

City Plan Implementation Update

Advancing Edmonton's Systems

Recommendation

That the August 24, 2021, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE00684, be received for information.

Previous Council Action

The following motion passed at the June 8, 2021, City Council Public Hearing:

That Administration provide a report to Committee, outlining the approach and opportunities for additional engagement on District Planning, as part of a City Plan implementation update.

Executive Summary

As Administration advances the direction of The City Plan, this report builds on the February 2, 2021, Urban Planning and Economy report CR_8176 Advancing City Plan: Systems and Networks, and provides a brief update on the initiatives that underpin the systems and networks that shape Edmonton and are required for growth. These include:

- Development of a city-wide policy and geographic plans for the city's 15 districts
- Streamlining and simplifying the regulatory and planning landscape through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative
- Establishment of a City Planning Framework and repeal of plans that have served their purpose
- A review and renewal of Administration's planning guidance and regulation of the River Valley
- Completion of the Mobility Network Assessment and Mass Transit Planning Study
- Development of the Bike Plan Implementation Guide
- Completion of initial phases of the Growth Management Framework

Report

Systems and Networks

The City Plan establishes a systems and network approach to shape our city and create a foundation for growth (see Attachment 1). The systems are Planning and

Design, Mobility and Managing Growth. This report provides information on projects and initiatives that advance these systems.

Planning and Design System

District Planning Network

Establishing districts modernizes the planning framework to ensure the City's long-term financial viability and is rooted in stewardship and preservation of what Edmontonians value - safety, livability, and community. A modernized system responds to emerging realities to make informed choices. It means less detailed and prescriptive guidance for specific places and land uses, and better direction for the big picture - how we want to experience our community now and in the future.

Scope of District Plans

District plans will provide structure and policy to guide land use planning and infrastructure decisions, and ensure these decisions support the intentions of The City Plan. This will provide greater certainty to communities and developers regarding the extent of change expected and desired as the city grows to 1.25 million residents. This is especially important in the many areas of the city that have no other land use plan in effect other than the broad and long-range direction of The City Plan. District plans will facilitate the application of new zones through the Land Development Application process once the new Zoning Bylaw is adopted. Growth Management will work in tandem with district plans to apply financial tools to activate priority growth areas and revenue generating tools to complete developing areas, connecting planning direction and budget decisions. Establishing district plans is therefore critical to the delivery of The City Plan and these integrated projects.

The policies in district plans will support decisions that are informed both by The City Plan and the local context. Examples of local context include the location of local nodes, proximity to transit stations, and the presence of parks, open spaces and heritage elements.

Because of their scale, district plans will not contain the same level of detail provided by neighbourhood level land use plans. However, district plans will help inform local area planning such as neighbourhood renewal. Also, district plans can be amended in the future to contain more detailed land use planning direction in specific areas of concern.

Consultation is intended to occur at multiple scales with the level of consultation and detail increasing in scope as the geographic area narrows. For example, neighbourhood renewal projects will conduct additional consultation at the neighbourhood scale, while block level consultation can occur for land development applications.

Approach to District Planning

Current work is focused on extracting and utilizing existing priorities and policies from approved plans rather than recreating this work in new neighbourhood policy plans. The 15 district plans will combine existing land use, mobility and infrastructure policies that align with The City Plan. This creates a simplified, consistent and nimble policy landscape for residents, developers, communities and Administration, and is necessary to support future growth.

This approach to District Planning will use a compressed timeline to formally establish the districts as statutory plans. The draft district plans will be developed in 2021 and broad public engagement is planned for early 2022 (see engagement section below for additional detail). The District General Policy and 15 district plans are anticipated to be brought to City Council Public Hearing by the end of 2022.

Preparing these plans and discussing them with stakeholders and residents will reveal where more planning work is required to address gaps in policy after the foundations of district plans are established. Over time, district plans will evolve to guide growth in priority areas and appropriate local context will be added into the plans.

This innovative approach to land use policy planning provides opportunities for the City to establish the regulatory framework that will serve as the foundation to achieving The City Plan and Energy Transition Strategy goals in an efficient and effective manner. Administration understands the complexities of implementing a new approach to planning that shifts away from the neighbourhood level. Although a neighbourhood-level approach has been used in the past, it requires extensive resources and cannot be applied equitably across the 375 neighbourhoods in the city. Additionally, a more detailed neighbourhood planning policy approach does not meet the needs of our dynamic, growing and increasingly diverse city. Administration will continue to work to ensure that local context remains an important part of district plans, through a layered policy approach that addresses unique considerations.

Current and Planned Engagement

District Planning is focused on consolidating and simplifying existing approved plans and priorities rather than creating new directions. This approach honours and formalizes feedback from The City Plan engagement into policy and maps.

The current engagement approach to inform the district planning project is to:

- Confirm and validate The City Plan's directions applied to each district; and
- Refine the District General Policy and individual district plans for clarification, missing or incorrect information or appropriate level of detail.

To date, engagement has been focused on gathering feedback from the same core stakeholder group who participated in the preparation of The City Plan and

ConnectEdmonton. This group reviewed and commented on the draft District General Policy and three sample district plans in the initial project phase. The feedback informed:

- The structure, content and level of detail required; and
- Strategies to effectively communicate plan concepts to a broad audience.

In addition to core stakeholder engagement, eight public virtual information sessions were hosted to share information about District Planning and answer any questions. The information sessions were advertised through the City's website and public events calendar, through social media channels and through stakeholder networks such as Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL). Resulting information helped identify gaps or opportunities the project team had not considered.

Robust public engagement at the Advise and Refine level is planned for early 2022 once the draft District General Policy and all 15 draft district plans are ready for review and feedback. Specific tactics and activities will be confirmed later this year. The current approach defers more detailed engagement to future projects that will address specific planning issues as they arise, rather than attempting to address these issues through the creation of the district plans. Administration considers this approach to be the best course of action for this project.

Opportunities for Additional Engagement

At the June 8, 2021, City Council Public Hearing, a motion was passed that asked Administration to consider how additional public engagement could be accommodated. The understood intent behind the motion is to examine opportunities and provide options to Council where meaningful local context can be selectively considered and to ensure residents have confidence in the emerging planning policy regime. One of two options that outline opportunities for additional engagement can be pursued if directed by Council, otherwise Administration will continue with the approach to engagement described above.

Option 1 - Additional Engagement

Opportunities for additional engagement within the current project scope include:

- Hosting additional engagement events in each district (in addition to joint district events)
- Providing additional interactive opportunities online throughout the engagement period (e.g. activities led by the project team as well as self-directed review and input for residents/communities)
- Creating more resources (e.g. workbooks, conversation guides) for community leagues and/or residents to collaborate on feedback and share with the project team

- Identifying other City project engagement events where the project team can attend and create awareness and collect additional input

These additional engagement activities would give more participants an opportunity to share local context with Administration. The information they provide can be considered for policy inclusion within district plans, or support work planning for future projects. This option may not satisfy some residents who desire a more detailed customized neighbourhood plan that recognizes substantial local context. If Council desires additional engagement for District Planning, this option would have manageable impacts on the project timeline and budget, and would preserve the project scope.

Option 2 - Change of Engagement Scope

Option 2 for additional engagement entails a significant adjustment to the District Planning project scope. This option would revert to a more conventional approach to neighbourhood planning in which extensive community engagement would occur for each plan area with a purpose of capturing and embedding a high level of local context into each of the district plans. The benefit to this approach is a high level of public participation and increased understanding of development expectations.

Administration has identified a number of drawbacks to this approach:

- Adjusting policies and maps would duplicate a significant amount of work already completed through The City Plan.
- City-wide planning at the neighbourhood scale will create inequities, as due to resource constraints, district plans would not be developed concurrently, and some districts would undergo detailed planning while others would have no direction for some time.
- The resources necessary to create and maintain these types of plans are significant, which does not support the modernized, financially viable planning system intended by the City Planning Framework project, which ensures our planning tools remain responsive as the city evolves over time.

This option represents a fundamental change in the project's intent, scope, timelines and required resources, and will leave insufficient direction to implement the new Zoning Bylaw through land development applications. If Council directs Administration to pursue this option, a new project scope, schedule and resource plan would be required.

Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative

The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative will streamline and simplify the regulatory and planning landscape. The initiative supports key objectives in The City Plan and Corporate Business Plan, including red tape reduction, improved service delivery, sustained community and economic investment, and more equitable outcomes. This work supports and is in alignment with Edmonton's Economic Action Plan.

As part of Phase 2 of the initiative, Administration is drafting a new Zoning Bylaw and corresponding zoning map, investing in technology improvements, updating City services and engaging with Edmontonians. A complete update and timeline is described in the June 29, 2021, Urban Planning and Economy report CR_7697, Zoning Bylaw Renewal Report #3 - Approaches and Structure of the New Zoning Bylaw.

City Planning Framework Implementation

Phase 1 of the City Planning Framework Implementation concluded on June 8, 2021, with the repeal of 74 land use plans that had fulfilled their purpose. The next phase will create a predictable lifecycle process to create, monitor, review, and retire planning tools to ensure they remain responsive as the city evolves over time. This process is expected to be in place in early 2022.

River Valley Planning Modernization (RVPM)

An update on the River Valley Planning Modernization project was provided in the June 29, 2021, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE00544, River Valley Planning Modernization Phase 1 Update. The project will be completed in four phases by early 2023 and is a holistic review of Administration's planning guidance and regulation of the River Valley with the goal of ensuring that the River Valley remains a high-functioning, vibrant and ecologically resilient open space network as the city grows.

Mobility System

Mobility Network Assessment

The Mobility Network Assessment establishes a framework to prioritize investments that best support an evolving mobility system and will inform the 2023-2026 Capital Budget Cycle. High priority locations will consider improved multi-modal access, safety and the development of the mass transit network, which will support the Energy Transition Strategy goal of 50 percent of trips made by transit and active transportation by 2040. An update to Urban Planning Committee is anticipated in early 2022.

Mass Transit Planning

Findings from the mass transit technical study will be incorporated into the Mobility Network Assessment and will inform the:

- Development of concept planning of non-LRT technologies and guidelines for route selection; and
- Review of opportunities and constraints for bus rapid transit implementation.

Bike Plan Implementation

The Bike Plan Implementation Guide will be presented to Urban Planning Committee in early 2022. Future bike routes along arterial roadways and general active

transportation mode improvements will be prioritized through the Mobility Network Assessment. Bike network expansion would support Energy Transition Strategy goals and in conjunction with other capital projects, continue to accelerate the completion of the active transportation network.

These mobility initiatives will be evaluated through the Growth Management Framework and Carbon Accounting Framework as part of the priority-based budget process and will inform the 2023-2026 Capital Budget.

Managing Growth System

Growth Management Framework

The Growth Management Framework will direct investment to areas of greatest priority based on the population horizon and activation approach in The City Plan. Growth management advances activation of nodes and corridors, creates conditions for success of the mass transit network, and supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Current work includes:

- Establishing a capital investment program to address infrastructure gaps and support redevelopment in priority growth areas;
- Designing financial and non-financial incentives and tools to incentivize growth;
- Refining the policy on substantial completion of the developing area to provide direction on planning for the future growth area; and
- Applying a growth management lens to the priority based budget process for the 2023-2026 budget cycle.

Upcoming stakeholder engagement will inform the development of these actions and includes ongoing conversations with EPCOR focused on coordination of infrastructure investments.

The City Plan Implementation Integration

The City Plan envisions three systems that work together to shape our city - the Planning and Design System, the Mobility System and the Managing Growth System. This integrated system is activated by the distinct but related projects in this report. Even though each project is independent, they work together and consider how decisions of an individual project may influence other initiatives in the system.

Public Engagement

The City Plan engagement with the public, key stakeholder groups, local business, institutions, and other orders of government gathered important feedback and support for The City Plan Implementation initiatives. Attachment 2 provides a summary of engagement themes.

Financial Implications

Establishing a capital program under the Growth Management Framework will require funding to address infrastructure gaps and provide financial incentives to attract and support growth to the city's priority growth areas. Program parameters and associated funding needs will be identified for the 2023-2026 budget cycle.

Accelerating timelines for initiatives such as mass transit and bike plan implementation to support the Energy Transition Strategy will have financial implications for the 2023-2026 budget process.

Option 1 for District Planning additional engagement would have impacts that can be accommodated within the Planning and Environment Services Branch's 2022 operating budget. If Option 2 for additional engagement is pursued, a comprehensive review of the project's purpose, scope, resources and timelines would be required and an unfunded service package for Council's consideration developed upon request.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact; Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation; Goods and Services move efficiently			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmontonians have the ability to live locally, with access to diverse and affordable housing options in communities that support their daily needs	See Community of Communities in the City Plan	To be determined	15 minute districts that allow people to easily complete their daily needs
Edmontonians live closer to what they need and are supported by walkable communities, active transportation networks and greater connectivity across all travel modes	See Community of Communities in the City Plan	To be determined	50 percent of trips are made by transit and active transportation
Edmonton's growth and development mutually benefit the city and region	See A Rebuildable City in the City Plan	To be determined	50 percent of new units added through infill city-wide

Attachments

1. The City Plan - Systems and Networks Approach
2. The City Plan Engagement Data Summary

Others Reviewing this Report

- H. Rai, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Financial and Corporate Services
- D. Croft, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services

- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- K. Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor