



10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AREAS

Goal: Strengthen the protection of sustainable natural areas and minimize the negative impacts of development on natural areas.

The “*St. Albert Natural Areas Review and Inventory*”, completed in March 1999, identified two hundred and thirty-two natural areas. Of these, seventy-seven were determined to be significant on a local, regional, or provincial scale. The *St. Albert Natural Areas Review and Inventory Addendum*, completed in March 2007, identified an additional 12 significant natural areas and 23 environmentally sensitive areas in the newly annexed lands. The consultant recommended that the City of St. Albert consider adopting a Natural Areas Policy that, at a minimum, ensures the conservation of all provincially significant and regionally significant sites using specific policy objectives.

The challenge ahead is to develop a natural areas policy and process that will conserve sustainable sites. Important points to consider include:

- As many of the sites are located on privately held lands, the City of St. Albert will need to work with landowners/developers to implement a fair conservation and compensation process
- Municipal and environmental reserves will not be sufficient to ensure protection of all sites. The City of St. Albert should identify new funding sources or acquisition means
- Some significant sites will be better suited for integration into urban development than others
- Some sites may not be suitable for intensive human use, so conservation of sensitive sites may require user restrictions and management plans

Objectives

The objectives for environmental management established in CityPlan 2007 are to:

- prioritize the natural areas on the basis of their significance and potential for sustainability
- review the impacts of development on natural areas, considering issues of land use compatibility, buffering, linkages, recreational uses, etc.
- implement policies which will minimize the negative impacts of development on natural areas, incorporating such policies in the Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan, proposed Tree Bylaw, Land Use Bylaw and Area Structure Plans
- implement policies to preserve and/or sensitively integrate natural areas wherever possible, giving consideration to their individual merits
- consider creating “manmade”, natural areas in locations where no such places currently exist (e.g., naturalized wetlands for stormwater management).

Policies

10.1 Natural Areas Inventory

The City of St. Albert shall prioritize the natural areas identified in the natural areas inventory. This inventory

shall be kept current.

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| 10.2 Protection of Natural Areas | The City of St. Albert shall protect not only provincially and regionally significant areas, but also locally significant, sustainable areas except where the protection compromises other necessary parks, trails and open space requirements in a neighbourhood. |
| 10.3 Linking and Integrating Open Space | The City of St. Albert shall require, wherever possible, that sustainable natural areas be integrated into the design of new development areas to form part of linked and integrated parks and open space systems, including the retention of natural corridors and ponding areas, as part of the Area Structure Plan, Area Structure Plan Technical Report and subdivision process. |
| 10.4 Sturgeon River Valley and Carrot Creek Corridors | The City of St. Albert shall preserve and protect the Sturgeon River Valley and Carrot Creek Corridors in accordance with the Red Willow Park Urban Park Master Plan. |
| 10.5 Methods for Conserving Sustainable Natural Areas | <p>The City of St. Albert shall use, but is not limited to, the following means of conserving and protecting natural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) environmental reserve dedication in accordance with the Municipal Government Act;(2) municipal reserve dedication;(3) environmental reserve easements;(4) conservation easements;(5) donations and bequests; and(6) acquisition through purchase or land trades. |
| 10.6 Establishment of Conservation Fund | The City of St. Albert should support the establishment of a Conservation Fund capitalized through public and private sources for the acquisition of significant natural areas that cannot be preserved through other means. |
| 10.7 Natural Area Assessments | <p>The City of St. Albert should require a Natural Area Assessment for any proposed development which would adversely affect any natural area identified in the Spencer Environmental Management Services Ltd. Report shown on Map #4 - Natural Areas Inventory 2007. If required, a Natural Area Assessment shall include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) a description of the proposed development, including its purpose, alternatives, and staging requirements;(2) a description of the biophysical environment that would be affected; |

- (3) a prediction of the effects (positive and negative) that the proposed undertaking may have on the biophysical environment;
- (4) an indication of the limitation of the study, criteria used in predicting effects, and interests consulted;
- (5) recommended measures to mitigate any negative effects identified;
- (6) presentation of the results in a framework that can assist decision-makers in determining the final course of action; and
- (7) viability and sustainability of the natural area(s) based on the proposed redevelopment or development in the immediate area.

10.8 Living Nature

Consideration shall be given to living nature.

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Bylaw 11/2012

