

TERMS OF REFERENCE – Regional Agriculture Master Plan

<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide the region’s decision-makers with a land use framework and tools to make decisions consistent with the principles and objectives of the Growth Plan while providing certainty and flexibility for the existing agricultural sector and position the region to capitalize on future agricultural opportunities for the growth and sustainability of the sector for future generations.
<p>Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan Principle 6:</p> <p><i>Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.</i></p> <p>In the context of metropolitan growth, we will ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources to continue a thriving agricultural sector.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>6.1 Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local food source for future generations</p> <p>6.2. Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses</p> <p>6.3 Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principle, objectives and policies¹ within the Agriculture Policy area of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan establish the framework for the Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP). The RAMP will build upon existing sector information gathered by municipalities augmented by agricultural expertise within the region². The RAMP will provide the overarching framework and rationale for the region’s agricultural policies, which will include strategies and a policy framework to conserve and maintain a supply of prime agricultural lands; minimize fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands, foster the economic growth and diversification of the agri-food production and value added agri-economy, guide infrastructure investments and urban agriculture and address the transition between the rural-urban fringes. The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) will work with the Province, member municipalities, and representatives of the agricultural sector to develop a Regional Agriculture Master Plan and a land evaluation and site assessment evaluation tool. A land evaluation and site assessment tool³ will provide an objective method to

¹ See Appendix A – Agriculture Policies from EMRGP, Pages 78, 79 and 81.

² See Appendix C – for a complete list of Plans, Studies and Reports by Municipalities.

	<p>assess, qualify and quantify the prime agricultural lands in the region consistent with the policy area objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy outcomes and implementation plan of the RAMP will be integrated into the Growth Plan. Including, if required, refinements to the Agricultural Impact Assessment requirement identified in the Growth Plan and key performance indicators for the Agriculture Policy Area. • The RAMP policies will follow the same tiered structure identified in the Metropolitan Region Structure to 2044 in the Growth Plan (Schedule2) and will follow the same principles used in developing the Growth Plan: planning without borders and using an evidence-based planning and decision-making approach. • The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Structure to 2044 consists of three policy tiers – the rural area, the metropolitan area and the metropolitan core. These tiers reflect and respond to the diversity of communities within the region, recognize the difference in growth challenges and the unique agricultural characteristics to be considered in developing the RAMP. • Schedule 11 from the Growth Plan shows the Metropolitan Structure as an overlay to the Agriculture Land Suitability Rating for the region. Class 2 and 3 soils are equal to CLI Class 1-3. The RAMP will more clearly delineate areas for conservation and growth for agriculture in the region. • Following the success of the process used in developing the growth plan, the development of the RAMP will include a Communications and Engagement Plan which will identify opportunities to for feedback and input from key stakeholders involved in agriculture including indigenous groups - First Nations, Metis and Inuit.
<p>Proposed Approach</p>	<p>The development of a RAMP will include a number of tasks and project deliverables. The follow describes the key tasks followed by a proposed project timeline and key deliverables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton Metropolitan Region Agriculture Profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and synthesis of the existing regional plans, reports and strategies of member municipalities supplemented by data from federal and provincial government sources, prepare an overview of Agriculture in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. Highlight strengths, synergies, differences, and areas of growth and opportunity by policy tier. ○ Gap Analysis of existing plans in the context of the regional growth plan – agriculture policy objectives and impact analysis across all policy areas of the Growth Plan. ○ Report and Recommendations to include the region-wide profile of agriculture, gap analysis, and highlighting trends affecting the agriculture

³ See Appendix B for the land evaluation and site assessment framework.

	<p>sector. Identify recommendations for addressing the gaps; identify specific topic areas requiring additional information and recommendations for how to gather the information such as supplementary consultations, white papers, presentations, summits, etc. to inform the development of the RAMP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Agriculture Master Plan Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building from the insights and key learnings from the Edmonton Metro Region Agriculture Profile report, develop a vision, guiding principles, policy framework and strategies to address the policy objectives in the Growth Plan. Exploring topics such as the rural land use framework, climate change and the environmental impact on the sector, boundary interface between urban and rural, changing dynamics of farming due to technology, innovation and the implications of changing consumer demand⁴, and the increasing demand for urban agriculture and implications, the identification of regional infrastructure to support growth of agricultural sector, and specific policy direction regarding lot creation on prime agricultural land in the rural area and metropolitan area for non-agricultural uses. ○ Part of this work will include data gathering & analysis to establish base line metrics, verification of key performance indicators for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on the outcomes of the RAMP. ○ Development of an Implementation plan. ● Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Tool⁵ & Implementation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In conjunction with the development of the RAMP, the development of a land evaluation and site assessment tool will be created for the region to support the identification and quantification of a supply of prime agricultural lands for conservation in the region. ○ The process will involve identifying the specific area of application; developing a land evaluation and site assessment tool for the region; establishing decision making criteria, and implementation measures; plans for stakeholder engagement, and consultation to build consensus for the final tool and approach. The tool will be tested and refined throughout the process to ensure it meets the needs of the RAMP. ○ Once completed the land evaluation and site assessment tool will establish a consistent basis for accessing land quality and contextual factors of prime agricultural land base across the region.
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⁴ There are significant shifts in demand due to environmental attributes, product quality, and other concerns that result in shifting land use practices and patterns.

⁵ See Appendix B for the land evaluation and site assessment framework.

Proposed Project Timelines and Key Deliverables:

Edmonton Metro Region Agriculture Master Plan – Key Deliverables	Q1-2018	Q2-2018	Q3-2018	Q4-2018	Q1-2019	Q2-2019	Q3-2019	Q4-2019	Q1-2020	Q2-2020
Edmonton Metro Region Agriculture Profile										
• Review and Synthesis										
• Gap Analysis										
• Edmonton Metropolitan Region Agriculture Profile Report and Recommendations										
Edmonton Metro Region Agriculture Master Plan										
• Vision										
• Principles										
• Stakeholder Engagement										
• Policy Framework										
• Stakeholder Engagement										
• Implementation Plan										
• Stakeholder Engagement										
• Final Plan										
Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Tool										
• Identify Area of Application										
• Tool Development										
• Decision-making Criteria										
• Testing of Tool										
• Stakeholder Engagement										
• Testing and Refinement										
• Finalize Criteria and Tool										
• Stakeholder Engagement										
• Implementation Plan										

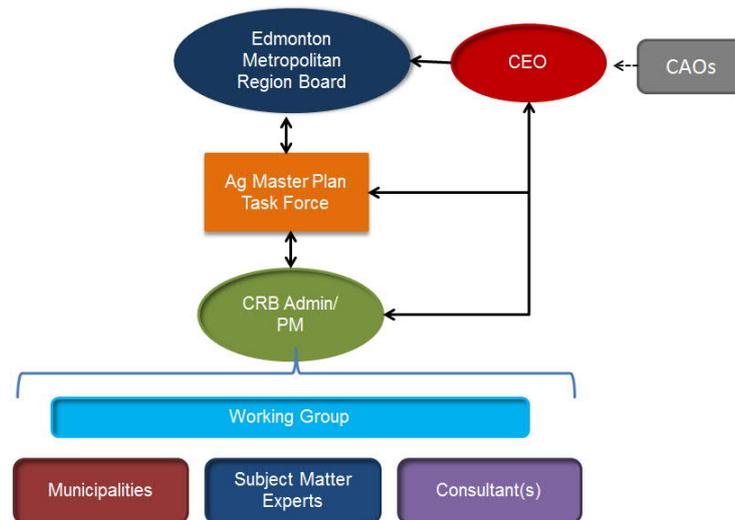
Note: The arrows indicate the need to validate the output of the land evaluation and site assessment tool with the Regional Agriculture Master Plan and vice versa.

Budget:

- The Board currently has \$134,000 budgeted for 2017/2018 and has a matching grant application in with the Ministry of Agriculture for \$134,000, for 2018/2019.

Governance

- The proposed **project governance model** is based on the successful model used in the development of the Growth Plan, where a Board appointed Task Force is supported by a technical working group consisting of a select number of technical experts from within the region’s municipalities, a consulting team and supplemented with subject matter experts, as required.



- The **Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board** is the project sponsor and provides the authority and support for the project.
- To ensure transparency throughout the process a **comprehensive communications & public relations plan** will be developed in conjunction with member municipalities to support the Board and Task Force with consistent messaging regarding the project.
- The Board oversight will come from a **Task Force** appointed by the Board in accordance with its new governance structure and will provide strategic direction and oversight for the project.
- The proposed **Task Force membership** is recommended to be a maximum of seven elected officials (4 counties, Edmonton, and two additional urban municipalities from within the Metropolitan Area) and 1 non-voting representative from the Province and the Board CEO, also non-voting.
- It is expected that the **provincial involvement** for the project will continue to be through the office of the Land Use Secretariat within the Ministry of Environment & Parks.
- The provincial representative will liaise with other ministries to include the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, Energy, Infrastructure, and Transportation to ensure the work of this project is informed by Provincial direction.

- The Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry Ministry is also the source for monitoring & reporting of fragmentation and conversion of agricultural lands provincially and for the development of the number of tool kits to support the efficient use of land principles that will be important resources for this project.
- Supporting the Task Force would be a **multi-disciplinary working group** whose participation would be coordinated by EMRB administration and may contain **the following skills and functions** – municipal planners with experience in developing regional plans, Ag Services Board Representatives, consultants, facilitators, and subject matter experts and includes academics, agrology professionals specializing in agriculture, environment, life sciences and food, conservation expertise, representatives for indigenous populations, farmers/ producers, NGO's, etc.
- The **working group** will provide technical level knowledge and local expertise to support the needs of the Task Force, consultant(s) and EMRB Administration. In the form of reviewing draft policy, providing feedback on strategies, recommendations and implementation plans, reviewing report drafts, gathering local information, supporting stakeholder engagement, and participating in Task Force meetings, etc.
- The **EMRB CEO and regional CAO's** will provide guidance throughout the project as it relates to understanding local considerations.
- A **project manager** from EMRB will be assigned to oversee the planning, development and completion of the RAMP and land evaluation and site assessment tool.
- The project manager is responsible for preparing the project terms of reference and managing all aspect of the project in accordance with direction from the Task Force and Board.

APPENDIX A – Agriculture Policies in Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Growth Plan

Schedules and Tables Referenced in the Agriculture Policy Area

- Schedule 1: Population and Employment Projections 2014-2044 (Pg. 19)
- Schedule 6: Greenfield Density, Centers and Intensification Targets (Pg.59)
- Schedule 11: Agricultural Land Suitability Rating (Pg. 80)

Objective 6.1 Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local food source for future generations.

Policies

- 6.1.1 Prime agricultural lands shall be assessed to identify and conserve a supply of prime agricultural lands. The EMRB will pursue this through the following measures.
- a. prepare a Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) to conserve and maintain a secure supply of *prime agricultural lands* with the aim to support the *regional food system*, densify the agri-food production base, contribute to the value-added growth of the agri-economy and guide agriculture supportive infrastructure investment.
 - b. develop a *land evaluation and site assessment tool* to assess land quality and contextual factors, and identify and quantify a supply of *prime agricultural lands*; and
 - c. use **Schedule 11** to identify *prime agricultural lands* until the *land evaluation and site assessment tool* is completed.
- 6.1.2 In the rural area, prime agricultural lands identified through the land evaluation and site assessment tool shall be conserved subject to revision based on the outcomes of the Regional Agriculture Master Plan.
- 6.1.3. In the *metropolitan area*, *prime agricultural lands* identified through the *land evaluation and site assessment tool* shall be conserved for agricultural purposes for as long as possible, recognizing that these lands will urbanize over time to accommodate growth.
- 6.1.4 In the *rural area*, opportunities to re-designate *prime agricultural lands* for agricultural uses will be encouraged in areas defined by municipal zoning or designations for non-agricultural uses including, but not limited to country residential areas or reclaimed resource extraction areas.

Objective 6.2 Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses

Policies

- 6.2.1 The *fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands* shall be minimized when planning alignments for and developing *multi-use corridors*. Where no reasonable alternative can be demonstrated, *mitigation measures* to protect *prime agricultural lands* and existing agricultural operations on adjacent and surrounding lands will be adopted and implemented to minimize the potential for land use conflicts.
- 6.2.2 In the *rural area* large *contiguous* agricultural areas will be protected and maintained to enable efficient agricultural production and to support the agricultural sector.
- 6.2.3 In the *rural area* the *fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands* for non- agricultural

uses outside the boundaries of urban communities may be considered for resource extraction uses, recreation corridors and development of major employment areas subject to meeting the following criteria:

- a. Lands proposed for development are located within a proposed statutory plan or statutory plan amendment;
 - b. An *agriculture impact assessment* has been completed to identify potential adverse impacts of the proposed development on agricultural lands and existing agricultural operations on-site and off-site in the surrounding area; and
 - c. *Mitigation measures* recommended through an agricultural impact assessment are incorporated in the planning and design of the proposed development to minimize potential adverse impacts on agricultural lands and active agricultural operations on-site and off-site in the surrounding area.
- 6.2.4 In the *metropolitan area*, the *fragmentation* and *conversion* of *prime agricultural lands* for non-agricultural uses will only be considered when the proposed development meets all of the following criteria:
- a. the lands are *contiguous with built-up urban areas* and/or *planned areas*;
 - b. the lands are required to accommodate municipal employment and population projections in accordance with **Schedule 1**.
 - c. if residential uses are proposed, the lands are within a proposed statutory plan in conformance with the applicable *minimum greenfield density* identified in **Schedule 6**.
 - d. an *agriculture impact assessment* has been completed to identify potential adverse impacts of the proposed development on agricultural lands and existing agricultural operations on-site off-site in the surrounding area; and
 - e. *mitigation measures* recommended through an *agriculture impact assessment* are incorporated in the planning and design of the proposed development to minimize potential adverse impacts on agricultural land and active agricultural operations on-site and off-site in the surrounding area from near neighbor impacts of urban growth.
- 6.2.5 An *agriculture impact assessment* prepared by a qualified professional shall be required when a new area structure plan proposes development in a *greenfield area* that contains *prime agricultural land* as identified on **Schedule 11**. The application and contents of an assessment may be subject to review following completion of the Regional Agriculture Master Plan. The assessment shall:
- a. describe the proposed development and contextual factors;
 - b. determine potential adverse impacts on agricultural lands and active agricultural operations on-site and off-site in the surrounding area; and
 - c. recommend measures to buffer, mitigate and minimize potential land use conflicts.

Objective 6.3 Promote the diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system

Policies

- 6.3.1. *Value-added agriculture* production and the diversification of the agricultural sector will be pursued by:
 - a. advancing food production, processing and distribution, *value-added* opportunities related to



- agricultural products and services;
 - b. supporting manufacturing, packaging, shipping and distribution to wholesalers, agri-tourism, farmers markets and urban agriculture; and
 - c. promoting diversification related to food production, processing and distribution.
- 6.3.2 Supportive infrastructure for the agricultural sector to sustain the *regional food system*, attract new opportunities and maximize investment to grow and diversify the sector will be pursued through the following measures, including but not limited to:
- a. maintaining and improving transportation access and facilities; and
 - b. providing drainage and irrigation infrastructure.

APPENDIX B: Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Framework

A land evaluation and site assessment tool is an analytical tool that considers contextual factors about a piece of land to support land use. It is designed to determine the quality of land for agricultural uses and to assess sites or land areas for their agricultural economic viability.

A land evaluation and site assessment system does not take away the power of decision makers to make land use decision but rather assist them in making rational, consistent and sound land use decisions.

A land evaluation and site assessment system is designed to be supportable. Both planners and decision makers need a supportable system to evaluate land and determine under what conditions agricultural land should or should not be converted to non- agricultural uses.

A land evaluation and site assessment system are intended to be designed by local work groups or committees who can represent local values and objectives.

LE	Land Evaluation	Soil based factors such as LSRS rating to assess the physical capability of the land to support viable agriculture production.
SA 1	Site Assessment – important factors other than soils that contribute to the quality of the site for agricultural use	Other agricultural factors measuring limitations on agriculture productivity such as the size of the parcel, current level of farm sales, net income generated, and farm practices such as soil and water conservation.
SA 2	Site Assessment	Factors measuring development pressure or land conversion such as proximity of residential, commercial and industry zoning, proximity of agricultural or rural zoning
SA 3	Site Assessment	Factors measuring other public values such as historic or scenic values and environmental considerations.

APPENDIX C: Regional Plans, Reports, and Studies

The following list of documents prepared by member municipalities will be the basis of the regional information to inform the Edmonton Metro Region Agriculture Profile.

Leduc County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Context Document. • Agriculture Strategy – Draft Situation Report, December 2015 • Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy, 2015 • Leduc County Agriculture Strategy, July 2016 • Aerotropolis Viability Study
Parkland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation Report, December 8, 2015 • Future of Agriculture Study, Situation Report, March 2016 • Future of Agriculture Study, Final Report, June 2016 • Future of Agriculture Study and Action Plan, January 2017
Strathcona County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Master Plan, A Time to Choose, Final Report, May 2015 • Urban Agriculture Strategy, Autumn 2016 • Implementation Strategy, Strathcona County Agriculture Master Plan
Sturgeon County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Progress
Edmonton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>fresh</i>, Edmonton’s Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy, 2012
Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, <i>Re-imagine. Plan. Build.</i> October 2017
Province of Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Land Stewardship Act • Land Use Framework • South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (proxy for Agriculture policy) • Land Use Framework Reporting: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, 2016, 2017

APPENDIX D: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The EMRB Administration would like to acknowledge the members of the Working Group who provide support for the development of the project Terms of Reference.

Regional Agriculture Master Plan Working Group

Leduc County	Garett Broadbent Director of Agricultural Services	Laurie Johnson Senior Planner, Long Range Planning
Parkland County	Darren Haarsma, local grain farmer	Peter Vana General Manager Development Services
Strathcona County	Joel Gould Manager, Agriculture Services	Ryan Hall Manager, Land Development Planning
Sturgeon County	Alyssa Hutchings Acting Ag Services Manager	Collin Steffes, Manager Community and Regional Planning
Edmonton	Lindsey Butterfield, Director, Regional Development Kathryn Lennon, Principal Planner Policy Development	Hani Quan, Senior Planner, Policy Development
Morinville	Greg Hofmann Director of Planning & Development	
Fort Saskatchewan	Janel Smith-Duguid Director, Planning & Development	
City of Leduc	Cory Labrecque Manager, Long Range Planning	
Provincial Rep	Jason Cathcart Director, Regional Planning Land Use Secretariat Environment and Parks	
Sponsor	Malcolm Bruce, CEO Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board	
Facilitator	Bill Diepeveen	
Project Manager	Sharon Shuya, MBA Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board	