



# GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: Multi-Parcel Country Residential Subdivision Approvals Policy

## Introduction:

This report provides information, discussion, and implications of creating and implementing a Multi-Parcel Country Residential Subdivision Approvals Policy for Council’s consideration.

## Facts (Background Information):

At the May 11, 2021, Council meeting, Administration was directed to prepare a report outlining information and potential policy development regarding Multi-Parcel Country Residential Subdivision Approvals for review at the February 1, 2022, Committee of the Whole meeting.

Council raised concerns regarding the cost of maintaining service levels and infrastructure in vacant subdivisions. The intent of a policy would be to limit development of any new multi-parcel country residential subdivision until a certain level of vacancy has been reached. With vacant subdivisions and no developed parcels, there is no additional tax revenue being collected to support the required services.

As part of the background, Administration sought input from Brownlee and Associates (“Brownlee”) on the implications of creating and implementing such a policy.

## Analysis:

### Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) developed a Growth Plan (the “Growth Plan”) to ensure responsible and sustainable growth throughout the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. The Growth Plan contains policies that support where and how growth is managed. One of the objectives under the Integration of Land Use and Infrastructure Policy Area 4 limits a member municipality from designating new land as Country Residential until at least 90 percent of the lands are developed.

Administration conducted a Country Residential District Land Inventory & Analysis (the “Analysis”) in 2018, which indicated that 16 percent of land within the County is districted as CR. The CR lands are further broken down as follows:

Absorbed Parcels*	12,296 ha	32%
Unabsorbed Parcels*	26,317 ha	68%

\*Absorbed parcels refer to those that have reached their full development capacity, while unabsorbed parcels are suitable for future residential development.

Administration reviews and approves an average of four (4) new multi-parcel subdivisions per year. The Analysis estimates that it will take approximately 40 years to exhaust the land supply based on current building permit trends. Given this information, under the EMRB Growth Plan, the County will not be able to designate any new CR lands for several decades.

#### Municipal Government Act (MGA)

The Subdivision Authority, the decision-making body for subdivisions, must assess a subdivision based on the criteria set out in the Provincial MGA, the Subdivision and Development Regulation as well as the County's Land Use Bylaw. The MGA outlines the regulations for when the Subdivision Authority can approve or refuse a subdivision application. Specifically, the MGA does not allow the Subdivision Authority to consider the progress of another existing subdivision in making its decision. As such, the County would not be able to develop a policy to restrict new subdivisions as it would be contrary to the MGA.

In addition, the MGA also states that a proposed subdivision conforms with a growth plan, any statutory plan and the land use bylaw. It is the opinion of Brownlee that using a policy to manage subdivision could be seen as inappropriate fettering of the Subdivision Authority's discretion and recommends relying on the County's Municipal Development Plan or other statutory plans to address subdivision.

#### Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Statutory Plans

Administration could utilize the MDP to set higher level policies that would address future land use and subdivision. For example, policies could be developed that would limit subdivision in certain areas, limit leap-frog development, and set density targets to maximize infrastructure use and minimize operational costs. Furthermore, these policies could also be incorporated into existing Area Structure Plans for specific areas. This would provide the Subdivision Authority clear direction in making decisions.

#### **Conclusion/Summary:**

In conclusion, Administration recommends that Council does not support the creation of a Multi-Parcel Country Residential Subdivision Approvals policy.

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