

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE MASTER PLAN (RAMP) REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

That the Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) Regional Context Statement as set out in Attachment 1 of the October 11, 2023, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE01950 be approved and that Administration be authorized to refer it to the Edmonton Metropolitan Board for information.

Requested Council Action	Decision Required		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Urban Places, Regional Prosperity		
City Plan Values	PRESERVE, LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A Rebuildable City	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the Future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan Regional Agriculture Master Plan 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CR_5674, Regional Context Statement, Inter-municipal and Regional Development Committee, May 25, 2018 UPE01663, Update and Proposed Next Steps for fresh: Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy, Community and Public Services, Q1 2024 		

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Executive Summary

- The Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) was approved by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board in 2021 and the Government of Alberta in 2022, and is part of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan ('Growth Plan').
- Members of the EMRB are required to ensure that their existing municipal development plans are consistent with the Growth Plan and RAMP. Administration has determined that The City Plan and the City's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy, *fresh*, are compliant with RAMP. The compliance is documented through a Regional Context Statement.
- This report provides an overview of the City of Edmonton's Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) Regional Context Statement. The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board (EMRB) requires the context statement to be completed by December 20, 2023 — if the report recommendation is approved, Administration will refer it to the EMRB for information.

REPORT

The Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP)¹ approved by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) on August 12, 2021, and the Government of Alberta on December 21, 2022, is part of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. Member municipalities of the EMRB are required to ensure that their municipal development plans are consistent with RAMP, as well as the Growth Plan which encompasses RAMP.

The compliance exercise is completed through Regional Context Statements, which are required to be provided to the EMRB as information prior to December 20, 2023, (i.e. within one year of the Government of Alberta's approval of RAMP). Municipalities are required to update their municipal development plans, if required, prior to December 20, 2024, or as part of any updates required by the Growth Plan's 5-Year Interim Review (expected to be completed in Q4 2024), whichever occurs first.

Using the EMRB template for Regional Context Statements, Administration completed a review and determined that The City Plan is compliant with RAMP. Therefore, no immediate changes are recommended. This analysis is outlined in Attachment 1.

The City Plan was developed concurrently to RAMP and, through the drafting process, Administration confirmed alignment between the two documents. Policies within The City Plan align with the key objectives of RAMP to conserve agricultural lands, minimize premature fragmentation and promote diversification and value-added agriculture production/infrastructure.

Applicable direction from The City Plan that relates to RAMP:

- Seek to increase infill to achieve a target of a cumulative total of 50 per cent of new residential units being created within the redeveloping areas over the life of The City Plan.
- Promote intensification of land uses and promote mixed land uses within key nodes and corridors of the City, thereby increasing the viability of transit.

¹ [Regional Agriculture Master Plan \(RAMP\)](#). Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, 2021.

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- Prevent premature fragmentation and conversion of agricultural lands for residential and non-residential uses.
- Conserve agricultural land in order to improve food system resilience, support the long term viability of the agricultural sector and mitigate climate change.
- Prevent any further subdivision of Rural Residential or Agricultural lands that creates additional Rural Residential parcel(s) or would otherwise facilitate further country residential development.
- Cooperate with regional partners to steward agricultural resources and value-added industries.
- Require substantial completion of the developing area prior to authorizing the preparation of statutory plans for contiguous development of the Future Growth Area.

These measures are expected to help slow the conversion of agricultural land for other uses. This is consistent with the policy direction in RAMP for areas designated for transition to urban uses.

Fresh, the City's Urban Agriculture Plan, was completed in 2012, prior to RAMP. This meets the requirement in RAMP that all urban municipalities need an urban agriculture plan in place. There is existing policy alignment between *fresh* and RAMP; therefore, immediate changes are not required. *Fresh* is set to be updated in Q1 2024 and adjustments could further integrate *fresh* with the new direction from RAMP.

Community Insight

RAMP's engagement process was led by EMRB's RAMP Task Force. The engagement included a range of stakeholder groups from across the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, with the majority of participants being agricultural producers, followed by developers and research specialists. A majority of the participants support the preservation of prime agricultural lands.²

The City Plan, which implements the goals of RAMP, included an extensive stakeholder engagement program that found support for key City goals such as:

- the preservation of prime agricultural lands.
- efficient land use, including increased densities
- intensification of developed areas.
- mixed-use development, which will reduce the rate of land consumption.

These insights provided during The City Plan engagement process are consistent with the key findings of the RAMP engagement process.

GBA+

A comprehensive GBA+ report completed for this report determined that The City Plan policies are consistent with RAMP objectives and goals, including those that impact equity. Findings from the EMRB stakeholder group engagement were not disaggregated into their stakeholder groups, and as such it is not clear whether some groups are marginalized by the impacts of RAMP. In seeking to conserve prime agricultural lands, RAMP aims to maintain opportunities for local area farmers to

² Regional Agriculture Master Plan Engagement: Phase 2 – Draft Policies What We Heard Report. Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board. June 2021.

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continue farming. Therefore, it does address the needs of farmers who desire to continue farming in the region. Nonetheless, RAMP is limited in its effect on speculative land investment activity that can still negatively impact the viability of local farming.

Attachment

1. City of Edmonton Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) - Regional Context Statement