

# Regional Policy Alignment Analysis

## Our Future Valley: Sturgeon Valley Core

### Area Structure Plan



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document mirrors Sturgeon County's submission to the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB). It is being shared ahead of the REF submission with our municipal neighbours to assist with the intermunicipal evaluation process and for transparency and expediency with regards to the wider REF process.

Pursuant to Ministerial Order MSL 111/17, the Province of Alberta adopted the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) to ensure consistency and alignment with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP) and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation. As such, certain statutory documents from member municipalities require review to ensure compliancy.

Section 4.0 of the REF states that a member municipality must refer proposed statutory plans or statutory plan amendments to the EMRB under certain conditions, after the first reading by Council and prior to the third reading pursuant to Section 5.1 of the REF. The application has been referred to the EMRB due to the criteria under Section 4.3 of the REF, amendments to statutory plans must be submitted to the Board.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

Bylaw 1557/21 will be presented to the Sturgeon County for first reading on June 8th, 2021. The purpose of the referral is to review the amended Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure Plan for consistency with the EMRGP.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<b>Municipality:</b>	Sturgeon County
<b>First Reading Date:</b>	June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
<b>Location:</b>	Sturgeon Valley, Valley Core (defined as "Area C" in the EMRGP)
<b>Purpose of the ASP:</b>	The purpose of the Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure is to guide the development of the Plan area in an orderly and phased manner, driving development in the Sturgeon Valley in a contiguous, compact manner with transitions sensitive to existing landowners, surrounding agricultural areas, and the Sturgeon River.

### Summary of the Referral

The purpose of the Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure Plan is to provide the long-term planning framework for the area defined as 'Area C' in Appendix G: Negotiated Policies for the Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area (SVSSA), which is contained within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. To align with the goals, objectives and policies from Appendix G, the existing Area Structure Plan (previously known as the Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan, amended to the Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure Plan to reduce confusion with the new Area Structure Plan being created to the south in Areas A & B of the SVSSA), required amendments. The purpose of

this referral presented to the EMRB is to showcase how the culmination of these amendments align the ASP with those policies contained within the SVSSA.

While the County used this opportunity to modernize and update the layout, formatting, figures, etc., the elements and policies of the original Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan (Bylaw 882/99) that relate to and are still applicable to “Area C” are retained within the amended Plan. Policies that related to “Areas A, B1, B2 and D”, were either removed entirely, or amended to only address lands within “Area C”.

## 4.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA


### Applicable Policy Tiers


The Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area policy tier is defined as: The Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area (SVSSA) includes lands contained within the current in-force statutory plan for the area (Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan); being those lands contained within the area of Highway 37 to the north, Highway 28 to the east, Range Road 253 to the west and the city boundaries of St. Albert and Edmonton to the south/southwest. Internal boundaries have also been established to guide the development of required policy. This has resulted in the creation of four core areas known as:

- » **Area A** - Includes lands currently under the City of St. Albert annexation process and will involve the development of an Area Structure Plan in accordance with the objectives and policies provided in Section 3.
- » **Area B1/B2** - Includes lands that will involve development of an Area Structure Plan in accordance with the objectives and policies provided in Section 3.
- » **Area C** - Contains the existing Sturgeon Valley community; an established serviced rural residential development containing approximately 3,400 residents. This Valley Core includes 33 multi-lots nearing 86% built-out, with 1,452 approved/registered lots.
- » **Area D** - Includes lands that will be retained for primarily agricultural purposes. Area D will be protected and maintained to enable efficient agricultural production and support the agricultural industry in the Region.


Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure Policy Tier	Applicability
Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area	Applicable


The guiding principle of the SVSSA is: Sturgeon County, in collaboration with the City of St. Albert and City of Edmonton, will plan for the completion of the Sturgeon Valley in a contiguous, compact manner with transitions that are sensitive to existing established communities, surrounding agricultural area and metropolitan boundaries.


PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p><b>APPENDIX G: NEOGIATED POLICIES FOR THE STURGEON VALLEY SPECIAL STUDY AREA</b></p> <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b></p> <p>Sturgeon County, in collaboration with the City of St. Albert and City of Edmonton, will plan for the completion of the Sturgeon Valley in a contiguous, compact manner with transitions that are sensitive to existing established communities, surrounding agricultural area and metropolitan boundaries.</p>		
<p>3.2.1 Area C, being the existing serviced rural residential community shall maintain its existing status as described under Sturgeon County's Municipal Development Plan and regulations governing development outlined in Sturgeon County's Land Use Bylaw for rural residential development.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The amended ASP, renamed to the Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure Plan, has retained its existing status as described in the County's MDP, and directs that development within the Plan area and follows the regulations as outlined in the County's Land Use Bylaw for rural residential development.</p> <p>For the latter, the amended ASP contains specific policies that direct development to occur in alignment with the Land Use Bylaw, exemplified through policies 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.4.3, and 5.5.1.</p>
<p>3.2.2 The Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan (Bylaw 882/99) shall be amended in the following areas to enable the completion of the existing community (Area C) and the development of a new Area Structure Plan(s) (in Areas A and B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Area Structure Plan planning boundary will be reduced to encompass only Area C; and</li> <li>b) Remaining greenfield lands in Area C will be designated for development in a complementary manner to the existing rural residential community.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The planning boundary for the Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan (renamed to the Sturgeon Valley Core Area Structure Plan) has been amended to predominately encompass the lands indicated as "Area C" in the SVSSA. As noted on Schedule 12 "[e]xact alignments are subject to further refinement through future Area Structure Planning". Through the planning process, it was noted that some lands in "Area B1" were better suited for development in alignment with the directives of "Area C" as well as acting as a buffer to future development in the south. Additionally, some lands in the northern portion of "Area C" were removed as they were determined to fit better within the context of "Area D" and therefore be governed by the Municipal Development Plan. Further context and rationale related to the above is provided for in the Plan on pages 10 and 11.</p> <p>The greenfield lands within "Area C" are designated in the amended Plan as "Valley Core Reserve". Future development on these lands will require an Outline Plan to be prepared prior to redistricting. Specific goals, objectives, and policies that relate to the Valley Core</p>

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 <p><b>APPENDIX G: NEOGIATED POLICIES FOR THE STURGEON VALLEY SPECIAL STUDY AREA</b></p> <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b></p> <p>Sturgeon County, in collaboration with the City of St. Albert and City of Edmonton, will plan for the completion of the Sturgeon Valley in a contiguous, compact manner with transitions that are sensitive to existing established communities, surrounding agricultural area and metropolitan boundaries.</p>		
<p>Notwithstanding the above amendments, it is agreed that all remaining elements and policies of the existing Area Structure Plan for Area C will remain grandfathered.</p>		<p>Reserve are found in Section 5.4, and requirements of the Outline Plans are contained in policy 5.12.2.</p> <p>While the County used this opportunity to modernize and update the layout, formatting, figures, etc., the elements and policies of the original Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan (Bylaw 882/99) that relate to “Area C” are retained within the amended Plan. Policies that related to “Areas A, B1, B2 and D”, were either removed entirely, or amended to only address “Area C”.</p>
<p>3.2.3 Future residential development in Area C will be consistent with existing development densities, up to a maximum density of the lowest Rural Teir minimum greenfield residential density target as identified in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan.</p>	✓	<p>As noted in the EMRGP, the maximum density of the lowest Rural Tier Future residential development within the Plan area is directed towards those lands designated as “Valley Core Reserve”. Policy 5.4.4 in the Plan states: The County shall permit development density up to a maximum of 20du/nrha on lands designated as Valley Core Reserve in Figure 5: Development Concept Map.</p>
<p>3.2.4 Area D shall maintain its existing agricultural status in accordance with the policies and regulations contained within the Sturgeon County Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw for agricultural development.</p>	✓	<p>“Area D” as defined in the SVSSA, has been removed from the amended Plan, retained its agricultural status, and is governed solely by the policies and regulations within the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.</p>


While Appendix G: Negotiated Policies for the Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area policy 3.2.2 states that “...it is agreed that all remaining elements and policies of the existing Area Structure Plan for Area C will remain grandfathered”, below demonstrates how the retained policies meet other directives in the EMRGP.

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b> Promote global economic competitiveness and regional prosperity.</p>		
1.1: Promote global economic competitiveness and diversification of the regional economy	n/a	
1.2: Promote job growth and the competitiveness of the Region's employment base	n/a	
1.3: Enhance competitiveness through the efficient movement of people, goods and services to, from and within the Region	✓	Section 5.9 Transportation in the Plan directs the County to work comparatively to coordinate regional transportation planning to align with the IRTMP and the EMRGP.
1.4: Promote the livability and prosperity of the Region and plan for the needs of a changing population and workforce	✓	The Plan will become an extension of the Sturgeon Valley South ASP and combined provide a range of choices in housing that accommodate for a changing population and workforce.


PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
<div>  </div> <div> <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</p> <p>Protect natural living systems and environmental assets.</p> </div>		
<p>2.1: Conserve and restore natural living systems through an ecological network approach</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Plan requires that continuous corridors are designated for environmental and municipal reserve, which is exemplified through the land designated as Environmental Protection that borders both sides of the Sturgeon River through the Plan area, as exemplified through Figure 5: Development Concept Map, the narrative on page 18 under the subsection titled “Environmental Protection (EP)”, and the policies under subsection 5.6: Environmental Protection within the Plan.</p>
<p>2.2: Protect regional watershed health, water quality and quantity</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Protection of Sturgeon River is provided for through the lands designated as Environmental Protection in the Plan. These lands act as an important buffer between existing and future development in the Plan area to the Sturgeon River. In addition, development of the remaining lands within the ASP are required to prepare a stormwater a management plan to control the release rates into the watershed, with policy that encourages new development to include innovative stormwater techniques to improve the Quality of stormwater releases into the Sturgeon River and other water bodies (policy 5.10.5).</p>
<p>2.3: Plan development to promote clean air, land and water and address climate change impacts</p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p>2.4: Minimize and mitigate the impacts of regional growth on natural living systems</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Prior to development on lands designated as Valley Core Reserve within the Plan, Outline Plans are required to be prepared. One component of the Outline Plan is to include a biophysical and wetland assessment as described in policy 5.12.2. The County may also require applicants to prepare an environmental impact assessment for development within or adjacent to Environmental Protection lands as described in policy 5.6.9 in the Plan.</p>

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
<div>  </div> <div> <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b> Recognize and celebrate the diversity of communities and promote an excellent quality of life across the Region.</p> </div>		
3.1: Plan and develop complete communities within each policy tier to accommodate people's daily needs for living at all ages	n/a	This Plan will become an extension of the Sturgeon Valley South ASP and combined provide a range of choices in housing that accommodate for a changing population and workforce. New policy within the Plan also directs the County to investigate infill opportunities that may provide a greater range of housing choices to what currently exists.
3.2: Plan for and promote a range of housing options	n/a	
3.3: Plan for and promote market affordable and non-market housing to address core housing need	n/a	




PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
<div>  </div> <div> <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</p> <p>Achieve compact growth that optimizes infrastructure investment.</p> </div>		
4.1: Establish a compact and contiguous development pattern to accommodate employment and population growth	✓	The Plan directs future residential development to those lands designated as “Valley Core Reserve”. These lands are a direct extension of existing municipal infrastructure, utilizing systems already in place, and ensuring that future development is compact and contiguous from the established communities and existing development, exemplified through policy 5.12.1.
4.2: Enable growth within built-up urban areas to optimize existing infrastructure and minimize the expansion of the development footprint	✓	Policy 5.5.2 directs the County to investigate opportunities for greater infill development to better optimize existing municipal infrastructure. While this looks towards the future, policy 5.5.1 allows for infill opportunities to occur via the County’s Land Use Bylaw in alignment with existing development and subdivision regulations.
4.3: Plan and develop greenfield areas in an orderly and phased manner to contribute to complete communities	✓	Any future multi-lot subdivisions will require Outline Plans to be created prior to redistricting and subdivision, which allows the County the opportunity to assess technical studies for impacts on existing infrastructure.
4.4: Plan for and accommodate rural growth in appropriate locations with sustainable levels of local servicing	n/a	
4.5: Plan and develop mixed use and higher density centres as areas to concentrate growth of both people and jobs	n/a	

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
4.6: Prioritize investment and funding of regional infrastructure to support planned growth	n/a	
4.7: Ensure compatible land use patterns to minimize risks to public safety and health	✓	The Plan effectively acts as an extension of the transition planning that is provided for in the Sturgeon Valley South Area Structure Plan, acting as the buffer between higher intensity development to the agricultural areas identified as “Area D” now removed from the Plan.

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p>GUIDING PRINCIPLE Ensure effective regional mobility.</p>		
5.1: Develop a regional transportation system to support the growth of the Region and enhance its regional and global connectivity	✓	The Plan contains policies related to aligning with the Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (IRTMP) and the EMRGP for future regional planning and developing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that considers linkages to other municipalities with the potential to be development as part of an Intermunicipal Development Plan or other regional initiatives. These policies are exemplified through policies 5.9.1, 5.9.2 and 5.9.3 in the Plan.
5.2: Encourage a mode shift to transit, high occupancy vehicles and active transportation modes as viable alternatives to private automobile travel, appropriate to the scale of the community	✓	Policy 5.7.3 within the Plan directs the County to explore opportunities with the City of St. Albert, CFB Edmonton and the Sturgeon Valley South Area Structure Plan to develop a continuous trail network. This network would provide residents a greater opportunity to use active transportation as means to access services and employment nodes.
5.3: Coordinate and integrate land use and transportation facilities and services to support the efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services in both urban and rural areas	✓	Outcomes from the future TMP, as described above, will consider linkages to other communities, municipalities and connectivity at the regional scale. Effectively, its creation will integrate land use and transportation facilities and services to support efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services both within the Plan area and beyond.
5.4: Support the Edmonton International Airport as northern Alberta's primary air gateway to the world	n/a	

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
5.5: Ensure effective coordination and alignment of regional transportation policies and initiatives between all jurisdictions	✓	The Plan contains policies related to aligning with the Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (IRTMP) and the EMRGP for future regional planning and developing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that considers linkages to other municipalities with the potential to be development as part of an Intermunicipal Development Plan or other regional initiatives. These policies are exemplified through policies 5.9.1, 5.9.2 and 5.9.3 in the Plan.

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
 <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b> Ensure the wise management of prime agricultural resources.</p>		
6.1: Identify and conserve an adequate supply of prime agricultural lands to provide a secure local source of food security for future generations	n/a	While the Plan retains some lands designated as Agriculture, the majority of the prime agricultural land within the Sturgeon Valley has been removed from the Plan as it fell within “Area D”. The lands within “Area D” are now governed by the County’s MDP and the agricultural districting through the Land Use Bylaw. Land along the northern edge of what is defined as “Area C” has also been removed and incorporated into “Area D”. These actions are a reflection of the commitment to identify and conserve agricultural land.

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCY	EVALUATION + COMMENTARY
6.2: Minimize the fragmentation and conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses	✓	<p>While both the EMRGP and the County's MDP designate the majority of the tracts of undeveloped land within the amended Plan boundary as suitable for future residential development, existing agricultural operations on lands designated as "Valley Core Reserve" are permitted to continue until Outline Plans for future development have been approved by the County and redistricting has occurred, exemplified through policies 5.3.2 and 5.4.3 in the Plan.</p> <p>If an applicant seeks to designate additional lands as "Valley Core Reserve", either within or outside the Plan area, this would trigger the amendment process resulting in another REF to the EMRB, exemplified through policy 5.4.1 and section 5.12 Implementation in the Plan.</p>
6.3: Promote diversification and value-added agriculture production and plan infrastructure to support the agricultural sector and regional food system	✓	<p>Policy 5.3.3 within the Plan guides Outline Plans for lands designated as "Valley Core Reserve" to consider retaining lands for urban agricultural development and/or to incorporate agricultural elements into the development, such as gardens, greenhouses, etc.</p>

## 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The following summary provides an overview of how the proposed amendments work towards each Guiding Principle within the Growth Plan:

Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The amendments made to this Plan are to align with the policies within the Sturgeon Valley Special Study Area, specifically those pertaining to those lands defined as “Area C”.</li> <li>▪ Amendments have been made for the boundary to encompass only “Area C” and remove/ amend policies that relate to “Areas A, B1, B2 and D” from the Plan.</li> <li>▪ Future development in the Plan is directed to the lands designated as “Valley Core Reserve”, requiring a maximum density of 20 du/nrha, and an Outline Plan to be prepared and approved by the County prior to redistricting and subdivision.</li> <li>▪ Any development in the Plan area will be driven by what is allowed for within the Land Use Bylaw, providing consistency with existing development within the Plan area.</li> </ul>
Economic Competitiveness & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Plan directs a future Transportation Master Plan to be developed that aligns with the Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan and the EMRGP. This allows for the Plan area to align at the regional scale for the efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services, ultimately contributing to the economic competitiveness and employment within the region.</li> </ul>
Natural Living Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Plan provides continuous, uninterrupted protections around the Sturgeon River, which protects and promotes the important regional asset.</li> <li>▪ Any development within or adjacent to lands designated as Environmental Protection may require an environmental impact assessment to be prepared.</li> <li>▪ Outline Plans for future development within the lands designated as Valley Core Reserve require a biophysical and wetland assessment.</li> </ul>
Communities & Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This Plan will become an extension of the Sturgeon Valley South ASP and combined provide a range of choices in housing that accommodate for a changing population and workforce.</li> </ul>
Integration of Land Use & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Plan allows for future residential development to occur on lands designated as Valley Core Reserve. If feasible and as determined through the creation of Outline Plans, development will leverage existing infrastructure in place.</li> <li>▪ As part of the grandfathered policies, development within the Plan will be serviced by municipal water and waste water.</li> </ul>
Transportation Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Plan directs a future Transportation Master Plan to be developed that aligns with the Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan and the EMRGP. This allows for the Plan area to align at the regional scale for the efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services, ultimately</li> </ul>

	<p>contributing to the economic competitiveness and employment within the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Plan also directs the County to work with regional partners, such as the City of St. Albert and CFB Edmonton, and with the Sturgeon Valley South Area Structure Plan, to create a continuous trail network. If developed, this network would allow residents within the Plan area to leverage an active transportation mode to access services and employment nodes outside of the Plan boundary.</li> </ul>
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As part of the amendments to this Plan, the majority of the lands designated as “Agriculture” have been removed and are now governed by the MDP and the regulations within the Land Use Bylaw.</li> <li>▪ Existing agricultural operations on lands designated as “Valley Core Reserve” are allowed to continue until Outline Plans have been approved by the County and redistricting has occurred.</li> <li>▪ Future developments have the opportunity to retain lands for urban agriculture, or to incorporate agricultural elements into the development.</li> </ul>