



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: Sturgeon River Valley and Natural Areas Protection Policy

On January 29, 2018, Councillor Hughes provided the following postponed notice of Motion for consideration at the February 26, 2018 Council meeting:

“That administration develop recommendations for a bylaw that protects the river valley area, natural areas, and parklands.”

This motion was an update to a previous motion put forward by Councillor Hughes at the December 11, 2017 Council meeting:

“That Administration develop a policy and conservation plan that protects the river valley area, other natural areas, and protects parkland by xx, 20xx.”

BACKGROUND:

As noted in the January 29, 2018 Administrative backgrounder (*attachment 1*) there are a number of master plans and reports, as well as the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) that provide direction with respect to the protection of Sturgeon River valley, natural areas, and parks. Some of the current legislative mechanisms and bylaw protections are outlined below.

Existing Protection Mechanisms for the River Valley, Natural Areas, & Parks

Environmental Reserve (ER) Dedication

The City utilizes Section 664 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA, *attachment 2*) to obtain Environmental Reserve dedication for those areas deemed to be undevelopable, or that may constitute a risk to develop (e.g. floodplains, steep slopes, etc.). Through this dedication provision, the City prevents the development of these ER lands.

The majority of the City’s ER dedicated lands are along the Sturgeon River Valley, or ravines (see map, *attachment 3*) and have been incorporated into the City’s park system, particularly the City-wide Red Willow Park.

Municipal Reserve (MR) Dedication

Other lands within the City are protected by their dedication as Municipal Reserve. Section 666 of the MGA (*attachment 4*) provides direction regarding the dedication and use of Municipal Reserve lands. Through this dedication provision, the City specifies the development of these MR lands, which is generally limited to park or school development. Section 671 of the MGA (*attachment 5*) identifies the allowed

uses of MR land, which includes a public park, a public recreation area, school board purposes, and to separate areas of land that are used for different purposes. Lands dedicated as MR are scattered throughout neighbourhoods within the City and are generally used as park space.

Land Use Bylaw

Schedule G (Designated Floodline Map, *attachment 6*) of the Land Use Bylaw identifies floodplains within the City. Part 6.10 (Designated Floodline, *attachment 7*) of the LUB limits development within those areas. Acceptable uses within the floodplain are primarily low impact developments such as trails, passive parks and non-permanent structures.

Districting also limits development, with Schedule A of the Land Use Bylaw identifying land use districts to which use regulations apply. With respect to parks and natural areas, they are generally districted as P, Public Park. Part 10.1 (Public Park, *attachment 8*) of the LUB identifies the allowed uses within the areas districted as Park (e.g. campgrounds, indoor recreation, outdoor recreation, etc.). In order for uses to occur that are not stated within the Council approved LUB, Council would need to approve a LUB amendment.

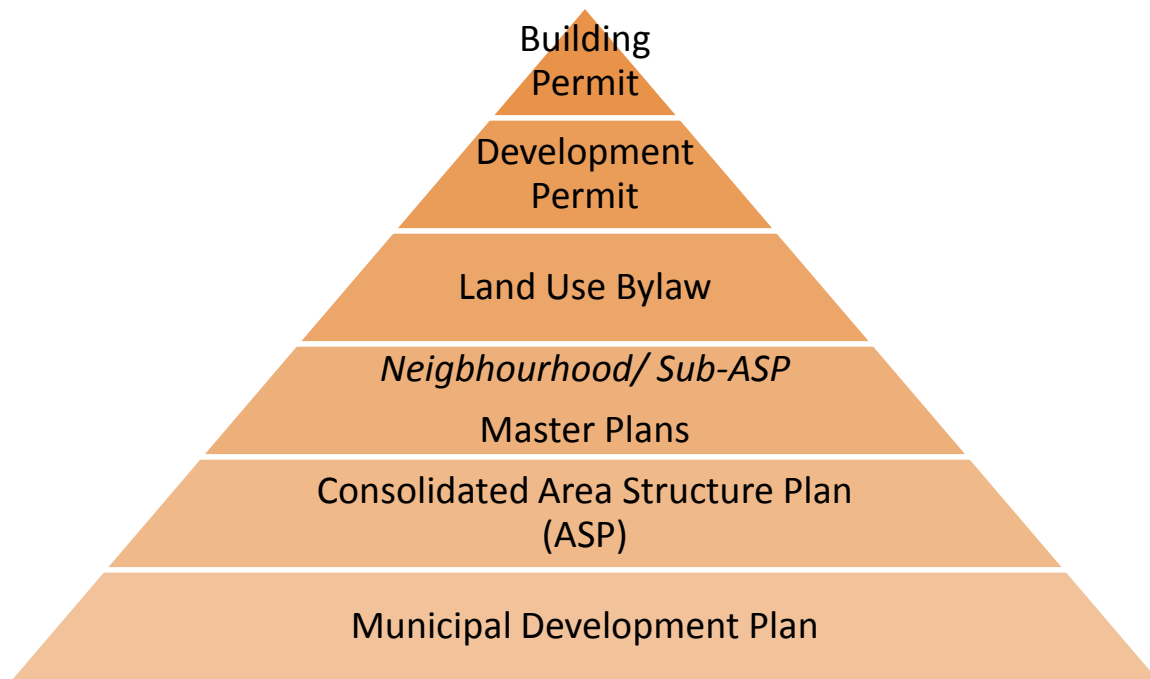
Municipal Development Plan (Bylaw)

Section 10 of the Municipal Development Plan (Environmental Management of Natural Areas, *attachment 9*) identifies goals, objectives, and policies for strengthening the protection of natural areas of the City. Protection of natural areas, linkages, and corridors are key concepts within the MDP. Section 9 of the MDP (Parks, etc.) also speaks to the Red Willow Park Corridor and Carrot Creek Greenway.

If any new stand-alone protection policies or bylaws were pursued, Administration would need to ensure they align with existing direction within the MDP, LUB, and other related policies and master plans.

Recommendation

Administration recommends that the most efficient way to address the postponed motion for a bylaw that would provide further clarity around the use, preservation, or development of the river valley, natural areas, or parks is through an update to the MDP. The MDP is the City's statutory planning bylaw and is based on provincial legislative requirements and the community vision, and is the foundation upon which the Land Use Bylaw and City master plans are built, as shown below.



This is consistent with the recommendation made by Administration in the January 29, 2018 Administrative Backgrounder and would take 12- 18 months and cost approximately \$150,000 to complete.

If Council wishes to reduce the cost and/or timelines, the public participation component of the bylaw development could be eliminated, and the project could be completed in 8-12 months for approximately \$100,000. Council Policy C-P&E-01, however, states that the City shall conduct public consultation processes as part of special planning studies that may have an impact on the greater public. Council would also need to provide direction on the prioritization of the project with other key planning initiatives for 2018-2020.

Report Date: February 26, 2018
Author(s): Leah Kongsrude & Adryan Slaght
Committee/Department: Environment; Planning & Development
General Manager: Ian McKay
City Manager: Kevin Scoble

P:\Agenda Reports\10. 2018 Council Meetings\07. Feb 26\PE\Sturgeon Valley Natural Areas\Admin Backgrounder Natural Areas Conservation Plan_022618 FINAL JLKv2.docx

February 21, 2018 4:23 PM