

**MEETING DATE:** March 8, 2021

**SUBMITTED BY:** M. Hay, Director, Gov't Relations and Corporate Planning Strategy

**PREPARED BY:** B. Kelly, Regional and Intergovernmental Advisor

**REPORT TITLE:** Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Update – March 2021

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration has prepared this report with the purpose of updating Council on the initiatives relating to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board ("EMRB") and the related work that has taken place since our update in the fall of 2020

The report comprises regular updates from the EMRB Board and Task Forces to keep Council informed on the progress being made through these regional efforts. It also highlights ongoing work and next steps for the various initiatives. Further detail on the progress of the various initiatives can be found in the attached documents. Please note that updates may occur between the time of writing this report and it being presented at council.

## BACKGROUND

### Board

The EMRB Board has hosted several regular and special board meetings since our last update in October. Some key highlights include:

#### Vice Chair appointment:

- Mayor Alana Hnatiw, Sturgeon County, was appointed as vice chair of the EMRB Board

#### Regional Evaluation Framework ("REF"):

- EMRB received ministerial approval of amendments to the REF as submitted by the EMRB in May 2020.
  - The amendments provide greater certainty to the development community and clarity to local Administrations working with the regulation. In practice, this can result in shorter timelines, quicker turnaround, and reduced red tape by allowing municipalities more clarity and flexibility as to what must be submitted through the REF process or not.
- The Board also approved amendments to the REF Framework Procedure and Planning Toolkit, which would allow for more clarity and understanding at the Board level regarding applications (if needed).

#### Dispute Resolution and Appeal Mechanism:

- Considerable work has occurred on the dispute resolution and appeal mechanism process and bylaw by a Chief Administrative Officer ("CAO") Working Group ("Working Group"), Administration and the Board to determine what the process should be, who should be involved and what would be subject to dispute resolution and/or appeal – these are scheduled for Board consideration at the February 11, 2021 EMRB Board meeting.

#### Strategic Planning and Board Charter:

- Work continues on the refinement of the Board Charter and updating the Board's strategic plan. Leduc's City Manager D. Prohar is a contributing member of the CAO Strategic Planning Working Group. Work will continue on these topics at upcoming Special Board meetings in March 2021.

### **Shared Investment for Shared Benefit (“SISB”)**

Since the last update to Council, the SISB Task Force has partially approved the initiative selection framework which outlined the process for evaluating which projects should be considered for investment through the SISB model. The Task Force also ran two hypothetical projects (Regional Broadband Connectivity Infrastructure and Regional Waste Management Facility) through the conceptual model for members to see how the model works. The conceptual model itself is a technical document that considers various inputs and analyzes the information to generate a distribution of expected costs and revenues among the partners.

The Working Group continues to work through the details of the initiative selection framework process including who should manage the moving initiatives through the process, what happens should an initiative receive non-, partial- or full-support of the Board. Further work will continue on refining the framework and model for Task Force endorsement and subsequent Board approval in the next few months.

### **Regional Agriculture Master Plan (“RAMP”)**

RAMP stakeholder engagement has been undertaken and finalized. EMRB Administration and consultants presented the results of the engagement to the Task Force on January 7, 2021, and it shall be presented to the EMRB Board on February 19, 2021 (see attached ‘RAMP What We Heard Report’). One of the key takeaways from the engagement is that more work will be required for RAMP to fully meet the needs of stakeholders and its full potential. As a result, EMRB Administration is moving forward with a multi-stage strategy, where “RAMP 1.0” will be completed this year, with further work occurring following the municipal election in October 2021 and the re-convening of a Task Force.

During the engagement process, stakeholders confirmed the current direction of using four (4) geographical policy areas or tiers. However, draft policies were not presented to the stakeholders, and have not been presented to the Task Force or Working Group for some time, so it remains to be seen how the stakeholder engagement process will influence the policy framework.

At their January 7, 2021, meeting, the Task Force directed the Working Group to continue working on the RAMP timeline and agriculture definitions, as consistent definitions for commonly used terms was identified as an issue.

*Considerations for the City of Leduc (“City”): Significant work is still required in the development of the RAMP and corresponding implementation tools. It remains to be determined what will be completed this year as part of “RAMP 1.0” and what will be pushed into the future, including any implementation mechanisms such as the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (“LESA”) tool (which was identified early on in the process as a requirement of the project). The City will continue to participate at the Working Group level (as we do not have representation on the Task Force) and influence future direction of the plan, where possible. The City’s Administration remains committed to working to ensure that agriculture preservation is commonly understood and equitably managed—specifically, that future growth areas that have infrastructure investment already made within them are not compromised.*

### **Metropolitan Region Servicing Plan (“MRSP”) and Collaboratives**

Work relating to MRSP has moved into the implementation stage, under the guidance of the MRSP Standing Committee (“Committee”). The Committee is working to have all four collaboratives (name given to the to topic-specific implementation working groups) in place prior to October 2021; the collaboratives will focus on each of the areas identified in the inaugural MRSP (solid waste, storm water, fire and emergency medical services, and emergency management).

## COUNCIL INFORMATION ITEM

The Solid Waste collaborative is established (with representation from subject matter experts across the region) and work began in late 2020. Much of this work will focus on gathering and analyzing information relating to the benefits of regional cooperation and the cost savings associated through stream lining and shared services. The first phase of this work is expected to conclude in March 2021. City administration anticipates that the next phase of this work will include using the consolidated data to develop transition plans to align with regional monitoring and a measurement program.

Work continues to set up the Storm Water to be established, as its terms of reference were recently approved. A request for subject matter expert representation has gone out to all 13 member municipalities.

### **Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (“IRTMP”)**

Members of IRTMP are working towards developing policies at a regional level to enhance the transportation network. The policies that will be recommended out of this work and implemented at a regional, and local level, will focus of achieving these key outcomes:

1. Optimizing the use of existing corridors and infrastructure
2. Connecting goods to market
3. Getting people to jobs
4. Connecting modes and supporting modal shift

Currently, model iterations are being run for future scenarios using various levels of available investment to help indicate which projects will deliver the greatest improvement to the regional network. The model simulations look at the impact on the network as a result of a range of factors scenarios including: 1) reduced capital spending on system expansion, 2) increased transit availability, 3) dedicated truck routes, and 4) travel demand management measures (incentives to encourage a mode shift). This will aid in ranking the relative priorities of the projects in relation to each other.

Next steps at the working group level include revising the aforementioned policies and ranking the projects in terms of their relative importance to the region. Alberta Transportation has indicated that these priority rankings may be used to influence their funding decisions in the future.

*Considerations for the City: Administration notes that the City’s 65 Avenue Interchange project is currently identified, within the existing IRTMP, as the top priority project “ready for construction” in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. This could change within a revised IRTMP, which may have an increased focus on a shift to active modes of transportation and trip reduction (transit), versus prioritizing investment.*

### **NEXT STEPS**

Administration will continue to bring regular updates to Council.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- *RAMP Stakeholder Engagement What We Heard Report*
- *Updates on EMRB Initiatives as of February 4, 2021*