Issue Brief #6 – Regional Growth

Summary

This Issue Brief outlines the regional growth context near the Future Growth Area (FGA).

Key question

- What is the regional context in Leduc, Beaumont, and Leduc County?

What is the regional development context in Leduc, Beaumont, and Leduc County?

Edmonton annexed roughly 8,260 hectares from Leduc County and Beaumont, effective January 1, 2019, to secure land for future growth. The City's own Growth Study, filed as part of that application, projected the annexed lands would supply about 35 years of residential capacity and about 25 years of industrial capacity. The Growth Study assumed that any residential demand the City could not satisfy in its own south area would spill over into neighbouring municipalities rather than shift north. That is not an inference. It is the City's stated planning assumption from 2018 which informed the successful annexation application to the Municipal Government Board.

Seven years on, that spillover shows up in five-year population data. BILD's own State of the Region project data put Beaumont's five-year growth rate at 5.1 percent per year, faster than Edmonton's own 3.4 percent over the same window. Leduc City and Leduc County grew at 3.2 and 3.0 percent respectively, just behind Edmonton's pace, but both still ahead of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board's own 2044 high-growth scenario for each of them, which sits at 2.9 and 2.3 percent. Growth on the south side of the boundary is not just outrunning a decade-old regional forecast - in Beaumont's case, it is outrunning Edmonton itself.

The same pattern shows up inside Edmonton's own boundary. BILD's State of the Region analysis of City of Edmonton building permits since 2020 finds that half of the ten neighbourhoods with the most housing permits issued sit in south Edmonton. No other direction in the city comes close to that concentration and pace of development. Edmonton's own fastest-building neighbourhoods and the fastest-growing municipalities in the region sit adjacent to the inactive annexed lands.

The City's Growth Planning webpage states a servicing study for the FGA will not be complete until the end of 2026, and that developers cannot seek Council authorization to prepare Area Structure Plans or Neighbourhood Structure Plans until that study is finished. In plain terms: the lands set aside seven years ago for exactly this growth have not yet reached the starting point for statutory planning, while the demand they were meant to meet has already landed on the municipalities next door, and on Edmonton's own south neighbourhoods in particular.

Edmonton's own population is not lagging the region. City data show Edmonton grew more than 10 percent from 2022 to 2024, its strongest two-year stretch since at least 2003. The point is not that Edmonton is falling behind. It is that Edmonton's growth, like the region's, is concentrating on the south side of the city, through infill and new neighbourhoods within the existing boundary, while

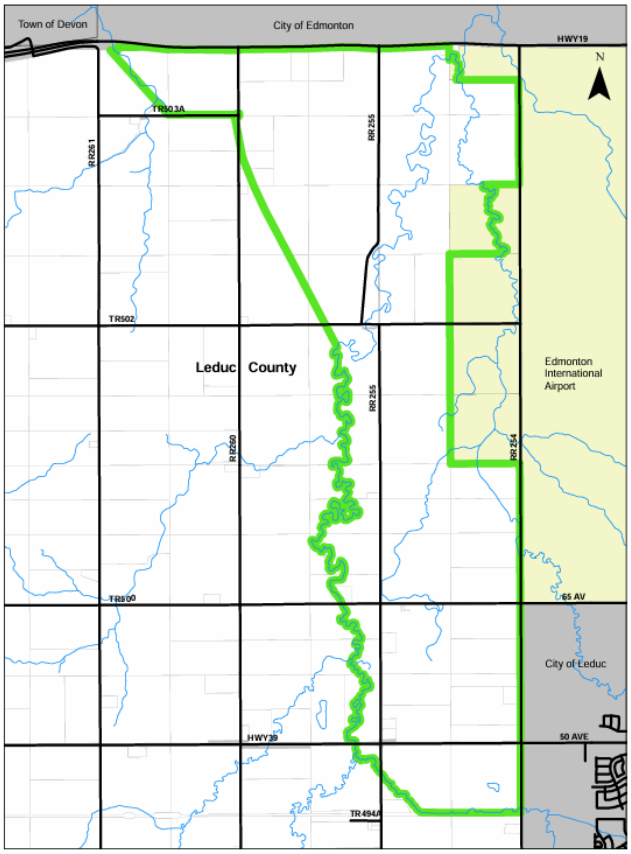


Figure – Whitemud Landing Major ASP

the specific lands annexed in 2019 for exactly this purpose sit idle. The corridor is filling in around the one piece that was intended to be a critical part of the plan.

The industrial picture reinforces the same point, and it is moving on three fronts at once. Leduc County has named and begun public engagement on Whitemud Landing. This is a roughly 1,800 hectare area west of the airport reserved, in the County's own words, as "the focus of the County's future land supply needs to support non-residential development." The County's Nisku Major Employment Centre Area Structure Plan (ASP) already states that in Nisku South, "further residential development or residential redistricting is not supported."

The City of Leduc's own Growth Management Study targets a 65 percent residential, 35 percent non-residential split for the roughly 2,209 hectares it is seeking beyond its current boundary. And Edmonton International Airport broke ground in May 2026 on its International Cargo Hub, a federally co-funded expansion adding up to 550,000 square feet of e-commerce logistics, intermodal cargo, and light manufacturing space, expected to be complete by fall 2027.

Set against this, Edmonton's own 1,870 net hectares of south industrial land were projected in 2018 to be fully absorbed by 2044. That timeline assumed a planning process that, as of this writing, has not yet started.

Edmonton risks losing out to the region's growth. The land the City itself identified and annexed for this economic development purpose, remains inactivated while every municipality and authority around it presses forwards on their own plans to attract industrial investment elsewhere. Edmonton's own growth concentrates on the same side of the city. The longer that gap persists, the more of the region's south-corridor growth locks in permanently on the other side of the boundary.

Sources

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