



## REF 2021-002, City of St. Albert New Municipal Development Plan

### Recommendation

*EMRB Administration recommends that REF application 2021-002 be approved.*

### Background

On December 22, 2020, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) received an application from the City of St. Albert (the City) for approval of *Flourish*, the City's new Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The City submitted the new statutory 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 January 4, 2021.

### Application

The proposed City of St. Albert MDP, *Flourish*, is being updated for alignment with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. The existing MDP will be repealed upon approval.

### Evaluation

EMRB Administration obtained the assistance of V3 Companies of Canada Ltd (V3) to evaluate the application with respect to the REF requirements. The V3 evaluation (attached) reviewed the proposed 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 V3 evaluation recommends that the proposed MDP be approved by the EMRB. REF 2021-002 was received and deemed complete prior to EMRB receiving notice of approval of amendments to the REF Ministerial Order (MSD:088/20); therefore, this application has been evaluated in accordance with REF (MSL 111/17). That said, the differences between the two ministerial orders does not materially change the evaluation of this application.

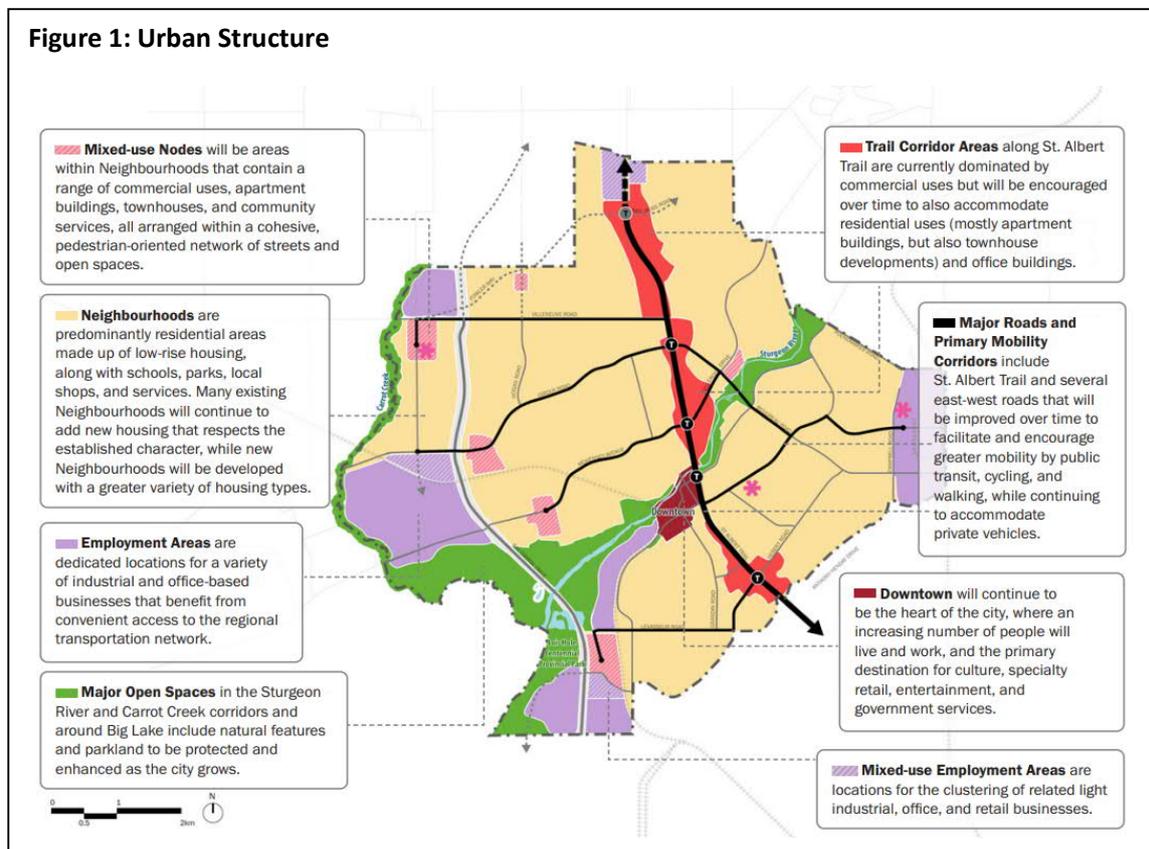


## EMRB Administration Comments

The proposed MDP is located wholly within the conceptual Metropolitan Area Tier of the Metropolitan Region Structure to 2044 (Schedule 2 of the EMRGP). Therefore, the application is evaluated for its consistency with the principles and policies of this tier pursuant to the Policy Area in the Growth Plan. The MDP plans for growth of St. Albert to a population of 100,000, which is between the low and high populations forecasted for the City within Growth Plan Schedule 1: Population and Employment Projections 2014 to 2044.

The MDP builds from a sustainable vision of St. Albert as a botanical arts city, with five pillars of sustainability providing a foundation: natural environment, social, culture, economic and built environment. Policies are crafted to implement the Urban Structure and General Land Use, depicted in Figure 1, which establishes the major land use designations and their defining components and features.

Looking at Growth Plan Schedule 2: Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044, the MDP's Urban Structure features a central downtown area as its Urban Centre, as well as a Mixed-Use Employment Area identified on the north end of St. Albert that is further described in policy as implementing the Growth Plan TOD Centre and meeting the Growth Plan's 140 persons+jobs aspirational target. Trail Corridor Areas, traditionally built for automobile-oriented commercial land uses, will be the focus of intensification to support future higher order transit expansion. Major





open space corridors are identified as a mix of natural features and parkland focused on areas surrounding Big Lake, the Sturgeon River and Carrot Creek waterbodies. Several mixed-use nodes will provide local services to neighbourhoods, while employment areas are located near Major Roads and Primary Mobility Corridors with regional connections.

Several sections of the MDP relate to the Growth Plan Policy Area 1: Economic Competitiveness and Employment, although Chapter 6, Robust Economy, is particularly focused on the area. Policy includes fostering businesses from start-up, through incubation, as well as developing incentives and infrastructure for retention. Several policies relate to collaboration and promoting partnerships to attract regional investment. Employment Areas in the Urban Structure correspond to the two Major Employment Areas depicted in Growth Plan Schedule 3A: Major Employment Areas (centered on Campbell Business Park, Riel Business Park and South Riel). Two new greenfield employment areas are proposed along Ray Gibbon Drive to take advantage of its regional transportation connections, generally aligning with the Planned Employment Areas depicted in Growth Plan Schedule 3B: Planned and Local Employment Areas. Several policies are included in the Goods Movement section supporting Growth Plan policies around enhancing competitiveness through the efficient movement of goods, people and services.

Regarding Growth Plan Policy Area 2: Natural Living Systems, the MDP weaves policy promoting the health of St. Albert's ecosystems throughout the document. That said, policies are especially concentrated in Chapter 5, Green Environment, which includes an ecological network approach to preserving and enhancing natural features. A riparian setback matrix model will help define appropriate setbacks, while low impact development methods will be employed to improve water quality and groundwater recharge. Growth Plan Schedule 4: Natural Living Systems depicts the lands within St. Albert adjacent to Big Lake as Provincial Environmentally Sensitive Area, which requires additional environmental and technical studies during statutory planning exercises to mitigate impacts, as well as incorporating ecological design features. The MDP establishes the minimum environmental studies required for the statutory planning of Lakeview Business Park, a future greenfield employment area on the north end of Big Lake, consistent with the requirements for lands adjacent to Provincial Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Growth Plan Policy Area 3: Communities and Housing focuses on fostering complete communities, with a continuum of housing choices, including non-market and market affordable housing. The MDP aligns with this Policy Area through Section 7: Housing Options. Policy includes intensification through innovation, promoting purpose-built rental housing, aging in place and multi-generational housing. Accessibility is fostered both within this section, as well as land use specific policy areas relating to inclusive design.

Several policy areas within the MDP implement and align with Growth Plan Policy Area 4: Integration of Land Use and Infrastructure. Intensification is seen as opportunity throughout St. Albert's mature neighbourhoods; however, future planning exercises to foster intensification will be centered on the downtown and St. Albert Trail corridor, with the aim of supporting future higher-order transit and capitalizing on existing infrastructure. The MDP highlights intensification policy in its Sustainable Growth Chapter, which sets the minimum greenfield density, intensification targets



and TOD aspirational densities. More specific policies are provided for each land use type depicted in the Urban Structure (Figure 1 of this report).

Infrastructure efficiency is further defined for St. Albert through the Resilient Infrastructure Chapter, which plans for municipal infrastructure with efficiency and climate readiness in mind, as well as speaking to private investment such as fostering renewable energy options in new development. Greenhouse gas reduction is highlighted with policy promoting green development standards around infrastructure efficiency and waste reduction in operations, while also supporting green infrastructure for electric vehicles.

Transportation Systems are looked at through the aforementioned resiliency lens, but are also further detailed in the Chapter entitled Mobility Choices. Policy focuses on delivering multi-modal options for residents and incorporating technology to improve transit reliability and access. Street network policies promote finer-grain street patterns with high connectivity to foster active transportation. Public transit will focus on Mobility Corridors that connect mixed-use nodes with the densest development areas like downtown (see Urban Structure, Figure 1 of this report). Cycling, walking and other active transportation modes are encouraged and will be further planned for in an Active Transportation Connectivity Plan. A transit center/park and ride is located on the north end of St. Albert and opportunities to connect to and expand upon the regional LRT system is also encouraged.

The MDP includes multiple policy areas to support agriculture, including recognizing food security and opportunities for urban agriculture as part of the Plan's focus on Community Well-being (Chapter 11). The MDP provides additional policy to prevent premature fragmentation, exploring agricultural buffers, and requiring Agricultural Impact Assessments as part of new development proposals. Value-added agriculture opportunities will also be encouraged. The MDP supports the development of the Regional Agriculture Master Plan and proposes the advancement of an urban agriculture strategy.

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 2021-002 be approved.

## Attachments

Evaluation	V3 Companies of Canada Ltd
REF Documents	1. Cover Letter
	2. MDP Bylaw 2020
	3. Flourish – St. Albert MDP
	4. Agenda Report
	5. Attachment 1 Phase 1 Engagement Report



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February 1, 2021

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6. Attachment 2 Phase 2 Engagement Report
7. Attachment 3 Phase 3 Engagement Report
8. Existing MDP