



Background

Since 2003, the City of Leduc has conducted and been involved in consultation and engagement activities focused on the Edmonton Airport Vicinity Protection Area (AVPA) and the regulation's impacts to the community. This has included many touchpoints and discussions with Municipal Affairs, our municipal neighbours, our local MLA, the Edmonton International Airport, impacted industry leaders and, very recently, citizens. These efforts have resulted in minor amendments and updates to the AVPA regulation to date. However, as the City continues to grow, further work needs to be done to allow for responsible, sustainable growth.

Currently, the City is forced to turn away development; large parcels of undeveloped land are and will remain sterilized; the extension of municipal services will continue to be costly and unnecessary; and, aging neighbourhoods are in decline and are still unable to redevelop. Without immediate action, this situation will continue to be a pervasive issue.

Recent Engagement and Public Education

In the Spring of 2020, the City participated in stakeholder engagement that was led by Leduc-Beaumont MLA Brad Rutherford. As a result of this consultation, recommendations that the City supported were submitted to Municipal Affairs and while the City was reassured that these would address many of its challenges, the recommendations were not actioned as expected.

This led the City to begin broader public education on AVPA throughout 2021. The goal of public education was to help inform citizens and stakeholders about the depth of impact the regulations have on our community and included:

- » Targeted emails to the Edmonton International Airport, neighbouring municipal partners, provincial government, Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, Edmonton Global, Leduc Chamber of Commerce, Leduc Downtown Business Association and impacted developers
- » Website content at www.leduc.ca/AVPA
- » **Video development**
- » Organic social media posts through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- » Mentions in Mayor Bob Young's Facebook Live events
- » Media coverage through local radio, newspaper and Taproot's Regional Roundup
- » Ongoing dialogue with neighbouring partners and municipalities
- » In- person consultation with directly impacted stakeholders
- » Citizen engagement survey

Stakeholder Engagement on Adding Caveat to Title

In winter of 2021-22, the Ministry directed the City of Leduc to undertake additional targeted consultation specific to the issue of adding caveat to title. As such, the City of Leduc conducted stakeholder engagements with those who would be directly impacted (such as landowners, organizations representing landowners and citizens).

On Dec. 16, City of Leduc Mayor Bob Young, accompanied by MLA Rutherford, led an in-person engagement with landowners who may be directly impacted. The discussion focused on the

Edmonton AVPA, the impacts that the regulation is having on the City, and outlined the list of consultations and touchpoints that have taken place to date.¹

The focus of the engagement was then narrowed to a discussion on the Government of Alberta potentially enabling the City of Leduc to add caveat to title for the purpose of allowing residential development in the 30 Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) zone. As a result, stakeholders shared their thoughts on this concept.



What We Heard



Support for caveat on title

Stakeholders expressed that having caveats on title is a process that already occurs for many of their existing developments, without impacting them. It was overwhelmingly clear that adding caveat to title in this case was a non-issue for stakeholders. Another resounding theme that was heard was the important economic benefits (i.e., significant job creation) that would be realized if large parcels of land, currently considered sterilized, were able to be developed. Consensus around the room was if adding caveat to title was the process to enable this development, they would be in full support.



By way of the consultation, stakeholders also identified the following themes and thoughts:

Economic development and growth

Stakeholders expressed real optimism about potential changes that would allow them to begin development in Spring 2022. Many pointed to the significant job creation that opening up the lands would generate especially in a time of economic recovery that Alberta is in dire need of. It was felt that Leduc, being positioned adjacent to the Edmonton International Airport, has enormous potential and building the City to support airport operations makes logical sense.

Frustration with infringed upon landowner rights

The consultation unveiled a shared sentiment that stakeholders were frustrated with the encroachment on their rights as landowners. This included a discussion about the City turning away countless permits for development in order to comply with the antiquated regulation; a landowner having to move a development eight feet to accommodate the regulation which resulted in costly changes including delays in development; and, expressions of confusion over why the Edmonton International Airport is able to develop while private citizens and landowners are not permitted to undergo the very same development.

Support for reducing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape

In a time when the provincial government is committed to reducing red tape, some felt that making amendments to the regulation would solidify and demonstrate real progress on this promise.



A caveat on title for this purpose is a non-issue for the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and would allow for large parcels of land, currently considered sterilized, to be developed.

Alessandra Bruni, UDI Chair,
Leduc Regional Committee



If residential land uses were permitted and market conditions were favourable, we estimate that we would invest between \$75 and \$80 Million to service these lands over a 10 to 15 year horizon. This does not take into consideration the investment from homebuilders and commercial developers, or any economic multipliers that would be realized by employment and permanent population growth generated over that timeline.

Qualico Communities Edmonton



Support for amendments to the Edmonton AVPA

When stakeholders gained a deeper understanding of the amendments the City has been advocating for, and the subsequent recommendations put forth by MLA Rutherford to Municipal Affairs, they voiced support and asked what more they could do to help these efforts.

Expedited timing on a resolution

Some stakeholders spoke about wanting to break ground this coming construction season if the amendments were to occur and pushed the City to do what it takes to make this happen quickly. Stakeholders also commented that a resolution on amendments would mean increased stability for their land use planning and would allow them to plan for and begin time-consuming administrative processes. It was clear that the lack of stability and predictability surrounding this issue has led to loss of development opportunity which has impacted their bottom line.



In January and February of 2022, the City consulted more broadly with citizens regarding adding caveat to title on select residential future development within the 30 NEF, in addition to asking for feedback on the Edmonton AVPA through an online survey. Through email, Mayor Young invited members of the community to answer the survey, in addition to the City sharing the survey through its established channels.

Over the span of two and a half weeks, 69 citizens responded to the online survey. Approximately 80 per cent voted in favour of adding a caveat to select land titles notifying property owners that they were developing under a flight path, while 20 per cent were not in support.

Input from the general public was varied but meaningful in helping the City understand what position citizens take on this issue. Below are highlights of input from respondents:

- » Some respondents lost sight of the fact that what is being proposed is not a caveat on title applied to all development but select properties in order for the City to continue to grow undistorted;
- » There was general confusion about the nature and function of a caveat despite the preamble to the survey addressing this specifically;
- » Some participants suggested landowners be compensated for living under flight paths while a significant amount of people suggested complete elimination of the regulation all together making the argument that there is no need to restrict residential development in proximity to the airport as this type of development already occurs all over the world;
- » Interestingly, respondents pointed out other noise with Leduc, like that of the highway or trains, that they felt were equally as concerning as potential aircraft noise and suggested possible noise studies as part of a broader solution going forward;
- » Members of the business community pointed to the already hurting economy and this regulation being a punitive imposition further impeding their ability to expand business operations; and,
- » Finally, one respondent commented on the desire to have no future growth near the airport citing a want to keep Leduc undeveloped akin to a bedroom community.

Overall, although the input received from the survey was more broadly themed around noise in general and the challenges of having an airport as a neighbour, the theme of support for a caveat on title that was received from the targeted consultation in December, and the feedback received from the online survey were aligned. People recognize the importance of the City being able to develop and grow while still supporting the 24/7 operations of the airport.

80%

voted in favour of adding a caveat to select land titles

Conclusion

The Edmonton International Airport and the City of Leduc have identified their collective support for the recommendations put forth by MLA Rutherford to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The City of Leduc is confident that these comprehensive recommendations have appropriately struck the right balance of addressing both the opportunities that exist with amendments to the regulation, and, any concerns identified by the sub-regional stakeholders most impacted by the Edmonton AVPA.

The City valued the opportunity to hear directly from stakeholders who are most dramatically impacted through ownership of sterilized land adjacent to the airport and was pleased to hear their strong support for a caveat on title as a solution going forward. Additionally, the City appreciated the feedback it received from citizens more broadly, who have voiced their support for caveat on title on select residential development.

Now more than ever, it is clear that the province needs to take expedited action to enable the City of Leduc to grow sustainably; to give landowners back their rights; to rebuild this economy; and, to do what is in the best interest of the taxpayers, who have been burdened by the distorting effects of the Edmonton AVPA for decades.

