

## Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force

Friday, August 16, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

City of Edmonton – City Hall (main floor), Heritage Room  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton, AB

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### Members:

Rod Shaigec, *Parkland County (Chair)*  
Michael Walters, *City of Edmonton (Vice Chair)*  
John Stewart, *City of Beaumont (Alternate)*  
Tanni Doblanko, *Leduc County*  
Alanna Hnatiw, *Sturgeon County*  
Paul Smith, *Strathcona County*  
Barry Turner, *Town of Morinville*

### Technical Members:

Garett Broadbent, *Leduc County*  
Darren Haarsma, *Parkland County*  
Joel Gould, *Strathcona County*  
John Knapp, *Parkland County*  
Angela Veenstra, *Sturgeon County*  
Hani Quan, *City of Edmonton*  
Karen Sundquist, *Government of Alberta*

### EMRB Staff:

Karen Wichuk, *CEO*  
Sharon Shuya, *Director, Regional Growth  
Planning*  
Bryan Haggarty, *Director of Strategic Initiatives  
and Operations*  
Dan Rose, *Senior Communications Advisor*  
Taylor Varro, *Project Manager*  
Carol Moreno, *Project Coordinator*

### Consultants

Jerry Bouma, *Toma & Bouma*  
Bob Burden, *Serecon*

### Guests:

A. Azad, *Town of Morinville*  
Teaka Broughm, *City of Beaumont*  
Jordan Brown, *City of Leduc*  
Neal Comeau, *Sturgeon County*  
Charleen Currie, *City of Edmonton*  
Gibby Davis, *City of Edmonton*  
Madison Dube, *City of Edmonton*  
Trevor Duley, *City of St. Albert*  
Lyndsay Francis, *City of St. Albert*  
Greg Hofmann, *City of Edmonton*  
Laurie Johnson, *Leduc County*  
Michael Klassen, *Sturgeon County*  
Anne Bentley Manson, *Interested Public*  
Avril McCalla, *City of Edmonton*  
Robert Parks, *Strathcona County*  
Paul Ross, *City of Edmonton*  
Shree Shinde, *City of Fort Saskatchewan*

## 1. Opening

### 1.1 Quorum

Quorum achieved; 7 of 7 voting members present.

### 1.2 Call to Order

Chair Shaigec called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### 1.3 Chair Opening Remarks

Chair Shaigec welcomed the members of the Task Force and other guests.

## 2. Approval of Agenda

Councillor Walters proposed a discussion on economic development and Chair Shaigec accepted the additional agenda item.

RAMP19-17

**Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the August 16, 2019 meeting agenda as amended.

**Moved by:** Mayor Doblanko

**Accepted by:** Chair

**Decision:** Carried unanimously

## 3. Approval of Minutes

RAMP19-18

**Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force approve the June 14, 2019 meeting minutes.

**Moved by:** Mayor Hnatiw

**Accepted by:** Chair

**Decision:** Carried unanimously

## 4. Review June 14 Task Force Meeting Outcomes

Mr. Burden reviewed the last Task Force meeting's progress towards developing an agriculture boundary through a series of progressions.

## 5. Outcomes for August 16 Task Force Meeting

Mr. Burden outlined the expectations for this meeting in terms of giving direction to the Working Group's next steps on the planning framework and policy areas, implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and incorporation of a communication strategy.

## **6. Planning Framework Approach**

Mr. Knapp presented the updated application of the RAMP Planning Framework, on behalf of the Working Group. He thanked the Working Group members and the additional representatives from urban municipalities who helped shape the most recent Task Force materials.

Mr. Knapp explained that the current approach to developing and mapping policy areas will demonstrate various agricultural policies will apply to all lands within the Region and ultimately lead to significant progress with the RAMP. He described the four policy areas as General Agriculture, Other Areas, Agriculture Inside the Metropolitan Area, and Urban Agriculture. The Small Holdings category has been incorporated into General Agriculture as its principal intent is primary agriculture.

The Task Force commented on the potential interface of policy areas, clarified that the policy areas are required to refine the Agriculture Boundary, and discussed how the RAMP Vision and Guiding Principles were applied in order to develop the policy foundations for each Agriculture Policy Area. Task Force members encouraged the project team to consider economic development, alignment with Edmonton Global, and infrastructure considerations as the Policy Areas are further developed. In response to the Task Force's questions regarding RAMP implementation, Mr. Knapp indicated that further discussion is required but the intention is to see RAMP policies enacted as a minimum benchmark with an awareness and sensitivity to unique municipal contexts.

Mr. Knapp also provided a summary of the policy directions for growth, as per the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, as foundational to the work of the RAMP.

Mr. Knapp shared that this marks his 50<sup>th</sup> year working on agriculture policy development and describe the task of RAMP as having a high degree of difficulty but incredible potential as legacy work. Chair Shaigec thanked him for his years of dedication, expertise, and wisdom.

### **6.1. Agriculture Policy Area Framework – Vision, Intent, and Policy Directions**

Mr. Bouma led the Task Force through a detailed description of each of the four Agriculture Policy Areas: 1) General Agriculture, 2) Other Areas, 3) Agriculture Inside the Metropolitan Area, and 4) Urban Agriculture. The Task Force offered feedback regarding policies to inform hamlet growth and developed areas of country residential, clustering of value-added processing and support services, and areas dedicated to research, development and education.

Mr. Bouma clarified that municipalities are not prohibited from applying greater specificity within these policy areas. Municipalities may use their discretion to designate a sub-category for small holdings, for example. The Task Force requested additional clarity on the possible role of the LESA tool and the potential to reassign the Agriculture Policy Areas in response to changes over time. Mr. Bouma explained that the Working Group will further develop the policy areas and it will become clear which areas will be conducive to the use of LESA as a tool to inform the priority for Agriculture and non-agricultural uses.

Mr. Bouma outlined the 50-year vision, intent and policy direction for General Agriculture, which includes primary agriculture, confined feeding operations, and diversified/value-added agriculture. Mr. Burden clarified that the LESA tool can only be correctly applied within the context of a defined policy intent and the Working Group is seeking the Task Force's direction. The Task Force offered feedback on including municipal administrations when mapping the Policy Areas, considerations for infrastructure and Alberta Transportation's plan for regional highways, suggestion of a cross-ministerial presentation to the Government of Alberta, annexation plans and engagement of non-EMRB municipalities, and climate change.

*Break - 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.*

Mr. Bouma outlined the 50-year vision, intent and policy direction for Policy Area 2: Other Areas, which includes undeveloped country residential, resource extraction areas, environmental areas, industrial lands, employment areas, and recreation areas. Generally, Policy Area 2 will be located within the rural area. The Task Force recognized that lands currently used for resource extraction, once reclaimed, may not be best suited for agricultural use. Land use decisions should be left to the municipalities to examine strategic opportunities that consider its location and the potential to leverage existing infrastructure for non-agricultural uses. It was also suggested that underdeveloped country residential should be included in this policy area. Other comments related to evaluating vacancy rates of underdeveloped country residential areas, possible redesignation of existing country residential areas back to agriculture, and the potential use of transfer of development credits.

Mr. Bouma outlined the 50-year vision, intent and policy direction for Policy Area 3: Agriculture Inside the Metropolitan Area, characterized as lands zoned or designated agriculture or currently in use for agriculture. The Task Force discussed the complexity of this area due to increased development pressure and recognized the Growth Plan already provides policy direction for responsible growth. All policy areas will be developed further with the support of the Working Group. Areas where multiple municipalities have differing perspectives on Policy Area application will be brought forward for further discussion and resolution.

Mr. Bouma outlined the 50-year vision, intent and policy direction for Policy Area 4: Urban Agriculture, characterized as built-up urban areas including hamlets. Consideration will be given where Areas 1 and 4 interface, as urban agriculture can impact surrounding producers.

Ms. Shuya provided a timeline for the project team's next steps incorporating this valuable feedback and direction from the Task Force. The project team will continue the refinement of each policy area's parameters, conduct a mapping exercise with all member municipalities, and prepare a more detailed draft of the Policy Area Framework for the October Task Force meeting.

RAMP19-19

**Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force endorse the four Policy Areas and the Vision, Intent, and Policy Directions for each to inform further work on policy development and mapping.

**Moved by:** Councillor Walters

**Accepted by:** Chair

**Decision:** Carried unanimously

*Break for Lunch - 11:54 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.*

## **7. Draft RAMP Engagement Plan**

*Councillor Walters rejoined the meeting following lunch at 12:37 p.m.*

Ms. Shuya provided the Task Force with an update on plans to implement the Draft RAMP Stakeholder Engagement Plan, incorporating the feedback gathered at the June 14, 2019 Task Force meeting. EMRB plans to present to municipal councils, organize regional stakeholder group sessions, and host a regional roundtable to foster open discussion. EMRB Administration will work with municipalities to plan and extend invitations to regional engagement events, with consideration given to producers' ability to participate during peak agriculture periods.

The Task Force suggested that non-EMRB member municipalities could be invited to Council presentations, and that the Federal Government and various Chambers of Commerce should be identified as stakeholders. Ms. Shuya explained that Phase One will be primarily informational but subsequent phases will include more detail on how stakeholder feedback will be channeled to specific opportunities for influence and conducive to actionable input. Leduc County volunteered to host the first regional stakeholder session.

RAMP19-20

**Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force endorse the Draft RAMP Engagement Plan for implementation.

**Moved by:** Mayor Doblanko

**Accepted by:** Chair

**Decision:** Carried unanimously

## **8. Economic Development**

Councillor Walters reminded the Task Force of the RAMP objectives related to economic development and proposed that it be a standing agenda item. The Task Force discussed the proposal to involve Edmonton Global at the Task Force, the Working Group, and/or observe the regional engagement sessions. The Task Force acknowledged the need to avoid duplication of efforts and promote efficiencies. CEO Wichuk shared the nature of ongoing communication with Edmonton Global regarding their alignment with RAMP and potential participants.

RAMP19-21

**Motion:** That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan Task Force extend an invitation to Edmonton Global to participate in the Task Force.

**Moved by:** Councillor Walters

**Accepted by:** Chair

**Decision:** Carried unanimously

## **9. RAMP Meeting Schedule**

Ms. Shuya outlined the proposed meeting schedule. In response to some scheduling conflicts, the next meeting was moved to October 28 and a poll will be conducted to explore alternate dates for December.

## **10. Draft RAMP Communications Plan**

CEO Wichuk introduced Mr. Rose and shared some of his experience with the Assistant Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Forestry as well as the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), and the Edmonton Heritage Planning Council.

Mr. Rose led the Task Force through the draft objectives and strategies for RAMP Communications. He emphasized the need to make the EMRB's work tangible and understandable to a variety of audiences, respond to political sensitivities, and provide consistency and rigor across communication platforms. EMRB committed to preparing and circulating communications briefings to Task Force members following each meeting to capture the key discussion points and assist in sharing RAMP updates with councils. Another product will be a high-level infographic, stylized summary for public circulation. Mr. Rose indicated that Task Force members may be asked to participate in producing video vignettes and other materials to champion the RAMP. The Communications Plan will undergo further refinement and brought to the Task Force at a later date.

Members of Task Force suggested framing communications related to critical opportunity costs, in terms of climate change, agriculture, and economic development. They also noted that the communications tactics and engagement strategies are inextricably linked to ensure a meaningful consultation process.

## **11. Meeting Summary and Next Steps**

Mr. Burden summarized the record of key decisions:

1. Solid direction to Working Group on their parameters
2. Evolution of the planning framework and endorsed by the Task Force
3. Discussion and approval of policy area conceptual framework
4. Approval of the structure and implementation of Engagement Plan
5. Invitation to participate in the Task Force extended to Edmonton Global
6. Clear and consistent key messages, tools provided to the Task Force
7. Recognition of the challenges that lay ahead

Chair Shaigec thanked the Task Force for a productive meeting and the project team for their diligent work. He invited comments from member of public in attendance. Comments included a reminder not to lose sight of how this work will impact the producers at the ground level.



## 12. Adjournment

Chair Shaigec declared the Task Force meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.



Task Force Chair, Rod Shaigec