

COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT REPORTING

Appointment: Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board

Classification: External Agency - Intergovernmental

Councillor(s): Mayor Amarjeet Sohi

Reporting Period: November 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023

Mandate

The primary objective of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) is to plan for and manage the growth of the region in a strategic, coordinated and integrated way to ensure long term economic prosperity and quality of life for the residents of the region.

Background

Thirteen Mayors make up the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board and bring their unique local perspectives to a regional table, and create a platform for problem solving across communities. The EMRB Board facilitates collaboration among the member municipalities in support of the implementation of a growth plan and servicing plan. The growth plan, *Re-Imagine. Plan. Build.*, provides a comprehensive and integrated policy framework to plan growth across the Region over the next 30 years in a responsible manner that sustains and advances regional prosperity and well-being. The servicing plan identifies the services required to support the implementation of the growth plan; to support the optimization of shared services; and to facilitate orderly, economical and environmentally responsible growth in the Region.

Shared Priorities and Advocacy Areas

The EMRB and City of Edmonton share a vision of growth to create opportunities for economic prosperity and to find solutions for demands upon services and infrastructure, as well as pressure on natural and built environments. Aligned priorities include:

- Promote long-term sustainability
- Ensure efficient land use, including environmentally responsible land use planning
- Develop coordinating policies for regional infrastructure investment and service delivery
- Develop growth and servicing plans that guide planning and service delivery for the region
- Promote economic well-being and competitiveness.

Report on Activities, Projects, and Outcomes

The following are key recent highlights of activities at the EMRB:

- The Growth Plan Five-Year Interim Review Task Force is nearing the completion of the first phase of work which includes updating population and employment forecasts and a review of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The full scope of work will continue through Q2 of 2024.
- In February 2023, the Board approved a new [strategic plan](#), [business plan](#) and [budget](#) for the period of 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. These documents outline the work that the Board will undertake over the remainder of its term. Key strategic priorities identified include:
 - **Enabling a prosperous region:** Speaks directly to the implementation of the Growth Plan through various means and includes strategies describing how we intend to create a foundation to enable growth and attract investment, while ensuring we have the infrastructure needed to support prosperous communities in both rural and urban settings.
 - **Stewarding our natural assets:** Describes how we intend to maximize the use of existing and planned infrastructure and steward our natural assets, including prime agricultural lands and watersheds. This priority is also about stormwater management, climate resiliency and planning for parks and open spaces.
 - **Building enduring partnerships:** Describes how we intend to collaborate with one another and with others. It is about relationships and partnerships that inform and enhance the impact and reach of our work.
- The Committee of the Whole meeting on November 17, 2022 featured a conversation on the challenges the region is facing with housing and homelessness. Issues are being observed by many of the municipalities in the region, not just Edmonton, and there appears to be an interest for the region to contemplate what it can do to coordinate efforts. A housing symposium is currently being planned in Q3-Q4 of 2023.
- EMRB Administration has commenced work on a regional Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) based on a project charter approved by the Board. This work is expected to be completed in 2023. Future work to explore a regional carbon budget and coordinating regional standards for climate resilient communities is anticipated later in 2023 and into 2024.
- At the April 13, 2023 Board meeting, Sturgeon County advanced a Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) application for the Villeneuve Airport Area ASP. This REF application was recommended to be rejected by EMRB Administration and therefore was brought forward to the Board for a decision. After questions and debate, the REF application was rejected by the Board (City of Edmonton voted to reject the application).

Upcoming Events and Milestones

The completion of a five year interim review of the 30-year Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan is planned for the second quarter of 2024. In 2022 the Board agreed that this review should include:

- A review and update of the employment and population projections to 2044 to align with the staggered release of federal census data
- An update and review of the growth plan's key performance indicators (KPIs) and explore target setting to better understand whether the growth plan's outcomes are being met
- A review of the work completed to date and to assess how to integrate the outcomes of this further work into the growth plan.

At the May 18 Committee of the Whole meeting, there will be an education session on carbon budgeting along with another discussion on Indigenous engagement in the region.

The June 2023 Board meeting is expected to be a critical meeting with several key items coming forward for consideration, including:

- The completion of the first phase of the five year interim review of the Growth Plan.
- Initiation of projects exploring carbon budgeting and climate resiliency.

- New member motions that originated from the Board's decision on the Villeneuve Airport REF application that could adjust the scope of the interim review of the Growth Plan.
- Initiation of a project to create a value added agriculture asset map.
- Selection of a new Board Chair and Vice-Chair who will take on the roles in November 2023.

Evaluation

It is recommended that the City of Edmonton continue to work with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board to advance municipal priorities and areas of shared interest including how to advocate for the City's interests.