

**MAYOR DON IVESON  
SWEARING-IN ADDRESS  
OCTOBER 24, 2017**

***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

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I'd like to begin by respectfully acknowledging that we are here today on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional territory of the Cree, the Dene, the Nakota Sioux, the Saulteaux, and the Blackfoot... as well as a homeland of the Metis Nation.

It is a privilege to once again have the opportunity to serve as your Mayor, and it is a privilege to serve alongside these 12 dedicated Edmontonians.

I am grateful for the trust that voters have again placed in us for the next four years. Standing here I'm reminded of when I was first elected to office as a councillor ten years ago. It's just as humbling now as it was then. I'm sure that my fellow councillors are experiencing similar feelings..... A mixture of excitement... Coupled with a tremendous sense of responsibility... and certainly some trepidation as we all contemplate what now lies ahead.

Fortunately, like my fellow councillors, I am surrounded by supportive people who not only encourage and advise me, but who also keep me grounded. I want to thank all those who have come along on this journey. Above all, I am tremendously thankful to Sarah, and to Dexter and Alice – who with their love and support keep me on course, serve as my compass as I do this work.

As a family, we've been passionate about "city building" for a very long time.

And you don't have to look very far around Edmonton to realize there's been a lot of city-building during the past four years... We've seen a remarkable evolution in a short period.

Four years ago, I said we were the "Most Underestimated City in Canada". Today, I truly believe we are the "Big Canadian City to Watch".

- We are one of the youngest and fastest-growing cities in the country.

- We have diverse, promising economic clusters ... Not just in staples such as food and agriculture and energy.... But also in health innovation... logistics... building technologies.. and even artificial intelligence.
- We have modernized zoning so that people can choose from a greater range of housing in neighbourhoods closer to the city's center... rather than having no choice but to choose the outskirts
- We're continuing to build out our transit backbone with the Valley Line, and are looking ahead to further expansions...
- We're working with community partners on initiatives to end poverty and expand the supply of affordable housing...
- And we're working with our regional partners as never before. As an example, Edmonton and other municipalities in the metro region came together to form Edmonton Global, our new regional economic development team. We're now going to

'hunt as pack' together to draw in economic opportunities,  
rather than squabble over whatever happens to come our way.

We've got a lot of things going for us. A lot of talent and enthusiasm and new creativity... that can help us cement our place as an *uplifting* city that offers an incredible wealth of opportunity, no matter the price of oil.

And that's why it's so important for us to maintain our momentum.

We can't get complacent. Because at the end of the day, we're still part of a big, interconnected world that is in fierce competition for jobs and talent and new industries.

You just have to look at the feeding frenzy around Amazon's new headquarters to get a sense of how tough and intense the level of competition can be.

So how are we going to stand out in a hyper-competitive world?

How are we going to make sure that more people and businesses choose to call Edmonton home?

How do we ensure the incredible brain power and discoveries coming out of Edmonton's many post-secondary institutions raise the quality of life in this city, rather than somewhere else?

And how do we do all this while making sure we're getting the fundamentals right.... And helping as many Edmontonians as possible participate in our community?

This is the challenge that faces us, as your City Council.

Edmontonians have re-elected a group of councillors who... despite whatever differences we might have... all care deeply about our community, and share a vision of a city that strives to uplift all our people, a city of opportunity, a city that leaves no-one behind.

Likewise, I'm confident that the newly-elected councillors who now join us in this effort are people who are here for the right reasons.....To serve our public.... to debate issues respectfully.... and to contribute towards making our whole city better through our decisions.

That's the trust citizens have placed in us.

They've entrusted us with the responsibility – the duty – to build an Edmonton we can all be proud of.... And to work together in common cause to this end.

We're not always going to agree. We're not supposed to agree all the time. But as the saying goes, you can disagree without being disagreeable.

Our constituents don't want to watch us wedge each other and pit parts of Edmonton against each other. They want us to find common ground with each other, and with our partners, in standing up for Edmonton. To find "win-win" solutions whenever possible. In my 10 years on city council, I've done my best to work with that philosophy in mind.

In fact, the oath we just took together is to the whole city, not only to one part of it, or only to the people who voted for us, but to the whole city. And, working that way for 10 years, I've found that collaboration produces much better results than polarization.

I won't pretend that's easy.

We are a diverse and spread-out city. No two districts look the same.

And I know from listening during the election campaign that there are many people who are anxious about the future, or have concerns about the direction in which we're headed.

For instance, there are some very strong feelings about how future phases of the LRT should be built... and how it will interact with roads and traffic patterns. The problems with the Metro Line are understandably up front in many people's minds..... No one wants a repeat of that, least of all this City Council.

And the city's approach to major infrastructure projects is another area where we have work to do to restore trust. When people see the city spending significant amounts of their tax dollars on major projects they expect to see those projects on time, on budget and planned in ways that minimize disruption as much as possible.

The last Council made some changes on this front... but we still have more to do to ensure officials and contractors are properly held accountable and that we're reducing delays and mismanagement. We won't always get it perfect - no organization the size and complexity of ours does - but it's what we do *after* these mistakes that matters the most: we hold people accountable, and we learn how to do it better.

[pause/tone shift...]

Over the past few months, I've said a number of times that we need to think, plan and build for a million people.

That's not just rhetoric. It's a mathematical reality.



The latest census put our city's population – not the metro region, but just Edmonton alone – was 932,546 people. That is 120,000 more people than just five years ago, and a quarter of a million more over 15 years. (No wonder there's still catching up to do.)

It may be hard to believe for those of us who have lived in Edmonton for a long time, but a million is right around the corner. Quite possibly within this term.

We've gone from being this place that often had this feel of a really, really large town.... To being a place that looks... and feels... and is a lot more of a big city -- with greater confidence... more excitement... and, yes, big city challenges.

There's more happening now in Edmonton than there used to be.

But this makes the need to collaborate even more imperative. We won't come through the other side if we divide ourselves, or leave certain parts of the city ignored or feeling cast-off.

And we won't succeed by turning inward or shrinking from challenges. On the contrary, we need to draw on that grit, that

cooperation, that openness, and that determination which define our spirit... and make the bold moves that will prepare us for that bigger future....

- Putting in place a transportation network that provides many options to get around our city – bus, LRT, bikes and pedestrians, and vehicles... so that people and goods can move efficiently....
- Promoting green building technologies so that we're helping the environment, cutting utility costs and strengthening our economy...
- Strategically building an innovation corridor that connects our city's biggest think tanks – NAIT, Macewan, Norquest, and U of A – with additional breeding grounds for innovation – our health campuses, Startup Edmonton, TEC Edmonton...
- And focusing our infill work next on encouraging medium-density growth around our nodes and corridors, so that we're leveraging their location advantages as the

sensible places to build walkable, higher-density residential and commercial developments.

It's also more important than ever that we govern and lead with even greater integrity and openness.

Edmontonians must have confidence that we are making decisions in their best interests, rather than because of *special* interests. That's part of the reason I think it's important for us to establish an Integrity Commissioner's Office, implement a lobbyist registry, and enact other changes that make City Hall truly "open by default".

And, as we tackle issues and find the collective courage to make difficult decisions... we must do our utmost to keep listening and be responsive.

I think it can be too tempting and too easy at times to dismiss concerned individuals as cranks or curmudgeons or people who are simply opposed to any kind of change.... And to reduce their concerns to nothing more than NIMBYism.

People aren't always perfectly articulate when they raise concerns... especially when there is a lot of emotion in an issue. But if we as elected officials are truly listening..... we should be able to understand and appreciate their underlying interests. And then find ways of addressing those interests while still working to build a better Edmonton.

For instance, I'm not prepared to reverse course on LRT expansion... nor do I think it's realistic to expect zero disruption to vehicle traffic once the lines are running.... Things are going to change. Getting *ahead* of congestion is part of the reason we're investing in LRT.

But I get that people don't want us spending money to create a bunch of new snarls like we've seen in places like Kingsway and University Avenue. So we will work to separate trains from traffic at key intersections...so that we're learning from past experiences and "future-proofing" the investments we make today.

I'm not interested in moving backwards, or standing still, or growing complacent.

I want us to maintain our momentum. Edmontonians have clearly signaled that's what they want too.

But it's vital we do this based on evidence, not ideology. And that we do it with intelligence, rather than for political expedience.

I would rather iterate, and reformulate, and bring more people along, than stubbornly ram things through and leave people behind.

So where do we start? What should be our measures of success during the next four years?

You're heard my campaign say it's time to go "all in" for Edmonton.

Sarah and I bet on Edmonton 12 years ago when we decided to put down roots here, rather than chase the possibility of what appeared to be greener pastures elsewhere.

We chose this place – Edmonton – as the place to raise a family and build a life. I am forever grateful that we made that choice. And we have always wanted and encouraged more people to do the same. That's been a major touchstone for me during 10 years of public service.

So, to me, that should be our goal... To create the right conditions so that when our children and grandchildren are deciding where to build a life and a career and a family, they won't hesitate to choose Edmonton.

When I think of that kind of Edmonton, I envision great pedestrian spaces that put people first in their design... Where a young person who's starting out can go days without a vehicle and yet have rich and fulfilling days and nights as they live, work, play and create....

I see our mature neighborhoods going through a renaissance... where local playgrounds are once again filled with the sounds of young families playing and interacting.... And neighbourhood commercial spaces are filled with an array of small businesses bustling with activity.

I picture a place with a public transit system befitting a big city, with bus routes that connect everyone to the LRT, and LRT lines stretching out and connecting all Edmontonians with each other.

I envision an Edmonton where, no matter my children's aptitudes or chosen vocations, they can find rewarding and fulfilling jobs that offer them opportunities to learn, to grow, to challenge themselves and then to give back. An Edmonton that is an easy and supportive place to start a business... a city that's known as the nation's birthplace for incredible discoveries... And where new and exciting things are happening and opportunities are being generated.

As I said during the campaign, I think a great way to build this future is to make Canada's youngest big city also Canada's most "family-friendly" city. We have a strong foundation. Focusing on going further for families and children, which I know is important to many members of our council, can be a differentiator for Edmonton.

There's no silver bullet here... All this represents a vision that will take lots of work from lots of people doing lots of complimentary

things in every sector.... But if we collectively get behind this kind of vision, we can be a place that's a magnet for families and, in turn, a magnet for people and jobs and investment and opportunities.

I think City Hall can and should take the lead on this front.... with moves like providing free transit to everyone 12 and under. What a change that would be, making it easier for families to move around the city and experience its sights and sounds.

I think we take more action to expand early learning and child care spaces in our community... By facilitating more locations for these services and 'getting out of our own way' when it comes to red-tape and backwards restrictions.

And in this election Edmontonians also selected our school board trustees. It makes sense for our City Council to have a closer relationship with the school boards, and explore how we can align our community planning efforts with decisions about schools and school lands. I'm a big believer that our schools should be more than places where kids go between 8:30 and 3:30. Schools really are the hearts of neighbourhoods, and can be ever more powerful in bringing people together and



strengthening our neighbourliness as true community hubs.

So with that in mind, I issue this challenge to my colleagues on City Council: let's put family-friendliness at the centre of our ambition, and let's build a city that matches this ambition.

Let's tap into the creative, intellectual and physical strength of our community to do audacious things.

Let's build a culture of 'yes' within the city administration so that we're doing everything we can to help new initiatives and opportunities take root, rather than find reasons they can't.

Let's leverage the talent and energy and ideas we have in this city, and work with others in our metro region to attract and nurture more industries, jobs and economic opportunities.

And let's uplift all people here so they can live their best possible lives in Edmonton.

Edmontonians have said they're ready to go "all in" for Edmonton.

Now let's work together to make them proud.

Thank you.