



Bringing Our Vision To Life



STATE OF THE CITY
REPORT
2012





Heritage Days

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with the talents of:

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WHAT'S YOUR STORY

We have two iPads for the best submissions received between now and November 22, 2013 — one awarded in July and the other in October. Send us a story, photo or video that illustrates what the City has done to impact your life this year. Details at edmonton.ca/stateofthecity. Use stateofthecity@edmonton.ca for your submission.

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CITY COUNCIL



Back row (left to right): Don Iveson, Dave Loken, Amarjeet Sohi, Bryan Anderson.

Middle row: Tony Caterina, Ben Henderson, Mayor Stephen Mandel, Kerry Diotte, Ed Gibbons.

Front row: Linda Sloan, Kim Krushell, Jane Batty, Karen Leibovici.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Mayor Stephen Mandel

With an ambitious vision, exciting new projects and engaged citizens, Edmonton continues to make great strides in shaping our city into one that is increasingly vibrant, innovative, inclusive and sustainable and as Mayor I would like to share with you some of what we have been working on.

Edmonton continues to weather the global economic reality well, continuing to see steady growth. Our population, employment and economic growth are all outpacing municipalities across the country and, in fact, most parts of the world. We have recognized that to keep pace, we must invest in our infrastructure. Over the past 10 years, we have funded nearly \$9 billion in infrastructure projects across the city. Today, citizens have access to new recreation facilities, police and fire stations, libraries, LRT lines, roads and bridges. This level of investment is unprecedented in our city's history.

Building a great city is about much more than urban planning, it's about offering citizens an exceptional quality of life. We have focused on attracting new people and investment and providing the services to retain them. Beyond the dynamic city life and culture we offer, Edmonton is a city that is open to new ideas, and there are unique opportunities for Edmontonians to become involved in shaping the future of their city so it can remain the place of choice for generations to come.

Edmonton will continue to position ourselves as a world leader in waste management with our Waste to Bio-fuels facility scheduled to open in 2013. This facility will produce methanol and ethanol and will reduce the demand for biofuels and help the City to increase its diversion from landfill rate to 90 per cent. Municipalities across the world are studying our system as a model of innovation and excellence.

Revitalizing our downtown core remains a priority. The City Centre Redevelopment will be one of the largest urban renewal projects in Canada and when completed will house more than 25,000 people. It will be a model of creativity and environmental sustainability, incorporating the very best in architecture, design and urban planning. The new downtown arena, Royal Alberta Museum and proposed arts district will see this area become the arts and culture hub, an exciting place for Edmontonians and visitors alike to gather and enjoy. Projects like The Quarters Downtown and Boyle Renaissance are breathing new life into some of the more challenged parts of the city.

I am proud of the unparalleled leadership and commitment of our City Council, who in cooperation with our businesses, communities and citizens, are helping to ensure a strong and successful future for Edmonton.

My Council colleagues and I welcome questions and ideas on any of the information in this 2012 State of the City Report or the municipal services the City of Edmonton offers. For more information, please visit edmonton.ca.

Mayor Stephen Mandel

PERSPECTIVE TAKING THE MEASURE OF OUR CITY



Quality of life is important

There's a couple of useful measures to explain why Edmonton is a special place to make a life and a living.

One is quality of life; another is people's choice to live here.

Quality of life encompasses everything that brings pleasure, convenience, accessibility, sustainability to city living. One example is choice, with Edmonton's push into energy-efficient residential housing and transit-oriented neighbourhoods aimed at giving Edmontonians options in managing their footprint on the earth.

Or look downtown, where years of dreaming, consulting and planning are giving way to massive transformative projects. Major drainage upgrades in The Quarters Downtown will support new hotel, retail and residential development for thousands of residents. The Blatchford Master Plan will transform the City Centre Airport lands into a new and future-oriented community of more than 25,000 people.

Not far from Blatchford is the planned site of a landmark sports arena whose iconic design has already been enthusiastically endorsed by citizens and Council.

Edmonton continues to invest in multi-purpose recreational centres, seniors' centres, libraries, arts facilities and not-for-profit initiatives that bring a smile to the everyday. We also know how to live up to our reputation as Festival City. Dozens of festivals and special events celebrate our rich cultural diversity, our character-building winters, our sublime summers, and our passion for artistic, musical, theatrical and comedic excellence.

And are we truly a place of choice for visitors and new residents? That story is being told every day, in statistics that show we're growing by an average 12,000 new Edmontonians every year, and that we boast one of the most youthful populations in Canada.

Some big players are also telling our story for us. Edmonton has been recognized and chosen to host numerous national and international sports events, from the 2014 ITU Triathlon Grand Final to the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2015.

Now that says something. But citizens have plenty to say as well. They talk to and about their city, making full use of Edmonton's Twitter, Facebook and YouTube spaces. They logged more than 42 million page views on edmonton.ca in 2012. In May 2012 the 311 service centre that answers 160,000 citizen questions every month was voted #1 medium-sized call centre in North America.

By any measure, Edmonton is a city of growth, opportunity, excitement and energy. It's all thanks to our citizens, our businesses, our partners across the globe who recognize our unique talents and attributes. And also the City's enduring vision, and the municipal planning that will accomplish our common goals.

Edmonton more than measures up as a great place to call home. We hope you agree, and will share your stories about the city we call home through stateofthecity@edmonton.ca or any of our social media channels.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

A PRIVILEGED POSITION



Edmonton is out front in many respects

While conditions in the rest of Canada and most developed economies were disappointing over 2012, Edmonton's economy continued to move forward at a remarkable rate.

Economic growth, excluding inflation, should come in at well above 4% for the Edmonton region in 2012.

Employment growth in the Edmonton metropolitan area, driven by ongoing strength in construction, energy and logistics, out-paced that of Canada's largest municipalities.

Edmonton's unemployment rate posted an enviable 4.5% by the end of 2012 - second lowest in the country. Word of the excellent employment opportunities in Edmonton has spread, drawing near-record levels of migrants from other regions of Canada and internationally. This influx of talent has helped Edmonton employers deal with shortages that are starting to emerge for skilled trades and professionals of all stripes.

Meanwhile Edmonton consumers experienced very moderate inflation as local gasoline and electricity prices held the overall rise in the Consumer Price Index to levels well below the national average. As well, Edmonton's housing remained one of the best bargains in Canada as modest price increases, low interest rates and rising incomes made the city the most affordable for housing among Canada's major urban centres according to RBC Economics.

The economy will moderate in 2013, but Edmonton will continue to enjoy one of the fastest growth rates in Canada, clocking in at between 3.5% and 4%. The focus of growth will pivot toward the consumer side of the economy as rising incomes boost retail, entertainment, culture and personal services. Housing construction will remain strong as new migrants to the city seek out accommodation. In addition, the anticipated start of construction on the North West Upgrader in Sturgeon County, just north of the city, will give a boost to the non-residential side of the construction sector.

Edmonton is the logistics and fabrication hub for much of the anticipated \$364 billion investment in oilsands activity in northern Alberta.

John Rose

Chief Economist, City of Edmonton

EDMONTON BRINGS ITS GAME FACE



Downtown Business Association's Jim Taylor foresees good times — for a long time

The wheels are turning on developments that will dramatically transform Edmonton's downtown core — the face of the city that greets workers, shoppers and newcomers every day.

It's a multibillion-dollar enterprise spearheaded by the City and private interests, driven by the conviction that a renewed streetscape means more people, more business, more retailers, more pizzazz for the downtown experience. Initiatives are all in line with The Way We Grow, the City's 10-year plan to transform our urban form.

Simon O'Byrne, of Stantec Consulting and Chairman of the Downtown Vibrancy Taskforce, says City-led projects such as The Quarters Downtown, Boyle Renaissance and the multiple components of the Capital City Downtown Plan are catalysts sparking tangible results, including major hotel and condo construction, in 2012.

And downtown resident Ian O'Donnell, of the Downtown Edmonton Community League, says it's all part of a long-awaited shift in thinking: "We've seen a shift in mindset and resources in the last five years, where we've begun to recognize the heart of our city is in the downtown."

Also long-awaited is resolution of the downtown arena proposal, and the past year has seen some progress on this front as well.

City Council approved the schematic design for the facility in July 2012, and in January 2013 Council approved a financial framework for the arena, which will be owned by the City of Edmonton and operated by the Katz Group, owner of the Edmonton Oilers.

While design details continue to be refined the new arena is expected to be open in time for the 2016-17 NHL season.

O'Donnell, meanwhile, points out that more people are already moving into the core, (up from about 6,500 to 13,000 residents since 1998), and they bring their own heartbeat to the district.

Jim Taylor, Director of the Downtown Business Association, says that kind of population growth kickstarts a growing stream of new projects. The association's research in 2012 put some impressive numbers on the trend.

"Our study in 2012 showed we could expect \$4.8 billion worth of development over the next five years - and that number wowed everybody," he says. Since 1998, 60 multi-family residences have been built in the downtown area. Walkways through the new Railtown district have made downtown a walkable destination for Oliver residents. And more people begets more business, Taylor says.

"The beauty of the high-rise condominiums being built is that the zoning requires the street-front part of it be retail-commercial."

Condo construction along 104th street has added a dozen retail units, a new hotel is under construction near the Shaw Conference Centre, and at least two others are in the works.

An arena will be a jewel in the crown, Taylor says, tying many development threads together to create a transformed, unique and vibrant downtown abuzz with people and excitement.

"Say there are 50 home games and 20,000 people in attendance each time. That's a million new people coming downtown — and that's just for hockey games."

"Having an exciting downtown doesn't diminish the rest of the city," says Taylor. "What's good for downtown benefits the rest of the city and the entire region."

"Having an exciting downtown doesn't diminish the rest of the city. What's good for downtown benefits the rest of the city and the entire region."

Jim Taylor, Director, Downtown Business Association



Simon O'Byrne says catalyst projects are having their intended effect already

Transforming Edmonton's Urban Form

THE QUARTERS DOWNTOWN

This City-led redevelopment of 18 city blocks directly east and adjacent to downtown Edmonton (92 Street to 97 Street and 103A Avenue to the top of the river valley) will create a highly walkable urban neighbourhood close to the river valley, arts, entertainment and financial districts.

Mixed-use development will showcase high-quality architecture. Developments in the community will use industry-leading technologies to reduce environmental impact while providing innovative design and lifestyle options. When complete, the area will house more than 20,000 people.

City investment in infrastructure and public amenities will attract further investment and encourage growth in this part of downtown. Initial drainage and utility relocation work are ongoing, laying a solid foundation for development to occur.

Private investment continues to grow and includes a new hotel and several residential developments. Together these investments will help this historic centre of Edmonton reach its full potential.

The Quarters Downtown came alive in 2012 as a destination for community events, hosting Canada Day celebrations, a public art exhibition, and a venue for the 2012 Edmonton International Fringe Festival. It was also home to a temporary location for the Boyle Street Community Garden, allowing residents, organizations and communities in the area to have a place to plant in the garden and relax in a collective area.

BOYLE RENAISSANCE

The area between 95 Street and 96 Street, extending from 103A Avenue north to the LRT tracks is a unique area within The Quarters Downtown that the City has identified for priority revitalization efforts—referred to as the Boyle Renaissance.

The City has helped revitalize this area through partnerships with other organizations and through funding contributions from Phase II of the Cornerstones Affordable Housing program. Phase I is now complete and the Boyle Street Plaza and Melcor YMCA Welcome Village at 95 Street and 103A Avenue have created a bright and welcoming hub for community life.

Phase II construction includes Renaissance Tower, a 90-unit affordable housing facility for seniors being built by the Métis Capital Housing Corporation. It will feature a heat and power co-generation system that will be shared with the Melcor YMCA Welcome Village across the street.

The City has also committed \$8.3 million of Cornerstones funding to create a new facility for artists and arts organizations in The Quarters Downtown. The Artists' Quarters development will be a partnership with local and national arts agencies and will offer 64 market and non-market residential units of different sizes as well as studio, performance and office space to meet a demand expressed by non-profit arts organizations.



Boyle Street Plaza

CAPITAL CITY DOWNTOWN PLAN

Investments in the Capital City Downtown Plan Catalyst Projects are intended to yield improved infrastructure, increased urban densification, increased economic activity in the core, and greater transit connectivity.

Potential projects include:

- The Downtown Arena and Entertainment District, and related public infrastructure.
- Central Warehouse Housing Incentive Program.
- Warehouse Campus Central Park.
- Jasper Avenue New Vision.
- River Valley Promenades.
- High-Profile Bikeway System.
- Green and Walkable Downtown.
- Downtown Stormwater Drainage Backbone project.

BLATCHFORD (REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY CENTRE AIRPORT LANDS)

The City is building a new mixed-use community in the heart of Edmonton that is walkable, transit-oriented, and sustainable.

Featuring homes for all stages of life, a great city park, and opportunities to shop, dine, and work, Blatchford will create a new urban experience for Edmontonians. It will also be a world-leading example of progressive urban planning.

In 2012, several milestones were reached:

- Design team Perkins + Will developed the Master Plan for the redevelopment, which involved over 100 meetings with community stakeholders and citizens to gather ideas and feedback.
- The Area Redevelopment Plan was approved by City Council.
- The City's Naming Committee selected the name Blatchford for the redevelopment.

STATION POINTE

Station Pointe is a major investment in infrastructure improvements and brownfield land redevelopment along Fort Road to promote transit-oriented development and private sector redevelopment in the area near the Belvedere LRT station.

Station Pointe Village is a robust residential development with: on-site retail services, a community garden, a children's playground and social facilities to meet multigenerational needs including one-, two- and three-bedroom homes.

Station Pointe Greens is a mixed-use development featuring sustainable green housing development. A Community Revitalization Levy (which does not increase taxes) will help fund municipal infrastructure improvements in the area.

WEST ROSSDALE REDEVELOPMENT

The Urban Design Plan will facilitate the development of the West Rosedale lands from a largely vacant, under-developed area into an attractive, livable, well-designed community.

The project will include infrastructure upgrades, streetscape improvements, land acquisition, lot consolidation and sales.

The city is also planning to improve connections to the Alberta Legislature grounds and explore mechanized river valley access with multi-government funding in 2013.

Fire Rescue Services



New equipment and facilities keep Fire Rescue efficient and effective

Fire Rescue Services keeps pace with Edmonton's growth with capital investments to protect life, property and the environment. The provision of internationally recognized emergency services, fire prevention programs and public education make our city a safer place to live, work and play.

As Edmonton continues to grow in area and population, replacing aging fire stations and building new ones helps ensure firefighters are there for citizens when emergencies occur. For example, the opening of a new fire station in southeast Edmonton led to an improvement in fire response times of 50% in neighbourhoods immediately around the station.

Planned investments in the 2012 - 14 capital budget include:

- Design of the new Heritage Valley Fire Station, to be completed in 2014.
- Construction of Ellerslie Fire Station (completed in 2012).
- Replacement of equipment critical to fight fires, rescue people and to recruit and train firefighters.
- Conversion of the Fire Rescue Training Tower to burn liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to address firefighter health and safety issues and environmental requirements for live fire exercises.
- Planning for Lewis Estates and Pilot Sound fire stations.

Fire Rescue improved turnout time performance by 13% for fire calls and 3% for medical calls. Seconds count in the event of an emergency and firefighters were on-scene in less than four minutes 78% of the time.

Edmonton Police Service



Edmonton Police Service helps provide a safe, vibrant city

Under the governance of the Edmonton Police Commission, the Edmonton Police Service helps provide a safe, vibrant city through innovative, responsive and progressive policing.

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- Replacements of police vehicles.
- Replacement of radio equipment at the end of its useful life and to ensure compatibility with the Alberta First Responder Radio Communication system being implemented by the Province.
- IT system upgrades and telecom and radio life cycle costs for the next three years.
- Completion of the Southwest Division Station, to be completed in 2013.
- Addition to closed circuit television equipment for holding rooms and increased retention to meet new provincial standards.
- Approval for initial construction of North West Campus to provide three functional components — North West Division Station, a new Training Facility, and a new Detainee Management Facility — as an integrated campus to be completed in 2016.



Asset investments keep EPS up to date

TRANSIT OPENS UP TEENAGER'S WORLD



Ryan Wolfert and his father Rob say LRT has a special place in their lives

No one is more excited about light rail transit than Ryan Wolfert.

And it shows. He's the only person on the platform who's bouncing up and down as the next train approaches, so eager with anticipation he can't quite contain himself. "Here it comes, here it comes!" Right on time, in the exact same place, always traveling in the same direction. He loves it.

It is the predictable nature of LRT that fascinates him so. The set schedule and dedicated routes create reliability. You always get where you're going on time (or close to). What's more, the system runs according to precise rules of engineering: the mechanics of the vehicles, wheels on tracks, all powered by electricity overhead. All these things enthrall an autistic teenager who has made Edmonton's LRT system part of his way of life.

"The LRT is a lot of fun to ride," says the 18-year-old high school student. "It goes really fast. It's efficient. I ride it all the time, sometimes five days a week. It gets me where I need to go."

Usually Ryan rides alone. Autism can limit a person's capacity for social interaction, and Ryan's father, Rob, credits the Edmonton Transit System, and particularly LRT, for enabling his son to build independence into his life to the degree

that he is able to fully integrate with society. Ryan attends Strathcona Composite High School and takes transit all over the place, to meet his friends at the Royal Glenora Club, for example, or to catch the occasional Oilers game at Rexall Place.

"He takes transit to go see his friends, but sometimes he'll jump on a bus or the LRT just because he likes doing it, because it's a fun thing for him to do. He'll do it to relax and just be in his own head for awhile, just watching the world around him."

"It's really great for my wife and me, to have that comfort level, knowing he can do all that on his own."

For Ryan, almost as exciting as the ride itself are the plans the City has to expand LRT across Edmonton. He was there in November when the City unveiled the new tunnels that will connect the North LRT currently under construction to Churchill Station when trains start running in 2014.

Meanwhile engineering is progressing for the Southeast to West low-floor line that will connect Mill Woods, where the Wolferts live, with Lewis Farms in the west end. The City continues to pursue funding partnerships with the federal and provincial governments that will dictate project timelines for the Southeast to West LRT.

Ridership on Edmonton's LRT network increases dramatically as the system expands. Weekday ridership doubled to approximately 100,000 after the LRT was extended south to Century Park. The North LRT to NAIT is expected to add another 13,200 weekday riders, and that's just a precursor to massive growth once the line is extended northwest to St. Albert (timeline to be determined). Other Edmonton Transit System (ETS) enhancements, such as the new bus service to the Edmonton International Airport, UPass and ETS@Work sales, Smart Bus and mobile applications, contributed to a 3.1% bump in overall ETS ridership in 2012 when almost 83 million transit trips were taken.

Meanwhile the City continues to make aggressive investments in road and neighbourhood construction. Sections of major arterial roadways, such as Fort Road and 97 Street, were rebuilt in 2012 and the City continued construction of the Capital Boulevard project on 108 Street as well as a major revitalization of Jasper Avenue. These and many more road projects will continue through 2013, including construction of a new Waltherdale Bridge in the heart of Edmonton that's already underway.

Other investments, such as a city-wide network of bike lanes and other cycling facilities, continue to enhance the way citizens move in Edmonton. Following directions set out in a 10-year master plan, The Way We Move, the City is taking a holistic, big picture view of what transportation means, and could mean, for citizens now and generations into the future.

"The LRT goes really fast. It's efficient. I ride it all the time, sometimes five days a week. It gets me where I need to go."

Ryan Wolfert

The City of Edmonton, with the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities, created Measuring Up Edmonton to encourage communities and businesses to improve accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities and others including seniors, parents pushing baby carriages and people with injuries.

Keeping Edmonton on the Move

The Edmonton Transit System (ETS) continues to be a fully integrated, progressive, easy-to-use, public transit system that supports economic development, and improves the quality of life in Edmonton. ETS provides customer focused, safe, reliable and affordable public transit services that link people and places.

ETS is Canada's sixth largest transit agency and is the first agency in North America to introduce LRT to a city of under one million people, one of the first to provide standardized low-floor buses (accessible transit), and the first to link transit use to Air Miles rewards.



Safe, affordable, reliable transit

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- The pilot for Smart Bus technology on 45 buses in the ETS fleet is scheduled to be rolled out by the spring of 2013. Components of the project include automated bus stop announcements, automated vehicle location, computer aided dispatch, real-time customer information and security cameras with live video feed to the ETS Control Centre.
- ETS's original fleet of U2 vehicles average 30 years in age and have never had a major overhaul. A retrofit program will extend the service life of the vehicles by 15 to 20 years.

- Central LRT Station rehabilitation and upgrade. This includes repairs and replacement of the roadway (sidewalk, curb and gutter and pavement) as well as repairs to the roof structure, replacement of the station roof structure waterproofing, repairs to station structural components and hard landscaping.
- Major initiatives to enhance the safety and security on ETS include replacements of the video monitoring and security systems in bus terminals and buses, and a pedway security upgrade.
- Transit Priority Corridors are designed to speed up the bus system by reducing transit travel time and increasing travel time reliability through the implementation of bus lanes and lane control, bus queue jumps, transit signal priority and other traffic signal improvements.
- Tunnel construction continues and work has begun on MacEwan and Kingsway/Royal Alex LRT Stations. Construction is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2013. Major works in 2012 included 105 Street work and track work to new stations. Public service is scheduled to begin in April 2014.
- The North LRT to NAIT is expected to add 13,200 weekday passengers to Edmonton's LRT network, with capacity for considerable growth once the North LRT is extended to Edmonton's city limits near St. Albert. The line will operate from Health Sciences/Jubilee Station to NAIT.
- The existing line will see renewal of LRT fleet, facilities and equipment.
- Funding has been budgeted for strategic land purchases for future Southeast to West LRT. Preliminary engineering has begun and will be completed in 2013.
- On the South LRT, a Health Sciences Station pedway to the Edmonton Clinic and the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre will be constructed.
- A major program of arterial road construction and rehabilitation was completed in 40 locations in 2012.
- 10 key arterial roadway intersections are included in a five-year program to improve safety and effectiveness.

WALTERDALE BRIDGE

The Walterdale Bridge has served Edmonton for nearly 100 years and is reaching the end of its usable life. The bridge spans the North Saskatchewan River near the Kinsmen Sports Centre. Construction of a replacement bridge is scheduled for 2013-2015.



Artist's impression of new Walterdale Bridge

41 AVENUE/HIGHWAY 2 INTERCHANGE

Construction of a new interchange on Highway 2 and 41 Avenue SW will include a road/rail grade separation of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks east of Highway 2. The City will also make improvements to arterial roads in the area. This is a federal/provincial/municipal cost shared project.

BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROJECTS:

Bridge rehabilitation projects include:

- Grierson Road Bridge over McDougall/Scona Road.
- 82 Avenue Bridge over the Argyll Road Connector.
- 102 Avenue Bridge over Groat Road.
- Stony Plain Road Bridge over Groat Road.

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT FACILITY

This project will expand the existing Northeast Yard to provide a permanent facility for the Pavement Management Section of Roadway Maintenance. The new permanent facility will consolidate resources into one location and provide sufficient capacity for growth in staff and resources that are necessary to accommodate additional service levels.

ARTERIAL STREET LIGHTING REHABILITATION

This project focuses on the major arterial network and includes funding for rehabilitation and replacement of aging streetlight infrastructure, as well as installation of new street lighting and walkway lighting. The City has achieved cost savings in maintenance and energy consumption through innovative design and new streetlight technologies.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The City supports active transportation for cyclists and pedestrians by providing infrastructure, facilities, programs and initiatives to enhance accessibility, safety, security, and convenience. Components of the project include a curb-ramp program, shared-use paths and multi-use trails as well as the Bicycle Transportation Plan, including bicycle routes and bike racks.

KENNEDALE SNOW STORAGE FACILITY

The Kennedale snow site serves the City's Roadway Maintenance Districts and contracted snow removal services. The addition of property already owned by the City will increase storage capacity at the Kennedale site from 700,000 cubic metres to more than 1,000,000 cubic metres. This enhances capacity for snow storage will help the City meet service commitments to citizens.

HEALTHY CITIZENS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Wendy Sutherland is a fan of fitness — and Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre

Edmonton punches above its weight when it comes to fitness and healthy lifestyles accessible to all.

Swimming pools attached to libraries? Weight rooms in the same buildings as classrooms? Indoor football fields with artificial turf for year-round practice? Edmonton has it all, and citizens are taking full advantage.

Fitness fan Wendy Sutherland has become an enthusiastic patron of the new Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre.

The Alberta government employee switched from her old haunt at Kinsmen Sports Centre to Commonwealth because program times are a better fit for her schedule. The centre offers a jogging program on its indoor track after she and her friends leave work, rather than early in the morning.

“Once we were more familiar with the facility, we decided we’d come here on a more frequent basis,” says Sutherland.

The facility offers much more as well: a massive swimming pool facility, arts, music and dance programs, kids’ space and child-minding, and fitness equipment galore.

“Commonwealth has all the equipment I require. I don’t see anybody really searching for anything,” Sutherland said.

The new recreation centre also sports an impressive indoor field covered with artificial turf suitable for football team practices and workouts — that’s both kinds of football. The Edmonton Eskimos use the field, as do players with FC Edmonton, this year the only Canadian team in the North American Soccer League.

FC Edmonton assistant coach Jeff Paulus notes that indoor soccer is a “different game” that’s played on a smaller field and uses sideline boards as part of the playing area.

Players wear their cleated soccer boots and play on a surface that’s just like neighbouring Clarke Field, FC Edmonton’s home turf.

“This is much better,” says Paulus. “This facility lets the players play a proper game all-year around. For us, it’s fantastic.”

Players also have access to the other parts of the facility. On Wednesdays they take yoga. “All of our training can happen in this one building,” said Paulus. “It provides everything we need.”

Mallan Roberts. 20, a centre back, says he grew up playing the game in his African homeland. “I’ve played it all my life.”

He likes the centre, which has become a second home for him.

“Even when there’s no practice, I come here for six or seven hours a day. Our summers aren’t that long, but in here it’s summer all year round.”

Commonwealth is the second of four \$100-million-plus recreation centres now open or under construction in the city. Together they are just one element supporting Edmonton’s 10-year strategic plan, The Way We Live, which aims to bolster Edmonton’s capacity as a diverse and inclusive city by connecting people, creating communities where people can age in place and actively nurturing an arts, culture and athletic community.

Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre opened in 2011, and construction continues on large integrated facilities in Clareview and The Meadows.

Clareview, rising just east of an LRT station, will include the top-of-the-line pools and weight rooms and gym, as well as a sports park with artificial turf, a branch of the public library, a cultural centre and, in conjunction with the Catholic School Board, the Cardinal Collins High School Academic Centre that will provide support to students and adults for pursuits like high school completion, work experience and career planning and support for English Language Learners. There will be two ice rinks, one NHL-sized and one Olympic-sized, opening later this year, with the rest of the facility to open in 2014.

The Meadows Community Recreation Centre in southeast Edmonton will also include a public library, community gathering spaces, aquatic centre, fitness centre, a gym and two NHL-sized ice rinks. It’s scheduled to open in 2014.



FC Edmonton players have a ball at Commonwealth

“All of our training can happen in this one building. It provides everything we need.”

*FC Edmonton assistant coach
Jeff Paulus*

The Flying Eagle program was expanded to city-wide playground programs, increasing awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures among leaders and children.

Investing in Quality of Life



Peter Hemingway Fitness and Leisure Centre

Edmonton's more than 60 leisure and recreation facilities attract over 5.5 million visitors each year. These community hubs connect residents of all ages and backgrounds to their communities, and offer memorable, inclusive and accessible experiences for learning, health and enjoyment. Investment in these facilities reflects City Council's commitment to ensuring Edmonton is a vibrant, safe city that is welcoming to all and offers residents a high quality of life.

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre opened in 2012.
- In March 2012, the new Arctic Shores exhibit opened, recreating an Arctic shoreline at Edmonton Valley Zoo. The new habitat is one of a series of construction projects that is transforming the 53-year-old facility.
- Also at the zoo, construction is underway on a new otter habitat, education centre, cafe and a central trail system called the Wander, which will showcase the ecosystems created by the North Saskatchewan River as it winds its way through Alberta.
- Construction on The Meadows and Clareview community recreation centres, libraries and parks is under way. Both of these new community hubs are scheduled to open in 2014 and integrate a public library and park into the design. Clareview also includes a multicultural centre and the Edmonton Catholic Schools' Cardinal Collins High School Academic Centre and a daycare.

- Design of a new natural swimming pond at Borden Park began in 2012. The pool is expected to open by the summer of 2015.
- The Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre reopened in the fall of 2012.
- Upgrades to Mill Woods Recreation Centre were completed in 2013.
- The City continues to work with partners to make Edmonton one of Canada's most livable cities. Projects to be cost shared or operated with partners include:
 - The Mill Woods Seniors Centre and Multicultural Facility above the new Mill Woods Library is slated for completion in 2014.
 - A permanent sport park for non-motorized wheeled recreation in Edmonton's southeast is being developed in partnership with the South East Community League Association.
 - Telus World of Science Travelling Exhibit and facility expansion.
 - Redevelopment of Abbottsfield Recreation Centre.
 - A South Edmonton Multicultural Centre in partnership with the Korean Community Centre Foundation is scheduled to open in 2013.
- Jerry Forbes Centre for Community Spirit with Santa's Anonymous.
- Whitemud Equine Centre redevelopment in partnership with the Whitemud Equine Learning Association.
- A permanent facility for The iHuman Youth Society, which helps at-risk youth reintegrate into the community through crisis intervention, arts mentorship, and life skills development programs. The society's new home will include an arts studio and transitional housing.
- Concept plans for an expansion of the Winspear Centre by the Concert Hall Foundation to accommodate additional arts initiatives.
- Redevelopment of the former Alberta Hotel on Jasper Avenue into CKUA's Centre for Artistic Expression. The Centre will provide barrier-free performance and exhibition space, dedicated space for non-profit organizations at below market rates, and universal access to CKUA's physical and digital collections.
- Commonwealth Stadium seat replacement is scheduled to be completed in 2013.

Libraries

Investment in renewal and growth capital projects allowed the City to address a backlog of rehabilitation and renewal for library facilities and to build new libraries in growth areas of the City.



Meadows branch opens in 2014

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- Mill Woods Library Branch Replacement to open in 2014.
- Meadows Library Branch to open in 2014.
- Clareview Library Branch relocation and expansion to open in 2014.
- Jasper Place Library Branch replacement to reopen in 2013.
- Highlands Library Branch replacement to open in 2013.
- Land and design for Calder Library Branch.
- Design for Capilano Library Branch.
- Design for Milner Library Exterior.
- Investment for new library materials, equipment, furniture and IT infrastructure.
- Downtown library parkade rehabilitation completed in 2012.

PARKS PASSION HAS MANY RIPPLE EFFECTS



Edmonton's river valley offers a way to get away from it all

Edmonton's beautiful river valley — arguably the City's best-loved and most emblematic asset — was not created by human hand.

But human passion and persistence in City offices and among groups such as the River Valley Alliance have helped with many an augmentation to increase accessibility and enjoyment of the valley.

Christopher Sheard, chair of the River Valley Alliance, is a long-time Edmontonian who says the valley has been a prime recreation experience over the decades “for me, as a runner, golfer, picnicker, festival-goer. I suspect I’ve partaken in almost everything, including by canoe and the River Queen paddleboat.

“I find myself travelling down the river and wondering at what I see — we see things brand new, from a new perspective, from the water’s surface.”

The experience is part of what drew him to take over the reins at the River Valley Alliance, a collaborative of seven municipalities along the capital region’s stretch of the North Saskatchewan. The partners share a common goal — to preserve, protect and enhance the 88 km long capital region river valley park system for the year-round accessibility and enjoyment of citizens and visitors.

“I find myself travelling down the river and wondering at what I see — we see things brand new, from a new perspective, from the water’s surface.”

Christopher Sheard, chair, River Valley Alliance

It’s a goal that dovetails with Edmonton’s strategic plans to conserve natural spaces and parks, and to ensure access for all. Those plans received a boost in January 2013 with announcement of \$72.9 million in funding for river valley projects within the City of Edmonton. Co-funded by the City and the provincial and federal governments, the proposed projects include mechanized river valley access, new east and west trails, a new Terwilliger Park footbridge, three boat launches, seven docks and other amenities.

“You cannot live in Edmonton and this region as long as I have — 40-plus years — without becoming enamoured with the beauty of our river valley, and with its importance to the well-being and psychology of the people who live here,” says Sheard.



Varinder Panesar has big dreams for his new home

“But talk to any canoeist or kayaker, and one thing they all talk about is boat launches, the right places to manage ins and outs (access to the water).” They key, he says, is to keep the emphasis on preserving and protecting the valley while improving access and usability.

Speaking of green spaces, Varinder Panesar is a property tax analyst who’s about to build an innovative home in one of the city’s most forward-thinking new areas: Oxford, a more sustainable development.

Oxford is a City-led development initiative in northwest Edmonton that will require all home buyers and builders to meet eco-friendly guidelines for conservation and efficiency.

Panesar is excited to be on the leading edge: “When I heard about the City of Edmonton developing a sustainable design and an energy-efficient community, I was pretty intrigued that Edmonton is finally moving in the right direction. The Oxford project is the beginning of an environmental lifestyle in Edmonton and I’m proud to be a part of this beginning.”

He has designed a two-storey house of about 2,400 sq. ft. with a double garage, and hopes to finish construction before next winter.

“I love homes that are comfortable yet sleek and stylish and all I can say right now is that I promise it’s going to be different in a good way! This is going to be a fun year and I would like to thank the City of Edmonton for the help they have provided.”

Forty three City-owned lots in Oxford sold out quickly in a public draw last November. As an incentive to reach its targets, the City of Edmonton also offered grants from the Cornerstones program, to assist in the construction of up to 25 secondary suites in Oxford. Eligible homeowners could apply for the Cornerstones Grant, up to \$20,000, towards the cost of developing the suite, as part of a City plan to increase the number of affordable housing options for lower income citizens.

In addition, all buyers are eligible to receive a Green Building Grant of \$1,000 to \$7,000 providing the home achieves an EnerGuide rating of 80 or higher.

Ensuring Access to Clean And Green Natural Spaces



Open spaces are key to our quality of life

Considered Edmonton's most prized asset in annual surveys of residents, the river valley parks system and natural areas are key to our quality of life. Combined with playgrounds and sports fields, trails and neighbourhood open spaces, Edmonton has a wide range of active recreation and leisure opportunities. Parks add beauty to our city, provide a respite from our busy lives and help us connect with nature.

Each year between 400 and 500 capital projects are moved forward to enhance the city's parks. These projects range in cost from \$10,000 to \$28 million and are often completed in partnership with other orders of government, community organizations and the private sector.

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- Continuation of John Fry District Park, Borden Park, Mill Woods District Park, and Castle Downs District Park redevelopments.
- Neighbourhood parks and outdoor aquatic amenities (projects in over 70 neighbourhoods).
- Components of the Louise McKinney Riverfront Park to continue with the green room to be completed in 2013 and the riverfront buildings in 2014.
- Parks, sports fields and playground conservation, focused on component replacements and urgent repairs.

- Tree canopy replacement, tree canopy enhancement-naturalization, and replacement of tree grates and upgrades to tree well infrastructure.
- Utilities and access renewal projects that include parking lot refurbishments and utility connections.
- River valley renewal to include Victoria Park Amenity Building and master plan completion and phased construction for Laurier/Buena Vista and Queen Elizabeth parks.
- New park construction in the Cameron Heights and McConachie neighbourhoods.
- Continuation of The Hamptons District Park Phase II, Eaux Claires Neighbourhood Park, Claireview District Park and Meadows District Park.

FLOURISHING IN A NOURISHING ATMOSPHERE



The community kitchen at Candora offers tasty learning and lots of laughter

Living in a city known for its affluence and vibrant economy is not an automatic ticket to prosperity for all.

Immigrants who need initial language skills and settlement support, along with the under-resourced and others dealing with chronic challenges, do however have the opportunity to flourish thanks to the City's robust support programs.

One example is the Candora (Can-Do-in-Rundle-and-Abbotsfield) Society, which in 2012 received more than \$237,000 from City-administered Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) grant programs.

Goals of the City's broader grants program align closely with strategies aimed at sustaining Edmonton's high quality of life through affordable and responsible financial strategies, and with The Way We Prosper, which incorporates a focus on supporting a vibrant, livable city. And helping newcomers establish their lives in Edmonton makes the city attractive to the global labour and talent required to ensure a high quality of life for everyone.

FCSS funding helps Candora take a community development and participatory approach to people wanting to work towards self-sufficiency and to reduce barriers and poverty. The range and variety of programs offered is astonishing.

Visit Candora on a Monday night and the kitchen area is busy with up to a half-dozen women learning basic food preparation skills, and creating a variety of dishes they can take home or freeze for later use.

Facilitator Gail Gosse explains that the day's cooking themes follow what vegetables are in season, like roasted garlic cauliflower for April. It's what is cheap, but also tasty and fresh, for people who are learning to stretch their budgets and eat well at the same time.

Each participant gets a recipe book, complete with notes on all the things they cover: food handling, kitchen safety, the Canada Food Guide, portion sizes, and there's a list of resources, plus neighbourhood stores and how to get to them.

It's not just adults who find Candora such a rich resource. Shandaya is one teen who complained there was nothing to do there, but had an idea ready. She asked if she could start a new group, was encouraged to write a proposal, and On the Go Teens was born three years ago.

"Everything's free, but you have to work for it," says Shandaya, who's 18 and a junior leader now. Funds raised by the group allowed a three-day weekend of camping in a cabin at Hinton in 2012, with lots of stops en route to explore, plus

horseback riding and playing in a lake. It was a big deal for kids who live in a near-inner-city environment.

Joanne, who moved to the city from a reserve a few years ago, has blossomed through a number of Candora programs. She says it took almost a year before she even felt confident enough to leave her home, but when she found Candora, she quickly started getting involved.

She began with a program that brought together life skills, job readiness, job research and applications, office skills, plus role playing. "I was just really impacted in ways that some other programs came up short. I felt really at home, welcomed, in a multicultural group."

She adds: "I knew how to budget, but in the women's savings group I learned to do it better, to think longer term. It was one on one," and covered topics like credit reports, saving, RRSPs and how to save at home on energy, power, water, and food.

Joanne says that at Candora, "They really take care of people, no matter what the background. We're all human beings. I still come back for coffee - it's open, friendly, fun. I always have a laugh."



Young people soak up life skills and companionship

FCSS funding helps Candora take a community development and participatory approach to people wanting to work towards self-sufficiency and to reduce barriers and poverty.

"They really take care of people, no matter what the background. We're all human beings. I still come back for coffee — it's open, friendly, fun. I always have a laugh."

*Joanne, describing
Candora Society*

Planned and Prudent Asset Management



Planned program of renewal keeps the City moving

Edmonton's residential neighbourhoods, the heart of our city, experience the kind of use that necessitates ongoing repairs and maintenance.

In the late 1980s and '90s, Edmonton went through a period of constrained funding for maintenance of roads and sidewalks in mature communities. Over time, the condition of roads, sidewalks and sewers deteriorated, resulting in more frequent collapsed sewers, increased sidewalk trip hazards, and increased maintenance needs for pothole repairs.

In 2009, the City began addressing the infrastructure deficit with three main programs that renew the physical infrastructure of our neighbourhoods through sustainable, effective investment that will reach all areas of the city. The capital budget has slowed the rate of increase in the infrastructure gap.

TRANSPORTATION NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

This program is funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal portion of the annual property tax increase. It operates in mature neighbourhoods to reconstruct or maintain streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, street lighting, collector roads and multi-use trails. Roadways treatments can be reconstruction, overlay or microsurfacing, determined by which represents the best investment for taxpayers, long term.

Capital plans for 2012-2014 will see these improvements made in 41 neighbourhoods. In addition, 53 km of collector roadways, with a priority for bus routes, will be renewed.

The City will also invest in energy-saving LED street and alley light retrofits in more than 30 neighbourhoods.

DRAINAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Coordination of drainage renewal with the reconstruction of above-ground infrastructure minimizes disruption in neighbourhoods. This program includes mainline sewer replacement with open-cut or relining methods, manhole repairs and renewal of service connections in neighbourhoods built before 1989.

Drainage Services will renew or replace sewers in 18 neighbourhoods from 2012 through 2014

GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS CAPITAL PROGRAM

The Great Neighbourhoods Capital Program enhances the livability and community connectivity of neighbourhoods by creating new shared-use pathway and sidewalk connections, improving park spaces and streetscaping, and helping meet infrastructure needs identified by the community.

By coordinating work with other City departments, the Office of Great Neighbourhoods helps ensure that disruption is minimized and investments are maximized to enhance the livability of neighbourhoods.

Key Projects in 2012 - 14:

- Four neighbourhood revitalization areas: Alberta Avenue, Central McDougall/Queen Mary Park, McCauley and Jasper Place.
- Continuation of the Alberta Avenue Revitalization Initiative.
- Central McDougall/Queen Mary Park revitalization — construction scheduled for 2012 to 2014.
- McCauley revitalization - construction of three revitalization phases scheduled for 2012 to 2014.
- Jasper Place Initiative - design for the revitalization completed in 2012 with construction scheduled between 2013 and 2016.
- Enhancements in up to 10 mature neighbourhoods, such as walkways, street furnishing in coordination with the Transportation and Drainage Renewal programs.
- Inglewood streetscaping along 118 Avenues as well as 124 Street.



Residents have a say in neighbourhood improvements

Drainage



Most of the City's biggest asset is hidden underground

Drainage Services operates and maintains over 5,500 km of pipes, 343,000 service connections and numerous other assets, with a combined replacement value of over \$15.1 billion at the end of 2011. The branch manages diverse capital projects including design and construction of wastewater and drainage facilities using open-cut and tunneling methods.

Drainage Services capital projects are funded through utility rates.

Drainage Capital investment projects in 2012 to 2014, funded through utility rates, will include these projects:

- Sanitary Sewer Trunk construction in West (WESS) and South (SESS) Edmonton.
- WESS Stage W12 (tunnel underneath North Saskatchewan River near McNally School).
- WESS Stage W13 (151 Street from 99 Ave to 93 Ave).
- WESS Stage W14 (199 Street from 100 Avenue to 109 Avenue).
- SESS Stage SE4a (91 Street SW between 25 Avenue SW and 30 Avenue SW).
- SESS Stage SA1a (91 Street and Anthony Henday Drive).
- SESS Stage SA10a (34 Street south of Sherwood Park Freeway).
- Stormwater management to provide flood and erosion control during heavy rainstorms.
- Mill Woods Storm Trunk (30 Avenue between 91 Street and 99 Street).
- Flood prevention projects in Laurier Heights and Duggan neighbourhoods .
- Morris Pond Wetland (Morris Industrial neighbourhood).
- Quesnell Basin Low Flow Diversion project.

Waste Management



Construction and demolition materials recycling facility, Edmonton Waste Management Centre

Investments (funded through utility rates) for 2012 – 2014 focus on meeting needs to serve a growing City, and ensuring existing capital infrastructure is up to date and operating efficiently.

Key Projects in 2012 – 14:

- Opening of the Construction & Demolition Recycling Facility in 2012.
- Phase 3 of the Integrated Processing & Transfer Facility (IPTF) substantially completed in 2012. This phase will produce feedstock for the Edmonton Biofuels Facility.
- Commissioning of the Edmonton Biofuels Facility by Enerkem Alberta Biofuels to commence 2013.
- Closed-loop paper recycling to begin in 2013 with the opening of the Greys Paper Recycling Facility.
- Expansion of Kennedale Operations Facility completed in 2012.
- New Northeast Eco Station to be completed in 2014.
- Ongoing acquisition/replacement of collection vehicles, equipment and containers.

The establishment of City-owned **Waste RE-solutions Edmonton** to market our waste management expertise nationally and internationally was announced in October 2012.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY

We have two iPads for the best submissions received between now and November 22, 2013 — one awarded in July and the other in October. Send us a story, photo or video that illustrates what the City has done to impact your life this year. Details at edmonton.ca/stateofthecity. Use stateofthecity@edmonton.ca for your submission.

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