



May 13, 2020

Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board
#1100 Bell Tower
10104 – 103 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0H8

Attention: Taylor Varro, RPP, MCIP
Project Manager, EMRB

Dear Mr. Varro,

RE: Referral of the City of St. Albert North Ridge ASP Amendment; REF 2020 – 004.

Please find attached our final statutory plan evaluation report for the above referral from the City of St. Albert.

If you have any questions, please contact Alan Wallace at 306.291.7024.

Sincerely,

Alan Wallace, RPP, MCIP

Planning Lead – Saskatchewan



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Ministerial Order MSL 111/17, the Province of Alberta adopted the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) to ensure consistency and alignment with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP) and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation. As such, certain statutory documents from member municipalities require review to ensure compliance.

Section 4.0 of the REF states that a member municipality must refer proposed statutory plans or statutory plan amendments to the EMRB under certain conditions, after the first reading by Council and prior to the third reading pursuant to Section 5.1 of the REF.

2.0 PURPOSE

Bylaw 5/2020 was presented to Council for first reading on March 16, 2020. After passing first reading Bylaw 5/2020 was submitted to the EMRB for a referral in accordance with the REF. The purpose of REF 2020-004 is to review the North Ridge ASP amendments for consistency with the EMRGP.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Municipality: City of St. Albert

First Reading Date: March 16, 2020

Location: Northwest sector of St. Albert, adjacent to Lacombe Park, Deer Ridge and Jensen Lakes neighbourhoods.

Purpose of the North Ridge ASP: The purpose of the ASP is to establish the basic residential land use and circulation patterns for the North Ridge Neighbourhood.

The ASP was first approved by the City of St. Albert in 1998, and has since been adopted as Bylaw 4/2015 in February 2015.

The purpose Bylaw 5/2020 is to amend Bylaw 4/2015 to update the land use concept by expanding the boundary to create a second phase of the neighbourhood. The ASP amendment establishes the land use and circulation patterns within North Ridge Phase 2.



Summary of the Referral

This evaluation reviewed the proposed amendments to the North Ridge ASP in relation to the Guiding Principles of the EMRGP, the Objectives and Policies of the EMRGP, and the evaluation criteria in the REF.

The City of St. Albert gave first reading to amend the North Ridge ASP to update the land use concept and land use statistics to reflect creating a Phase 2 of the North Ridge Neighbourhood by altering the neighbourhood boundary and adding approx. 48.8 ha (120.6 ac) of land north of Villeneuve Road.

The land being designated in Phase 2 of the North Ridge neighbourhood is the east half of quarter section SE-18-54-25-4 and is owned by Badger Land Development Corp. The land is approximately 26 ha (64 ac) in size. The remaining lands are owned by the City of St. Albert (unoccupied, Future Development Area), AltaLink (electrical substation), and the Province of Alberta (former landfill).

Section 5.1.1 of the EMRGP grandfathers existing ASPs that have been adopted in accordance with the MGA prior to the EMRGP coming into effect. Substantial amendments to grandfathered ASPs are subject to REF evaluation.

One criterion for ASP amendments in the EMRGP is no net reduction in greenfield residential density. The current North Ridge ASP has 24.5 du/nrha, the Phase 2 density targets must align with the EMRGP, for which a density of 40 du/nrha is mandatory. **The planned density for North Ridge Phase 2 is 40 du/nrha.**

The information presented in this report represents our professional opinion on how the referral aligns within the framework of the Growth Plan, and we have concluded that the EMRB should **approve** the proposed ASP amendment.



4.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Section 8.1 of the REF states that “When evaluating a statutory plan or statutory plan amendment, the Board must consider whether approval and full implementation of the statutory plan or statutory plan amendment would result in development that is consistent with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.”

Applicable Policy Tiers

The subject site is located within the Metropolitan Area, defined as “the contiguous urban settlement pattern where major and local employment areas are located, and that host cultural and health facilities and major commercial centres. The Metropolitan Area has urban levels of service and regional commuter transit service with varying levels of local service and park and ride facilities.”


Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure Policy Tier	Applicability
Metropolitan Core	N/A (Not Applicable)
Metropolitan Area	Applicable
Rural Area	N/A

Applicable Growth Directions for the Metropolitan Area are to:


1. Encourage intensification of built-up urban areas including brownfield sites to optimize existing and planned infrastructure;
2. Plan and build transit-oriented development (TOD) with higher densities and foster active transportation opportunities; and
3. 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.

The review of the North Ridge Phase 2 amendments in alignment with the Growth Directions of the EMRGP concluded that the proposed amendments are consistent with the Growth Directions for the EMRGP Metropolitan Area.



PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE Promote global economic competitiveness and regional prosperity.</p>		
<p>1.1: Promote global economic competitiveness and diversification of the regional economy</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 neighbourhood has been designed to integrate residential uses with a neighbourhood commercial centre along the Hogan Road extension. Higher density development is located adjacent to the commercial area, increasing the potential consumer traffic in the area.</p>
<p>1.2: Promote job growth and the competitiveness of the Region’s employment base</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The proposed ASP amendments (creating dedicated commercial lands) would result in an increase in number of jobs.</p> <p>The ASP area is adjacent to a planned employment area in the EMRGP, the addition of commercial opportunities and mixed-density residential uses will promote economic competitiveness of the Region’s employment base.</p>
<p>1.3: Enhance competitiveness through the efficient movement of people, goods and services to, from and within the Region</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 neighbourhood will see a residential density of 40 du/nrha with the proposed amendments. The Phase 2 area is situated along an existing and future transportation access corridor (Villeneuve Road and future Fowler Way).</p>
<p>1.4: Promote the livability and prosperity of the Region and plan for the needs of a changing population and workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The ASP amendments seek to offer a variety of housing forms, from single-family to medium density for the North Ridge Phase 2 neighbourhood.</p> <p>The proposed amendments seek to create a complete community by locating residents close to parks, open spaces, and commercial development providing residents with choices within walking distance of their homes.</p>




PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="404 369 649 401">GUIDING PRINCIPLE</p> <p data-bbox="404 411 1153 443">Protect natural living systems and environmental assets.</p>		
<p data-bbox="199 531 618 642">2.1: Conserve and restore natural living systems through an ecological network approach</p>	<p data-bbox="727 1098 760 1140">√</p>	<p data-bbox="855 531 1422 835">A geotechnical investigation was completed in 2012 for the North Ridge neighbourhood. The proponents who conducted the original Geotech study concluded that no update is required to screen the Phase 2 lands. The lands are currently undeveloped and are mostly cultivated farmland. The Geotech report concluded that soils in Phase 2 are suitable for the proposed residential development.</p> <p data-bbox="855 877 1422 1220">Note: Areas of higher ground water levels in the Phase 2 amendment area may require further investigation at the time of subdivision or development permitting. At the time of site development, an additional study will be required for commercial and multiple family developments. A geotechnical investigation will need to be undertaken for the City-owned portion of the lands once it becomes ready to develop.</p> <p data-bbox="855 1262 1422 1465">A Phase 1 ESA was conducted and identified one former oil well on the subject site, and another five oil wells in the vicinity of the subject site. Each of these wells requires a reclamation certification, which provides a determination if a 5m setback is sufficient.</p> <p data-bbox="855 1507 1422 1707">Two natural areas were identified in the Future Development Area, an overgrown rail right-of-way used by wildlife as a movement corridor, and a wooded area. Both of these areas will require further investigation before development can occur in later phases.</p>




PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
2.2: Protect regional watershed health, water quality, and quantity	√	A wetland assessment was conducted, and the identified wetlands are not considered to have significant ecological value and have received clearance for removal under the Public Lands Act and the Water Act. The City is not requiring protection of these wetlands.
2.3: Plan development to promote clean air, land, and water and address climate change impacts	√	North Ridge Phase 2 includes a central park and open space, and a mix of land uses that provides a range of choices to residents that are within walking distance of the greenspace. This indirectly reduces the need for the use of combustion vehicles vs traditional development and therefore a reduction in emissions.
2.4: Minimize and mitigate the impacts of regional growth on natural living systems	√	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 amendment has been screened extensively for natural living systems protection (i.e. wetlands study, geotechnical investigation, agricultural impact assessment, natural site assessment, heritage resources).</p> <p>An overgrown rail line was identified in the western portion of the ASP boundary that wildlife use as a movement corridor. This land is not intended to be developed in the future.</p>



PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE Recognize and celebrate the diversity of communities and promote an excellent quality of life across the Region.</p>		
<p>3.1: Plan and develop complete communities within each policy tier to accommodate people’s daily needs for living at all ages</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The Phase 2 land use concept includes a mix of uses that create a complete community where residents are located near commercial uses and recreational spaces. The North Ridge neighbourhood, upon full build out, will be a community that provides for a range of ages and lifestyles through a variety of housing types and easy access to commercial areas and transportation corridors.</p>
<p>3.2: Plan for and promote a range of housing options</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>North Ridge Phase 2 lands allow for a range of housing types including low to medium density (single detached, semi-detached, townhouse, low-rise apartments).</p>
<p>3.3: Plan for and promote market, affordable, and non-market housing to address core housing need</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 amendments proposes residential land uses to accommodate a wide spectrum of housing types that cater to various income levels and family types.</p>




PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="402 369 643 401">GUIDING PRINCIPLE</p> <p data-bbox="402 411 1271 443">Achieve compact growth that optimizes infrastructure investment.</p>		
<p>4.1: Establish a compact and contiguous development pattern to accommodate employment and population growth</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The entire intent behind North Ridge Phase 2 is to accommodate a logical and contiguous development in St. Albert. Phase 1 of the neighbourhood is completely built out. The addition of Phase 2 represents a logical extension of development patterns that can accommodate both population and employment growth within an area designated by the City for future urban growth.</p>
<p>4.2: Enable growth within built-up urban areas to optimize existing infrastructure and minimize the expansion of the development footprint</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The ASP is within the City of St. Albert boundary. The proposed ASP amendments will increase overall density of the North Ridge neighbourhood by abiding to the EMRGP minimum greenfield density targets of 40 du/nrha.</p>
<p>4.3: Plan and develop greenfield areas in an orderly and phased manner to contribute to complete communities</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 ASP amendments seek to develop residential and commercial linkages in the North Ridge neighbourhood across Villeneuve Road and Hogan Road to Phase 2 lands.</p> <p>Figure 10 in the ASP outlines the staging concept of the Phase 2 lands, which provides an orderly phased manner of development to prevent overbuilding a vacant newbuilds.</p>
<p>4.4: Plan for and accommodate rural growth in appropriate locations with sustainable levels of local servicing</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The ASP is not within the Rural Policy Area.</p>



PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
4.5: Plan and develop mixed-use and higher density centres as areas to concentrate growth of both people and jobs	√	<p>The ASP amendment includes low and medium-density residential areas, a large commercial centre, and a centralized park with waling trails all close to residential dwellings.</p> <p>The ASP amendment area is also consistent with the EMRGP Schedule 6: Greenfield Density, Centres and Intensification Targets.</p>
4.6: Prioritize investment and funding of regional infrastructure to support planned growth	√	<p>The North Ridge Phase 2 land have been designated by the City of St. Albert for future urban growth. The Phase 2 lands will be serviced through an extension of the Phase 1 infrastructure network, making efficient use of regional infrastructure to support planned growth.</p>
4.7: Ensure compatible land use patterns to minimize risks to public safety and health	√	<p>The proposed land uses are consistent with adjacent development in Phase 1 of the North Ridge neighbourhood and the adjacent Jensen Lakes neighbourhood.</p>




PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="402 369 847 443">GUIDING PRINCIPLE Ensure effective regional mobility.</p>		
<p data-bbox="199 533 574 772">5.1: Develop a regional transportation system to support the growth of the Region and enhance its regional and global connectivity</p>	<p data-bbox="727 825 760 867">√</p>	<p data-bbox="855 533 1393 596">The North Ridge Phase 2 transportation network can be found on Figure 3 of the ASP.</p> <p data-bbox="855 638 1417 947">The Phase 2 lands are bound on the north by Fowler Way, a future NW crosstown connector and access road. The Fowler Way alignment is updated to comply with the 2018 functional alignment study that was undertaken by Associated Engineering. The alignment of Fowler Way will provide residents direct access to Ray Gibbon Drive, St. Albert Trail, and the wider region.</p> <p data-bbox="855 989 1414 1157">The ASP has been developed to accommodate vehicular, pedestrian, future public transit and active transportation movement that connects the North Ridge Phase 2 lands to the existing built-up areas of St. Albert.</p>
<p data-bbox="199 1184 630 1465">5.2: Encourage a mode shift to transit, high occupancy vehicles and active transportation modes as viable alternatives to private automobile travel, appropriate to the scale of the community</p>	<p data-bbox="727 1388 760 1430">√</p>	<p data-bbox="855 1184 1409 1423">The extent of future transit service has not been finalized with the City of St. Albert; however, the proposed ASP amendments seek to increase density in the North Ridge neighbourhood, that will locate more residents near transportation corridors thereby making transit more viable for the amendment area.</p> <p data-bbox="855 1465 1406 1598">Pedestrian connections within the ASP amendment area will promote active transportation by providing convenient access to amenities.</p>



PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
5.3: 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	√	The ASP includes a central park and enhanced pedestrian connections. The collector and local roadways will provide pedestrian linkages through the development of sidewalks and multi-use trails. Situating the commercial centre adjacent to Range Road 225 allows for efficient movement of goods and services within the region through immediate access to Fowler Way, Hogan Road and Villeneuve Road.
5.4: Support the Edmonton International Airport as northern Alberta’s primary air gateway to the world	N/A	The North Ridge ASP is outside of the Airport Vicinity Protection Area Regulation.
5.5: Ensure effective coordination and alignment of regional transportation policies and initiatives between all jurisdictions	√	Based on analysis of the City of St. Albert Transportation Master Plan and the transportation screening of the North Ridge Phase 2 lands, the proposed amendments align with transportation network and transportation policies within St. Albert.



PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.</p>		
<p>6.1: Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local source of food security for future generations</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>An Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was conducted in December 2019 for the SE-18-54-25-4 quarter section. The AIA concluded the North Ridge Phase 2 lands have been cultivated consistently since at least 1949. The crops appeared to be hay and there was no evidence of more intensive agricultural uses such as livestock.</p> <p>The City-owned half of the quarter section has been used as a snow storage and organic waste dump for the past decade. As a result, none of the land is viable for agriculture and it would take considerable resources to return the land to agricultural production.</p>
<p>6.2: Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>The proposed ASP amendments are located on lands designated for residential development on Map 2 of the City’s MDP and is located within the Metropolitan Area of the EMRGP.</p>
<p>6.3: Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The proposed ASP amendments create more commercial opportunities for the agricultural sector and regional food system.</p>



5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The following summary provides an overview of how the proposed amendments work towards each Guiding Principle within the EMRGP:

Economic Competitiveness & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASP amendments provide opportunities for additional employment by increasing the commercial capacity in the North Ridge neighbourhood (1.5 ha) • Transportation network is planned to facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services • Encourages an increase in employment density in an area that has easy access to regional transportation systems • Supports Planned Employment Area • Mix of land uses promotes livability and supports the needs of future residents
Natural Living Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater management facility integrated into natural systems to mitigate disturbance • Natural areas investigations uncovered that additional geotechnical investigations are required at the time of site development for commercial and multiple family developments • One oil well located adjacent to the north boundary of the subject site, and five more located within the vicinity of the development area. Each oil well requires a reclamation certificate • Two natural areas were identified in the western portion of the Future Development Area, an overgrown rail right-of-way and a wooded area. Further investigation of these areas is warranted in future development phases
Communities & Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASP amendments will provide a range of housing types, from single-detached homes to mid-rise apartments • Medium density residential development within a couple of blocks of the commercial area and transportation corridors/access points • Contiguous development that builds off of commercial and residential land use pattern of the adjacent North Ridge Phase 1 and Jensen Lakes neighbourhoods • ASP amendments to provide a range of housing types or various family types and income levels
Integration of Land Use & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed North Ridge Phase 2 neighbourhood is adjacent to existing residential and commercial development • ASP development is phased and includes compatible land uses with connections between the commercial and residential area • Increasing residential density in the North Ridge by concentrating higher density residential uses near planned commercial development will make more efficient use of infrastructure • The ASP was developed using St. Albert engineering standards
Transportation Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher density residential land uses in the proposed North Ridge Phase 2 neighbourhood make transit more viable by locating more people in close proximity to collector and arterial transportation systems • Plans for future transit service • ASP amendments include enhanced pedestrian connections between commercial centre and residential development



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complies with Transportation Master Plan for St. Albert
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An AIA was performed and determined the lands more viable to accommodate residential development than agricultural production• Proposed development adds population within an area designated for future residential development (St. Albert MDP) which reduces additional pressure for greenfield development, fragmentation, and loss of agricultural land

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board **approve** The City of St. Albert’s proposed amendments to the North Ridge ASP and approve Phase 2 of the neighbourhood.