



## REF 2020-013, City of Edmonton New Municipal Development Plan

### Recommendation

*EMRB Administration recommends that REF application 2020-013 be approved.*

### Background

On September 21, 2020, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) received an application from the City of Edmonton (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 September 23, 2020.

### Application

The proposed new MDP (The City Plan) has been developed as an integrated Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to plan for the growth of the City to a population of two million residents. The City's existing Municipal Development Plan was adopted in 2010 and will be repealed upon adoption of The City Plan.

### 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 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 V3 evaluation recommends the proposed Municipal Development Plan be approved by the EMRB.



## EMRB Administration Comments

The City Plan includes lands within all three Policy Tiers (Rural Area, Metropolitan Area and Metropolitan Core) 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 the three policy tiers.

As an integrated Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan, the proposed Plan highlights the important relationship between transportation and land use planning. Section 5.2 of the EMRGP outlines the implementation mechanisms for statutory and non-statutory plans; MDPs are subject to REF review while TMPs are subject to referral for review and comment. Therefore, as an integrated application, this recommendation is a combination of what would typically be two separate review processes.

The City Plan is population-focused rather than temporal and looks to a population of two million residents, which is beyond the planning horizon of the EMRGP (which plans to 2044 and a potential population of 1,470,800 within Edmonton).

The proposed Plan contains employment growth policy encouraged within Nodes and Corridors, with a target of 50% of employment to be located within these areas. The City Plan also fosters innovation and competitiveness, including policy supporting an Innovation Corridor between the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and University of Alberta campuses with a target of 50,000 additional jobs. Employment Areas are connected and supported by designated roadway and goods movement networks both within the City and connecting to the greater Region.

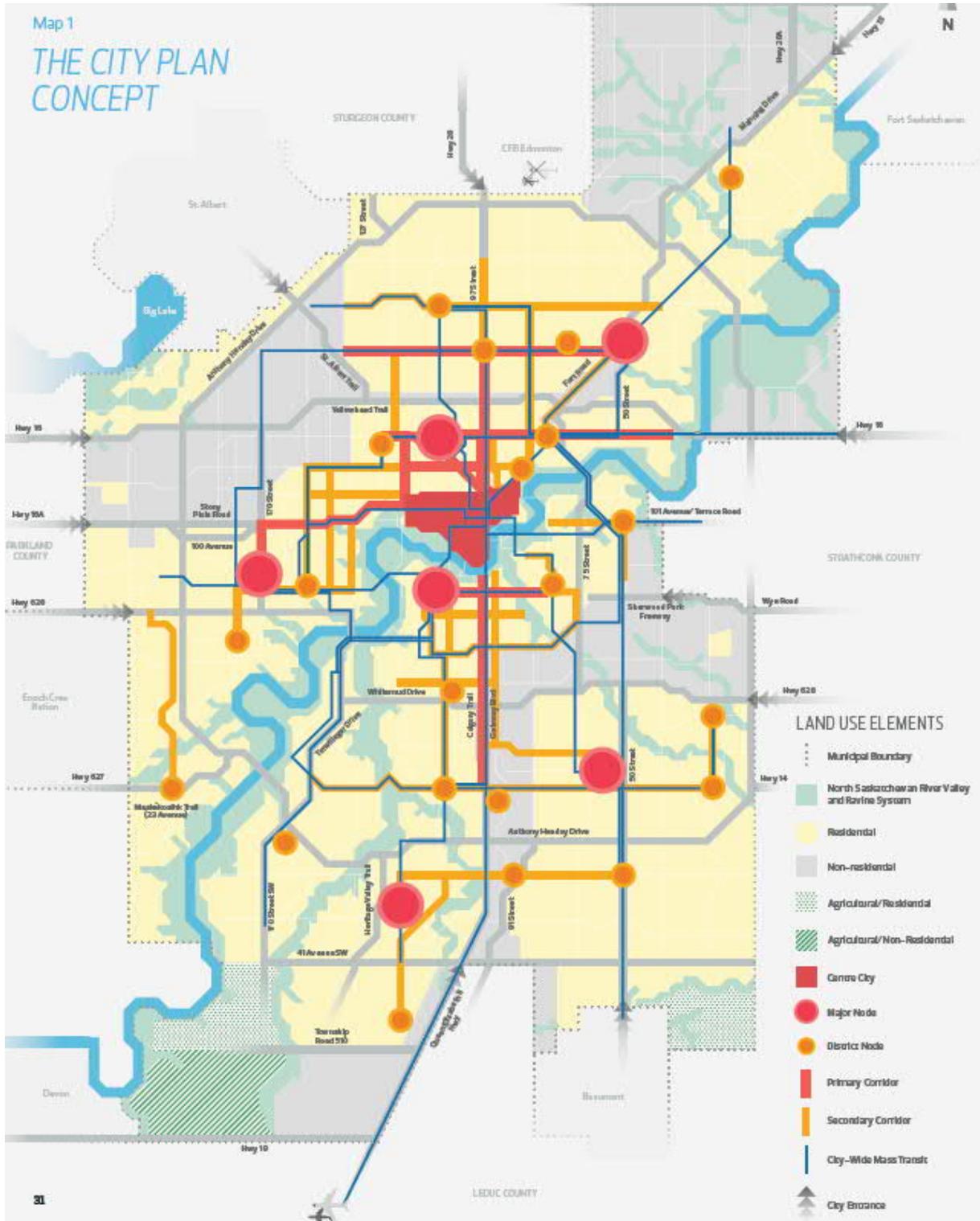
The City Plan promotes sustainability holistically through densification and mobility shift resulting in a smaller urban footprint and ultimately targeting a net-zero greenhouse gas footprint per person. The City Plan also recognizes the importance of natural systems for biodiversity, ecological value, as well as climate resilience. Natural systems, including the North Saskatchewan River Valley and ravine system, are augmented with Urban Greenways and Habitat Greenways to form the Green and Blue Network and related policy framework.

Health and well-being are tied to both the natural and built environments throughout the plan and is supplemented by policies ensuring housing choice and affordability as well as supportive social programs are developed with a focus on access and equity. High-quality design and inclusive gathering spaces, along with equitable access to natural systems and recreational opportunities support mental and physical health.

The City Plan is designed as a culturally inclusive plan for a diversifying and growing population. It draws from the importance of its Indigenous heritage and recommends integrating Indigenous values and environmental stewardship into practices as the city grows. The City Plan also recognizes the importance of social and cultural inclusivity, intergenerational gathering spaces and support services, and how a city benefits from a culturally diverse population.



The City Plan Concept





To support a significant shift in densification and land use, the proposed MDP incorporates a policy framework to manage growth by breaking the city into various districts that are traversable within a 15-minute trip by active or higher order transportation. Districts will be anchored by a series of mobility hubs, nodes, and corridors, which vary in size, density, and land use mix to serve varied functions. The City Plan Land Use Concept (Map 1) is shown on the following page to illustrate the network. The proposed MDP's objective is to achieve 50% of employment growth within nodes and corridors, and 50% of net new dwelling units through infill development, in order to achieve a transportation mode-split where 50% of trips are made by transit and active transportation.

Transit Oriented Development Centres (TOD Centres) shown in Schedule 2: Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure to 2044 and Schedule 6: Greenfield Density, Centres and Intensification Targets are used as a guide for evaluating TOD Centres in the EMRGP are classified in The City Plan into nodes and mobility hubs. Nodes are the population and employment centres with a dense urban fabric and planned at different scales, from Major Node to District Node, as central mixed-use areas. Mobility hubs are connection points between multi-modal transportation options including park and rides along higher order transit routes. This approach outlines and plans for the population and mobility within the EMRGP policy framework. The proposed approach differentiates the scale and role each TOD Centre plays within the network, ensuring the resulting land use mix achieves the outcomes of the Growth Plan. Examples of how TOD Centres support greater development intensity and mobility shift include:

- West Edmonton Mall/Lewis Estates TOD Centres: Both Lewis Estates and West Edmonton Mall are designated TOD Centres in the EMRGP, which have an aspirational density of 140-160 people+jobs per gross hectare. The City Plan, designates Lewis Estates as a mobility hub, recognizing its location along Anthony Henday Drive as a limiting factor for density along with the large natural area retained around the existing transit centre. The density planned along the future LRT line in the EMRGP is being met or exceeded through The City Plan's designation of West Edmonton Mall as a Major Node, with density targeted at 250 people+jobs per hectare for an area up to two kilometres in size. The proposed Mobility Hub and Major Node provides the necessary population and employment density envisioned in this quadrant of the City under the EMRGP in support of the future LRT line.
- Campbell: The Campbell TOD Centre is located along the future LRT Line connecting northwest Edmonton to St. Albert. The City Plan designates the site of the Campbell TOD as a mobility hub to serve as a park and ride and transit station, as a point for automobile commuters along Anthony Henday Drive to transfer to higher order transit lines. Residential and employment density to support the future LRT is being planned in a more central location in the Northwest District, being the Castle Downs District Node, with a density of 150 people+jobs per hectare at a scale of up to one-kilometer across.

The proposed MDP demonstrates planning for the needs of the Region while developing an approach to Transit Oriented Development that drives growth to meet the urban form and mobility objectives. These examples highlight how the size and density of can vary throughout the city in TOD planning.



The City Plan includes policy regarding meeting minimum regional density targets and envisions the staging of development through various population horizons. Intensification is encouraged through policy to achieve 50% of new net units through infill, serving 600,000 residents in redevelopment areas implementing EMRGP intensification targets and efficient use of infrastructure. Specific greenfield density targets are identified in the Plan to meet the minimum density outlined in EMRGP.

While most of The City Plan is located within the Metropolitan Tier and Metropolitan Core, a small portion of Edmonton's lands are located in the Rural Policy Tier. The City Plan includes policy mitigating fragmentation, including restricting further rural residential subdivision within its boundaries. Agriculture systems are addressed through investment in agricultural and ecological systems as well as cooperating with regional partners to steward value-added industries. Urban Agriculture is encouraged throughout the City in all three policy tiers.

As Edmonton's TMP, The City Plan proposes transportation policy in greater detail than a typical Municipal Development Plan. Unlike statutory plans that are subject to approval through the REF, TMPs are referred to the EMRB for review and comment. One subject that may benefit from additional detail in The City Plan is around regional connections to transit. As an example, Highway 16A is depicted as the transit corridor and regional connector to the west, which differs from Regional Transit Services Commission business case routing and preliminary network discussions as part of the EMRB's Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan Update. To some extent, the difference may be due to the different planning horizons of The City Plan and EMRGP. Additional activation plans for regional transit connections at population benchmarks, similar to the Nodes and Corridor Network activation plans, would increase understanding around regional transit connections and inform investment decisions over time.

In summary, The City Plan is an ambitious plan demonstrating Edmonton's commitment to implementing the EMRGP. While some regional infrastructure differs from EMRGP schedules, such as Mobility Hubs and Nodes, the overall plan meets or exceeds the population and employment requirements to support regional infrastructure and demonstrates the important integration of land use planning to meet growth needs. Overall, The City Plan 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 2020-013 be approved.



**Attachments**

Evaluation  
REF Documents

V3 Companies of Canada Ltd Evaluation

1. Cover Letter
2. Selection Sheet
3. Administration (SIRE) Report
4. Administration (Technical) Report
5. Appendices to Administration (Technical) Report
6. Charter Bylaw 20000 Edmonton's City Plan
7. Regional Context Statement
8. MDP Bylaw 15100