

'WHAT WE HEARD' REPORT

Annexation Area Amendments to the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw

Public Open House

The Public Open House was held virtually on Wednesday, December 1, 2021. The first part of the Open House was a presentation provided by Administration, and the second part was a question-and-answer period, see below.

- 1. What is the current tax split?**
 - The current tax split is 80% residential and 20% non-residential.
- 2. Has St. Albert successfully negotiated access for farmers within the annexed area to the Rosedale Landfill? If not, what are the alternatives to Rosedale services and are user fees attached to these services?**
 - Yes, access has been negotiated and verbally agreed upon to be maintained for farmers. A formal access agreement and other information will be prepared and shared.
- 3. Will farmers within the annexed area be subjected to the St. Albert franchise tax on natural gas and electricity usage? Or in other words, will our monthly utility bills remain subject to similar rate and taxes as our current contacts?**
 - If your current service providers change, St. Albert will pay franchise fees.
- 4. Farmland within the annexed lands will be taxed on lower of Sturgeon County or St. Albert combined mill rate and assessed values, is that correct?**
 - Yes, the tax rate of properties within the annexed lands will be assessed as though they are in the County. The lower tax rate between the County vs. the City applies and will run until a triggering event, such as subdivision, land use change, or connecting to St. Albert services. Essentially, the change in tax rate is owner driven.
- 5. Does this also apply to Farmland School Taxes, the lower of Sturgeon County or St. Albert?**
 - Will need to refer this question to Assessment.

- 6. What about Local Improvements and Special Levies for example; transportation, utility upgrades and libraries Sturgeon County currently has none?**
 - When agricultural land transitions to urban development, levies will be applied.
- 7. Will farm ancillary buildings become taxable?**
 - If you have exemptions for farm ancillary buildings, you will continue to have those exemptions as though you are in the County. The lower rate between City vs. the County will be applied.
- 8. Will farmers be able to subdivide their farmland? Will rules within Municipal Government Act (MGA) apply?**
 - Yes, farmers are able to subdivide their land. Subdivision regulations from the County have been kept; owners can still do first parcel out, and up to 4 parcels per quarter section. The maximum parcel density is 4 per 64 hectares. Anything beyond that will become more of urban development, and will be a triggering point for St. Albert regulations to apply.
- 9. How will taxes be affected once agricultural land is rezoned to Transitional/Urban Reserve if it does not change in use?**
 - The application of the Transitional Land Use District is not a triggering event if the land use does not change.
- 10. How will the 60% residential 40% non-residential tax split be distributed over the annexation lands? If a developer is developing a quarter section of land within a residential zoned area are they required to still meet a 60/40 split?**
 - The MDP and the future land use map shows where the City anticipates residential and non-residential development. The overall annexation area should incorporate the 60/40 tax split, as long as the developer generally complies with the map designations found within the MDP.
- 11. Will new rounds of engagement/consultation be planned for timeslots that will work better for community members to participate? 5:30 is dinner making/eating time; especially for young families.**
 - This is the last round of engagement before going to Council, however, the community can participate and provide feedback online: <https://conversation.stalbert.ca/mdp-lub-annexation>. The video presentation will be uploaded on to the City website.
 - There is also a public hearing process when the proposed MDP and LUB amendments go to Council.

12. For the discretionary uses list for land parcels under 10 acres, What happens to businesses that are currently operating on these areas that are not listed as a service under the approved discretionary uses?

- If you are permitted, you will continue being able to run the business. But the City would like to know what your business is about; will need to refer to the Land Use Bylaw definition of that use. If the business is lawfully permitted, it will continue being permitted after annexation.

13. With the Poundmaker's site being protected by the Provincial Resource Act, is the City of St. Albert going to respect the boundary and work with the River Lot Society and Poundmaker Lodge Society (have collaborated to preserve sites) in preserving the former Edmonton Indian Residential School site? Survivors have informed us of the unmarked gravesites on both sites of the River Lot and Poundmaker's.

- The City intends to allow everything to continue as is; no requirement for additional permits or processes, as the parcels are Provincial and the City does not intend to interfere with Provincial jurisdiction. City does not have the ability to dictate what is done on those parcels. Any development would be up to Province for decision, not the City.
- Additional comment from Mayor Heron: A letter was sent to the Poundmaker Lodge Society and the Province has expressed desire to keep both the Poundmaker site and River Lot 56 as is.

14. For the parcel of land on the north west next to Coal Mine Road where Christ Community Church is located, I wanted to confirm that subdivision will be allowed? Also, are there any plans on what road access would look like in the future for that area, currently St. Albert closed all but one road leading to us.

- Please contact the City to set up a meeting about subdivision. Will need more information to confirm how a subdivision can proceed.

15. Is the 60/40 tax split based on area calculation or financial assessment through an Financial Impact Assessment (FIA) within an Area Structure Plan (ASP) submission? We are seeing less commercial and employment land demand due to our current market conditions so if market doesn't demand 40% commercial development, how will we have maintain increased growth within St Albert?

- The City is looking into the future and its needs, and what we've heard from residents and business owners, is to move the bar on the tax assessment and have it less reliant on residential taxes. In order to do so, the City needs to provide more opportunities for employment growth. Having the appropriate land base also helps the City achieve its goals regarding employment; in addition to the lifespan of Flourish growing to 100,000, the City would also like to another 13,000 jobs being added. At the same time, the MDP and long range plans can change over time, so the City is also in the process of monitoring.

16. What is a node?

- As per the City's MDP, the pink nodes are called the "Mixed-use Nodes", which are areas within Neighbourhoods that contain a range of commercial uses, apartment buildings, townhouses, and community services, all arranged within a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented network of streets and open spaces.
- As per the City's MDP, the purple nodes are called the "Mixed-use Employment Areas", which are locations for the clustering of related light industrial, office, and retail businesses.

17. If an agricultural use parcel of land would like to build a new agricultural building, is the building permit process changing? Or alternatively, will a building permit issued by Sturgeon County be honoured by the City of St. Albert in the event construction has not been started or started but not completed when the annexation takes place?

- Because the Building Permit (BP) process is driven by Alberta Building Code, the regulatory process is the same for the County and City. As long as a permit is still valid, the process would continue. If the BP has begun but not completed, the monitoring of the BP process will be passed over from the County to the City.

18. Are the proposed permitted and discretionary uses presented during the open house etched in stone or flexible?

- All amendments presented at the open house are draft and subject to change based on feedback and comments from public.

19. If the City is taking over the permitting process, would this also count as a "triggering" event?

- No.

20. Can I assume the City would prefer to see development proceed logically from the developed areas out and not random developments in the middle of the annexation area?

- Yes, development would proceed based on logical extension of servicing. If you are on the outer edge of annexation, servicing to that area would need orderly fashion of servicing and development first.

21. I just want to understand how 60/40 tax split will be required on each individual ASP within the annexation? Not that there isn't one ASP being submitted for the entire annexation land, so if it's in sections, one section will have all employment lands and another section might have all residential and some might have a split between employment and residential. I know the total average will be 60/40, but how will the City

determine each ASP area within the annexation, and what that split should be?

- Best to refer to the MDP future land use map.
- Correct that there will be some quarter sections that are designated for employment areas and some for neighbourhoods. It is not always a 60/40 tax split on every single area or quarter section, and it varies throughout. But based upon feedback, we can make amendments to the proposed map.

22. Are there any goals embedded in the MDP regarding housing density or business density? Or possibly the inclusion of mixed market housing developments (i.e. including some affordable housing units) to provide housing to workers in the new employment zone?

- Density requirements are determined by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan and also brought over to St. Albert's MDP for consistency. See housing chapter within the MDP.

23. When can we expect a response from the Province?

- Deadline for a decision is January 1, 2022, but the City is hoping to hear back by the end of December.

Cultivate the Conversation

A Cultivate the Conversation online webpage was created to engage and allow the public to review proposed amendments to the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw that would incorporate the annexation area. Questions were collected under the Guestbook section. The webpage also includes the project timeline and a video recording of the virtual Public Open House that was held on December 1, 2021.

Link: <https://conversation.stalbert.ca/mdp-lub-annexation>

1. Map 3 has Lot 56 cross hatched, but no legend. What is intent for land use post annexation?

The intent is for Riverlot 56 to remain as is. The City does not have jurisdiction on this land and land use decisions will be made by the Province.

2. What imperative is being followed to identify so many lands as "Employment lands"?

This is in keeping with the proposed annexation studies and rationale for the proposed annexation, to increase our employment land base to promote sustainability and reduce the reliance on residential taxes.

3. **I understood Council had directed that the employment lands south of Meadowview Drive were to be left for park use yet Map 3 shows otherwise?**
Council made a Council Motion on May 31, 2021 for Administration to bring this back to Council for debate by Q3 (July-September) 2022.
4. **The MDP Flourish calls for a minimum 50 meter setback from the top of bank of Carrot Creek and the Sturgeon River regardless of the lands within that setback being developable. Yet Administration permitted a 50 m building foot print (Bylaw 9/2021) to be identified within 17 m of top of bank. What assurances are there that the 50 m set backs will be honoured and not whittled away under the notion they contain developable land?**
The last part of that policy states, "Or as determined through appropriate studies and plans, as deemed satisfactory by the City. The cost of supporting studies and plans are the responsibility of the applicant." The applicant provided studies to support this development which were reviewed by the City and deemed satisfactory.
5. **What rationale is applied to create a mixed use node at the eastern end of Bellerose Drive at the terminus of a ravine draining to the Sturgeon River?**
A mix use node was identified in this location as it is a key intersection. Appropriate setbacks and stormwater management would be further defined at the ASP.
6. **Why is there not more green space/parkland associated with Carrot Creek?**
The map just shows what can be taken as Environmental Reserve, there could be an opportunity to have additional park space dedicated as Municipal Reserve. This will be further outlined within Area Structure Plans.
7. **I understand the Province is intending to purchase the lands west of Ray Gibbon and south of 137th Avenue for consolidation of Lois Hole Centennial Park. What discussions has St. Albert had with the government to justify identifying the lands as employment lands?**
Employment lands is the current designation under Flourish. This amendment focuses on assigning land uses to the proposed annexation area. If this area becomes a Provincial Park, Flourish could be updated at that time.
8. **Why are some wetlands in the annexation area identified as major open space and yet not others of comparable size on map 3?**
Some wetlands already have approval from the Province to be drained.

Session with Directors

The MDP team also conducted a session with the City Department's Directors to familiarize them with the final version of the MDP, as well as information about budgeting and prioritization of projects.

- 1. Tax revenue split is different from assessment split, and built form should be based on assessment. Thought that the City's assessment split is 70/30?**
 - We are looking at 60/40 tax **assessment** split in the new annexation area. 60/40 assessment is the goal that we are trying to achieve within the annexation area in order to achieve an overall 70/30 assessment across the City.
- 2. How will the MDP feed into mid-range planning? MDP is about land use planning and infrastructure, but looking a mid-range planning, feeling that there are gaps in terms of mid-term planning and service delivery. Parks infrastructure is captured in MDP, but not so much about service delivery.**
 - The long-range strategies are captured under the MDP goals. But each department will still need to prepare their own mid-range planning.
 - Based on Strategic Services, the goal is to use the MDP as a springboard.
 - Need a cohesive strategy that will work across all departments. But still might be high level.
 - Example: The Green Environment Strategy does pull from the MDP goals but further refines, to fit their needs.
- 3. Comment: The MDP is approximately planning for the next 30 years, so it is an iterative process. Makes sense that gaps are dealt with step by step.**

Emailed Questions

The St. Albert community was also invited to submit their comments and questions to the MDP team at mdp@stalbert.ca. See questions and Administration's responses below.

- 1. Will this new annexation open the door to better access via roads and city utilities? (Right now we have a cistern and get water and sewage via trucks. It is very expensive compared to being connected to city utilities.) Cecil mentioned last night that decisions have been made previously to close off some points of access to city streets in the nearby neighbourhood.**

- This parcel of land is included within a proposed Area Structure Plan (ASP) which the City will be reviewing in the new year. This ASP will go into more details about future land uses and infrastructure such as roads and utilities. The ASP is early in the process and the developer hosted a public meeting in September to get input from area landowners. You can view the recording of this open house [HERE: https://landrex.com/ne-st-albert-public-meeting-area-structure-plan/](https://landrex.com/ne-st-albert-public-meeting-area-structure-plan/), and you can also reach out to Landrex (or their consultant) directly if you have questions/concerns about the proposal. Stay tuned to the City's Cultivate the Conversation page for more information as this project develops. Connection to City services is available once the services are extended out to the property boundary. Costs of connections borne by the landowner. The timing of when utilities will be available is not yet known.

2. **Will we be allowed to consider a sub-division of our property? If so, what kinds of processes or dynamics will we have to consider?**

- In terms of future subdivision potential, a proposed subdivision could potentially be entertained, assuming it conforms with the policies depicted within the Area Structure Plan (i.e., if/when it's approved by St. Albert City Council). Another key consideration you'd want to keep in mind, is that a subdivision may trigger off-site levies (a one-time charge collected by the City at either the development permit and/or subdivision stage – to cover the costs of providing things like new/upgraded roads, utilities, fire protection, etc.

Also important to note that subdivision and/or connection to City services will 'trigger' the application of City tax rates.

3. **The piece that stuck out for me during the presentation was construction services were listed for both discretionary uses over 10 acres, but the under 10 acres discretionary uses I noticed construction services was not listed.**

We are a landscape construction company, so in the future when development has reached us, it would be my hope we could still continue this service, but if we are not on the discretionary use list, my assumption would be this would not be possible.

It is also possible we fall under another use listed here (our land is 3 acres), so I would just be looking to confirm that one.

Thanks for the extensive presentation, it was very helpful!

- Thank you for your patience while we discussed the matters you brought to our attention in your email below.

First, it has been decided that 'construction service' could be suitable on a parcel less than 4 ha in area, and so we will be adding that use to the list of discretionary uses for that parcel category in the update Land Use Bylaw.

Second, the term 'discretionary use' simply means that a use may or may not be suitable on a particular property, and so the Development Officer is given the discretion to decide based on the information provided as part of an application for development.

Third, your business was lawfully approved by Sturgeon County as Home Occupation Level 3, or what the City of St. Albert would call a Major Home Occupation. The City's Major Home Occupation definition includes reference to contractor services and landscaping supply, so you are good to continue your business after annexation so long as you remain compliant with your current conditions of approval. For future reference, if you wanted to expand or change the nature of your business down the road, and required a new permit as a consequence, the City's current (i.e.: soon to be updated!) regulations would apply.

4. I wanted to ask about the Employment area identified to the NW of my land (above Fowler). I am not against it being employment land per se, but I am concerned with that being locked in. When the time comes, there will need to be access through the City's Badger Lands, or from the East. Depending on where access comes from, the use should probably be consistent. I.e. if access comes from the West, you wouldn't want a road to employment coming through residential land. Could we keep that bit flexible until the access is better understood? I just want it to be shown in a way that minimizes the likelihood that we will have to do an MDP amendment in the future when the ASP that contains this fragment of ours (I assume it might be part of the City's ASP) moves forward. Any changes you think might support that, we would support. Maybe that bit is more part of the mixed use node so it isn't defined as commercial/residential/transition specifically?

- Thanks for your comments on the draft. Some of the details of this area such as access, transition, and more detailed land uses will be further defined through the ASP process. We do have policies within the MDP that speak to establishing buffers between employment areas and residential areas, and in this location Fowler Way and the mixed-use node could act as a buffer/transition to the lands to the south. The ASP would speak to additional policies on the transition from employment to neighbourhood.

I will keep you updated on the amendment and changes to the draft.

5. **I attended the virtual Open House on December 1st. I would like to get copies of the draft MDP and LUB that were discussed at the meeting, including the draft Maps 3 and 4. Can you provide me with copies or otherwise let me know where I can get them.**
 - Below is the link to our Cultivate the Conversation page which contains information of the draft amendments. On the right-hand side under key documents, you will see draft Map 3 & 4. Additionally, under Videos is the recording from the open house if you want to rewatch and here about the drafts again. Stay tuned to this page for updates.

<https://conversation.stalbert.ca/mdp-lub-annexation>
6. **I didn't have a chance to sign up for the open house Wednesday. Is it possible for you to share either the documents or the links to the documents that were presented at the December 1 meeting?**
 - Please check out the link below. This site contains details on the draft amendments. On the right side under videos, you can watch the recording of the open house from December 1st. The documents are also on the right side under key documents.

<https://conversation.stalbert.ca/mdp-lub-annexation>
7. **I'm still looking for clarification on the 60/40 taxation split policy. Is it possible that exact policy wording can be shared?**

Can there be more clarity on the ASP boundaries expected for the annexation lands and what split will be required on each ASP section? I understand the colors on the map more or less will dictate the split but there is some room for movement of zone classification as the map is at a very high level.

We also have an ASP that was submitted months ago showing land use concept different than what is shown on the MDP map 3 with no comments at that time that didn't meet the intent of the proposed MDP. We request that trail corridor on the east side of St Albert trail be extended to the north edge of the new annexation boundary.

- Thank you for following up. The exacting wording of the draft policy is "Strive to achieve a tax revenue split of 60% residential assessment and 40% non-residential assessment within the 2022 north annexation area, to promote sustainability and reduce the reliance on residential taxes."

At this time, we do not have defined future areas for ASP's and what the exact splits should be within those areas. I have noted your input on altering the draft urban structure and general land use map to extend the trail corridor areas to the annexation boundary on the east side of the trail.