

CURRENT ISSUES & INITIATIVES

Downtown Airport

Situation

After two referenda, in 1992 and 1995 respectively, and numerous court challenges, Edmonton City Council decided to close one of the downtown airport's two remaining runways effective Aug. 3, 2010. The 1995 referendum resolved to consolidate all passenger services at the Edmonton International Airport, leaving the downtown airport restricted to general aviation.

Numerous studies, lengthy public consultations and exhaustive debate eventually led to council's decision to close the airport and rezone it as a "green" residential development. While a council majority favoured total closure, Ed was successful in obtaining a compromise in which one of the two runways was retained, thus providing a transition period and preventing undue hardship for the airport's existing tenants. Nevertheless, a group of dedicated airport users and enthusiasts are gathering signatures to retain the airport for general aviation and even expand it to offer passenger service.

Position

Ed's position is that record numbers of new flights and passengers have clearly demonstrated the advantage of consolidating passenger traffic at the international airport and that the result of the 1995 referendum should be respected. The limited number of corporate users and tenants using the downtown airport can easily be accommodated at the International, and the city will benefit tremendously with a new "green" residential area close to downtown.

Gorman LRT Station

Situation

Ward 4 candidate Dan Backs claims a concerted council effort could have secured funding for the Gorman LRT Station in 2009 when the federal government's economic stimulus initiative was available for "shovel ready" infrastructure projects. Council examined various projects, including the Gorman Station, but rejected it in favour of a much-needed new spur line to include the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT).

Position

The fallacy of Mr. Back's argument is that the Gorman Station project was NOT shovel ready: consultation had not begun, nor had there been any attempt to purchase the necessary land. Council favoured the NAIT expansion because, compared to any other destination, a much larger number of riders would actually use it. While city councillors are expected to manage the interests of their constituents, they must also consider the interests of the city as a whole. It may "look good" to

support a project that wouldn't possibly win council approval, but such posturing will ultimately discredit the councillor and reduce his or her ability to win future council support. Note: an LRT extension to the Gorman area should be in place within the next five to seven years.

Northeast Agricultural Land

Situation

Rural and agricultural land in the north-easternmost corner of Ward 4 uniquely combines a favourable micro-climate with excellent soil conditions supporting a large number of local market gardens. However, the increasingly convenient transportation of goods, services and commuters along Anthony Henday Drive has produced tremendous competition for available land from urban developers hoping to establish new residential communities in the area.

Position

The situation in northeast Edmonton is similar to that of the Netherlands where intensive agricultural activities and high population densities effectively coincide. Ed supports development that would see new communities surrounded by active market gardens giving consumers easy access to locally grown produce. He advocates the creation of a properly prepared "area structure plan" in which the community's input concerning land development is actively encouraged, considered and respected.

Environmental Initiatives

Ed will continue to introduce and support measures undertaken by the City of Edmonton to ensure Edmonton maintains its international reputation as a leader in "green" initiatives:

- The provision of affordable, user-friendly public transit
- New and ongoing conservation initiatives
- Providing homeowners bonuses when purchasing energy efficient appliances
- Insistence on the provision of walking trails – especially those in the river valley
- The provision of adequate green space keeping pace with new development.

Supporting Our Military

With over 6,500 military, civilian and volunteer members, CFB Edmonton has one of the largest concentrations of DND personnel anywhere in the world. Our troops not only risk their lives on our behalf, they and their families also contribute enormously to our local economy. Recognizing the need to seamlessly integrate our military and civilian communities, Ed has co-chaired the Edmonton Salutes Committee for nine years. His dedication has helped Edmonton earn its reputation within the defence establishment as the most military friendly community in Canada. The committee's mandate includes:

- Meeting each flight of military personnel returning from Afghanistan with free coffee and donuts, heartfelt thanks, and police and fire service escorts to CFB Edmonton

- Raising special event funds for military families when spouses are deployed including invitations to the Citadel's performance of "Billy Bishop Goes to War" on Oct. 10, 2010
- Ensuring public awareness of the sacrifices military men, women and their families endure on our behalf with recognition oriented events such as "Red Friday"
- Attending all Edmonton based Remembrance Day ceremonies
- Arranging "Freedom of the City" ceremonies for CFB Edmonton military units
- Attending military events associated with the Navy centennial, etc.

Crime Prevention

Ed is devoted to a variety of crime related initiatives designed to:

- Identify and eliminate the root causes of crime
- Coordinate police and social organizations in solving crime related problems
- Develop appropriate after-school activities for youth
- Increase neighbourhood-friendly and late-evening transit services
- Provide support for community policing

Greater Edmonton Initiatives

In order to ensure the communities surrounding Edmonton share in the opportunities and costs associated with belonging to a metropolitan area, a committee consisting of 24 municipal representatives was established in 2008. The committee has since agreed to a variety of important policies. Ed has been instrumental in securing the necessary consensus; he has chaired the regional non-market housing sub-committee; and represented Edmonton's interests on the sub-committee responsible for governance, advocacy, and transportation.

Volunteer Activities

Ed is a registered member and enthusiastic supporter of the Northeast Edmonton Rotary Club

Northlands Board

Ed represents the City of Edmonton on both Northlands' Executive Committee and Board of Directors. He has been an effective leader insisting Northlands contributes appropriately to the development of local sports facilities - whether downtown or on Northlands' existing site.

Other Alberta / Edmonton Initiatives

- Immediate past Vice-President of Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)
- City of Edmonton representative responsible for Alberta MLA relations
- Northern related issues