

Responses to Council Questions

Administration has prepared responses to the following nine Council Questions:

1) Urban Agriculture

Council Question: *How will the concept of urban agriculture be incorporated in the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan?*

The City of Edmonton has taken a fresh new look at urban agriculture in the development of a unique Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy (October 2012). The Goodridge Corners Neighborhood Area Structure Plan, however, makes limited reference to urban agriculture in its statement of “providing community gardens for neighbourhood residents”. Nonetheless, the opportunity remains as development in the neighbourhood progresses, for the adoption of urban agriculture practices and in the implementation of urban agriculture concepts and strategies.

The Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy identifies seven key areas of opportunity for urban agriculture in Edmonton. They are:

1. Food production
2. Processing
3. Storage and distribution
4. Buying and selling
5. Eating and celebration
6. Waste and recovery
7. Education and governance

These areas can be applied to the various types of the urban setting that include peri-urban, urban residential, inner urban and inner urban core residential areas.

As a new greenfield development that will include various densities of population, it could be argued that Goodridge Corners will be representative of three of these areas, excluding inner urban core.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Implementation of these strategies can be accomplished at Goodridge Corners through the follow strategies:

The Goodridge Corners property presently has a thick depth of rich topsoil. Much of this will be removed during construction. The topsoil will be stockpiled on-site for use throughout the neighbourhood during development. The business industrial area will be developed in such a way that topsoil remains intact during

grading operations (where feasible) and the opportunity for market gardening remains in place for those developed properties.

The framework for a farmers' market site and/or community gardens can be pursued at the detailed design and subdivision stage, with consultation between Community Services and Sustainable Development.

Goodridge Corners will also include the following urban agriculture features:

- Edible landscaping in parks and public right of ways will be negotiated with Community Services;
- Each residential lot will be developed with a generous finished depth of topsoil to enable the development of productive private gardens;
- The live/work area will be developed in such a way to facilitate outdoor patios; and
- Productive stockpiled topsoil will be made available to homeowners for final grading purposes while available.

2) Parking and Car Share

Council Question: *Expand on the Neighborhood Area Structure Plan references to parking and car sharing, and explain why the sections use “shall consider” or “will be encouraged to” statements, rather than “must do” or “will do”.*

RideShare, Carpool (Edmonton) and Student Carshare and other sustainable transportation sharing programs exist in Edmonton. In other municipalities car sharing is promoted by the local government, but is primarily initiated by the private sector such as collective or co-op organizations and car rental agencies. Private land is typically allocated for car share sites which are located in areas with high accessibility to public transit. It may be possible to integrate car share lots in transit park and ride sites, and it may be possible for the City to lease a portion of land for the parking of shared vehicles with the proceeds going to transit.

The parking requirements are defined by Zoning Bylaw 12800 based on the proposed use, such as but not limited to residential, commercial, or industrial zones. Zoning Bylaw 12800 also defines the development regulations with respect to parking, loading and passenger drop-off zones for any use in the bylaw. Non-accessory parking means to provide vehicular parking which is not primarily intended for the use of residents, employees, or clients of a particular development. Typical uses include surface parking lots and parking structures located above or below grade. On-street parking and circulation is subject to review by Transportation Services and may further require Traffic Impact Assessments to determine specific requirements or limitations at the rezoning and subdivision stage.

Anticipated Outcomes:

As stated in the introduction, specific details such as on-site parking requirements and car share opportunities related to any development will be determined at rezoning, subdivision, and the development permit stages in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw 12800. Similarly on street and non accessory parking requirements or restrictions will be determined jointly by Transportation Services and Sustainable Development at the rezoning, subdivision, development permit or engineering drawing review stages.

3) Public Transportation

Council Question: *Why is the phrase “shall consider” used rather than “will do” in reference to funding early transit service?*

To fund any project, such as early transit service, Administration would first have to seek approval through the budget process. This request would require a business case and implementation report outlining the need for such a service at this time, as well as outlining the proposed financing for funding the program.

As the timing for development in Goodridge was uncertain, it would have been presumptive to prepare such a report prior to the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan being approved.

Making this a “shall do” or “will do” statement in the Neighborhood Area Structure Plan would also be presumptive as approval of the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan would then grant approval of a program that had not gone through the proper process of approval. In a sense, it would have tied Council’s hands, rather than allowing for an informed decision on the matter when all details have been finalized.

During the design and construction phase of the new Edmonton Remand Centre, which was proceeding at the same time as the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan process, Edmonton Transit was in discussion with the Province regarding possible provision of early transit service to accommodate the staff at the new facility. Sustainable Development was advised of these discussions, however, the Province opted to not pursue provision of this service at this time.

The compromise was to write it as a “shall consider” statement to keep it on record in the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan so it could be properly assessed once it is approved and the phasing of development finalized.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Future City budget allocation for transit, projected neighbourhood build out timelines and projected ridership demand will determine if early transit service can be established for Goodridge Corners.

4) CN Level Crossing

Council Question: *Why is there not a roadway crossing shown across the CN rail into St.Albert?*

There were several meetings with CN from the start of the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan process. CN would not support a new crossing unless one was abandoned somewhere else.

With the consultant (Stantec), an investigation was conducted for an overpass, however this proved to be too costly in terms of construction, as well as land required on both sides of the rail to allow for proper slopes.

A pedestrian-only crossing was also considered, but deemed not feasible for the same financial reasons.

Anticipated Outcomes:

CN limits its crossings to a one mile separation. If CN were to abandon the rail or close an existing crossing along the line, the City would have the option to then pursue a crossing into St.Albert. The Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan retains this Right of Way and recognizes the potential for a future crossing so the option would not be overlooked in the future, nor would it come to a surprise to future residents, however it does not show an actual crossing as this cannot be provided at this time.

As development in Goodridge proceeds, the potential for a rail crossing can be re-evaluated on the basis of the above mentioned conditions.

5) Efficient Snow Removal

Council Question: *How is Goodridge Corners a Winter City, specifically in terms of snow clearing? How will snow clearing be addressed?*

It is important to distinguish between snow removal, snow clearing, and blading or grading. Snow removal involves collecting or physically removing snow from the road surface. Snow clearing involves moving snow from the travel lane surface onto the boulevard or into a windrow at the side of the road. Grading or blading is conducted to level out the snow pack and reduce bumps and ruts. Snow removal can be witnessed on the road in the downtown core, while snow clearing is the common practice on arterial and collector roads. In residential neighbourhoods windrowing is most commonly practiced in response to a major snow event. All of these methods are likely going to be practiced within Goodridge Corners unless or until there is a change in the way that the City manages snow on the roads.

If snow clearing is the desired practice, then it may be possible for example, to use a road cross-section that has a wider boulevard and separate walk to accommodate off street snow storage. This road design or cross-section could be used along arterial, collector and residential roads within the neighbourhood. The benefit is that additional room is provided for snow storage between the curb and property line versus a mono-walk which is typically used within residential neighbourhoods. The disadvantages are that wider boulevards may take up additional developable land, maintenance costs may be higher due to additional grass and trees, and neighbourhoods with separated walks are susceptible to more damage during the neighbourhood build out process than mono-walk because of contractors crossing the boulevard and damaging the sod or turf.

Review of and revision to the City's Design and Construction Standards occur on an infrequent basis and changes to the roadway design typically do not occur until there is a major review of the standards. Changes have to be agreed to by all stakeholders including the City department and external agencies including the Urban Development Institute. Transportation provides some flexibility around design, however substantive deviations from standards has implications on the on-going maintenance budgets.

Future direction regarding design and function of streets will come from The Complete Streets Policy which was approved by City Council in May 2013. Complete Streets is a new approach to planning and designing Edmonton's transportation system that moves away from the traditional, mobility-based approach. It is based on the idea that how a street is designed, should reflect the surrounding areas context, its land use, and its users. The policy and guidelines will encourage a holistic approach to roadway design in order to develop a network of roadways that are safe, attractive, comfortable and welcoming to all users and may include items such as bioswales and heat recovery systems to manage snow, ice, and run off.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Future City budgets will determine optimal levels of roadway snow management services within the Goodridge Corners Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan and elsewhere in the city. Changes to future roadway design standards and roadway maintenance practices will be implemented at the subdivision review, engineering drawing approvals, and construction stages of development in Goodridge.

6) Energy Efficiency

Council Question: *What steps are being done related to energy efficiency in Goodridge Corners?*

The Goodridge Corners Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan "Green List" provides a series of design goals to achieve improved energy conservation

through third party sustainability certification, such as Built Green, as the neighbourhood is constructed. Administration intends to work closely with builders in implementing energy efficiency principles through best practices and higher standard requirements.

As the City is the owner and land developer for Goodridge Corners, this implementation takes place at the time of sale of individual lots, through instruments such as the Sales and Development Agreements and Sustainability and Architectural Design Guidelines.

Development of a district-energy system was investigated during the early stages of neighbourhood plan development. Because of the initial high cost of building the necessary infrastructure and the extensive land base needed to support a district system, this aspect of energy efficiency was not further pursued within the Neighborhood Area Structure Plan.

Opportunities exist however, for the implementation of less intensive heat recovery systems as development progresses. Administration is investigating community heat recovery systems for homes that would be constructed at the time of underground infrastructure construction and would recover heat from sewers.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Overall, as per the Green List, Administration will undertake to achieve improved energy efficiency in the neighbourhood by the following:

- Maximization of passive solar design through the layout streets and homes, which will be reviewed at each stage of residential development;
- Constructing buildings within the neighbourhood according to or equivalent of green standards under certification programs such as Energuide, LEED NC, LEED for Homes, Built Green, R-2000, or other applicable programs in force at the time of construction;
- Allowing residential and commercial lot developments within the neighbourhood to be constructed “solar ready”; and
- Utilizing solar opportunities and LED technology for public infrastructure, such as street lighting, where feasible.

The above noted items would be requirements of the Sales Agreement Contract with any prospective purchaser.

7) Grocery Stores

Council Question: *Will there be a grocery store situated in the Goodridge Corners neighbourhood to help build a self sustaining community?*

The City of Edmonton, as the developer of the Goodridge Corners neighbourhood, has ensured that there are opportunities for commercial

development within the Goodridge Corners Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan and agrees that a grocery store would be advantageous. Commercial land aids in ensuring that a neighbourhood can be self contained and sustainable.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Administration will be contacting major grocery food chains and providing information on the demographics of the primary (Edmonton) and secondary (St. Albert and Sturgeon County) trade area in an effort to solicit interest in having a grocery store chain purchase land from the City or lease land from a third party land developer. The City will undertake its best efforts to encourage a grocery store chain to locate in the Goodridge Corners neighbourhood but the final decision will rest with the commercial operation.

If commercial land is sold to a third party developer, the City will add into any listing that commercial food operation such as a grocery store will be favored in any offer to purchase. However, ultimately, it ends up being a willing seller and purchaser real estate transaction. If there is no interest from a grocery store chain, the City can either sell the land to another interested party or place a hold on the land specifically for a grocery store but the land could remain vacant and unsold.

8) Conditions of Sale

Council Question: *Can the City of Edmonton use the conditions of sale to require, any or all of Council's wishes for Goodridge Corners?*

As the developer and sellers of the lands in Goodridge Corners, the City can apply conditions by which it will sell land to private companies and individuals. However, in any real estate transaction there must be a willing seller and a willing purchaser. As well, conditions may affect the market value of the land. Other City priorities can be achieved, such as sustainability principles, through conditions such as home design.

Special conditions or conditions that defer costs to a land purchaser typically affect the market value as the purchaser's ability to develop and sell the land for the profit the seller considers reasonable and acceptable in the industry are directly impacted by sales conditions.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The City generally begins the marketing and sale of properties after the completion of the subdivision stage, and any specific conditions of sale are included in the marketing and negotiations.

9) Age Friendly Design

Council Question: *What references to Age Friendly Design are in the Neighborhood Area Structure Plan?*

Age friendly, accessibility, and visitability are all aspects of design that could be considered when developing Goodridge Corners in a unique and sustainable way and can be done utilizing existing zoning. These keywords are all speaking towards providing accessible housing that can accommodate persons with permanent or temporary mobility challenges, including the ability of these individuals to visit other homes. These features are incorporated at the home design/building stage and can include things such as:

- Wider doorways on all main floor doors;
- A half bath on the main floor that includes a sink, toilet and the wider doorway;
- One entrance with no steps, such as an at-grade front door;
- Lowered light switches and raised electrical plugs;
- Open concept showers;
- Installing plywood behind drywall in specific areas for grab handles; and
- Stacking closets on each floor to provide for possible elevator shaft locations in the future.

There is minimal added cost to the home if these design features are included in the original design and construction.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Specific details regarding construction design will be worked out at future subdivision and development stages. As the owner and developer of the land, the City of Edmonton has the opportunity to guide the design of future homes and even create pilot projects to showcase specific designs, such as what was done in Oxford and La Perle with secondary suites or as other innovative housing built forms being developed in other Canadian cities.