

## **2014 Mayor's City-Building Summit Speaking Points**

### **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

#### **Opening Remarks (3 -5 mins)**

- First, thank you to the presenters for being here...
- I would like to briefly set some context for today's discussion and then move quickly to our first presentation.
- Canada is an increasingly urbanized place and Alberta is actually more urbanized than Canada...
- Edmonton is the fastest-growing city in the fastest-growing province in the country.
- Arguably, Edmonton is at the heart of the economic engine of our country -- 40% of the new jobs created in Canada last year originated in the Edmonton region.
- And while we're proud to be a place that welcomes those who are seeking a better life for themselves and for their families, we cannot build this place alone.
- We-- those of us in this room-- in health, in education, in innovation, in community safety...-- we know what it takes to build a city *for* our province and *for* our country.
- And now it's time that we heard from each other, so that we can understand our points of common pressure and common opportunity, and more effectively support each other.
- I really do believe that we all want to build a city that is more prosperous and competitive; more healthy and inclusive; more resilient and green; and altogether, a more uplifting Edmonton.
- Colleagues, I've asked you here today because I know you want to be part of building a great city. Your ability to attract people and investment is contingent on it. And our ability to do the same, as a municipality, is contingent on your success.
- A week from today, our provincial colleagues will begin meeting in the legislature, and are probably already preparing the 2015/16 budget.

- Certainly, they will be wrestling with questions of how to continue to build the infrastructure we need to stay on top of such tremendous growth, and how to do it with diminished one-time resource revenues, which I think you'd all agree we've become overly reliant upon.
- What is clear is that we cannot afford to fall behind again, especially in the face of growth pressures that we all face, cannot afford to fall behind on research, cannot afford to fall behind on educating our kids, cannot fall behind on acute health care capacity and continuing care for the most vulnerable, cannot afford to fall behind on roads, bridges, and mass transit.
- Let's take the opportunity we have in front of us this morning to share openly the challenges and opportunities we are facing as the hub and service centre of northern Alberta and Canada.
- I believe we do face special challenges and opportunities as the Hub of the North, and we're finally getting the opportunity to make that case as part of the City Charter talks - but it extends to your sectors as well, from a meeting the needs of a disproportionate number of high-needs kids in our schools, to more successfully accommodating rural students at our PSEs, to supporting Northern Alberta's essential goods and labour mobility with improvements to the Yellowhead.
- Again, I thank you for your interest and I look forward to the presentations.

## **Presentation - *City of Edmonton priorities for Budget 2015 (7 - 10 mins)***

- Edmonton is the fastest-growing part... of the fastest-growing region... in the fastest growing province in the country.
- In fact, 70% of the population growth in the region is occurring in Edmonton proper.
- By 2041, 8 out of 10 Albertans will live in the Edmonton-Calgary corridor. This corridor will attract most of the international migrants, and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of Canadians moving to Alberta.<sup>1</sup>
- As we've heard throughout this morning's presentations, this rate of growth is putting pressure on our city in unprecedented ways.
- At the same time, we are --as Brad, and others have mentioned-- the heart of the economic engine of Canada's economy.
- This is why now, we must build a true partnership between our big cities and our provincial government.
- Just a few weeks ago, along with Mayor Nenshi, I agreed to work toward such a partnership by signing the city charter framework agreement. I fully intend to hold this provincial government to it's commitment to get this work done, despite an ambitious timeline.
- Our charter discussions are part of a long-term solution to making cities more sustainable.
- But in the meantime, our city is facing growth pressures now that we can't address on our own. The city charter won't solve our growth pressures this year, but there are some opportunities - right now - for managing this growth more effectively.
- It starts with making smart decisions about where and when to invest our tax dollars, in particular, when it comes to **public transit, poverty, housing and community safety**.
- By 2016, we need a line-of-sight to build out our full LRT network. That means we need a renewed GreenTRIP program-- a program which has been very helpful in providing dedicated funding to public transit, and, as we've heard this

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<sup>1</sup> GoA July 2014

morning, unlocks productivity, allows our goods and services to move more freely and is the backbone of an adaptive and resilient transportation network. LRT is a vital tool to managing growth, keeping our economy moving and reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

- When it comes to housing, we need both the provincial and federal governments to provide us with the proper tools and authority to build complete and diverse communities. In some cases, this means renewing affordable housing programs that are already in place - but fundamentally, we must ensure that Edmontonians have housing choices that are affordable and accessible *all along* the spectrum. Without these funding assurances, our growth is simply not sustainable.
- And we need our provincial partners to stay at the Mayor's Task Force table as we continue to work toward our goal to eliminate poverty in Edmonton in a generation. There are more than 100,000 people living in poverty in our city; around 30,000 of those are children. Poverty is costing us a minimum of seven billion dollars annually as a province, mostly in healthcare, but also in lost productivity and crime. In order to build a city and a province that is healthy, inclusive and prosperous, we need to get serious about eliminating poverty – instead of simply trying to manage it, as we are today.
- And, of course, we want Edmontonians and visitors to our city to feel safe and secure -- just as Shami was alluding to earlier.
- In my view, when it comes to community safety in particular, the City of Edmonton cannot wait another year to begin to address our policing challenges.
- Our chief has indicated that we need 400 new officers over the next 5 years to deal with the city's growth and to reach the national average.
- This year alone, the Commission is requesting 98 new officers and we have funding available for 14. To me, this is neither satisfactory nor acceptable.
- I would argue that property taxes were never intended to address complex policing issues like drug and gang activity, cyber-crime, child pornography or human trafficking.
- This is the kind of complex criminal activity that clusters in large urban centres- these are province-wide, interprovincial and in some cases, international community safety matters. They cannot and should not be the sole responsibility of the Edmonton taxpayer.

- As a practical first step in advancing a new partnership with the provincial government, we must address our critical community safety needs.
- If we get the right kind of partnership in place, homelessness, addictions, poverty and mental illness will be dealt with by making the right kinds of social and health care investments. Not with policing dollars. In fact, the need for costly policing dollars could, in fact, over time, decrease.
- If we make the right kinds of investments in education, and in our libraries-- just as Sarah (public), Marilyn (Catholic), Kevin (Francophone), Neil (post-sec) and Linda (library) have spoken to-- we will be the kind of city that attracts and retains the best and the brightest. Indeed, though much attention is focused on the economic contribution of the natural resource industry, our strength in education deserves just as much focus. Indeed, as a city, our future is filled with huge potential (newcomers, FNMI). Investing in the fundamentals, for example, will anchor our K-12 system on a much stronger footing.
- If we make the kinds of investments in the economy, as Brad has called for — from building on our leadership in manufacturing and energy supply and services for the world, to realizing our already significant work on health care research, innovation and delivery, to furthering our investments in education (from kindergarten to graduate school) that differentiates our city ... if we make these kinds of investment in the economy, it will enhance our city's competitive edge more than ever and create an uninhibited future for our youth in a world that will be far more competitive than anything we are seeing today.
- In my mind, this is exactly what a new partnership with our provincial government should look like.
- The politics of 'divide and conquer' have worked far too well and for far too long in this province, but we are in a new era. Cities, increasingly, are showing and leading the way, in partnership with other stakeholders and orders of government, in addressing societal challenges.
- I believe our Premier wants to build world-class cities in this province. This morning's discussion sends a powerful message to our provincial government about what it is going to take to get there. We have outlined do-able short-term steps with a longer-term approach that will, to be fair, take more deliberation and diligence.

- But you have all demonstrated this morning, in words and action, your commitment and passion for Edmonton to reach greater heights. A more successful Edmonton makes for a more successful region, province and nation.
- Thank you again for your time and for your willingness to contribute to this city-building, and province-building, effort.