



REF 2020-015, City of Fort Saskatchewan New Municipal Development Plan

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF application 2020-015 be approved.

Background

On October 28, 2020, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) received an application from the City of Fort Saskatchewan (the City) for a new Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The City submitted the plan pursuant to the following submission criteria in the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF):

4.1 A municipality must refer to the Board any proposed new statutory plan, except for

- a) a new sub-area structure plan that is subordinate to and consistent with its higher order area structure plan or area redevelopment plan;*
- b) a new area structure plan for country residential development within the zoned and/or designated country residential areas as depicted on Schedule 2: Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044 in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan; or,*
- c) a new area structure plan in a town or village with a population of less than 5000 that is consistent with the town or village municipal development plan.*

EMRB Administration deemed the application complete on November 3, 2020.

Application

The proposed City of Fort Saskatchewan Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is being adopted for alignment with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. The existing MDP will be repealed upon approval.

Evaluation

EMRB Administration obtained the assistance of Scheffer Andrew Planners and Engineers (Scheffer Andrew) to evaluate the application with respect to the REF requirements. The Scheffer Andrew evaluation (attached) reviewed the proposed new MDP 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 the proposed Municipal Development Plan be approved by the EMRB.



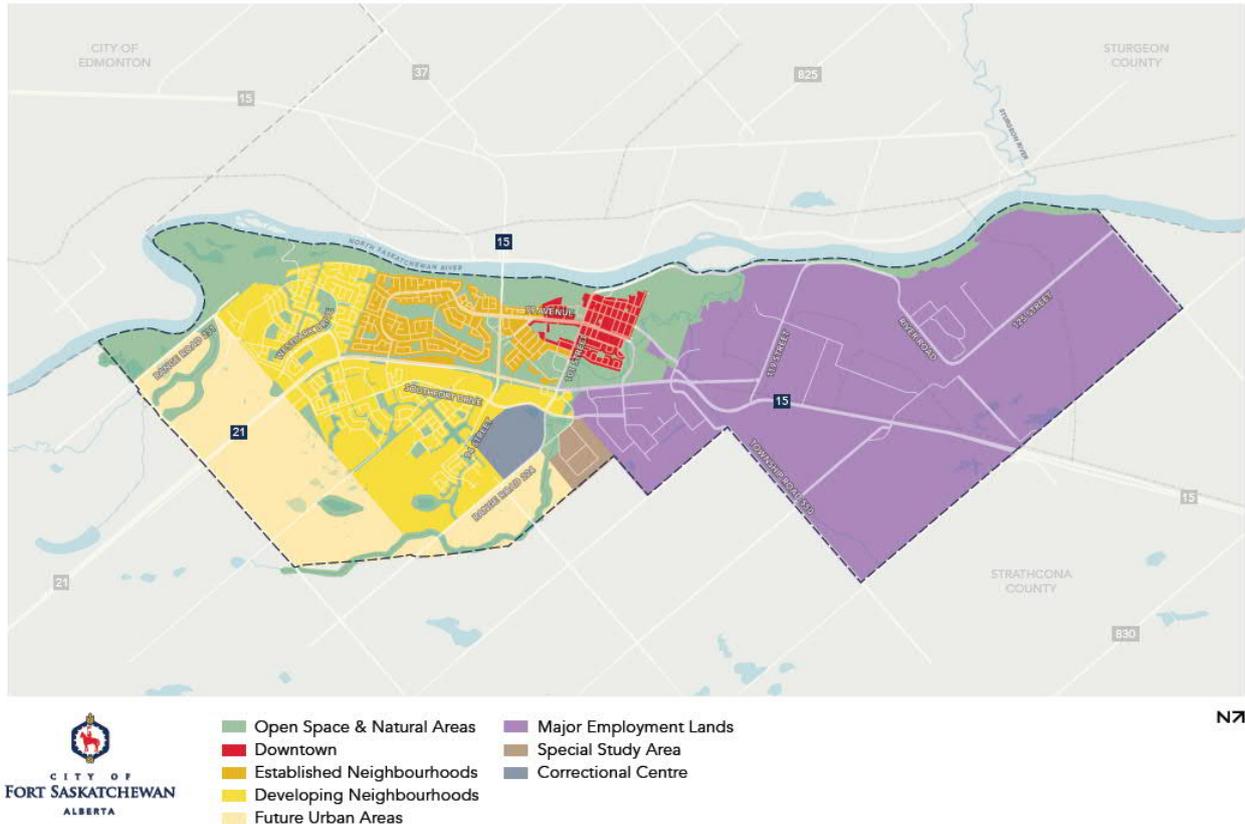
EMRB Administration Comments

The City of Fort Saskatchewan is located entirely within the Metropolitan Area as depicted in Schedule 2 of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP). Therefore, the application is being evaluated for its consistency with the principles and policies of this policy tier.

The City of Fort Saskatchewan MDP, entitled *Our Fort. Our Future.*, plans for the growth of the City to a population 50,000, which is between the low and high growth projections for Fort Saskatchewan within Schedule 1 of the EMRGP. The MDP builds on an overarching Community Direction Statement supported by five Plan Pillars. Each Plan Pillar is further supported by policies and objectives.

The City's MDP recognizes the unique location of Fort Saskatchewan as the gateway to the Industrial Heartland and the important ecological network of the North Saskatchewan River valley, focusing on balanced growth building upon the City's assets.

The proposed MDP features a policy area approach. Section 5.0 *City-wide Policies* includes objectives and policies relating to planning and services throughout the entire City, including regional cooperation. More specific policies are identified relating to geographic areas identified in Map 3 Policy Areas (below). City-wide Policies focus on regional cooperation and partnerships,



Map 3 – Policy Areas



public engagement, emergency preparedness and safety, environmental resiliency, vacant and underutilized lands, and housing affordability. City-wide policy areas espouse cooperation and partnerships both between various governments, but also with private partnerships, to meet city-wide objectives. Examples include regional cooperation with the EMRB, working with stakeholders in the North Saskatchewan River watershed, mutual support with surrounding municipalities to handle emergency services, and potential public-private partnerships to meet affordable housing needs.

Section 6.0 Our Neighbourhoods supports complete communities across the varied and diverse neighbourhoods within the City. Neighbourhood Nodes will form the centre of neighbourhoods, promoting a walkable neighbourhood centre providing a local destination for the surrounding community. Neighbourhood Nodes will feature higher densities and will be anchored around community amenities with a fine-grain modified-grid street pattern to enhance walkability. The Neighbourhood Node policy area includes step-by-step illustrations on how to plan a potential Neighbourhood Node to ensure clear understanding of MDP objectives. The policy area includes significant detail around universal design for accessibility as well as urban design principles to encourage an active, interesting neighbourhood in all seasons.

Looking at the Downtown (identified as an Urban Centre in the Growth Plan) as a neighbourhood, the MDP recognizes a greater population is needed downtown to support business vitality, redevelopment and intensification. Similarly, intensification is targeted in Established Neighbourhoods along transit routes and near community amenities. Design concepts highlight potential opportunities for redeveloping underutilized commercial sites into Neighbourhoods Nodes to better support and connect communities.

In developing neighbourhoods, new Area Structure Plans must include a Node and its amenities, as well as including phasing for long-term viability of agriculture uses to mitigate premature fragmentation. One special study area has been identified for Clover Park, an existing country residential development unique within the City. This neighbourhood will be the subject of a future study to determine strategies for potential intensification.

Section 7.0 of the MDP provides policy around Fort Saskatchewan's natural resources and natural systems, as well as greening municipal infrastructure. Policies include protection and enhancement of ecological systems, striving to weave greenspaces and other ecological connections throughout the City to put residents in touch with nature and to provide important ecological connections to the North Saskatchewan River Valley. Green infrastructure is encouraged through implementation of Low Impact Development principles and other measures such as incorporating natural landscaping into utility corridors and stormwater management facilities. The MDP also underscores the importance of access and visibility of green spaces to residents by ensuring minimum road frontages along environmental reserve lands, parks, and schools.

Mobility is addressed in Section 8.0 of the MDP, which promotes complete streets and connectivity through grid and modified-grid street systems. Policies support transit through a mix of uses and



higher density residential along key corridors and near park and ride locations, and recognizes the importance of working with local partners to increase transit access for all users. Goods movement policies focus on the highway and rail networks that serve the City, and includes policies requiring review of Transportation Demand Management strategies prior to widening roads.

Economic Development is the focus of Section 9.0, which includes a number of policies to support diversification of Fort Saskatchewan's economy, including focusing on foreign investment strategies, inventory analyses, expanding locations where businesses can operate, and developing partnerships for academic institutions and industry.

Section 10.0 of the MDP provides policy direction around Infrastructure and Servicing, including increasing efficiency and reducing costs through densification and phased development, as well as planning for climate resiliency in new development areas. Low impact development techniques are encouraged and further work will occur around integrating existing wetlands into the stormwater management system and encouraging permeable materials to reduce run-off and improve groundwater recharge.

While growth management principles and policies are included throughout the document, Section 11.0 provides further focus on how the City will manage growth citywide. Policies centre around fiscal sustainability and creating efficiencies through effective phasing of development, ensuring existing infrastructure is utilized first and existing neighbourhoods should build out before new neighbourhood development is initiated.

Section 12.0, Implementation, includes 13 different targets for implementation, including but not limited to: intensification targets in Established Neighbourhoods (16%) with redevelopment of nodes targeted at 60 du/nrha; reducing downtown vacancy rates from 15% to 7%; increasing densities in Developing Neighbourhoods by 15%, centered around a node of 70 du/nrha. Transit service to each node is targeted at every 15 minutes. These are consistent with targets applicable to the City in Schedule 6: Greenfield Density, Centres and Intensification Targets outlined in the Growth Plan. The MDP explores Strategic Implementation in Section 13.0, which focuses on the follow-up studies, plans, and projects that will fully implement the Plan.

Our Fort. Our Future., Fort Saskatchewan's Municipal Development Plan is comprehensive in nature and provides illuminating detail in how the City can achieve a more compact and efficient development pattern for a resilient future. Overall, the MDP is consistent with the principles and policies of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan and Section 8.0 of the REF.

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF 2020-015 be approved.

Attachments

Evaluation

Scheffer Andrew Planners and Engineers



Administration Recommendation to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board

November 24, 2020

REF Documents

1. REF Cover Letter
2. Council Report – MDP Bylaw
3. Bylaw C31-20
4. Schedule A – Bylaw C31-20 Our Fort. Our Future.
5. Bylaw C16-10
6. Amending Bylaw C17-20
7. Schedule A, Bylaw C17-20 (2010-2030 Municipal Development Plan)