



REF 2019-023 St. Albert Jensen Lakes Area Structure Plan Amendment

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF application 2019-023 be approved.

Background

On October 23, 2019, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) received an application from the City of St. Albert (the City) for approval of the proposed amendment to the Jensen Lakes Area Structure Plan (ASP). The City submitted the proposed ASP amendment 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:*
- c) *The proposed statutory plan amendment would result in a change to the boundaries of an area structure plan, area redevelopment plan, intermunicipal development plan, urban service area, growth hamlet or hamlet that is not designated a growth hamlet in a Municipal Development Plan where the boundary change includes a population gain of more than 200 and/or an increase in area of 32 ha or more in the hamlet.*
 - 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 November 8, 2019.

Application

The proposed amendment to the ASP adjusts the boundaries of the plan area, amends future residential land uses to reduce the number of Medium/High Density residential sites and allows for a broader range of unit types within the Low and Medium Density Residential designated areas. The amendments also make minor changes to the linear park system and changes the residential development configuration in proximity to the private lake.

Evaluation

EMRB Administration obtained the assistance of Lovatt Planning Consulting Inc. (Lovatt) to evaluate the application with respect to legislative requirements. The Lovatt evaluation (attached) reviewed the proposed amendments to the 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 Lovatt evaluation recommends that the City of St. Albert's proposed amendments to the Jensen Lakes ASP be **rejected** by the EMRB.

EMRB Administration Comments

The proposed ASP amendment affects lands within the Jensen Lakes 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 Jensen Lakes ASP, including specific amendment areas are located within 800 m of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Centre, identified on Schedule 2 of the Growth Plan.

The Jensen Lakes ASP was originally approved under the previous Capital Region Growth Plan (CRGP) and is therefore grandfathered until amended. Due to the plan area reconfiguration, the entire ASP is being amended and therefore is being evaluated in its entirety for consistency with the EMRGP.

The proposed ASP amendment includes the following primary components:

- **Reconfiguration:** Approximately 1.58 hectares of land are being added to the plan area along the north boundary of the ASP, and to accommodate a reconfiguration of the future road alignment for Fowler Way along the west boundary of the ASP.
- **Redesignation of Medium/High Density Sites:** Two Medium/High density sites are being redesignated to lower intensity uses due to the City approving lower density development or other land uses than what was designated in the approved ASP: in one case a future Medium/High density site was allowed to develop as townhousing and in the other case a Medium/High density site was removed to accommodate stormwater management facility redesign. The proposed amendment would be 'cleaning up' the ASP to reflect the lower densities and other development already permitted through the development permit process.
- **Intensification of Low and Medium Density Residential Areas:** The amendment introduces smaller lot products and provides for greater flexibility in housing mix allowed within the Low and Medium Density Residential designations, resulting in density revisions for these areas.
- **Reconfiguration of Fowler Way:** Fowler Way, which replaces Highway 633 as the Regional Arterial connection to St. Albert Road, is being realigned in a way that the road traverses land in Sturgeon County that will require intermunicipal collaboration. The original Jensen Lakes ASP included the realignment of Highway 633 to Fowler Way; however, the ASP was not submitted to the REF process for evaluation.

Looking at the plan area as a whole, the overall planned residential density for the ASP remains the same at 30 du/nrha as the reduction in Medium/High density residential sites is theoretically

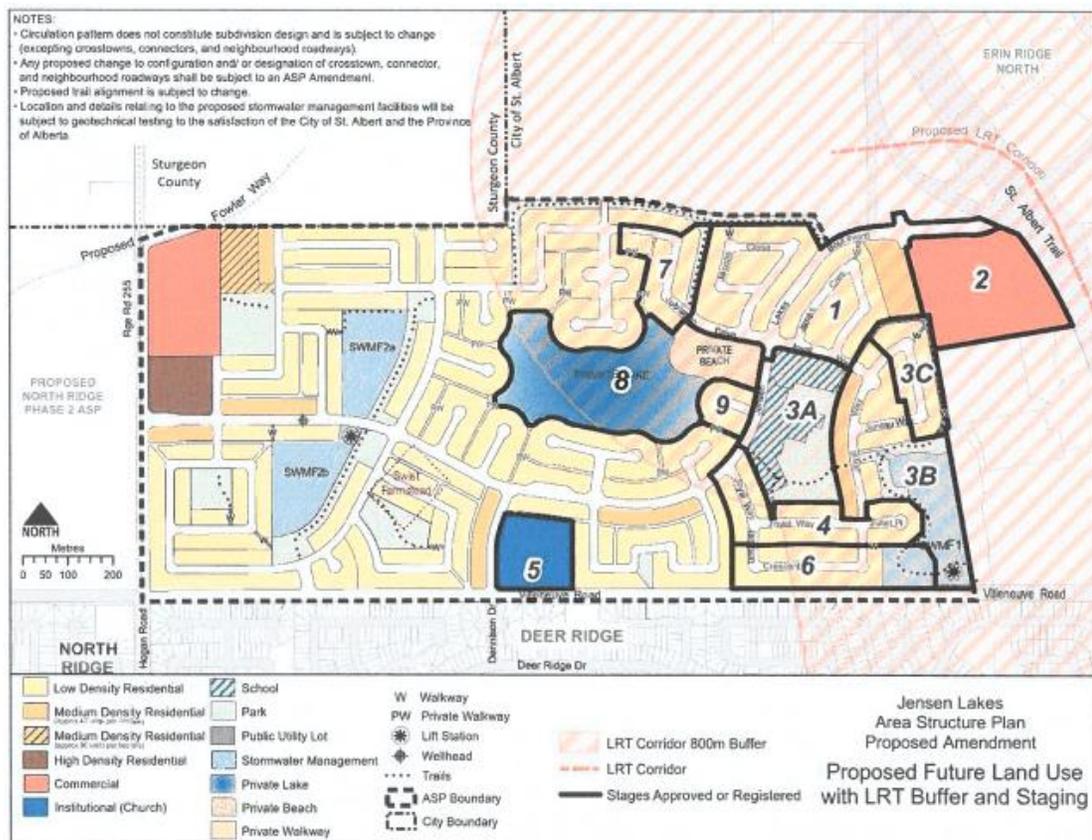


balanced by the smaller lots (and therefore higher densities) of the expanded Low and Medium Density Residential areas. As the Jensen Lakes ASP was approved while the CRGP was in effect, EMRB Administration looks to Section 8.2 of Ministerial Order No. MSL: 111/17 for density guidance, which states:

“... when evaluating an amendment to a statutory plan, other than a municipal development plan, approved by the Board under the Capital Region Growth Plan: Growing Forward, the Board may use the density targets of that plan rather than the density provisions within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. All other provisions of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan shall be in effect for evaluation purposes.”

In reviewing the proposed ASP for EMRGP alignment per Section 8.2, the following inconsistencies were noted:

- **Transit Oriented Development:** Several policies in the EMRGP call for intensification through a mix of employment and population growth in proximity to future transit stations, including an aspirational TOD Centre Density of 140-160 people+jobs per gross hectare. The proposed ASP amendment results in *decreasing* residential density in the TOD area due to the underdevelopment of one Medium/High Density site and removal of the other. Applying the revised statistics to the TOD area, EMRB Administration estimates overall reduction of density is approximately 115 dwelling units, moving in the opposite direction of the aspirational densities in the EMRGP. Continued reduction in densities in proximity to





transit-supportive areas will compromise the implementation of future higher order transit along the identified future LRT Corridor located on St. Albert Trail.

- **Complete Communities:** Similarly, the removal of the Medium/High Density Residential sites within the TOD Centre affects the range of housing options in close proximity to future higher order transit as well as services along St. Albert Trail. In greenfield development areas, the EMRGP challenges municipalities to consider how future residents will access services locally and plan for residential density in proximity to services and amenities in a walkable, connected manner.

Based upon the above findings, EMRB Administration does not believe REF Section 8.2 can be applied, as the proposed ASP **is not consistent with the all provisions of the EMRGP**.

Development History and Other Considerations

In presenting the proposed ASP amendment application, the City has highlighted that the majority of the TOD Area is subdivided and in the midst of development (see figure on previous page) and that the ASP amendments are to bring the plan into alignment with development densities that has already been permitted. Therefore, in formulating the EMRB Recommendation, Administration considered what would be gained in recommending refusal to the Board in terms of EMRGP implementation. In this case, there is limited greenfield area within the TOD to place High Density Residential to offset the reduced density lost over the history of development approvals. The only location left for development would be to the west of Jensen Lakes Stage 7, which is in the middle of the neighbourhood, approximately 500 m away from the nearest services. Building high density residential in this location may not be possible due to infrastructure considerations, necessary density transitioning within the neighbourhood, and possible impacts to the feasibility of high density sites planned for the future TOD north of Jensen Lakes.

The City has also stated that the Municipal Development Plan Update that is underway is reviewing the location and alignment of the future Transit Facility/Park and Ride and may consider moving the location further north in order to better plan for transit-supportive high density residential and employment uses. EMRB Administration supports further study of how to best implement the higher order transit along St. Albert Trail and anticipates St. Albert's MDP providing policy context to inform detailed TOD planning at the ASP level.

Further, with many Metropolitan Tier municipalities in the midst of updating their MDPs, EMRB Administration would like to highlight the importance of ASP implementation and ensuring land use concepts in an approved ASP are supported by LUB land use districts with minimum densities to mitigate against eroding densities needed to realize EMRGP implementation.

Conclusion

In summary, the amendments to the ASP are considered consistent with the CRGP, as the minimum density of 30 du/nrha has been maintained. However, the EMRGP recognizes the importance of supporting transit with high density residential and employment uses, and the



proposed ASP results in a reduction of density in the TOD. As such, the application does not align with policies promoting complete communities and supporting transit through higher density uses.

Given that the major density reduction has already been approved through the subdivision and development permit processes, EMRB Administration does not see benefit in recommending refusal at this time. It should be noted that EMRB Administration considers each application on its own merits and local circumstances, and therefore the recommendation should not be interpreted as precedent setting.

EMRB Administration looks forward to the MDP Update providing needed direction setting to inform the requirements for future TOD planning, as well as detailing how the Land Use Bylaw and development approval practices will ensure the implementation of density and built form policies in approved statutory plans.

Recommendation

EMRB Administration recommends that REF 2019-023 be approved.

Attachments

Evaluation	Lovatt Planning Consulting Inc.
REF Documents	1. Cover Letter
	2. Bylaw 22/2019 Jensen Lakes ASP Amendment
	3. Existing Jensen Lakes ASP
	4. Council Report
	5. St. Albert LRT Planning Study