Issue Brief #1 – Future Growth Area

Summary

This Issue Brief outlines the policy direction for the City of Edmonton's Future Growth Area and provides an overview of the current status of planning and development within the area.

Key Questions

- What is the Future Growth Area?
- What is the planning and policy context for the area?

What is the Future Growth Area?

The Future Growth Area (FGA) is Edmonton's long-term land supply for required residential, employment, industrial, commercial, institutional, and community development. It includes lands within Edmonton's municipal boundary that will support and accommodate the city's future growth. The FGA provides the land base needed to respond to population growth, housing demand, employment needs, and infrastructure requirements. At full build-out, the area is expected to accommodate over 92,000 new residents and more than 64,000 jobs. The FGA is a strategic city-building land asset that enables proactive, coordinated growth where it is needed most. Planning ahead provides flexibility to respond to market demand, supports a range of housing choices, and allows the City and infrastructure to coordinate major investments before development occurs.

The City of Edmonton is currently undertaking a Servicing Study for lands south of 41st Avenue SW. The study is expected to be completed by early 2027 and will identify potential residential and non-residential growth opportunities, topographical features and constraints, major infrastructure requirements and high-level servicing networks. It will also forecast the anticipated progression and sequencing of development in that area.

What is the planning and policy context for the area?

The FGA is shaped by several layers of planning. The original annexation application outlined the major features of the area and what it was expected to contribute in terms of residential and non-residential growth opportunity. Edmonton's City Plan establishes a long-term vision for a city of two million residents and recognizes that accommodating future growth will require both redevelopment within existing communities and planned expansion into the FGA. District Plans provide more detailed direction for how different parts of Edmonton will evolve over time, including future land uses, transportation networks, servicing considerations, environmental priorities, and principles for growth sequencing.

The current FGA was formally established through the adoption of Edmonton's City Plan in 2020, following the 2019 annexation of lands from Leduc County into Edmonton's municipal jurisdiction. The annexation provided Edmonton with a long-term land base to accommodate projected residential and employment growth, while recognizing that major infrastructure systems, such as

transportation corridors, water and wastewater servicing, stormwater management, utilities, and community services, require significant lead time to plan, finance, and deliver. The City Plan identifies the need for a planning strategy for the FGA to be underway by the time Edmonton reaches a population of 1.25 million, a milestone reached in late 2025.

The FGA is also informed by the principles established through previous regional planning frameworks. The former Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) Growth Plan emphasized coordinated regional growth, efficient infrastructure investment, compact and contiguous development patterns, and the protection of agricultural lands. The EMRB Regional Agricultural Master Plan further recognized agriculture as an important regional economic asset while allowing for strategic urban expansion where required to support long-term growth contiguous with urban areas. Although the EMRB and its accompanying framework are no longer in place, these principles about responsible growth, infrastructure efficiency, and land-use sequencing are threaded into the existing municipal planning hierarchy in Edmonton and informed the FGA.

Prior to annexation, the lands now within the FGA were under Leduc County jurisdiction and were primarily planned for agricultural or rural uses, with some future industrial and country residential land use anticipated. The transition into Edmonton's boundary shifted responsibility for long-term urban planning and servicing decisions to the City and expectations about commensurate urban density and development patterns were confirmed for the area and understood by landowners. The FGA does not mean immediate development; rather, it reinforces the need for proactive planning so future neighbourhoods and employment areas can be coordinated with existing and future infrastructure networks, market demand and consumer trends, environmental considerations, municipal priorities, and industry capacity.

The FGA is intended for development and should not be understood as an unmanaged reserve whose future is uncertain. It is a long-term planning tool approved by the province of Alberta that helps Edmonton maintain housing affordability, supports economic competitiveness, coordinates infrastructure investment, and provides certainty to residents, builders, developers, utilities, businesses, and municipal partners.

Sources

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