

CITY OF EDMONTON ANNEXATION APPLICATION

APPENDIX 10.0

PUBLIC FEEDBACK AND THE CITY'S
RESPONSE



MARCH 2018

Edmonton

APPENDIX 10.0

PUBLIC FEEDBACK AND THE CITY'S RESPONSE

Note: specific reference to personal information, such as name, as well as identifying details have been removed from this Appendix, consistent with the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act).

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the annexation process, the City undertook an extensive public engagement program, including an engagement program unique to landowners within the proposed annexation areas. This report summarizes the feedback gathered from the nearly five year process, as well as the City's response to the feedback received.

Over the course of the five year annexation process, the proposed annexation area was revised several times to either add or remove areas. Specifically, four quarter sections immediately north of the Town of Beaumont's then-boundary at Township Road 510 were added to the proposed annexation area in early 2015. Then, early in 2017, the North Nisku area and land south of Township Road 510 were removed from the SE proposed annexation area and the land immediately west of the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.) was removed from the SW proposed annexation area. Later that same year, in mid-2017, the City removed the E.I.A. from the proposed annexation area. Lastly, just prior to the submission of this annexation application in early 2018, the City revised the SE annexation area to remove the nine Beaumont quarter sections from its annexation application area.

The changes to the proposed annexation area were made, in part, as a result of the public feedback received. The revisions to the proposed annexation area undoubtedly affected the topics and tone of the public feedback, and thus the feedback presented in this report should be reviewed with an understanding of the context within which the feedback was received.

While the City has not solicited feedback on the removal of the nine Beaumont quarter sections, the overall annexation area has been reduced (not expanded), and the reduced area actually addresses much of the feedback received, such as feedback related to the rationale for the annexation.

The intention with providing this comprehensive report on the public feedback received since the announcement of the City's annexation intentions in March 2013 is to demonstrate the evolution of the City's annexation discussions with the public.

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Public Feedback

This report fulfills the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* requirements for annexation¹ as checklist item #7 on the Municipal Government Board Annexation Application Checklist.²

Feedback from interested parties was collected via the following means:³

- comment forms
- staff recording verbal feedback from engagement events
- e-mail
- telephone inquiries
- mailed correspondence
- questionnaires

Public feedback ranged from general requests for more information, to questions about the specific impacts of annexation, such as services and taxes, to opinions on the merits of the proposed annexation.

The City received about 1,430 individual pieces of feedback from the public between 2013 and 2018.⁴ The majority (66%) of comments were from the initial stages of the annexation, in 2013, and of these, nearly half related to the rationale for the annexation. In the final stages of the annexation, in 2017 and early 2018⁵ the number of inquiries related to the rationale for annexation represented significantly less of the proportion of inquiries (10%), likely as a result of the reduction in the proposed annexation area. Likewise, the proportion of inquiries on the impacts of annexation on municipalities, such as Leduc County declined from 14% of total inquiries in 2013 to 0% in 2017/2018. However, the proportion of landowner impact-related inquiries, such as bylaws, development and service impacts, increased between 2013 and 2018. The number of assessment and taxation inquiries as proportion of total inquiries remained relatively stable throughout the four year time period. Overall, the most frequently-referenced topics were:

- 1) Rationale for the annexation

¹ [Municipal Government Act](#), Part 4 Division 6 Section 118 (1) c)

² [Municipal Government Board Annexation Application Checklist](#)

³ See *Appendix 10.2* for summary “what we heard” reports from the City’s annexation public engagement events, and *Appendix 10.4* for an account of the correspondence received between 2013 and 2018.

⁴ This report captures feedback collected from the announcement of the annexation in March 2013 up to February 2018.

⁵ For the purposes of this report, feedback from the first two months in 2018 was combined with 2017 feedback to make approximate comparison between years feasible.

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- 2) Servicing impacts
- 3) Administrative inquiries, mostly process-related
- 4) Impacts on the City of Edmonton and Leduc County
- 5) Tax and assessment related inquiries

City's Response to Feedback

Public feedback informed the annexation negotiations, and the City's transition and mitigation plan for landowners. Public feedback also informed the City's proposed annexation area boundary. The public's concerns over agricultural land preservation and Leduc County's future growth opportunities, in part, contributed to the City's decision to reduce the proposed annexation area to exclude the land immediately west of the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.), which is largely used for agricultural production, as well as the developing North Nisku industrial area.

The City's proposed mitigations are unambiguous, enforceable and time-specific, in accordance with the Municipal Government Board (MGB) Annexation Principle #11: "annexation proposal that development reasonable solutions to impacts on property owners and citizens with certainty and specific time horizons will be given careful consideration and weight."⁶

The City reviewed feedback from the public, as well as feedback from the County from the annexation negotiations, and researched the bylaws and services of the County and the City to determine areas of similarity and differences between the two jurisdictions. A topic was further examined and mitigation tactics were explored in instances where the differences between the two jurisdictions would result in an impact to landowners.

The proposed mitigation actions are the result of an analysis of how similar issues were handled in past annexations, feedback from the City's various departments with respect to feasibility and cost, and feedback from the public.

The City adhered to the general mitigation principle of minimizing impacts on landowners to the greatest extent reasonably possible. Mitigation tactics include recommendations to amend current City bylaws to account for a rural lifestyle, and a commitment to maintain or exceed the County's current service levels.

⁶ [Municipal Government Board Annexation Principles](#)

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The City did not match the services provided by the County in instances where doing so would be cost-prohibitive, legally risky, and/or unfeasible. The City has proposed mitigation for the majority of anticipated impacts.

2. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The various topics of the public feedback received are categorized below:^{7,8}

1. **Rationale** for the proposed annexation, including:
 - a. Questions about the merits of annexation, and general statements of support or non-support
 - b. Size of the annexation area, and concerns about urban sprawl
 - c. Options to annex elsewhere
 - d. City's growth strategy ("grow in and up, not out")
 - e. Rationale for including or not including the E.I.A. in the proposed annexation area
 - f. Overlap with Beaumont's annexation area
 - g. Comparisons with annexations from other municipalities, such as Calgary

2. **Service** impacts from annexation, including:
 - a. Road services, such as snow removal, dust suppression, and maintenance
 - b. Agricultural services, such as mow and spray programs
 - c. Emergency services (fire, police and emergency medical services)
 - d. Solid waste services
 - e. Water, wastewater and stormwater services
 - f. Electricity services
 - g. Senior housing
 - h. Cost of future services

⁷ Note: there are several limitations to the feedback analysis provided in this report. Limitations include: 1) The analysis only includes recorded questions and comments; it is possible that some feedback may have not been recorded. 2) In many cases, someone may have had a question about a particular topic in their mind, but the poster or website addressed it, and thus it was not expressed (and therefore not recorded). 3) One person could have raised the same question or comment multiple times in different ways (for example, both as a stickie comment on an open house poster and as a comment on the open house survey).

⁸ Note: This analysis counted the number of times a topic was referenced, not the number of comments. In other words, one person's comment may have referenced multiple topics, and each topic was counted individually.

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- i. General comments on the City's ability to provide adequate services
- 3. Administrative inquiries, including:**
- a. Process-related questions, such as:
 - i. How decisions on annexation applications are made
 - ii. What the public's role is in the process
 - iii. When future public engagement events will be held
 - iv. Timelines for the decision on the annexation application
 - b. Requests for updates on the status of the negotiations
 - c. Requests for general information on the annexation
- 4. Impacts on municipalities, such as:**
- a. Inquiries about the compensation for Leduc County
 - b. Concern about a potential increase in taxes for the rest of Leduc County
 - c. Concern about the implications of annexation on the cost-sharing initiatives between the municipalities in the Leduc sub-region
 - d. Comments on the right of every municipality to grow
 - e. Implications on existing tax-revenue sharing schemes
- 5. Tax and Assessment impacts from annexation**
- a. Interest in the tax transition plan, including special tax and assessment provisions and triggering events to end special tax considerations
 - b. Concern that taxes will increase
 - c. Comment that the annexation is a "tax grab"
- 6. Environment-related inquiries, including:**
- a. Preservation of agricultural land
 - b. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas, such as around the North Saskatchewan River and Caves Lake area
- 7. Development-related inquiries, including:**
- a. Timelines for when development will reach certain areas
 - b. Questions about permit and licence requirements
 - c. Zoning transition
 - d. Statutory plan transition
- 8. Topics beyond the scope of the annexation application, including:**
- a. School transition
 - b. Provincial highway projects
 - c. Future transit alignments

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- d. Changes to insurance rates
 - e. E.I.A. development plans
 - f. Mailing address changes
9. **Lifestyle bylaw** impacts, such as:
- a. Firearm use
 - b. Animal control
 - c. Farm equipment on roads

There were 1,435 comments and questions recorded overall for the 2013 - 2018⁹ time period. The majority of inquiries (37%) were rationale-related, with many questioning the initial size of the proposed annexation area, and the City's growth projections. Services (12%) and administrative topics (11%) were the second and third most frequently referenced topics. Impacts on municipalities (10%) and Tax and assessment (10%) were tied for a close fourth.

Figure 1: Total Number of Inquiries by Topic

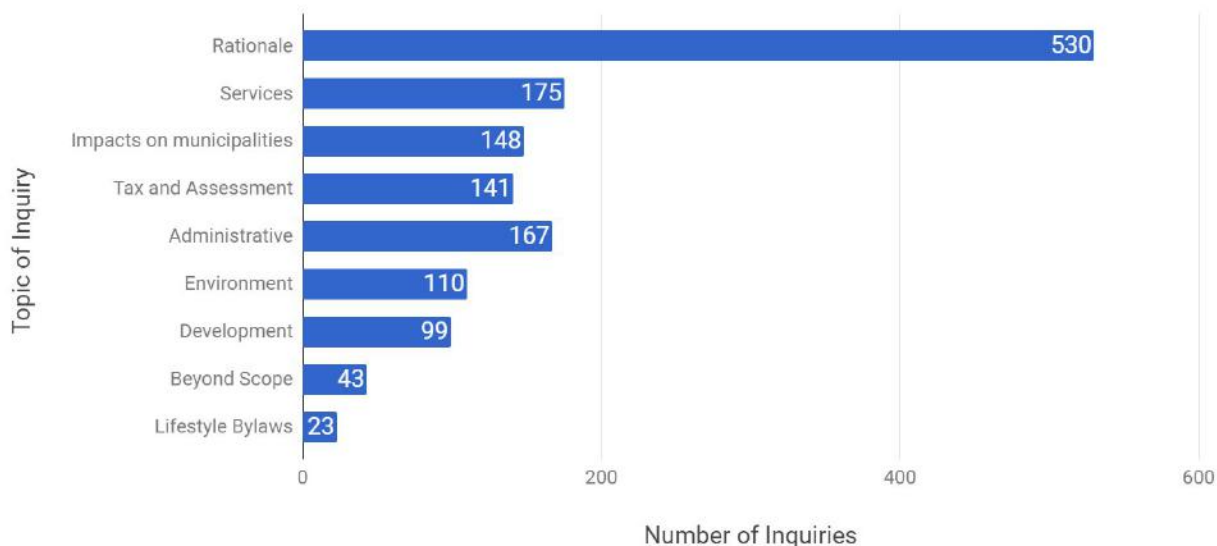
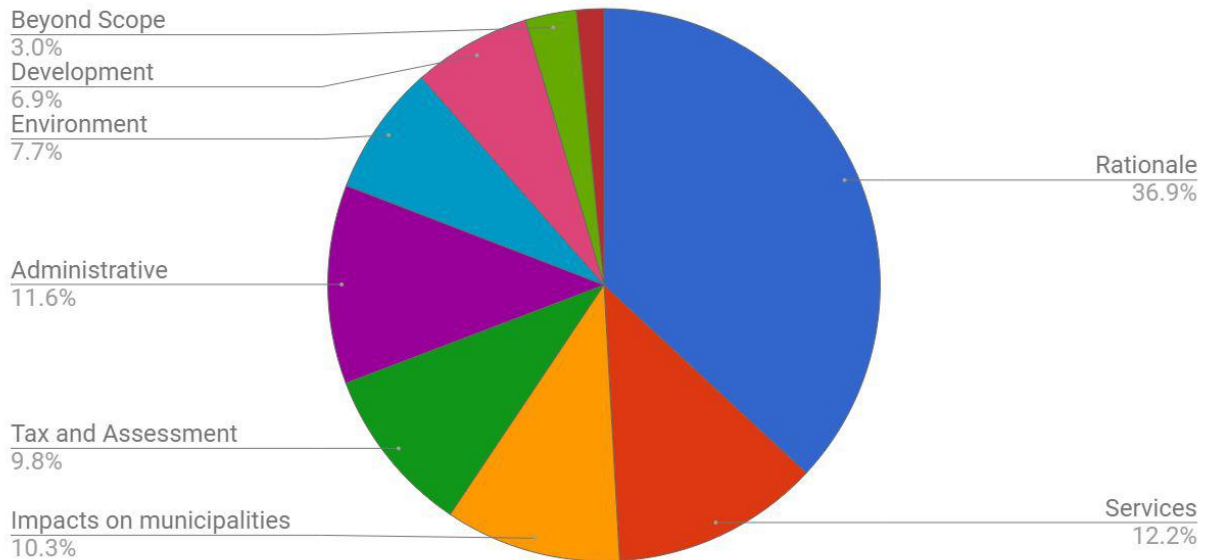


Figure 2: Total Proportion of Inquiries by Topic

⁹ Comments were recorded for the purposes of this report up until February 20, 2018.

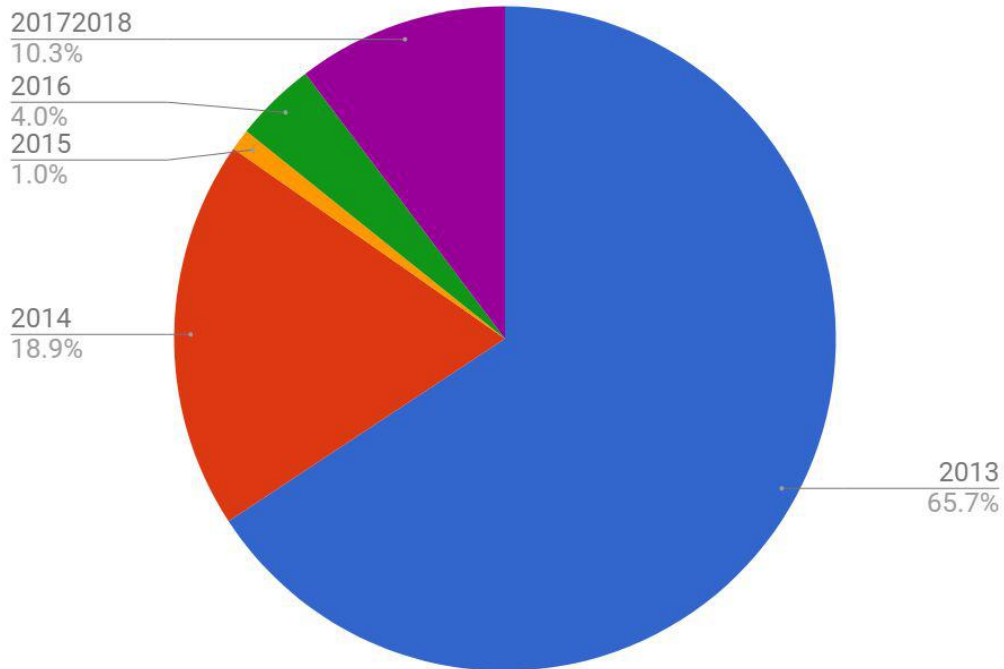
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As shown in Figure 3, most of the inquiries occurred in the first year of the annexation process, in 2013. As expected, years where large scale public engagement events were held yielded the most inquiries (years 2013, 2014 and 2017). The number of inquiries in these years declined from year to year; most of the inquiries were received in 2013, followed by 2014 and then 2017. This declining trend may be a reflection of the reduced proposed annexation area between 2013 and 2017, as well as the fact that by the end of 2016, the City and County had negotiated a Framework for Agreement and many of the concerns identified by landowners could be answered comprehensively.

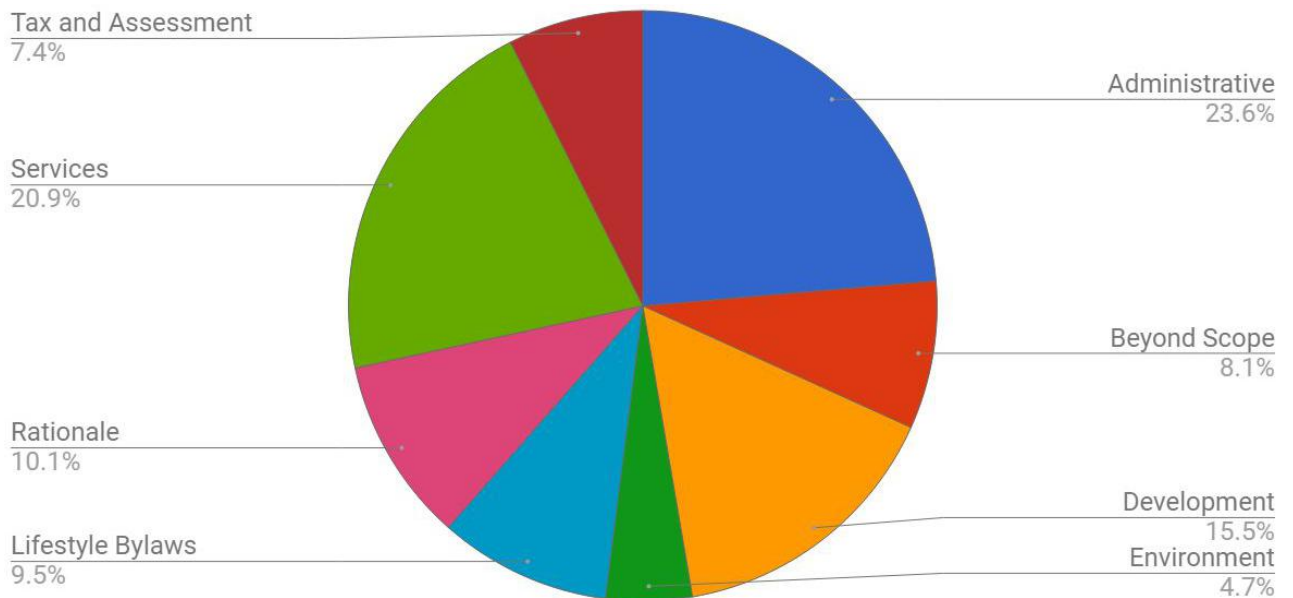
Figure 3: Proportion of Inquiries per Year

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In 2017/2018¹⁰, service impacts (28%), development-related inquiries (15%), and lifestyle bylaws (13%) were the most frequently-referenced public feedback topics (as shown in Figure 4).

Figure 4: Total Proportion of Inquiries by Topic for 2017/2018



¹⁰ From January 1 to February 20, 2018

3. RATIONALE-RELATED FEEDBACK

As shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, there was significant interest in the City's rationale for annexation from the public. Most (35%) of the rationale-related comments pertained to the merits of the proposed annexation area. The public commented on the size of the proposed annexation area, referred to the annexation as a "land grab," posed questions about the city's existing land supply and growth projections, and drew comparisons with the incremental annexations of other municipalities, such as Calgary.

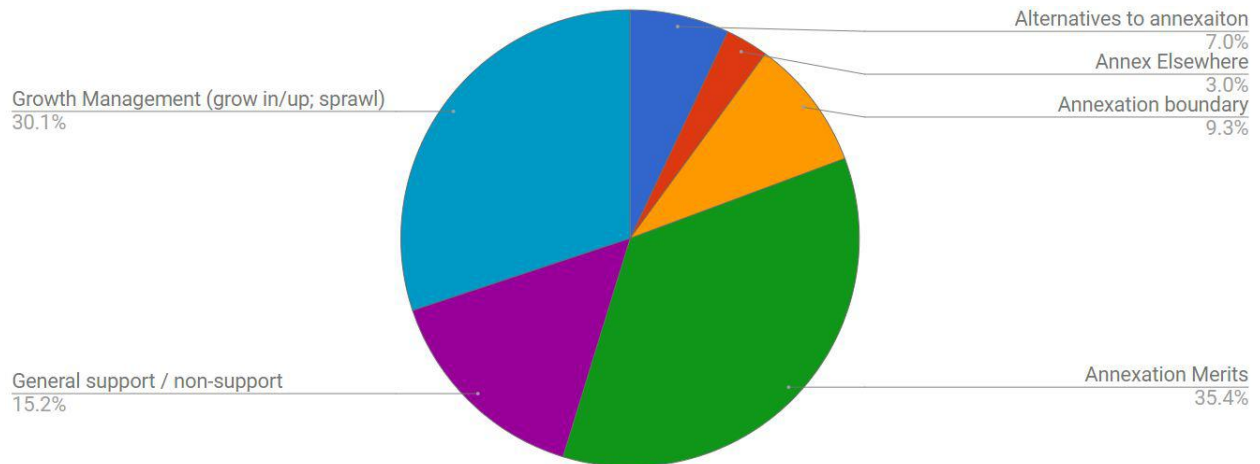
30% of inquiries commented on the city's growth management practices ("grow in/up, not out") and cited concerns about urban sprawl. Other rationale-related comments included general statements of support or non-support for annexation (15%).

Ten percent of inquiries related to the annexation boundary, including the originally proposed annexation of the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.) and Beaumont's overlapping annexation area. Some members of the public questioned why the Edmonton International Airport (EIA) had to be within Edmonton to be an economic asset, and why the City was interested in annexing the EIA when it recently closed its own municipal airport. Also, some residents were of the misunderstanding that the Province granted lands to Beaumont *instead of* Edmonton. Residents were confused as to why the City would apply to annex these lands.

Seven percent of inquiries suggested alternatives to annexation, such as regional collaboration. The remaining portion (3%) of inquiries suggested that the City look elsewhere to annex.

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Figure 5: Detailed Proportion of Rationale-Related Inquiries



4. SERVICE-RELATED FEEDBACK

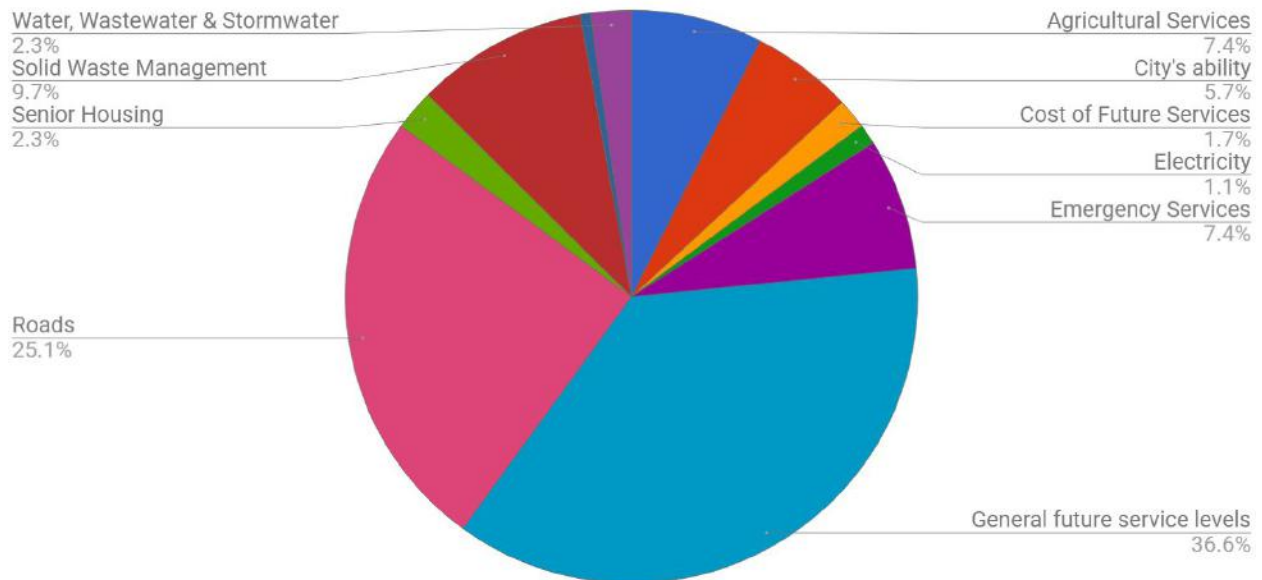
The public expressed a general interest in what services would be available to them and when (37% of service inquiries), and how those services would be provided, as well as the associated costs (2%). Some questioned the City's ability to provide adequate services (6% of service inquiries).

Road-related services, such as snow removal and road maintenance were by far the most referenced service (25% of service-related comments), followed by solid waste services (10%), emergency services (7%), and agricultural services (7%). Less referenced services included: water, wastewater and stormwater (2%), seniors housing (2%), electricity services (1%) and transportation services (1%).

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Figure 6: Detailed Proportion of Service-Related Inquiries



Broadly speaking, landowners were concerned with how the transition of the following services would be handled:

- Emergency Services
- Agricultural Services
- Social Services
- Municipal Services, such as solid waste and water and wastewater

4.1. Emergency Services

The public was interested in how annexation would impact their current ambulance, fire, and police services, with emergency services comprising 7% of all service-related inquiries.

4.1.1. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The public was interested in how annexation would change their current ambulance services.

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City's Response

The Government of Alberta, through Alberta Health Services (AHS), manages Emergency Medical Services (EMS) throughout the Province. Municipal boundaries do not affect how these services are administered, therefore, residents will receive the same EMS that they currently do.

Alberta Health Services' response time targets vary across the province based on geographical areas (ranging from remote to urbanized). The response time target for urban/metro areas is 8-12 minutes; response times in rural areas normally comes close to the times in urban areas. The closest available ambulance is dispatched in an emergency.

4.1.2. Fire Protection Services

The public expressed general concern about the response times for fire protection in the proposed annexation area.

City's Response

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (FRS) will service the annexation area, should the annexation be approved.

Edmonton's FRS currently has the capacity to match the existing fire protection services in the annexation area. FRS uses tanker trucks to service rural areas that do not have fire hydrants. Additional services offered by Edmonton FRS include: hazardous materials and dangerous goods team, public education, and emergency operations centre.

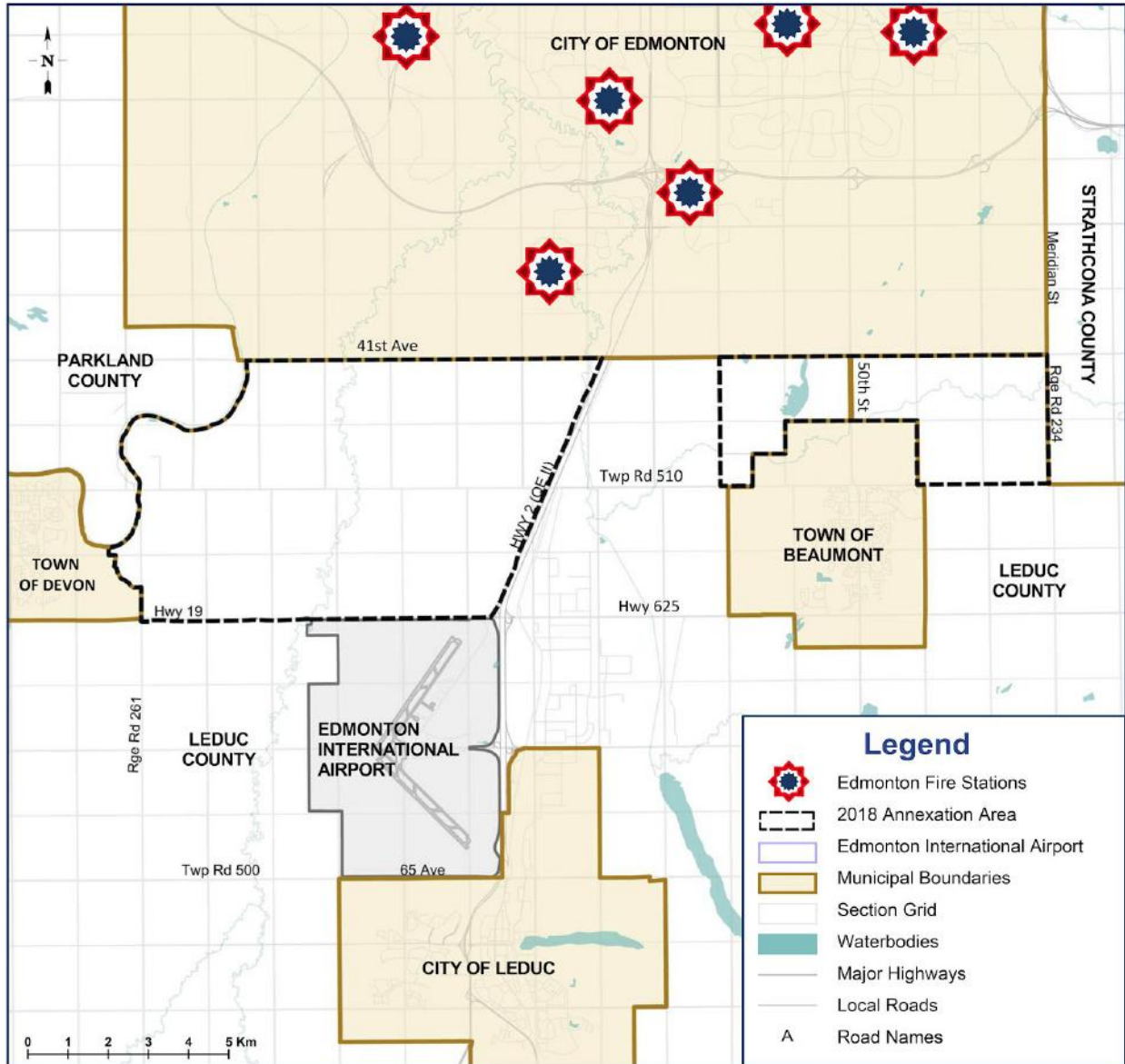
FRS responds with the closest available unit. Edmonton's Heritage Valley station is the closest station to the annexation area, about 2 km from Edmonton's existing boundary at 41 Ave. New fire stations will be built in the annexation area in concert with urban development.

FRS's response time goal is:

- First unit at the scene of an event 90% of the time within 7 minutes or 4 minutes after leaving the station
- In the case of a fire, a crew of 16 firefighters is targeted to be on scene within 11 minutes

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Map 1: City of Edmonton Fire Stations in Relation to the Proposed Annexation Area



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4.1.3. Police Services

The County relies on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to provide police services. The public sought information on how these services would be provided in the proposed annexation area.

City's Response

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) will police the annexation area, should the annexation be approved. EPS has a broad mandate, including:

- Community policing
- Crime prevention
- Victim support
- Family protection
- Personal & property crimes
- Operational services
- Investigative support
- Traffic safety
- Enforcement
- Organized crime

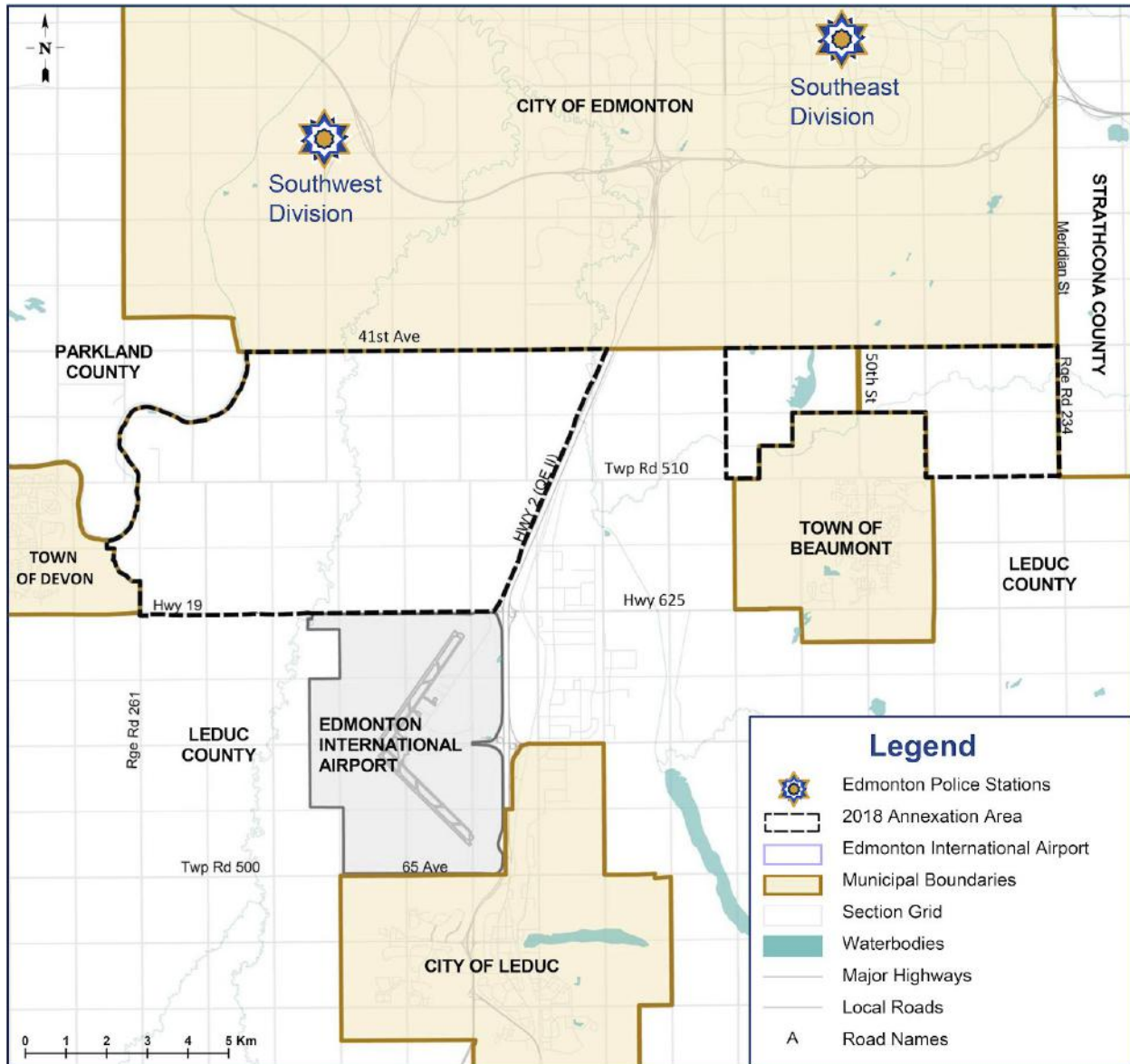
EPS has developed a high-level policing plan to address the unique needs of the annexation area. EPS is committed to maintaining existing service levels, and will transition to City-standard targets as new police stations are built in the annexation area. New police stations will be proposed to be built as urban development progresses into the annexation area.

The Southwest Division in the Windermere neighbourhood in Edmonton will likely service the west proposed annexation area. The Southeast Division in the Millwoods neighbourhood will likely service the east proposed annexation area.

EPS's City-service standard is to respond to events that threaten human life within 7 minutes of being dispatched, 80% of the time. Lower priority events have different response time goals.

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Map 2: City of Edmonton Police Stations in Relation to the Proposed Annexation Area



4.2. Agricultural Services

The County's agricultural services program, which is funded, in part, by the Province, provides farmers with support for farming operations. Agricultural services includes:

- Roadside mowing programs
- Roadside, fenceline, and private property noxious weed spraying programs
- Agricultural services staff provide education, advice, onsite visits, pest control assistance and weed inspections
- Agricultural equipment rental and sale
- Crop and animal pest control
- Funding assistance for private drainage improvement projects
- Gopher trapping incentive programs
- Alternative Land Use Services Program that compensates farmers for retaining or restoring natural areas on their property

Landowners were interested in how the agricultural services they currently use would be continued after annexation (7% of service inquiries). In particular, landowners were interested to know if the City planned to continue mowing the ditches, conducting inspections for noxious weeds and agricultural diseases, and administering spraying programs.

City's Response

The City will endeavour to enter into an Agricultural Services Agreement with the County wherein the County's Agricultural Services Board (ASB) will continue to provide agricultural services within the annexed area for a transition period.

Should an agreement not be reached with the County, the City will provide equivalent services either through its own City operations, or through contract services, or a combination thereof for a transition period.

4.3. Social Services

Roughly 2% of service inquiries related to the provision of social services, such housing for seniors and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).

4.3.1. Seniors Non-Market Housing

Some landowners wanted to know how the annexation would affect their access to the non-market housing for seniors provided by the Leduc Foundation. Landowners expressed a preference to maintain access to housing within the smaller communities of the Leduc sub-area, near their current home, close to their family and friends.

The Leduc Foundation provides many housing services, such as seniors supportive living and independent living accommodation within the geographical area of Leduc County, which encompasses Leduc County, the City of Leduc, the Town of Devon, the Town of Beaumont, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and the Village of Warburg.

City's Response

Both municipalities support the provision of affordable housing to adequately meet the needs of their residents. Due to Edmonton's diverse population, there is a greater variety of non-market housing options in Edmonton than in Leduc County. The needs of the residents within the annexation area would be addressed through the City's advocacy, planning and policy development for affordable housing.

With respect to the location-specific concerns of access to housing within the Leduc sub-area, the City reached out to the Leduc Foundation to explore whether access to their housing services would be restricted if landowners were to transition from Leduc County residents to Edmonton residents, in the event of a successful annexation.

The City was advised by the Leduc Foundation that an agreement to ensure continued access for the residents in the annexation area after annexation was not necessary. The Leduc Foundation stated that annexation would not affect the eligibility of annexation area residents to apply for occupancy in the various accommodations provided by the Foundation after a successful annexation since most, if not all, residents have lived in Leduc County for at least 10 years (one of Leduc Foundation's residency requirements).

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4.3.2. Home Help Programs

The County offers financial assistance to low-income adults and seniors for home assistance, such as light cleaning. Some members of the public inquired as to whether or not this program would continue for landowners within the proposed annexation area.

City's Response

While both the County and the City receive funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) from the Government of Alberta for preventative social services, each municipality allocates funds differently, to support the unique needs of their community.

The County offers subsidized home help programs to low income adults and seniors for both light and labour-intensive home cleaning and chores. The County subsidy amounts range, depending on program particulars, from approximately one hundred to two hundred dollars a month.

The City offers some support programs directly, such as short term counselling services, family violence prevention, and community building social workers. The City also supports and provides funding for preventative social service programs to many non-for-profit organizations in the community, such as the Millwoods Seniors Centre, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and Family Futures Resource Network. Also, Edmonton's coordinated District Home Supports Model connects seniors to appropriate and affordable home services.

The City of Edmonton and Leduc County administrations met to discuss the effects of annexation on Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). It was determined that although there are differences in the particulars of how each municipality approaches FCSS, there would not be a negative effect as a result of these differences. Moreover, Leduc County administration did not think that many people in the annexation area used their services. It was determined that the best way to manage the transition would be to communicate how to access the City's services, if the annexation is approved, through direct mail-outs to residents in the area.

4.4. Municipal Services

4.4.1. Road Maintenance

The public questioned whether the City would be able to maintain the extensive road network in the proposed annexation to at least the same standard as it is maintained within the County. They asked how often gravel roads would be re-gravelled, and how often dust suppression would be undertaken.

City's Response

The City has a diverse network of roads, including rural, gravel roads, and thus has experience with the operations and maintenance of roads in a rural setting. In the City, roads are regularly inspected to ensure safety and to promote mobility.

The City is committed to maintaining a safe road network and regularly inspects roads to ensure safety and promote mobility. The City will endeavour to provide road maintenance services to at least the same level as is currently provided by the County.

4.4.2. Road Improvements

The public wondered whether current plans for roadway improvements would be implemented if the annexation was approved.

City's Response

Roadway improvements planned by Leduc County will not necessarily proceed after annexation. Many factors are considered before roads receive work, including the remaining life of each pavement section, the City's budget, and coordination with other capital projects. Road maintenance priorities are set based on the results of an assessment process. City resources are provided in the budget and allocated to where it makes sense in terms of the City's overall transportation network.

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4.4.3. Snow Clearing

Landowners expressed concern that annexation would result in longer timelines for snow clearing. Some landowners also expressed a concern about losing the private driveway snow clearing and grading services provided by the County after annexation. Through a one-time application process, the County plows private driveways up to three times per year and provides grading services up to one time per year, for free. Additional snow plowing and grading services are available for a fee.

City’s Response

The City is unable to continue the private driveway snow clearing and grading services provided by the County after annexation due to cost and legal constraints. There are private companies that offer private driveway clearing services in the proposed annexation areas.

The City’s snow and ice control standards are described in the table below.

Table 1: City of Edmonton Snow and Ice Control Standards¹¹

Highway, Freeway, Main Arterial, Bus Collector	Plow within 36 hours after end of snowfall
Collector/Bus Roadways, Transit Park and Ride Access Roads	Plow within 48 hours after end of snowfall
Residential Roadways	Blade to 5 cm level snowpack within 48 hours after snowfall and complete within 5 days

4.4.4. Solid Waste Management

Many residents were interested to know how their garbage would be managed by the City, should the annexation be approved. Some members of the public expressed a preference to maintain their existing access to the Leduc & District Regional Waste Management Facility, where they are permitted to dispose of residential waste without

¹¹ Note: the City is updating its Snow and Ice Policy this spring to reflect input from the Winter and Summer Program and Service Review.

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paying on a per-use basis; fees are indirectly paid through municipal taxes. Other waste, such as commercial waste, can be disposed of for a fee.¹²

County residents can recycle their pesticide containers at the nearby Nisku Sewage Transfer Station, or the Thorsby Public Works Shop. Dead animals are disposed of by landowners at the landfill facility. County residents also use burn barrels to burn certain agricultural waste, such as weeds.

City’s Response

Immediately upon the annexation effective date, landowners will receive weekly City waste collection services, for a monthly fee, according to the following conditions:

Table 2: Proposed Solid Waste Collection Conditions

PROPERTY TYPE	SERVICE
Residential	Weekly residential waste collection
Farm with a residence	Optional weekly residential waste collection
Farm without a residence	Optional City commercial waste collection or other service provider
Commercial / industrial	Optional City commercial waste collection or other service provider

The City will also endeavour to enter into an agreement with the Leduc & District Regional Waste Management Authority to enable access for landowners with properties that are classified as farmland, at the same rates as Leduc County residents, for a transition period of 5 years from the annexation effective date.

Edmonton’s Waste Management Facility recycles commercial pesticide containers, and accepts large dead animals found on private property. Small animal carcasses can be double bagged and disposed of with household waste as part of the City’s weekly waste collection services.

The City does not currently allow burn barrels. The City will endeavour to allow burn barrels on agriculturally zoned land for a transition period of 5 years. After 5 years,

¹² [Leduc & District Regional Waste Management Authority: Fee Schedule](#)

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landowners will be expected to transition to other waste management methods, such as the City's EcoStations and BigBin events.

4.4.5. Water, Wastewater & Stormwater

Landowners were interested to know how annexation would affect their water and wastewater services. Landowners currently receive their water through either the regional commission line, on-site wells, purchased trucked water stored on-site, or through a water co-op. Some landowners within the proposed annexation area provide their own wastewater services through private sewage disposal systems. Leduc County encourages stormwater drainage improvements on private property through programs that compensate landowners for projects that improve drainage on their property.

City's Response

The provision of municipal water and wastewater services will coincide with urban development, and residents will not be assessed a fee for these services until they are hooked up to the municipal system. Landowners may connect to the EPCOR water lines and municipal wastewater system when the infrastructure is made available in the area either immediately, or when their current system needs repair or replacement.

WATER

Landowners with private water wells will be allowed to continue receiving potable water in this manner. Landowners that receive trucked water services will also be able to continue to do so.

Landowners with water provision from the Whitemud Water Co-op can continue to use this system. The Whitemud Water Co-op may continue to function in the annexation area independently or until an agreement is reached collaboratively with EPCOR.

WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER

Existing sanitary and sewer systems will be grandfathered. Landowners can continue to contract out sewage disposal companies to empty their on-site wastewater storage facilities.

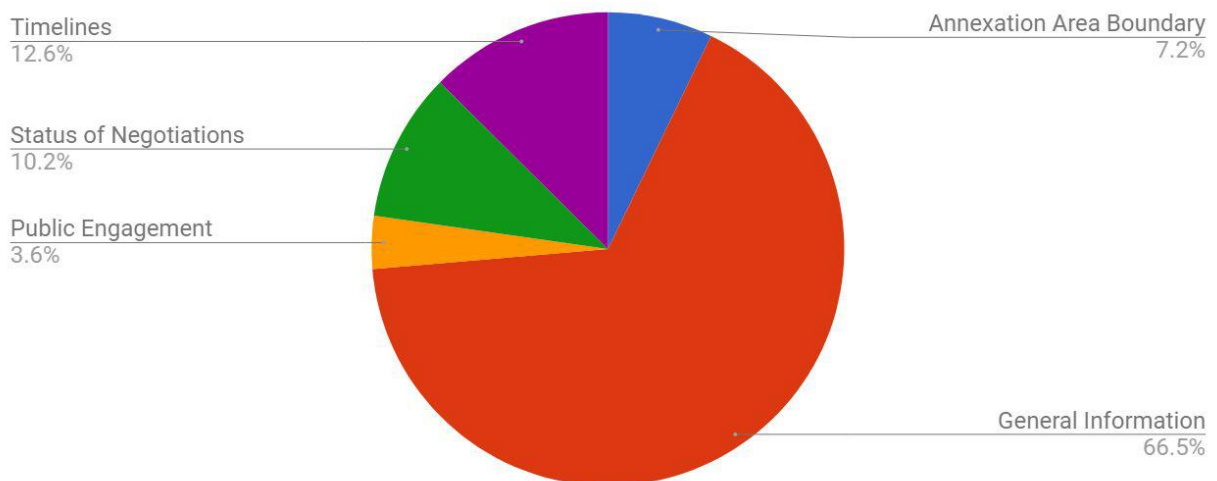
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The City's Drainage Bylaw¹³ would apply on the annexation effective date to existing development. Existing drainage plans will be grandfathered until new development commences.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE FEEDBACK

Of the 167 administrative questions, the majority (67%) requested general information on the annexation process, such as how decisions are made on annexation applications and the role of the public. The public was also interested in the timelines for annexation, with 13% of administrative topics relating specifically to timelines. Ten percent of administrative inquiries related specifically to the negotiations, such as what topics were being discussed and how negotiations were proceeding. There were inquiries about the annexation area boundary (7%), including determining if a particular parcel of land was included in the annexation area or not. Others were interested in future engagement opportunities (4%).

Figure 7: Detailed Proportion of Administrative Inquiries



¹³ [City of Edmonton Drainage Bylaw \(Bylaw 16200\)](#)

6. IMPACTS ON MUNICIPALITIES

About 10% of total inquiries related to the potential impact of annexation on the municipalities directly involved in the annexation (Edmonton, Leduc County and Beaumont), as well as the surrounding municipalities.

Some members of the public referred to the annexation as a “tax grab.” They felt that the City was annexing a key growth area for the County (the North Nisku area),¹⁴ from which the County could generate significant tax revenue, and that annexation would require the County to compensate for the loss by imposing higher taxes on the remaining County landowners and/or reducing current service levels.

The fact that the City was originally seeking to annex the Edmonton International Airport (EIA) was also seen as a tax grab, as the annexation of the airport may have disrupted the current tax revenue sharing scheme that the County and City of Leduc benefit from.

On a related note, landowners also expressed worry that the annexation would limit the County’s ability to support its hamlets and neighbouring municipalities. Currently, the County participates in cost-sharing with surrounding municipalities for services, such as fire protection, recreation facilities, and libraries.

There was some interest on the cost implications of the City growing in size and the anticipated deferral of these costs onto City ratepayers.

City's Response

The potential impacts on the City of Edmonton and the rest of Leduc County (outside of the proposed annexation area) have been evaluated in the City’s Fiscal Impact Assessment Report (2018). Consistent with the Municipal Government Board’s annexation principles,¹⁵ the City’s proposed annexation does not have negative financial impacts on the City or Leduc County in the immediate, short or long term.

The City also removed the North Nisku area from its annexation application, in part, in recognition of the concerns of the business owners.

¹⁴ These comments were collected prior to the City removing the North Nisku area from the proposed annexation area.

¹⁵ [Municipal Government Board \(MGB\) Annexation Principles](#)

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7. TAX & ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

Tax and assessment inquiries made up about 10% of total inquiries. Overall, landowners in the proposed annexation area were concerned that their taxes would increase as a result of annexation.

Business owners, particularly in the Nisku area (when it was originally included in the City’s proposed annexation area) were concerned that annexation would mean higher taxes, which would threaten the viability of their businesses. The Leduc County Coalition was formed by a group of many of these business owners, and other concerned residents, to champion a message against annexation in lieu of a more collaborative solution.

The public was interested in the particulars of the tax transition plan, including: timing for the tax change, triggers to end special tax considerations, and differences between City of Edmonton and Leduc County tax rates. There was a general interest in how the assessment and taxation transition was handled in previous annexations and how the final assessment and taxation transition would be decided upon.

Less-referenced tax and assessment topics included support for the notion of regional equity, questions about the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.) tax sharing scheme, and requests for information on where tax dollars would be allocated.

City’s Response

City and County Tax and Assessment Comparison

The tables below summarize the mill rate and assessment differences between the City and County for the different tax classes.

Table 3: 2017 City and County Mill Rate Comparison

	Leduc County Tax Rate	Edmonton Tax Rate
Residential	5.81 mills	8.5087 mills
Farmland	15.85 mills	8.5087 mills
Non-Residential	10.59 mills	20.7587 mills
Machinery & Equipment	6.85 mills	0 mills

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Table 4: City and County Assessment Comparison

Residential	No difference between Edmonton and Leduc County
Farmland	No difference between Edmonton and Leduc County
Farm Buildings	Edmonton - 50% tax exemption* Leduc County - 100% tax exemption
Farm Residences	Edmonton - no tax exemption Leduc County - partial tax exemption
Non-Residential	No difference between Edmonton and Leduc County

** Note: The Government of Alberta is considering making all farm buildings (in both rural and urban municipalities) tax exempt*

Farmland

Farmland assessment is regulated by the Province and would not change as a result of annexation. However, there are differences in how farm residences and farm buildings are assessed in the County versus the City. Unlike City landowners, landowners with farm residences in the County have a partial exemption from assessment. Farm buildings are also fully exempted from assessment in the County, but are only exempted from assessment by 50% in the City.

Non-Residential

In both the County and the City, commercial and industrial land is assessed at market value, and machinery and equipment is assessed according to a regulated procedure based model under provincial regulations.

The tax rates for non-residential and machinery and equipment differ between the two municipalities. The tax rate is higher in the City for non-residential. However, the rate is lower in the City for machinery and equipment.

The City proposes the following to mitigate the tax and assessment impacts from annexation:

After the annexation effective date, and subsequent years, up to and including 2069, or such year as required to accommodate a **fifty year transition period**, the annexed lands and assessable improvements to it, except for linear property:

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- for any given year, must be taxed by the City using the lower of the tax rate for the assessment classification or subclassification that is currently assigned to the said lands and assessable improvements to it, or the tax rate for the assessment classification or subclassification that was assigned by the County as of the effective date. For greater clarity, the tax rates to be compared are the current tax rate and the tax rate for any given taxation year, and
- the City will exempt farm buildings at the same level of exemption as if the buildings remained in the County pursuant to the Matters Relating to Assessment and Taxation Regulation AR 220/2004, or any subsequent regulation exempting farm buildings from taxation.

Notwithstanding the above, the landowner transition provisions for taxation shall no longer apply where in any taxation year, a portion of said land:

1. becomes a new parcel created as a result of **subdivision** or by instrument or any other method that occurs at the request of, or on behalf of the landowner,
2. is **redistricted** at the request of, or on behalf of the landowner, under the City's Land Use Bylaw to another district, or
3. is **connected to municipal water and sewer** at the request of, or on behalf of the landowner, or
4. receives a **Major Development Permit** to change the use of the land, and/or to construct a permanent building, or an addition to a permanent building, except in the following instances:
 - Major Development Permits for exterior alterations or renovations to an existing building
 - Development Permit for residential accessory uses or buildings, or
 - Any farm building or structure that would be exempted from assessment

8. ENVIRONMENT-RELATED FEEDBACK

Approximately 8% of total inquiries from the public related to an environmental topic. The vast majority of these comments (92%) voiced concern for agricultural land preservation. Other environmental topics included potential wildlife impacts from annexation (3%) and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas (6%), such as the Cawes Lake area.

City's Response

Agricultural Land Preservation

The Annexation Agreement between the City of Edmonton and Leduc County lists the following agricultural commitments for the two municipalities:

1. The parties agree to jointly promote the concept of an agricultural land reserve or similar protection for agricultural land into the future.
2. Notwithstanding the above, the parties agree that the lands annexed from Leduc County will be developed beyond agricultural land uses in accordance with existing or future statutory plans.
3. The parties acknowledge that the protection of agricultural land must be done as a region through a regional agriculture master plan and in collaboration with the Government of Alberta.

Also, the City removed nearly 3,000 hectares of land from its original proposed annexation area immediately west of the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.), in part, in response to concerns over agricultural land preservation. The removed area is largely used for agricultural production.

Agricultural uses will continue to be an important land use as the area transitions from primarily rural to urban over the coming decades. Landowners who want to continue their agricultural operations can do so. Edmonton has committed to provide comprehensive agricultural services to support agricultural uses after annexation.

Edmonton recognizes that land is a valuable resource. Edmonton's policies discourage the premature fragmentation of agricultural land and encourage support for agriculture through Edmonton's urban agricultural strategy.¹⁶ Edmonton's various intensification initiatives, such as the Blatchford redevelopment on the former city airport site, building Light Rail Transit (LRT) and promoting transit-supportive development, and our Evolving Infill¹⁷ initiatives collectively promote the re-use of land. Maximizing land in this way reduces the amount of land converted from agricultural production to build new communities throughout the region.

Also, the Capital Region Board's proposed *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan* commits to the development of a Regional Agriculture Master Plan. The Regional Agriculture Master Plan will, among other things, "provide a policy framework for

¹⁶ *Appendix 26: Edmonton Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy*

¹⁷ *City of Edmonton Evolving Infill*

conserving and maintaining a secure supply of prime agricultural lands to support the regional food system...".¹⁸

Management of Environmentally-Sensitive Areas

Environmental land management policies are included in the City's *Municipal Development Plan* ("The Way We Grow"), as well as the City's *Environmental Strategic Plan*¹⁹ ("The Way We Green"). The policies outlined in these plans would guide environmental stewardship of environmentally-sensitive areas within the proposed annexation area, such as the Cawes Lake area.

9. DEVELOPMENT-RELATED FEEDBACK

The two most referenced development-related topics were about the City's vision (30% of development inquiries) and plans to transition existing zoning (27% of development inquiries).

Interest in the City's vision included questions about the proposed land uses for the annexation area and integration with the regional 'big picture' and transportation networks.

Zoning transition questions included questions about the continuation of existing uses, such as farming. There was also a general interest in how the development of the proposed annexation land would happen and what form it would take. A few landowners were interested in developing their land and wondered how annexation would affect the plan approval process, including infrastructure servicing and subdivision of their land.

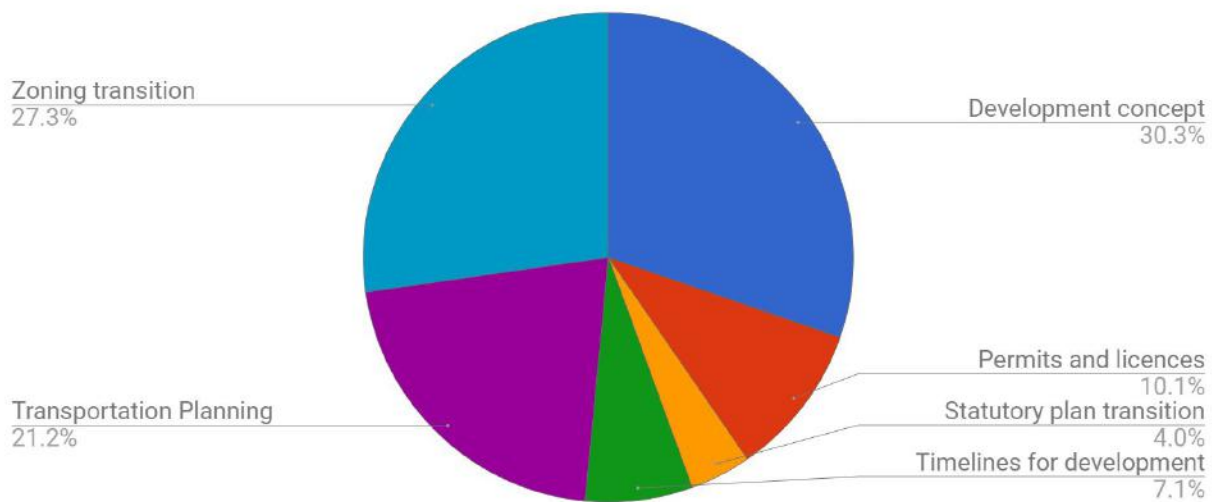
Other development-related inquiries included transportation planning (21%), such as concerns about how potential increases in traffic would be managed, and interest in extension of the LRT further south. About 10% of development-related inquiries pertained to permits and licensing, such as business licences and permits for farm buildings. There was also interest in the anticipated timelines for development to reach certain lands (7%) and the transition of existing statutory plans (4%).

¹⁸ Appendix 14.0: Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (2016), 114

¹⁹ Appendix 25.0 : City of Edmonton Environmental Strategic Plan

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Figure 8: Detailed Proportion of Development-Related Inquiries



9.1. Zoning Transition

Landowners wondered whether they could continue the existing use of their land, such as farming uses, or if the development rights they currently have would change as a result of annexation.

City's Response

Current land uses will be allowed to continue. The City will incorporate the specific Leduc County zones that currently govern the annexed lands into its Zoning Bylaw. These Leduc County zones will transition into the City's Zoning Bylaw as-is, with the exception of the removal of Confined Feeding Operations (CFO) and Farm-Based Alcoholic Beverage Production Facility as uses. The expansion of current uses will be permitted, subject to the discretion of a City Development Officer and City policies.

Rezoning to accommodate a new use will require transition to a City zoning designation. High-level land use plans, including incorporation into the City's Municipal Development Plan, and Area Structure Plans that are consistent with regional and municipal policy will guide any future major development. The size and number of subdivisions allowed on a parcel will depend on the zoning.

9.2. Land Development

Some members of the public were interested to know what the City intended to do with the land it is seeking to annex, and how the City would guide development in the annexed area. Many landowners had questions about when development would reach their land, with some preferring development to reach their land sooner rather than later.

City's Response

The City is proposing to annex land to accommodate a range of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Much of the high-level land use in the proposed west annexation area is dictated by the Edmonton International Airport Vicinity Protection Area Regulation,²⁰ which restricts residential and some commercial uses within proximity of the airport. See Map 4 below for the proposed land uses within the annexation area.

Future growth will conform with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, which provides a set of policies and density requirements that support responsible growth, as well as the City's Municipal Development Plan.²¹

It is difficult to determine when development will reach specific lands, as it is subject to variable market conditions. The map below depicts the expected phasing of development within the proposed annexation area, which is related to the direction of servicing for water and wastewater.

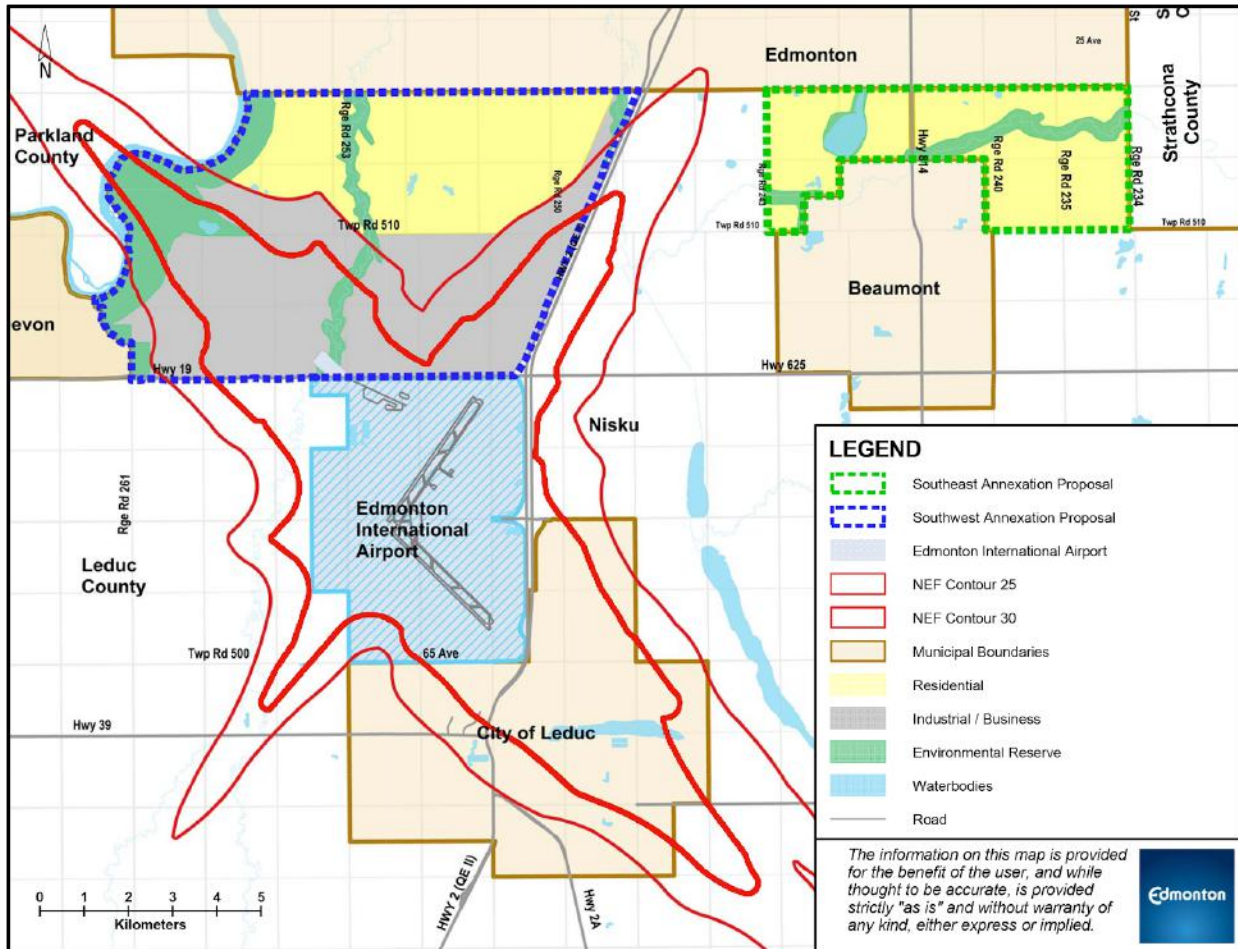
²⁰ *Appendix 22.0: Edmonton International Airport Vicinity Protection Area Regulation*

²¹ *Appendix 15.0: City of Edmonton Municipal Development Plan*

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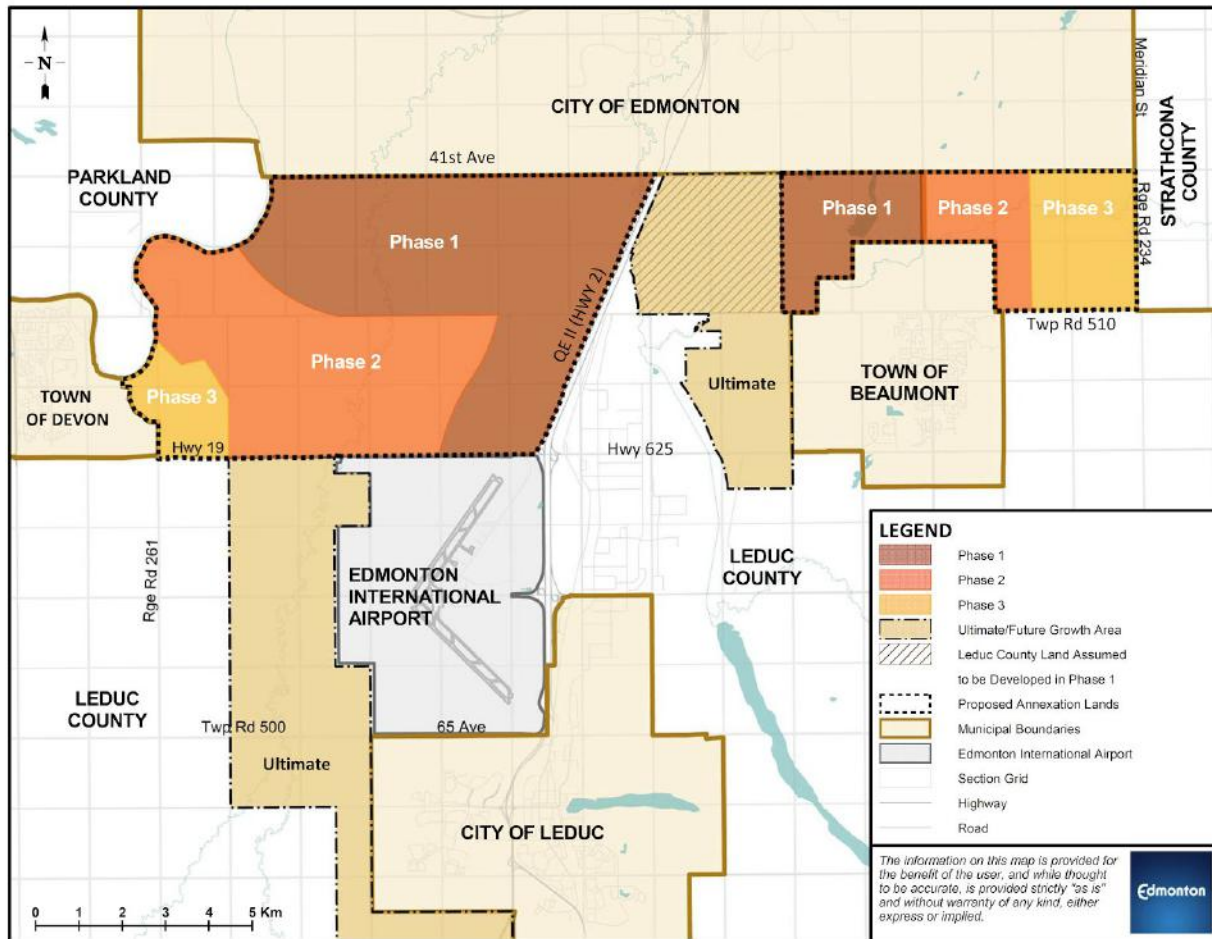
Map 3: Proposed Land Uses in the Annexation Area



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Map 4: Anticipated Phasing of Development Within the Annexation Area²²



²² Note: The "Ultimate/Future Growth Area" shown on Map 4 describes lands outside of the City's proposed annexation area that have been identified for development as metro areas by the Capital Region Board

9.3. Permits and Licences

Landowners had questions about the permit and licence requirements of the City compared to the County. In particular, they were concerned that they would have to obtain permits for farm buildings.

City's Response

There are many differences in the types of permits and licenses required by the City and the County.

Business Licences

The County does not require a business to obtain a licence, but the City does. The City exempts some businesses from requiring a business licence, such as businesses regulated by professional acts, and daycares. Farm operations also do not require a business licence.

Business licences require annual renewal, and the fees vary depending on the nature of the business, from forty one dollars to nearly six thousand dollars. Obtaining a business license is convenient as the application can be made online.

The City will seek compliance with its current bylaws and will require business owners to obtain a licence within one year of the annexation effective date, with fees waived for the first five years after annexation.

Vehicle for Hire

The City has a limited number of taxi plates available under the City's Vehicle for Hire Bylaw, and all of them have already been assigned. For this reason, the City is not able to supply City of Edmonton taxi plates to any business owners operating within the annexation area. Instead, businesses have 2 options to choose from, should they desire

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to continue the operation of their business. The City will waive all fees for 5 years for both options.

Option 1

Operate as a rideshare company (like Uber or TappCar) instead of a taxi company. These vehicles would not be permitted to have top lights or metre runs. Access to the service would be through a prearranged means only (e.g., by phone or app) - street hails are not allowed.

Option 2

Remain a taxi business and purchase plates that are available on the open market. The City of Edmonton will waive the operating and application fees for 5 years.

Development Permits

Both the City and Leduc County require development permits for new construction, renovations, and change of use to existing buildings. Development permits are not required for farm buildings. The City also requires a development permit for businesses.

Building Permits

Both Edmonton and Leduc County require building permits for structures, consistent with the Alberta Building Code. Building permits are not required for farm buildings; however, Safety Codes permits for the installation of power, gas, plumbing etc. is required.

9.4. Statutory Plans

About 4% of development-related questions were about how the existing plans adopted by Leduc County would be handled in the case of a successful annexation.

City's Response

There are four statutory plans that overlap to varying degrees with the City's proposed annexation area. These are:

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1. Leduc County Municipal Development Plan (MDP)
2. North Major Area Structure Plan (ASP)
3. Crossroads Area Structure Plan (ASP)
4. Leduc County - Town of Beaumont Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)

Existing statutory plans will continue to remain in effect after the annexation effective date, and may be reviewed to ensure that the policies are appropriate for lands within the City. The City will amend its Municipal Development Plan (MDP) to include the newly annexed areas. Any review and amendment process for the statutory plans will include a public and landowner consultation process, including a public hearing, consistent with the Municipal Government Act (MGA).

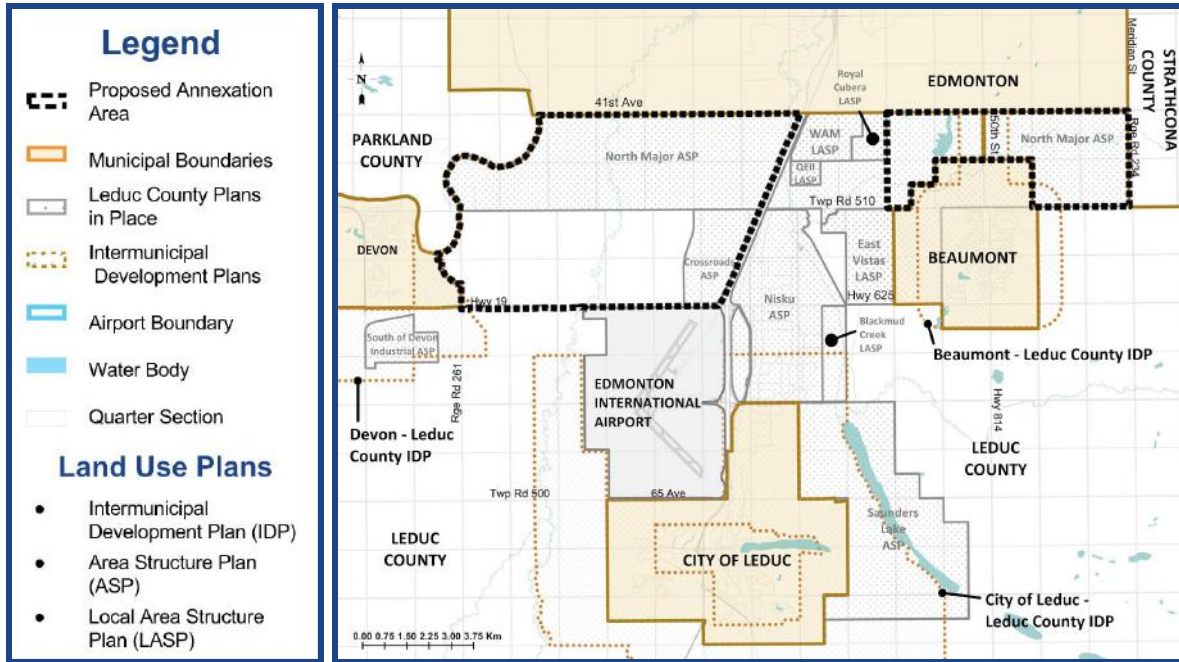
Statutory plans within the annexed area, either in their entirety or portions thereof, will be administered by the City.

All new areas for development will undergo an Area Structure Plan (ASP) process and must align with the City's Municipal Development Plan.

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Map 5: Statutory Plans South of Edmonton



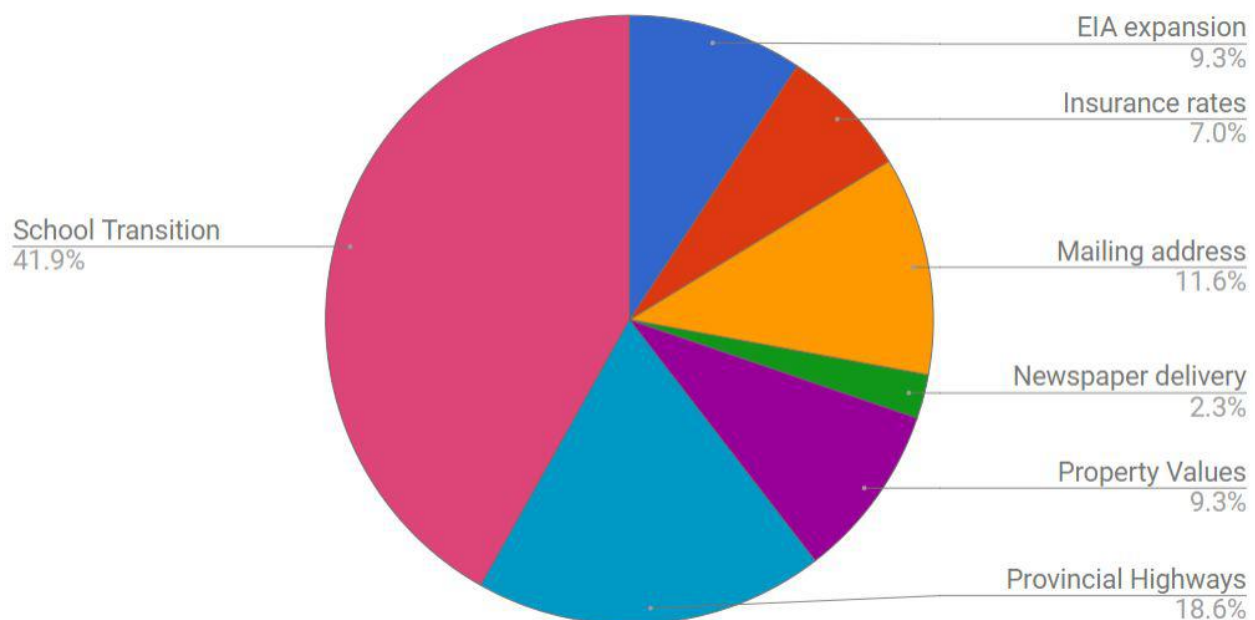
12. FEEDBACK BEYOND THE MUNICIPAL SCOPE

The City received questions from the public that pertained to major development projects under the jurisdiction of other levels of government, as well as services that are provided by the Province. Questions about how school boundaries may be affected by annexation accounted for 42% of the total number of comments beyond the municipal scope.

Questions about provincial highway projects, such as the planned twinning of Highway 19 accounted for nearly 19% of inquiries.

Other topics referenced by the public include: how property values may be affected by annexation (9%), Edmonton's position on the planned expansion of the E.I.A (9%), as well as how annexation would affect fire insurance rates, mailing address changes, and the delivery of local newspapers.

Figure 9: Detailed Proportion of Topics Beyond the Municipal Scope



12.1. School Transition

The City received numerous inquiries about how students would be transitioned in the event of an annexation. Residents and landowners were concerned about splitting up social and sibling groups into different school systems, as well as the potential for long bus rides. They were also concerned about when in the school year a change would take place.

City's Response

The City reached out to the local school boards to share information on the annexation and the public's concerns.

Alberta Education informed City Administration that it does not decide on these matters until after annexation has concluded. School district boundaries are also not required to align with municipal boundaries.

12.2. Provincial Highways

Many members of the public voiced an interest in the plan to upgrade Highway 19, including whether the highway would remain in provincial jurisdiction, or be incorporated into the City post-annexation.

The public also posed questions about the alignment of Highway 2 (QEII) and plans for a potential outer regional ring road.

Lastly, it was noted that if the City's annexation application is successful and development progresses in the annexed area, that the traffic volume along Highway 2, an already congested highway, will increase. The public was interested in the City's strategy to address this corridor.

City's Response

The jurisdiction of, and upgrades to, provincial highways, such as Highway 2 and Highway 19, is not within municipal control.

The City's transportation priorities are guided by regional and municipal policy. The transportation network within the annexed areas will be incorporated into Edmonton's overall transportation network and transportation planning.

12.3. Edmonton International Airport (EIA)

Development

As the Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.) was in Edmonton's proposed annexation area for most of the annexation engagement process, the topic of the airport was raised several times. Some members of the public were interested in the development plans of the E.I.A., especially the timeline for the development of the third runway. They were also interested in the City's position on the expansion of the airport.

City's Response

The Edmonton International Airport (E.I.A.) is under federal, not municipal, jurisdiction. The E.I.A. has a master plan²⁴ for the airport, which will guide future development.

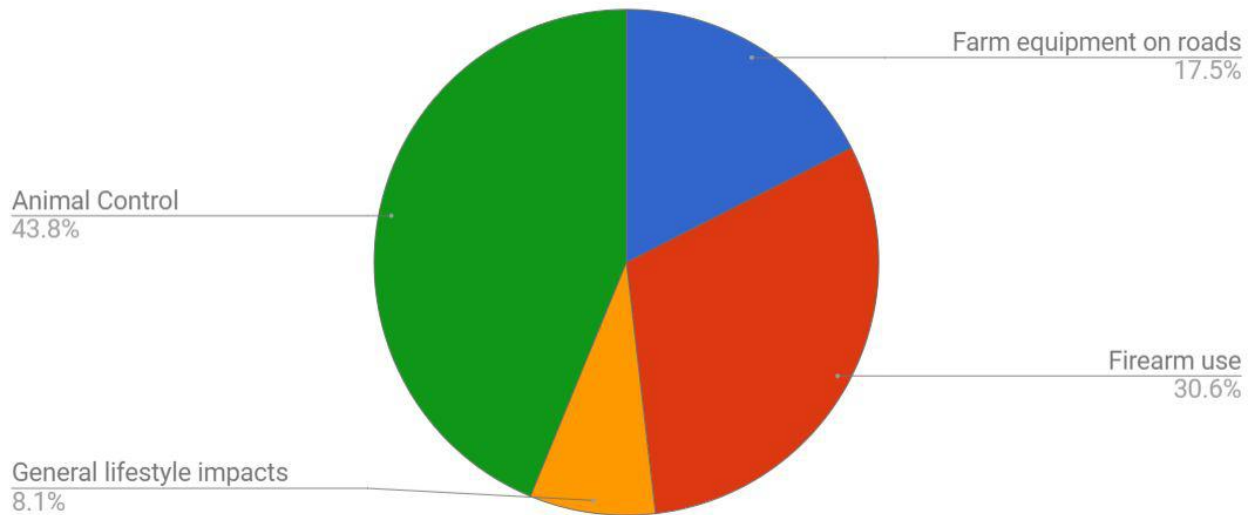
The City of Edmonton is supportive of the airport's growth ambitions and believes in its potential to spur significant regional economic growth. The City removed the E.I.A. from its proposed annexation area in mid-2017, around the same time it signed the Inter-Jurisdiction Cooperation Accord with Leduc County, the City of Leduc and Edmonton Regional Airports Authority to prioritize the airport as a key economic engine in the region and province.

13. LIFESTYLE-RELATED FEEDBACK

About 2% of comments from the public expressed concern that annexation of their land to an urban municipality would affect their ability to enjoy a rural lifestyle. The issues raised include the ability to drive farm equipment on roads, and to manage pests on their property. These, and similar issues, are regulated through municipal bylaws.

²⁴ [Edmonton International Airport \(E.I.A.\) Master Plan](#)

Figure 10: Detailed Proportion of Lifestyle Inquiries



13.1. Animal Control

About 44% of lifestyle-related inquiries were about animal control.

Farmers in the proposed annexation area were concerned that they would not be able to keep livestock after the annexation, or that should they be allowed to keep livestock, that they would have to get permits for their livestock.

Landowners were also concerned that they would have to licence their pets. Leduc County does not require pet licences, and thus, the City's pet licence requirements would impose a new cost for landowners. This cost would vary, depending on the number and type of pets owned. Landowners argued that cats in a rural context, for example, do not live long enough to justify paying for a licence for them, and that they serve a pest-control purpose, and thus should be exempted from licence requirements.

City's Response

Landowners on agriculturally-zoned property are allowed to keep livestock and are not required to obtain a permit to keep their livestock.

Pet Licences

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The City regulates pets, and requires yearly licences for each pet owned. Property owners are allowed a maximum of 3 dogs and 6 cats. Property owners who currently have more pets will be allowed to keep their pets. Property owners on agriculturally zoned land do not have restrictions on the number of cats or dogs they own.

Licence fees range from about twenty dollars to nearly eighty dollars, with fees reaching up to two hundred and fifty dollars for restricted dogs. The fine for having an unlicensed animal is two hundred and fifty dollars per pet.

Animal control ensures that owners are responsible for their pet's actions, helps return lost pets to their owners, and ensures that pets are a positive addition to the community.

The City will seek compliance with its current bylaws and will require owners to obtain a licence within 1 year of the annexation effective date, with fees waived for the first 5 years.

13.2. Firearm Use for Pest Control Purposes

There was a concern that farmers would not be able to manage pests, such as coyotes and gophers, on their property with a firearm after annexation.

City's Response

Firearm use is not permitted within City of Edmonton boundaries for public safety reasons.

The City provides traps for small pest animals, such as skunks, and will pick up trapped animals. Landowners can call the City's animal control office and Community Standards enforcement officers for help with removal of pest wildlife, such as coyotes.

13.3. Farm Equipment on Roads

Many landowners wanted to know if they would still be able to drive farm equipment on the roads after annexation. Also, landowners expressed a general concern that moving farm equipment on the roads would be more difficult as development encroaches because of increased traffic and limited space.

City's Response

Farming equipment on roads is provincially regulated, thus both the City and the County must abide by the same regulations. The City does have a bylaw²⁵ to further regulate the use of City roads, but the Bylaw pertains mainly to parking issues and does not impose additional restrictions on farming equipment.

13.4. General Lifestyle Impacts

Some landowners were concerned that the standards for maintaining their land and buildings would be higher in the City than it currently is in the County and that annexation to an urban municipality would restrict their off-highway vehicle use.

City's Response

Property Maintenance Standards

Property maintenance standards are enforced by Municipal Bylaw Officers through a complaint-driven process. Municipal Bylaw Officers take the context into consideration when determining appropriate maintenance standards, which are meant to mitigate nuisance and support safety.

Off-Highway Vehicle Use

The City proposes to allow residents to use off-highway vehicles in certain areas of Edmonton with rural roads through a one-time permit system. As urban development encroaches, the "exception area" will be amended accordingly.

²⁵ [City of Edmonton Traffic Bylaw \(Bylaw C5590\)](#)

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