

**Speaking Notes**  
**Mayor Don Iveson's Swearing-in**  
October 29, 2013  
130 pm, City Hall, Edmonton

***Check against delivery***

Justice Manderscheid, Grand Chief Kappo, Councillors, City of Edmonton staff, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, fellow Edmontonians.

**Tributes**

I wish to begin by acknowledging that the City of Edmonton is on Treaty 6 territory, and that the city and all the people here are beneficiaries of this peace and friendship treaty. I also extend to the indigenous nations of the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot, Tsuu T'ina [sue-tina], and Métis who have made Edmonton, and this region, their home before the coming of the forts — my respect and desire to build stronger relationships in the spirit and intent of Treaty 6.

And to all indigenous people who make Edmonton their home today, I respect the spirit of WICIHITOWIN [we-chee-too-in], which means “helping each other,” that permeates this ancient gathering place, and which is the true spirit of Edmonton.

And human beings continue to gather here, more and more of us, from all around the world. Now, as Edmonton strives to become more globally competitive, the stakes have never been higher.

A week ago, our fellow citizens bestowed upon us their collective will and desire for Alberta's capital city to continue to build on the strong foundation laid by the previous City Council.

Today, as we swear in a new Council, we also honour our predecessors.

They set a vigorous pace for those of us who will lead the city for the next four years. The bar was set the highest by outgoing Mayor Stephen Mandel, who demonstrated bold leadership and succeeded in building consensus. I played a role in that team, and am fully aware that an effective Mayor must draw upon the diversity of wisdom and perspective that Councillors bring to the table — and that is how I will work with each of you.

Together, we will work closely on making the city an even better place in four years' time than when we first arrived.

### **Beyond Our Borders**

Local government is most effective in coalition. Therefore, only when we work as a region — a region of diverse but purposeful strategic partners — will we succeed. On behalf of Edmonton City Council, I extend best wishes to our regional colleagues on their election. We look forward to collaborating in building a stronger and more prosperous future for the Edmonton Region while ensuring a more equitable share of the benefits and burdens of growth.

And I am going to keep calling it the Edmonton Region, because that's what it is and that's where it is — and we must be clear with the world about who we are and where we are.

We also have a new relationship with Calgary, not only because Mayor Nenshi and I follow each other on Twitter, but also because these two great Canadian cities have so much to gain by working together. We have a lot of work ahead of us with the provincial government on a big city charter that must recognize our special challenges, and that ensures we have the tools and resources we need to realize our full potential as *globally competitive* Alberta cities.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Mayor Nenshi and Premier Redford this past Saturday. We discussed the needs of our two cities. It was a good first meeting, and I look forward to more face-to-face opportunities to firm up stable, predictable funding for key infrastructure, including LRT.

### **Priorities**

One of the themes from the election campaign that resonated with me was the new sense of optimism in our city. In business, in the arts, in the community — there is consensus and pride in this being one of the best places on earth to take a risk, to innovate or to launch an idea. 840,000 strong, Edmontonians applaud the successful, and we strive to enable those emerging among us to rise, to lead, to innovate, to inspire — to Make Something right here in Edmonton.

During the mayoral campaign, I outlined a vision for city-building and put forward ideas for how, through short-term action, anchored in longer-term commitment, we may achieve that vision.

In return, we received a clear, strong, city-wide mandate from the people of Edmonton.

This election confirms that Edmontonians are done apologizing, done making excuses, and ready to build something extraordinary here on the banks of the North Saskatchewan.

But how do we get there?

First, the basics. We all need a city that works. Our most pressing priority is our infrastructure: roads, pipes and sidewalks. We need to apply the successful principles of our neighbourhood renewal program to how the City approaches its infrastructure. We must put, to an end, yearly debates on the quality of basic City services by finding long-term consistent solutions to predictable annual challenges. We will fix the roads, and we will remedy the weaknesses in our drainage system. The scale of this work is immense, and it will take time — so I ask for citizens' patience as we work hard through more construction seasons to re-build a city that works.

On fiscal responsibility ... Council must always demonstrate a commitment to value for money, and to improved efficiency. We have a sacred responsibility to make effective and efficient use of public dollars. In recognition of this, I proposed "Council 2 Per Cent," a goal for City Council to work year-round with managers and front-line staff to find at least \$20 million in efficiencies each year. The fruits of our labour can be applied to fund infrastructure priorities, like roads, or used to help keep tax increases lower. One qualifier ... our opportunity to do this for the 2014 budget will be limited, but we will learn from it and set in motion for the 2015 budget. We will work hard to earn your confidence, to demonstrate that your dollars are well invested in your city.

On open, accountable, transparent government ... Many of us, while door-knocking, heard repeatedly that citizens are insisting on more meaningful channels to connect with, and influence decision-making in the City. We can, and will, do better. Council will decide whether a Council initiative on public involvement is warranted. Whatever the path, our destination is a renewed, reinvigorated and more inclusive public engagement process, where Edmontonians' voices inform how City Council and Administration approach decision-making. This is about more than town halls and surveys. This is about demystifying what happens at City Hall for citizens, this is about using technology to make interacting with City Hall easier, and this is about reaching out to communities that have not traditionally engaged with City Hall. Open government is about demonstrating that, in everything we do, and by the way we do it, we are at your service. Regardless of where you stand on a City decision, you will have a say and will be heard, and will understand the reasoning behind that decision.

On tackling homelessness and poverty ... We must continue to support our community's ongoing work toward ending homelessness. Looking to root causes, we must begin to apply the same discipline to tackle poverty in our lifetime. The solution involves diverse partners ... including the provincial and federal governments. At the municipal level, our role is to help lead the dialogue, bring in partners, raise our aspiration and support consensus on innovative ways to help our fellow citizens in ending the vicious cycle. Let me be clear: our role is not to fund work that is the mandate of others. So my commitment as Mayor will be to provide personal leadership on building a community consensus about the social and economic case for reducing poverty in our city, especially among children.

On urban living ... Building a globally competitive city requires increasing housing options for a growing population. This means revisiting the regulatory barriers that make infill development difficult while, at the same time, working with communities that are prepared to embrace change. And where we have bigger opportunities like Strathearn or Blatchford, or future transit-oriented development, we must aim high so that Edmonton offers a full set of urban lifestyle options. Affordable, urban living options for families of all shapes and sizes, to complement the suburban options already available, are crucial to attract and retain the people who will help build a more globally competitive city.

Globally competitive cities require strong transportation networks, anchored by comprehensive rapid transit. LRT expansion is a priority for Edmontonians, and it is a priority for me. City Council must continue to champion bold development of the full network. Our measure of success will be seeing construction underway on the southeast line and a long-term funding formula to carry on west, and northwest. Similarly, we will need support from partners for key roadway projects like the Yellowhead to keep goods and labour moving.

All this will require being clear about our priorities to other orders of government. It will mean we cannot ask for 10 different things and be disappointed when we don't get the help we need. It will require discipline to stay focused on the big things we need help with.

On prosperity ... Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy. They contribute to the diversity and resiliency of our growing city and economy. City Hall can do more to encourage the next level of growth as we build a more profitable and prosperous city. Like a one-stop shop to help businesses get through key paperwork. And, move more applications and interactions with the City on-line. We need to *listen* to our business community as we make decisions that affect the climate for business in Edmonton. From taxes and fees to infrastructure to key transformational projects like downtown revitalization, LRT and major roadway upgrades — all critical to our continued

prosperity.

On innovation ... We must build on the success of Startup Edmonton and TEC Edmonton — recently ranked Canada's best and the world's 17th best business incubator — to create more early and mid-stage incubators. And add a new focus on unlocking innovation and entrepreneurship in indigenous as well as immigrant and refugee communities. We can increase their chances at success by attracting investment and venture capital to our city. Our universities, colleges and technical institutes are key to supplying us with talent, fueling innovation with research. Combined industry, education and research will ensure that we are part of the solution to problems in the world. As problem solvers, we can do our business cleaner, greener, cheaper, faster and safer — and sell those solutions to the world. This is how we will ensure that Edmonton will compete globally, and endure long into the future, no matter the price of oil.

On the environment ... Edmontonians want to do the right thing. We are a leader in waste management, and Edmonton is charting a new path through a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to redevelop urban land into Blatchford based on light footprint principles. Let's continue our environmental leadership, stimulating new entrepreneurial, research and innovation opportunities as we go.

On the arts ... Edmonton's arts scene is a thriving one. But living here as an artist has to be affordable. Space for collaboration, rehearsal and performance remains a challenge, particularly for emerging artists. We will continue to bring together the business and artistic communities to share ideas and grow together. And soon, with Canada's largest urban Aboriginal population, let us discover together how we can better support Aboriginal art in our city.

On diversity and inclusion ... We draw pride and strength from being a city of diverse communities — as you will soon see in our performers, Métis singer Sierra Jamerson and a collaboration of Aboriginal and multicultural drummers.

Just as we pay tribute to those who have gathered here for thousands of years, we welcome those newly arrived who have made Edmonton their home. We are building this place together.

Edmonton is a welcoming place, but it can be even more welcoming in the years to come.

The almost 80 candidates for City Council were drawn from all walks of life with a singular purpose ... and that is their desire for a better Edmonton, a place they choose to call

home. The diversity of the candidates is encouraging, though City Hall still does not reflect the diversity we see in Edmonton. So we will strive to ensure all voices are heard, and that our agencies, boards and commissions come to reflect the diversity we see in our population.

We strive to live up to our designation as an age-friendly city, ensuring that seniors have housing, community and every chance to lead active, safe and creative lives in Edmonton.

We strive to ensure that young Edmontonians are more actively engaged in civic life and in positive activities in our city — from amateur sports to learning at the library.

We strive to ensure that Edmonton is a safe, inclusive, equitable and welcoming city for women as well as for those among us who identify, or are perceived, as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, or who have alternate gender identity, or gender expression.

Virtually every thread on earth is represented in the rich tapestry that is Edmonton, and we are stronger for it.

### **Council Expectations**

To my newly sworn-in City Council colleagues, Edmontonians have high expectations of us going in. Voters rendered their verdict clearly at the polling booth: we are moving in the right direction to build an even greater city, but, just as much, we must take care of the most basic parts of what makes a city great.

We will disagree from time to time. In fact, that's to be expected, even encouraged where it's constructive. But I trust we will always be respectful of each other's roles, and conduct ourselves in a way that is befitting of our office. Indeed, diverse but informed perspectives enrich the quality of our debate and our decisions.

Politics, at its best, ought to be about seeking solutions to challenges that have no simple answers. We cannot please everyone — though we will not shy away from hard decisions. We cannot fix everything — though we will do our best to fix what we must.

Our partners in this effort will be citizens, the public servants of the City of Edmonton, and our colleagues at Edmonton Public Library, the police service and commission, and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. Shoulder to shoulder, our city stands poised — no longer underestimated — to reach our potential over the next four years.

## **Generational Shift**

Some have remarked that this election marked the passing of the torch to the next generation of leaders. But I and my fellow Council members are custodians of that leadership, doing the most good with it to make Edmonton a even greater place, in time to pass on the torch to our children and grandchildren.

The leadership you see here represents all Edmontonians, regardless of age or interest. A united city we must be ... in order to accomplish all on the path ahead in the next four years.

I welcome returning incumbent Councillors Anderson, Caterina, Gibbons, Henderson, Loken and Sohi. I warmly welcome Councillor Nickel back to City Hall, and I extend a warm welcome to our new Councillors Knack, Esslinger, Oshry, McKeen and Walters.

Let me end by acknowledging all those gathered here in person as well as those watching online. We extend our thanks to the people of Edmonton for entrusting their hopes for a brighter future to this group.

Now let's get to work building this great Council.

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