



Legislation Text

File #: BL-20-050, Version: 1

TAMRMS#: B06

Bylaw 20/2020 Municipal Development Plan (1st Reading)

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RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

1. That Bylaw 20/2020, being a bylaw to adopt a Municipal Development Plan, be read for a first time.
2. That Bylaw 20/2020 be referred to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) for approval.
3. That Administration be directed to propose to Council a date and time for a Public Hearing on Bylaw 20/2020 during the first or second quarter of 2021 after the date of the anticipated approval decision of the EMRB is known.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report discusses the proposed new Municipal Development Plan (MDP), *Flourish - Growing to 100K*, and the corresponding engagement process, which was integral in shaping the goals, principles, and policies outlined in *Flourish*.

Flourish has been drafted to align with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP) and requires approval by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB).

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Council Strategic Plan:

Strategic Priority #1: Growth Policy Framework: Develop a robust policy framework to guide growth.

1.1 Complete revision of the Municipal Development Plan.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Long range policy planning - the development and advancement of long range policy planning documents which proactively plan for and shape new growth and development in the city.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

All municipalities in Alberta must, by bylaw, adopt a Municipal Development Plan (MDP). Section 632 (3) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) sets out the matters that an MDP **must** address (including the future land use within the municipality) and the matters that it **may** address. The legislation further stipulates that an MDP must be consistent with any Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) in respect of land that is identified in both the MDP and the IDP. To ensure compliance with this provision the bylaw adopting the 2001 IDP between the City of St. Albert and Sturgeon County was repealed on December 7, 2020..

In addition to the requirements legislated through the MGA, section 5.6.3(j) of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP) requires St. Albert to update its MDP by October 26, 2020. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and associated impacts to public engagement, the Minister of Municipal Affairs granted the EMRB's request to extend this deadline to June 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

MDPs identify future development patterns within municipal boundaries and facilitate local planning and growth. An MDP provides information and direction on how a municipality will address the current and future needs of the community, including land use, transportation systems, services, and environmental considerations. An MDP is a long range, statutory planning document, which serves as an important decision-making tool for everyone involved in the city building process. This includes, Council, Administration, developers, property owners, businesses, service providers, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and school boards.

Originally drafted in 1999, *CityPlan* has been St. Albert's MDP document for over twenty years. While plan amendments have occurred on occasion, the overall direction has remained unchanged and is no longer reflective of the applicable policy context and contemporary drivers of change. As such, in 2018, work began on creating a new MDP to position St. Albert to plan proactively for growth, seize new opportunities, and take decisive action for the future.

St. Albert is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live in Canada and has experienced steady growth for the past several decades. This trend of growth is expected to continue, with forecasts from the Edmonton Metropolitan Region estimating, on average, the addition of almost 1,000 new residents and 500 new jobs in St. Albert every year.

Flourish - Growing to 100K, is St. Albert's proposed new MDP. It is a comprehensive, citywide plan for growth and change, which envisions reaching a future population of 100,000 residents and adding approximately 13,000 new jobs over the coming decades. The Plan's goals, policies, and strategic directions take a holistic approach that integrates the city's environment, social, economic, and cultural aspirations. As a foundational document, it will provide direction and guidance for private development, and a range of City initiatives, intended to reinforce St. Albert's livability, sustainability, and resilience.

Flourish is generally organized into the following sections:

Introduction and Context - introduces the document and describes the context for *Flourish's* creation in terms of higher-order plans and pressing issues influencing urban development

Plan Foundations - contains the broad goals of *Flourish*, principles aligned with the goals and the long term Urban Structure and General Land Use Plan, which together underpin the policies of the Plan

City-wide Policies - contains policies related to the environment, economic development, housing, mobility, community well-being, culture, infrastructure, placemaking, and sustainable growth

Land-Use Policies - contains policies that set out how land in all areas of the city can be used and developed, based on applicable land-use designations

Implementation - describes the tools and strategies that will be used to implement *Flourish*

Maps - clarifies where certain policies apply and contain supporting information relevant to *Flourish*

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Engagement and Communications Overview

Flourish has been built on the foundation created by *Cultivating Our Future: St. Albert's Community Vision*, which itself was developed through an extensive public process. *Flourish* applies this vision, along with new ideas that emerged through the planning process, into the goals, principles and policies of the Plan. The four phase process for creating *Flourish* continued the conversation about the city's future by engaging residents, Council, City Administration, business owners, community groups, developers, intermunicipal neighbours, and other community building partners.

The project team employed extensive engagement notification throughout this project such as newspaper ads, social media ads, mobile/LCD signage and pop-up displays, to promote *Flourish* and to increase community awareness. Some of these tactics included utilizing paid Facebook ads, utility billing, development/building permits, bookmarks in the library, community ambassador promotion, attendance at community events, and a photo contest. *Despite these extensive engagement efforts, it is likely that not every St. Albert resident or landowner is currently aware of the project*

Administration used community input, best practices and established planning/legal criteria to design and develop *Flourish*. When a municipality makes the decision to develop a whole new MDP such as *Flourish* it is not uncommon for individuals or groups to have concerns around some of the plan's content. However, the goal of the project is to provide a path forward that reflects the overall best interests of the City and reflects the values of residents, while addressing planning and legal responsibilities.

Public Engagement Process and Input

A robust and extensive public engagement process was designed, implemented, and adapted as needed, around key milestones for *Flourish*, to facilitate direct and timely input into project deliverables. Comments from a broad range of stakeholders provided formative input from the development of preliminary goals and growth scenarios through the refinement and optimization of principles and policies. To complement engagement around key milestones, engagement throughout

the project was continuously involving both internal and external opportunities. Overall, a diverse range of engagement opportunities was utilized and included interviews, a panel discussion, questionnaires (4), workshops (3), pop-up booths (25+), open houses (2), and community meetings (20+).

During the four phase process:

- First phase of community engagement (Fall 2018), the focus was on exploring growth considerations and opportunities. The project team engaged with the community to identify future challenges, big ideas, and innovations that the new MDP needed to address. Engagement opportunities in the first phase of the project included key stakeholder interviews, City Summit events, two online questionnaires and multiple pop-up booth events.
- Second phase of engagement (Spring 2019) focused on gathering feedback on the Plan's emerging goals and three growth scenarios. The project team engaged with the community through a variety of methods, including an open house, a developer/ builder workshop, stakeholder and advisory committee meetings, an online questionnaire, and multiple pop-up events.
- Third phase of engagement (Summer 2019) focused on gathering feedback on the Plan's emerging key policy directions. During this phase, the project team hosted a series of pop-up booths at popular community events and gathering places including: the St. Albert Farmers' Market, Rock n' August, Woodlands Spray Park, and Grosvenor Pool.
- Fourth phase of engagement were adapted and modified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with in-person engagement events being replaced with virtual engagement sessions. In Spring 2020, a draft Word version of the plan was shared with the Project Champions Team to gather feedback. Numerous virtual engagement sessions also coincided with sharing the draft plan including a Project Champions Team meeting, a session with UDI St. Albert representatives, a Chamber of Commerce roundtable session, and multiple sessions with various local developers. The fourth phase of community engagement (November 2020) was centered around informing the public about the proposed document and sharing a formatted version of *Flourish* with the community. This was accomplished by hosting a live webinar and offering a short questionnaire through the City's new Bang the Table engagement platform.

Project Champions Team and Community Meetings

To further enhance the engagement process and to gather a range of community input into *Flourish*, a Project Champions Team was created at the onset of the project. This dedicated team consisted of representatives from select city committees, boards, and key stakeholder groups. Specifically, it included members from the:

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Seniors Advisory Committee
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Subdivision and Development Appeal Board
- Economic Sustainability Advisory Board
- Chamber of Commerce
- Alberta Health Services and

Urban Development Institute (UDI) St. Albert

The Project Champions Team was an integral partner and community sounding board in the creation of *Flourish*. The team had key roles in the project, including general promotion of the project and the associated public engagement opportunities within their respective organizations. As well, the Project Champions shared project information and deliverables (e.g. the draft plan) with their respective organizations to gather feedback. Over the course of the project, the Project Champions met on eight occasions and provided valuable input at key milestones throughout the process.

In addition, the project team met with numerous city committees, community boards, and groups including:

- The Environmental, Community Services, and Youth Advisory Committees
- Economic Sustainability Advisory Board
- Chamber of Commerce Governance Committee
- St. Albert/Sturgeon County Métis Local
- Outloud St. Albert
- Neighbourhood Connectors

Further details regarding the engagement process, events, participants, and feedback, can be found in the attached Engagement Summary Reports for Phases 1, 2 and 3. The Final Engagement Report will be included in the future Council Agenda Report associated with the 2nd and 3rd reading of the implementing bylaw.

Internal Administrative Engagement

Throughout the course of the project, internal teams were instrumental in *Flourish*'s creation and refinement. This included a citywide team made up of representatives from city departments who contributed to the plan's overall strategic direction and provided technical expertise regarding policies. Internal engagement events included presentations, meetings, and open houses.

City Council was also an instrumental partner throughout the course of the project, contributing to *Flourish*'s content and engagement plans. Ongoing updates, and timely input was received and enhanced the quality of the plan.

Outside Agencies and Intermunicipal Engagement

Throughout the development of *Flourish*, the team hosted two workshop sessions with intermunicipal partners. In addition to providing key insight into intermunicipal opportunities, the sessions, along with the circulation of the draft document, fulfill the City's obligation for notification under the MGA and reduce the risk of an intermunicipal dispute (MGA Section 690).

An updated version of the draft *Flourish* document was referred to applicable government agencies, service providers, and school boards, in keeping with referral requirements for a new statutory plan.

The draft document was shared with EMRB Administration prior to first reading, to address any outstanding concerns regarding policy alignment.

Comments on the draft *Flourish* Plan

At the time of writing this report, over 700 written comments had been received as a result of sharing and circulating the draft plan both internally and externally. A new process was created and implemented to provide a comments summary with enhanced analysis. The process focused on reporting what the project team did with the written feedback. For each comment received, a written response was provided. Stakeholder comments and responses from the project team were also tracked and categorized to show how action was taken as a result of each comment. The analysis found that the biggest percentage of internal stakeholder comments were suggested drafting changes. By contrast, the biggest percentage of external group comments were requests for clarification. Internal groups were focused on optimizing policy wording while external groups wanted to know how the policies would be interpreted and how their respective organizations would be impacted.

Overall, many positive comments from each stakeholder group were submitted, and a lower proportion of change requests than originally anticipated. All written comments received on the draft plan along with further analysis will be included in the forthcoming Final Engagement Report.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

N/A

Legal / Risk:

All municipalities in Alberta must have an MDP, and it must satisfy requirements outlined under Section 632 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*. *Flourish* has been reviewed by the Legal Department and by external counsel, to ensure that it meets the requirements of the MGA.

In accordance with the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRBGP)*, the City is required to update its Municipal Development Plan (MDP) to comply with the regional growth plan by June 1, 2021.

Program or Service:

As *Flourish* provides direction regarding future growth and development, this will influence city service delivery areas. Key aspects include:

- Updates to the Land Use Bylaw to align with policy direction in *Flourish*
- Preparation and/or coordination of new and/or updated Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans
- Coordination and review of planning and development applications such as subdivision applications and development permits
- Provision of municipal services such as parks, recreation, roads, utilities, fire, social, and other community services associated with growth

Organizational:

Flourish is a foundational document which will provide guiding direction for future decisions, investments, and complementary plans regarding growth and development. Specifically, as it relates to land use planning decisions, Area Structure Plans (ASPs), Area Redevelopment (ARPs), and subdivisions must align with *Flourish*.

Flourish also provides numerous opportunities, or starting points for future city projects, initiatives, and actions.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

1. Defeat first reading of bylaw 20/2020

Defeating first reading puts St. Albert at risk of non-compliance with the EMRB directive for ensuring that the MDP complies with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.

2. Defer first reading of bylaw 20/2020

Deferring first reading to incorporate changes will have impact to project scheduling of the MDP and planning branch projects. Deferring first reading will delay adoption to late Q2 2021.

Report Date: December 21, 2020

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