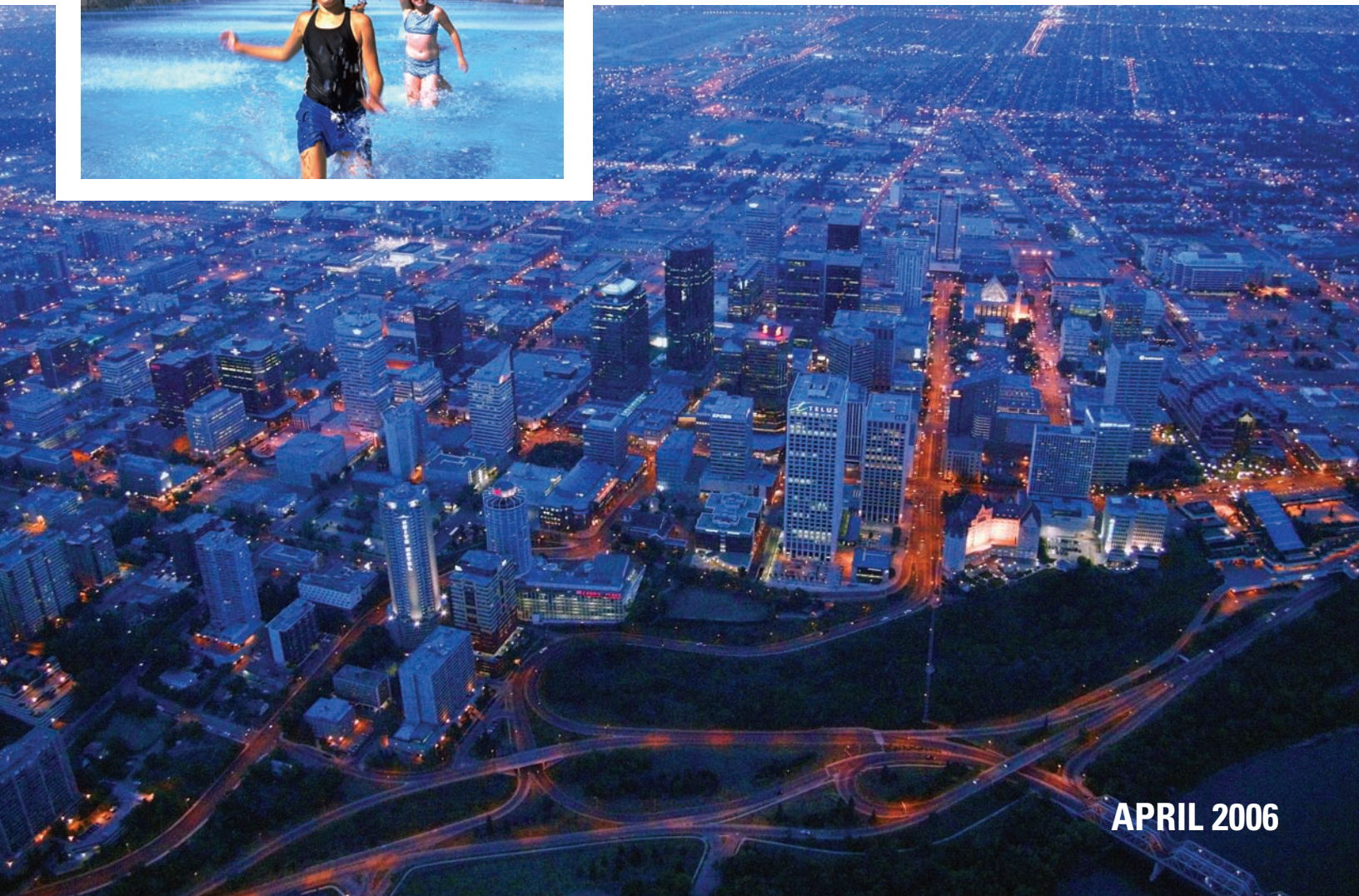
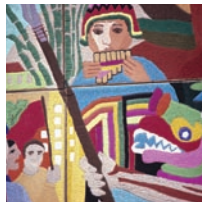


# STATE OF THE CITY REPORT BUILDING THE CAPITAL CITY



APRIL 2006



## EDMONTON CITY COUNCIL



### TOP ROW:

Councillors Ron Hayter, Ed Gibbons, Terry Cavanagh, Dave Thiele, Kim Krushell, Karen Leibovici, Bryan Anderson

### BOTTOM ROW:

Councillors Linda Sloan, Janice Melnychuk, Mayor Stephen Mandel, Councillors Jane Batty, Michael Phair, Mike Nickel

**EDMONTON CITY COUNCIL'S VISION** for Edmonton is a Capital City with a confident international reputation.  
A city with:

- VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS AND A DYNAMIC DOWNTOWN
- A GOOD NEIGHBOUR AND PARTNER
- A SAFE ENVIRONMENT
- A CULTURALLY RICH AND WELCOMING SOCIETY
- A POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION
- AND RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR STEPHEN MANDEL

The City of Edmonton has boldly emerged as a true leader at the front of Alberta's second century – a confident capital with a certain and clear view of our position on the world stage, and a city where everyone has an opportunity to take part in our growth and prosperity.

Edmonton is a city becoming known as a dynamic, exciting and vibrant destination where individuals, families and businesses seek to put down roots, invest, contribute and flourish.

We're a city where enthusiastic leadership and administration are working hand-in-hand with all citizens and communities to celebrate and encourage diversity. We value the safety of our citizens, our neighbourhoods and our environment. And we're a city where community leaders, elected representatives and an experienced administration are all committed to meeting the expectations of the people who live here and in the regions that are our neighbours.

Edmonton is a culturally rich and welcoming centre that, with the participation of our citizens, is confidently earning a proud worldwide reputation as a centre that acts, plans and feels like a Capital City.

Mayor Stephen Mandel

## EDMONTONIANS LOVE THEIR CITY. 97 per cent of citizens surveyed in April 2005 rated city life positively. The most common reasons cited were the economy and enjoyable living.

### And what's not to enjoy?

- Second highest quality of life among major cities in Canada.  
*MoneySense Magazine*

- The second most affordable housing market in Canada and 14th among 100 major housing markets world wide.

*Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey, March 2006*



- The lowest combined provincial and federal taxes of any province in Canada.

*Alberta Finance*

- The eighth lowest property taxes among 23 Canadian cities surveyed.

*City of Edmonton Planning and Development*

- High personal incomes, up an average of 6.1 per cent over the past year, surpassing after-tax income in all other provinces.

*Canada West Foundation, Statistics Canada*

- The most cost competitive business environment of any major city (500,000 plus) in western North America.

*KPMG Competitive Alternatives Study*

- The fastest growing economy in Canada in 2005.

*The Conference Board of Canada*

- Canada's fifth largest city with 712,331 citizens, and a regional population of 1,014,000.

*2005 Civic Census, Statistics Canada*

- An internationally renowned Centre of Excellence in Waste Management featuring the largest waste co-composter on the continent.
- A world-class reputation for wastewater treatment.
- A three-time award winning CO2RE program (Carbon Dioxide Reduction Edmonton).
- The greenest city in Canada with the largest stretch of urban parkland in North America, over 22 major parks and 150 km of trails.
- The number one rated health care authority in Canada for five years running.  
*Maclean's Magazine*
- One of Canada's sunniest cities (2300 hours a year) with up to 17 hours of daylight at the height of summer.  
*Edmonton Economic Development Corporation*
- Dynamic and diverse post-secondary sector with 157,000 students enrolled in one of 11 prominent educational institutions.  
*Edmonton Economic Development Corporation*
- A climate rated 37th out of 100 Canadian cities for mildness.  
*Canada Climate Severity Index*
- 2005's number one destination in overall person-visits to Alberta and the number one destination in person-visits from other provinces. Edmonton is also Alberta's number one metropolitan destination for U.S. visitations and revenues.  
*Alberta Economic Development*
- Festivals! More than 30, making us Canada's Festival City, including the largest Fringe Theatre in North America, the largest Heritage Festival in the world and Canadian Finals Rodeo.

### ■ 2 TO 3 MILLION PEOPLE ATTEND EDMONTON'S MAJOR EVENTS EACH YEAR

### ■ AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AS A HOST CITY FOR SPECIAL EVENTS, SUCH AS 2005's WORLD MASTERS GAMES AND THE INAUGURAL GRAND PRIX.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2005

The City of Edmonton's focus in 2005 was on these key strategies:

- Maintenance of existing service levels to meet citizen expectations.
- Enhanced service levels in public safety, roadway maintenance and transit, citizen priority areas identified in the 2003 citizen satisfaction survey.
- Administrative cost savings of \$6.5 million.
- GST savings directed toward neighbourhood revitalization and matching funds for provincial centennial legacy projects.

2005 saw the hiring of additional firefighters and emergency medical services personnel to meet growing needs. Replacement and construction of emergency services stations continued.

Funding was provided for 85 new police recruits, and the South East Division police station opened in August.

Basic roadway services were maintained throughout 2005, with an increase of 5.7 km in the road patch program. Rehabilitation of roadways, sidewalks and curbs was underway in five mature neighbourhoods. Construction continued on the Yellowhead Trail-156 Street interchange. The Whitemud Drive-34 Street interchange opened in August.

Transit hours were increased to continue new services added in 2004. The South LRT grew: the Health Sciences Station opened and construction began on a new section that will see LRT extended to South Campus by the end of 2008. Planning studies on bus rapid transit continued.

Edmonton is growing! The City conducted a civic census, placing Edmonton's population at 712,391 as of April 1, 2005. The last official population figure collected in the 2001 federal census was 666,104. This represents a growth of almost seven per cent. Edmonton remains the fifth largest city in Canada.



**ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, READ ABOUT CITY OF EDMONTON ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS THAT SUPPORT EDMONTON'S QUALITY OF LIFE ... AND DELIVER ON THE PROMISE OF A CAPITAL CITY.**





## VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS AND A DYNAMIC DOWNTOWN

A city with strong, sustainable neighbourhoods ... physically sound ... with opportunity for all citizens

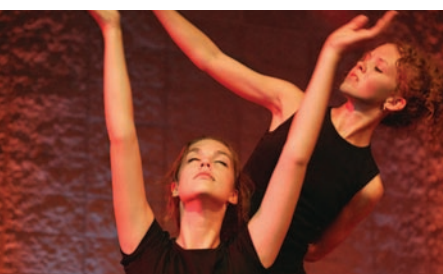
- December 2005 saw funding approval for a new Southwest Community Recreation Centre. The project is built on the principles of the "community hub" concept - where people of all ages and abilities can gather to learn, exercise, relax, meet and have fun. The centre will open in fall 2008.
- McQueen and York communities have new sidewalks and streets after a revitalization program during 2005. Neighbourhood revitalization work began in Rundle Heights, Holyrood and Idylwyld. The work is part of the City's sustained, multi-year infrastructure renewal strategy.
- Cornerstones, the City's new affordable housing program, got the green light in 2005. The City's plan invites all orders of government, the non-profit and private sector, and individuals to join the City as partners to ensure adequate and decent housing for all Edmontonians.
- Over 2,000 Edmontonians took part in the City's popular flood prevention check-up program, getting free, one-on-one advice on how to deal with drainage problems on their lots.
- Work continued on the Fort Road Old Town Master Plan, a project that includes affordable housing initiatives, plans to increase LRT ridership, and higher residential and commercial density.
- Work began on two other major neighbourhood revitalization projects in 2005.
  - The Downtown East planning group began shaping a vision for one of Edmonton's oldest communities through an extensive public consultation process.
  - The Avenue Revitalization Initiative kicked off in January 2005. The people who live and work in the neighbourhoods of Parkdale/Cromdale, Alberta Avenue, Spruce Avenue, Eastwood and Westwood identified four areas of focus: safe streets, beautification and cleanliness, development and revitalization, and programs and services.
  - The Capital City Clean Up program, piloted in summer 2005, attracted 29 businesses and four business associations to "adopt-a-block," sweeping and picking up litter. The program was such a success, it is going city-wide in 2006.



## A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

A city where all citizens ... the young, the old, the at-risk ... feel safe and secure ... and are confident in the preventative and responsive measures in place to deal with health, emergency and other community issues

- Eleven new paramedics joined the City's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in mid-summer 2005 and 25 new fire fighters were recruited. City Council approved \$1.6 million in funding in April 2006 to add 22 full time paramedics to EMS staff.
- Construction was underway on the new Lake District Station #25 at 84 St. and 167 Ave., with completion expected in late summer 2006.
- Design work was underway on the replacement of Fire Station No. 10 at 127 Ave. and 101 St. Land opportunities were explored for replacement of Station No. 5 now at 111 Ave. and 101 St. and Station No. 11 now at 66 St. and 101 Ave.
- New-style ambulances appeared on city streets. Emergency Medical Services put 12 of these larger, boxy-shaped vehicles on the road in 2005, enabling paramedics to perform better patient care within the increased space.



**THE ARTS ADD OVER \$153 MILLION TO ALBERTA'S GROSS PROVINCIAL PRODUCT ANNUALLY. MUCH OF THIS CAPITAL IS GENERATED IN EDMONTON, ACCORDING TO AN ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS STUDY.**

## A POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

A city known widely as a Capital City ... culturally rich ... business friendly ... innovative and edgy ... technologically, economically, aesthetically creative

- An international architecture competition saw Randall Stout win with a stunning design for reconstruction of the Edmonton Art Gallery, now the Art Gallery of Alberta. The redesign, to be completed by 2009, will enhance the face of the City's Arts District.
- Sacred Self Series, workshops presented at the City Arts Centre by Aboriginal artists, kicked off to great success. Workshops include painting, silversmithing, textile art and traditional pottery.

**In 2005, thousands of visitors found out why we're proud of our city:**

- 24,000 international visitors came to compete in the World Masters Games, taking in local colour like a Taste of Edmonton and other attractions.
- More than 200,000 spectators from around the world came to the West Edmonton Mall Grand Prix of Edmonton, making it the most well-attended first-time event in Champ Car history. The races will be back in our city for 2006.
- The Royal couple's visit to Edmonton was topped off by a walk-about in Churchill Square where the Queen was able, at her request, to meet the public, especially children. The event showcased the arts and culture of the Capital City and focused positive national and international attention on Edmonton.
- Over 1.2 million people have enjoyed events at the new Churchill Square since it opened in 2004.

## A GOOD NEIGHBOUR AND PARTNER

**A city that nurtures and enjoys good relationships ... with other orders of government and the health and education sectors ... its regional neighbours ... and northern Canada**



- The City of Edmonton, the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada signed off on a new fiscal deal for cities, with new funding going to LRT development.
- City Council approved \$12.5 million for the partnership with the University of Alberta to redevelop the historic Bay Building. The partnership aims to revitalize the downtown through full occupancy of the Bay building and foster economic development through commercialization of university innovations.
- Basic roadway services were maintained with an increase of almost 6 km in the road patch program.
- Construction continued on the Yellowhead-156 St. interchange. The Whitemud Drive-34 St. interchange opened in August.
- Work continued on the south leg of Edmonton's ring road through 2005, with the southwest leg slated to open in fall 2006 and the southeast a year later. The province has committed to opening the northeast segment by 2011. As the ring road gets closer to completion, it's increasingly true that all roads lead not to Rome, but to Edmonton.
- Many birds that survived the Wabumun oil spill can thank a group of City employees who were among the many volunteers at the bird recovery centre in Spruce Grove, bathing birds and doing other necessary tasks.

## A CULTURALLY RICH AND WELCOMING SOCIETY

**A city with a wealth of diverse cultures ... that respects its history and heritage ... that welcomes newcomers ... and celebrates diversity**

- Edmonton's earliest residents were returned to their original resting places in restored Rosedale cemetery at a ceremony designed by Aboriginal and other communities and the City of Edmonton. A permanent park and memorial will be built on the site.
- The Inuit, First Nations and Metis communities worked with the City of Edmonton to draft Edmonton's Aboriginal Accord. The City is working to improve services to the Aboriginal community and to attract and retain its members as employees.
- Edmonton Public Libraries celebrated our rich cultural heritage with a new internet service that lets customers read 225 newspapers from 58 countries in 33 languages.
- The Library proudly accepted a \$25,000 collection of Chinese language books from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. The gift marked the start of a new partnership between the Library and the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association to enhance service to Edmonton's more than 70,000 Chinese-speaking people.
- City Council established the Next Generation Task Force, a committee to recommend how Edmonton can become more attractive to youth and a place the 18 to 40 year-old population will call home.
- Captioning and sign language services became available for the deaf and hard-of-hearing at all major civic events and celebrations, and upon request for other events and meetings.
- City employees learned what it's like to open jars with arthritic hands, travel with a walker and read product labels through sight-impaired eyes. It's all part of Senior Friendly training, a customer service improvement program developed by the Alberta Council on Aging.





## QUALITY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

**A city that values both the built and natural environment ... with access to facilities and amenities ... room to grow business ... in a healthy, protected environment**

- Edmonton City Council approved fast-tracking of LRT development in 2005. With a budget of \$595 million, the next two phases of the extension will add approximately 7.5 kilometers to the City's LRT line, taking it from the new Health Sciences Station to Century Park (former Heritage Mall site) by the end of 2009.
- The City's on-line recycling directory was an instant hit with citizens: more than 2,000 used the feature in the first month of its operation. The tool helps Edmontonians keep unwanted household items out of the waste stream with information on more than 230 charities, businesses and City services that reuse or recycle items.
- Edmonton's Master Composter/Recycler volunteers harvested 1,638 kg of produce from gardens at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre for the Edmonton Food Bank. The gardens demonstrate the benefits of amending soil with compost made from yard waste.
- Edmonton's growing amateur sports community got a big win with the new synthetic turf at the Joe Clarke Athletic grounds. It provides a safe playing field in varying weather conditions, increased spring and fall play times, and more options for fast-paced, multi-sport play.
- The Edmonton Valley Zoo Master Plan was updated and unanimously supported by Council in 2005. The plan is working toward unique opportunities for citizens and visitors to encounter, and come to understand, the living plants and animals of their world.
- The City's street sand recycling program, the only one in North America, now recycles nearly 80 per cent of street sand. And the program received top honours in the 2005 Environmental Awards program of the Transportation Association of Canada.
- Converting landfill gas to electricity will save the City of Edmonton power costs the equivalent of 4,600 homes, or 15 per cent of its total power bill. This green power project is a partnership between the City and EPCOR.



## RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE CIVIC ADMINISTRATION

**A city that is customer focused ... excels in efficiency and effectiveness ... that embraces innovation and creativity ... and is on the leading edge of municipal excellence**

- The City's flood prevention program was singled out for excellence, receiving the 2005 Project of the Year Award from the American Public Works Association, Alberta chapter.
- A new method of managing the City's database and software needs introduced in 2005 will result in ongoing annual cost savings of \$500,000.
- The City's Smart Choices for Developing Our community received a Project of the Year Award from the American Public Works Association Alberta chapter.

**THE "BALD LEGALS," A GROUP OF CITY EMPLOYEES, RAISED \$44,500 FOR CANCER RESEARCH. THEY SHAVED THEIR HEADS TO RAISE DONATIONS IN SUPPORT OF A LAW BRANCH CO-WORKER DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CITY OF EDMONTON PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES, VISIT: [WWW.EDMONTON.CA](http://WWW.EDMONTON.CA)  
TO COMMENT ON THIS REPORT, CALL THE CITIZEN ACTION CENTRE AT 496-8200  
OR EMAIL [CACENTRE@EDMONTON.CA](mailto:CACENTRE@EDMONTON.CA)**

