



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan – Project Status Update

Introduction:

Administration is currently undertaking a review of the Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan. This update to Committee of the Whole provides a project status update.

Background Information:

The Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan (ASP) is a statutory document that provides the land use planning framework for the future development of the Acheson area. The current ASP was adopted in 2014, with the goal to review and update every five years. In that time, the County has adopted a new Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 2017-14, providing strategic policy direction for Major Employment Areas. Additionally, the Acheson Industrial Area continues to develop at a more accelerated rate than originally contemplated in the current ASP, highlighting a need to ready more lands for development within the Plan Area.

On July 7, 2020, Administration presented an introduction to the project to the Committee which outlines the two project phases. This project status update relates to **Phase 1: Administrative Updates**.

Analysis:

Following the initial introduction to the Committee, Administration has completed the following with regards to the project:

Policy Review and Gap Analysis

Administration has reviewed the existing ASP in order to identify and address any gaps in policy. This included a review of the Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 2017-14, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan and the County's Engineering Master Plans (i.e. water, wastewater, stormwater and transportation). Administration also undertook a review of other industrial ASPs completed in recent years to ensure best practices are being incorporated.

Internal Review

The internal Steering Committee has provided guidance on ASP policy through their own department reviews and formal discussions regarding existing policy and potential updates. These discussions have identified areas where the ASP can be streamlined (i.e. Engineering sections due to completion of County master plans) and where the ASP may need more guidance. This is discussed in further detail in the sections below.

Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement

Administration has met with municipal partners including the City of Edmonton, City of Spruce Grove, as well as, Enoch Cree First Nation, Alberta Transportation and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Administration. These meetings were held to introduce all parties to the project and its two phases. To date, feedback has been positive from these parties. Administration also sent an email notification to external stakeholder groups to notify them of project initiation in preparation for key stakeholder meetings and future open houses.

From the initial work completed to date on Phase 1 of the Acheson Industrial ASP Project, three items of interest have emerged:

1. **New ASP Document Layout** – Through the internal review process, Administration identified certain aspects of the existing ASP document layout that made the document less accessible to readers. For example, redundant policy statements were identified. Additionally, certain policy statements were hard to find as they were not included under the most relevant section heading. Through a review of modern Area Structure Plans within the region, paired with Parkland County's recent document branding, Administration has developed a new document layout for County ASPs. This layout will be used for the first time with the Acheson Industrial ASP. It includes inset definitions for easy reference, standardized mapping, and the use of best practices in graphic design such as white space (or negative space) to increase readability and comprehension.
2. **Infill Development** – As the Acheson Industrial Area continues to build-out, Administration is seeing greater opportunity for infill development within already established areas of the park. This may include the subdivision of underutilized lots or the redevelopment or expansion of existing buildings. Internal discussions and review identified a need for a new policy section in the ASP for Infill Development. This section will help to provide more direction to landowners and developers when looking to develop in an existing area. Policy direction could include incentivization and local plan requirements for infill to provide a more transparent development process and to encourage infill development. Through upcoming engagement, Administration will work with industry stakeholders to review this section and its potential policy statements, ensuring shared understanding and support.
3. **Local Plans** – As per Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 2017-14 (MDP), developments may be required to complete a Conceptual Scheme or a Master Site Development Plan based on the nature of the development. The MDP provides a base terms of reference for these documents which has been used by Administration and developers since 2017. However, this terms of reference does not differentiate between residential or commercial/industrial development. Administration will be developing policy statements that address Local Plans (umbrella term for both Conceptual Schemes and Master Site Development Plans) to provide transparency in the development process in Acheson. Through upcoming engagement, Administration will work with industry stakeholders to ensure policies for Local Plans are reflective of current practices and are understood by all parties.

Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement

Administration will be conducting further external engagement during the month of September. This will include the following:

- **Focused Stakeholder Sessions:** Administration will engage with developers/industry representatives, the local resident association, and regional business associations on emergent topics such as infill development and local plans.
- **Open House Series:** Administration will be conducting two in-person open houses, tentatively scheduled for September 23 and 24, 2020. A virtual open house will also be scheduled to run concurrently from September 21 to 25, 2020. **Note: the in-person open houses will be subject to provincial public health requirements in order to ensure the health and safety of all parties.**

Following the completion of formal engagement events, a detailed summary will be submitted to Council via the “What We Heard Report”.

Policy Framework Review:

The ASP will be reviewed to align with several Pillars found in the County’s Long-Term Strategic Plan “*2040 and Beyond*”, related to strategic economic diversification, responsible leadership, complete communities, and respected environment.

Additionally, the project will ensure that the ASP aligns with the County’s Municipal Development Plan (2017-14), which identifies policy direction for Major Employment Areas, Master Site Development Plans, and Conceptual Schemes.

Conclusion/Summary:

Administration recommends the Committee of the Whole accept the Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan Project Status Update for information, as presented.

**AUTHORS: Rachelle Trovato, Development Planning
Feinan Long, Long Range Planning**

Department: Planning and Development

Date written: August 20, 2020

Attachments

Attachment 2: PowerPoint Presentation