Moved by Councillor Joly
That the “Regional Context Statement - Moving Forward in Long Range Planning Policy”, provided as an attachment to the September 17, 2018, agenda report entitled “Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan Implementation” be approved, and that Administration submit the Regional Context Statement to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB).
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
INTRODUCTION

Background

The *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan* (EMRGP) was approved by the Government of Alberta on October 26, 2017. As per the associated implementation directives, member municipalities of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board are required to prepare a Regional Context Statement within one year of provincial approval. The Regional Context Statement (RCS) is a document which links municipal land use policies to the regional growth plan. Specifically, it identifies how the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) conforms with or diverges from the EMRGP.

The City of St. Albert’s Municipal Development Plan (*CityPlan*), has been the guiding local policy planning document since 2000. Over the years, several updates have occurred to align with regional planning goals and to reflect boundary adjustments. In 2007, the MDP was updated to incorporate the lands north of Villeneuve Road, as annexed from Sturgeon County, for instance. The Plan was also updated in 2012 to ensure conformity with the 2010 Capital Region Growth Plan – *Growing Forward*.

Given the significant changes within the regional planning context, the City recognizes the need to modernize the MDP to suitably incorporate the goals and objectives of the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan*. As such, St. Albert City Council has directed the development of a new MDP. Development of a new MDP is underway and is scheduled to be completed prior to the deadline of October 2020.

Purpose

The purpose of the Regional Context Statement is to demonstrate how St. Albert’s MDP contributes to the achievement of regional goals and objectives. The document will focus on the regional guiding objectives applicable to St. Albert. Each policy section of the EMRGP will be outlined, along with supporting information regarding applicability to the current and future policy framework. It is an implementation tool which will assist with the formation of new MDP policies.
Part 1: Metropolitan Regional Structure

The *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan* (EMRGP) identifies the City of St. Albert as being located within the ‘Metropolitan Area’ policy tier. This policy area supports a contiguous urban settlement pattern, consisting of elements such as major commercial development, health facilities, employment areas, and regional transit service. The Plan contains ‘Structure Components’ which reinforce existing urban communities and major employment areas, while building on existing infrastructure and land use patterns.

The following EMRGP structure components are applicable to St. Albert, and are shown conceptually in Appendix 1, as per regional mapping:

- Built-up Urban Area;
- Urban Centre (Downtown);
- Transit Oriented Development Centre;
- LRT Corridor (St. Albert Trail);
- Major Employment Area.

The Plan also contains both long range population and employment projections for the member municipalities. The following projections have been provided for St. Albert.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Projections</th>
<th>Employment Projections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low 2044</td>
<td>2044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 2044</td>
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<td>35,437</td>
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<tr>
<td>21,140</td>
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**CityPlan**

In the current MDP, the City is identified as part of ‘Priority Growth Area B’ and commits to striving towards the 6 associated growth principles for the Area. This reflects the 2010 CRB Growth Plan – *Growing Forward*. The MDP also includes population projection figures, however they are slightly higher than the ones noted above.

**Moving forward, the new MDP will**

- Refer to the applicable *Metropolitan Area* policy tier.
- Incorporate a policy framework which reflects the *Growth Directions* associated with the *Metropolitan Area* policy tier.
- Include policies that support concentrating future urban development within the *Metropolitan Area*.
- Include updated population and employment projections.
- Contain a new policy framework and mapping which has regard for the new structure components, as identified on *Schedule 2* of the EMRGP. The location and extent of the applicable structures will be refined through the MDP revision process.
Part 2: Growth Plan Policy Areas

#1 – Economic Competitiveness and Employment


Applicable 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

CityPlan

The current MDP contains some policies which support economic development, such as creating local employment opportunities. From a regional perspective, Policy 5.3 outlines the City’s support for Regional partnerships:

“...shall continue to be an active partner with the local and regional economic development, tourism, and community service groups to further St. Albert’s economic development efforts on a regional basis.”

Moving forward, the new MDP will

✓ Contain a policy framework which supports promoting a diverse, globally competitive, prosperous Region, with greater regard for regional economic development. This may include policies which encourage diversification of the energy sector to attract and support green energy, manufacturing, and technology opportunities, as identified in the EMRGP.
✓ Include new policies to support the efficient movement of goods, services, and people within the Region, to foster a strong economy and enhance competitiveness.
✓ Promote the livability and prosperity of the Region through new MDP policies. This may include supporting the planning and development of housing within close commuting distance to Employment Areas and Centres.
✓ Include major, local, and planned employment areas as identified on Schedules 3a and 3b of the EMRGP, and include new land use typologies and MDP mapping.
#2 – Natural Living Systems

Guiding Principle: Protect natural living systems and environmental assets.

Applicable 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

CityPlan

Known as the ‘Botanical Arts City’, St. Albert has a strong connection to the natural environment. The current MDP incorporates a Natural Areas Inventory, which identifies significant natural features on a local, regional, and provincial scale. The associated policies support conserving, enhancing, and connecting these areas. The current policy framework recognizes the importance of a green network approach to environmental planning, as outlined in Policy 10.3:

“The City of St. Albert shall require, wherever possible, that sustainable natural areas be integrated into the design of new development areas to form part of linked and integrated parks and open space systems....”

Moving forward, the new MDP will

- Strengthen existing policies, specifically through an ecological network approach, which supports conserving and enhancing a system of natural features such as wetlands, tree stands, and watercourse corridors.
- Utilize conservation tools to minimize the loss and fragmentation of natural living systems.
- Contain a supporting policy framework to promote clean air, land, and water. This may include policies which speak to new development incorporating low impact development standards and ecological design features.
- Address climate change mitigation through new policy development. This may include energy recovery and the use of green energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including district energy systems and renewable energy.
- Reflect Schedule 4 – Natural Living Systems of the EMRGP.
#3 – Communities and Housing

Guiding Principle: Recognize and celebrate the diversity of communities and promote an excellent quality of life across the Region.

Applicable 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

CityPlan
The current MDP contains policies which support a range of housing types for all members of the community, including rental, seniors, and affordable housing, as outlined in Policy 4.7:

“The City of St. Albert should work with non-profit groups, developers and other agencies and groups to substantially increase the long-term supply of affordable housing, particularly for young families, seniors and special needs groups.”

CityPlan also incorporates community design principles to ensure neighbourhoods are complete with the necessary components, including: natural areas, parks, schools, and amenities. For new greenfield residential development, the current MDP includes a minimum density target of 30 du/nrha, which reflects the City’s target outlined in the 2010 Capital Region Growth Plan - Growing Forward.

Moving forward, the new MDP will

✓ Build upon the existing policies which support a range of housing options in terms of density, built form, and type for current and new residents.
✓ Strengthen policy direction to ensure the planning and development of complete neighbourhoods, with amenities and services within walking distance.
✓ Incorporate a minimum density target of 40 du/nrha for future planned greenfield development, as outlined in the EMRGP.
✓ Strategically align new growth with future or planned transportation corridors and stations.
#4 – Integration of Land Use and Infrastructure

Guiding Principle: Achieve compact growth that optimizes infrastructure investment.

Applicable Objectives

4.1 Establish a compact and contiguous development pattern to accommodate employment and population growth
4.2 Enable growth within built up urban areas to optimize existing infrastructure and minimize the expansion of the development footprint
4.3 Plan and develop greenfield areas in an orderly and phased manner to contribute to complete communities
4.5 Plan for and develop mixed use and higher density centres as areas to concentrate growth of people and jobs
4.6 Prioritize investment and funding of regional infrastructure to support planned growth
4.7 Ensure compatible land use patterns to minimize risks to public health and safety

CityPlan
The current MDP supports managing residential and non-residential growth in an orderly, compatible, and efficient manner. The Plan discourages leapfrog development as the City requires phased development, directly associated with adequate levels of servicing. Policy 3.2 outlines this direction as follows:

“The City of St. Albert requires that development take place in a contiguous and sequential manner. Development shall not proceed unless the required transportation, improvements, infrastructure and community services are in place to support it.”

Moving forward, the new MDP will
- Incorporate a policy framework which supports achieving the aspirational intensification target of 17.5%, as outlined under Schedule 6 of the EMRGP.
- Strategically direct new growth to optimize existing and planned infrastructure.
- Include the appropriate policy direction to support achieving the aspirational targets of 140-160 people+jobs/gha and 100 du/nrha for the TOD and Urban Centres, respectively.
- Incorporate Schedules 8A and 8B which pertain to infrastructure and energy corridors.
#5 – Transportation Systems

Guiding Principle: Ensure effective regional mobility.

Applicable Objectives

5.1 Develop a regional transportation system to support and enhance growth and regional and global activity
5.2 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
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
5.5 Ensure effective coordination of regional transportation policies and initiatives between all jurisdictions

CityPlan

Several policies exist which speak to the importance of regional transportation planning, including Policy 12.3:

“The City of St. Albert shall work collaboratively with the City of Edmonton, Sturgeon County, Parkland County and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation to develop a safe and efficient regional transportation network for roadways, public transit, future light rail transit (LRT), truck and dangerous goods movement.”

The MDP largely defers to the City’s Transportation Master Plan (TMP) for determining the future transportation network and improvements. The TMP was recently updated in 2015 and incorporates the Region’s Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan.

Moving forward, the new MDP will

- Continue to build on regional collaboration to enhance growth and global activity, by supporting multi modal transportation choices.
- Contain the necessary policy framework and future land use plan to encourage and support a modal shift away from private automobile use.
- Include complementary work such as the Complete Streets Guidelines and Implementation Strategy to help shape future MDP policies.
- Incorporate the regional roads, transit, and related infrastructure, as shown on Schedule 10A and 10B of the EMRGP.
Guiding Principle: Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.

Applicable Objective

6.2 Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses

CityPlan
Within an urban context, the current MDP contains a general policy framework which supports the protection of agricultural areas. The policies support minimizing the potential for premature conversion of agricultural lands to other land uses, including Policy 11.1:

“Provide for orderly, economic and beneficial development through the Area Structure Plan process to avoid premature subdivision of productive agricultural lands.”

This is encouraged by the orderly phasing of development and by reducing leapfrog development through contiguous growth. The Plan also provides guidance to reduce conflict between agricultural and other land uses.

Moving forward, the new MDP will

✓ Build on the existing agriculture policies regarding fragmentation and conversion, by reflecting the policy direction outlined in Section 6.2 of the EMRGP.
✓ Recognize the importance of minimizing the premature development of agricultural lands.
✓ Ensure new greenfield development will be contiguous to built-up or planned urban areas and will be in conformance with the applicable minimum density target.
✓ Reflect Schedule 11, which indicates prime agricultural lands within City limits. In keeping with regional direction, an Agricultural Impact Assessment will be required as part of any new Area Structure Plan application.