above retail development. It creates walkable neighbourhoods where multi-modal transportation options can be provided efficiently. Contiguous development means developing new urban areas as part of existing urban communities and logically extending infrastructure and services. Combining compact and contiguous development patterns reduces the cost to build, maintain and operate infrastructure and services.

Agricultural Viability

Regional growth needs to be carefully managed to ensure the long term viability of the agricultural sector. The Plan addresses this issue from multiple standpoints to provide for food production and food security over the long term, and contribute to the Region’s economic prosperity and diversification. Agricultural viability requires conserving prime agricultural lands for farmland, limiting fragmentation and conversion of the agricultural land base to non-agricultural uses, and fostering growth and diversification through value added productions within the agricultural sector and supportive infrastructure investments.

Complete Communities

This Plan aims to create complete communities at a variety of scales and contexts across the Region. Complete communities meet people’s needs for daily living at all ages and provide convenient access to a mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, community infrastructure and multi-modal transportation choices. For planning purposes, complete communities at the regional scale are focused on hard infrastructure, land use, transportation and development patterns. This Plan acknowledges but does not address the soft infrastructure components of a complete community including culture, health, education, law enforcement and emergency services. The elements of a complete community can be provided at different levels, appropriate to the size and scale of the community. A small hamlet, for example, will not be able to provide all these elements but a larger urban centre could meet many of those needs. The network of complete communities creates a complete Region.
3.2 Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure

The Regional Structure depicted on Schedule 2: Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044 (page 27) provides the framework for managing economic, employment and population growth. It recognizes the Region’s diverse urban and rural contexts and provides a tiered policy approach to establish a compact and contiguous development pattern.

The Regional Structure reinforces existing urban communities and major employment areas, and builds on existing infrastructure and land use patterns. The Regional Structure includes two elements - policy tiers and structure components. This Regional Structure replaces the Priority Growth Areas (PGAs) and Cluster Country Residential Areas (CCRAs) and associated maps in the 2010 Growth Plan and Addenda and provides a more strategic approach to plan and manage growth across the Region.

Policy Tiers

The Region is large and complex, consisting of diverse communities in terms of size, scale and urban and rural contexts. Different geographic areas in the Region have varying regional roles and distinct opportunities and constraints for growth and change.

The Regional Structure introduces three policy tiers: rural area, metropolitan area and metropolitan core. These tiers reflect and respond to the diversity within the Region and are depicted conceptually on Schedule 2. The policy tiers provide a mechanism to introduce tailored policies and targets to respond to different urban and rural contexts, addressing unique growth challenges in the Region and in some cases, policies that apply to one or more of the tiers. The intent is that each community in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region will grow in a responsible, compact and contiguous manner, but in a form and at a scale appropriate to the corresponding policy tier.

Rural Area is defined as the lands outside the metropolitan area within the wider Edmonton Metropolitan Region, consisting of rural working landscapes with agricultural lands, major employment areas and local employment areas, natural living systems, recreation areas and resource extraction areas, counties, towns, villages, incorporated hamlets and country residential development with some local levels of service and community amenities.

Metropolitan Area is defined as the area surrounding the metropolitan core, including portions of county lands, urban communities, major and local employment areas, and intervening undeveloped areas that are socio-economically tied and that share industry, housing and infrastructure.

The metropolitan area encompasses the highest concentration of existing and future urban development in the Region, and reflects the general direction of future urban growth. It is not intended that the metropolitan area form a growth boundary, or that all of the lands within the metropolitan area will be urbanized by 2044.

Metropolitan Core is defined as the contiguous developed area within the City of Edmonton with the highest density development served by higher order transit and the highest concentration of regionally significant amenities and services, including downtown Edmonton.

Each policy tier’s general character, types of centres, and directions for accommodating growth are described in detail in Table 1A–C on the following pages.
The Policy Tiers: Types of Centres, Community Characteristics and Growth Directions

The following provides an overview of the characteristics of each policy tier and the types of centres and levels of service within each tier and how growth is anticipated to be accommodated within each tier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1A: Rural Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-regional Centres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The exception is Lamont Health Care Centre, which provides a higher level of service.*
### TABLE 1B: Metropolitan Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Types of Centres and Community Characteristics</th>
<th>Growth Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Contiguous urban settlement pattern;</td>
<td><strong>Urban Centres</strong> Urban centres provide a sub-regional level of service consisting of:</td>
<td>- Encourage intensification of built-up urban areas including brownfield sites to optimize existing and planned infrastructure;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Major employment areas and local employment areas;</td>
<td>• a broad base of service, office, government and institutional employment;</td>
<td>- Plan and develop greenfield areas that are compact and contiguous, with a diverse and compatible mix of land uses including a range of housing and employment types;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cultural and health facilities and major commercial centres;</td>
<td>• convenience and major retail and entertainment uses;</td>
<td>- Plan and build transit oriented development (TOD) with higher densities and foster active transportation opportunities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Urban levels of service; and</td>
<td>• all levels of primary and secondary education and potential for satellite campuses of post-secondary institutions;</td>
<td>- Support employment growth in major employment areas, local employment areas and within urban centres and TOD centres and encourage the growth of institutional, health and education sectors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regional commuter transit service with varying levels of local service and park and ride facilities.</td>
<td>• major community centres and recreation facilities;</td>
<td>- Promote the diversification and growth of the agricultural sector including urban agriculture in an urban context; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• local and commuter transit service;</td>
<td>- Support the development of market affordable and non-market housing and support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• some government services;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• emergency medical services;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• hospitals or community health centres; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• social and supportive services to support non-market housing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE 1C: Metropolitan Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Types of Centres and Community Characteristics</th>
<th>Growth Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Highest urban density;</td>
<td>Downtown Edmonton</td>
<td>• Encourage intensification in built-up urban areas including brownfield sites to optimize existing and planned infrastructure;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional levels of service;</td>
<td>Downtown Edmonton is recognized as the primary centre within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region and will be planned to deliver the highest level of regional service consisting of:</td>
<td>• Plan for and build transit oriented development with the highest level of density in the Region in areas with existing and planned LRT service;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concentrated employment node consisting of downtown Edmonton; and</td>
<td>• a broad base of employment including the regionally significant central business district;</td>
<td>• Continue to develop downtown Edmonton as a major employment area with a mix of uses and activities with high density residential development as well as commercial, institutional and office employment; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interconnected higher order transit with LRT network connecting to inner parts of metropolitan area.</td>
<td>• all types of convenience, major and specialized retail and regional cultural and entertainment uses;</td>
<td>• Support the development of market affordable and non-market housing and support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• all levels of primary, secondary and post-secondary education institutions, regional sports and entertainment facilities, and cultural amenities;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• bus, rail and commuter transit service;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provincial legislature and all levels of government services – federal, provincial and municipal;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• regional hospitals and specialized health care facilities such as the Cross Cancer Institute, Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute and Stollery Children’s Hospital; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the highest concentration of social and supportive services in the Region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure Components

The following provides descriptions of the structure components shown on Schedule 2: Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044. These descriptions should be read together with the regional policies and the implementation plan. These components provide the basis for defining matters of regional significance and identifying geographic elements where growth may and may not be anticipated. Each component has an important role to play in the Region, and has corresponding Growth Plan policies to provide direction. The Structure identifies the general locations (not parcel based boundaries) of the components. Other Schedules in the Plan provide further detail on the components.

Existing Developed Areas:

🔥 Built-up Urban Areas: are defined as all lands located within the limits of the developed urban area within plans of subdivision that were registered as of December 31, 2016. Built-up urban areas are shown conceptually on Schedule 2 and will be delineated in detail by member municipalities as part of the implementation of this Plan.

🪐 Country Residential: is defined as the subdivision of rural lands to create multiple unserviced country residential lots in which households are responsible to provide their own on-site water and private sewage systems. Schedule 2 depicts the existing country residential areas with municipal zoning or designations in place as of December 31, 2016.

Range and Type of Centres:

Schedule 2: identifies a network of centres in the Region, reflecting the differing roles, levels of service and ability to accommodate growth. Centres are key community focal points that offer opportunities to align higher levels of density, services, and connectivity with transportation and transit and to focus on placemaking.

▲ Rural Centres: urban areas within the rural area that provide a local level of service to serve their own community with potential to accommodate higher density mixed use development, appropriate to the size and scale of the community. Rural centres include central areas of towns, villages and some growth hamlets.

⊙ Sub-regional Centres: centres that provides a sub-regional level of service to meet the needs of their own communities and those in the wider area within the rural area. Sub-regional centres have potential to accommodate higher density mixed use development, appropriate to the scale of the community.

● Urban Centres: central urban areas in the metropolitan area that provide a sub-regional level of service. Urban centres are intended to accommodate mixed use development at higher intensities, and include downtowns and central areas of urban communities.

● Downtown Edmonton: the regional scale centre in the metropolitan core and the central core of the City of Edmonton, with a concentration of regionally significant amenities and services, the highest levels of residential and employment density, mixed use development, higher order transit services and active transportation options.

● Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Centres: to capitalize on investments in existing and planned higher-order transit, areas around major transit stations where transit oriented development with mixed use development and/or intensive employment uses should be planned. The City of Edmonton's TOD Guidelines for planned TOD Centres are shown with refinements based on directions from this Growth Plan.

Transit Corridors: existing and planned dedicated right of way for transit vehicles (buses or trains) or a right of way for a multitude of modes. Existing and planned transit corridors will accommodate bus service and/or rail transit.

Major Employment Areas: areas with a concentration of industrial, commercial and/or institutional land uses that have regionally significant business and economic activities and high levels of employment. This includes existing larger scale urban and rural industrial parks, Alberta's Industrial Heartland, the lands around Edmonton International Airport and regional airports.

Natural Living Systems: a system of natural features and areas, linked and connected by natural corridors that are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species and ecosystems. These are areas where development should not occur and specific conservation and mitigation measures may be required to protect the integrity across the system. These areas include the North Saskatchewan River Basin, provincial parks and other areas of ecological significance.

Airports: Edmonton International Airport is an important economic asset at the heart of a growing regionally significant cluster, known as Aerotropolis. The Region's other three airports are also identified as regional transportation infrastructure. The Region's airports will be driving forces for growth and will shape development patterns in the Region to 2044.

Regional Infrastructure: significant infrastructure corridors need to be accommodated in planning for growth. Regional infrastructure includes infrastructure developed by one or more levels of government and/or regional service commissions to provide services to citizens and businesses, and to support the function of a regional economy. This includes transportation and energy corridors.
SCHEDULE 2:
Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044

NOTE:
All alignments of regional pipeline corridors are conceptual. Lands within CFB Edmonton, the Edmonton International Airport and the Villanueva Airport are under federal jurisdiction.