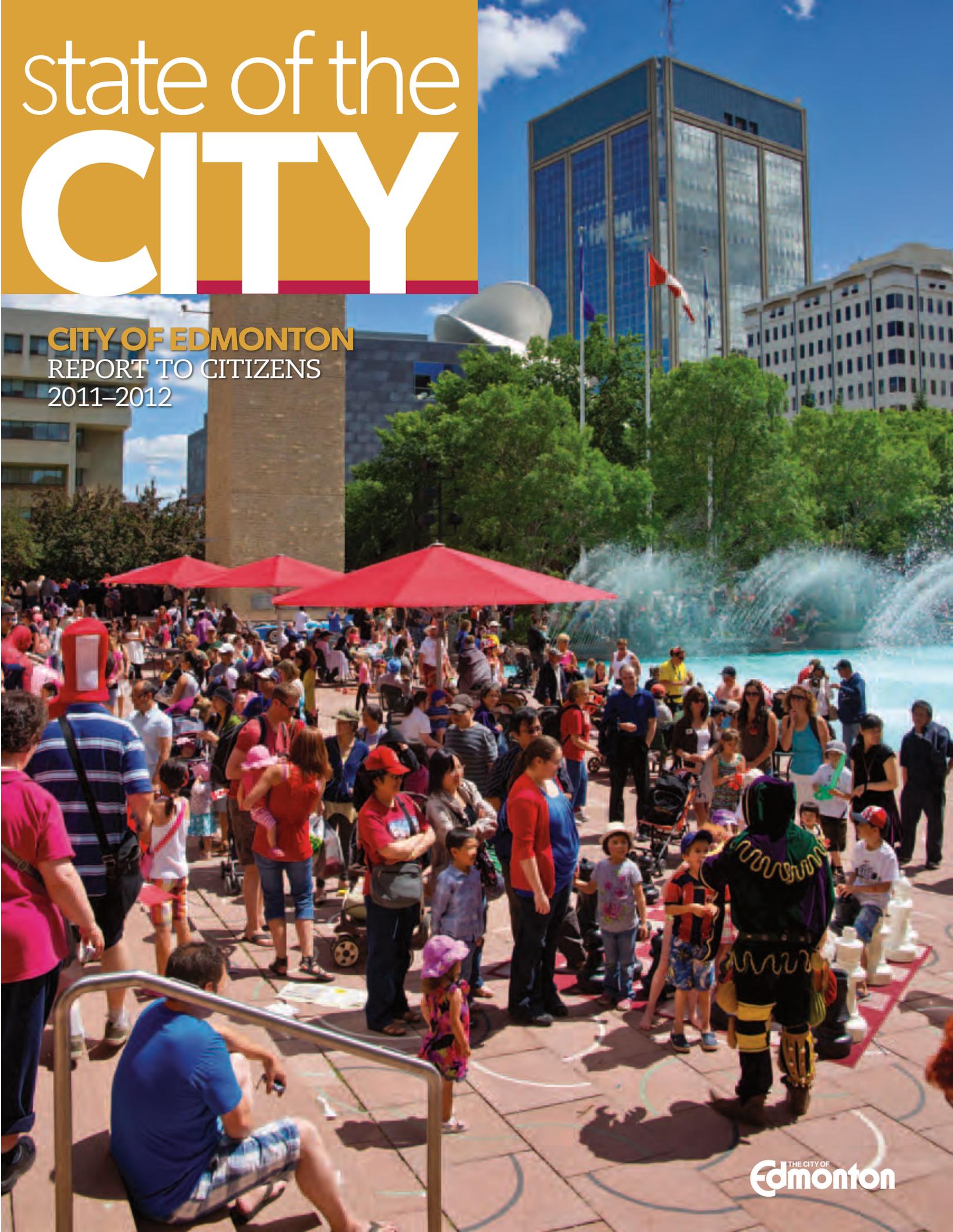


state of the **CITY**

CITY OF EDMONTON
REPORT TO CITIZENS
2011-2012

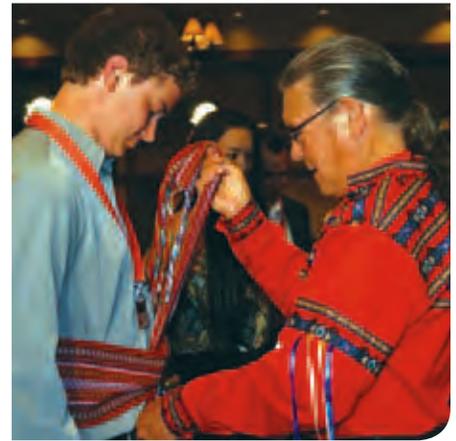


Corporate Communications,
City of Edmonton, with the talents of:
Writing: FinalEyes Communications
Feature photos: Chris Schwarz Photography
Design: Studio X Design + Illustration
Printing: McCallum Printing Group



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Or go to www.edmonton.ca/stateofthecity



state of the CITY

CONTENTS

- 5** Message from the Mayor
- 6** Edmonton: our home
- 8** Our roadmap
- 9** The economic outlook
- 10** Affordable home a life-changer
- 12** Leisure access appreciated
- 14** Pedal power engages kids
- 16** Downtown dwellers pumped
- 18** Icing on the cake
- 20** Getting around gets easier
- 22** Making tracks – in a big way
- 24** A passion for recycling
- 26** Going all out for Mother Nature
- 28** Neighbourhood’s vital volunteers
- 32** Local talent takes world by storm
- 34** High-octane imagination

City council



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

Middle row (left to right): Tony Caterina, Ben Henderson, Mayor Stephen Mandel, Kerry Diotte, Ed Gibbons.

Front row (left to right): Linda Sloan, Kim Krushell, Jane Batty, Karen Leibovici.

Message from the mayor



Edmonton today is a more vibrant city than ever before. Our comprehensive plans for how Edmonton will continue to grow and thrive for the next 30 years, “The Ways,” have outlined a bold path for our future. We are already seeing how that vision and the creativity of our people have begun to shape and transform our city.

It is clear that investment in our people and communities pays off. The new libraries and recreation centres we are building, like the spectacular new multi-purpose Commonwealth facility, are places to gather with friends and enrich body, mind and spirit. It is about providing a superior quality of life for our people. And we know that when we engage Edmontonians in planning, prioritizing and community building, we are creating the kind of city we can all be proud of.

Many of the major projects we have set in motion over the last few years are now coming to fruition. Expansion of our LRT continues and transit-oriented development represents a shift in how we move people from one end of the

city to the other, and how we are ultimately building communities.

Downtown revitalization is also taking shape. Between ongoing work on The Quarters and our City Centre Redevelopment project, we are making our downtown a place to live and raise families. And further plans to invest in and connect vibrant areas of our downtown core - the Civic Precinct, Jasper Avenue and Capital Boulevard - are cementing the heart of our city as a destination for entertainment, arts and culture.

However, we cannot sit back and rest on our successes. We have further to go as Edmonton rises to the challenge of building a more sustainable city capable of attracting and retaining the world’s best and brightest. As we strive to welcome more people to our city by offering a high quality of life, we must remember that investment in arts and culture goes a long way to defining a strong, uniquely Edmonton identity that unites us all.

Strong leadership, creativity and conviction in the great future of this city are instrumental to our success, and I must commend our City Council who, in cooperation with our Administration, businesses, communities and Edmontonians, are shaping Edmonton into a more vibrant and sustainable city for generations to come.

As Mayor, it is my pleasure to provide this 2012 State of the City Report which captures highlights of the past year.

My Council colleagues and I welcome your thoughts and ideas on any information contained in this report. You can find our contact details and more information by visiting www.edmonton.ca.

Mayor Stephen Mandel



Our city celebrates year-round with a multitude of festivals and special events

Edmonton:

diverse and energetic, with strong roots and an ambitious vision

Edmonton has been graced with many labels over the years – City of Champions, River City, Festival City – as our dynamic and energetic city grows and transforms. We know that the way we define ourselves speaks to where we’ve come from, where we’re going and who we are.

Ours is a city rooted in the history of the Canadian West, with a population that represents people from Aboriginal and pioneer communities to waves of 20th Century immigrants and more recent arrivals from all parts of the world.

Our city is a diverse, evolving metropolis, with a robust economy, strong infrastructure, dynamic arts and culture, and caring communities. The city has a cosmopolitan energy with a tradition of openness. We take our spiritual, physical and environmental health seriously.



We work hard. Albertans work longer hours than anyone in Canada (Statistic Canada, standard workweek excluding overtime, March 2012). We aren’t afraid to put in the long days, whether it’s in the financial or retail

sectors, in agriculture, or in serving the needs of Canada’s energy industry.

And we play hard. We’re passionate about the more than 30 festivals throughout the year, the diversity of our arts organizations, the professional sports teams, the activities in our community leagues and neighbourhood recreation centres. And of course, there’s no limit to the enjoyment of our river valley trail system – the largest continuous urban parkland in North America.

Edmonton is Canada’s fifth-largest city, and we have every cause for pride. With City Council’s leadership, Edmonton is now fully engaged in realizing the six strategic goals designed to move us towards our 30-year vision – a vision crafted with input by citizens. These goals, along with the plans to achieve



Edmonton's percentage rate of increase in immigration from 2006 to 2010 was 71%, the highest of seven major cities across Canada.

I live in Edmonton because it might just be the most open city on the continent right now: open to new ideas, new conversations, new businesses, new art and architecture. A new sense of self. Edmonton and Edmontonians are deeply curious. We're listening to each other and we're willing to take risks as we plot the future of this strange northern city.

Author and entrepreneur, Todd Babiak



North America's largest urban parkland system

them, will build on our city's tremendous resources and history.

Our 13,000 dedicated, talented and capable employees will continue to find ways to serve citizens better, whether it be the cheerful bus driver, the diligent street cleaner, the person working with at-risk people on the street. These are men and women who could work elsewhere, but choose to be public servants because they like the work and take pride in our city.

The City will continue to lead innovation on the national and international stage. We led the way with early adoption of new computing systems to development of winter construction techniques and piloting smart traffic control technology. Tech giant IBM named Edmonton as the first Canadian city, and one of just 24

worldwide, to receive the 2011 Smarter Cities Challenge award of \$400,000. The award supports 21st-Century solutions for successful growth, better delivery of municipal services, more citizen engagement and improved efficiency.

We continue to strive for excellence. City services play a significant role in the lives of Edmontonians every day. We are proud of our accomplishments and eager to improve service at every opportunity.

Please explore this report as we, and Edmontonians, outline some of the things the City has done over the past year that contribute to making Edmonton a great place to live.

- **812,200:** City population in 2011
- **1.17 million:** population of Greater Edmonton, an area recording Canada's second-fastest growth rate 2006-2011
- **\$49,400:** estimated per capita income for Greater Edmonton, compared with \$38,500 for Canada
- **31,000:** growth in labour force, December 2010 to December 2011
- **5.5%:** Greater Edmonton's unemployment rate for 2011, compared to 7.4% nationally (Statistics Canada)

THE WAY AHEAD

Edmonton has always had a lot going for it, and it has long been a place where people love to live, work and play.

The 30-year vision and the six 10-year strategic goals designed to move us toward that vision, **The Way Ahead**, build on our historic character and modern-day assets with some clear and determined directions to shape our civic decisions on a daily basis.

In some ways, The Way Ahead is the travel guide that offers a glimpse of our destination in this 30-year journey as a community.

For each of the six strategic goals there is a corresponding directional plan (see below). These plans provide long-term direction on how each goal will be pursued by the City. Implementation plans will outline initiatives and projects to be undertaken under each plan. Like highways and byways on a map, the plans are colour-coded for easy reference. Here's a quick overview:



The Way We Live plan focuses on the goal of Edmonton's livability, described as public safety, overall cleanliness, strong heritage, arts and multicultural elements and active lifestyles. Targets that show what success looks like were finalized in 2011, and an implementation plan for the strategy is near completion.



The Way We Grow plan outlines the goal of transforming our urban form in ways that increase density and derive best value from existing infrastructure, while maintaining strong, vibrant neighbourhoods. Performance targets were finalized in 2011, and an implementation plan is underway.



The Way We Move plan speaks to ways that Edmontonians might shift their transportation mode to better suit the city of the future, with provision of efficient road systems for goods and services, and convenient LRT and bus service for commuters, along with opportunities for alternatives such as walking and cycling. Performance targets were finalized in 2011, and an updated implementation plan is under development.



The Way We Green plan is the blueprint for preserving and sustaining Edmonton's environment through the practices and "footprints" of the City and its partners. The plan was approved by Council in 2011, and its implementation plan is near completion. Performance targets will be finalized in the next phase of development.



The Way We Finance plan is the strategy to ensure Edmonton's financial sustainability, with the revenue resources required to provide the affordable services and infrastructure that citizens need. The strategy and a financial modeling tool are under development.



The Way We Prosper plan points the way to a diversified economy for a city that is recognized as an economic powerhouse able to capitalize on its geographic, natural resource and human talent advantages. The strategy and implementation plan are under development.

25% Percentage **growth** of **Aboriginal population** in Edmonton from 2001 to 2006. Aboriginal people made up 4.8% of Edmonton's total population in 2001, a number that grew to 5.6% in 2006.

199 number of cities worldwide joining Edmonton as signatories to the **2012 Global Cities Covenant on Climate**, agreeing to at least 10 initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases.

175 scarves knitted by Assessment & Taxation Branch volunteers for participants in the **Canada Winter Games Special Olympics**; national total – 3,200 scarves.

160 kilometers of biking, hiking, skiing, walking and snow-shoeing trails in "**Ribbon of Green**" river valley parks, recognized as the longest interlinked urban parkland system in North America.

I am a newcomer to Canada; I got here in May 2011 with my wife. I would like to thank the City of Edmonton, and I am not referring just to the municipal government, but also to the citizens who have welcomed us so well since the first day. I think I can say this in the name of all newcomers - you really know how to make us glad to be living in your country. The best of the best to all of you.

Ed Buchanan, citizen

Edmonton City Manager **Simon Farbrother** has been selected president-elect of the Washington, D.C.-based International City/County Management Association. He will serve as president-elect for a year commencing October 2012 and assume the role of president at the 99th Annual Conference in Boston in 2013. ICMA's mission is to create excellence in local governance by promoting professional management worldwide and increasing the proficiency of appointed chief administrative officers, assistant administrators, and other employees who serve local governments and regional entities around the world.



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The Economic Environment: A Positive Outlook

Edmonton's economy remains buoyant and leads the nation in several respects, even while financial challenges slow activity in many other parts of the world.

A future international crisis or a crash in energy prices could set the economy back on its heels, but there were many positive signs for Edmonton in 2011. Analysts say our city enjoys some unique features that help shelter us from the worst economic storms.

"Edmonton remains home to one of Canada's most outstanding economies," John Rose, Chief Economist for the City, said in January 2012. "Broad-based upswings across the economy as well as our vital role in western Canada's resource sector are all driving up job availability, average earnings and total population numbers."

For 2011 our economic strength meant a rising standard of living for the population as a whole, and growth in sectors such as construction, service and retail. It meant an influx of migrants and refugees from all over the world who contribute their own spending stimulus, as well as added diversity and depth for the community. It stimulated growth on the city's edges, and revitalization in the core.

Mario Lefebvre, Municipal Studies Director at the Conference Board of Canada, also likes what he sees in Edmonton's economy. "With its record of population growth, job creation and rising average wages, Edmonton's economy is in a very strong position. It's a great combination. People have income, they go shopping, they fuel the residential construction industry - it's the perfect mix."

4.7%:
2012 estimate of
growth in GDP, the market
value of all goods and services
produced in Edmonton
region, compared to forecast
of 2% for Canada.
(Chief Economist,
City of Edmonton)



Affordable home has been a **life-changer**

Most mornings, Gloria Woloschuk – a self-described “early bird” – leaves the lights off and watches the sun rise through the trees outside her apartment.

The retiree loves her east-facing suite, with its brand-new kitchen, earth-toned walls, and spacious bedroom. It’s even got a balcony. “I lucked out,” she beams.

Woloschuk moved into Prince Rupert Manor – a 15-unit affordable housing development in north Edmonton – in October 2011. It was a huge relief after years of high-priced, but rundown, accommodations. She recalls one sweltering hot apartment that

hadn’t been painted in decades and had an oven so tiny her cookie sheet wouldn’t fit. One night the bathroom sink fell off the wall. In another instance, she shared a two-bedroom place with a verbally abusive roommate but couldn’t afford to move out for years.

Although a senior, Woloschuk couldn’t afford to retire because of the cost of rent, and was stuck working menial jobs. Things really took a turn when she broke a hip and found



The Way We Live is our roadmap toward a 10-year goal of making Edmonton one of Canada's most livable cities; one that is welcoming to all, safe and clean, supportive of its heritage, arts and crafts, a place that encourages active lifestyles, and that also engages its citizens in exploring its vision and directions.

between the City, other orders of government and private companies designed to increase the supply of affordable housing. Between 2006 and 2010, the City, provincial and federal governments committed about \$150 million towards provision of more than 3,000 additional units through new construction and upgrading, and rent supplements for lower-income Edmontonians. In 2011, the last of the funding for the program was allocated and now the City is exploring the possibility of future housing initiatives to build on the plan's success.

Affordable housing benefits all Edmontonians, says Daryl Kreuzer, senior planner with the City's Housing and Economic Sustainability branch. Reasonable rents help people save for the future, spend more time with their families, and become more active citizens, participating in extracurricular activities in their neighbourhoods. There's also an "economic multiplier effect" associated with building new affordable housing developments, since the business sector benefits too, Kreuzer explains.

Ben and Mary Zaurrini, owners of Prince Rupert Manor, say the project has been a perfect "win-win." Ben says tenants benefit from lower rent, but so does he: the vacancy rate tends to be lower when rents are below market value. Prince Rupert



Jay Freeman

Manor was made possible with the help of a \$1.9-million investment by the City of Edmonton and Government of Alberta through the Cornerstones Affordable Housing Program. Being involved in a Cornerstones development requires a 20-year commitment from the owner, but Zaurrini considers the building a legacy project for his children and grandchildren. Plus, he enjoys giving back: "There's still some of us who like to help out in a community. It feels good."

Affordable housing can also reduce citizens' costs of caring for people without homes. Jay Freeman of the Homeless Commission points out that a single homeless individual can cost taxpayers \$100,000 per year, due to the costs of shelter beds, hospital care, policing and other services.

Of course, affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness isn't just about the economics – it's a moral obligation for the community too, says Freeman: "The people who find themselves homeless are our brothers and sisters, our parents and children. They truly are us."



"The people who find themselves homeless are our brothers and sisters . . . they truly are us."

New home means a new outlook on life for Gloria Woloschuk

herself unemployed. For the first time, she worried about becoming homeless.

Then one day, she became curious about a new construction project across the street and went over to take a look. She met the building's owner who showed her one of the finished suites. It was not only beautiful, but within her price range. "It was like the universe was ready and said, 'Okay, this is your time,' and everything fell into place," says Woloschuk.

Prince Rupert Manor was built as part of Edmonton's Cornerstones Plan, a partnership



Kate Davis says access program is just the ticket

CHRIS SCHWARZ

Leisure access pass brings joy, equality

Five years ago, Kate Davis was a struggling single mother, trying desperately to give her eight-year-old son the same opportunities as other kids. But money was tight and most of the time, there was no money left after the bills were paid.

When her son was invited to birthday parties at a pool or the Edmonton Valley Zoo, she could seldom afford to send him. "It was hard to always have to say no," says Davis.

When a friend told Davis about the City of Edmonton's Leisure Access Program (LAP), which offered free passes to the City's recreation facilities and program discounts, she was interested – but hesitant. Davis worried that she might be branding her son as 'disadvantaged' if other people discovered he had a subsidized pass. She was thrilled to discover the pass looked like any other and no one would be the wiser.

"I can remember getting my pass and the first time I was able to take my son swimming, I cried," says Davis. After that, she and her son took full advantage of the opportunity, regularly visiting the zoo, the Muttart Conservatory and local pools, where they both took swimming lessons. But the value of program was about more than just being able to go to the gym or the zoo, says Davis: "It showed me the way out of a situation I felt stuck in. It showed me my child was as important as any other child and wouldn't miss out on opportunities to learn and grow and be active."

A lot of things have changed for Davis, who now works as the City's LAP program coordinator, a job she quite understandably loves. And it's a busy one. In 2011, approximately 28,000 people received recreation passes through the program, she says. Edmontonians are eligible if they meet an income threshold set by Statistics Canada every June.

Today, Davis tears up when appreciative clients call her to thank her for their passes. She says it makes her feel good to give back to the program that helped her feel 'normal' again and to live in a city that shares its resources with everyone. "The City has some beautiful resources and they're all available for every child," says Davis.

Tags targeted. The 2011 Graffiti Audit results show a 43% decrease in graffiti vandalism in 20 high-incident neighbourhoods compared to a 2010 baseline audit. This resulted in 1,133 tags counted compared to 1,978 tags in 2010. The number of tags identified by tagger is up to 69.8% of the total from 14.1% because Municipal Enforcement Officers participated in the audit this year, bringing their knowledge and experience to help identify or read the tags.

Fun in Edmonton?

Let us count the ways . . .

- Winter Light Festival
 - Canada Day fireworks
 - Canadian Finals Rodeo
 - Capital EX exhibition and parade
 - Cariwest Festival
 - Taste of Edmonton
 - Edmonton Indy
 - Edmonton Folk Music Festival
 - Heritage Festival
 - Symphony under the Sky
 - Freewill Shakespeare Festival
 - Latin Festival
 - Rock Music Festival
 - Dragon Boat Festival
 - Blues Fest
 - East Meets West Festival
 - African Dance Festival
 - International Street Performers Festival
 - International Fringe Theatre Festival
 - And much, much more!*
- www.edmonton.ca/festivalcityguide

Typical homeowner's property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

| | | |
|-----------------|------|--|
| City Governance | \$6 | |
| Fire Rescue | \$16 | |
| Police Service | \$24 | |



Safe Communities. Edmonton Public Library was awarded a three-year \$605,000 grant from the provincial government in support of the "Building a Safer Community through Inclusive Learning" project with Boyle Street Community Services. The project aids at-risk Edmontonians through literacy, education and social support.



The Art of Living. The City supports a rich arts and culture scene that contributes greatly to our high quality of life. It's also an investment that goes a long way to defining a strong, uniquely Edmonton identity that unites us all. The City-funded Edmonton Arts Council supported projects ranging from an artist in residence at Boyle Street Community Services to additional public sculpture to Edmonton's fourth Poet Laureate, Anna Marie Sewell.

Less mess. Bylaw officers have helped reduce cigarette litter by 36% since 2009, based on annual litter audit results. Officers focus their efforts on commercial districts within Capital City Cleanup's Outdoor Ashtray Program, which provides public ashtrays and anti-littering signage in seven pedestrian areas.

Pets in the City. This campaign reminds pet owners about being responsible for their cats and dogs. Control, license and clean up after your pet to keep Edmonton safe, clean and healthy for everyone – including you and your pet. The campaign ran on roadway and park billboards throughout Edmonton. One community reported an increase in compliance from 30% to 70% with respect to owners picking up after their dogs.

Turning the tide. The City plans drainage improvements for 31 neighbourhoods at risk of flooding. By the end of 2011, 12 have been completed and another four are ongoing. At the end of 2011, \$104 million had been invested in the program.

There when needed. Firefighters were there for Edmontonians in their time of need, responding to a record 36,356 911 calls related to fires, medical emergencies, rescues and other kinds of emergencies in 2011. This was an 8% increase over call volumes in 2010.



Weed beaters. Four additional inspectors and a public education campaign called Wanted Weeds targeted the city's worst offenders for noxious weed control. The increased effort resulted in a doubling of the number of enforcement actions to 1,200. These additional weed cuts not only curbed weed infestations but also improved the overall aesthetics of the city during the summer months.

Reducing violence. A Violence Reduction Strategy aimed at reducing the severity and frequency of violence, and better addressing the conditions that lead to crime and social disorder, was launched by the City, REACH Edmonton and Edmonton Police Service. Strategy elements include enhanced support programs for vulnerable populations, expanded enforcement in areas with bars and nightclubs, and deployment of Community Action Teams and Neighbourhood Empowerment Teams in distressed communities. Early results of the plan include housing 31 homeless individuals with intensive needs, 334 arrests, the launch of the Rising Youth leadership program and an alcohol awareness pilot project, and the creation of the Family-Business Connect Initiative to encourage businesses to identify the serious impact of family violence.

Grate news. The Really Grate Tree Project, launched in 2011, will improve growing conditions for all grated trees that bring beauty and environmental benefits to the downtown. Trees were planted in new soil plus one of either compost, biochar or horticultural lime. Employees are monitoring 16 of these trees for health and soil quality over the next three growing seasons. Citizens can follow progress by scanning "quick response" (QR) codes on the trees with their smartphone.



Shared responsibility. In late 2011, the City renewed its commitment to support the Wichitowin Circle of Shared Responsibility, and increased its annual support of \$75,000 over the last five years to \$500,000 each year. Edmonton has the second-largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada. Wichitowin is an inclusive urban Aboriginal organization that brings the community together to determine priorities, strengthen relationships and find ways to address key issues. Community Action Circles have already engaged more than 120 organizations with a focus on creating opportunities for social and economic success for Aboriginal citizens. For example, the Economic Action Circle created the Aboriginal Business Professional Association which aims to develop economic capacity in the urban Aboriginal community.





Youngsters cranked over bike rehab program

Kids chop bikes – in a good way

Kids that might once have been tempted to hang out at a bike “chop shop” now have a place where they can legally dismantle clunker bikes – and then fix them up and ride them home.

The shop was launched in 2010 for youth aged 12 to 17, as a Neighbourhood Empowerment Team crime reduction initiative known as ‘the spoke.’ The first participants were vulnerable youth involved in stealing, rebuilding and selling bicycles. But now many other youngsters are involved. Edmonton Bicycle Commuters’ Society has now taken the program under its wing, and the two groups have opened up a new workshop at 93 Street and 111 Avenue.

Edmonton Police Service provides bikes considered unfit for auction. Youngsters sign up for six weekly sessions at the workshop, where volunteers coach them in how to detect and solve problems and how to use tools. At the end participants come away with their own bike, as well as a helmet, lights and locks. Donations from local organizations and businesses help make the wheels go round.

There have been 16 graduates so far, and volunteer mentor Gina Gariano says one of the best rewards is seeing kids stay on to teach other participants. “The really amazing thing here is the relationships,” she says. “Participants learn the skills, build relationships with the other kids and

the volunteers, and then often want to stay on to share their new knowledge and become mentors themselves.”

Another success story is happening just north on 118 Avenue, where Alberta Avenue Business Association (AABA), several local business owners, the Avenue Revitalization Initiative, Arts on the Ave, 118 Avenue Neighbourhood Empowerment Team. and the Edmonton Police Service have come together to rid the locale of drugs and knife retailers.

“It wasn’t just that weapons and drugs were out there, along the Avenue,” says Joachim Holtz, Executive Director of AABA. “It was the outright sale of them: the sale of knives, weapons and drug apparatus, like glass pipes. There are families living in the area and legitimate businesses trying to succeed. It wasn’t good, at all.”

Launch of the “We Believe in 118” committee and campaign spread posters and buttons along the avenue to change the perspective. An action plan to approach six businesses of concern was created, and today five of those businesses have quit selling harmful products.

“It was a very positive experience overall and we’re still working on the sixth business,” says Holtz. “I can’t say enough about the incredible work of our community and stakeholder partners. It can’t just be a police presence; it has to be people from throughout the community who step forward and make it happen.”



Winter City – and loving it. City staff and almost 40 partners are working on a new Winter City Strategy. It’s an opportunity to turn our northern location into an asset, celebrating and promoting to the world our talent for cold-weather living. We’re already well on our way, with the Ice on Whyte Festival, Metropolis Winter Festival and the Winter Light Festival. But we can do more, using creative urban design to develop intimate and delightful outdoor public places where people want to gather and have fun, even on cold days.

Free Admission Day. Seventeen City of Edmonton facilities and attractions, along with the four YMCAs participated in Free Admission Day in September. More than 37,000 Edmontonians enjoyed the attractions and facilities, many for the first time.



New centres. Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre is a new social hub in Edmonton, where people of all ages gather to exercise, meet, relax and socialize in safety and comfort. The facility welcomed more than one million Edmontonians in its first year of operation. Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre opened its doors to the public in March 2012. An estimated 260,000 visitors annually are expected to enjoy the new aquatics area, children's area, fitness area, running track and indoor field house.



Meeting recreation needs. Edmonton continues to maintain facilities that help citizens stay active, provide opportunities for athletic development and bring people together to have fun. For example, Queen Elizabeth Outdoor Pool reopened in the summer in its new Kinsmen Park location; Peter Hemingway Fitness and Leisure Centre reopened in January following upgrades; and the newly renovated Hardisty Fitness and Leisure Centre opened its doors in March 2012.



Racism Free Edmonton. 23,000 citizens put their name to a commitment to make Edmonton a friendlier city where cultural traditions are respected and racism is not acceptable. Some of the many pledges included getting to know a colleague or fellow student from another race, speaking up when a racist joke is told, teaching one's children the importance of being committed to a racism-free environment, and educating employees and creating policies regarding racism in the workplace.

Renewing attractions.

Capital projects at City attractions have improved accessibility, interactivity, educational opportunities and enjoyment. John Janzen Nature Centre reopened in June with the popular interactive play space for young children. Fort Edmonton Park's historical recreation of the Capitol Theatre opened in the summer with the multi-media short film "Northern Light." In March 2012, Edmonton Valley Zoo opened the new Arctic Shores, inspiring visitors to learn more about the Arctic environment.

Good neighbours.

Thirteen individuals and three retail and community organizations were recognized as "good neighbours" in 2011. The City's Good Neighbour Awards honoured contributions ranging all the way from random acts of kindness to community gardens to block parties, neighbourhood safety patrols and youth programming.

Best place paw-sible. The City's new \$13.2-million, 25,000-square-foot Animal Care and Control Centre opened in 2011. The space brings staff and services together under one roof to improve service delivery and animal well-being. The building meets Silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards and is next to Edmonton Humane Society's building, allowing for more public education partnerships and improved customer service.



Ready for anything. Fire Rescue's Office of Emergency Preparedness ensured the City of Edmonton is ready for a large-scale emergency, updating our Municipal Emergency Plan and training more than 1,000 people, including City staff and external partners, in emergency management. The Emergency Operations Centre was activated 11 times in 2011. The City's Disaster Social Services coordinated various agencies and welcomed residents of Slave Lake in an Edmonton reception centre after massive wildfires ravaged the town in May 2011.

Africa Connect. About 3,000 people celebrated Edmonton's African communities at an event designed to connect people with City staff and community agencies, and explore ways to work and live together. The afternoon marketplace and learning sessions were followed by a sold-out gala dinner and dance with almost 1,000 in attendance.



Downtown dwellers pumped about life in the heart

After living overseas in his 20s, Keith Warner was happy to come home to Edmonton. Not only has the city provided great career prospects for the videogame developer at BioWare, but it's also a livable, vibrant place to live – and getting better. “In the last five years, there’s been a different energy in the city,” he says.

The heart of the city downtown, in particular, has grown by leaps and bounds. A couple of years ago, Warner bought a condo in Railtown to be close to the action – from Winspear concerts to Churchill Square festivals to – possibly – a new downtown arena. “I can walk to everything except my work,” he says. Many of his friends live downtown too, and after work he often checks out new restaurants

and coffee shops with them.

Though located in the heart of the city, his street is quiet, which makes for great summer nights on his balcony. “I have the best patio in town,” says Warner.

The City of Edmonton has been systematically developing the downtown core through its Capital City Downtown Plan, which puts a priority on sustainability and building up



The Way We Grow describes our 10-year goal of transforming Edmonton's urban form, to be accomplished by increasing density and optimizing existing infrastructure while maintaining and revitalizing strong, vibrant neighbourhoods. Expectations include high standards of urban design, adoption of best land-use practices and preservation of natural areas and public spaces.

happily reports that more Edmontonians are realizing the benefits of living downtown. In 2011, the community league sold 250 memberships, up from 30 memberships just five years ago. The 2011 census revealed that the population in the downtown (as defined by Statistics Canada) grew by 16% from 2007 - outpacing the citywide average of 12%.

This may not come as a surprise to those who've been following downtown's many development projects. With the possibility of a new arena, the Royal Alberta Museum's move downtown, the City's Jasper Avenue Revitalization Plan, major expansion plans for NAIT, Norquest College and Grant MacEwan University, redevelopment of the City Centre Airport into a sustainable, family-friendly community, and the new-look Art Gallery of Alberta, there are more reasons than ever before for people to relocate or visit downtown. Retail, services and new restaurant and grocery options are also moving back into the core.

At the same time, the creation of new housing projects offers a greater variety of homes in the core district. In 2011, the City borrowed funds against future property tax

growth in the area to kickstart the Quarters Downtown, a new development that will transform 18 city blocks directly east of the downtown core into homes for about 2,400 people, plus plenty of shops and restaurants for every taste.

O'Donnell thinks city-wide interest in downtown stems from a broader cultural trend: "Not everyone wants to live in the suburbs, and some people appreciate the choice and option of a different lifestyle downtown. You can live without the need of a car for much of the time."

As Warner says, it's a matter of renewed energy, vitality and excitement. "Cities are often judged by how vibrant their downtown is. Even though it's great to reduce our city's footprint and the cost of servicing that outward spread, ultimately our downtown revitalization is about making it a great place to live, and one that can compete with those other fantastic, appealing cosmopolitan centres around the world."



Keith Warner says downtown living is ideal for him

community. It's not just about growth – it's an acknowledgment that downtown is "the face" of any major metropolitan city, and a place we want to be proud of.

The City's role covers everything from aesthetic and safety improvements to encouraging more downtown living, especially around LRT and transit stops. Not to mention facilitating some exciting signature developments such as a relocated Royal Alberta Museum next to City Hall.

As development chair with the Downtown Edmonton Community League, Ian O'Donnell has been heavily involved in the City's efforts to improve livability, amenities, safety and transportation options in the city's core. He

“. . . ultimately our downtown revitalization is about making a great place to live, and one that can compete with those other fantastic, appealing cosmopolitan centres around the world.”



Revitalization is the icing on the cake, says Rick Krupa

CHRIS SCHWARZ

Downtown delights attract sweet success

Since Canada Day 2011, downtown dwellers have flocked to Flirt Cupcakes on their coffee breaks for sweet treats. After the success of its flagship store on Whyte Avenue, Flirt Cupcakes opened a second store on Jasper Avenue and 105 Street to capitalize on downtown revitalization.

“It’s moving in the right direction and we wanted to be close to that,” says company co-owner Rick Krupa.

At the moment, there’s not quite enough foot traffic to keep the shop open on the weekends, but he suspects this will change in the summer when the farmers’ market and an abundance of downtown festivals kick into high gear once again. Krupa is also optimistic that some of the big projects slated for downtown – like the proposed arena – will infuse more energy into the neighbourhood. “There’s so much room for growth,” he says.

Ed Fong can attest that downtown revitalization efforts are working. Since establishing deVine Wines and Spirits on 104 Street and 101 Avenue eight years ago, he has seen the area change dramatically. Plenty of independent shops and restaurants have sprung up in what used to be a quieter neighbourhood. And, thanks to new condo developments, amenities and public transit options, more people are living in the area, boosting foot traffic and walk-in trade.

During the summertime, the downtown farmers’ market and summer festivals draw people from across the city to the downtown core, exposing Fong’s business to a broader clientele. He is excited about the prospect of the proposed downtown arena, just blocks away, which would add even more bustle to the area.

“I always tell people there are few places I’d rather be doing business than in downtown Edmonton. I’ve always believed in downtown,” says Fong.

Good planning. The City of Edmonton received an Award of Merit from the Consulting Engineers of Alberta for the North LRT to NAIT Project in early 2012. The CEA commended the project team for its collaborative approach to constructing a tunnel cavity below the EPCOR Tower at 101 Street and 105 Avenue. The team designed and built the cavity for the North LRT to NAIT line, due for completion in two years’ time, during the design and construction of the EPCOR Tower. “It takes a remarkable level of collaboration to build two major infrastructure projects in the same location at the same time,” notes Transportation Services General Manager Bob Boutilier.

Capital development. The City began transforming a five-block stretch of 108 Street between the provincial legislature and Grant MacEwan University Campus into Capital Boulevard in 2011. It will be a public space where citizens can stroll, sit and enjoy the views including broad, tree-lined sidewalks along with distinctive street lighting and street furnishing. Completion is scheduled for the 100th anniversary of Alberta’s legislature building in September 2012.

We have a winner. The transformational Capital City Downtown Plan was recognized in 2011 by international, national and provincial organizations for its potential to make the heart of the city even more vibrant, sustainable, well-designed and accessible. Proposed components include a downtown arena and entertainment district, a high-profile bikeway system, integration of an at-grade LRT system and substantial investments by development partners including potential expansion to Grant MacEwan University and Norquest College.

Typical homeowner’s property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----------|
| Library | \$3 | \$ |
| Neighbourhood Renewal | \$6 | \$ \$ |
| Planning, Housing & Buildings | \$9 | \$ \$ \$ |

Did you know?
Edmonton has 264 distinct residential neighbourhoods:

- 109 in mature areas
- 87 in established areas
- 68 in developing neighbourhoods

All aboard. Belvedere Community Revitalization Levy sets the stage for Station Pointe, a \$34-million initiative that will couple innovative residential and retail development with the convenience of the existing Belvedere LRT station and transit centre.



By engaging 21 Aboriginal communities in Alberta, the Waltherdale Bridge renewal project became the City of Edmonton's largest Aboriginal consultation ever. The construction site is very near the Rosedale area, a historical gathering place and burial ground.

Downtown CRL. City Council approved the boundaries of the Capital City Downtown Community Revitalization Levy (CRL) area in October 2011. The CRL will help fund proposed catalyst projects that include: Jasper Avenue New Vision, Central Warehouse Housing Incentive Program, downtown stormwater drainage work, river valley promenades and downtown arena project. Investment in the catalyst projects will help Edmonton increase urban densification, improve sustainability, enhance transit viability and will also showcase downtown Edmonton as a vibrant economic, recreation and residential centre.

A tomorrow community. Plans to transform the City Centre Airport lands into a community for tomorrow continued to move ahead at a rapid pace. The process was kickstarted with the selection in 2011 of Vancouver's Perkins + Will as the team to lead the development of a plan that will achieve City Council's goal of a vibrant, sustainable and family-oriented community for 30,000 people. The site promises to be a new jewel in Edmonton's lifestyle and economic fabric.

Good eats. The City of Edmonton and citizens began research and consultation to develop a comprehensive strategy around food policy, food systems and urban agriculture. A Food and Urban Agriculture summit is planned for May 2012. Urban agriculture is an important part of a sustainable local food system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability of the city.



West Rosedale. An urban design was approved by City Council in 2011, paving the way for the area to become a complete, diverse urban village on the river's edge in the heart of Edmonton. Edmontonians from all parts of the city will come here to connect with the river and enjoy this unique community.



Green houses. The City of Edmonton's highly successful Legacy Pointe development on a surplus school site attracted high interest, with 17 lots sold and 16 houses built with secondary suites, yielding the potential to house 32 families. The development combines Built-Green construction and secondary suites in an established community to help achieve moderate increases in density, diverse housing forms and opportunities for sustainable and affordable housing. Look for the next City development featuring Built Green housing with secondary suites this summer in Oxford neighbourhood.



Welcome home. Cornerstones: Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing marked the end of its five-year term by surpassing Council's original goal of creating 2,500 affordable homes by 2011. As of December 31, 2011, the Cornerstones initiative increased Edmonton's supply of affordable housing by funding 3,038 safe, affordable housing units for citizens. City administration will deliver recommendations for another similar grant program to City Council in 2012.



**Getting
around**
is getting a
whole lot easier

Commuter convenience
replaces rush-hour
stress for Katie Starratt



The Way We Move gears us up for a transportation “shift” to fit Edmonton’s evolving urban form and enhanced density, while supporting the City’s planning, financial and environmental sustainability goals.

When Katie Starratt moved to Ellerslie in 2010, Edmonton’s newest LRT station in the southeast had just opened at Century Park. She was thrilled to discover it only took a few minutes to drive to the station, where she could park her car for free and hop on the LRT.

“I don’t have to face the stress of rush-hour traffic,” says Starratt. “When the weather is bad in the winter I’m on the LRT, reading the newspaper and relaxing.”

Across the city, more and more Edmontonians are parking their cars and turning to transit as a reliable, inexpensive way to get where they need to go. In recent years, the City has been steadily expanding its transit offerings, bringing the LRT out to the southside. In 2011, it completed the first year of construction on the LRT’s north expansion to NAIT, with project completion due in 2013.

Commuter convenience has also been upgraded with a revamped ETS website and a new text-to-ETS service. Now, anyone with a cellphone can text ETS to see when the next ride is coming.

This is a handy tool for Asia Szkudlarek, who says it makes an easy commute even easier. There’s a bus stop on a busy route just a few minutes from her Glenora home, and it takes less than 20 minutes to get downtown. “I’ve never had any trouble with ETS,” she says.

In the summertime, however, Szkudlarek

prefers to cycle to work, a preference shared by an increasing number of Edmontonians. Chris Chan, an avid cyclist and former president of the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters’ Society, has noticed a surge in the number of bicycle commuters. “We gave a winter cycling seminar five years ago, and 10 people came out. Two years ago, we had 30 people trying to register and we had to turn many of them away,” he says.

Cycling, walking, running, even skateboarding, are ways that Edmontonians can “shift” their transportation habits when weather permits. It moves us closer to the vision of a city where transportation is less demanding on the environment and fits a range of lifestyle choices. The City plays its part by making those choices easier – for instance by investing \$1.6 million in 21-km of on-street bicycle routes in 2011. In the next 10 to 20 years, the City plans to install around 500 km of bike paths or lanes to make it safer and more comfortable for bicycle commuters to get where they need to go.

It’s a good start, says Chan, though he hopes the City will continue to invest in even more cycling infrastructure.

“We need infrastructure that will encourage more new cyclists to be on the roads and feel like they have a space they can be comfortable in,” he says. “And getting more cyclists out there makes it safer for everyone.”

Of course, not everyone can cycle or take transit everywhere they need to go. Edmonton’s transportation plan focuses on offering complementary transportation options that meet everyone’s needs. At the heart of this is the maintenance of roadways and streets, used by commuters of every stripe.

In 2011, the City upgraded many major thoroughfares in town, and also began a pilot project with an intelligent traffic management system that uses sophisticated sensors and cameras to control the flow of traffic. Historically, the timing of stop lights has been predetermined and is not responsive to events like car accidents or construction tie-ups. The pilot on Yellowhead Trail can change traffic controls instantly to keep drivers moving.



“When the weather is bad in the winter I’m on the LRT, reading the newspaper and relaxing.”



CHRIS SCHWARZ

Chris Chan



Quesnell Bridge was just one major project for 2011

CHRIS SCHWARZ

Making tracks at a record pace

The old joke that our city has two seasons - winter and construction season - may have been quite true in 2011, when a record tally of road and bridge construction work was completed.

Thanks to cooperative weather, a diligent workforce, plenty of patience from Edmonton motorists and approximately \$231 million in taxpayer investment, the City wrapped up an amazing number of major projects.

Two were the \$161-million Quesnell Bridge and Whitemud Drive widening project and the \$253-million 23 Avenue-Gateway Boulevard-Calgary Trail Interchange.

At the same time the year saw the reconstruction of Scona Road and 99 Street as well as roadwork on Kingsway to accommodate the North LRT to NAIT line due to be complete in a couple more years.

Construction and maintenance of these and other critical parts of civic infrastructure provide easier, safer and more efficient ways for citizens and commercial goods to get around the city, and also make public transit an increasingly attractive option.

And it's not all about the major commuter routes. 2011 saw another successful construction season in Edmonton's neighbourhoods. Transportation, the Drainage Branch and the Office of Great Neighbourhoods managed a City investment of \$184 million for road reconstruction, overlays, and microsurfacing, along with drainage renewal and upgrading of other neighbourhood amenities.

The first 100 years. *Ride of the Century: The Story of the Edmonton Transit System* is a new book that tells the story of the first 100 years of ETS as well as the development of Edmonton from a small prairie town to the booming capital city it is today. Filled with a rich collection of historical and current images, woven together with personal stories and historical accounts, this book is a fascinating look at a century of Edmonton Transit's history.

Smart roads. City staff have been doing preparatory work with international partners to turn the Yellowhead Trail into a smart technology laboratory and showcase, with the ultimate aim of moving goods and people more quickly. Tech-solutions for merging onto the Trail could also avoid the need for overpasses – just one example of significant savings to the taxpayer. The Trail has the highest concentration of trucks and congestion among the city's arterial roadways.

Trip planner. ETS launched its revised online ETS Trip Planner in late 2011, making it easier for residents to plan their trip on Edmonton Transit. Developed jointly by ETS and the City's Information Technology Branch, some of the new features and tools of the upgraded ETS Trip Planner include integration with notices about detours and bus stop closures as well as quicker results and better trip solutions.

The hole truth.
Edmonton roadcrews repaired 549,600 potholes in 2011, up from 435,000 in 2010.

Safety studies. A one-of-a-kind research chair in urban traffic safety, funded with an endowment from the City and established at the University of Alberta, will study traffic safety issues in this and other cities, looking for ways to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries and the financial cost of collisions. Dr. Karim EL-Basyouny was appointed to the chair in 2011.

Typical homeowner's property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

| | | |
|------------------------|------|------------|
| Corporate Expenditures | \$6 | \$\$ |
| Roads | \$16 | \$\$\$\$\$ |
| Transit | \$18 | \$\$\$\$\$ |

No fueling around. About 400 citizens attended Edmonton's nod to World Car Free Day in September, when City staff provided every form of encouragement and information required to have people park their car for a day and use alternate and more sustainable modes of transportation – everything from bus and LRT to walking and cycling.



Around the block a few times.

Bus #5059 has become the first DATS vehicle to put more than 300,000 kilometres on the clock. When the City took over the DATS maintenance contract, the fleet was almost entirely new. Because of the cost of replacing the fleet all at once, the City's objective is to make them last as long as possible while they are replaced through a phased cycle. DATS operators make nearly 2,500 door-to-door trips each day. More than 10,000 registered passengers who have a severe physical or cognitive disability rely on this service throughout the year.



The right direction. The Office of Traffic Safety reports improved figures for 2011 compared to 2007: fatalities down from 32 to 22; injury collisions down 37% from 5,482 to 3,460; injuries down 40% from 7,445 to 4,446. At the same time, the population has grown 10% from 741,392 to 812,201 in 2011, private passenger vehicles in the city are up from 431,425 to 491,789 in 2011, and private motorcycles have increased in number from 10,152 to 14,087 in 2010.

In the know about snow. In January 2011, road crews cleared so much snow from Edmonton streets that it would be equivalent in size to a pile the height of our CN Tower, 100 metres wide and 80 metres deep. Following the severe winter that saw record storms amounting to about 160 cm of snowfall between October 2010 and April 2011, the City of Edmonton took significant steps to improve its service and enhance its communications efforts for future snow seasons. Traditional news releases and web updates about parking bans on busy roads were augmented with posts on the City's Facebook page and through its Twitter account (@CityofEdmonton). In addition, citizens could subscribe to e-mail alerts about parking bans, snow clearing schedules and spring street cleaning. A new interactive map showed residents when residential road maintenance would take place. All this gives residents enough notice to move their vehicles so crews can do the best job possible.

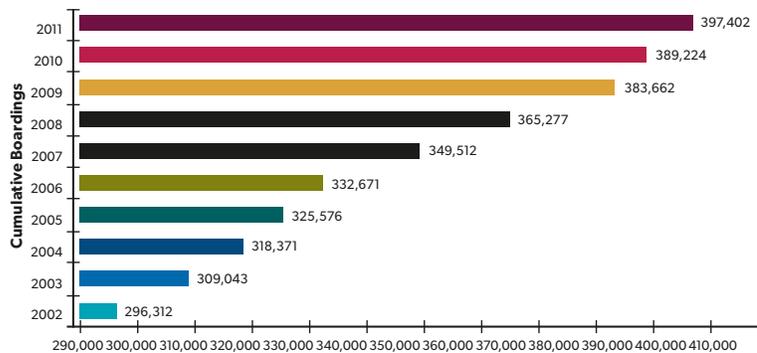
Free trip. Corporations donated 82,470 transit tickets to the Donate A Ride program in 2011. The free rides were distributed by local social service agencies to help low-income individuals and families get to the social services they need to improve their lives.

Night Rides.

A late-night transportation pilot between Whyte Avenue, the University of Alberta and Southgate shopping centre began operating January 6, 2012, and by April 1 had served 1,828 patrons. The pilot ran until mid-April 2012, operating Friday and Saturday nights between 1:30 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. The goal is to help patrons and workers of the night-time economy get home more easily and safely after closing time. Riders can request a stop anywhere en route to Southgate, where taxis wait for remaining patrons. The pilot was intended to free up taxis on Whyte Avenue for people travelling in other directions.

Zooming ahead. More Edmontonians than ever are making the choice to go with public transit, whether bus or LRT. A ridership survey shows that overall bus ridership increased 5.2 percent from 76.3 million trips in 2010 to 80.3 million trips in 2011. Weekday LRT ridership increased from 92,000 to 95,300 daily passenger boardings in 2011. Weekday bus ridership increased from 297,000 to 302,000 daily passengers boardings in 2011. Contributing factors include good service, a full year of South LRT operation and programs such as U-Pass and ETS@Work.

Bus and LRT Weekday Cumulative Boardings 2002–2011



A turn for the better. Traffic safety analysis has identified opportunities for road infrastructure (right turns) and signal fixture changes that when implemented reduce collisions an average 75% and 99% respectively, resulting in millions of dollars in cost savings.



Citizen passion drives **recycling** **success**

Edmonton's River Valley is 22 times larger than New York City's Central Park, providing a sanctuary for flora, fauna and nature lovers in the heart of the city, and making it North America's largest continuous urban park. In neighbourhoods all around the city, our 460 parks and green areas provide places for people to gather and enjoy the great outdoors.

While the city's parks are well known, Edmonton has another 'green' side that you may not know about. Since the 1980s, the city has been a world leader in recycling. Long before environmental consciousness

was trendy, Edmonton embraced curbside recycling, diverting cans, bottles, paper and more from landfills.

To be precise, our citizens have embraced recycling. The success of recycling services at



Marilyn Kirby, seen volunteering at Edmonton's Reuse Centre, embraces recycling in all its forms



The Way We Grow describes the 10-year route Edmonton will take to become a national leader in setting and achieving the highest standards of environmental preservation and sustainability, in our own civic practices and those of our partners.

training. Now she's sharing her knowledge through her condominium newsletter, tacking up recycling information in the garbage rooms, and speaking with her neighbours. "I want to educate people to do the right thing with their garbage and recyclables to help reduce waste," she says. "Every time you speak to someone you make a difference."

Kirby's environmental ambitions don't end there: she's also a volunteer with the Reuse Centre, where citizens donate and buy used goods like paper, craft supplies, textiles and more. "It's a crafter's paradise," she says.

Passionate volunteers are an important part of the City's environmental efforts. Between 2009 and 2011, the percentage of grasscyclers rose from 36% to 52%, largely because of grassroots (excuse the pun) efforts. Hundreds of volunteers went door-to-door, explaining the environmental benefits of leaving grass clippings on the lawn, instead of bagging them for the City to take away.

Meanwhile, about 90% of single-family homes recycle paper, plastics and the like. That number is partly due to Edmonton's focus on convenience: homeowners can simply toss all recyclable items into a big blue bag and put it out on collection day, rather than having to sort them into separate containers.

Edmonton's waste management strategy also includes a world-class composting system, which removes organic waste from trash. Between recycling and composting, 60% of waste is being diverted from landfills.

Edmonton is also leading the way with a program to convert residential waste into biofuels. In 2011, the City opened the Advanced Energy Research Facility at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre. The facility enables this technology to be used for other waste streams from oil and gas, forestry

"I want to educate people to do the right thing with their garbage and recyclables to help reduce waste."

and agricultural sectors. Jointly funded by the City of Edmonton and Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions, the research facility positions Edmonton, and Alberta, as a green technology leader. It is part of a broader biofuels program that aims to divert 90% of Edmonton's residential waste from landfill by 2015, once the Edmonton Biofuels Facility is fully operational.





Laurie Taylor enthalls student Audrey Slavens with her show-and-tell

CHRIS SCHWARZ

Dressing up for Mother Nature

Laurie Taylor is actually a little bit shy, but that didn't stop her donning a handmade recycled bikini for a contest sponsored by a local radio station.

She crocheted the bottom portion using old VHS movie tape (Spinal Tap, to be specific), and for the top, she shaped two 45 rpm records to suit. While she didn't win the handmade bikini contest, she did earn an honourable mention and some enthusiastic recognition.

Taylor goes the extra mile for all things environmental. In the summer of 2011, she used recycled materials to transform a lamp post on Alberta Avenue into a large carrot (in tribute to a local coffee shop called The Carrot). She also sells her recycled creations – like corkboards made from wine corks and multimedia art – at a handful of shops in and around Edmonton. "I love creating things and giving back to nature," says Taylor. "I want to leave my world a little better than when I found it."

Her job as a program specialist with the City of Edmonton's Waste Management Services fits her to a tee. The job entails doing everything from teaching Grade 4 kids about worm composting to donning the Michael Recycle mascot costume, to teaching adults about recycling at various trade shows across Edmonton. "I love helping people see things in different ways," she says.

Taylor's proud of the City's efforts to care for the planet and she loves her job. Even in her off hours, she'll wear her City vest, happy to chat with anyone who asks if she works for Waste Management Services.

"We're always going to have waste, and we're always going to have to deal with it," she says. "How the City deals with waste is part of the reason I'm proud to be an Edmontonian."

Power cuts. Energy requirements were cut 15% through five Arena Energy Retrofits completed by Buildings and Landscape Services. There are now plans to upgrade an additional three arenas and an archives facility with similar energy reducing initiatives and reduction targets. Projected annual savings are \$42,500, suggesting a 10-year payback on the \$450,000 investment.

Business awards. Edmonton's first Small Business Eco Challenge presented awards to three local businesses for their commitment to preserving and protecting the environment through their business operations. The awards allow the City to develop strong relationships with small businesses and encourage community-wide participation in environmentally-friendly practices.



Filter system. The Groat Road End of Pipe Underground Treatment Facility, completed in 2011, uses advanced filter treatment technology combined with oil and grit interceptors to treat the stormwater runoff from over 1,800 hectares in the Groat Drainage Basin. This facility helps improve water quality in the North Saskatchewan River.

Typical homeowner's property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

| | | |
|--|------|------------|
| Parks and Community Services | \$15 | \$\$\$\$\$ |
| Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal and other City support services | \$7 | \$\$ |



Keep it clean. A Low Impact Development (LID) Design Guide has been developed to help reduce pollutants in the North Saskatchewan River by managing storm runoff as close to the source as possible. The guide provides technical guidance for planning, design and maintenance of LID features.



The Defenders. The City engages citizens in learning about and protecting natural areas through the Master Naturalist Program. This program has more than 90- graduates who continue to network and share with others on the need and options to protect natural areas. Various City departments also protect biodiversity, for instance with native plantings around stormwater management ponds, wildlife crossings where roads intersect with natural areas, and innovative management of protected natural areas.

Bin it. The number of people and the frequency of visiting a Recycling Depot followed a consistent trend in 2011, with 65% of single family households and 66% of multi-family households using Recycling Depots around the city. Meanwhile the number of people using Eco Stations in a 12-month period continues to grow, from 37% in 2006, to 53% in 2009 and 66% in 2011. Overall satisfaction with Eco Stations remains high at 95% in 2011, including 73% who report being very satisfied.



Killer-watts. Bicycle-powered generators at three musical events allowed energetic citizens to power sound systems that saved the grid seven kilowatt-hours. Another bike-powered generator spun the blender to make smoothies at several events around the city. Such awareness events help Edmontonians explore ways to be the "green champions" they aspire to be.

Pull the plug. Drainage Services won a Canadian Water and Wastewater Association outreach award for two programs developed to address the issue of fats, oils and grease plugging drains, pipes and major sewer lines. The City of Edmonton spends about \$1 million annually on costs associated with clearing these sewers. The two programs were "Store it, Don't Pour It" for residents and a "Trap it, Trash it, Strain It" campaign for industry and restaurant owners. Through the second program, the City has raised the associated bylaw compliance rate from 40% to nearly 60%.



Energy savings. The City worked with RONA hardware and renovation stores to offer the first Home\$avers Eco Sale at all Edmonton RONA stores in November 2011. More than 850 home energy saving kits containing programmable thermostats, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, low-flow showerheads, wallplate insulators and LED nightlights were sold to the public. The kits each help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 1.6 tonnes while saving \$175 annually in energy costs.

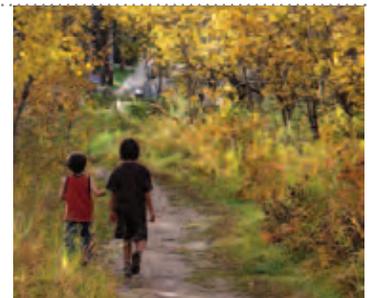
Waste not, want not. The City is finding ways to minimize the effects of major capital construction projects. For instance, in the project to build the North LRT to NAIT, trees obstructing the right-of-way have been relocated whenever possible, or donated to an Edmonton grade school for landscape art projects. Unused wood is chipped for tree wells or mulched and composted. Ninety percent of material from buildings removed from the right-of-way has been recycled. Removed asphalt is reused on site or for other projects. Rainwater at the future MacEwan Station will be collected and used for irrigation.

More recycling. Early 2012 saw the opening of a new construction and demolition recycling facility at Edmonton Waste Management Centre. It will process 100,000 tonnes of mixed construction and demolition material per year, eventually recovering up to 70 per cent of the material for second use. This type of material generally makes up a quarter of all municipal solid waste sent to landfills in Alberta.

Let it rot. Backyard composting increased among single family households in 2011, from 24% composting regularly in 2009 to 30% in 2011.



Au naturel. Edmonton has protected 4,000 hectares of natural areas, working towards a goal of 5,500 ha. Most Edmontonians (75%) are now within a 20-minute walk of a natural area.





Residents team with City to **renew neighborhoods**

Nora Begoray (left) and Christine Gue are part of a passionate corps of community volunteers in Parkallen

CHRIS SCHWARZ

At nearly 70 years old, Parkallen is one of the city’s oldest neighbourhoods and blessed with a charm all its own.



But having been built on a marshy area many decades ago, it has suffered some maintenance challenges along the way. Citizens were relieved when Parkallen was one of six communities chosen by the City for renewal work in 2011.

The project included upgrading roads, curbs and sidewalks that cracked and sagged over time. The reconstruction and new paving has made streets more attractive and useable. “Now we can open the car door without

hitting the curb,” says resident Christine Gue. “The sidewalks are a lot smoother and easier to walk on.” Homes that once flooded in the springtime will no longer suffer the same grading problems they once did thanks to drainage systems replacement.

Renewing older neighbourhoods on a scheduled basis isn’t just about the comfort of citizens, it also helps reduce future costs, explains Konrad Siu, director of the Office of Infrastructure and Funding Strategy:



The Way We Finance is a 10-year plan, currently under development, to ensure Edmonton's financial sustainability, with the revenue resources required to provide affordable services and infrastructure that citizens need in their daily life.

"An industry-accepted rule of thumb is that if you don't do roadway rehabilitation such as resurfacing the pavement at the appropriate time, it will cost four times when total reconstruction is required." It's always more expensive to build anew than to do the rehabilitation needed to keep current infrastructure in good shape.

Since there are limited funds available for renewal, including rehabilitation and reconstruction, it's important to do this strategically. Siu's office uses computer modeling and risk-benefit analysis to prioritize funding for allocation to infrastructure renewal each year. His team has been recognized by governments around the world for their approach to assessing age, condition and priorities for renewal of public infrastructure.

At least one other Alberta municipality is emulating our City's innovative program of building up a Neighbourhood Renewal fund that over time will renew all neighbourhoods. The dedicated tax levy, set to end in 2018, goes into a fund to pay for planned rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads, sidewalks and streetlights.

Like any renovation project, of course, neighbourhood renewal is not always a picnic – there are bumps in the road and there are times when a lot of things are happening at once. In Parkallen, prior to 2011, the City had been steadily tearing up sections of the street to access drainpipes beneath. The 2011 renewal project happened at the same time as the first phase of a project to make improvements to the neighbourhood park (a collaboration between the community league and City). In the summer of 2011, crews repaired concrete, added landscaping, and transformed an old wading pool into a spray deck.

"It's challenging," says neighbour Nora Begoray. "When they do the drainage work, they can block off a whole intersection." But at a certain point in the project, when about half of the neighbourhood had been finished, the improvement was evident. "We had a big rainfall, and all the old areas had puddles everywhere and mud, and the newly repaired

areas had nice streams running straight to the drainage. It was obvious how much better it was going to be."

A new Great Neighbourhoods team was instrumental in coordinating the various City departments, such as drainage and transportation and keeping community residents engaged in the projects that ultimately improve the liveability of neighbourhoods. The efforts minimize disruption to residents and maximize efficiency.

The community created its own light relief in the summer with a Construction Blues BBQ in the park and a chance to reconnect around the construction barricades and semi-finished projects. Begoray says the event was a really great effort on the part of the organizers and residents to embrace the frustrations and challenges that can accompany neighbourhood reconstruction. She compares the entire process to a home renovation, where things never go perfectly according to plan, but the end results are worth it.

A critical component is the presence of passionate community volunteers who work hard to help residents build a connected, fun and attractive neighbourhood. This energy shone through in the summer BBQ, and many other special touches, including the effort to find volunteers to plant a last-minute donation of trees with only 24 hours' notice.

The willingness of citizens and City officials to work together through thick and thin has been critical to ensuring a successful project that will extend the life of community infrastructure for decades to come. The City and its contractors have been fully receptive to the community's concerns and ideas, Begoray says. In fact, when Parkallen residents went to the City's contractors, Red Oak Construction and Park Paving, to ask for their involvement in a concrete handprint project, they immediately helped create a distinctive memory and legacy in the neighbourhood park for generations to come.



Park Paving and their supplier Burnco donated concrete and staff time to create a unique concrete feature in the neighbourhood park where neighbourhood kids could set their handprints to commemorate the year of reconstruction in 2011. Steve Shaw, project manager with Park Paving, said staff gave up their Saturday for this little extra touch. "It's not a huge thing, but we'd been tearing up that community and it was nice to give something back."





The City's tax share. The latest (2009) numbers from Statistics Canada show that the average Edmonton household paid almost \$17,000 for taxes to all levels of government (combining income taxes, education taxes and property taxes). For every dollar of this total tax amount, 65.9 cents go to the federal government, 28.4 to the provincial government, and 5.7 cents to the City of Edmonton. This breakdown does not include additional taxes the provincial and federal governments collect on goods, services, fuel and other consumables.

New quarters. The City received provincial approval for The Quarters Downtown Community Revitalization Levy (CRL) from the provincial government in September, 2011. The City will borrow \$56 million to fund infrastructure and public amenities identified in the Quarters Downtown Community Revitalization Levy Area (including Quarters Downtown and Boyle Renaissance). Future phases could see additional municipal investment of up to \$110 million, plus more than \$200 million in private sector investment currently planned for the area. The CRL will use increases in taxes from that area, generated by the increase in value created by the initial investments, to pay back the original borrowing. The City has begun significant improvements to drainage infrastructure in the area to support planned development along 96 street.

Squeezing pennies. The 2012 Operating Budget, excluding City utilities) of \$1.88 billion (subject to final adjustment) held the average increase in property taxes to 3.89% for civic services and 1.5% to continue the Neighbourhood Renewal program. Strategies to increase revenues and reduce internal costs achieved about \$40 million in net savings in the 2012 budget. Increased spending was approved to cover projects such as

- An enhanced snow removal strategy
- More roadway maintenance
- Support for violence-reduction strategy
- Operating funds for Community Leagues
- Affordable housing
- Pilot bus service to Edmonton International Airport



Record-setter. 2011 was the last year in a three-year capital investment cycle that saw a record \$3.3 billion invested in capital infrastructure projects. Lower interest rates, higher industry capacity coming out of the recession, and a desire to catch up on some long-needed projects supported this level of spending on facilities and amenities that Edmontonians use every day. Examples of projects 2009-2011:

- Renewal work in six neighbourhoods
- Dawson bridge rehabilitation
- Fort Road upgrade
- Four new transit stations around the city
- Terwillegar Recreation Centre
- Begin work on Commonwealth Recreation Centre
- New Capitol Theatre at Fort Edmonton Park
- Hardisty Pool redevelopment
- John Janzen Nature Centre expansion
- Park construction and rehabilitation



Conferring cash. The Shaw Conference Centre generated food, beverage and rental revenue of \$13.5 million for Edmonton Economic Development (EEDC) in 2011, plus overall economic impact city-wide of \$47 million. EEDC manages the tourism and events portfolio for the City, as well as Edmonton Research Park and other economic development initiatives.

Typical homeowner's property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

Capital project financing \$8 
 Debt financing \$12 



Utility bills. The budgets for City-managed utilities, approved in 2011 for the 2012 year, result in rate increases for a typical family of \$4.03 per month for Sanitary Drainage, \$1.34 per month for Stormwater drainage and \$1.86 per month for Waste Management. Drinking water and wastewater treatment services are managed by EPCOR. Utility charges pay for services such as flood management and waste recycling that Edmontonians have come to expect. Drainage Services operates and maintains more than 5,400 km of pipe, 330,000 service connections and numerous other system assets. Waste Management collected 236,338 tonnes of residential garbage and 51,588 tonnes of recyclables.

Many happy returns. Dividends of approximately \$26 million were paid to the City from the Ed Tel Endowment Fund in 2011. Since 1995, the fund has earned a compound annual rate of return of 7.5%, grown its principal from \$465 million to \$591 million and paid \$561 million in dividends to the City. The City's overall investments outperformed their benchmarks in 2011 providing additional investment earnings that fund the City's various capital projects. On a combined basis the overall return on the City's investments was 2.2% for 2011. This is above the overall policy goal of 2% and reflects the City's conservative approach at a time when Canadian equities, for instance, were down 8.7% and international equities fell 12.2%.



Assessment file. The number of Edmonton property owners filing formal complaints with the Assessment Review Board is about half the average of the four years 2008-2011. Residential complaints were down to 988, while commercial filings were fairly steady at 1,344. About 18,000 assessment queries were directed to City staff prior to the deadline of March 12. As a result of citizen contact more than 450 accounts were adjusted by assessors without need for an official filing.

Managed debt. The City's total debt in 2011 (net of EPCOR and sinking fund) was \$1.974 billion, or 53.7% of the debt limit defined by the Municipal Government Act. The City uses debt much like a homeowner, borrowing money to pay for needed improvements today, and making payments over the years the benefit is enjoyed by everyone in the house.

Shared dollars.
The City allocated transfers from other orders of government as follows in 2011:

| |
|--------------------------|
| Federal government: |
| Capital - \$34,272,000 |
| Operating - \$45,104,000 |
| Provincial government: |
| Capital - \$452,883,000 |
| Operating - \$68,044,000 |



Excitement ahead. Council approved a capital budget of \$2.8 billion for hundreds of infrastructure projects in the 2012-2014 construction cycle. Projects will replace the century-old Walterdale Bridge; reconstruct and maintain older communities through the Neighbourhood Renewal Program; purchase land for the Southeast to West LRT line; build a new Borden Park outdoor pool; continue arterial road work; and fund community facilities such as the iHuman arts program for at-risk youth, the new CKUA space on Jasper Ave., and the Whitemud Equine Centre. Almost half of the capital budget goes to maintain existing structures as good practice to avoid costly repair and replacement costs later.



And...Action!

Local talent takes
the world by storm

Movie-maker Trevor Anderson is conquering the world from his home base in Edmonton



The Way We Prosper charts our path to a robust and diversified economy, where Edmonton is recognized as an economic powerhouse with strong connections to the north and key markets around the world, and with a full role as the urban centre of regional industrial development. Edmonton will be a knowledge and innovation centre for value-added and green technologies and products, and a place that attracts and supports entrepreneurs.

You could say Trevor Anderson's star is rising quickly. The Edmonton filmmaker's newest work, *The Man That Got Away*, was shown at the prestigious 2012 Berlinale, earning him the DAAD Short Film Prize, which comes with a three-month residency in Berlin.

In 2011, his short film *High Level Bridge* was screened at the Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim.

As he builds a reputation internationally, Anderson is often asked why he chooses to stay in Edmonton. It's a question that bugs him: after all, why *wouldn't* he stay? Edmonton has a vibrant arts community and citizens who appreciate the arts, he notes. While the film industry isn't as large as the scene in Vancouver or Toronto, the energy in Edmonton is palpable. "When you say you're making a movie, people say, 'I'll help!'"

There are also plenty of formal supports. Anderson recalls one panicky Friday afternoon when he discovered he needed the City to close a road in order to film *The Man That Got Away* over a long weekend. So, he called the City's Film Commissioner, Brad Stromberg, who liaised with officials in the Transportation Department to make it happen, to Anderson's relief. With the commissioner's help, the film remained on schedule – and on budget.

Anderson has received strong accolades from the community, like the Enbridge Emerging Artist and Telus Courage to Innovate

Awards, both given to Anderson at the annual Mayor's Celebration of the Arts. The Edmonton Arts Council – a funding organization supported by the City – has helped the young filmmaker finance his movies. Other indie filmmakers he meets on the film circuit are quite shocked to hear how well Anderson has been supported by local funding agencies.

Beyond this support, Edmonton is home to the professional capacity required for successful projects, as well as a willingness to invest. Anderson says he wouldn't want to make movies anywhere else. "I like the idea of developing my own artistic voice in the place where I am from," he says.

For more established players in the industry, the film commissioner's office coordinates a filmed entertainment fund, established in 2011 with \$5 million from the City and a matching amount from Kilburn Entertainment of Los Angeles. It is an investment fund that supports proponents who already have a confirmed distribution agreement for projects made in and around Edmonton. The two equity investors have full expectation of generating a profit to support further investments.

Like the city's arts scene, Edmonton's high-tech business sector has also been growing strong thanks to programs and organizations designed to facilitate entrepreneurship. Scanimetrics is one of Edmonton's tech success stories. The company sells wireless sensor technologies that test and monitor the vital signs of equipment ranging from mobile phone computer chips to oilsands heavy haulers. "Our nanotechnology products can provide a return on investment of more than 2,000% for our customers," says president Steven Slupsky.

The company got its start in 2003,

when it won the VenturePrize business plan competition that provides cash prizes and mentorship for start-up companies. "It transitioned us from what was pretty much a virtual company at the time, to an operating entity," explains Slupsky.

Since then, the company has grown steadily, and now employs about a dozen people and serves clients across Canada. "We've found the environment here to be



conducive to starting a company," he says.

Edmonton has a strong base of investors, talent and programs. VenturePrize is run by TEC Edmonton, a joint venture between the City's Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and the University of Alberta. TEC Edmonton programs also operate a business incubator in downtown Edmonton, broker venture capital investments in start-ups, and help with patent and other commercialization tools required by Edmonton inventors. TEC Edmonton clients received more than \$50 million in financing in 2011.

All this has helped Edmonton's tech sector expand at a fast clip.

"Historically, the local tech industry has grown in fits and starts.

But, as we build critical mass together, we create a better and better environment for companies to operate here," says Slupsky.



"We've found the environment here to be conducive to starting a company."



CHRIS SCHWARZ

Norman Mendoza

High-octane imagination fuels success

There was a time when technology seemed at odds with learning, and parents urged kids to put down the videogame controller and pick up a textbook.

But recently there's been a shift in thinking. "There's a real appetite in traditional education to find new ways to engage with audiences," says Norman Mendoza, chief operating officer of Rocketfuel Games in Edmonton. "Technology – particularly mobile and online games – can be a great way to capture the attention of kids and adults alike."

Established in 2009, Rocketfuel Games marries gaming and technology to create interactive experiences for people of all ages. "It's a way for people to play while they learn or receive a brand message," says Mendoza. Past projects have educated children about street safety, tested the knowledge of university geology students, and helped young people explore their career options. In addition to local clients, the company has worked for clients across North America, including Discovery Kids on the Discovery Channel.

"Edmonton provides a great launching point for any company," says Mendoza. Local institutions like the University of Alberta, NAIT and Guru Digital Arts College provide the talent that fuels the company's creative efforts. The province's strong economy gives local organizations the resources to try new things with their educational or marketing materials, he adds.

The City also supports burgeoning tech ventures via TEC Edmonton, a collaboration between the University of Alberta and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation that helps entrepreneurs turn good ideas into solid business entities. Winning the TEC VenturePrize in 2009 gave Rocketfuel Games the financing and expert guidance it needed to get off the ground. Three years later, the company is growing and will continue to be based in Edmonton for the foreseeable future. "We believe, very strongly, in deep roots," Mendoza says.

Faster flight. The City agreed to provide \$120,000 to Startup Edmonton for the Flightpath Accelerator program that helps companies quickly turn business ideas into reality. The venture, which will also provide business training, aims to invest in 500 creative entrepreneurs over the next five years.

A place for business. The new Rampart/Oxford land development in northwest Edmonton mixes fully serviced industrial and residential sites in a way that conserves natural areas, uses Low Impact Development principles, solves complex intergovernmental jurisdictional issues, and provides a full complement of roads, multi-use trails and underground infrastructure.



EDMONTON NORTHLANDS

Smokin' turnstiles. The City of Edmonton and Northlands joined forces to host the 2011 River City Round Up, a 10-day celebration of Edmonton's agriculture and western heritage in 2011. Operating in conjunction with the Canadian Finals Rodeo and Farmfair, this multi-day festival serves to raise the profile of agriculture as an important part of our heritage and a vital part of our economy.

Typical homeowner's property tax allocation for City services, out of total \$150/month

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation \$2 



Our story. The stories of life in Edmonton have been shared in 192 countries and 10,000 cities worldwide via the City's main marketing and outreach program, Edmontonstories.ca. Over 600 people every day learn about life here through the site, promoted through online advertising, social media, and personal social networks. Recruiters and tourism officials are now using the site to win clients, new recruits and visitors.



Home sweet home. Despite a vibrant economy and robust average wages, Edmonton remains the place to be for prospective home-buyers. RBC Research shows that in 2011, home affordability in Edmonton was better than in five other major cities across the country.

Help found. 34,800 new jobs were created in Edmonton from December 2010 to December 2011, the fastest rate of job growth in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. Most were full time, often in sectors with high skill requirements and above-average wages and salaries.

Good business.

The City relies on the local business community in delivering quality services and infrastructure to the citizens of Edmonton. Almost three-quarters of the \$1.5 billion spent in 2011 went to Edmonton vendors, including local construction firms and trades. Vendors from surrounding areas, including Sherwood Park and St. Albert, accounted for another 5% of that expenditure. A series of "Selling to the City" sessions aimed at increasing access to business opportunities has been developed.



Victory lap. Edmonton scored major international exposure as well as a bump in visitors when it hosted Indy car racing again in 2011. The latest contract keeps the event here through 2013. Another crowd-pleaser that raised Edmonton's profile as a destination for tourism, business investment and relocation: preliminary games in the World Junior Hockey Championships in December 2011.



Pickles in the pyramids. The downtown farmers' market remained open over winter weekends thanks to its move into City Hall between October and May. Edmonton has a total of eight farmers' markets that connect local farmers, producers, and artisans who provide fresh, locally grown food and hand-made goods with citizens. The markets foster relationships that create a greater sense of community and a stronger local economy in Edmonton.

Edmonton HQ: Hoover's database lists 1,539 headquarters based in Edmonton for firms that manage operations in other branches or divisions. Also, 30 publicly traded companies are based in Edmonton.

Sweet spot. Edmonton took the Number Two spot as the Canadian city where entrepreneurs are the most upbeat about their prospects, in a report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. First was Regina. And Edmonton came in third among other cities for its high concentration of entrepreneurs and a high business startup rate.

Cost recovery. The Schonsee Development includes one of the largest earth excavations in Edmonton's history to create a naturalized wetland on provincial land, serving as a stormwater management facility for a large part of north Edmonton. This initiative by the City includes rapid recovery of the cost from other land developers. The City's construction of this infrastructure has opened the door for further development in the area.



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What's Your Story? If you have a story about your experience with City staff, services and programs in 2012, we'd like to hear it. E-mail: stateofthecity@edmonton.ca