



Probud Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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February 23 - Karen Wichuk

Karen Wichuk, CEO of the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board (EMRB), Karen describes the EMRB, its history, role, success, etc.

EMRB is about the Region, its growth, and its place in Alberta. The region has 1/3 of the population, 1/3 of the GDP, and is the second youngest and second fastest growing metro region in Canada. It has 750,000 jobs. Why a regional approach? Growing pains won't respect municipal boundaries, citizens live regionally, expectations are outpacing our individual capacities, finally the future will not wait for us.

EMRB finds its roots in the Capital Region Board, which was set up by the Province in 2008. It was made up of 24 municipalities from smallest hamlets to the City of Edmonton. Later it was established under Regulation 38/2012. Its efforts laid the groundwork for EMRB, which was proclaimed by the Province on October 26, 2017. Membership was reduced by including on Municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more (13 municipalities). The board is made up of the 13 mayors from these municipalities. The regulation establishes a double majority voting structure. For a motion to pass it requires positive vote from 2/3 of the municipalities which represent 2/3 of the population. Practically, this means that for motion to pass it will need to support of the city of Edmonton. It was described as a way to avoid the tyranny of the majority and the tyranny of the minority.

The new regulation permitted required the Board to create the Metropolitan Servicing Plan. Also, the EMRB continues to guide the municipalities in the implementation of long term, integrated growth plan entitled Reimagine, Plan. Build. In essence guiding the growth of the region over the next 30 years. For example, this document set out certain parameters for Municipal Development Plans that each municipality will prepare. An MDP must comply with Growth plan to receive to support of the EMRB, which is needed.

The Servicing Plan focuses on identifying services that will be improved at the regional level through collaboration. The Plan was passed by the Board in December 2019. Four service areas were identified; solid waste, stormwater management, fire and EMS, and emergency management. The Board has already realized a success in the transit service with the creation of the Regional Transit Commission. The idea of jointly delivering transit services to the region was an initiative of the Board.

The Board also claims a success in the spinoff of the organization "Edmonton Global". This is an independent organization focused on the attraction of business to the region.

The Board also has developed or worked on:

- Growth Plan Agriculture Policy
- Shared investment shared benefit model
- Broadband

The Board is an important entity and does impact the lives of citizens. While citizens know little about the Board. It does not diminish its importance.

There is great deal of information on the Board's website including its policies, planning documents, and enabling regulation. Having the CEO present to us was great opportunity for the members.

Stay Health and Enjoy