

December 1, 2014

Dear Premier Prentice:

Alberta's capital city is facing unprecedented population growth pressures. We are Canada's fastest-growing city in Canada's fastest-growing province — an economic engine that is now powering our country. In 2013, 40 per cent of all new jobs in Canada were created in the Edmonton region. Our city is a magnet, more than ever a destination for those seeking a better life for their families — growing by more than 60,000 people in just two years.

Building this city requires the effort and partnership of many. On November 10, at the inaugural Mayor's City-Building Summit, an unprecedented gathering of leaders from the fields of education, business, health and community safety met to identify their collective 2015-16 priorities. Every leader, and every organization present, spoke about the desire to work with the Province in pursuing their goals and the importance of ensuring Edmonton — a hub and service centre for Northern Alberta — is prosperous and competitive, resilient and adaptive, healthy and inclusive — overall, uplifting.

From K-12 and post-secondary education to policing, from infrastructure and transportation to social support development, we heard several recurring themes:

- Alberta's two largest cities account for the majority of the province's population growth and generate the majority of its economic output; the Alberta government must be a committed partner in unlocking our big cities' promise and prosperity
- It is in our best interest to build on Edmonton's already considerable strengths in select disciplines and enhance the

city's competitive edge as a city of learning and an unrivalled hub for health and care

- Adequate, stable and predictable funding is the optimal approach to plan for and to sustain growth in areas of provincial jurisdiction
- A clear desire exists to enhance partnerships between those who gathered at the table and the Alberta government.

With these themes in mind and, on behalf of my peers at the City-Building Summit, please consider the following as Edmonton's submission to the Government of Alberta's 2015-16 budget deliberations.

Health & Care

We must recognize and invest in Edmonton's role as a health centre for Western and Northern Canada. Our city also requires an investment in prevention through early childhood development programming, and efforts to head off mid-life chronic illnesses associated with smoking, obesity, inactivity and injuries. While my Task Force to Eliminate Poverty is taking a close look at preventing and eliminating the cycle of poverty versus simply continuing to manage it, we will not and cannot succeed without a solid partnership with the Province. Indeed, the Task Force's work is aligned with the poverty work of your government, and I recognize Human Services Minister Heather Klimchuk for her spirited participation as a valued Task Force member.

In front of us is an opportunity to create a true centre of excellence for health and care in Edmonton by investing in treatment best practices, expanding the role of medical and public health schools, and building on existing strengths in transplants, cardiac care and obstetrics. As a start, we should open up available health data for broader use in

order to create a baseline for understanding our current health, defining pathways for change, and unlocking innovation and clinical possibilities. These steps could lead to better performance measures and enhanced accountability while maximizing the University of Alberta's capacity in this respect.

Our city's business community, in its presentations, also carried this message and spoke about Edmonton's preeminence in health and the need to build on this strength by investing in health care research, new product and process innovation laboratories, and a new health data analytics centre that improves health outcomes.

As Edmonton grows, and with it the larger family of northern communities it serves, there is no doubt that new and replacement hospitals will be needed very soon in our city, including a new children's hospital that allows us to enhance our leadership in children's health care.

Education

Board chairs of Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and Greater North Central Francophone School Board emphasized funding targeted programs in early education, intervention strategies and supports. This means recognizing continued acute and growing needs for new schools in addition to funding required to modernize existing ones. We appreciate the Province's announcements of new schools and modernization projects in Edmonton and we are doing our part to assemble sites and facilitate the necessary permits and applications; however, we must build on these in order to match the capital needs of our fast-growing city.

An essential component of our province's lifelong learning is its public libraries. We heard from Linda Cook, Chief Executive Officer of

Edmonton Public Library — Canada's third-most popular library system, based on circulation, and Edmonton's second-most visited destination. The library needs provincial per-capita funding that keeps pace with our province's rapid rate of growth, particularly to support digital literacy. Named library of the year by the prestigious *Library Journal* in 2014, Edmonton Public Library is seeking a partnership with the provincial government that ensures capital and operational funding assistance can keep up with a library network that has maintained its relevance to citizens now more than ever.

Post-Secondary Education

Provosts representing the University of Alberta, MacEwan University, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Concordia University College of Alberta, The King's University and NorQuest College came together with a shared vision for the role of post-secondary learning in Edmonton. As Alberta's premier university town, Edmonton universities employ in excess of 22,000 people with an annual \$1.5 billion payroll. University leaders told us about the need to develop stronger pathways into productive careers for Aboriginal, immigrant and underemployed learners, the help required to apply to and navigate the process for newcomers' permanent residency in Alberta, the assistance needed with settling families and accessing health care, and the help single parents need in order to obtain a post-secondary education. Post-secondary institutions require stable, multi-year program funding, and new operating and capital funding to manage enrollment growth and support skills training in one of the country's most vital economies.

Business

This vision for both our K-12 and post-secondary education systems was also expressed in a joint presentation by the leaders of Edmonton Economic Development, TEC Edmonton and Edmonton

Chamber of Commerce Board — describing the need for a long-term sustainable funding model for education that builds on Edmonton's leadership as a learning city and magnet for research and teaching talent. They described the need to enhance Canada's manufacturing and energy supply and services hub by servicing the Edmonton Energy Technology Park, accelerating interchange infrastructure and freeing up remaining land at the Edmonton Research Park to attract companies and innovators — and stand ready to demonstrate the business case for each vital investment.

Community Safety

Edmonton Police Commission Chair Shami Sandu spoke of the need for increased upfront investment in police officer recruitment to face growth pressures. In law enforcement terms, Edmonton is one of Canada's most complex cities and is facing increasingly sophisticated and resource-intensive criminal activity. At the same time, the Edmonton Police Service has become the social agency of first response for Edmonton and the homeless, addicted and mentally ill who come from across Northern Alberta. Investing in preventing these problems could, over time, actually decrease the need for expensive police funding.

Municipal Priorities

We can help your government successfully achieve its social policy framework goals of ending homelessness and ending child poverty, along with supporting your mental health and addictions work. These are the kind of prevention strategies Edmonton needs, too. At the municipal level, my City Council colleagues and I are seeking a true partnership with your government that will result in better health and education outcomes for our citizens, and the long-term sustainability of our city. **We believe the most effective way forward is through the continued development of a big city charter that supports a**

shared vision developed between Alberta's two big cities and the province.

In that vein, over the medium term, we are seeking a commitment to fully fund the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) to the level that was originally intended; an increase to the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) grant that matches the needs of a hub and service centre like Edmonton; and finally, a renewed GreenTRIP program that provides a line of sight to a full build-out of our LRT system — essential transportation infrastructure to keep our economy moving. Let us also work together to advocate for federal investment in much-needed transportation upgrades that will open up key economic trade corridors in the Edmonton region. Building on your recent meeting with Premiers Clark and Wall, I would be pleased to discuss this opportunity with you in the near future.

As a practical first short-term step, the City of Edmonton is seeking an **immediate provincial investment in community safety** in the form of funding for an increased number of police officers on our streets. Response times are trending up while our city's geographical footprint continues to increase. Edmonton also has one of the highest number of inmate spaces per capita in the country. Bottom line: while crime is declining in other parts of Canada, it is not declining in Edmonton. Provincial funding and partnerships, while valued and instrumental in the delivery of a fundamental service, have not kept pace with inflation nor have they kept pace with increasing mental health-related social disorder.

Finally, a thoughtful, productive and timely review of the Municipal Government Act is paramount to our mutual success and the success of all the City-Building Summit partners who work in health care, education, innovation and research, business and community safety.

This process is well underway, and I remain committed to lending Edmonton's voice to these discussions as we move along. In the context of your recent 2014-15 second-quarter financial update, we understand the need for fiscal diligence in your budgetary planning process. To that end, it is our expectation that this submission will assist in prioritizing areas of investment for Edmonton.

On behalf of my City Council colleagues and partners in our community, thank you for considering these priorities – and we look forward to discussing them with you and your government as you formulate the Province's 2015-16 budget.

Yours truly,
Mayor Don Iveson