

Regional Evaluation Framework (REF)



A legislated process established through a ministerial order, designed to ensure statutory plans* and statutory plan amendments are consistent with the principles and policies of the growth plan. The REF was established concurrently with Provincial approval of the growth plan.

While the primary purpose of REF is to assess and approve statutory plans for consistency with the growth plan, municipalities may use the process to bring forward proposals that are unique and promote innovative planning and design that will benefit our Region.

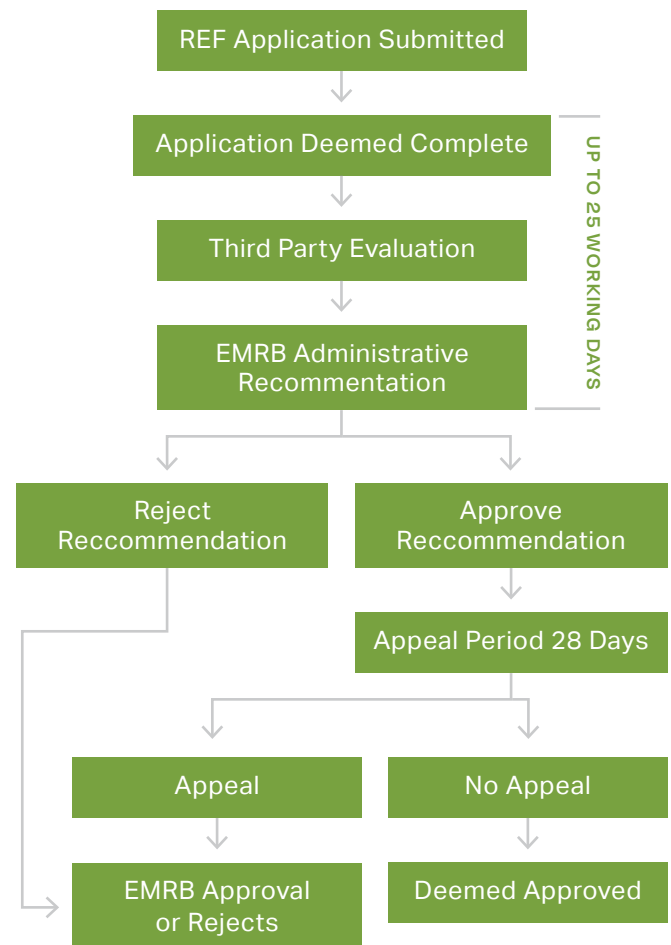
REF is an essential mechanism for the Board to evaluate how local plans support the implementation of the growth plan in reflecting the directions, policies, and collective outcomes of the regional growth plan. It's about moving us beyond the status quo pattern of growth and:

- **securing an efficient and cost-effective future by:** ensuring our Region's long range plans implement growth plan policies including contiguous development, density targets, complete communities, integrating infrastructure and land use decisions, protecting the environment, and conserving prime agricultural land.
- **working smarter and better together by:** identifying statutory plans for regional oversight that may impact our Region's commitment to responsible growth, including major employment areas, regional transportation and transit corridors, regional infrastructure, and agricultural lands.
- **fostering relationships to become a seamless and integrated Region by:** providing a consistent framework to achieve responsible growth and provide greater certainty to developers, investors, municipalities, and other regional stakeholders through the commitment to a collaborative and integrated approach to land use planning across our Region.

REF Process

Only those statutory plans and statutory plan amendments that meet the submission criteria in the REF must be referred to the EMRB.

The REF allows municipalities to submit their applications within their local process any time after receiving first reading but before receiving third reading of the bylaw(s). REF evaluation utilizes third party reviewers to provide a rigorous and unbiased evaluation of the application and ensures consistency in the evaluation process.



In 2021, the EMRB received 8 REF applications. The average review length was 15 working days, including the third-party evaluation.



Why is this work important?

Because ...

- we are planning for a million more residents and 750K more jobs.
- residents don't see borders and we are growing closer together.
- there are complex challenges associated with doubling our regional population and diversifying our economy that require coordinated planning and priority setting.
- certainty for investors, developers, and agricultural producers in terms of land use with clear policy direction and specific outcomes encourages and secures investments.
- managing sprawl, while encouraging complete communities and reducing municipal infrastructure costs will save taxpayers money and improve quality of life.
- ensuring our communities are climate resilient and environmentally sustainable for future generations.

1.4m Home to more than 1.4 million people and generating \$105 billion in GDP.

5th Canada's fifth largest economy, and the fastest growing region.

*Statutory plans in the MGA are defined as Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs), Municipal Development Plans (MDPs), Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs). Statutory plans are the framework for the future growth and development of a municipality.



By working cooperatively as one Region to enable responsible growth, we ensure we will continue to provide value for current and future generations.



Building our future today

- We need to better position our Region to meet the challenges of a growing population and economy.
- We need to act quickly to build a more efficient and sustainable future for generations to come.
- We need to work in the best interest of our Region, while respecting local autonomy.

Innovative work

Regional collaboration builds relationships. Working together fosters information sharing and creative thinking, allowing our Region to problem solve together and plan without boundaries. The work:

- leverages municipal planning expertise across our Region to collaboratively improve EMRB and municipal processes, increase efficiencies and provide consistent understanding.
- uses third party reviewers to provide an unbiased evaluation of the application and consistency in the evaluation process.

Deliberate and strategic work

As one of the youngest and fastest growing regions in Canada, we are continually creating conditions to increase economic and social advantage, to attract some of the best and brightest talent.

Our municipalities had over 100 years to build the services and infrastructure needed to house, move, and keep a million of us safe. We have only 25 years to plan for the next million residents.

This is the work of the EMRB where efficiency, innovation, and sustainability intersect.