



REF 2020-001 St. Albert Municipal Development Plan Amendment and Erin Ridge North Area Structure Plan Amendment

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF application 2020-001 be approved.

Background

On December 20, 2019, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) received an application from the City of St. Albert (the City) for approval of proposed amendments to the City's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Erin Ridge North Area Structure Plan (ASP). The City submitted the proposed MDP and ASP amendments pursuant to the following submission criteria in the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF):

- 4.2 *A municipality must refer to the Board any proposed amendment to a statutory plan that meets one or more of the following conditions:*
- g) The proposed statutory plan amendment results in a decrease of the planned density of the statutory plan area.*
- And*
- j) The plan area of the proposed amendment to the statutory plan includes a Park and Ride or Planned LRT line or the boundaries of the proposed amendment to the statutory plan are within 0.8 km of a Park and Ride or Planned LRT line as identified on Schedule 10B: Transportation Systems –Regional Transit and Trails to 2033 in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.*

EMRB Administration deemed the application complete on January 2, 2020.

Application

The proposed amendment to the ASP redesignates the subject site in proximity to a future LRT line, from Mixed-Use Commercial with Residential to Commercial. Additionally, in conjunction with the ASP amendment, the City proposes an amendment to the MDP to redesignate a portion of the subject site from Residential to Commercial. The proposed amendments comprise the third reduction in density to be referred to the EMRB in the area of the North St. Albert Transit Oriented Development since the adoption of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP), which is addressed in detail within the EMRB Administration Comments section of this report.



Evaluation

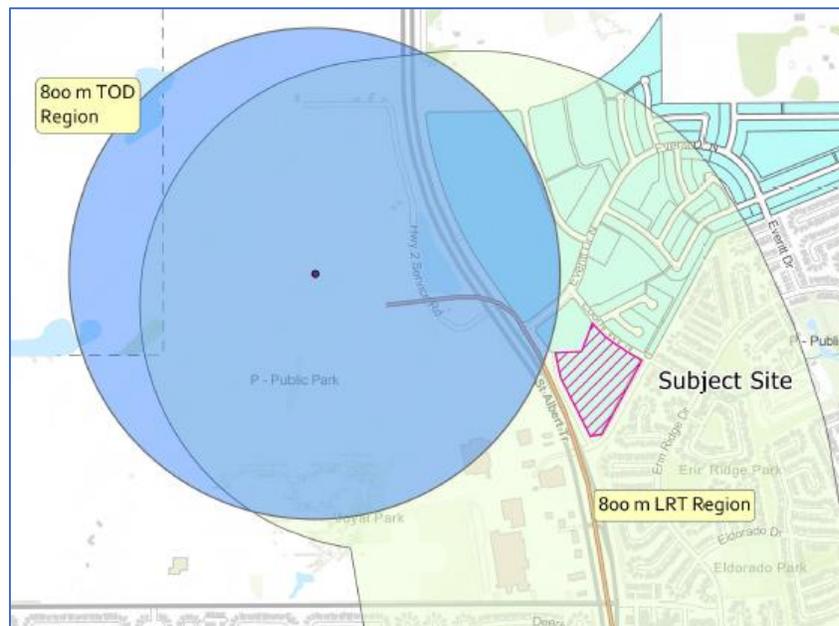
EMRB Administration obtained the assistance of Scheffer Andrew Planners and Engineers (Scheffer Andrew) to evaluate the application with respect to legislative requirements. The Scheffer Andrew evaluation (attached) reviewed the proposed amendments to the MDP and ASP in relation to: Part 3 of EMRB Regulation 189/2017; Section 8 of Schedule A of REF Ministerial Order MSL 111/17; and, the Principles and Policies of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP). The Scheffer Andrew evaluation recommends that the City of St. Albert's proposed amendments to the MDP and Erin Ridge North ASP be approved by the EMRB.

EMRB Administration Comments

The proposed MDP and ASP amendments affect lands within the Erin Ridge North neighbourhood located within the Metropolitan Area Tier of the Metropolitan Region Structure to 2044 (Schedule 2 of the EMRGP); therefore, the evaluation has been reviewed for consistency with the principles and policies pursuant to this Policy Area in the EMRGP. A portion of the Erin Ridge North ASP, including the specific area are located within 800 m of a future LRT Line, identified on Schedule 2 of the Growth Plan.

The Erin Ridge North ASP was originally reviewed for consistency with the Transitional Regional Evaluation Framework and was approved prior to adoption of the Capital Region Growth Plan (CRGP). The ASP was subsequently amended multiple times, including two amendments that increased the size of the original ASP by over 50%, leading to multiple policy areas with different approaches to implementing the CRGP and EMRGP. Unfortunately, the policy framework of the ASP does not clearly address the density and land use policies of each Growth Plan, as the newest additions include no discussion of complete communities, aspirational densities near Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Centres, or toward more compact development near LRT corridors despite EMRGP notations on the ASP's Future Land Use Map for Phase 2B.

Therefore, in order to deem the application complete, EMRB requested additional clarification regarding the subject amendment area and its proximity to the TOD, as only the LRT corridor is depicted in Figure 3 of the application Cover Letter. The City of St. Albert clarified that the subject site is not located within the municipally designated TOD, which is to





the west of St. Albert Trail (as adopted in the City's Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan). Figure 3 of the Cover Letter depicts the EMRGP TOD location, which the City of St. Albert has clarified is not correct. The figure on the previous page, prepared by EMRB administration for clarity, depicts the TOD Centre in blue and the LRT buffer in light green.

With the application clarification, the proposal was reviewed based upon the following findings:

- The subject site is in a grandfathered ASP approved in 2009 and later amended in compliance with the CRGP when the subject lands changed from Institutional to Mixed-Use. Therefore, the site is located in a Planned Area.
- Planned Areas are not subject to greenfield density requirements; however, all other policies of the Growth Plan are subject to the evaluation.
- The subject site is located within a local employment area.

The proposed amendment area is 4.4 ha in size and is located at the northeast corner of St. Albert Trail and Coal Mine Road. The site was originally subdivided and developed for religious assembly purposes and was designated for institutional use when first developed as an ASP in 2009. The land use designation was updated in 2017 to Mixed-Use, which was reflected in the MDP through the re-designation of commercial to residential use on the east side of the site.

The proposed ASP and MDP Amendments would result in a reduction of approximately 120 dwelling units from the site, resulting in an overall decrease of the ASP from 36.1 to 34.7 du/nrha. As the subject site received an approved amendment under the CRGP, EMRB Administration looks to Section 8.2 of Ministerial Order No. MSL: 111/17 for density guidance, which allows for the use of the CRGP densities, with all other provisions of the EMRGP in effect for evaluation purposes.

In the opinion of EMRB Administration, the proposal reduces land use intensity along an important transit corridor. However, there is no specific inconsistency with the EMRGP given the City of St. Albert's assertion that the site is located outside of the TOD Centre. In addition, given the subject site's location along a future LRT Corridor and in proximity to existing transit, the existing Mixed-Use designation best implements policies regarding optimizing existing infrastructure and minimizing the expansion of the development footprint, as well as encouraging mixed-use near higher-order transit to concentrate growth of people and jobs. That said, the proposed commercial designation remains consistent with the Local Employment Area and is contiguous to residential development, which is also encouraged in compact, complete communities.

EMRB Administration notes that critical TOD planning anticipated as part of the MDP update is not yet completed. Further, the City of the St. Albert has indicated the location and alignment of the future Transit Facility/Park and Ride may change, including the possibility of the facility moving closer to St. Albert Trail where development of the amendment area with a higher intensity use may be critical. Best practices would be to determine the TOD location in the MDP, and define the land use expectations for the same, prior to reducing the intensity of sites in the area. This is the



third such application under the EMRGP to the EMRB reducing densities in and around the North St. Albert TOD Centre without updating overarching policy direction in the MDP.

It is recommended that the future location of the TOD be fully understood by St. Albert when considering the proposed reduction in residential density and land use intensity at this important location.

Conclusion

The proposed MDP and ASP amendments, while a reduction in residential density and commercial intensity, are considered consistent with the policy direction of Local Employment Areas considering the subject site is located in a Planned Area. EMRB Administration looks forward to the policy direction forthcoming in the MDP to provide future clarity to TOD planning.

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF 2020-001 be approved.

Attachments

Evaluation	Scheffer Andrew
REF Documents	1. Cover Letter
	2. Report to Council
	3. Bylaw 33-2019 MDP
	4. Bylaw 32-2019 ASP
	5. Erin Ridge North ASP with no amendments
	6. Bylaw 34-2019 LUB Amendment
	7. Court Reporter Transcript
	8. Circulation Responses
	9. MDP Map Amendment
	10. LRT Buffer Map
	11. Fiscal Impact Assessment Summary Table
	12. DCMU-RC Comparison of Uses
	13. Current MDP