



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Calgary

Tuesday, June 10, 2025
9:01 a.m.

Transcript No. 13

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Justice Dallas K. Miller, Chair

Greg Clark

John D. Evans, KC

Julian Martin

Susan Samson

Support Staff

Shannon Dean, KC

Philip Massolin

Aaron Roth

Rhonda Sorensen

Christina Steenberg

Amanda LeBlanc

Clerk

Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of
Parliamentary Services

Administrator

Manager of Corporate Communications

Supervisor of Communications Services

Managing Editor of *Alberta Hansard*

Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Calgary

Public Participants

Michael Doyle
Sarah Elmeligi, MLA, Banff-Kananaskis
Janet Eremenko, MLA, Calgary-Currie
Linda Goold
Samir Kayande, MLA, Calgary-Elbow
Julia Law, Vice-president External, Students' Union, University of Calgary
Allison Leonhardt
Ruben Nelson
Gordon Paynter
Alexander Shevalier, President, Calgary & District Labour Council
Joan Stauffer
Kevin Van Koughnett
Ross Watson

9:01 a.m.

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[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Well, good morning, everyone. Please come on in. Find a chair, and make yourself comfortable. Welcome to the very first public hearing in the city of Calgary for the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

First of all, I want to thank each of you for coming, and I know more people will be coming. The expression of interest and the full schedule of presenters encourages this commission that Albertans and, particularly, Calgarians are concerned about this very important issue of redrawing the boundaries in Alberta.

By way of introduction my name is Justice Dallas Miller. I'm the chairman of the commission, and I also serve as a justice of the Court of King's Bench in southern Alberta.

I want to introduce the commissioners to you. To my immediate left is Susan Samson, a long-time resident of Sylvan Lake, Alberta, and an experienced municipal councillor, and she also served a four-year term as mayor of Sylvan Lake. She also volunteers and was a business owner in Sylvan Lake, and for her volunteer activities she was awarded the citizen of the year and also received the Queen Elizabeth II diamond jubilee medal. She continues to volunteer in her community with a special focus on public health care.

To Susan's left is John Evans, KC, an experienced litigation lawyer who conducts trials across the province but with a focus in the Lethbridge office of Stringam barristers and solicitors. John's legal ability was recognized recently by being awarded the King's Counsel designation, or KC. John also volunteers as a member of the Alberta Judicial Nominating Committee.

To my right is Dr. Julian Martin. Dr. Martin is a retired history professor from the University of Alberta with advanced degrees from the University of Cambridge. Julian has volunteered on many committees in the Sherwood Park area, where he lives. He's our capital city representative, and he has served and continues to serve on tribunals such as the Surface Rights Board and the Land Compensation Board.

At the far end of the table is Mr. Greg Clark, an entrepreneur and consultant in the area of information and knowledge management. Mr. Clark lives in Calgary, and he has had the distinction of serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, representing Calgary-Elbow for a term. For that experience we are very grateful to have his input as a commissioner as well as many other items he brings to the table. Currently Mr. Clark serves as chair of the Balancing Pool of Alberta, and he consults widely with organizations relative to proper governance.

We are your Electoral Boundaries Commission from across the province and with varied interests and professions and life experience to bring to this issue. The Electoral Boundaries Commission, as you see in the slide, is an independent body established by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Every two election cycles, or approximately every eight to 10 years, the legislation requires that Alberta boundaries be looked at to determine whether they need to be revised or changed.

Two issues are driving this commission in terms of this process. First of all, the Legislature has authorized the expansion of the Legislative Assembly from 87 electoral divisions to 89. Currently there are 87 seats, and soon there will be 89 representatives in the Legislature, but before the next election legislation will be passed to expand to expand that to 89, so we must take those two electoral divisions into consideration.

Our timeline as a commission is very strict, and it is running. This commission was appointed by the Speaker of the Legislature in late

March of this year. In April we met as a commission on a couple of occasions. We started our public hearing process in late May, and we're partway through that public hearing process. We've had meetings in Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Edmonton last week, Westlock, St. Paul, and we're here in Calgary two days this week and moving to Brooks and Medicine Hat later in the week. Then the following week we do northern Alberta. By the end of June we will have completed our public hearing process.

We take the information and the submissions and the presentations heard at the public hearings, and we work on a report that must be registered and filed with the Speaker of the Assembly no later than late October. That will be what we call an interim report. It will be made available to the public, and the public will have input and response to that report. We will then in turn have a second round of public hearings to receive specific input relative to our initial interim report. Then, finally, we must provide a final report within 12 months of our appointment, which will be late March of 2026. That's our timeline as a commission.

Of course, you all recognize that in each of the electoral divisions one Member of the Legislative Assembly represents that division, and voters in that constituency or electoral division are the ones responsible to elect that person.

In order to give some perspective on the task that's before us as a commission, it is helpful to look back at what happened eight years ago. In 2017, that was the last Electoral Boundaries Commission that served its purpose in the province, they had to deal with a population of just over 4 million people. They took that population, and they came up with a mean average of population per electoral division using this formula. They had a population of 4,088,609 people. Divided by 87 constituencies, that left an average of 46,697. That's not the exact amount that is in each electoral division. There's a target population or range that we are concerned about. That can vary from as low as minus 25 of that figure to plus 25. You can see those figures, 35,023 to 58,371. That was the situation the last Electoral Boundaries Commission found itself in.

This time around, eight years later, as you all know and are aware, the population of Alberta has grown incredibly. We are required as a commission to rely on the most recent census for our population to be supplemented with further statistical information if the census is not immediate to the commission's work. The last decennial census from Statistics Canada was issued in 2021, but it is updated annually, and those figures are verified by the province, specifically Alberta Treasury Board.

We've come up with a population figure, and the figure that we're utilizing is 4,888,723. That's the population of Alberta as of July 2024, so 4.8 million. Taking that population and dividing it among 89 electoral divisions yields a population number of 54,929. Then you see underneath that the target range of population from minus 25 of 41,197 to as high as 68,661. Those are the figures that we will be using as a commission. Of course, the growth has not spread evenly across all electoral divisions, and that makes our job somewhat of a challenge. Our task is not to implement the principle of one person, one vote. Our task is to provide boundaries that give us effective representation.

9:10

In completing our work, we will be considering several factors in addition to the presentations that we hear throughout our touring the province last month and this month. The factors specified in the legislation are that, of course, we take into consideration the relative density and sparsity of population across the province. For example, we were in Drumheller yesterday. Drumheller does not have the population growth challenges that Calgary does, it goes without saying, so we have to take the sparsity and density of population

into consideration. As well, we take into consideration common community interests and organizations. That criteria will no doubt be important in Calgary ridings. As well, we take into consideration geographic features across the province. That is most prominent in electoral district divisions outside of Calgary and Edmonton. Communication and transportation lines across the province is also a factor that we consider. Our ultimate goal is to create understandable and clear boundaries that provide effective representation for Albertans. Finally, we are entitled to take into consideration other important and appropriate factors that we determine are essential, and those factors no doubt will be gleaned from the vast number of public presentations we conduct.

This is an opportunity to hear from Albertans. We are on the road in the next couple of weeks to hear from Albertans, and that gives us an opportunity to hear from folks like you who are present. I can tell you that we have a full day today. People signed up for all afternoon and indeed this evening as well as all day tomorrow. Thank you, everyone, for coming and for being willing to participate.

As we start our day today, I'm going to call upon our first presenter, Allison Leonhardt.

Miss Leonhardt: Good morning. Do I just come up over here?

The Chair: Yes, please. Just have a seat to my left there and introduce yourself. Normally we have a timeline of seven minutes with a three-minute exchange. We haven't been strictly enforcing that. Make yourself comfortable, take your time, identify yourself, and begin your presentation.

Miss Leonhardt: Oh, perfect. Well, thank you so much, Justice Miller. My name is Allison Leonhardt, and I live in Highland Park, which falls within Calgary-Klein. I've lived there for the last two years, but I'm a born-and-raised Calgarian. Calgary-Klein lies in the heart of central-north Calgary. It's characterized by mature tree-lined streets, postwar bungalows, vibrant parks, and a strong sense of community. The current boundaries for Calgary-Klein encompass about 60,000 residents. It's had a growth of about 10,000 people from 2019.

The boundaries as they stand fit well with this vibrant riding and should stay the same. The growth of population in Calgary-Klein has kept pace with the rest of Calgary. Much of the growth has come from infill housing. The wide lots of the postwar bungalows have been an attractive proposition for developers to increase density and thus split the lots. Particularly, on corner lots in Highland Park and Tuxedo you've seen a lot of infill housing go in and several families occupying the same space that was previously occupied by one family. Right now, as well, you drive down 4th Street, and every second corner lot is being turned into infill housing.

To move across the Deerfoot, the population projection for Mayland Heights shows the community growing at a rate of 1 or 2 per cent according to the city of Calgary population projections. This is much below the growth rate for the rest of Calgary and much below the growth rate for the rest of the riding, meaning that leaving this neighbourhood in the community will not greatly increase the resident population of the riding over the next 10 years. However, areas such as Tuxedo Park and Winston Heights are expected to see substantial growth with an over 10 per cent population increase, again, according to the city of Calgary statistics, which I can share with you afterwards.

Keeping communities such as Mayland Heights in the riding helps keep the population growth in the riding proportional. With Tuxedo forecasting growth at such a high rate, it makes sense to keep it in Calgary-Klein as neighbourhoods to the south of it such

as Crescent Heights are forecast to have quite a large population increase that will outpace Calgary's population projection. Yeah. I'll share charts with you afterwards.

Looking at the boundary commission's own findings, Calgary-Klein has grown by about 9.8 per cent. This rate of growth is proportional and sustainable in terms of the size of the provincial riding. Adding in new communities would skew the riding greatly and increase the growth rate to an unsustainable level and make it larger than it should be. Picking up communities to the east of the riding does not make sense as much of the border to the east includes industrial and retail areas, and then you also have the airport there as well north of McKnight. Picking up communities to the south: they're growing too quickly. We could pick up communities to the north or the east and still maintain a sustainable growth rate, but I would like to advocate that Calgary-Klein maintain its current boundaries, as these communities have much in common and are generally growing at similar rates.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Let me start on this end of the table. There will be some questions from the commissioners. Mr. Evans?

Mr. Evans: Thank you for coming and for your presentation. The growth rate on our numbers would have it at 9.8 per cent.

Miss Leonhardt: Yes.

Mr. Evans: And, in your perspective, that's consistent with the surrounding electoral districts.

Miss Leonhardt: Yes, and with the rest of Calgary as a whole. Yeah.

Mr. Evans: Would you agree that you would say that would carry forward to Calgary-Lougheed, for example?

Miss Leonhardt: I haven't looked at the numbers for Calgary-Lougheed. I mean, I'd imagine, where Lougheed is situated, you'd have some density going in, but you wouldn't have, like, new communities being built or anything like that. It wouldn't be growing outwards or anything like that. It is fairly landlocked.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you, and thank you again for coming out. When Justice Miller started with the introduction, we talked about the number that we want to target is 55,000 per electoral district. Calgary-Klein is sitting at 60,000 and showing growth, so, hypothetically, if we had to trim back and move in and, you know, look at sharing that in other areas like Calgary-Varsity, which is below – just hypothetically. I'm not saying anything more than that. Where do you see in your riding the possibility to carve off something?

Miss Leonhardt: To carve off something? I mean, Tuxedo, I would think, would make sense. The only challenge is the population growth increase in Tuxedo. I would say that that's just a little bit different than the rest of the community, partially even down to how the streets are laid out differently than when you get into, say, Winston Heights, Highland Park or North Haven or Collingwood.

Mrs. Samson: Right. Okay. Thank you very much.

Miss Leonhardt: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. As you can see, Calgary is growing everywhere, and you're a very good example in your riding of growth, upward pressure on sort of the target boundaries. That's why my colleague was asking that question. Perhaps I could ask it in a different way, which is to ask you your characterization of the area to the east of the freeway. Are there opportunities for residential growth amid what is now commercial development?

Miss Leonhardt: Oh. That's a good question. Looking at the city of Calgary population projections, I haven't seen anything about new developments going in there. What I've also found that's interesting, too, is when you go into a community like Vista Heights, it reminds me a lot of what Highwood looked like about 10 years ago. That was my grandma's neighbourhood, and it hasn't had the same redevelopment that communities like Highwood have had. Highwood has a lot of infill. Vista Heights is still relatively untouched. It does have some density in the form of townhouses over there, but there haven't been any major apartment buildings that have gone in.

It's interesting as well, because, since it is kind of bounded by both industrial and retail – you've got Marlborough Mall on the one side and quite a bit of industrial – I haven't seen a lot of zoning applications going forward for higher density. I do know there is more push for density south of Calgary-Klein on that side. In Southview there's a new Calgary Housing development that's supposed to be going in, but there haven't been as many applications for Albert Park or Radisson or Vista Heights or Mayland Heights. They have generally stayed the same.

9:20

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Thank you so much for being here. Yeah. I have many, many questions. I'll ask sort of a couple of specific and then one general that you may or may not have an opinion on. Just maybe situating myself here to make sure I know exactly where I'm talking about: Tuxedo Park is where?

Miss Leonhardt: If you look on that part of the riding by 2nd Street and 16th Avenue with Centre Street there as well, it's at kind of the southwest corner of the riding.

The Chair: Between Edmonton Trail and Centre Street.

Miss Leonhardt: Yes. Then all the way over to 2nd Street.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clark: I see. Okay. Yeah. That's helpful.
You said that is growing quicker, is it?

Miss Leonhardt: That is forecast to grow quicker, yes. Even as well driving through the community, there's a lot more infill housing and a lot more apartment buildings in that area than the rest of the riding.

Mr. Clark: That's really helpful. Let me just make a quick note here. That's very helpful.

That, then, actually leads nicely to the next question. I look at a lot of the neighbourhoods up towards SAIT, even the parts that Commissioner Samson mentioned off towards Varsity and the university. A lot of those neighbourhoods are, like you say, that sort of postwar, single-family bungalows. What, if any, opinion do you have on the impact of the blanket rezoning, of turning some of that

into increased density? Do you see that happening? What's your thought on that?

Miss Leonhardt: That's definitely happening. I think a big reason in part is that a lot of the bungalows in, for example, Highwood typically go for around \$750,000 as kind of an average price. When a developer buys that, they're typically not going to tear that down and build a new house. It's a lot more attractive for them to split the lot and build two homes. A lot of those new homes as well, the infills, are going for around a million dollars, which makes sense when you look at what the development charges are, what the permitting fees are, and then what they had to pay for the initial property as well. It does increase density. It doesn't necessarily improve affordability, but it does increase the density.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. You're right about the growth. I mean, the whole city has shot up. But you're right; Klein was above average at the last boundaries. It continues to be about the same amount above average. Again, you feel like that's likely to continue and that growth – it's not that sort of the inner city is hollowing out and the edges are the only place growing. You feel like there's a reasonable prospect of continued growth here.

Miss Leonhardt: Yeah. I'd say a continued, sustainable growth. You don't have as many apartment buildings going in. Even, for example, I know in Highland Park a friend of mine who's a landlord has looked into building apartment buildings there. One of the obstacles for him has just been the city development charges and that the city wants him to pay for the sewer, the this, the that, and he's like: it's just not sustainable for me to build here; I can't build something that's big enough that I'm going to be able to recoup what I spent developing it.

I think that's why a lot of the increased density will focus on more like infill housing, which is more affordable for developers. I do work in housing as well, so I know a bit about it.

Mr. Clark: You've got some opinions. We can't, I'm afraid, deal with the city charges but lines on a map, we can.

That's it. Thank you. Really, that's very helpful. Thank you so much.

Miss Leonhardt: Awesome. Well, thank you so much. Would you like copies of my notes?

Mr. Clark: Absolutely. Yes.

The Chair: Leave them with Aaron. Thank you very much, Ms Leonhardt. We appreciate you coming out, and we like it when people say leave things alone.

Miss Leonhardt: That's good. Yeah. Makes your job easy.

The Chair: I can't guarantee we will, but we like it. Thank you, and you're more than welcome to stay for the rest of the presentations.

Miss Leonhardt: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Alexander Shevalier. Good morning.

Mr. Shevalier: Good morning. My name is Alex Shevalier, and I am president of the Calgary & District Labour Council.

The Chair: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?

Mr. Shevalier: My name is Alex Shevalier. I'm president of the Calgary & District Labour Council.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Shevalier: First, a thank you; you have the unenviable task of determining the boundary commission. You're on the boundary commission and you get to decide lines on a map, which generally pleases nobody, so I do not envy you on that.

You've outlined a lot of my presentation. One of the major points is: where possible, keep seats contained within cities. Again, where possible. There are instances where you won't be able to.

I'll just give the highlights. I think in my submission I made one mistake, and I have to correct it here. I had said that Grande Prairie deserved one seat. They actually deserve one seat and one hybrid seat based on their population because a lot of this is math. Rural Alberta, just based on the sort of population, would deserve 26 seats; Grande Prairie, one seat and one hybrid seat; Calgary would have 28 seats; Edmonton would have 21 seats; Red Deer, two seats; Lethbridge, two seats; Medicine Hat would have one seat and one hybrid seat; Airdrie, again, would continue to have one seat and one hybrid seat; St. Albert would have one seat and one hybrid seat; and then Wood Buffalo, just because of geography, would have to have two hybrid seats.

That's sort of my topline. We looked at the populations, and we divided them. We got a slightly higher number than you did, but we used the January 1st numbers as opposed to the July numbers.

That was it. That's our highlight. I live in Calgary-Currie. I don't have strong opinions on where things should go in Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Clark: Can I ask you just to repeat those numbers one more time? I didn't quite catch them. I know they're in your presentation. I think you have a written version.

Mr. Shevalier: Yeah. Rural Alberta, 26 seats; Grande Prairie, one and one hybrid; Calgary, 28 seats; Edmonton, 21 seats; Red Deer, two seats; Lethbridge, two seats; Medicine Hat, one seat and one hybrid seat; Airdrie, one seat and one hybrid seat; St. Albert, one seat and one hybrid seat; and Wood Buffalo, two hybrid seats.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Did you have an opinion on Sherwood Park?

Mr. Shevalier: I did not look at Sherwood Park, so, no, I would be guessing at this point.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: We will be going to Medicine Hat later this week.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay.

The Chair: So is your suggestion one city, one hybrid, just leave the status quo the way it is now?

Mr. Shevalier: Yes, because there has been growth in Medicine Hat. Like, their population has only increased about a little over 2,000, 2,700 people roughly. Any growth that they have would push them beyond the maximum they're allowed to have, so you would have to have one and one hybrid. I just think that you can't make the math work any other way.

The Chair: Of your proposal, it takes into consideration the two new electoral divisions, obviously, because I quickly did the math to make sure we had it at 89. Does it involve attracting any further ridings out of the non-Calgary/Edmonton area?

Mr. Shevalier: Does it involve subtracting?

The Chair: Yes. I could figure it out if I went through the math, but you might know the answer quickly.

Mr. Shevalier: Yes. My suspicion is yes, it would, because of population growth, because the city of Calgary has grown almost a quarter of a million people. The city of Edmonton has grown over 100,000 people. Of the growth, more than half of it has occurred in two cities.

The Chair: And one riding in each city doesn't do it?

Mr. Shevalier: No.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Shevalier: It doesn't, because otherwise you're pushing yourself beyond, I think, the population limits. There was an instance near the end of the last – not this last boundary, but the boundary commission before – where you had Fort McMurray-Conklin, that the population was about 20,000 and you had Calgary-South East with 100,000.

9:30

The Chair: Oh, really?

Mr. Shevalier: In terms of electors, though, it ended up being 45,000 on the official electors roll. We can't enter a situation where the value of a vote is three times more valuable in one place than another. So this is the unenviable task because population growth is unpredictable, and it can slow and it can rapidly increase.

The Chair: Thank you for your empathy. I'm going to start. I usually don't interject right away, but Mr. Clark . . .

Mr. Clark: I did interject right away, and I apologize for jumping over. No. That's fine. I answered my question. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Just a comment that I'm grateful that you recognize the difficult position we're in. It's kind of, you know, we're going to be treated like the way you treat your dentist. You know it has to happen, but you don't like it.

If it was just about the numbers, we'd hire a computer, not have a commission. The act is very clear about the range of factors that we are to weigh so we can juggle all the balls in the air at the same time.

Mr. Shevalier: Yeah. To that what I would say is that there's actually a quote I included. It is:

Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Deviations from absolute voter parity, however, may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation. Factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen's vote as compared with another's should not be countenanced.

Dr. Martin: Can I follow up on that?

Mr. Shevalier: Sure.

Dr. Martin: We're not talking voters; we're talking populations. The case law is about voters, so we have a difficult set of analogies

to build, but the act talks about population. So reliance on the case law, very famous cases about effective voter parity and the like, the Saskatchewan reference and so on: not directly relevant.

Mr. Shevalier: It informed the legislation, though.

Dr. Martin: Maybe.

Mr. Shevalier: No. It did.

Dr. Martin: But it's not in the act.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay.

Dr. Martin: If you read the act, they do not use the word “voter.”

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

Thanks for your presentation. The reason – my apologies. I jumped in on Sherwood Park because somebody else had laid out the numbers for the ridings based on the big cities and mid cities. I was just checking on my notes here, and you're pretty darn close, but they did include Sherwood Park. Honestly, if it was just the numbers, I think we could wrap it up tonight, but it's not that easy. I appreciate we're all on the same page, and that's an excellent starting point, and then the details flow from there.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

Thanks for your presentation. I'm interested in your calculations, and I want your perspective on the positives and the negatives of the hybrid ridings, you know, in terms of looking at that, looking at the numbers. But it's more than just numbers. I think that's clear. I want to know: is it a necessary evil? Are there advantages, disadvantages? Have you contemplated that? Have you thought about that?

Mr. Shevalier: With a hybrid riding there's no good way to do it because taking, I don't know – I'll take the example of Airdrie, which has a population of about 88,000. It's far too big to contain in one riding. You would be breaching the population limits, so you have to have a hybrid in some way. So they created Airdrie-Cochrane. I think there's a community of interest because they're both satellite communities outside of Calgary. They sort of share the same struggles, which are, you know, advocating with the provincial government for things like hospitals and health care, and they share the same struggles of trying to do economic development outside of a large centre. So you can create those communities of interest together.

Now, in terms of effective representation in terms of the Airdrie case it's hard to say because I don't know how well represented – somebody might get the short end of the stick. Like, if you have 15,000 people in Airdrie and the rest are in Cochrane and in the rural areas surrounding, somebody might not feel as well represented. But it's determining what the least bad option is.

Mr. Evans: I mean, let's look at a specific example, you know, sort of segueing off Airdrie. Tell me why you would think there would be a significant difference between the community interests of Calgary-North East and any of the Airdrie riding, or a hybrid riding, or Airdrie itself. It would seem to me that geographically they're very close. They would also have the same issues that you were talking about in terms of economic development.

Mr. Shevalier: Strangely enough, oftentimes satellite communities and cities compete for economic development in odd and strange ways. There's also competition for provincial subsidies. Airdrie for the last forever has been struggling to get a hospital – I'll use a hospital as an example – and Calgary has also been struggling to add additional hospital spaces because we still have fewer hospital beds than we did in 1993. So if you have a hybrid Airdrie-Calgary riding, how then do you manage those competing interests?

Mr. Evans: Well, I mean, based on what you're talking about there, in terms of competing interests, there would be competing interests between Calgary-North East and – I'll pick any Calgary riding – the centre of the city, and we'll say Calgary-Mountain View. They would not have the same interests.

Mr. Shevalier: They would have similar interests in that they both live within the city of Calgary.

Mr. Evans: But that's like saying that you and I are both White, so we have that interest.

Mr. Shevalier: No, no. They're represented. For example, they would both advocate for additional transit dollars.

Mr. Evans: Would they? The centre of the city would have less interest in transit than the external, than the fringe.

Mr. Shevalier: No, no. There's always an interest for transit dollars.

Mr. Evans: But in terms of priorities it would rank as a lower priority because they have transit.

Mr. Shevalier: For Calgary-North East, for example, they would want additional transit dollars so they can easily transport downtown but in other sections of the city.

Mr. Evans: My point would be this, that our priorities, however we list them off, depending where we're located in the city, on the fringe or city centre: how you would weight them would be different. You would agree with that.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay.

Mr. Evans: Isn't that exactly the same with respect to a hybrid riding or even a rural riding? Many of their interests would be on that list. It would just be weighted differently. Isn't that just a factor of what the elected representative has to deal with, regardless of the riding they're in?

Mr. Shevalier: I would simply suggest that within Airdrie and the rural context, the economic development factors are different than they would be for Calgary – that's all – and a lot of other factors would be different. That would simply be what I would say.

The Chair: Mr. Shevalier, thank you very much for coming. We've run into the time limit here, but could you just remind us – first of all, you relied on the January 2025 numbers in your report.

Mr. Shevalier: Yes.

The Chair: So it acknowledges a slight difference there between what we're relying on.

Secondly, are you from the Calgary office?

Mr. Shevalier: Yeah. My office is in northeast Calgary.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Well, thank you for giving us this 30,000-foot level of the province and for presenting. Very much appreciated. We have your written presentation. Thanks for coming. You're more than welcome to stay for the rest of the presentations.

Mr. Shevalier: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Mr. Kevin Van Koughnett.

Mr. Van Koughnett: Close.

The Chair: Kevin, right?

Mr. Van Koughnett: That's the easy way.

My name is Kevin Van Koughnett, and I live in Calgary-Varsity. I also have a farm near Pincher Creek in Livingstone-Macleod, so I have a foot in each area, so to speak. One of my children lives in Calgary and the other lives in Pincher Creek, so I'm back and forth all the time, and I'm very familiar with both of them.

9:40

The task of setting electoral boundaries, to me, is a blend of principles and pragmatism. I think you probably appreciate that. I think attaining effective representation is through creating electoral divisions of equal voting power unless justified by identified and weighted factors in each division and with the objective of keeping the population deviations as small as possible. In doing so, you are bound, in my view, by the Supreme Court decision and by Alberta legislation. I'm going to skip over the part of reading into the record what Justice Beverley McLachlin said in the 1991 decision because you've already had that today.

The Chair: By the way, she's from Pincher Creek, too.

Mr. Van Koughnett: I'm well aware of that. I can go into the history of that, but I won't.

Anyhow, the Supreme Court, to me, was very clear that the primary condition of effective representation is in equal voting power and that any deviations should be limited as much as possible and can only be justified to enable more effective representation. I've read through the entire decision of the Supreme Court and the dissent and everything else, and I think it's very clear. The intent is to achieve parity and only moving away from parity when justified. Justification does not mean that just so long as the population is within plus or minus 25 per cent, it's okay. Justification means a measured and appropriate adjustment from parity to address identified issues in an electoral division.

To me, the myriad of conditions identified as impacting effective representation would easily fall within a variance from parity of plus and minus 10 per cent. Given the quotient of 54,929 this means being over or under by 5,493. That's a wider variance, for example, than the size of most Alberta towns, which on average in 2021 was under 4,500 people. You wouldn't split a town on a boundary, which would be a community of interest, with a boundary. In cities and metropolitan areas I think a smaller variance is possible and reasonable, of 5 per cent. I thought about whether there was a de minimis pragmatic variance, and I would think that it would probably be of the order of plus and minus 3 per cent.

Perhaps the only condition that may warrant a wider variance than, say, the plus and minus 10 per cent is where the population density per square kilometre is much lower than the average for electoral divisions outside of the cities and metropolitan areas, so where the geographic size becomes very large. The commission should review and publish the square kilometres, the geographic size, if you will, and the population density of each electoral

division. I haven't seen that in the past, and it would be most helpful if it was there.

The two northern exceptions are extreme examples of why this is necessary. There are other divisions which are geographically large and so have low population densities: West Yellowhead and other northern ridings; Livingstone-Macleod, Drumheller-Stettler, and some other southern ridings. The commission could pragmatically develop a matrix of allowed variances for a range of low population densities as guidance for fairly allowing appropriate deviations. Concerns about size indicate to me that section 15 of the legislation needs to be reviewed regarding division, geographic size, and population density to provide guidance to address a wider range of size-related concerns than just the extremes.

Another principle to think about is to recognize that the process uses population as a proxy for the number of eligible voters in an electoral division. A possibility would be to allow a deviation in an electoral division to better reflect the number of eligible voters. Census population data, of course, includes those under 18, who are ineligible to vote, as well as noncitizens, who are also ineligible. The assumption should not be made that the demographics in each electoral division are the same. You may have the same number of people but very different demographics and, hence, very different numbers of eligible voters.

Population across the province varies greatly. From the 2017 commission, which used 2016 census data, to the estimated 2024 data, the change overall is plus 20 per cent. The range of that change across divisions was from minus 1 per cent to 111 per cent. Amazing. The legislation requires the commission to regard population growth; theory would say that if you expected above average population growth in a division, you should adjust its starting size downward to try to accommodate future growth. The key to this, of course, is to recognize where higher growth may occur. The population changes noted above would suggest, for example, urban areas and on the periphery of urban areas where a municipality may have annexed land for future development.

The tool box the commission has is limited in that the government has preset the maximum number of electoral divisions. It would be more effective to meet the needs of effective representation and voter parity if future governance allowed the commission, as an interim step, to recommend the number of divisions to achieve the objectives. Increasing the number of divisions, for example, could reduce the cascading changes to borders by better adjusting to local changes and keeping electoral divisions much smaller. There are trade-offs, of course, and compromises, but fettering the commission in this way is unwise.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Evans, any questions or comments?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you for your very well-put-together submissions.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you again. I thought your thought process and interpretation of what we're working with is very good. I made some notes for myself because although it's out of the authority of what we can do, we can certainly list in the reports, both interim and final, some of those areas where you're suggesting that if we had the tools, we could do a better job. The thing that I'm really struggling with is that cascading effect. Thank you for those thoughts that you put together so well.

Mr. Van Koughnett: I think that's appropriate because, you know, you may have legislation and things like that, but you're on the cutting edge or the bleeding edge or whatever of trying to implement that. So first-hand you have the experience of what works, what doesn't work, what should be changed, that kind of thing.

Mrs. Samson: Exactly. Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. Thank you for your brief, and I hope we have a copy of it because it is obviously a very thoughtful assessment of what you have determined is our tool box and how it could have been more robustly designed. Quite obviously, we have what we have. But, all the same, I would like to be able to review your general pitcher, so I do hope you are able to pass a copy to Aaron, who's right behind you there.

I could go on and on, but just with respect to the representation by proxy of those who are at this time unable to be eligible voters: it is a condition that we see in virtually every riding. Most spectacularly, in parts of Calgary and parts of Edmonton it is pretty obvious. There's a representative, on the one hand, but the pool of eligible voters in those districts carries the responsibility of all those who cannot vote. It's a high degree of responsibility although I'm not sure they quite think about it that way sometimes. That's never going to be eradicated from a province like Alberta. There are always going to be people in the population who are not simultaneously in the eligible voter pool, so we have to accept that as part of understanding effective representation in Alberta.

9:50

As you heard me say before to the previous gentleman with some anguish, the Saskatchewan reference and other case law is not immediately pertinent to the particular expectations of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act.

Mr. Van Koughnett: I guess I would say in regard to the eligible electors that as I look at the demographics – and that's the point I was trying to make – the demographics across the divisions are quite different. As I spoke to before, I'm very familiar with the Pincher Creek area in Livingstone-MacLeod. If you look at what is termed the hollowing out of the population, it's that – you know, and that's pretty typical across a lot of rural areas, where you find that the children are growing up, they go through high school, and then they disappear. They go off to university, they go off to find work elsewhere, and you find that you've got that hollowing out. Then the population is sitting back there again at age 60 and up, so a whole bunch of your voters that you would normally have – say, if you had the city of Calgary, you'd get that the opposite way where there's a ballooning out of those eligible voters that are in that range.

My point is that if you are looking at the possibility of doing an adjustment, if you will, when you go into rural areas – for example, take the town of Pincher Creek. Claresholm is the same. They have an awful lot of seniors' residences. They have that because the amenities of the hospitals and things like that are there in those towns, so you have a wide range of those people, but those people also vote. You know, that's what they do. My point was that if you ever were trying to close the gap from getting away from the proxy per se – and I do understand your point – you could perhaps in the future have some kind of adjustment to that.

I did look at Elections Alberta's website, and they do have the elector count, and I found it because I looked, for example, at the three upcoming by-elections. You know, two out of the three in

terms of the numbers made sense, but one I would say would be wonky, so I didn't know what the validity of that data was. That would obviously be one of the concerns you would have.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you. Well, thank you. You know, the voters versus population thing in some ways is a bit of a red herring. I mean, an MLA represents all of the people in that constituency whether they're voters or not. Our anchor is population. It's on the maps.

Mr. Van Koughnett: I think it's driven by the data.

Mr. Clark: Yeah, it is. I mean, I think we all agree – you've referenced it, and a couple of presenters here today have – that the population growth in Alberta has been vast. The population growth in Calgary and Edmonton specifically has been remarkable, like, historic, all time. I don't anticipate that will continue exactly, but it has really kind of put us behind the eight ball, right? You've got some constituencies that are just almost double. It isn't only a numbers game, but I think it is first a numbers game, and then there are mitigating factors in terms of effective representation.

In all of that context, I guess I'm just curious if you can just expand a bit on your thoughts on hybrid constituencies versus clear communities of interest being together. Because I guess I didn't ask it of the previous presenter: why do people live in Airdrie and not in Calgary? Why do people live in rural Alberta and not in Airdrie? Any thoughts on what connects communities and how we might want to think about that?

Mr. Van Koughnett: I think that, pure and simple, it's probably economics and lifestyle. You know, you live where you live. If you have a family and you want to have a house and you want to have a backyard, if you can't afford to have it in Calgary, then you perhaps consider Airdrie or Cochrane or wherever because then you can get the kind of property you want and the amenities you want at a more affordable price to you.

We're not going to talk about affordability, but for people starting out these days, I shake my head because I think it's almost impossible for somebody starting out to put together a down payment for a house or anything like that. If a property is available outside the city and it's \$200,000 or less than you can get it for in Calgary, that is a very big deal. I don't know if that answers your question.

Mr. Clark: It does help, yes. Thank you very much.

Mr. Van Koughnett: But you talked about hybrids. I was talking to somebody earlier, and I said: you know, to me it's sort of like layers. To me there's not a lot of difference between, say, the people in the city of Calgary and the immediate layer of residences, if you want to call it that, that is outside. If you're in a Chestermere or you're in an Airdrie or a Cochrane, I would submit that you're not too far different than what you are as a Calgarian in terms of what is there. If you want to call that a hybrid, I think that makes sense to me. How far do you stretch that? There's another layer out there, however – you may define it as being rural or agricultural or whatever – which is far more difficult. The rural people, in my experience, are very I'll say proud of being rural and want to retain their ruralness, if that's a word. I don't know how far you go in doing that.

When I looked at some of the things like where you've done Airdrie, with a split or if you want to call that a hybrid – Medicine

Hat is a hybrid as well – where you're stretching out and you're gathering up all those communities outside, I think the further you are away from that urban core and fringe, the less you are going to be similar.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, sir. Time is our enemy here, so I'm going to have to cut you off.

A couple of things, though. Thank you for your big picture, somewhat philosophical, but getting it down to the pragmatism as well. Your comment about the square kilometres: I think we will discuss that. That's kind of a novel little indicia that doesn't hurt that much for us to include, so we'll discuss that.

Mr. Van Koughnett: Yeah. To me what was important there is that when I looked, for example, at the exception, it talks about something being 15,000 square kilometres and things like that. Well, I had nothing to compare that to to sort of say: "Oh. The two exceptions: do they meet that criteria, or do they not meet that criteria?"

The Chair: One other thing. In your written submission do you have your comments about section 15(2)?

Mr. Van Koughnett: Yes, I do. What I read out there.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Make sure we receive a copy of that. Thank you again.

Our next presenter is Linda Goold.

Linda Goold: You did pronounce that correctly.

The Chair: I did? Thank you. We're off to a great start.

Linda Goold: I live in Cambrian Heights, and I've lived there since 2001. Cambrian Heights is part of Calgary-Klein. I'm a practising lawyer and a family lawyer, so I, too, am like the dentist. I sympathize very much with that earlier comment. I make that comparison all the time. Nobody wants to see me, but they're always happy I'm there.

Calgary-Klein is over the 55,000 or so limit that I understand is the goal but within the 25 per cent deviation. I'm not going to be able to give you the kinds of statistics that the other speakers have given you, all of which were excellent; I'm just going to give you a bit of a snapshot of Calgary-Klein. I've lived there for a very long time. I would agree with the previous speaker about Tuxedo being one of the few areas that's a little bit different from the rest of Calgary-Klein. Calgary-Klein has a lot of different communities. We cover three different quadrants of the city, mainly northeast and northwest. A lot of different but very distinct communities.

10:00

I'm in one of the communities that, again, was described by that first speaker very well: postwar, '50s bungalows. We have 50-foot frontages. We were one of the communities that was the most annoyed about the bylaw changes in terms of development because, you know, people move into communities for a reason. I bought my house because it's a tree-lined, older street with a big frontage and lots of parking and various amenities, that may not exist if we get a lot of extra development there.

We're also a community that's often referred to as a complete community. We have everything within Cambrian Heights that you could possibly need, right? We don't have to go outside of our community to get anything crucial. And we're one of the greenest communities in Calgary. Again, that's important to a lot of us who live there. And many of us moved there because it's close to

downtown. That's certainly my reason, because that's where my office is.

I would make two submissions today. One would be that I would ask the commission to seriously consider any deviations into the sort of split ridings that we've heard talked about, where they're partly rural and partly urban. I would encourage you not to do that except where necessary, because city concerns are very different from rural concerns. I grew up in Small Town, Alberta. I come from a family of farmers in the U.S. I'm very familiar with both city and a more rural community, and the interests are very different. I don't think anybody would disagree with that. The biggest change since the last boundary commission, as I understand it, is that the population increase, which is large across the province, is much larger in Edmonton and Calgary, which would suggest that city voices need to be heard more, if anything, at this time.

Secondly, I would encourage the commission to keep communities together that are alike. Much like the first speaker, who spoke so much about the cohesiveness of the Calgary-Klein larger community despite the fact that we have a number of discrete communities within it, I would second that. Another piece of information about that community is that we have several bilingual schools. We have a Spanish one, Spanish-English, we have a Mandarin-English school, and we have two Muslim schools that also teach classes in Arabic. All of those schools tend to have constellations of like community around them because if you want your child in a school like that, in a Muslim school, for example, you also want to live close to it and you also want to live within your community in many cases, your cultural and religious communities. So those are citizen voices that are fairly cohesive in many cases. Not identical, none are identical, but those communities need to stay together, and I would agree with the first speaker that Calgary-Klein, because it's in the particular demographic that it is, does not need to be expanded or shrunk, that it should stay exactly as it is.

We still have room for growth. I can't know, but I would suspect, given my involvement in my own community and some surrounding communities, that we're not going to see as much of the big development growth that some of the other communities are going to see, with the possible exception of Tuxedo. My community as well has some three-level apartment buildings, certainly a lot of duplexes, townhouses, and I'm sure we'll get our infills, but we've had a large reduction of senior and retired people and an influx, from what I've seen, of younger couples. It's kind of an age-in-place community, Cambrian Heights, and I think large areas around there, and we're currently going through one of those transitions where a lot of people are going into care, and that opens up the area for young families with children. We have a lot of schools in the area, and that means that a lot of the houses in my immediate neighbourhood are not going to be selling any time soon, however much developers might be interested.

We have two permits being sought, as I understand it, in my neighbourhood right now. The community associations in my neighbourhood and surrounding neighbourhoods tend to fight those fairly aggressively, so I would suspect, as the first speaker said, we're not going to see apartments; we're not going to see major development. We're going to see low-grade development, if anything, which means a slower increase in population.

So I would just encourage you to consider the importance of keeping like communities together. Those are my submissions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Goold. Very much appreciated.

Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: Yeah. First, Linda, good to see you again. We were classmates in law school.

Linda Goold: Oh, yes. I see the name. Hello.

Mr. Evans: I've got a question with respect to the Horizon area. Is that a growth area in Calgary-Klein?

Linda Goold: I'm not enough on the statistics to know that, sir. I don't know whether it is or not. I know the more inner-city neighbourhoods in Calgary-Klein much better and some of the northeast neighbourhoods.

Mr. Evans: What about South Ridge?

Linda Goold: The first speaker would have been in a much better position to answer that question than myself.

Mr. Evans: Okay. You're more familiar with the – I think you mentioned the Cambrian Heights area.

Linda Goold: Yeah. That's where I live.

Mr. Evans: What's the significant difference in the community-of-interest test between, say, Rosewood and Capitol Hill?

Linda Goold: Rosewood would be wealthier than Capitol Hill. Capitol Hill has had a huge amount of development. They don't have, I don't think, a square inch that doesn't have infills on it in Capitol Hill. The same cannot be said of Rosewood. So I would think, though I don't know, that Capitol Hill's population growth has been higher than some other areas of the northwest.

Mr. Evans: Thank you, Linda.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out today. You expressed a strong opinion on like communities being kept together, and with the growth challenges in Calgary, I wonder if you could give me your opinion on how alike are the communities, for example, between somebody in the north of Calgary and Airdrie.

Linda Goold: Well, I would think, certainly, as you get to the edge of northern Calgary, it would be closer in interest to Airdrie. I mean, I think of it as three different kinds. I know we lump places like Airdrie into rural, but I grew up in Small Town, Alberta. It's not the same as the agricultural communities of actual farmers. So I would say that Airdrie has different interests from Calgary and different interests from truly rural communities. I know that Airdrie, for example, has a huge problem in terms of needing a hospital. That's a major issue for them, and while we would all like more hospitals, they have a bigger problem with that than any community in Calgary.

Mrs. Samson: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: No. No, thanks.

The Chair: Greg?

Mr. Clark: Again – I think I've asked this previously – as I'm just getting my head around the different communities, you indicated that Tuxedo is a little bit different than the rest.

Linda Goold: I would agree with the first speaker, yes, that it's more developed.

Mr. Clark: That's perfect. I just wanted to make sure I got that right and not reverse it. We've had a bit of information coming at us here over the last couple of weeks. I just want to make sure I'm not getting that backwards.

Thank you.

Dr. Martin: I'm interested in the adjacency of SAIT, although it's not directly in your ED, and the effect of students seeking residences. Do you see that effect in your neighbourhoods?

Linda Goold: Yes. Even in my neighbourhood, which does not have a lot of student housing per se, we do have a lot of what were originally illegal suites and now legal suites in houses in that neighbourhood because we are close to both SAIT and relatively close to the university. Not as much as Brentwood or Charleswood, but we get a fair number of students. And we have a mall that's right next to SAIT, and there's a lot of student housing in there and a lot of parking issues in there in terms of students that want to park at the mall and go to classes.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Goold. Thank you for disturbing your practice this morning and coming.

Linda Goold: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: I want to jump the schedule. Who's – and that person's name is? Sarah Elmeligi. Thank you. Please have a seat.

Dr. Elmeligi: Good morning. Thank you. I have another commitment, talking to some grade 6s. I mean, that's quite important as well, obviously, because they're so cute. They want to know about provincial politics. I can't wait to tell them about this presentation.

My name is Sarah Elmeligi. I am the current MLA for Banff-Kananaskis. Thank you so much for hearing me today. I've lived in the town of Canmore for 18 years, and over that time I've been part of two different riding configurations. So I'm going to draw on my experience as a Canmore resident today but also on my experience as the MLA for this quite large, partially rural, partially mid-size city, I guess, riding.

I want to start by saying that I love every single community in my riding. Every square inch of Banff-Kananaskis is special and amazing. And what's great about this riding is that it is truly a cross-section of our province, and any MLA that's lucky enough to represent this riding can learn a lot about Alberta.

10:10

I have two main areas of comment. My first one is around keeping communities whole, and my second one is grouping like communities together, which particularly applies to rural communities being part of rural ridings and urban communities being together in urban ridings. I say this also recognizing that we use the word "rural" to mean anything that is not Edmonton or Calgary or Lethbridge or Red Deer, and that drives me insane. Rural means a lot of things. What I love about Banff-Kananaskis is that I actually have all definitions of rural in my riding. But I think we need to be careful how we use that word because it means something very different to somebody living in Millarville, who is a third-generation cattle rancher, than it does to somebody living in Canmore or Banff.

The first piece I want to speak to is this idea of keeping communities whole. I want to use the Stoney Nakoda Nation as the example here. The Stoney Nakoda Nation is actually comprised of three nations: the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Goodstoney. Each of these nations has its own chief and council. I work quite closely with all three nations and with their chief and council and the community members to completely understand the issues that they face.

This is challenging in Banff-Kananaskis because only the community of Mini Thni, which is Morley, is actually in the riding of Banff-Kananaskis. The two other communities that are a part of the Stoney nations are Eden Valley and Bighorn, and because Mini Thni tends to be the centre of activity for the Stoney, and Eden Valley and Bighorn are smaller communities, I spend most of my time in Mini Thni, but I do also connect with residents and chief and council from Eden Valley and from Bighorn. Eden Valley is currently in the Livingstone-Macleod riding, and Bighorn is currently in the Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House riding. And, as I said, the centre of Stoney tribal offices is in Morley, or Mini Thni, in Banff-Kananaskis.

I don't mind representing Eden Valley and Bighorn and connecting with those folks, but I would say that it is confusing for them that I'm not their MLA but that I care and that I want to represent their voice because they're part of the Stoney. I recognize that Banff-Kananaskis boundaries are at risk – or not at risk, but likely to be edited – because we are adjacent to the city of Calgary, and there are going to be changes in the city that can trickle out to us. One of my recommendations would be to include Eden Valley and Bighorn in the riding of Banff-Kananaskis, just to make sure that all of the Stoney Nation communities are in one riding.

The other community that I wanted to be sure to mention today is Millarville. Millarville is at the very southern edge of the Banff-Kananaskis riding. It is a large, spread out community of farmers, ranchers, and acreage owners. Even though it is a dot on the Alberta map, that dot basically is the Millarville ag society and race track and a gas station or a corner store. Millarville itself is just really spread out across the landscape. The community of Millarville is currently split by secondary highway 549, and this really doesn't make sense to people who live there because they really do see themselves as one community. The north half of the community is in Banff-Kananaskis, and the southern half of the community is in Highwood.

I hear all the time from residents of Millarville how that's really confusing for them. They don't know who to talk to when they have an issue. You know, it's just kind of funny because Minister Sigurdson is the MLA for Highwood. People love R.J., they love me, and R.J. and I get along well, but it does create confusion for constituents around who they need to talk to when they need to talk to their MLA; should they try to work with R.J., or should they just try to work with me?

I think the boundaries commission should really consider the nature of some of those truly rural communities that don't have necessarily a central hub, but they have, like, a race track or an agricultural centre or stables or something that is the gathering place for the community but where there is not, like, a downtown or stores or a coffee shop. The community is spread out over a bigger distance, and we need to make sure that everybody who identifies as belonging to the Millarville community is within one riding. It's really important to keep communities together, not only to ensure clarity for residents of who they need to work with, but also this is an important part of reflecting real-world community connections and recognizing how people use and move through the landscape.

My second point today is about grouping like communities together. Similarly with Millarville, it's important for people to

identify with other communities across the riding. Canmore and Banff have a lot in common. Canmore and Banff and Jasper also have a lot in common. They're the tourist destinations for, you know, North America, frankly. There are a lot of times where I've also been working with the Jasper mayor and council just because their issues are very similar to those faced by Canmore and Banff.

We need a riding map that is fair for all communities. As an MLA I often think about how I represent all of the communities across large rural and mid-size city ridings. What works for Banff-Kananaskis – this is so critical; if I leave you with one comment, this is it – right now is that no one town pulls the vote because the population is fairly equally distributed. We've got the west end of the riding where the main population centres are Canmore and Banff, and in the east end of the riding our population centres are, really, mostly Springbank and area. Those populations are equal.

We used to be a riding called Banff-Cochrane, and during that time – Cochrane, of course, is the major population centre – every single person in the Bow Valley felt as though their vote didn't matter because all that matters is Cochrane. Cochrane has, you know, tens of thousands of people; we have 8,000 people in Banff. I would just say: please don't put us with Cochrane or Airdrie. Like, oh my gosh, it has been so nice for the last 10 years to have a riding where the population is more equally distributed. People really feel like their voice and their vote matter because there's not a big town pulling the vote and pulling the MLA's attention also, right?

The other thing is, like, everybody moves to the Banff-Kananaskis riding very intentionally and chooses to live in this riding because they don't want to live in the city. Whether that's Springbank or Waiparous or Millarville and Priddis or Banff and Canmore, people definitely choose to live here because we're so close to Calgary. They don't want to live in Calgary. Changing the riding boundaries in Banff-Kananaskis to include portions of the city of Calgary really won't resonate with most people in the riding. It creates that perception that it will become all about Calgary, not to diss Calgary but maybe a little. There is a growing sense of urgency in the Banff-Kananaskis riding that there is this really growing intensity of development pressure coming from Calgary into Banff-Kananaskis, and communities are concerned about losing their sense of identity and their community feel because of that development pressure. If, for example, Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows would be included in a city of Calgary riding, people would be very upset about that. They don't want to be Calgary. They want to be Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows.

Since the redraw of Banff-Kananaskis I think we've really seen a riding come into its own in a way that is seamless and where communities feel like they belong together. The Bow Valley communities have more in common with other foothills communities like Bragg Creek and Waiparous, who are also experiencing increased tourism and recreation demand and stuff like that, than they do with, you know, Cochrane, for example.

I would say that recreation and tourism is one of the things that ties all of these communities together, and the fact that this riding includes the most popular national and provincial parks just kind of reinforces that. What it does also is that it makes sure that all of the communities have access to a public service nationally and provincially that is accustomed to and has the expertise to manage tourism and recreation pressures on the landscape, which is really significant across this whole riding.

10:20

The other issue, I think, that ties these communities together is concern about wildfire risk. I went to two different community cleanups this last weekend removing deadfall from people's property and from the forest to reduce wildfire risk. Every

community in Banff-Kananaskis is concerned about wildfire in a very intense and meaningful way right now. People in the city of Calgary do not experience that same fear. You know, I held a workshop in Bragg Creek at the end of March, like, a wildfire risk prevention workshop, and was blown away by how many people came from across the riding to learn more about staying safe.

Most people in the Banff-Kananaskis riding want to continue to be part of a foothills, mountain riding. I would say there are some slight exceptions to this. I was door-knocking in the community of Elbow Valley this weekend. Elbow Valley is, like, 10 minutes from the city of Calgary, right by where highway 8 sort of meets the ring road in the southern end of the city, or I guess it's west central now because the south goes so far. The community of Elbow Valley is pretty split as to whether they would like to be part of a city of Calgary riding or not. Again, most people choose to live in Elbow Valley because they can have a little more space, and, you know, it feels more spacious and open than it does living in the city. However, the residents of Elbow Valley: a lot of them work in Calgary. That's where all the services that they access are housed. So it's a bit of a tricky situation. I would say that the sentiment is really 50-50 among residents there.

Millarville: I talked about how that needs to be in one riding. I would also say: the MD of Bighorn. One of the benefits of Banff-Kananaskis is that I have all of the communities of the MD of Bighorn, and they have a lot more in common with Banff and Canmore. I would like this riding – if the riding boundaries were to change, I would see it extending north-south to include more of the eastern slopes, basically. That's where the headwaters, the wildfire risk, and coal mining and a love of parks and outdoor spaces – that's really what identifies with people in this area.

Yeah. Is that my seven minutes?

The Chair: Yeah. I lost track of the time. Sorry. I'm going to have to limit questions, but thank you so much for your presentation. Have you submitted that in written form to the commission?

Dr. Elmeligi: No, I did not.

The Chair: Would you, please?

Dr. Elmeligi: I definitely can. Yeah. For sure.

The Chair: Yeah. Just check with Aaron as to where that goes. Very quickly, Mr. Clark, any questions?

Mr. Clark: No. You know, we've got a bit of a magical mapping tool here, so I was just trying to find the different geographies you were talking about. I did that, so if we have a written submission – but just, with our thanks, that was a great presentation. Thank you.

Dr. Elmeligi: Anybody?

The Chair: Julian?

Dr. Martin: You're speaking about the work you do with the Stoney and that it was a bit outside your riding to go to the central area to Mini Thni. Is that how you pronounce it?

Dr. Elmeligi: Mini Thni is in my riding. Eden Valley and Bighorn are not.

Dr. Martin: Okay. I wanted to extend this thought. What about the rest of the Stoney lands that are heading east from you? That's part of your community of interest, if you will, right?

Dr. Elmeligi: Yeah. The largest reserve for – like, the Stoney have three reserves. The largest one is entirely held within Banff-Kananaskis. That is around the community of Mini Thni, or Morley. Then there are two smaller reserves in Eden Valley to the south and Bighorn to the north, and they are not a part of the riding right now, but they are all part of the Stoney Nation. Yeah. That's how I work with the chiefs and council and residents there.

Dr. Martin: So in general you would think it coherent and helpful if all those Stoney Nation footprints were within one electoral district boundary?

Dr. Elmeligi: Yes.

Dr. Martin: That's why I was pushing further east with Ghost Lake and so on and so forth.

Dr. Elmeligi: Ghost Lake is in my riding.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. How far towards Cochrane do you go?

Dr. Elmeligi: To the edge of it, really, because I include all of the Ghost public land-use zone and Waiparous. I love having that area in as well because it is an area of growing recreation pressure and interest, so it has a lot in common. That's part of the MD of Bighorn that I was saying at the end there. They have a lot in common with Canmore and Banff.

Dr. Martin: Right. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan?

Mrs. Samson: One question. Thank you again for coming out. Is this too far of a stretch to include Jasper? I was thinking of that mountain park, the communities of interest.

Dr. Elmeligi: Issuewise, no. I mean, issuewise I work with Jasper all the time because there are economies of scale to be gained by representing Canmore, Banff, and Jasper as, you know, mountain park towns with high tourism interest. I think, like, a riding of that geographical size does present the MLA with some challenges of travel, but it's definitely not bigger than some of the rural ridings in the north where MLAs are also faced with that same challenge, right? So there are ways to work around that.

I think it's more important to consider grouping communities together that have similar issues. It's just so much easier as the MLA to stand up in the Legislature and say, "the people of mountain communities" or "the people in communities in parks think X, Y, Z" than trying to find a way as the MLA to represent a small community that is so different from all of your other communities that still needs to have a voice in the Legislature. It's just really hard. As MLA you're pulled in a million directions all the time – right? – so it just makes more sense to have communities that have commonalities. It makes our job so much easier.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Anything, Mr. Evans?

Mr. Evans: Do you think there's an advantage of having two MLAs representing mountain communities mountains of interest, the way that it is now, or is it more advantageous to have one spokesperson?

Dr. Elmeligi: I mean, it kind of depends on who the MLA is, to be honest. Like, collaboration is a two-way street, I have come to learn, and some MLAs want to collaborate, and some don't. In some instances I think there's benefit, and in some instances I find it frustrating. I think it's easier to have one MLA represent all mountain communities.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much. We look forward to the written presentation. It's always helpful to have people present that drive that riding, walk those towns' sidewalks, so very much appreciate it. Thank you.

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Say hello to the grade 6ers for us.

Dr. Elmeligi: I will.

The Chair: Boy, we're running into break time here. We're running over, but I want to get one more in. Dr. Ross Watson, are you present? Oh, good.

Dr. Watson: Well, thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Is that mic picking me up okay?

The Chair: Yes.

Dr. Watson: Okay. Great.

My name is Ross Watson. I was a councillor in the town of Cochrane for 20 years up to 2017, and my submission to you today is to consider Cochrane as a stand-alone electoral district. Now, we're currently a hybrid with Airdrie, and in 2016, when the statistics were used for the 2017 boundaries, Airdrie-Cochrane, that riding, had roughly 51,000 people in it; Airdrie-East had roughly 48,000. I'm rounding these off. Now, in the 2024 municipal census Airdrie was showing a population of 85,000, and Cochrane was showing a population of 37,000. Based on growth patterns over the last two decades for the 2027 election Cochrane will reach a population of 46,000 people; Airdrie will reach a population of between 106,000 and 110,000. To put that into perspective, Lethbridge is roughly 106,000 people with two elected officials.

There has been some talk today about hybrids, and they use terms like "communities of like interest." I would suggest to you that although we like Airdrie, we don't like being a part of it, and the same goes for Airdrie.

The reason is simply this: we are the two fastest growing communities in Alberta, and we are desperately competing for funding for infrastructure, for hospitals, for public safety. So we have a rivalry, much like Edmonton and Calgary. You know, we have similar situations. We are rivals for every dollar we can get.

10:30

And there is a bit of a cultural difference. Sarah, who just spoke, kind of suggested: please don't let Banff-Canmore be a part of Cochrane, which it used to be. You know, Cochrane always used to feel that we had the short end of the stick because our MLA always came from either Canmore or Banff, and that's always where the MLA office was. Now, with Airdrie and Cochrane there's a confusion in Airdrie. They were always wondering why a smaller part of Airdrie was a part of Cochrane's riding.

Quite frankly, after the election, the MLA for Airdrie-East really took on the burden of all of Airdrie. For the most part the MLA for Cochrane was seen as primarily a Cochrane MLA because, you know, when it came down to it, he had sort of one foot in Cochrane

and maybe a toe or two in Airdrie. When it came down to sort of defending either of the town's interests for municipal dollars or stuff like this, I believe Airdrie felt that there was a bias towards Cochrane with our MLA, and, quite frankly, I believe there was.

Going forward, for clarity I think that the people of Airdrie would find that having two representatives – and I think they could meet the threshold for two – would be advisable because it is big and it is growing. Cochrane, you know, like I suggested, would have a population of 46,000 by the time the election comes around, and I think that falls within your numbers. It might look a little small. I know you wanted to get up into the mid-55,000s. You could pick up some extra numbers – we share a lot because our schools draw from the Bears paw area.

My submission basically is based on the fact that when you're talking about the two fastest growing communities within Alberta, you kind of want to, if I can use in these days a hockey scenario, you know, skate to where the puck will be rather than where it has been. We have some real extreme, I guess, differences in infrastructure needs. Cochrane has what I always thought was a misfortune of being intersected by two highways, a railway, and a river. So our transportation costs and infrastructure costs are huge. Going forward our traffic situations need a lot of dollars, and Airdrie by the same token has a lot of pressures because of its proximity to Calgary. The pressures on Airdrie are quite great.

Just in summation, I believe that the concept of a hybrid that we are currently in in Airdrie-Cochrane is not fair to either Airdrie or Cochrane. I think a better boundary could be drawn, and I believe that it would add clarity. Other than just the concepts of population, clarity, and fairness, I believe that Cochrane needs to be split from the Airdrie riding and a new riding formulated around Cochrane.

With that, I will leave myself open to questions from the panel.

The Chair: Dr. Watson, thank you very much for your concise and targeted presentation.

Commissioners, if we're going to have a break, please keep your questions short and succinct this morning. We'll start with Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: Again, thank you for your submission. Can you tell me what the population is right now in Cochrane?

Dr. Watson: It's 37,000.

Mr. Evans: The number that you're projecting?

Dr. Watson: It's 46,000 by 2027.

Mr. Evans: What do you base that on?

Dr. Watson: Cochrane – and I'm just going by my memory – has not dropped below 10 per cent growth in probably 15 years.

The Chair: Okay.
Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your submission as well. I don't have a question, more of a comment. I was musing about having two large cities or mid-size cities in one riding, how that works, and this is a good example. You gave us a good explanation on mixed priorities and therefore mixed representation. Thank you for that clarity.

Dr. Watson: You're welcome.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much for that presentation. You had mentioned towards the end of your submission, sir, about Bearspaw, which made me think: would you conceive of the immediate hinterland, Mitford up to Cochrane Lake, all the acreages, as part of your natural domain, if I can put it that way?

Dr. Watson: Definitely. Cochrane Lake and MonTerra, that area up there, use Cochrane's services. They definitely consider Cochrane as, I guess, their centre.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Maybe going the southern direction, then, sort of Springbank area south of the river, those sorts of areas, you know, like Springbank Airport, down 22, is that sort of another world or is that functionally related to Cochrane?

Dr. Watson: Well, quite frankly, and this is an objective opinion, I think it's, like you suggest, another world. You know, you have the new community of Harmony, you have Springbank, which is in Sarah's riding, who just presented today: those communities I think just reach a little further out than Bearspaw. I suggest a lot of the people from Bearspaw shop in Cochrane. A lot of people from Bearspaw recreate in Cochrane. Their children are bused to Cochrane. Springbank, not as much.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much again, Dr. Watson.

We are way past our break time, so I'm going to suggest that we break for only five minutes, and then we'll commence with Member Kayande's presentation. Five minutes and then we'll be back convening. I'm going to have to watch the clock a little more. I've been a little sloppy this morning. My apologies.

One other thing I neglected to mention is that with all the public presentations the audio will be available on the EBC website in due course and a transcript of the proceedings will also be available on the website.

Thank you very much, and we'll see you back here in five minutes.

[The hearing adjourned from 10:39 a.m. to 10:46 a.m.]

The Chair: Commissioners, can we reconvene so that we can start post-haste? I was terribly negligent in keeping track of time. I'll be much more vigilant right now.

Member Kayande: Just in time for me.

The Chair: Yes. You were supposed to speak, sir, at 10:10.

Member Kayande: I'm good.

The Chair: Okay. Please introduce yourself and tell us what constituency you represent.

Member Kayande: Absolutely. You can hear me okay?

The Chair: Yep.

Member Kayande: Great.

My name is Samir Kayande, and I am the MLA for Calgary-Elbow.

The Chair: Okay.

Member Kayande: My submission is about Calgary-Elbow. Every MLA I know talks about how their riding is a little bit special. Calgary-Elbow is actually genuinely special because it has had two Premiers representing it, right? Strong cabinet ministers. The leader of the Alberta Party represented it, whose name currently escapes me right now.

The Chair: I'm sure it'll come back to you soon.

Member Kayande: Yeah, at some point.

It has also had numerous different parties represent it as well. We spoke of the Alberta Party, the UCP, the PC, now the NDP, and it's also been held by a Liberal. It's a microcosm for the city of Calgary in many respects. It is a fully urban riding that incorporates a lot of postwar housing stock, as well, like the original postwar suburbs in Altadore, for example, or new urbanist developments in Garrison Woods. Central Memorial high school is, you know, a real draw for people.

But the fundamental characteristic that defines Calgary-Elbow is not just the political awareness of the people there – because they really are. Like, I've been asked to comment on the UCP nomination race while door-knocking, which, if you talk to other MLAs about their door-knocking experience, is a very weird thing. When there isn't even a candidate selected, for me to be asked about: hey, what do I think about all the various different candidates for the other party? That's a conversation that comes up.

The physical geography as well of the Elbow River. The Elbow River gives us life, it provides water to the entire southern half of Calgary, and it can kill us. I know that the former MLA Greg Clark did a tremendous amount of work to make sure that Elbow is protected from flood. Protecting Calgary-Elbow from flood protects Calgary from flood. Protecting Calgary from flood protects the entire province of Alberta's economy. It is impossible to describe how important protecting Calgary from flood is to the future prospects of this province and our nation as a whole.

To protect Calgary-Elbow, you have to flood pieces of Springbank, which is a perfect example of how rural and urban concerns are, in many cases, in opposition to each other and how that voice of somebody who's speaking for Calgary-Elbow undiluted is so important to ensuring that we get the protection that we need, which has massive national implications, as I talked about, and leads to better policy outcomes.

Now the riding itself. You see the population numbers here, almost 56,000 as of 2024; 49,000, which I think was a little bit above average, in 2016. Basically, the growth in Calgary-Elbow has been kind of – to a first order you can think of it as being roughly average growth for ridings within Alberta because it had a variance of 4 per cent in '16 and it's got a variance of 2 per cent now.

Where does that population growth occur? We are not like a suburban tract development, right? You don't have any empty land here. How it happens is that when there is a housing crisis, people move into basements. You know, they start building carriage suites. They infill. It kind of happens. Like, the magic of the market kind of tends to build housing, and it builds it in a way and in a place that is not amenable to central planning, which is why I'm glad we live in a capitalist society. So that is probably going to continue and, in fact, is likely going to accelerate because the pressure on Marda Loop now is very real. What you see now are our proposals for large developments just to house all the people that we're going to house.

I remember that earlier this morning you had the presentation from Cambrian Heights from Linda, I believe it was, who was talking about: yeah; I don't know where future development is going to come from in this riding. I can tell you where it's going to come from. It's going to be from infilling and basements and all the

stuff that we have already seen in Calgary-Elbow. There is no way to stop it because the market pressure is so immense. People need homes.

When I think about, like, “what is the biggest concern in Calgary-Elbow from a provincial standpoint?” it is managing that growth pressure. It’s ensuring that we have the infrastructure that we need. Schools are overcrowded for the first time in a generation within Calgary-Elbow. The transportation networks that go all the way back to the first No. 7 Marda Loop streetcar in 1909 are being overwhelmed. These are the sorts of things that they need strong representation for, to make sure that they get appropriately managed growth, where the infrastructure precedes the growth that is coming and doesn’t lag it by, like, 10 years, which is the case right now.

With that, I conclude my submission.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for your presentation and for your concise effort and for finishing in less than seven minutes.

Member Kayande: You’re very welcome.

The Chair: You are the MLA, right?

Member Kayande: I am the MLA, yes.

The Chair: Sorry. I couldn’t resist.

Mr. Evans, any question?

Mr. Evans: No. I had the advantage of talking to Samir during the break, so I peppered him then.

Thank you.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you again for coming out. I just wanted to ask you, in your opinion, if there was a need to get the population down that is sitting in that electoral division to make up for the expected infill growth, would it be reasonable to look at the community to the far west on the end? It kind of looks like almost an add-on piece.

Member Kayande: Glamorgan, you’re thinking of.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. Yes.

Member Kayande: This is extremely awkward for me as an electoral official, to throw one of my communities under the bus.

Mrs. Samson: Yes, I know. Just whisper in my ear.

The Chair: Which child do you like more?

Member Kayande: Yeah, which child do I like.

I’m going to punt on that, actually. Like, Glamorgan is lovely, right? It is also facing very similar infill pressures that the rest of the community is. It is definitely less explicitly urban in character. It’s more like a ’60s-style suburban development, like Altadore is, like postwar. Oh, gosh. Some lovely, lovely California-style, beautiful homes in Altadore. It’s not like, you know, Garrison Woods, which is like a new urbanist sort of thing.

10:55

The one thing I didn’t talk about was that I do have a massive proportion of renters in Calgary-Elbow. Calgary-Elbow, while it is most well known for Mount Royal and Britannia – those are large areas, relatively small population – about 40 per cent of Calgary-Elbow residents rent.

The Chair: Really?

Member Kayande: It is top five in Calgary, I believe. Please fact check that, but I believe that that is true. Definitely there is a balance right now between suburban single-family and urban, like truly urban, high-rise, those sorts of things. Yeah. And we’ve got – I didn’t realize this. Calgary-Buffalo is a Death Star up there, with almost 80,000 people.

One thing I will say is that Lower Mount Royal and Mount Royal actually historically have very strong connections with each other. Even though one, Lower Mount Royal, is a lot of walk-ups, a lot of condos, very dense, it’s the same sort of psychology, if you will, the same sort of historical connections that have existed for well over 100 years.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: No, thank you. You answered my question.

Member Kayande: Thank you, Dr. Martin.

The Chair: Okay. Greg?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. A bit of a – hello. Good to see you.

I guess I’m just curious. I mean, I obviously have some insight into Calgary-Elbow, but I am actually really interested, because you are very much closer to this, I think, probably than I am: where is that growth happening? You’re exactly right. It has basically tracked the growth pattern to date. Other places, though, like Calgary-Buffalo, northeast Calgary, south Calgary, south Edmonton, northeast Edmonton, are really growing very, very, very quickly. I’m just curious if you have any prediction or perspective on going forward, again, to skate to where the puck is going to be, you know, over the next 7 to 10 years. Do you feel like Calgary-Elbow growth is likely to continue tracking that same population growth?

Member Kayande: I believe so, yeah, just because of its proximity to downtown. I know that after the pandemic it was thought that, well, maybe downtowns are out of style now. It turns out that’s not the case because people are now moving there, right?

What I’m concerned about – look, I mean, I went through the report that was written in 2017, the last time this was done, and there were lots of predictions on where ridings would grow. Most of them were all over the map, so I try not to predict the future. But in terms of where the pressure is coming from, definitely when we think about, like, South Calgary, which, ironically, is to the north of the riding here, so 26th Avenue to 34th, also the Marda Loop area: these are going from postwar suburban development in character to actually urban centres, like new downtown cores almost. It’s just that spillover. Yeah.

Of course, it’s my job to complain about the infrastructure, but when we think about infrastructure in inner city cores versus what it looks like in outer ring suburbs, where you could buy a house and not have a school built there in 15 years, you know, when your kids don’t need it anymore, literally, I think that a lot of people are realizing: “You know what? I get a little bit less space, but this is where I want to live.”

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. Good point.

Member Kayande: And they do that for a reason. Like, not to diss any of the suburban communities or to diss Springbank. You know,

if you live in Elbow Park or Mount Royal, your alternative is Springbank. There's a reason they're not living in Springbank, that they're living in the centre of the city.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much. I very much appreciate it. As I said, we really appreciate presentations from people who walk the streets, pound on the doors of these electoral divisions, so thank you.

Member Kayande: All right. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Janet Eremenko.

Member Eremenko: Great. Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning.

Member Eremenko: This is kind of a nice convenience to be following Samir Kayande's presentation because our ridings are right up against each other, too. I am the MLA for Calgary-Currie, which is just off the west end of downtown. Thank you so much for having me, and I'll take this quick moment to thank you for your work as this commission. You are taking on a Herculean task. You will know every nook and cranny of this province in a way I'm sure you never really expected to do.

Very pleased to be able to give this little brief presentation on the wonderful riding of Calgary-Currie. Much of what MLA Kayande has already referenced in regard to Calgary-Elbow applies to Calgary-Currie, with the exception, however, that we have quite a bit of brownfield development that's occurring in Calgary that is going to be presenting significant population growth in the, you know, kind of mid- to long-term when it comes to the next 10 years.

Just a very brief overview of the nature of our neighbourhoods here. There is a somewhat surprisingly low rate, just 27 per cent, of the households that are single detached. Much like in MLA Kayande's riding of Calgary-Elbow a lot of them were in the 1960s, really, on the edge of town. These were suburban developments, largely, you know, big lots, bungalows, that kind of thing. Though they take up a lot of, literally, real estate, in fact, only 27 per cent of the households are single detached. North of a third are households that are in multi-unit that are five storeys or lower. Then row houses and semidetached homes are approximately 10 and 11 per cent respectively. I would expect that that latter category of row houses and townhomes are going to be increasing significantly, and that's largely the focus of my presentation today.

Households are almost exactly 50/50 owner and renter, a lot of that, of course, a lot of the rental properties occurring close to downtown in communities like Sunalta and Bankview and then more ownership in the single-unit houses further to the west towards Sarcee Trail. Seventy per cent of the homes were built prior to 1990 and many much earlier than 1960, about as old as Calgary itself in communities like Bankview and Sunalta and the very unique and special community of Scarboro.

By the time we reach our next redraw, Calgary-Currie is likely to look very different than it does now. The growth since the last boundary profile was generated has likely been at a rate very similar to what it has seen for several decades prior, but I expect we'll see a dramatic jump in the next decade on account of significant brownfield planning and developments and lot-specific densification, facilitated in part as a result of the changes to Calgary zoning bylaws, with the changes to blanket rezoning, that has facilitated significant growth and development in these communities.

Another bylaw that I think is worth noting is the transit-oriented development, which, you know, relaxes some of the planning

requirements, depending on the proximity to large public transit hubs. The west line of the C-Train runs right up through the middle of Calgary-Currie. We have four C-Train stations. Then we also have the new bus rapid transit route that runs down Crowchild Trail. That TOD development is helping to facilitate significant densification in and around those areas by quite a large area. You know, a kilometre or two from those C-Train stations is where we're allowed to have much greater building.

Density, density, density. As opposed to what's happening on the outskirts of the city when it comes to greenfield development and people necessarily being drawn to those areas, rather I think in Calgary-Currie it's a build-it-and-they-will-come phenomenon. As a result of blanket zoning, once a single-family house is going to be built on that lot, we could be looking at four titled properties plus four secondary suites. So where there was one household, there may now be up to eight. Corner lots may even have an additional four titled suites. The growth in population is going to be significant. The pressure isn't from an influx of people, as I said, but, rather, market demand in terms of people interested in living more inner city.

11:05

We know, specifically on a small stretch of Crowchild Trail, for example, that within the next 10 to 20 years we could see upwards of 2,000 new units. Those are plans that are literally on the books as we speak. Where the old Viscount Bennett school is situated on Crowchild Trail is slated to have north of 1,200 new units, 119 in phase 1, which is currently under way. And then, of course, we have down at the southern part, just west of Crowchild Trail there, Currie Barracks. That is owned by Canada Lands, and currently there are five parcels of public land open to submissions or in the review stage that will present a total of 675 housing units.

So, like I said, in just that lower half of Crowchild Trail in Calgary-Currie we're going to be looking at north of 2,000 units that are going to be in the pipe as we speak, and it's going to be construction season 12 months a year. A lot of significant growth, I think, is coming down the pipe. Certainly, secondary suites, basement suites, and then in all of the rest of the communities where that densification is going to be happening with row houses, townhouses facilitated in part as a result of TOD is going to be significant.

To my recommendations on what I hope you might consider in this challenge before you: one is that Calgary-Currie has been a contiguous riding, really, since its existence. My first recommendation, respectfully, is to keep communities together. There is a major thoroughfare to the west that is Sarcee Trail, Glenmore Trail roughly to the south, and then, of course, we have the river to the north. We all know how in Calgary we are deeply loyal about our quadrants, and I would not want to consider going north of the river. These are predictable and quite common-sense boundaries to the riding that help communities and voters organize themselves. To the east, of course, is a little bit of a different challenge, where we butt up against Calgary-Buffalo and Calgary-Elbow, and those have always been boundaries that have been tweaked and shifted over the years.

I think keeping change to a minimum as much as possible is important. Civic engagement is so incredibly critical, but it takes time and it takes practice. Building familiarity with a riding, not to mention municipal wards and federal districts can be a lot. I've spoken to a lot of people who say: I just started to know my district; what do you mean we're doing this redraw once more?

My second recommendation is to encourage a redraw that respects existing municipal boundaries. We know, of course, that that was a particular consideration that was removed from the

boundaries district act. I think that it is incredibly important that as we see just phenomenal growth happening, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton, the interests, the ability to represent in a just, fair, equitable way for the elected representatives can be an incredible challenge if we're looking at dealing with two entirely different sets of pressures, challenges, interests, and property, certainly.

Lastly, with the redraw from 87 ridings to 89 boundaries I really do hope that we will consider putting those two new ridings in Calgary and Edmonton, where the growth is significant, particularly northern Calgary, where we see, you know, deviations – sorry; excuse the pun – north of 40 per cent, 50 per cent in some of those ridings on the edges of the city, and certainly in south Edmonton as well, where they're experiencing significant pressure.

I do have some other recommendations in terms of if I were in your seat, but perhaps I'll stop there and I'll take any questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Have you reduced this to a written submission for the commission?

Member Eremenko: I have not submitted it yet, but I can very easily do so.

The Chair: Please do so.

Mr. Clark, any questions?

Mr. Clark: I'll ask a question that maybe is not specific to Calgary-Currie but more of a general question. I agree with you on the old Viscount Bennett site. The school is gone. They're scraping dirt. Like, it's an obvious transit oriented – it makes great sense. Plus I think a lot of the other characteristics of Calgary-Currie, it does make sense.

I could see a scenario where the growth outstrips the rest of the city and the province. Where is growth in Calgary not going down? It sounds a bit of a cheeky question, but I guess I'm kind of interested, right? You've talked about the inner city. I think we see a lot of growth, you know, on the new suburbs, the kind of greenfield. Do you have an opinion – and maybe this is not a fair question or you just simply don't know. What parts of the city perhaps, even if they grow in absolute terms, may grow less than and therefore grow at a slower rate in relative terms?

Member Eremenko: Yeah. I think it's a very good question. I would say the next ring out from Calgary-Currie, for example, west of Sarcee Trail, where there are still a high number of single-detached homes but whose value is still high enough that it's not going to be worth razing it to the ground and replacing with four infills. In some of these communities where the homes were originally built in the '50s and the '60s, you know, they're getting tired. They're at a price point where I think the market can bear being bought outright and torn down and being replaced with something like a fourplex.

I would probably suggest, Mr. Clark, that it would be in the next ring outside of this particular area. When I think about some of the kind of main thoroughfares, west of Sarcee Trail, south of Glenmore, south of Anderson – I don't know the east of the city quite as well, my apologies. When I think of west of Sarcee, south of those, in those kind of '90s, early 2000s communities, where they're still single-detached homes and it simply isn't palatable from a market perspective to tear those down and change the density per lot, I think they won't be seeing the same kind of growth.

I will note, just in case this doesn't get mentioned in some of these conversations, that there is significant planning developments on Tsuut'ina Nation. South of Glenmore and west of 37th all the

way down to highway 22 is Tsuut'ina Nation. This was largely facilitated with the completion of the ring road. You know, last I checked, it was about a \$6 billion development project, the largest Canada has ever seen on reserve by First Nations, and that area, particularly north of the Weaselhead, is going to be a mix of commercial and residential builds.

Though Calgary-Currie may not change much, although I completely recognize that it may, and I understand and fully accept your decisions on that front, of course, when we start to grow, that's then going to have compounding effects for every riding beyond it. I think that though Tsuut'ina Nation is not currently in my riding, changes to Calgary-Currie will in fact and may in fact include adjustments on some of those areas in the next kind of ring below. I think some of those unique projects that aren't simply on the edges of town we've got some brownfield, and I think Tsuut'ina is also somewhat exceptional to what we've been seeing thus far.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much, and thank you. I want to come back to some of the particular growth pods that you had mentioned. One of the things we're keen to see as we tour the province is estimations of growth. Estimations of growth can be easily made, but we're particularly interested in things that are imminent and tangible, and you've given us some instances of those, which will, I think, bump the likely population of your riding significantly over the next two, three years. I wondered if there were others. You mentioned the old school, Currie Barracks, that portion that's being developed, and also several development pods on the books, which you estimated could be as many as 2,000 units. Do you also have – I bet you do – the development of basement suites as well?

Member Eremenko: I don't have that information with me, but I can certainly find it. Of course, we do have this challenge that I hope Calgary is slowly starting to overcome when it comes to registered versus non registered secondary suites. I would be happy to include that in my final submission if that would be helpful.

One other piece of land that I think is noteworthy, that the city recently bought back, is right at Westbrook Station. That was sitting fallow for a very long time. The city finally threw their hands up and took it back. And that will be up, so 2,000 units just between Curry Barracks and the old Viscount Bennett land. If the average household is currently 2.1 people per household in Calgary-Currie, then that will easily, I would expect, veer into 5,000 new residents pretty quickly. That is not within the next two to three years. In seven to ten years I bet we'd be about halfway there.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. We don't want to prognosticate the future very much, but it's irresistible when we hear figures like this.

Member Eremenko: Yup. Those are in the pipe.

Dr. Martin: We can anticipate that our successors will be saying: gosh, that Calgary-Currie is way over. At any rate, it's for us to wrestle with that. Thank you for the empirical information. Thanks.

11:15

Member Eremenko: My pleasure.

The Chair: Susan, comments or questions?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. Thank you for coming out. Most interesting, the challenges in those ridings in the inner city. It's been a real eye-opener for me, so I will tackle the problem with your input. Thank you very much.

Mr. Evans: Janet, thank you. My question is that I just want to make sure that I understand the numbers we're talking about. You think there will be an increase in population by 5,000 people within 10 years, roughly?

Member Eremenko: Just on account of the new builds. You know, the rate of growth from the 2016 census to 2021 was not particularly noteworthy, Mr. Evans, I would say.

Mr. Evans: Yeah. It was 2.98 per cent.

Member Eremenko: Yeah. That's right.

Certainly, the 2024 figures have represented a higher population growth rate since the period prior, so I would expect that rate, that new rate of growth, to continue. But the net addition of 2,000 units is going to create a big surge, I would estimate, 5,000 exclusively, and I would imagine that's quite conservative, as a result of the new builds that are coming online.

Mr. Evans: The new build is in that part just above Richardson Way. Is that where it is?

Member Eremenko: That's right. That's Currie Barracks. Several hundred hectares of land are there. The five parcels that are currently under review or accepting applications are at the north end of the Currie Barracks, so just south of 33rd Avenue there. The other, where Viscount Bennett, the old high school, used to be is just north of the 33rd Avenue lettering there. You can see a bit of a larger space. That's going to eventually accommodate 1,250 units.

Mr. Evans: Eventually within the next 10 years.

Member Eremenko: I think they'd probably get about halfway there as well. Again, crystal balling here a little bit, of course, it totally depends on our local economy and how the market is doing and how the province is doing overall. I would say that I would expect that for both of those projects we would get about halfway there in 10 years.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you again for your presentation. Much appreciated. We look forward to the written submission when that's available.

Member Eremenko: Thank you.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Travis Imber, who is not here. Okay. That lightens up the schedule a bit.

Michael Doyle.

Mr. Doyle: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning.

Mr. Doyle: My name is Michael Doyle. I'm a resident of Calgary-Acadia. I was born in Victoria, moved to Calgary in 1968. Except for some years of farming near Longview, Alberta, I've been a Calgary resident since the time of my move. My career has actually been in the international energy sector, and along the way I became a member of the ICD in 2009. In Calgary-Acadia I reside in a plus-55 community where my building has 281 residents, and it opened in 2022, which is long after the last electoral redistribution. My building is one of four in the complex, so one of these towers is 281 people. My story is also growth. It's not crystal ball growth; it's on-the-ground growth.

There are several other large rental apartments that have recently been completed within the same area – I would call it Kingsland – as part of Calgary-Acadia. It's clear that Calgary-Acadia has experienced a strong population growth.

I believe that this commission has an important role to play in shaping the democratic landscape for the next electoral cycle, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. At the same time I don't bring any recommendations in terms of adding anything or even substantially changing anything subject to the constraints that you see that come out of the rest of your process.

What I really see right now is that we have an electoral district that I think does a fair job of representing what I would call a socioeconomic community. That really leaves me to say that I'd hate to see it broken apart. I say that recognizing that there's a number of realities that you as a commission have to face here. In a sense, my purpose in coming today is really to advocate for electoral boundaries that uphold democratic principles and ensure fair representation for all the citizens of Alberta, having kind of made my point, if you will, about what I think are the unique characteristics of our district.

I can go a step further and say that I took the time to look at section 14 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act as recently revised. As you're well aware, it does list six factors that should be or, I guess, it's now may be taken into account. I was a little surprised at that revision to the act. "May" sounds kind of like: well, maybe; maybe not. If I look at those factors, I think ignoring any of them would be inappropriate. Otherwise, I think they should all be front of mind as you go through this process, and I don't think it's germane for me to list all of those. I'm sure you're well aware of them.

I think the one that applies most critically to the community that I'm part of is preservation of a community of interest. The Calgary-Acadia riding as currently defined, I think, as I've mentioned, does do a good job of gathering people that I think have like socioeconomic characteristics. The objective of maintaining an electoral district of reasonable size without unduly diluting our current community is, I think, going to be the key challenge that you have with respect to looking at our electoral riding. I think when you go through that, you're going to have to look at all of those other principles, which are things like continuity and not creating isolated islands or snake-shaped ridings and things of that nature.

Other than that, in conclusion, I'd say that my belief is that fair electoral boundaries are essential for a healthy democracy, and I think we're in your hands in that regard. I guess other than that, I'd really just want to wish you well in the process and say that I think that we've got in Calgary-Acadia what represents a fair community of common interest as it stands today, one that's seen some very rapid growth – I don't know the numbers – and put it to you as being your challenge to see if we can maintain our community without distributing it in a variety of directions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doyle.

Mr. Evans, any questions or comments?

Mr. Evans: Mr. Doyle, thank you for your submission. What I've understood you to tell the commission today is that you would consider there's been significant population growth within your community, within Calgary-Acadia?

Mr. Doyle: That's correct.

Mr. Evans: The numbers would say that your population growth has decreased by 2.1 per cent, so where's the development that's happening that's not being represented in the census data?

Mr. Doyle: Yeah. That's an interesting number, and I've got to admit that I was unaware of that.

Mr. Evans: From your perspective, you've got a sense that is different than the numbers, and I'm interested in knowing what that is and how you come by that. Where would you say the growth . . .

11:25

Mr. Doyle: Well, I'm in the northwest corner of the Heritage-Macleod intersection in a development that Trico completed in 2022. As I say, I'm in one of four towers, and my community, my tower just reached an occupancy of 281 people. They just told us that last week. I know that at the Glenmore and Macleod intersection two fairly large rental apartments have gone up. I know that two blocks north of me, north of 75th Avenue – but again, within Kingsland there's quite a large rental apartment complex that is being completed right now. It's not being occupied yet.

Yeah. I've got to admit that you've surprised me a little bit with that number that I didn't have an awareness of. Maybe I'm a little bit guilty of looking at what I see immediately adjacent to me.

Mr. Evans: That's valuable, though. You're seeing high-density development.

Mr. Doyle: Certainly, you know, I can only conjure up the possibility that those developments would actually remove people from the population roll while they're being developed. Really, mine, as I say, was completed in 2022. Two large ones at Glenmore-Macleod. One of them has yet to be fully occupied. The other one was put on stream about a year ago.

Yeah. That's an interesting statistic, and you're wiser than me here.

Mr. Evans: One last question, Mr. Doyle. Of all the locations you could have picked in Calgary, what drew you to your particular neighbourhood?

Mr. Doyle: Oh, gee, that's probably a story that doesn't have any real relevance here. I was living immediately adjacent to the downtown and was spending 50 per cent of my time outside of Calgary. When my children left home, I decided that I wanted to not own anything, so I moved into a plus-55 building. When I did my ICD program back in 2009, a fellow by the name of Wayne Chiu was in my class, and he at the time was chairman of Trico. I'm not sure if he still holds that role. He was a guy that I worked with in the class, and I heard he was building a plus-55 building. I felt very comfortable with the guy, so I committed to his project when it was still unoccupied and have lived there since 2022.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you so much. Appreciate that.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your presentation. I find it quite interesting. My daughter lives in Haysboro, and I drive into that area all the time. I agree with your observations. On the main transportation routes there are some high-rises going up, and that's where I see the growth in that area just from in the car. I agree with those comments. Thank you for that.

Mr. Doyle: Sure. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Maybe I'll just ask almost a philosophical question. We've talked about the rapid population growth in Calgary over and over again. We've also, though, spent a lot of time on this panel in rural Alberta, and we'll spend some more here coming up later this week, and next week we head up north. We hear in Calgary and Edmonton a lot of talk about community of interest and just the rapid population growth, but the flip side of that is in rural Alberta they're dealing with just vast geography, and it's a real challenge. They have their own challenges.

I guess I'd just ask: do you have any thoughts? You know, if you don't, then feel free not to answer. If you were talking to someone from rural Alberta and they said, "Listen, we've got these huge, big, vast geographies to deal with; that needs to be a consideration as well," how do you balance out the population growth with just the challenge of representing such a large area with a sparse population?

Mr. Doyle: Yeah. I'm in kind of a unique place to maybe look at that in that I farmed in east Longview for about 20 years. Still a little bit active in that community, but not so much. You know, for the most part when I first moved there and bought my first farm in 1971, it was certainly pretty rural. It's changed a bit now. I guess the answer, in my view, would simply be that, you know, we're constitutionally obligated to try our best to do one person, one vote. I don't know if it answers your question, but it seems to me that an inevitable consequence of that constitutional obligation, right, however you want to see it, is that the cities are going to end up holding more electoral divisions than the rural areas. I think that's just a fact. I don't know if that answers your question.

Mr. Clark: It does. Yeah.

I mean, Justice Miller can give you a far more eloquent answer than this. Anyway, in Canada it's interesting. It's effective representation, so it really is two things. It is the relative voting power but also tempered a bit by: we do have this vast geography. So we do have an ability to weigh those a little bit, but I think your point is taken, that ultimately we need to make sure we're not going too far one way.

Mr. Doyle: Yeah. I guess the challenge is to see them as two separate communities. I think people do get alarmed if you start mixing rural and urban votes, and that kind of adds to the challenge if you want to preserve communities of interest yet try and allocate votes in the right way. I wish you well in that process.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Doyle. As you probably know or may not know, the electoral divisions in Alberta are numbered from 1 to 87. A little bit of trivia, Calgary-Acadia is number 1.

Mr. Doyle: I did not know that.

Mr. Clark: There you go.

Mr. Doyle: I did wonder who would handle the issue of how many ridings should one really have to have an effective Legislature because I know that in a business world a board of 89 people would be extraordinary.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Joan Stauffer. I believe we have three more – sorry; including you, ma'am – presenters before lunch.

Ms Stauffer: Well, mine won't last very long.

The Chair: That's what they all say, but we always keep you here.

Ms Stauffer: Well, I haven't spoke publicly like this for over 30 years, so this is a challenge for me.

Good morning. I was raised on a farm in the Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills constituency, and I've lived in Calgary-Acadia for seven years in the past, Calgary-Fish Creek for five years, and have been in Calgary-Glenmore for 32 years. My understanding is that Calgary-Glenmore has exactly the right number of people and we were at the right percentage. I may be a little bit off, but I think that's so.

Although I was marinated in political discussions and activism, I limited myself to being a dedicated voter, only participating in a couple of campaigns over many years. I now want to support and participate in the democratic process. I believe the redrawing of the constituency boundaries is a cornerstone of democratic process, so here I am.

I believe the homogeneous constituencies promote and support democracy and that hybrid constituencies do not. By homogeneous I think of suburbs, inner city, bedroom communities, farms, and small towns supported by the farming community. For example, Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise, and Jasper have more in common with each other than any one of them with a bedroom community or even a rural agricultural community, but they're often lumped together as rural, and they really aren't. By hybrid I think of constituencies with a mix of suburbs, city, farming, tourist destinations, and bedroom communities. I don't believe that large towns, especially booming bedroom communities, have common issues with our farming population, but there they are.

What I hope does not happen as you're redrawing the boundaries is that communities are being split. Why is that? Well, it can cause divisions within the communities and create the feeling of not being heard, especially if they're a minority of the constituency, and that contributes to lower voter turnout. It can cause confusion as to where to vote when there are new boundaries, resulting in voters not even bothering to vote, and there's an increased chance of more conflicting interests and focus and the probability of the needs of the minority groups not being recognized, and it dilutes and splits the elected representative's focus on the constituents' needs.

11:35

I also don't want to see a lot of artificial boundaries used. Examples of the artificial boundaries are minor streets and roads or any boundary going through an intact community. This is versus familiar community boundaries, such as historical boundaries, rivers, main transportation corridors, and cultural communities.

The problem with artificial boundaries is also, again, that it causes confusion of those excluded from their communities, creating a sense of alienation, with less interest in voting. Voting, as we know, is the mainstay of democracy. If it's perceived as gerrymandering, it will reduce trust in the government and in the democratic process and can reduce motivation to vote for anyone. Conflicting needs may be very high in hybrid constituencies, and elected representatives will be less able to represent the populations to the extent they want to and are elected to do.

Speaking from my historical background – and I'm going out of any expertise I have – I still believe that the representation and manageable size of the rural, as in farming, constituency is critical. You've spoken to this, and I'm glad that you're really struggling with that, because it is a big struggle. What farmers need from government is very complex and different from all other constituents and is not understood by people not involved in the agricultural industry. I think it's important to have real representation of the rural population. When they are a constituency minority, it's impossible for them to be fully represented.

In closing, the positive outcomes of homogeneous constituencies are that people have a greater chance of feeling they belong and thus participating, of being heard and speaking up, of being well represented in the government, of access to their representative; and the elected representative has a greater chance of being fully informed and able to act on the constituent's behalf.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and for your part in this process. It is good that you've taken it on on our behalf.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Clark, any questions?

Mr. Clark: No questions in particular. I guess I'm hearing, if I look at Calgary-Glenmore – let me just look at Calgary-Glenmore. Yes. You're right. The growth seems to have lagged a bit. Sorry. You said you live in Calgary-Glenmore, correct?

Ms Stauffer: Yes.

Mr. Clark: So is that your experience? Are you finding that there's – you've obviously been around Calgary: lots of development, lots of places. Do you feel like there's a lot of infill or new builds happening in Calgary-Glenmore?

Ms Stauffer: Just starting.

Mr. Clark: Just starting. Okay.

Ms Stauffer: We're getting multifamily ones built. We're getting carriage houses. Yes. So it is growing.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: That really was my question. If Calgary-Glenmore is such an attractive part of the town, if I may say so, then people should be attracted to go there. In order to do that, we have to have infill; we have to have basement suites; we have to do a lot of the usual sorts of things. In your experience you see construction under way?

Ms Stauffer: Oh yes, and we see lots of houses are being sold, the older ones, and taken off for the countryside, I guess, and being replaced.

Dr. Martin: Right. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out. I just have a question that I'm not sure if you would know the answer. At Glenmore reservoir, if you are going to the north, the Glenmore Trail jogs around a little neighbourhood that sits adjacent to Lakeview. Do you know why they cut that one out?

Ms Stauffer: Probably to put it in with the – what else? I don't know what it goes with.

Mrs. Samson: This is not the right map.

Mr. Evans: Are you talking the north community?

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. Why is that cut?

Mr. Evans: It's called the North Glenmore community association.

Ms Stauffer: It's just a tiny little – maybe because of Crowchild Trail. What have they put it with? They've put it with the one north of it, right?

Mrs. Samson: They put it with Acadia. Oh, sorry. Elbow. They put it with Elbow.

Ms Stauffer: Elbow.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. They just cut it right off. The Glenmore Trail cuts it off. Well, no. It doesn't cut off. They just cut that one out.

Mr. Evans: Yeah. It's the North Glenmore Park community. Yeah. It's a bit of an odd artifact. Glenmore Trail hasn't always been there. The community was there before Glenmore.

Mrs. Samson: They want in. Okay. Got it. Thank you.

Ms Stauffer: That's a natural boundary, but we work together. We get each other's newsletters.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

Mr. Evans: It's a good test actually. Thank you.

Can you let me know, like, showing on the map, what part of Calgary-Glenmore. . .

The Chair: That's Calgary-Acadia.

Mr. Evans: Oh, sorry. I'm looking at the Calgary-Glenmore map here. If we can put up a Calgary-Glenmore map. I'm wondering where you're seeing the development. I've got an aerial view, and I don't see.

Ms Stauffer: It's sprinkled. It's sprinkled through.

Mr. Evans: Okay. They're infills. Is that what they are?

Ms Stauffer: Yeah. They're infills, and they're not all – you know, people are actually putting in new single homes, too. Huge single-family dwellings as well, so that prevents growth.

Mr. Evans: They're buying a house, razing it and then putting in a new house.

Ms Stauffer: I think somebody's putting in a new one. That's right.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms Stauffer: Thank you.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Ruben Nelson.

Mr. Nelson: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning.

Mr. Nelson: Thank you for doing this. I know it's required by law, but each of you is expressing a commitment as citizens to Alberta. I was born here a while ago at the end of the Depression, lived in Ramsay, lived in Scarboro. I've lived in Varsity Acres as an adult when I was on the faculty at U of C. I'm now living in Lac des Arcs, which is in Banff-Kananaskis, so if you could show that. If you're interested, I'm one of the few Canadians who has actually lived a life as a professional futurist. So you want to ask questions about the future, we'll take a crack at it.

The Chair: You're our man.

Mr. Nelson: If you look at Banff-Kananaskis as it now exists, you'll see that it has kept intact something that is increasingly precious to those of us who live there. The first thing I want to say to you is that you are used to the fact, those of you who know Calgary at all, that weather forecasts here often start by looking to the mountains. Those mountains you see are Banff-Kananaskis. That's the range from north to south. It's the Bow River valley and the Bow River water system. You have the Bow River. On the north side you have the Ghost River flowing into the Bow. On the south side you have the Kananaskis River flowing into the Bow. You also have, of course, the Elbow.

What I want to point out doesn't appear in the newspapers. Particularly over the last 25 years, as our environmental consciousness has grown, people living in that area – and I'm thinking from ordinary people to folks in voluntary organizations, churches, and the local governments – are learning to work together and to treat that landscape as a landscape that has its own integrity.

Now, when the federal commission wandered through here about three years ago, they suggested that there was a division between Banff and Canmore, so that Banff would have been in one federal constituency and Canmore in the other. In other words, it would have divided that just about in the middle. People heard a lot about: don't do that. I'm not suggesting that you're going to suggest that, but you will have to look at all kinds of permutations and combinations to fit population into landscape.

So, the first thing and the most important thing this morning is to say: please respect the integrity of that upper Bow Valley landscape and keep it in the same riding so that the people who are there, who are slowly learning to work together and treat it as a single entity, so that – yes. Waiparous is up the Ghost River, and people who live in Waiparous may not know anybody who lives down in Kananaskis country. As you probably know, there aren't many down there.

11:45

But bit by bit we are learning to treat that landscape with greater respect, and if you chew it up into pieces, that's going to become impossible. Let me stop there on that point.

The second question, and obviously important to you, is the growth question. You probably know that Canmore is growing as fast as you can build it. If you've been there recently, you'll find that the amount of new building in Canmore is quite extraordinary. My earliest memories of Canmore go back to the mid-1940s, and I've never seen anything like it. The mayor 25 years ago developed a growth management strategy not to increase growth but to manage the growth that they had because it was becoming unmanageable, and they're back to that state now.

If the Three Sisters lands are allowed to follow the plans that the company has for them, it will double the size of Canmore from roughly 16,000 to 30,000, which means that you have a continuous town from what is now Dead Man's Flats all the way up to almost the park gates.

You may not be aware that there are people, many people, in the valley who don't want that to happen. There is an issue before the courts. That's a slim chance, but if it did happen, that the courts decide that the government of Alberta must engage in a new environmental impact assessment rather than go with the one that was done in 1993, because 1993 in these terms is lifetimes ago, the final population of Canmore, instead of adding 15,000, it may add fewer than 5,000. It's not at all clear how that will turn out, and it

won't all happen in 10 years, but the decision of the courts will happen during the time you're making this. One of the difficulties you have in this riding is the uncertainty, because you've got the uncertainty of that particular proposal and folks taking issues to the court.

You also have the uncertainty that the growth in the area is largely people in Alberta who have done better than average because the prices are – I mean, Canmore is now the most expensive town in Alberta to live in. It means it's increasingly pricey, and that's possible because Alberta, as we all know, over the last 50, 60 years has done better than Canada. Most of that is about the price of oil. And, as we know, the price of oil is not a magical number, but it sure is a number that is wispy. It's: now you see it, now you don't.

Again, I would just – we know that the price of oil now is lower than the estimate the province had for this time of year, and we also know that in the fight with the U.S. government about Canada's existence and its economy, the Prime Minister has said that if need be, he will tax exported oil to the United States.

Now, we all know that would make many people here unhappy, particularly the Premier, but I'm just saying that what you're into is – there are perfectly credible adjacent futures in which the growth in this area grinds to a halt. I can't tell you where to put your money. I know where the market is putting its money, and I know where the common conversation is putting its money, but, as Pierre Poilievre found in the last election, you can be prepared for a future that does not happen, and what you're faced with is a future you had not planned on, were not prepared for. And I'm just saying that when it comes to this riding, the uncertainties that you face are probably greater than any other riding in the province. End of story.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Nelson.

Questions or comments, Mr. Evans?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Do you have an opinion on – previous commissions pulled Canmore out of that area. Do you believe that that's vital to that mountain area, that Canmore should stay within the Banff corridor?

Mr. Nelson: Oh, yes, and the federal commission did listen to us. Yellowknife is this long thing that runs through the mountains all the way up to Jasper. The people in the area have said, "We understand why they did it, and it's not entirely satisfactory just as a riding to get around," but are far happier with it so that, for example, when Jasper burned, people in Banff not only raised money for them, but it meant that people who were going to spend time in Jasper now spent it in Banff.

We're tied together deeply, historically through family ties, through business ties. So, yes, keep the Bow River system from what used to be Jimmy Simpson's lodge at Bow Lake down to the edge of Calgary if need be, which is where we are now. Keep that as an integral system with the Kananaskis River, with all the rivers I named, as they belong together ecologically. They'll be treated together in terms of tourist and other development, so we need a riding in which the MLA can exercise some responsibility and gather the people in order to make decisions together.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much for your presentation. I've got one – well, I have two questions. The first is: what about Lake Louise? Does anybody live there? It's on some maps but not on others, but I swear I've been there a lot. Lots of people.

Mr. Nelson: Well, as you probably know, once you're in the parks, there's no population growth; the only population growth is tourists. The national parks have marked an increasing number of roads within the parks that are now under control in the sense that you cannot drive your car there. You have to go by bus, or you can only go at certain times of the day, and that will get worse.

Dr. Martin: My follow-up question: is it not that the superintendent of the Banff national park is sort of a God; he or she controls everything? I know this from my experience of Jasper. I've spent a lot of time with superintendents there, where their opinion is the final opinion. Quite apart from the MLA, the representative for the park is the superintendent. Am I wrong?

Mr. Nelson: Not entirely. The superintendent reports to folks in Ottawa, and if you know anything about that, folks in Ottawa are of the view that they have the right to pass on laws and directives to the superintendent. So they don't see the superintendent as God; they see him as a public servant who is beholden to Him.

Dr. Martin: But my point, then, is . . .

Mr. Nelson: Well, if I just may, the other point I was going to say is that increasingly in the Banff area the Banff park superintendent and his staff are involved not just with Banff but with Canmore and other projects, that I mentioned, where we're learning to work together and see it as a whole, so there's much less sense today than may have been the case in the past that Banff lives unto itself. It's recognizing that it has a vested interest in what happens outside its borders and needs to learn to co-operate with this in a way that's absolutely mutual.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Just a quick question. You'd mentioned all the potential of new builds in Canmore, and there's obviously a lot of uncertainty at what's happening in Canmore. I'm curious. Do you have a thought or any data that tells us how many of those residences are permanent sort of first home versus weekend, recreation?

11:55

Mr. Nelson: I'm not giving you exact data. I was hired by the town of Canmore to do a citizen engagement process in 2005. At the time about 5 or 6 per cent of the homes in Canmore were weekenders. If you go back into the – I mean, Calgarians have been weekendening in Banff since the 1970s, when the mine closed at the end of the '70s, and then, of course, the Olympics came. Today it's almost 25 per cent, which is the reason that the town has put a tax on homes that are empty for six months of the year. I know people who, when they look down their street, can see two other neighbours on a street of 27 homes, and all the other 27 are owned by weekenders. So that's a concern.

It's not the kind of thing – the development within towns is, within limits, subject to the whims of the town and the decisions it makes, but a lot of it, of course, is set out in the Alberta municipal act and other acts. There are acts on the books that are known locally as the Canmore acts, which were acts put in place deliberately by the government of Alberta to say to the town of Canmore: "You cannot do what you just did. Every other town can

do that, but you've made a decision that we're unhappy with." If you think about it, the vested interests in Canmore at this point are pretty serious money. Much of that is Calgary money. Much of that is well connected to provincial governments in Alberta, and has been going back, I assume, to the Liberals in 1905. So this is not news, but it does mean that there are pressures in Canmore that reach Edmonton given the pressures of developers and serious money. There are things that the town of Canmore will not even consider because they know that if they consider them, the province will simply say, "You can't do that" and pass regulations to not allow it.

It's fraught in all kinds of ways. What I'm suggesting in terms of at least keeping the landscape together and the people on it, is to at least let those who are there now and will be there work out these things in some sense together, together with the park, together with the folks who live in Ranchland, up in the MD. It's a very interesting part of the province. I don't envy you, but I'm just saying: to the extent that you can, leave it intact. You may have to add to it for population reasons – I'll let you work that out – but don't decide to cut it in the middle and give half to somebody and another half to somebody else.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Nelson. Appreciate your submission.

Mr. Nelson: Thank you. You have been kind and patient.

The Chair: Thank you.

We've got one more presenter before lunch. Two? Since when? Okay. Sorry.

You know what? Julia Law, I missed you, so sorry. Can I have you present first, in fairness?

Ms Law: Yeah. Sure.

The Chair: I thought we only had one. That's why I was a little more relaxed with Mr. Nelson. Okay.

Ms Law: Thank you for having me and providing me with this opportunity. My name is Julia Law, and I am the vice-president external at the students' union for the University of Calgary. I'm also joined by my president, Naomie Bakana, also from the same organization.

My job is to promote the welfare of my fellow undergraduates, who elected me to carry out this work. In a way I'm accountable to my own electorate. My constituents are 30,000 undergraduates, most of whom study at the campus beside Crowchild Trail, next to the neighbourhood of Varsity. This being said, this places the University of Calgary and its students within the bounds of Calgary-Varsity, which is what I'm here to talk about today.

This electoral district includes the neighbourhoods of Banff Trail, University Heights, Brentwood, Dalhousie, Parkdale, Charleswood, Point McKay as well as Varsity itself. Analysis of almost 5,000 student voters in 2018 found that 48 per cent of the students I represent live in one of these areas. For more recent numbers we can look at the census in 2021. This census provided that 11.7 per cent of Calgarians were aged between 15 and 24. In Alberta most undergraduate or prospective undergraduate students are between these ages. As of the census this demographic made up more than 12 per cent of the respective populations of Varsity, Dalhousie, and Charleswood. They made

up 17 per cent of Banff Trail, 19 per cent of Brentwood, and 22 per cent of University Heights.

They were comparatively less represented in Parkdale and Point McKay, where they took up 6 per cent of each, but the census also found that these neighbourhoods contain a significant number of professionals in the field of education. In fact, the 2021 census tells us that in each neighbourhood represented by Calgary-Varsity, educational services appear in the top five professions held by the residents. Just as students live in these districts, so do university staff.

Students also play an important role in the economies of Calgary-Varsity. The SU oversees around 300 clubs, dozens of which carry out charitable and volunteer work in these neighbourhoods each year. One could say that in terms of size and organization students are a neighbourhood. To illustrate, we note that Calgary-Varsity had 45,000 residents in 2021, which is aligned with the commission's target population range. At that time the number of students enrolled at the University of Calgary, undergraduates and graduates, was 35,000. Not all of those students lived within Calgary-Varsity in 2021, but if they did, they would have comprised 80 per cent of the overall population within that district. We expect that in recent years students have only come to amount to more of Calgary-Varsity's population.

The government of Alberta estimates that Calgary's population has increased by 18 per cent since 2020. In this time, enrolment at the University of Calgary grew by 10 per cent. Our total student body is now 38,000 strong. As the student and city populations increase, it is important that the representation of the urban centre also increases. We'd like to bring attention back to the students outside of Calgary-Varsity, whether it be our own constituents or attendees of other institutions. These students are dispersed across the city, and it is important that their voices are amplified to the same extent as those living within the same boundary of the institutions they attend.

Of course, some students who live in Calgary-Varsity move there just to be closer to their campus. Still, even if they are just temporary residents, it takes an average of 4.5 years to complete a bachelor's degree, and pursuing a master's adds another 2.6. Students who won't call Calgary-Varsity home forever will be there long enough to understand the needs of the communities that welcome them during this transitional period. They'll be there long enough to be affected by the decisions of their MLA, and their student-focused voting patterns as well as political participation will set up success for students who come to live in their communities after them, which is highly likely. This is to say nothing of the staff who live in these areas, likely on a more permanent basis.

The university supports thousands of jobs in Calgary on and off campus. Voters with no personal involvement with the university also benefit from its continued health. One example is the millions of tourism dollars that the institution generates by hosting sports and other events. With an estimated annual economic impact of \$16.5 billion the University of Calgary is a key component of Calgary's economic health. Our city is the fastest growing in Canada. It will only come to rely even more on its mutually beneficial relationship with the university.

With this in mind, the commission should be aware that under the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act most districts should have populations of no more than 25 per cent above or below the average size, as we have mentioned earlier. CBC reports that of the nine districts in Alberta that currently exceed the guidance, five are in Calgary. These are Calgary-Buffalo, Calgary-Foothills, Calgary-North East, Calgary-South East, and Calgary-Shaw.

We know that the commission will have heard or will hear from Calgarians who believe the city is not appropriately represented, and we have to agree. The city that has allowed the university to flourish so successfully, to the billion-dollar benefit of Alberta as a whole, deserves more of a voice than it currently receives. We urge the commission to pay particular attention to the residents of these districts and whether or not they feel adequately represented. Proper representation within these districts ensures Calgary representation as a whole will increase but also ensures that the voices of students across the urban environment will be heard. For our part we strongly recommend that the Calgary-Varsity region is preserved as a provincial electoral district by the commission.

12:05

The campus community and the surrounding areas it supports deserve to have a consolidated voice that understands their unique needs in the areas of economic development, infrastructure, or support for education and research. We encourage the commission to look towards the success of Calgary-Varsity's current boundaries for other institutions and their surrounding communities around the city, ensuring that the student voice continues to be adequately heard and amplified. We therefore believe that the current boundaries of Calgary-Varsity are an appropriate recognition of the university and its affiliates as a community of interest in the spirit of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation and for your concise focus on this electoral division. My apologies for making you wait. It was handwritten in here, and I deferred to the typewritten. Sorry.

Ms Law: That's okay. No worries.

The Chair: Mr. Clark, any questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Calgary-Varsity was just about exactly average previously and is now just a little below the average. I'm just curious if you felt there were some communities that you could add into Calgary-Varsity, in particular around its edges. Is there a spot you think we should or shouldn't consider?

Ms Law: I think that generally speaking, if we're talking about students residing in certain areas, it would definitely be around, say, the Foothills medical campus. That being said, there is development going into areas such as the university district that would slowly start to increase the population in Calgary-Varsity, so it is important to consider those developments.

Mr. Clark: Great. And the university district is currently inside Calgary-Varsity?

Ms Law: Yes.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: On the south end.

Ms Law: Yes. It's at the edge.

Mr. Clark: Got it. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I'm very interested in your argument about the impact of students. I'm on the board of governors at the MacEwan University, which represents 25 per cent of the

commuter traffic in and out of Edmonton every day, so it and the points you raise about students are very much on my mind. You feel, from your studies, that quite a few of them are finding residences outside Calgary-Varsity, which is rather what one would expect, but do you continue to see growth of residences on the campus?

Ms Law: The university as a whole is trying to grow by 10,000 students, so it will be in their best interest to start to include more residences on campus. A lot of developments in the area include the university district, which might not be as student focused, just for particular students, but you can see families and then their children who are students living in those apartment complexes.

Dr. Martin: Great. Thank you very much.

Ms Law: Of course.

Mrs. Samson: No questions, but thank you for the presentation.

Ms Law: You're welcome.

Mr. Evans: No questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Well, thank you again. Did you submit what you just presented in written form at all?

Ms Law: We will be submitting.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Gord Paynter. You were scheduled for 11:30. We're 40 minutes late. We're still faster than most emergency rooms, so don't complain.

Gordon Paynter: No problem at all. I budgeted for a slight overage. Not a problem. I'll read from my presentation, which has been submitted.

I am from the area of Calgary-Acadia, again, a political hotbed apparently for all the presentations you've received. I'm also active on the Willow Park community association, which is one of the communities in the area. Worse, I'm a professional engineer, recently retired, so I have an opinion about lots of things.

A quick consensus. I think I want to empathize with the job that's been assigned to the boundaries commission. Given the growth in Alberta in the last 10 years, from about 4.1 million to 5 million, to only increase by two seats does seem a bit restrictive. However, I did do a little bit of background reading, and I do see that Ontario, which has had growth equal to Alberta in many cases – certainly in the Toronto metropolitan area – has only 124 electoral districts for its 14 million people, which is about 100,000 per district. So I would conclude that Alberta continues to be well represented per elector even if we do see an increase in voters per electoral district.

I think the critical thing, as several people have pointed out, is really the effectiveness of that presentation. However, I do note that, like some of the other presentations, Calgary and Edmonton grew disproportionately compared to the rest of the province. Calgary and Edmonton metropolitan areas grew by 550,000 people in the last 10 years, which represented about 71 per cent of the total increase in the population. Calgary and Edmonton represent about 45 of Alberta's 87 ridings – about half of the ridings – but saw 71 per cent of the population increase.

There is a slide in my presentation, but I'll just briefly touch on it. Essentially, Calgary's share of the population provincially has grown from about 32 and a half per cent to 34 per cent, Edmonton

marginally decreased from 32 and a half per cent to 32, and the rest of Alberta, meaning everything outside of Calgary and Edmonton, decreased from about 35 per cent to 34 per cent. So there is an argument that Calgary continues to grow disproportionately over and above the other areas of the province.

When I look at the 2017 boundaries commission report, they did an excellent job allocating ridings. There were two electoral district exceptions in northern Alberta, which are completely justifiable. The 2017 final report of the Alberta boundaries commission did note that, you know, there are really only three options available to the councillors: increase the number of constituencies, which is out of your control; reduce the number of overall seats in rural areas; or create blended ridings.

Arguments can be made on both sides. I am an urban resident but have deep roots in rural Alberta. I am not opposed to leaving the number of rural seats unchanged. I think there are lots of arguments in Canada. We can only look at the examples of other provinces federally in Confederation. Prince Edward Island, for example, has 179,000 population, not voters. Obviously, voters will be less than that. They retained four seats federally, as they have since the beginning of Confederation. However, Canada has recognized that and continues to grow the number of seats in Parliament, and I think we're now up to 343. I see the same logic prevailing provincially. As I mentioned earlier, in Ontario the seats continue to be added in urban areas while the rural areas retain the representation that they've historically had. I think that that's probably what we are looking at here.

In short, I would advocate that given the increase in population across the province, Calgary certainly should look at receiving at least one more seat, likely in the periphery, where we see the largest growth in those new communities. MLA Eremenko referred to that as well.

Finally, I'll just talk about a success story for the previous boundary commission, which is Calgary-Acadia. In 2023 the MLA was elected by a very slim majority of seven seats. In fact, it was very similar in Glenmore as well. After the official recount it was 25 seats and after the judicial review was 22 seats. It's a well-designed riding – contiguous boundaries, roughly similar ages of communities built between 1950-52 and 1968, demographics are similar – but the important part was that that was not a safe seat. That election could have gone either way. Every vote counted, and it was up to voters to make that difference. So, in my books, that was a success story. That was a well-designed riding, where the previous boundary commission did a good job of making sure that voters' interests could be heard at the ballot box. Democracy worked in part because of the careful design of that riding.

Thank you.

12:15

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Evans, any questions or comments?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you for your presentation.

The Chair: Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: I like that story about the voters. I did know that the MLA in Acadia only won by a few and that is quite – like, to tie it back to the boundaries, I hadn't thought about that. That's excellent.

Gordon Paynter: Yes, indeed. I'll also mention that I was there for the official recount. I watched all 23,000 votes get recounted, and it's a great exercise in democracy. There was absolutely no question that, even though it was a narrow victory, the right answer prevailed.

Mrs. Samson: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: Nothing from me.

Mr. Clark: That's fabulous. Thank you. I just appreciate the good people of Acadia coming out and representing. So thank you.

Gordon Paynter: Yeah. It's very surprising.

I'll mention one other thing. I think MLA Eremenko mentioned transit-oriented development and pressures on growth. I think Calgary-Acadia will see average growth as we see across the city. There is a large transit-oriented development scheduled for Anderson LRT station area, but I'll note that it's mostly aspirational. It won't really come to fruition until after the green line is in place and parking pressure is reduced on Anderson station. It depends on the Tower Chrysler dealership basically being turned into apartment buildings and potentially part of south centre, neither of which is really going to happen in the next few years. So I think that can be safely postponed to the next electoral commission.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paynter. Typical of an engineer, we finished perfectly at 10 minutes.

Gordon Paynter: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will adjourn until 1 p.m. for continuation of the hearings.

[The hearing adjourned at 12:17 p.m.]

