



PLANNING PRIMER

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF ST. ALBERT

Update March 2023


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1. INTRODUCTION

The background of the page is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, creating a modern, abstract design. The colors range from a light, pale green to a slightly darker, muted green.

**We build cities to give people
places to live, work, and play.
Cities are dynamic and land
development reflects how cities
evolve, grow, and change.**

Land use planning is important because it impacts how we experience our city. We want to guide development in a way that can reflect the public interest, the community vision, and address emergent or upcoming challenges.

This Planning Primer provides information about why and how change occurs in the city. It also provides information about how the public and other stakeholders can get involved and have their voices heard in the process.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely St. Albert, showing a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial buildings, and industrial areas. The image is overlaid with large, semi-transparent green geometric shapes that create a modern, layered effect. The text '2. COMMUNITY PLANNING 101' is prominently displayed in white on a dark green background in the lower half of the image.

2. COMMUNITY PLANNING 101

2.1 WHAT IS CITY PLANNING?

Decisions are made everyday that impact land use in a city. These decisions eventually evolve into a pattern of community growth. City Planning involves looking five, 20, and even 50 years ahead to anticipate how a city will function and how it will look. Planning provides a unifying framework for decisions, pulling all interests together to find the best path forward.

2.2 HOW DO CITIES PLAN?

Cities in Alberta use various tools, primarily statutory plans and bylaws, to help guide planning decisions. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) and related provincial legislation outlines specific requirements, statutory plans and bylaws.

Different tools offer different levels of detail and opportunities for direction from the public and stakeholders. Statutory plans and bylaws are consistent with one another to help achieve the city's planning goals and objectives.

2.3 WHO PLANS?

Community-builders are anyone who influences a decision that impacts the quality of life of a city. They are private individuals, public officials, city planners, developers, the business community, non-government organizations, school boards, and other levels of government. Everyone's role is different but essential to the overall process.

2.4 WHO BUILDS THE CITY?

Private companies (developers) and individual landowners conduct most of the development within the City. The City sometimes builds infrastructure like roads, recreation facilities, parks, or renovates existing facilities. Other levels of government may be responsible for certain facilities, such as schools and hospitals.



2.5 THE ROLE OF PLANNERS

The Planners and Development Officers in the Planning and Development Department guide land use planning for the City. Registered Professional Planners (RPP) in Alberta, and other professional planning designations around the world, have a code of conduct and commit to working within high ethical standards in the public interest.

Depending on the situation, the role of the Planner is to make recommendations to City Council on behalf of the best interests of the City.

Planners need to balance information from research, knowledge of the community, public and stakeholder input, training, and experience to inform decisions or recommendations.

Planners rely on knowledge about the many systems found in a City to understand how decisions will impact economic development, transportation, population, education, housing, services, parks and public spaces, and facilities. These elements contribute to quality of life in the city.

The Planning and Development Department also relies on professional input from other departments, such as Engineering, Transit, Environment, Finance, Recreation, Culture, and Fire Services.

2.6 THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Development Officers undertake the work needed to review and apply the Land Use Bylaw regulations to make decisions on development permit applications within the City. Development Officers work as the Development Authority to apply professional discretion and input from other City departments throughout the development permit process, and provide recommendations to Council regarding amendments to the Land Use Bylaw.

DID YOU KNOW?

Development Permits and Building Permits are different.

Development Permits apply to the entire site and will capture requirements regulated by the Land Use Bylaw, such as landscaping.

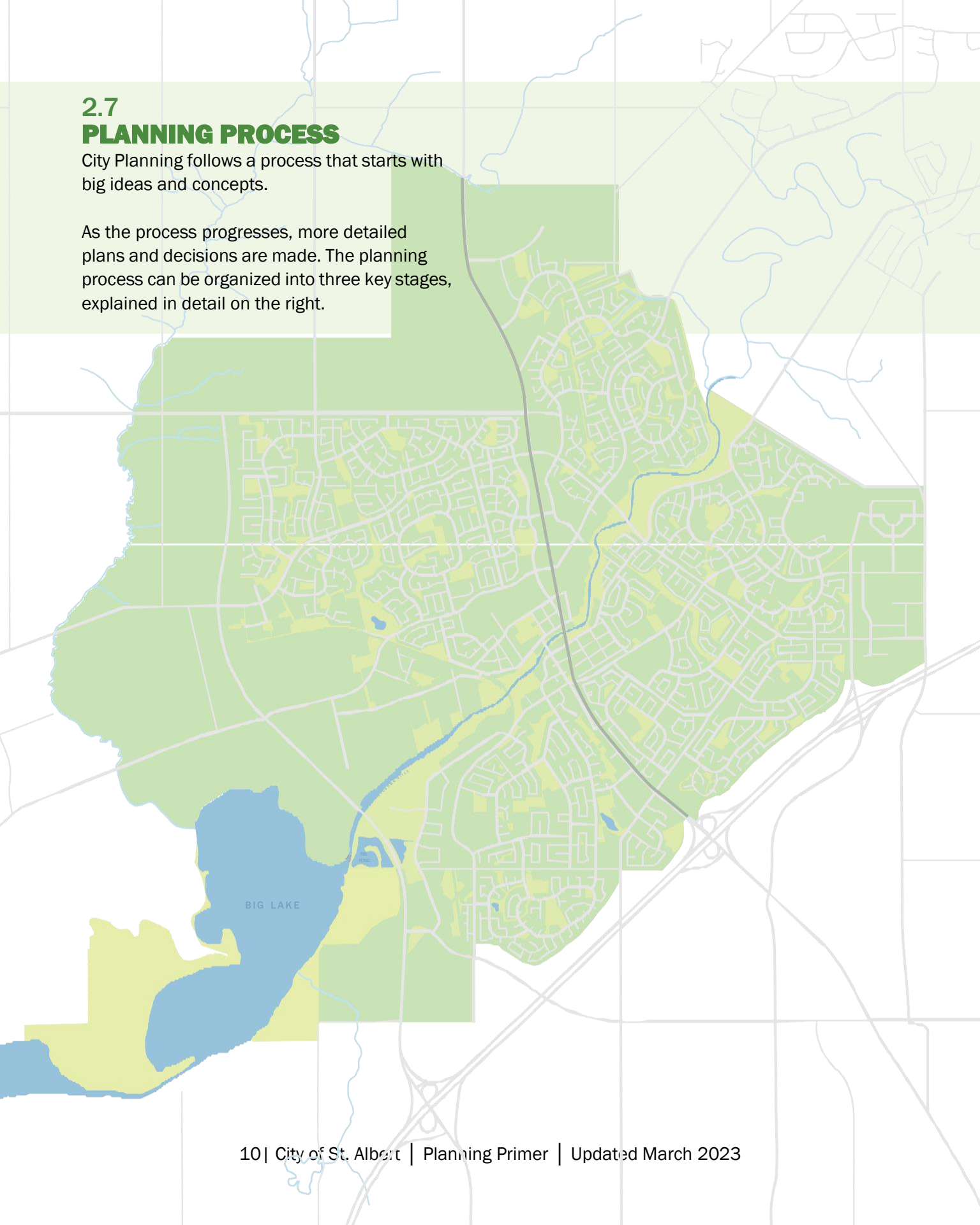
Building Permits apply to buildings and structures. Building permits and construction are regulated by the Safety Codes Act and the Alberta Building Code. Safety Codes Officers enforce this Code and related regulations to ensure buildings and structures are constructed properly and are safe to occupy. For more information about the Alberta building regulations, visit the [Alberta Municipal Affairs website](#).



2.7 PLANNING PROCESS

City Planning follows a process that starts with big ideas and concepts.

As the process progresses, more detailed plans and decisions are made. The planning process can be organized into three key stages, explained in detail on the right.





BIG IDEAS

Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

- Long-range planning takes a forward-thinking approach to help guide future community building.
- At this stage, the vision for the future is determined. The resulting policy or plan is high-level, but provides the blueprints for concept refinement.
- Tools include statutory plans (Municipal Development Plan), special studies, and policy development.



REFINED IDEAS

Area Structure Plan (ASP)/Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

- Decisions build upon policies created at the long range planning stage.
- This policy development supports the decisions made at the Big Ideas stage, resulting in policy or plans that are more detailed.
- Tools include Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans, and Neighbourhood Plans.



DETAILED PLANS

Land Use Bylaw (LUB)

- The final stage of planning reflects the implementation of decisions made at the Refined Ideas stage.
- Information is detailed and plans are exact.
- Tools include redistricting, subdivisions, and development permits.

2.8 HOW ARE DECISIONS INFORMED?

Planners and decision-makers rely on tools such as statutory plans, special studies, and bylaws created with stakeholder input to tell them how the City should evolve. The [Policy Framework section](#) has detailed information about how different planning tools are used and why.

Documents used by the City of St. Albert to make planning decisions are available on the City of St. Albert's website by searching [Documents and Plans](#).

2.9 WHO DECIDES?

City Council makes decisions on behalf of the public. City Council can delegate certain decision-making authority to City Administration, as outlined within the MGA. When decision-making authority is delegated, the authority must consider direction found within relevant statutory plans and bylaws passed by Council.

Detailed information about the decision-making authority at various planning milestones is available to the right.



DECISION TYPE	DECISION MAKER
Statutory Plans and Bylaws Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) Area Structure Plan (ASP) Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Including amendments to these documents.	CITY COUNCIL
Subdivisions & Neighbourhood Plan	THE SUBDIVISION APPROVING AUTHORITY In St. Albert, this is the Director of the Planning & Development Department
Development Permits & Compliance Certificates	THE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY In St. Albert, this is the Development Branch (Development Manager and Officers)
Appeals related to subdivisions and development permits	SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT APPEAL BOARD OR LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS TRIBUNAL



3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1

WHAT IS A STATUTORY PLAN?

Statutory plans are described in the Municipal Government Act (MGA). It includes Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs), Municipal Development Plans (MDPs), Area Structure Plans (ASPs), and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs).

For more information about the role of each statutory plan, please see the chart below.

MGA	Municipal Government Act
The provincial legislation that governs everything municipalities do, including planning and development.	
—	Subdivision and Development Regulation
The provincial legislation that specifically governs subdivision and development of land.	
EMRGP	Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan
The Growth Plan guides growth and development in the region.	
MDP	Municipal Development Plan
This plan is required by the Municipal Government Act. This forward-looking document sets out the vision and goals for all aspects of the municipality's development. While not exclusively a land use planning document, it provides policy direction to guide how a community should grow.	
IDP	Intermunicipal Development Plan
A plan developed jointly by two or more municipalities who share a boundary to address future land use, development, and intermunicipal planning and cooperation. The City of St. Albert does not have an IDP with any neighbouring municipalities.	
ARP	Area Redevelopment Plan
A plan to revitalize or preserve an existing neighbourhood or area. The ARP land uses must support the policies identified within the MDP.	
ASP	Area Structure Plan / Neighbourhood Plan (NP)
These plans provide the blueprint for development in new neighbourhoods. The ASP land uses must support the policies identified within the MDP. NP supports the ASP policies.	
LUB	Land Use Bylaw
The MGA requires the City to have a Land Use Bylaw. The LUB outlines districts which allow different land uses and have different rules. The land use districts must support the land uses identified in the ASP/ARP and the MDP. LUB is not a Statutory Plan.	

3.2

WHY DEVELOP A PLAN?

Plans provide a framework for future development of land and are amended from time to time to reflect current community priorities. The MGA requires the City to have a Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

3.3

WHO DEVELOPS PLANS?

The City usually initiates Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs), Municipal Development Plans (MDPs), and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs). Private land owners or developers often apply for Area Structure Plans (ASPs). Area Structure Plan applicants are required to prepare and submit all the detailed studies needed, and then the City prepares the ASP bylaw. Council makes the final decision to approve or amend any statutory plan.

For a complete list of approved plans, documents, and guidelines, visit the [Documents, Plans & Guidelines](#) page on the City's website.

DID YOU KNOW?

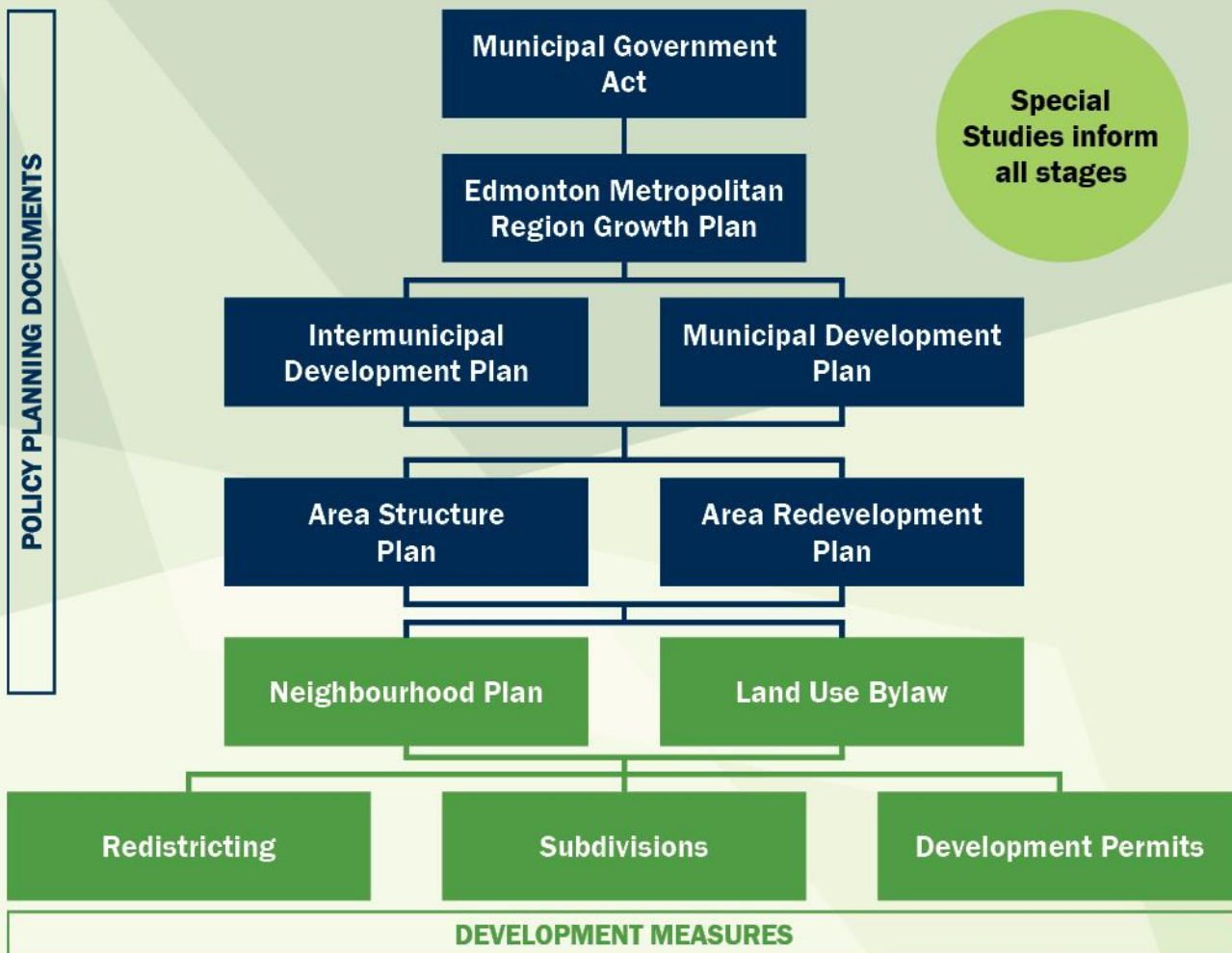
When creating or amending an approved statutory plan or bylaw, the MGA requires the City to notify the public and hold a Public Hearing.

- All the existing documents are available on the City website.
- Notice of a Public Hearing for a Statutory Plan or bylaw will be advertised in the Citylights section of the local paper and on the City's website for two weeks beforehand.
- For ASPs, signs will also be posted on the property.
- Sometimes information might be mailed directly to you.
- Articles about planning related matters may appear in the local newspaper.

HOW IS A PLAN DEVELOPED?



PLANNING FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The different document types often have long names, so they're referred to by their acronyms. The shortened versions are used throughout this document with the meanings found in the Glossary of Terms at the end.

All policy documents used by the City of St. Albert to make [planning decisions](#) are available on the City's website.

3.5

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Any person, group, or organization affected by a proposed planning matter is encouraged to provide input early and often.

Public and stakeholder participation is important during plan development and amendments. Depending on the proposal, there may be multiple opportunities to provide input.

For more information about how to participate in planning matters, see the [Public Participation Section of this document](#).



STATUTORY PLANS

3.6

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MDP)

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires each municipality to have a Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The MDP is an important city-wide policy document which outlines long-term policy direction for growth and development. It must conform with the Municipal Government Act and the Edmonton Metropolitan Area Growth Plan.

[Flourish](#) is St. Albert's MDP. The MDP relies on extensive public and stakeholder consultation to develop policy direction that reflects the public interest and priorities. The MDP contains policy direction for:

- Green Environment
- Robust Economy
- Housing Options
- Mobility Choices
- Cultural Richness
- Resilient Infrastructure
- Community Well-being
- Great Places
- Sustainable Growth

In the context of community planning, the MDP takes a holistic approach. All other statutory plans and bylaws must relate back to policy direction contained within the MDP. This includes

Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs), Area Structure Plans (ASPs), Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs), and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The city is always changing. It is critical that the MDP is able to provide direction for St. Albert's current challenges and future growth. To facilitate this, a full review of the MDP is undertaken typically every five to 10 years.

APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSES

The MDP is a statutory plan that is approved by bylaw. The City initiates the review of an existing MDP and may make changes to that document (known as an amendment) or repeal and replace with a new MDP. Extensive public participation and special studies are involved in this process.

Council approves and makes amendments to the MDP through a process outlined within the MGA. The process has specific notification requirements and a Public Hearing must be held.

Amendments to the MDP are also approved by Council through bylaw. Amendments can be made to the text, maps, or other elements of the document. Amendments to the MDP are sometimes initiated by the City and other times are initiated by private landowners, businesses, or members of the public. There is a fee and sometimes the process is completed in conjunction with amendments to the ASPs or ARPs to ensure all documents align.

3.7

AREA STRUCTURE PLAN (ASP)

Area Structure Plans plan new neighbourhoods in undeveloped areas. They contain policy direction for land use, density, transportation, servicing, parks, commercial and industrial activities, sequence of development, and more.

The City has single-tier ASPs and two-tier ASPs. A two-tier ASP may have many Neighbourhood Plans (NP). A NP is a technical document approved by the Director of Planning and Development.

For a list of all ASPs and NPs, visit the City's website at stalbert.ca and search for [Area Structure Plans](#).

GET INVOLVED

For MDP or ARP development, there are lots of opportunities for residents to get involved to help shape elements of the plan. Look for focus groups, surveys, workshops, open houses, public talks, or other events. Get involved early, be prepared to share your ideas, and learn about the ideas of others. The City appreciates your input!

3.8

AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (ARP)

Area Redevelopment Plans are applied to specific areas to guide redevelopment.

They contain policy direction for: land use, density, transportation, servicing, parks, recreational activities, commercial activities, sequence of development, design standards, and more. St. Albert's Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan is an ARP.

LEARN MORE

For more information, search Downtown Revitalization on the City's website, and click on [Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan](#).

APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSES

Amendments to ASPs and ARPs follow the same process. Often, additional focus is placed on public participation during the ARP process when the proposal impacts existing residents and the subject area serves a dynamic set of stakeholders.

New ASPs are usually initiated by private landowners or developers and occur on lands that previously did not have an ASP. Area Redevelopment Plans are initiated by both municipalities and private landowners or developers.

There is a fee to apply for an amendment to any ASP or ARP, and sometimes the process can involve changes to the MDP or LUB to ensure all documents align. New or amendment for NP has a process to follow and application fees.

LAND USE BYLAW

3.9 LAND USE BYLAW (LUB)

The MGA requires the City to have a Land Use Bylaw. The LUB outlines land use districts that allow several types of land uses and have different rules.

This document of rules and regulations is used to implement policies within statutory plans. The LUB outlines different categories of land uses throughout the municipality, called districts.

LEARN MORE

To view the districts applied to land within the City, search [Land Use Districting Map](#) on the City's website.

Each district identifies compatible land uses and activities and has standards for lot size, building type and height, building setbacks, site coverage, densities, parking, landscaping, signage, and other elements of the built form. These standards provide for the amenity and safety of the area, and keep the location and form of physical development compatible.

APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSES

Amendments to the LUB may occur to the text or change land from one land use to another. Changing the land use of a parcel is called redistricting. Sometimes called rezoning, redistricting occurs when the applicant would like to change what is currently allowed to happen on the land.

The process for redistricting is important because it allows Council to consider how well the proposed change fits for the City. If an ASP applies to the area being considered for redistricting, the proposal must align with the future land use contained within the ASP. The same is true for the Future Land Use Map within the MDP. Otherwise, an amendment to the ASP and possibly the MDP may also be required before redistricting can be approved.

Amendments to the LUB require a Public Hearing. In some cases, a Public Meeting or Public Open House may also be held. Input from stakeholders before and during the public hearing is encouraged.

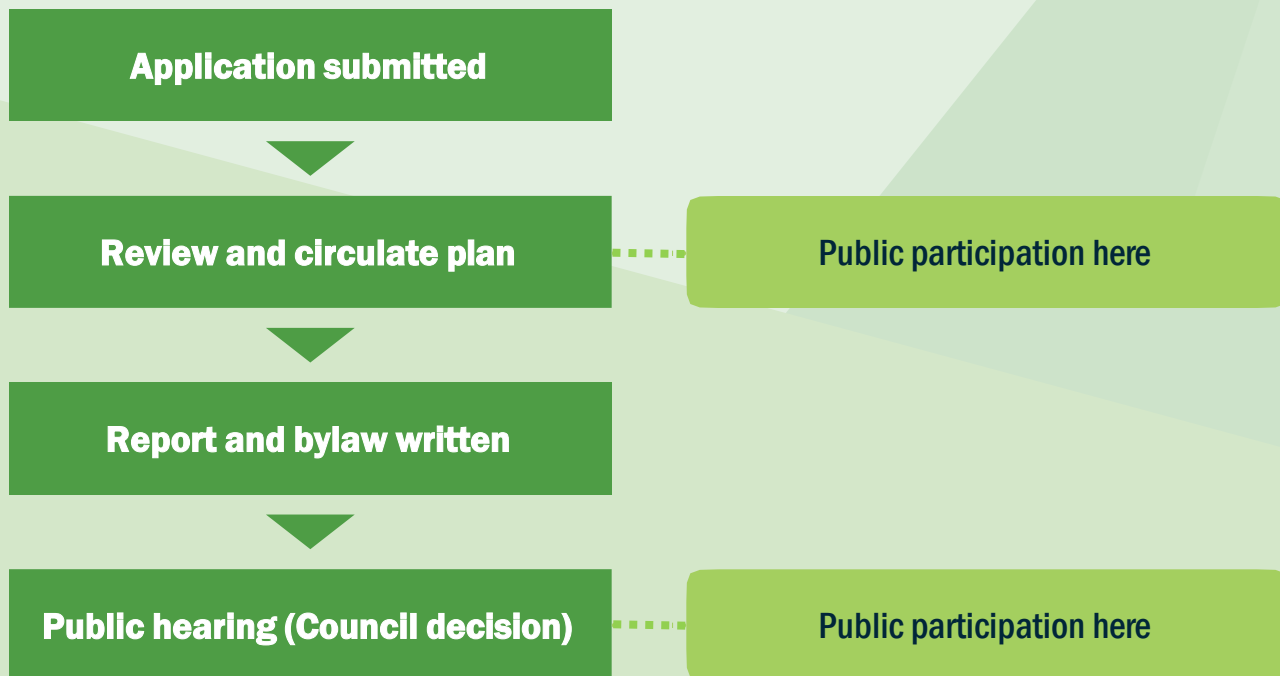
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For more information, see the [Land Use Bylaw Amendment Process and Application](#) brochure and the Land Use Bylaw [information page](#) available on the City's website.

To view some Land Use Bylaw amendment proposals visit [Cultivate the Conversation](#) and [Public Hearings Calendar](#) on the City's website, and visit the Citylights section in the St. Albert Gazette.

HOW IS LAND REDISTRICTED?

The process for redistricting allows Council to consider how well the proposed change fits for the City.



LEARN MORE

Find out about amendments to MDP, ASP, ARP, or LUB:

- Public hearings are required for new statutory plans and bylaws, or amendments to existing plans and bylaws.
- Additional community meetings are sometimes required, depending on the application and the nature of the proposal.
- Read the paper. Notice of a Public Hearing is advertised in the local paper in Citylights for two weeks beforehand.
- Check the City's website under Public Hearings Calendar.
- Look for signs on the property indicating a redistricting is proposed.
- Visit the City's website or call the Planning Department to find out more about upcoming planning matters.

NON-STATUTORY TOOLS

3.10

SPECIAL STUDIES

Special studies are undertaken to gather information on a variety of best practices in land use planning. The information is used to help shape policy and bylaw recommendations. Planners can learn a lot from researching other communities and from gathering data about our own community. Special studies can also be technical and be prepared by experts in various fields like engineering or geology. Special studies provide critical input to ensure recommendations and decisions are informed.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Fiscal Impact Analysis is a special study used to evaluate the financial impacts of new development and redevelopment proposals on the City's municipal operations. Providing public services and maintaining infrastructure represent significant costs to municipal operations. When land is developed more efficiently, it requires less infrastructure; which in the future, means less replacement and maintenance costs. At the same time, we are better able to pay for services (like transit) because more users are located closer together. Fiscal Impact Analysis can tell us how these costs and revenues add up over time.

3.11

GUIDELINES

Guidelines supplement statutory plans and bylaws through additional direction at various stages of development. Planning is a balance between requirements and flexibility. Guidelines are used to provide clearer direction and ideas for anyone undertaking development. They are typically non-binding, so they are a good place to put suggestions without making the process too prescriptive.

3.12 SUBDIVISION

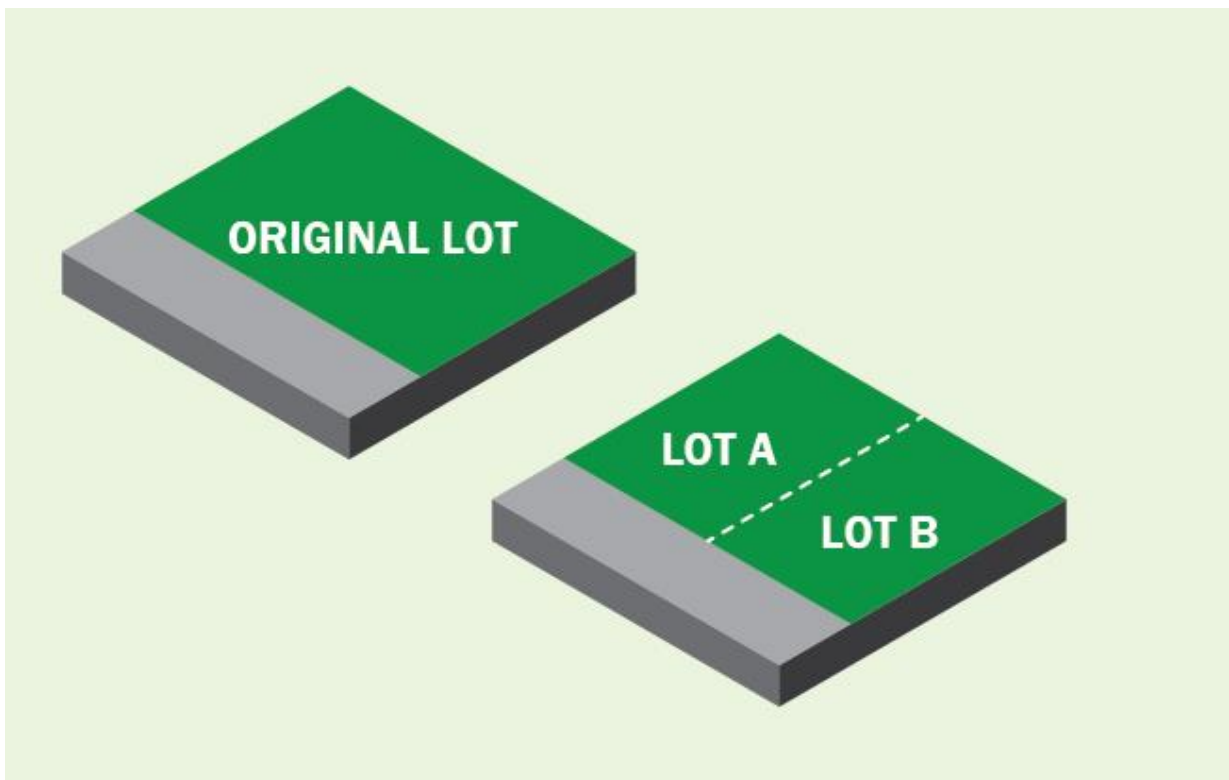
A subdivision is the process of dividing a parcel of land into two or more parcels so each will have its own legal title. This means that each parcel can be owned by different people. Redistricting will happen before a subdivision, which involves a Public Hearing and separate process, if a change in land use is being proposed.

Subdivisions are regulated by the City's Land Use Bylaw and Alberta Subdivision and Development Regulation.

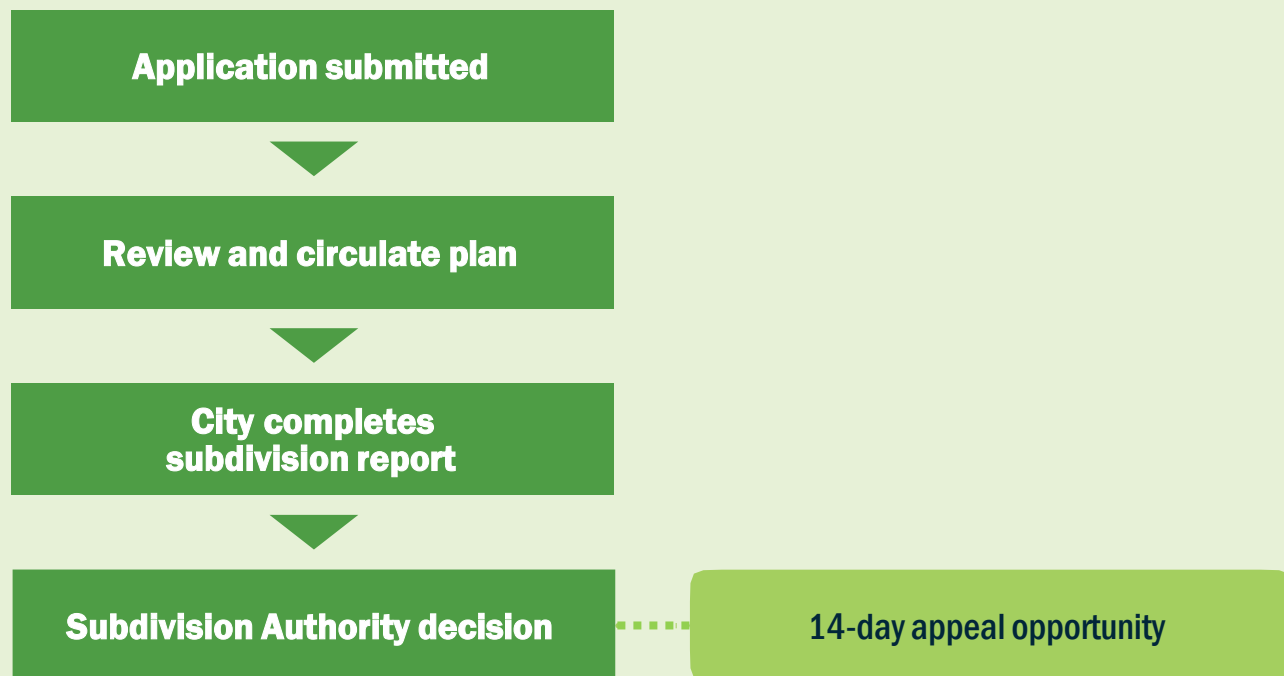
The Subdivision Authority is the body or person(s) determined by Council through bylaw that will have the authority to make decisions

about subdivisions on behalf of the municipality. In St. Albert, the Subdivision Approving Authority is the Director of the Planning & Development Department.

Subdivision decisions can be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board or Land and Property Rights Tribunal. Only the applicant, the City, government agency, or a school board can file an appeal.



HOW IS LAND SUBDIVIDED?



AFTER THE SUBDIVISION DECISION

Submit survey plan to City



Development Agreement



Endorse subdivision



Register subdivision

1. Meet conditions of subdivision
2. Apply to the City for endorsement
3. Subdivision Authority Decision on endorsement
4. Applicant submits plan to Land Titles for registration

For more details about the process, search [Subdivision Review](#) on the City's website.

FIND OUT ABOUT SUBDIVISION PROPOSALS

- If you live adjacent to a property being subdivided, and are not located in an area governed by an area structure plan, you will get a notice in the mail.
- Call the Planning Department.

Public hearings are not held for subdivisions. Statutory plans and the Land Use Bylaw require a public hearing to be approved or amended and these documents provide direction for subdivisions.

3.13

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

The City requires a development permit for most proposed development including:

- new buildings
- additions, renovations or structural repairs of existing buildings
- change in use, or intensity of use, of land or buildings
- excavation or stockpiling of soil
- signage

The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) establishes specific regulations for development, such as land use, setbacks, building heights, site coverage, and parking. Land uses are organized into permitted and discretionary uses. Discretionary uses may be approved to occur on the subject land at the discretion of the Development Officer. They must also meet special notification requirements and may be subject to other requirements at the discretion of the Development Officer.

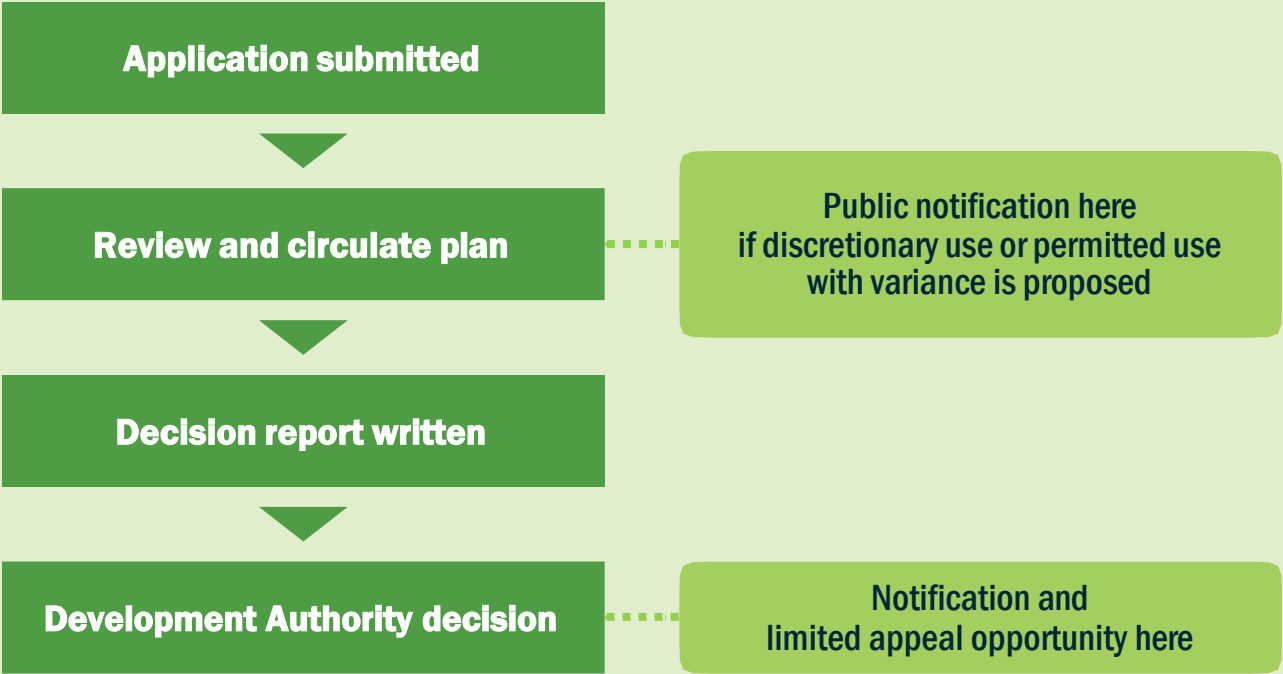
For more detail, search [Building & Development Permits](#) on the City's website.

FIND OUT ABOUT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PROPOSALS

- Not all development permits require mail notification to nearby residents.
- The Land Use Bylaw addresses the matter of radius notification for a *discretionary use* or, for a development permit issued for a permitted use involving a variance.
- Public meetings or open houses are sometimes held for development proposals. It depends on the nature of the development permit and neighbouring uses. Look for notices in the Citylights section of the St. Albert Gazette.
- Call the Planning Department to learn more about upcoming planning matters.



**HOW DO YOU GET A
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT?**



**3.14
SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT**

DIRECT CONTROL DISTRICTS

A Direct Control District is a land use district that warrants a custom-made, site-specific land use district. This is generally used if there are specific features of a site or a project that would require unique rules and guidelines.


Council sometimes remains the decision-making authority for all development applications within a Direct Control District. There may also be special notification and public meeting requirements in addition to regular requirements found in other districts.

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

When an application is made for a home-based business development permit, the Development Officer may ask the applicant to contact the neighbours immediately adjacent to the lot where the business will be located, and provide them with information on the proposed business and its impact.



4. PLANNING TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Planning effectively for the future must balance what we know today and our current/future needs. It means monitoring population, employment, land supply, housing, transportation, and investment in infrastructure to project trends and potential successes and challenges. St. Albert, like other cities around the world, applies planning solutions to help address many of the challenges cities face today.

4.1

HOW DO WE WANT TO GROW?

Planning for responsible growth requires a focused effort to limit urban sprawl and the costs to build and maintain the services that create a high quality of life.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan provides a framework for sustainable development for all member municipalities. As a member municipality, we contributed to the creation of the growth plan and are mandated to comply to this plan. For St. Albert, this means our new neighbourhoods will have more housing options, like townhouses and apartments, a variety of employment opportunities, and increased transportation choices. It also means that as we grow, we'll be looking to accommodate more of that growth within the existing urban footprint.

The City already sees infill and redevelopment in certain neighbourhoods. Moving forward, the City will develop a proactive policy framework that will help all stakeholders understand the benefits and mitigate the impacts of these changes.

Responsible growth management means the existing lower-density built form continues to have a place in our neighbourhoods. By selectively directing growth to places that make sense, we can provide a variety of different densities throughout the city and still meet density targets overall.

GROWING RESPONSIBLY

Responsible growth is a regional collaboration. The updated Edmonton Metropolitan Growth Plan policies will conserve an area bigger than St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, and Bruderheim combined. Growing efficiently will save five billion dollars throughout the region over the next 40 years by building less roads, bridges, underground utilities, and other infrastructure.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Area Growth Plan asks that St. Albert accommodate 17.5% of their overall growth within their existing urban boundary. This means that if 200 dwelling units are built in St. Albert in one year, 35 of those units should occur as redevelopment or infill. This is a long-term aspirational intensification target and will be monitored over time.

4.2 WHAT IS INFILL DEVELOPMENT?

Cities are constantly changing and infill (or redevelopment) is one way that happens. Infill refers to reinvestment into properties that are located within the existing developed area of a city. Infill may occur on land that is vacant, underutilized, or has existing buildings near the end of their usable life and require replacement. Infill and redevelopment reduces the need to grow the city outward and makes the best use of existing infrastructure.

Infill development can be big or small. It ranges from a single house to multi-family or commercial development.

Infill development is complex because it requires adapting land previously used for another purpose. Effectively planning for infill and redevelopment means addressing and mitigating changes that have an impact on nearby land uses and residents whenever possible.

Infill is generally found within older neighbourhoods. In St. Albert, development that occurred prior to 1980 is facing the most infill activity. These communities are identified as “Established Neighbourhoods” in the Land Use Bylaw.



Currently, the City has infill guidelines that address low density infill in the Established Neighbourhoods. The City has infill guidelines to help ensure development is compatible with the neighbourhood context and streetscape.

When an application is made for a new home or major renovation in an Established Neighbourhood, the City may ask the applicant to contact the neighbours immediately adjacent to where the development will be located. The applicant is responsible for providing the neighbours with information on the proposed development.

Prior to applying to subdivide or build a new home in an Established Neighbourhood, the City encourages applicants to discuss their plans with the City's Planning Department. Development Officers can conduct (fees may apply) an Infill Review to help ensure plans fit with the infill guidelines.

For more information, visit the City's website and search [Infill Guidelines](#).

LEARN MORE

Find out about infill proposals:

- If you live within 30 m of the site of the development permit or adjacent to the land being subdivided, you will get a notice in the mail.
- Visit the City's website or call the Planning Department to find out about development and planning applications.
- Public hearings are not held for subdivisions or development permits because decisions align with statutory plans and bylaws, which did require a public hearing.

INFILL INCLUDES:

1

A new single-detached home on a previously vacant lot

2

A new single-detached home where a single-detached home was demolished

3

One residential lot split into two lots to accommodate two single detached homes or one semi-detached home

4

Lot consolidation to accommodate multi-family development, like townhousing

5

Redevelopment of a large parcel of land to accommodate mixed-use compact built form

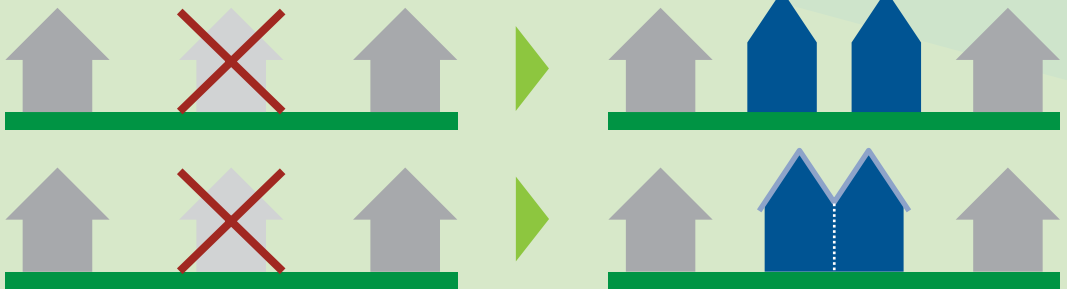
6

Parking lot converted to building

1+2



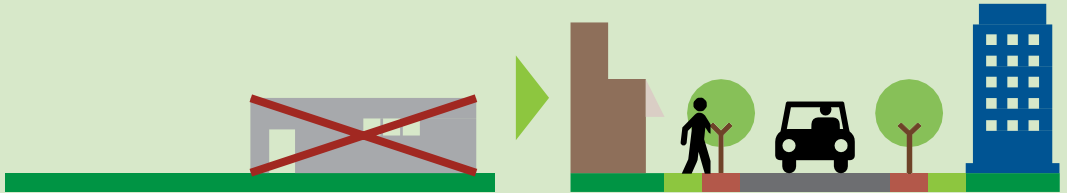
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4



5



6



4.3

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RUN OUT OF LAND?

Monitoring the amount of land available within the city to accommodate growth tells us when our supply is too low. The City monitors not only the amount of land, but what that land is being used for. When it is identified that land supply is low, the City will often work with neighbouring municipalities to undertake an annexation. Annexation means land changes from the jurisdiction of one municipality to another. It does not mean the ownership of the land changes.

In 2017, the City of St. Albert and Sturgeon County entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to work together for the City to annex lands from the County. The City provided an Intent to Annex to the Municipal Government Board on June 15, 2017. Annexation came into effect on January 1, 2022.



4.4

DO PLANNERS CONSIDER THE ROAD NETWORK?

The latter part of the last century saw cities designed around the automobile. Today, cities are thinking about a future with an integrated approach to public transportation. This includes buses, cars, light rail, and active transportation. Demographics are shifting, with more and more people looking for a car-free lifestyle. Cities need to provide choices, which for St. Albert means increased public and active transportation options to complement the successful delivery of private automobile choices. The benefits of these options also include less infrastructure costs and the ability to accommodate more growth without the typical traffic congestion of auto-oriented development.

The relationship between land use planning and transportation is important. The types of land uses and community design influence travel mode choices, and without efficient built environments, delivery of alternative transportation options is difficult.

To respond to these needs, the City of St. Albert has a Transportation Master Plan, has conducted long-term planning for light rail transit (LRT) along St. Albert Trail, will invest in park and ride facilities, and will continue to work towards transit-oriented development at planned transit station locations.

Cities today are also thinking about technology that changes the way we move around. Ridesharing services and autonomous vehicles are changing the way we think about the private automobile. For now, the full extent of the resulting impacts is unclear; however, the City will continue to monitor these technological advances.

4.5

HOW DO WE PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Our future depends on having a planet that can sustain life with clean air, clean water, food production, and resiliency for changing weather patterns. We have a responsibility to future generations to protect the systems they need to support a high quality of life. Providing people with a place to live and ways to move around have a considerable impact on the environment. Land use planning allows for the efficient use of land and natural resources as our city grows.

Efficient land use and energy consumption can happen through a variety of different tools. In general, it means that we put more people and services in a smaller area. In practice, this means more carefully designing our places and making it comfortable for people to live closer together. Amenities like parks and open spaces,

employment, goods and services, and beautiful streetscapes make urban living attractive to many different people around the world. It also means we expend less energy to get to the places we need to go, and use less materials and energy to construct, heat, and cool our buildings.

The City of St. Albert uses various policies to build more efficiently, like the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan which allows the neighbourhood to grow into a compact, mixed-use, and walkable place.



4.6

WHAT IS HOUSING DIVERSITY?

St. Albert experienced significant growth during the last part of the 20th century. Many families moved to St. Albert and many detached family homes were built. As we move forward, increasing housing diversity has become a focus of the City.

Housing choices accommodate different preferences and budgets as people move through various stages of life. Young people and families can find housing options that meet their needs, and older adults can downsize while staying in the same community.

The City has focused on addressing housing challenges through policies within the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) that require new neighbourhoods to include a mix of housing options. The Land Use Bylaw update enables a range of housing options within the low

density districts. Older neighbourhoods, through infill and redevelopment, will see more multi-dwelling housing, which makes it possible for existing residents to downsize their housing without moving out of the neighbourhoods they love.

DID YOU KNOW?

Household demographics have changed significantly over the last 22 years alone, the number of people in each house has dropped 8%. In 2018, there was an average of 2.9 persons per household in St. Albert, compared to 3.1 persons per household in 1996.



4.7 HOW IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTED?

Over the next several decades, we expect to see significant changes in how we do business in our region and around the world. Global shifts in smart technology, green energy, tourism, and the knowledge economy will influence job shifts, consumer habits, and how we move around everyday.

In the context of this transformation, attracting investment that creates jobs will increasingly depend on being able to attract talented and skilled people. To do this, places need to be a vibrant place to live, to work, and efficiently move people around. Land use planning influences these attributes within a City, and is an essential part of creating a City that can support economic development opportunities.

4.8 HOW DO WE CREATE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

Health is an important aspect of one's quality of life. Where you live has a direct impact on your long-term physical and mental health. The built environment influences access to healthy choices, like moving more, reducing stress, and accessing healthy foods. When planning a city, we can make choices that consider how to build healthier communities. A healthy community:

- Protects the environment to ensure cleaner air and water
- Provides housing choices throughout life stages
- Provides transportation options to get people out of their cars and offers choices that increase physical activity and reduces financial and physical stress
- Integrates the natural environment into the urban fabric, provides ample opportunity for recreation and social gatherings through open spaces, parks, and trails.







5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5.1 LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Listening to the community through public participation is a key source of information about the issues that matter most to St. Albertans. Effective community building relies on creating initiatives and places that benefit everyone. Getting people involved in community building starts with engagement and continues with people becoming champions of the projects, committees, and boards that matter to them.

Through effective public participation, the public, stakeholders and the City work together to achieve a common goal. This partnership encourages affected parties to bring forward unique ideas and solutions. As each community is different, so too are their aspirations and the ways to implement them. By listening to each other, the decisions generated will reflect the greater community at large.

The goal is to keep people involved to best represent the public interest in all the work done by the City. When priorities shift or new challenges emerge, the City needs to be able to embrace change and implement creative solutions that preserve aspects of the city that the community values.

5.2 WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Everyone is a community builder. We all have a stake in the communities we live in.

City Council, or a delegated authority of Council, makes the decisions on planning proposals on behalf of the electorate. You are affected

by these decisions and it is through public participation that you are informed, consulted, and heard before a decision is made.

5.3 WHY CONSULT?

You, as a member of the community, have knowledge of your community, your neighbourhood, and your streets that is invaluable to planners. You can provide insight into potential problems or concerns, as well as help decision-makers understand your community's goals and aspirations.

5.4 WHO INITIATES PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Depending on the project or development proposal, it could be a developer, private landowner, or the City.

5.5 HOW IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DONE?

Different methods of public participation include public hearings, public notification, appeals, public meetings, open houses, surveys, or focus groups.

Click [Public Participation Policy](#) for more information on the City's policy. For details about upcoming opportunities to provide input, visit the [Public Participation Calendar](#) on the City's website.

5.6

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The City notifies the public about upcoming Public Hearings, as per the requirements outlined in the MGA. Look for an advertisement in the Citylights section of the St. Albert Gazette or check the City's website.

[Public Hearings Calendar](#)

The Planning Branch notifies landowners within 100 metres by mail when a new application for redistricting has been received, and invites feedback prior to a decision being made. Notifications for Subdivision Applications are provided to adjacent landowners, when the property is not within an Area Structure Plan.

Notification for Development Permits varies depending on the proposal. For example, whether the use is permitted or discretionary.

For more information, search [Building & Development Permits on the City's](#) website.

5.7

GET INVOLVED!

Planners and Development Officers are very approachable and would be happy to help you. If you have any questions about a planning issue, call the Planning and Development Department 780-459-1642, submit an inquiry through the [contact form](#) or drop by the office on the 2nd floor of St. Albert Place at 5 St. Anne Street.

On the opposite page are some tips to help you make the most of your input.

KEY TERMS

APPEAL

City decisions about a subdivision application or development permit may be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. There are some restrictions as to who can file an appeal.

PUBLIC MEETING

A formal presentation by the group developing the project (developer, City, or landowner) where the public and stakeholders are invited to attend. Attendees ask questions publicly and the proceedings may be recorded. The purpose is to provide information and gather information from the public and stakeholders about the issues and options around a proposal. This is usually held earlier in the process to help the organizer gather public input and feedback on issues or options as plans are being developed.

OPEN HOUSE

An informal session with displays or other information available for participants to review. Organizers are available to answer questions the public may have. A feedback form or survey is often used to record public comment. This is generally held later in the process to inform the public of a proposal, including how feedback from earlier public participation was incorporated into it.

PUBLIC HEARING

Held during a Council meeting, a public hearing is required for all proposed bylaws that change a statutory document. Any person or groups of people affected by the proposed bylaw may speak to the issue at the Public Hearing. Each speaker is permitted five minutes. A group is allowed 10 minutes. The MGA and Procedure Bylaw outlines specific notification and procedural requirements for a Public Hearing.

SIX TIPS ON PARTICIPATION



BE PROACTIVE

Get involved as early in the process as you can. Did you hear about something happening in your neighbourhood? Check with Planning & Development to see if there is an application and how you can provide input.

The City's friendly Planning & Development Department staff would be happy to discuss questions you have and how to have your voice heard in the process.



GET ORGANIZED

Are there other people in your neighbourhood interested in the proposal too? Work together. It is an opportunity to welcome community members with similar and opposing views to come together for your community.



FOCUS

Opinions and personalized comments are okay, but they can be subjective. A clear, concise message that includes facts and a rationale is the strongest way to provide input. It helps decision-makers understand the issues and can lead to clear solutions. What are the best parts of the proposal you would not want to see lost? How could the proposal be improved?



RESEARCH

Gather information on the issue. Make sure you understand what it's all about. Sometimes misinformation is out there. What are the City's regulations and plans? Does the proposal meet requirements? What are the benefits to the proposal? What are the challenges or impacts of the proposal? If you have a suggestion, could your suggestion be done?



STAY INVOLVED

Look for the multiple avenues available to get your message across. Attend the Open House. Write a letter or email to the Planning Department. Make a presentation during the Public Hearing. Stay involved throughout the process.



BE RESPECTFUL

Landowners are entitled to develop their property in accordance with the City's regulations. All views are welcome and residents have the opportunity to present their input. Please listen to those who have different views than you. Be respectful to other residents, City staff, landowners, and City Council.



6. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

6.1

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	ACRONYM (IF APPLICABLE)	DEFINITION
APPEAL		City decisions about a subdivision application or development permit may be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. There are some restrictions as to who can file an appeal.
AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN	ARP	A plan to revitalize or preserve an existing neighbourhood or area.
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN	ASP	ASPs plan new neighbourhoods in undeveloped areas.
INTERMUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	IDP	A plan developed jointly by two or more municipalities who share a boundary to address future land use, development, and intermunicipal planning and cooperation. The City of St. Albert does not have an IDP with any neighbouring municipalities.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	NP	Within the two-tier Area Structure Plan will be several NP. A Neighbourhood Plan is a technical document that has details about servicing, land use, and road networks. NPs are approved by the Director of Planning and Development.
LAND USE BYLAW	LUB	The MGA requires the City to have a Land Use Bylaw. The LUB outlines districts which allow different land uses and have different rules.
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT	MGA	The provincial legislation that governs everything municipalities do, including planning and development.
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	MDP	This plan is required by the Municipal Government Act. This forward-looking document sets out the vision and goals for all aspects of the municipality's development. This plan provides the policy direction for the City's growth.

TERM	ACRONYM (IF APPLICABLE)	DEFINITION
OPEN HOUSE		An informal session with displays or other information available for participants to review. Organizers are available to answer questions the public may have. A feedback form or survey is often used to record public comment. This is generally held later in the process to inform the public of a proposal, including how feedback from earlier public participation was incorporated into it.
PUBLIC HEARING		Held during a Council meeting, a Public Hearing is required for all proposed bylaws that change a statutory document. Any person or groups of people affected by the proposed bylaw may speak to the issue at the Public Hearing. Each speaker is permitted five minutes. A group is allowed 10 minutes. The MGA and Procedure Bylaw outlines specific notification and procedural requirements for a Public Hearing.
PUBLIC MEETING		A formal presentation by the group developing the project (developer, City, or landowner) where the public and stakeholders are invited to attend. Attendees ask questions publicly and the proceedings may be recorded. The purpose is to provide information and gather information from the public and stakeholders about the issues and options around a proposal. This is usually held earlier in the process to help the organizer gather public input and feedback on issues or options as plans are being developed.
SUBDIVISION AUTHORITY		The body or person(s) determined by Council through bylaw that will have the authority to make decisions about subdivisions on behalf of the municipality. In St. Albert, the Subdivision Approving Authority is the Director of the Planning & Development Department.
SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATION		The provincial legislation that specifically governs subdivision and development of land.

6.2

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) works on behalf of over 8,000 planning professionals nationally, and has served as the voice of Canada's planning community since 1919. Planners safeguard the health and well-being of urban and rural communities by addressing the use of land, resources, facilities and services with consideration to physical, economic, and social efficiency.

www.cip-icu.ca

ALBERTA PLANNERS OF PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE

The Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI) is a professional regulated organization under the provisions of the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act of Alberta, responsible for certifying members to achieve "Right to Title" and thereby are legally entitled to use the Registered Professional Planner – RPP designation. APPI regulates private and public sector planners practicing in Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. APPI is governed as a public accountable organization with an obligation to serve the public's interest.

www.albertaplanners.com

CITY WEBSITE

This document is also available on the City of St. Albert website. Visit stalbert.ca and search [Planning and Development](#).

If you would like more information about planning related matters, visit the Planning & Development page on the City's website to [submit an inquiry via contact form](#), or use the contact information below:

ADDRESS:

Planning & Development
Second Floor
5 St. Anne Street
St. Albert, AB T8N 3Z9
Phone: 780-459-1642

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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