

# Implementation Guidelines for Cluster Country Residential Areas (CCRAs)

## 1. WHAT IS A CCRA?

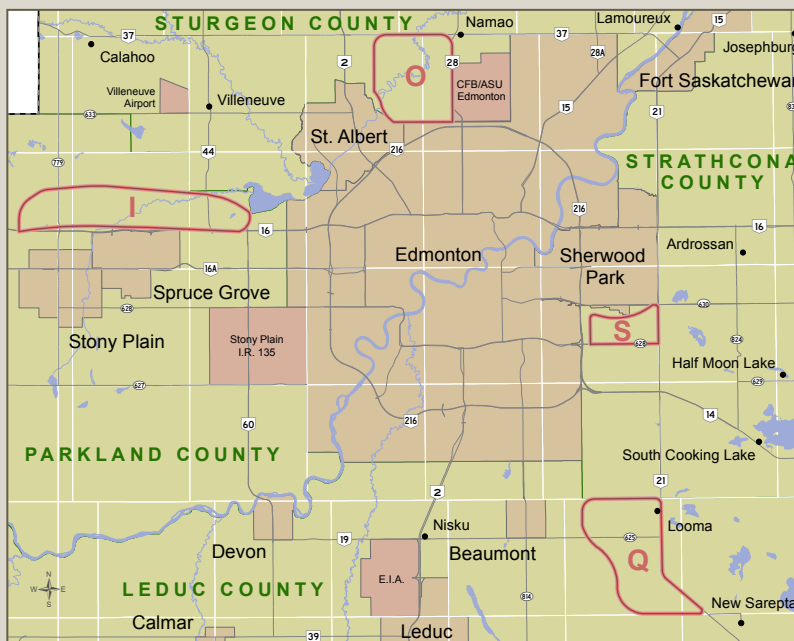
The Capital Region Growth Plan defines Cluster Country Residential Areas (CCRAs) as rural lands that have been subdivided to create multiple residential lots that are connected to municipal or communal services and grouped together to ensure the maximum amount of open space is maintained (in line with conservation design principles).

Cluster Country Residential Areas, through the implementation of the CCRA density target and conservation design principles, have a smaller development footprint than traditional country residential development, and therefore infrastructure and services can be provided in a more efficient way. In addition, by accessing existing infrastructure and increasing the amount of open space, CCRAs place a higher value on the environment than traditional country residential development.

There are four CCRAs in the Capital Region; one in each of Parkland County (Area I), Sturgeon County (Area O), Leduc County (Area Q) and Strathcona County (Area S). *Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas and Cluster Country Residential Areas of the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use)* illustrates CCRAs within the Region.

The general locations of the CCRAs in the Capital Region are presented in Exhibit 1.

### EXHIBIT 1: LOCATIONS OF CLUSTER COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL AREAS



## 2. ARE THE DENSITY TARGETS ASSIGNED TO CCRAS TO BE ACHIEVED IN THE 35 YEAR TIME HORIZON OF THE GROWTH PLAN?

The Capital Region Growth Plan intends that development within CCRAs reach the approved density target over the 35-year horizon of the Growth Plan. Member municipalities will achieve the density target assigned to CCRAs located within their boundaries through the amendment, adoption and implementation of statutory plans.

The October 2009 Addendum of the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use) established a CCRA density target of 2 units per gross hectare (2 du/gross ha).

The CCRA density target could result in approximately 129 lots per quarter section depending on the lands' characteristics. The density target developed for the CCRAs reflects current conservation design trends within the Capital Region and best planning practices for cluster country residential development.

The Growth Plan is silent regarding the transfer of density within or between designated CCRAs.

## 3. DOES EVERY DEVELOPMENT PLAN WITHIN A CCRA HAVE TO MEET THE DENSITY TARGET ASSIGNED TO THAT CCRA?

It is the intent of the Capital Region Growth Plan that every development plan will over time achieve the density target assigned to CCRAs. Each plan must demonstrate how it will achieve the density target.

## 4. WHAT SHOULD MUNICIPALITIES CONSIDER IN PLANS FOR CCRAs?

Municipalities should consider both access to municipal services and conservation design principles when working on development plans for CCRAs. Conservation design requires that the ecology of a site be considered and that natural features with a high aesthetic or environmental value be maintained as open space. For multi-lot country residential subdivisions this also means maintaining open space by clustering lots on those portions of the site that have a lesser aesthetic or environmental value. By definition, conservation design will result in smaller lots than the more traditional approach where the entire quarter section would be subdivided without retaining high value natural features as open space. Mechanics for securing open space outside of the municipal reserve provisions of the Municipal Government Act would be the subject of negotiation with the approving municipality. *Exhibit 2: Example of Cluster Country Residential Development at a Density Target of 2 du/GRha*, next page, illustrates an example of CCRA development and the associated land use statistics.

CCRA developments are different from traditional country residential development in terms of density, lot size, servicing and design. The purpose of CRRAs is to support the Capital Region Land Use Plan's objectives to increase densities, minimize the regional development footprint and use conservation design principles. In general terms:

- CCRA lot sizes are smaller than traditional country residential developments;
- CCRA densities are intended to be less than suburban development densities, which are greater than approximately 129 units per quarter section;
- CCRAs are developed with residential land uses that integrate with natural environmental features and maintain larger areas of open spaces; and
- CCRA developments have access municipal water and sanitary services. Private communal services may be allowed at the discretion of the municipality.

**EXHIBIT 2: EXAMPLE OF CLUSTER COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AT A DENSITY TARGET OF 2 DU/GRHA** (du/GRha - dwelling units per gross residential hectare)



**Legend**

- Residential
- Open Space
- Enhanced Wetlands (PUL)
- Existing Wetlands (ER)
- Tree Stands
- Roads

**Land Use Statistics**

<b>Average Lot Size</b>	<b>0.2 ha</b>
<b>Gross Area</b>	<b>63.7 ha</b>
Residential	27.2 ha
<b>Gross Non-Residential</b>	<b>36.5 ha</b>
Open Space	13.3 ha
Enhanced Wetlands (PUL)	2.4 ha
Existing Wetlands (ER)	0.9 ha
Tree Stands	12.2 ha
Roads	7.7 ha

## 5. HOW ARE THE CCRA BOUNDARIES TO BE INTERPRETED?

The conceptual boundaries of CCRA, as presented in the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use), may not necessarily represent logical planning units at the municipal level. Therefore, a set of interpretive clauses has been developed to help determine the logical location of the CCRA boundaries, and therefore which particular lands are within CCRA. These interpretive clauses are based on similar language used by municipalities across the Region in their Land Use Bylaws. The clauses are intended help municipal representatives (administrators and elected officials) in making local land use planning decisions and also provide direction to landowners and developers.

Should a member municipality be uncertain relative to the location of any CCRA boundary within its jurisdiction, as depicted on *Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas and Cluster Country Residential Areas* of the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use), the location may be determined by applying the following interpretive clauses:

1. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following a Priority Growth Area (PGA) boundary, it should be considered as exactly following the PGA boundary;
2. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the centre of existing or future highways, regional roads, municipal roads or other public thoroughfares, the CCRA boundary should be considered as following the centre line of these roads;
3. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the edge or shorelines of waterways (e.g., rivers or creeks) or other bodies of water (e.g., lakes), the CCRA boundary should be considered as following the edge or shoreline, and in the event of change in such edge or shoreline, the CCRA boundary should move with the same;
4. where a CCRA boundary is shown approximately following the boundary of a member municipality, or an urban service area recognized by Alberta Municipal Affairs, it should be considered as following the boundary of the member municipality or urban service area;
5. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the boundary of the Edmonton Transportation and Utility Corridor (TUC), it should be considered as following the Edmonton TUC boundary;
6. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the centre of pipelines, railway lines or utility easements, it should be considered as following the centre line of this infrastructure;
7. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the edge of an identified environmentally sensitive area, as shown in *Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas and Cluster Country Residential Areas* of the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use), or the top-of-the-bank line of an escarpment, or other significant topographic feature, then the CCRA boundary should be considered as following the edge line of the feature, and in the event that this line is changed, the CCRA boundary should move with that line;
8. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the edge of an approved statutory plan boundary (or boundaries of identified policy areas, land use designations or land use overlays within an approved statutory plan) as the approved statutory plan existed at the time that *Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas and Cluster Country Residential Areas* of the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use) was approved by the Capital Region Board (October 18, 2009), the CCRA boundary should be considered as following that boundary, and in the event that the approved boundary is changed, through a successful Regional Evaluation Framework application, the CCRA boundary should move with that boundary;

9. where a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following the boundary of a quarter section or a registered parcel, or a legal subdivision within a quarter section (outside urban municipalities only), then the boundary of the CCRA should follow the portion of the CCRA boundary which approximates the quarter section, registered parcel or legal subdivision boundary;
10. where a curved portion of a CCRA boundary is shown as approximately following a quarter section line prior to entering a curve, splitting quarter sections as a result, then the curved CCRA boundary should be considered to be coincident to the quarter section lines at right angles;
11. where a CCRA boundary is shown as being parallel to, an offset of, or as an extension of features noted above, it should be so construed; and
12. in all other cases where a CCRA boundary appears to divide a quarter section or registered parcel, the CCRA boundary should be adjusted inward to the nearest quarter section line or public roadway (or the nearest geographic feature noted above) to minimize the regional footprint in accordance with the Capital Region Growth Plan.

In the event where a CCRA boundary follows more than one of the geographic features listed in the above interpretive clauses, it is suggested that the geographic location that is listed first should have precedence over the others.

In the event where features on the ground differ from how they appear on *Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas and Cluster Country Residential Areas* of the October 2009 Addendum to the Growth Plan (Section 2: Land Use), or in any other circumstances not mentioned above, a member municipality may request assistance from the Capital Region Board to interpret that portion of the CCRA boundary

## 6. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CCRA's?

For more specific information, please refer to:

- Sections 2.2.II.E of the Capital Region Growth Plan, March 2009; and
- Section 2.4, Appendix A and B of the Capital Region Growth Plan, October 2009 Addendum; or
- contact your CRB Member Municipality.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### Capital Region Board

Web: [www.capitalregionboard.ab.ca](http://www.capitalregionboard.ab.ca)

Phone: (780) 638-6000

Email: [info@capitalregionboard.ab.ca](mailto:info@capitalregionboard.ab.ca)

**DISCLAIMER:** This Planning Toolkit is a guide to aid understanding of the Land Use Principles and Policies of the Capital Region Growth Plan. It is not a substitute for reading and understanding the Growth Plan. For certainty, the reader is advised to refer to the Growth Plan and related legislation available through the Capital Region Board.