

Branch - Urban Planning and Environment

Introduction

The Urban Planning and Environment Branch delivers land use policy, plans, guidelines and programs to support Council's goals. While the work of the Branch addresses all seven City goals, it is the Department Lead on Transform Edmonton's Urban Form and Preserve and Sustain Edmonton's Environment.

The Branch develops corporate land use and environmental policy, area plans, city wide and area specific guidelines and programs, undertakes urban design

projects and reviews, evaluates and develops plans for parkland and is responsible for the integration of biodiversity throughout the City.

The Branch works to shape the appearance and function of the City in the short to long term by promoting best practice land use and environmental planning and urban design, in the Edmonton region through the Capital Region Board, in mature and suburban areas, and in residential and industrial areas, to establish a more compact, sustainable and livable city, comprised of complete, strong and vibrant neighbourhoods.

MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Corporate Policy	Urban Design	Area Planning	Parks Planning and Biodiversity
Municipal Development Plan and Environmental Strategic Plan development and coordination	Land Use Guidelines and Planning Studies development and implementation	Transit Oriented Development Planning	Parks and Open Space policy Development and Planning
Regional and inter-municipal land use planning	City Wide and Neighbourhood Level Urban Design Projects	Mature Area Planning	Corporate Environment support
Forecasting, growth coordination, and land use decision support	Heritage Building Program	Industrial Area Planning and Implementation	Biodiversity Management
Oil and Gas Policy Support		Land Use Studies, policies and guidelines development	Support to River Valley Alliance and Edmonton Land Trust
Business Development Facilitation		Planning Academy support	

Branch Opportunities and Challenges

The Municipal Development Plan (The Way We Grow, approved in May 2010) and the Environmental Strategic Plan (The Way We Green, approved in July 2011) direct that a number of major policies and program initiatives be undertaken within 10 years to transform Edmonton's urban form and preserve and sustain Edmonton's environment over a 30 year timeframe. To maintain the implementation schedule several new initiatives related to each plan should be undertaken each year. The following are descriptions of the challenges and opportunities related to the Municipal Development Plan and the Environmental Strategic Plan:

Advancing The Way We Grow and The Way We Green: A one time / one year campaign to promote public awareness on the benefits of Edmonton becoming a compact, sustainable and resilient city. This will provide a greater understanding among citizens of the challenges and opportunities related to transforming Edmonton's urban form. This campaign will facilitate sustained consultation with business interests and the public, deliver information and education and include high profile events.

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Branch Opportunities and Challenges (cont.)

New Neighbourhood Design Guidelines: Design guidelines for new suburban neighbourhoods were last updated in 1996, and comprehensive subdivision guidelines for new neighbourhoods do not currently exist. Consistent with the Municipal Development Plan the design of new neighbourhoods must be reviewed to ensure they are well designed, complete, and contain a pattern and mix of land uses, densities and built forms in appropriate balances. The new Neighbourhood Design Guidelines will require one year to complete and will promote the development of complete communities.

Area Redevelopment Plans: An ongoing program to maintain and establish new Area Redevelopment Plans will review the efficacy of existing plans and validate the need for additional plans in other areas, and ensure existing and new plans reflect the policy direction of The Ways, and provide appropriate guidance for future land use, density, built forms, urban design and amenities.

Food and Urban Agriculture: A City-Wide Food and Agriculture Strategy and the formation of a Food Policy Council is underway and scheduled to be complete by Q4 2012. Completion of this strategy must be approved prior to any new additional Area Structure Plans being adopted. When completed this will place Edmonton as a leader among Canadian cities that are addressing the food and urban agriculture agenda.

Regional Initiatives: The approval of the Capital Region Growth Plan and its implementation generates considerable review and analysis of development applications from partner municipalities. It creates additional demand to enter into joint planning exercises with adjacent municipalities to ensure that the City's interests are effectively and proactively protected in matters of regional planning, development and related economic development and growth opportunities.

Green Building Plan: The Green Building Plan directive came from an Executive Committee direction in July 2009, and is currently underway. The focus is to promote an energy efficient building stock and a City operation greenhouse gas management plan to significantly reduce the impact of operations on greenhouse gas emissions.

Carbon Neutral City Operations: City Operations, as directed by the Environmental Strategic Plan, are to become carbon neutral, causing no net increase to greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

Public Spaces Review: The Public Spaces Review will deliver a Public Spaces Strategy and a Dog Off-Leash Program over a two year period.

Service and Budget Review

The operating budget for the Heritage Program was decreased by \$100. The Heritage Program funds the restoration and maintenance of designated structures and related projects. The 10% reduction of program and budget funding will impact the number of structures that can be designated each year and/or delay the time required to support designation for larger buildings. The program has brought significant recognition to the City, and this reduction could potentially diminish the City's reputation as a leader in heritage preservation. The funding for Consulting Services for the General Managers Office and Project Office was reduced by \$100. The consulting budget has been utilized for the Northeast Industrial Development program to prepare the Edmonton Energy and Technology Park Area Structure Plan, special area zoning, eco-industrial development guidelines, engineering studies, risk management study, planning studies and economic development studies/proposals to initiate industrial development in northeast Edmonton. The reduction of consultant funding will impact the ten year strategic goal to Diversify Edmonton's Economy, particularly the three year priority goal to attract talent and investment to the City, making it nationally and internationally competitive.

Two reductions were made to grant and funding levels to the CO2RE program for citizens and businesses that support changes to homes and businesses to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This is a 30% reduction of program and \$240 of funding. This reduction will not change Council Policy, but will provide reduced service for a program that Council endorsed. The Office of Environment will continue to look at incentive opportunities that provide good leverage by program participants while also targeting greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to market transformation; however this reduction in budget will have a negative impact on the ability to partner with citizens and businesses as it reduces the ability to leverage sustainability actions. During the 2012 budget deliberations, Council approved adding back \$100 of grant funding to this program. A \$100 funding decrease was made to Policy Development, a 21% funding decrease. This program was established to implement initiatives related to the Way We Grow and includes the development of city-wide land use policies, responding to Council's emerging priorities and working with mature neighbourhoods.

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Approved 2012 Budget – Branch Summary (\$000)

	2010 Actual	2011 Budget	\$ Change '11-'12	2012 Budget	% Change '11-'12
Revenue & Transfers					
User Fees, Fines, Permits, etc.	\$ 266	\$ 301	\$ 8	\$ 309	2.7
Grants	124	-	-	-	-
Transfer from Reserves	195	1,000	-	1,000	-
Total Revenue & Transfers	<u>585</u>	<u>1,301</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1,309</u>	0.6
Expenditure & Transfers					
Personnel	10,070	10,279	496	10,775	4.8
Materials, Goods & Supplies	104	262	(2)	260	(0.8)
External Services	4,228	2,911	334	3,245	11.5
Fleet Services	10	5	3	8	60.0
Intra-municipal Services	833	171	4	175	2.3
Utilities & Other Charges	5,123	3,214	(209)	3,005	(6.5)
Transfer to Reserves	4,074	1,000	-	1,000	-
Subtotal	24,442	17,842	626	18,468	3.5
Intra-municipal Recoveries	(612)	(1,040)	(37)	(1,077)	3.6
Total Expenditure & Transfers	<u>23,830</u>	<u>16,802</u>	<u>589</u>	<u>17,391</u>	3.5
Net Operating Requirement	\$ 23,245	\$ 15,501	\$ 581	\$ 16,082	3.7
Full-time Equivalents	92.0	92.0	3.0	95.0	

Budget Changes for 2012 (\$000)

Revenue & Transfers - Changes

User Fees, Fines, Permits, etc. \$8

A rate increase of 2.65% (CPI) accounts for all \$8 of this increase.

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Expenditures & Transfers - Changes

Personnel \$496

Movement within the salary ranges, changes in benefits and the last year of a 3-year LAPP contribution increase account for \$170. The New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines service package accounts for \$121. The City-Wide Redevelopment Planning service package accounts for \$205.

Material, Goods & Supplies (\$2)

This increase relates to inflation at \$9. The New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines service package accounts for \$2. The City-Wide Redevelopment Planning service package accounts for \$4. Service and Budget Review reductions include \$4 in Historical Adjustments and \$13 in Corporate Opportunities.

External Services \$334

This increase relates to inflation at \$79. The New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines service package accounts for \$175. The City-Wide Redevelopment Planning service package accounts for \$283. Council directed printing reduction accounts for \$3. Service and Budget Review reductions include \$200 in reduced consulting services.

Fleet Services \$3

An increase of \$3 in Fleet Services is attributed to inflation and rate increases.

Intra-municipal Services \$4

This increase relates to inflation at \$4.

Utilities & Other Charges (\$209)

This increase relates to inflation at \$87. The New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines service package accounts for \$2. The City-Wide Redevelopment Planning service package accounts for \$8. Council directed addback of grants to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions accounts for \$100. Service and Budget Review reductions include \$66 in Corporate Opportunities and \$340 in reduced grant payments.

Intra-municipal Recoveries (\$37)

This increase relates to inflation at (\$13). An increased recovery from Current Planning accounts for (\$24).

Full-time Equivalents - Changes

The New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines services package accounts for 1.0 FTE (one-time).
The City-Wide Redevelopment Planning service package accounts for 2.0 FTEs (ongoing).

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Service Package - New Neighbourhoods Design Guidelines

Description

This service package will develop strategies for new neighbourhoods that will provide for the development of complete communities; provide clear requirements with regard to density and mixed land use; reduce the per capita consumption of land; and reduce infrastructure and servicing costs. This will align with or integrate with work underway in other departments on best management practices for low impact development, complete streets and achieving a balance between sustainable growth and development. The project will build on earlier work done on conceptual neighbourhood design, with focus on scoping, project design and providing guidelines. This proposed service package would provide new service regarding the planning and design of new neighbourhoods. Funds will be required for 1 FTE and significant consulting services (due to the technical aspects involved in new neighbourhood design) for one year. **Sustainable Development will consider a 2013 request for further work on this initiative.**

Justification

This service is required to ensure that new suburban neighbourhoods, where a significant amount of Edmonton's growth will continue to be accommodated, are planned and developed in a fashion that aligns with the City's strategic goals. This service package would improve service to the public by applying the latest city planning and urban design ideas to the design of neighbourhoods that will ultimately be home to thousands of people and businesses. Not funding the service package would result in continued uncertainty, debate, approval delays and lack of necessary amenities and services, which come in the absence of clear planning direction for new neighbourhoods. The Council-approved Municipal Development Plan calls for the preparation of new neighbourhood design guidelines (Policy 5.5.1.1).

Links to Strategic Goals, Departmental Outcomes & Performance Measures

Strategic Goal	Improve Edmonton's Livability
Departmental Outcome	Complete collaborative communities that are accessible, strong, and inclusive with access to a full range of services.
Performance Measure	% Households that are in complete communities
Strategic Goal	Transform Edmonton's Urban Form
Corporate Outcome	Attractive and compact physical design with diverse neighbourhoods, amenities and public open spaces
Performance Measure	Net residential density – dwelling units per net hectare of residential land % of Edmonton communities within (distance/time) of a park, library, major transit center, commercial centre, and/or recreational facility % of citizens that think Edmonton is a well-designed, attractive city City area by all land use zones
Corporate Outcome	Edmonton has sustainable infrastructure that fosters and supports civic and community needs
Performance Measure	Amount of outstanding civic/community infrastructure required to support newly developing areas
Strategic Goal	Shift Edmonton's Transportation Mode
Corporate Outcome	Citizens use public transit and active modes of transportation
Strategic Goal	Ensure Edmonton's Financial Sustainability
Corporate Outcome	The City has well managed and sustainable assets and services

Impact on Other Departments

Staff in other City Departments would be required to provide input into the analysis of problems with the existing neighbourhood design; to assist in the establishment of objectives for a new neighbourhood design and align their projects with these guidelines.

Incremental (\$000)	2012				2013				2014			
	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs
New Budget Annualization	\$ 300	\$ -	\$ 300	1.0	\$ (300)	\$ -	\$ (300)	(1.0)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 300	\$ -	\$ 300	1.0	\$ (300)	\$ -	\$ (300)	(1.0)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-

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Service Package - City-Wide Redevelopment Planning

Description

This service package would fund the preparation of Area Redevelopment Plans in existing neighbourhoods. Area Redevelopment Plans would be prepared in neighbourhoods where there is development pressure, development intentions and/or a Revitalization Strategy or other initiative that would benefit from a comprehensive assessment of future land use patterns and resulting direction. To the extent possible the plans would be coordinated with neighbourhood renewal work, the Great Neighbourhood capital program and park development investments. Some plans would be new; others would revisit existing outdated plans. Suggested 3 - 5 year priorities: ARPs / ARP reviews for neighbourhoods where there has been significant development activity; ARPs where there are other drivers (e.g. proximity to City Centre Redevelopment, presence of revitalization strategy); and neighbourhoods with older commercial corridors or community shopping centres in need of redevelopment.

Justification

This service would establish a vision for the future of the affected neighbourhoods and increase land owner certainty regarding future land use and transportation changes. This package would be complementary to the existing service through which Area Redevelopment Plans are being prepared in LRT station areas to promote transit-oriented development. Some Area Redevelopment Plans have not been comprehensively reviewed in some time and are at risk relative to not being up to date with current strategic directions (as per the Ways) and current neighbourhood stresses. The Way We Grow policy 3.5.1.4 states, "Implement a program for the ongoing preparation of Area Redevelopment Plans and other types of land use plans to guide redevelopment."

Links to Strategic Goals, Departmental Outcomes & Performance Measures

Strategic Goal(s):	Transform Edmonton's Urban Form Improve Livability
Corporate Outcome(s):	Attractive and compact physical design with diverse neighbourhoods, amenities and public open spaces Complete collaborative communities that are accessible, strong and inclusive with access to a full range of services
Performance Measure(s):	Net residential density – dwelling units per net hectare of residential land % of citizens who feel that they are able to access amenities and services that will improve their quality of life

Impact on Other Departments

Other departments will be consulted in the preparation of Area Redevelopment Plans.

Incremental (\$000)	2012				2013				2014			
	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs
New Budget	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500	2.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Annualization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500	2.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-