



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Calgary

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12:59 p.m.

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Well, good afternoon, everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the afternoon session for the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission public hearing in Calgary. This is our second day in Calgary.

I want to introduce our commission to you. First of all, my name is Justice Dallas Miller. I'm the chairman of the commission. To my left is Susan Samson from Sylvan Lake, a long-time municipal councillor and mayor of Sylvan Lake. She's a dedicated volunteer in her community with a focus on public health care.

Next to Mrs. Samson is John Evans, KC, a trial lawyer with a province-wide firm known as Stringam, and he spends most of his time conducting trials out of the Lethbridge office. John's legal ability has been recognized by being awarded King's Counsel, and John also volunteers on the Alberta Judicial Nominating Committee.

To my right is Dr. Julian Martin, a retired history professor from the University of Alberta with advanced degrees from Cambridge University. Dr. Martin volunteers on many committees, formerly in Edmonton and now in Sherwood Park where he resides, and he serves on two provincial boards, the Surface Rights Board and the Land Compensation Board.

At the far end of the table is Mr. Greg Clark, an entrepreneur and consultant. He focuses on information and knowledge management. Greg is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee medal. He serves as the chair of the Balancing Pool for Alberta, and he brings to this commission real-life experience as a member of the Legislative Assembly, for which we are very grateful.

As we start this afternoon's session please silence any cellphones and don't worry about the audio. The microphones pick up all the audio. The audio proceedings will be posted on the website in a day or two for the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and as well written transcripts through *Hansard* will be made available to the public. If you have any written documentation that you want the commission to see or retain, please provide that to Mr. Aaron Roth, who's just walking with a clipboard, and check in with him if you have that material.

Our task as an Electoral Boundaries Commission is to provide a report to the Alberta Legislature as to where the electoral boundaries for the next version of the electoral map should be. We are moving from 87 constituencies in Alberta to 89.

To give you a sense of the timeline of this commission, we were appointed by the Speaker of the Alberta Legislature in late March. That starts the clock ticking for our work. We met in April on a couple of occasions to decide process and calendar, and in late May we started touring Alberta and hearing submissions in public hearings just like this starting in Pincher Creek. This week we are in Calgary for a couple of days, and then we move south to Brooks and Medicine Hat, and we were also in Drumheller on Monday.

When these public hearings are completed, which will be the end of June, we will then take into consideration all the submissions that we've heard, and we will look at the population data and use mapping programs. Throughout the summer and September we will work on what's known as the interim report. That interim report must be filed with the Speaker of the Legislature no later than late October of this year. That report will be made public, and we will give an opportunity for Albertans to respond to that report in the months after October with a view that by the end of March of 2026 we will present to the Speaker of the Legislature our final report.

That final report, of course, will be made public as well, and the Legislative Assembly will deal with that report in terms of passing any ensuing legislation.

Of course, as you are all no doubt aware, each electoral division in Alberta elects one member of the Legislative Assembly, and as I said, we're moving from 87 to 89.

1:05

In order to give some context to the work that we have to do we look back at the previous Electoral Boundaries Commission report. That report was issued in 2017. That report was based on a population of just over 4 million people. The 2017 electoral boundaries report was based on a population of just over 4 million people. The formula that that commission used was to take the population of Alberta of 4,062,609 and divide it by 87 constituencies and it gave us a mean average of 46,697 per electoral division.

We don't operate under the system of one person, one vote, in Canada, but it is, rather, effective representation. The effective representation formula gives an average of minus 25 to plus 25 of the mean average. You can see that range on the screen. That is from the last Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Our task is to take the population that Alberta currently has, and it has increased significantly. The population of Alberta that we're using is 4,888,723. The mean average after considering 89 constituencies is 54,929, or in other words, almost 55,000. The range then for each electoral division from minus or plus 25 is 41,197 to almost 69,000 per electoral division.

The task of this commission is to examine where the growth is in the province and draw the proposed electoral boundaries appropriately, taking into consideration the term "effective representation" and the target populations that I've just cited. Effective representation is our goal, and how we reach that goal is through several principles of the legislation under which we must operate.

The first is relative sparsity and density of population throughout the province as well as common community interests, organizations, the day-by-day work that people do in communities. That's a factor that we must consider. More importantly in areas outside of the larger cities are geographic features of the ridings. Communication and transportation routes also have an impact.

Ultimately, our task is to create understandable and clear boundaries for Albertans that also apportion the real estate of Alberta to provide effective representation. The legislation also gives us a catch-all factor or instruction that we can use, and that includes any other appropriate factors. That's the type of information, the sociological data, the information we receive from members of the public, that we glean from these public hearings. With that background, that's our current map of electoral divisions of 87. We will draw a new map of 89 electoral divisions after our task is completed.

Now we want to hear from Albertans, and thank you so much to everyone that's here that signed up. Our first presenter is Mrs. Miriam Obst. Please come forward and have a seat at the chair to my left. Just identify yourself. Tell us what electoral division you are from and begin your presentation.

Mrs. Obst: My name is Miriam Obst, and I live in Calgary-Elbow. I am retired. My husband and I moved back to Alberta to be closer to our families. I have lived in several large and small cities in Canada, the U.S., and overseas, and this has given me a unique opportunity to see a variety of elections and experience how they're managed.

I grew up on a family farm north of Lethbridge and attended school in Picture Butte. It was a small community with distinct concerns. We had dry land and irrigated crops on our land. We had cattle, sheep, and other animals during my childhood. I saw how the farmers needed assistance from the provincial government during years of drought, and the good years seemed far between at times. Either the crops or the cattle did okay, but usually not at the same time. Water for irrigation was a growing concern, especially as more land became irrigated. We lost the local hospital in Picture Butte shortly after I moved from home, which impacted our town. Several times we had farming accidents which required quick attention, and having a hospital within 30 minutes was invaluable.

After I was married, we moved to Cold Lake and saw another part of the province. That region too had its own unique challenges. It was an area of small towns surrounded by farms and oil and gas and, of course, the air force base. It was a boom-and-bust economy there, depending on the price of oil, and the businesses of the area were dependent on the industries located there. CFB Cold Lake provided stable employment in the area, which helped ease the ebb and flow of the oil industry.

Tourism also brought people to the area, and local businesses were able to maintain their presence throughout the leaner times. The marina in Cold Lake has recently been transferred to the city by the province, which will allow it to directly control any future development in the area.

The hospital was built in 1987 and was a huge addition to the health care in the community. As the hospital on the base was not open to the public, families of military personnel were unable to access that facility. Having a new and larger public facility enabled the community to grow and service the communities around Cold Lake.

Since retiring to Calgary in 2021, I've seen how the issues in Calgary are different again. Calgary faces serious issues with homelessness, housing shortages, and transportation infrastructure. The Alberta government has actively encouraged people to relocate from other parts of the country as well as from overseas but has not facilitated the municipal governments to prepare for the new arrivals. The health care is stretched and not able to manage the number of people needing care. Our schools are overcrowded and underfunded, at the lowest per-student funding across the country. The population of Calgary has grown by 6 per cent over a 12-month period ending July 2024. Where are the schools, doctors, jobs, et cetera for these new residents? These are provincial responsibilities that are not being met in the larger cities with a significant number of Alberta's new residents locating here.

We had lived in the U.S. for 11 years. While there, I was aware of numerous issues with the gerrymandering of the electoral districts. The official *Oxford* definition of gerrymandering is to manipulate the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favour one party or class. This approach was very effective in ensuring the states continue to elect representatives of their party to the state or federal governments regardless of the actual percentage of their voters in the state. These other voices were not heard or even seen. There was no effective representation for those voters and no way for their voices to be heard. I was very disillusioned by this approach to democracy. Tactics such as cracking, which is splitting like-minded voters across multiple districts, and packing, which is concentrating them into a few, eroded representative democracy. The states using this approach discouraged engagement of the electorate and weakened democracy.

As you decide the new electoral boundaries for Alberta's next provincial election, I trust you will not develop the boundaries for the new ridings to dilute the voices of Albertans, but will ensure a

fair map that keeps towns and cities voices heard. Each area has its own challenges and needs, and those voices deserve to be heard and represented. These electoral boundaries are not meant to consolidate votes for a particular party and influence the outcome of our elections. Our representatives are expected to bring the concerns of their ridings to the government. Please ensure this approach is respected in the new riding boundaries.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you so much for your presentation and for a couple of new terms that I've learned. Did I understand you correctly? Cracking and . . .

Mrs. Obst: And packing.

The Chair: And packing. Okay. Thank you. Well, Mrs. Obst, our tradition is to engage with the presenters. I'm going to start with Mr. Evans on the far end if he has any questions.

Mr. Evans: Thank you. My one question is: would I be correct in presuming that the premise of why you're here today is to remind us not to engage in gerrymandering?

Mrs. Obst: Exactly.

Mr. Evans: You're not the only one who has mentioned that, but I did appreciate the definition because some people misuse the term.

What specific about your riding – are you concerned if we think about it from opposition to gerrymandering, or is it a broader context?

1:15

Mrs. Obst: I would say that it's broader in that, I suppose, over time there's been tension between urban and rural. My experience with the gerrymandering in the States is the ridings became so convoluted so as to dilute those, and I just really don't want that to happen here. I know there's been a lot of population growth in the larger centres. It's going to be interesting trying to figure out how to manage that growth and keep the representation valid across the province.

Mr. Evans: If I can direct you to the map, is your concern with urban and rural related, then, to your southwest – I guess the more south-southwest – portion of your boundary, the bottom part?

Mrs. Obst: I suppose somewhat in there, but as the population of Calgary expands beyond just the city limits – it goes into Airdrie, it goes into Cochrane, it goes into a lot of other smaller centres – that the similarities are not diluted in those areas around the city as well.

Mr. Evans: Looking at your boundaries, if they had to change, you know, slightly one way or another, could you identify a concern that you would have with respect to those boundary changes that you would then think would constitute gerrymandering? In other words, packing or – what was the other?

Mrs. Obst: Packing or cracking?

Mr. Evans: Cracking. I was going to say fracking, but I didn't want to start a fight.

Mrs. Obst: That's another rhyming word.

Not specifically, because I haven't been in Calgary-Elbow that long. But when I would go to some of the open houses and things like that in the riding, they would say: Oh; this is part of that one,

and across the street is there. So there is a little bit of people who have been here longer who might have a bit more concern that way.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate your answering all my questions.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you, and thank you for coming out today. I think that one of the things we're tasked with – we're tasked with a lot of things – that's important to me is clear and identifiable boundaries. You know, as boundaries change, as they will in a big city like Calgary because of the cascading effect of once you move one thing, then everything kind of happens, I think it's going to be really important not only for the commission but for people like you who are on the ground to be able to clearly say: this is my riding, and this is what it encompasses. I appreciate you coming out today because you will be one up on your neighbours. Thank you.

Mrs. Obst: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. We've heard from other people who have been anxious about gerrymandering. Of course, when you have a commission with this kind of work, that sort of thing leaps to mind. But I'd like to reassure you that we take very seriously all the factors listed in the act, which is not just population, obviously, but it's communities of interest, the kind of industry, the kind of geography and transportation. We juggle a lot of balls. But I would also say that this riding, I mean politically, has elected people from different parties quite regularly within these kind of boundaries. So, I think your neighbours have a finely tuned sense of who can best represent them.

I look, for example, at my colleague, who was formerly the MLA for Calgary-Elbow. I think I've gained a much greater appreciation by talking to lots of MLAs in these hearings for the diligence with which they pursue connectivity and relations within their ridings. Your concerns remain your concerns, but I think the likelihood of that kind of thing happening is very, very low, except for those with the most jaundiced perspectives.

Thank you.

Mrs. Obst: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate you coming out. This process, we were talking about it earlier. It's a very active act of democracy, I guess, to have these sorts of commissions. Just to build on what my colleagues have said, one of the fundamental differences in the way we're doing this in Alberta and in Canada and the way the Americans do it is we have commissions like this that are neutral, appointed by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly as opposed to the legislators or the politicians themselves sitting down with the maps and, you know, horse trading with each other and sort of creating that situation, and we have the jurisprudence in Canada leading back to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There's a pretty clear line in Canada, anyway, from our Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the Supreme Court to the act to this activity for the public participating.

Just the nature of the conversations we've had and the questions, you know, I've heard from my colleagues: I guess the only thing I can guarantee is that most people won't be very happy

in a sense. Not to say we're going to try to make everyone unhappy, but it's very, very difficult. We're not sort of in the make-people-happy business, but it doesn't feel like there's a thumb on a scale necessarily. It's taking the feedback, looking at both the map, the arithmetic, considering the relevant factors of effective representation.

We haven't drawn the maps yet. That's what we're about to set out to do here in a few weeks, but I think your point is important. I guess maybe just take this as, I hope, some reassurance. I'm hopeful that we have a process here that's going to end up with a fair map at the end of the day, but at the same time your concerns, I think, in particular the comparison between Canada and the U.S., are helpful for us. I just want to say thanks for that.

Mrs. Obst: Thank you. I'm really pleased to see the difference in the process in how those boundaries are established because it was disgusting down there. Let me tell you, it was not good.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for presenting. It's always helpful to have someone that has such a rich experience and background present to us, so thank you so much. You're excused to sit in the gallery, and if you can stay for the entire proceedings, that would be helpful or may be helpful because, if we have some time, we might continue our conversation.

Mrs. Obst: I had e-mailed this copy to you earlier, so do you not need the . . .

The Chair: Yeah. We don't need it now. It's in our system, and we will be reviewing it again. Thank you.

Mrs. Obst: Okay. Thank you so much.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: David Howard? No?
Brian Malkinson? Please come forward.

Mr. Malkinson: I think we're aiming for seven minutes, correct?

The Chair: Well, I'm not that strict.

Mr. Malkinson: Not a hard seven minutes.

The Chair: No. Some of them this morning turned into 27 minutes, but don't use that as a guide.

1:25

Mr. Malkinson: Well, my name is Brian Malkinson. I am the former MLA for Calgary-Currie and former Minister of Service Alberta at the end of Premier Notley's administration. My current riding is Calgary-Glenmore, where I actually live. Interestingly, talking about boundaries in the city, the whole reason why I ran in Calgary-Currie ages ago was that I looked at an out-of-date map, so when I actually got elected, I lived – well, I could throw a baseball to my riding from my house, but I had lived in three different ridings in the apartment I had downtown, because I was right at the corner. I was in Calgary-Buffalo, Mount Royal, and Calgary-Currie in the span of the 15 years that I lived there, so I am acutely aware of boundary changes when you have a dense city.

To start off my presentation, what I am going to do is get less into the weeds of my specific riding because it is within the city limits. Where I'm coming from is that I put myself in your shoes and thought about the decisions you are likely going to have to make when it comes to adding those ridings. You chatted about how as soon as you add ridings, there's quite the butterfly effect. I was

hoping to provide some general thoughts of, you know, areas where I think you might have to make some difficult decisions and provide some suggestions for guidelines you could use while making that decision. I hope you would find that helpful.

Besides being a former MLA, I'm also in the power generation industry, both standby and actual utility power generation, which means I do a lot of travelling in southern Alberta. My comments are generally going to be to the southern part of the province.

With that in mind for general comments, when I look at the numbers, to me it seems like you are going to need to add two new ridings to both Calgary and Edmonton, looking at the population from your original presentation. I don't envy you having to do that because that means you are going to need to take at least two ridings from not Calgary or Edmonton and add one each from the new ones, which will create a lot of a knock-on effect.

While doing that I think, number one, you should as much as possible respect city boundaries and, specifically for Calgary and Edmonton, really try to avoid having ridings that would be, you know, Calgary-Okotoks as a random example. As we move out of Calgary and Edmonton, keep larger cities whenever possible within their own ridings, so cities like Medicine Hat, Airdrie, Lethbridge, Red Deer within their own riding or within two ridings if at all possible.

Looking specifically at Calgary, where you're going to have quite the butterfly effect if you do indeed add two ridings, as I'm suspecting you might, it's important to respect some natural boundaries. In order of importance, I would suggest that the Elbow River within Calgary city limits to probably be the most important boundary because there's not a lot of access or transport over that river besides on bridges. I think that that should be a very hard boundary.

Second and almost equal to it would be Deerfoot Trail going north-south through the city. Again, even if you look at a map on Google maps, there's a very clear delineation between what side of Deerfoot you're on, and it tends to nicely divide up communities of mutual interest as well.

Going down from there, I'm sure you'll get comments from others on specific ridings and specific roads. That would be the same sort of idea – Crowchild Trail, McKnight, Macleod Trail – but those first two, being the Elbow River and Deerfoot, I think are the most important ones.

Of course, as you expand around Calgary, you know, I used my comment of Airdrie. Airdrie is a rapidly growing city. We do a lot of business there by my count. Google says it's at about 88,000 people right now, which could be two ridings all to itself, which I would suggest, the way it's growing, I think that would be something the committee could do. Alternatively, have Airdrie-East encompass all of Airdrie and the current Airdrie-Cochrane take whatever part of Airdrie wouldn't be able to fit in that riding.

As we move around Calgary, there's also Banff-Kananaskis. I think there would be a temptation to perhaps put Cochrane into Banff-Kananaskis, you know, the butterfly effect that comes from moving those ridings into Calgary. I would suggest that Banff-Kananaskis, being that it is a resort area, people in those communities and the Indigenous reserves in those communities are very much mountain- and tourism-based whereas Cochrane, I think, as a like community would be much closer to Airdrie or the areas immediately surrounding Calgary.

I would suggest for a riding like Banff-Kananaskis that you could consider going further north to include Jasper or south along the mountains, again, because you'd have like interests related to tourism, use in the mountains. Whether it's mining or other economic activities, they would be similar, and that would be my suggestion.

Moving out, sort of further afield from Calgary, looking at Medicine Hat, again that's another riding where you have most of it in one riding, and then it goes south to include a rural area. But there's this little piece on the other side of the river in the riding that is north of it, which, I apologize, its name is escaping me at the moment.

The Chair: Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Malkinson: Brooks-Medicine Hat. That might be an example where Medicine Hat – I get that it doesn't have enough population to be its own riding, but perhaps all of Medicine Hat should be in its own riding and then the surrounding rural area, whether it be north, south. I leave that to your good judgment. From the perspective of an MLA that means your local councillors in the smaller centres – Strathmore, Chestermere – are only dealing with one local MLA as opposed to in Medicine Hat, for example, where you have mostly an MLA and then plus one more. I think it would make sense for those communities to try and not split them up.

With *Hansard* here I was looking at Lethbridge going south. Similar sort of situation. I read in *Hansard* that somebody made a presentation about splitting Lethbridge into four, going out into the related communities. As an MLA – again, I haven't been an MLA in Lethbridge – that would seem to be a little untenable to serve those people. You would have the city council of Lethbridge dealing with a potential of four MLAs potentially from different parties, perhaps even from more than two parties. That just seems like a way to sort of get lost in the weeds or have MLAs working at different purposes for the community. That seems like a bad idea to me. I would suggest my original comment of keeping those medium-sized cities as close to being in one or two ridings as possible. I don't envy your task.

Final comment as far as a general one for within Calgary itself. As Mr. Clark can attest to – we were both MLAs at the same time – during the Marda Loop festivals his booth and our booth were on the same street, and we were still within our own ridings. We could look at each other across the street. I get that, you know, you're going to have to make boundary changes. That means you're moving neighbourhoods from one to the other. I would just ask that you try to keep the density of downtown Calgary-type areas as much as possible within their own ridings. So a riding like Calgary-Buffalo or Calgary-Mountain View, more or less is the same shape. Very deep south or northwest communities are somewhat homogeneous. Again, try and keep them in their own ridings as much as possible.

I know the butterfly effect of potentially adding two, so I do not envy your job at all in that regard. With that, those are my comments. I did spend some time thinking about this and, again, a former MLA, so I'm happy to take any questions, how you might deal with theoretical situations. Again, thank you very much for your time. This is an important part of democracy. I'm glad the public is participating in it, and I'm glad we're here.

The Chair: Well, thank you so much. I have to say that anybody that has gone back to *Hansard* and read a presentation already from our beginning, hats off to you and thank you for doing it. You understand, if you've read through Lethbridge's presentations, that it was at the end of the evening, almost like – not a hand grenade but it was a different presentation and interesting. There were arguments on every side. I know that you are engaged if you've done that. So thank you so much. As I say, we always appreciate MLAs or former MLAs who have knocked on doors, walked the sidewalks day in, day out and campaigned because you bring a fresh perspective that we need.

I want to allow the commission to engage. Mr. Clark, do you have any questions?

Mr. Clark: I don't, actually. No.

It's good to see you again, and thank you for being here. You know, as I said to the previous presenter, I think it's always really impressive – again, I'll just maybe reflect on the kind of general feedback we've received. As Justice Miller said, it's been a range of input, and I think a few things. People have acknowledged how challenging our job is. We hear that a lot. Undaunted, though, we'll take it on.

Yeah. I guess I don't think I have any specific questions. I mean, I just appreciate you sharing your perspective on it because I think you do bring a unique perspective having been in the Assembly and just having lived the implications of the boundaries. I've written down most of what you've said. We also, as you say, have *Hansard*, so we can reflect on that as well.

Thank you very much. I have no specific questions.

1:35

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. I was a bit startled, as you might expect, with the notion that we have two new electoral districts for Calgary on the one hand and two new electoral districts for Edmonton on the other, which certainly would make the math easier, but we are not allowed to do it. The act specifies that there shall be 89 EDs.

Mr. Malkinson: If I may clarify, Dr. Martin, what I was meaning by that is that in order to make the math work, two of those ridings would come from – basically, there would be two less, not Calgary or Edmonton ridings, that would fold into Calgary or Edmonton. Then the two ridings that are being added would also be added to Calgary or Edmonton. Putting myself in your shoes, that was my suspicion of what you might be considering. That's where I drew my thought process from.

Dr. Martin: Okay. I apologize for overthinking it, but let's pursue that scenario. That would require, would it not, boundaries to cross the city boundary?

Mr. Malkinson: I mean, I think you guys might have your numbers in front of you perhaps a little bit more specific than I do. I don't believe so, but it's a tough one because, of course, Calgary and Edmonton are both growing rapidly. So it would be that if there has to be a riding that is slightly outside, maybe that's what it needs to be to allow for growth.

What I just did, again: population of Calgary divided by 16 ridings. The math made sense. That's, of course, based on what the 2025 estimated population of Calgary is, and I did the same thing for Edmonton. I also get that with two less rest-of-Alberta ridings, as they're often called, that means you're going to get some very big rural ridings and that's going to be tough. I don't envy that. I mean, that's something that you guys are going to have to weigh in the committee.

I think it's unquestionable that at least Calgary and Edmonton are getting more ridings because it has to make the math work. I would suggest that it's two. That was my thought process, but like I said, that would mean you would have significantly larger rural areas. I would say that in a time of modern communication I think that can be addressed and worked around, but you know, I'm sure, as you tour the province

in areas like Medicine Hat, you'll have lots of comments to help with that and draw from.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Susan, questions?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you, and thank you for coming out. I appreciate your thoughts, wide ranging. I think, if you could just expand on this, we've got a situation, and it occurs more than once. It's something like Airdrie, where Airdrie is joined up with another mid-sized city, Cochrane.

Mr. Malkinson: Yeah. It's probably Airdrie-Cochrane you're talking about.

Mrs. Samson: Right. And it's not up, but they're joined together. Then, you know, the population isn't there for Cochrane to stand on its own. So they would have to have a hybrid riding. But what do you think about when you have two mid-sized cities sitting in the same riding with urban and rural in between? How does representation – do you want to just discuss that?

Mr. Malkinson: Yeah. I can. That was something that I alluded to in my initial comments of: what do you do about Cochrane if you're going to add two ridings to Calgary? Going with the theory of same interests that you chatted about at the beginning, I would suggest that the concerns of Cochrane would be more similar to that of Airdrie than of Banff or Canmore, being more resort towns, which would be my suggestion to not put it there. But you bring up an excellent point. If you are a farmer that's in the riding that's between those two, it's a hard one, and I think it's unfortunately something that is going to be unavoidable.

The only other way around that would be if you would put Cochrane in part of Calgary; say, west or northwest does something to grab Cochrane. It's a question of: what boundary do you want to respect? I think for Calgary and Edmonton, being large, you would generally want to have that be in there. Being that those are smaller centres that are geographically relatively close to each other, I would think that an MLA would have an okay time representing those. Of course, it'd be a good example to get some feedback from any current or former MLA in a similar riding.

Mrs. Samson: We haven't seen an MLA yet from that area.

Mr. Malkinson: Or even a former one that has a similar type of situation, right? I would think that it would be doable due to the general proximity from it. This is not a riding – I think of Central Peace-Notley and some of the northern ridings, which are geographically massive. Because of their relative closeness to Calgary, they are going to have similar interests that are going to be in the gravity of a city like Calgary. Or if you go into other areas like, for example, ones that would be around Lethbridge, Lethbridge would have a certain gravity around, as you draw out into the rural area, that would be that similar community, perhaps similar interests.

I would suggest that it's not too large of a deal, but it's something that would need to be balanced, and I'm sure there would be differing opinions from other members of the public. I would just suggest that you have to bring it down to those interests. It's like: what's the bigger gravity pull? Is it the mountains and resort-style towns in Banff-Kananaskis? Is it true farming of the areas more north of that area that would make sense to put that in? Or is it the bigger gravity of being Calgary adjacent? I think of, like, Leduc and

Edmonton. It would be Edmonton adjacent. It's where's the biggest pull of gravity is, so to speak, as far as when you have similar interests.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: No, no questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. I want to engage a little bit more, but our list is filling up here.

Mr. Malkinson: Fair enough.

The Chair: You acknowledge that you've already looked through the Lethbridge transcripts. Maybe we can share a little bit of our thought process. Your suggestion is that basically we have to take two ridings out of the non-Calgary regions in order to make cities whole, with two new in each city.

Mr. Malkinson: Two have to come from the rest of Alberta.

The Chair: Somewhere, yes. But one of the attractions of the one presentation in Lethbridge, in terms of dividing up the city the way it was, was that it did remove one rural riding. It reduced it from six in the south to five, I believe, or something like that.

Mr. Malkinson: No. Five down to four.

The Chair: So that was certainly an option, but then you've got the countervailing problem of mixing a city that has never been part of a rural situation.

Anyway, those are the struggles we face. I thank you for your presentation. If you can stay for the rest and if there's time at the end, we can maybe continue the conversation.

Mr. Malkinson: Absolutely. Well, I'd give my 10-second final thought if you'd allow it in that regard.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Malkinson: Lethbridge is big enough that it should have as much of itself as its own riding as is humanly possible.

The Chair: Oh, yeah. No question.

Mr. Malkinson: In southern Alberta there is a lot of farmland and similar small communities that I think would make sense, as appropriate, to move the boundaries than to do with Lethbridge, would be my suggestion as a counterpoint.

I will aim to stay around.

The Chair: Yeah. You know that area, obviously, so thanks for your input.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you.

1:45

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Howard. David Howard.

Mr. Howard: Thank you very much for having me.

The Chair: We normally allow seven minutes for presentations and three for discussion. We've failed with almost every presenter – yeah – so you may be the guinea pig; I'm not sure.

Mr. Howard: Let me get started here with a timer so that I am faithful to some time.

The Chair: Please identify yourself and tell us which electoral division you live in.

Mr. Howard: My name is David Howard. I'm a lifelong Calgarian. I live in Calgary-Elbow today, represented I believe by Samir Kayande, MLA. I'm a citizen and haven't engaged in, I guess, civic duty ever other than voting, so this is my first time being in front of a panel, but I feel compelled to maybe start to engage.

First of all, I'd like to thank all of you for your service. This is a very difficult task that you have. Obviously, that came up with the last presenter, but just a reminder of why we are all here. It's because we need to protect the trust in our democratic system, which across the world is under threat.

The message I would like to bring is, very succinctly, let's try to maintain – I'm going to borrow from President Lincoln: the government of the people by the people for the people, that works with us. To that end, I feel the mandate that you have should be to limit population discrepancies between ridings to the maximum extent possible. I remind the panel that this is a common grievance that the people of Alberta use against the people of other ridings in Canada, so we can live by example here.

The other thing, too, is to remind the panel, as we are reminded, that democracy isn't just exact numbers; it must also be effective, and effectiveness includes taking into account history, geography, Indigenous populations, et cetera. With that end, I am piling on, so to speak, from the last presenter and strongly urging that large population centres be kept intact as culturally distinct, that we try not to mix rural and urban population centres to any sort of maximal degree, and then, obviously, limit the differences between ridings.

Since I have absolutely zero experience in what you're doing and have none of the details, like your past presenter, I am feeling like I'm a little bit unprepared, but I did manage to do some analysis quickly using the modern power of AI. The robot told me – it is a bot, so it is subject to hallucinations – that, roughly, if you constrain the problem to 89 seats plus or minus 5 per cent population difference between constituencies, it is an outcome of two extra seats for the urban Calgary centre, two extra seats for Edmonton, consolidating seats in northern Alberta by one, consolidating seats in central Alberta by one, and keeping southern Alberta whole. Now, that's what an unbiased read from an AI agent would tell you. Obviously, your jobs are more difficult than that, but that would be my recommendation. That is one person and several hours of work; you've got a lot ahead of you.

In conclusion, I think that what I'm trying to do with my proposals is increase effective representation by keeping cultural communities together. There is also decreasing the risk of loss of voter trust in the electoral system. If electoral boundaries look funny, as we know from the United States and the level of gerrymandering that exists in the U.S., it erodes trust broadly in the population.

Then, thirdly, is to keep this panel above the spectre of, I guess you could say, partisan politics. The difficult decisions that must be made should be obviously bipartisan in the end and avoid that gerrymandering.

So that is my one citizen's opinion here, and I am five minutes and five seconds into the presentation, so have lived up to the seven-minute rule. Concluding remarks. Thank you.

The Chair: The amazing help of AI: it keeps our presentations shorter.

Mr. Howard: There you go.

The Chair: You know, sir, you don't know how many times I lie awake at night thinking: "Is this the last in-person Electoral Boundaries Commission? Are we all going to be replaced by AI in the future?" I'm serious.

Anyways, thank you so much for your presentation, and you don't sound like a rookie in this business; a very smooth and very on-time presentation, but I'm sure the commission has got some questions, and I'll start with Mr. Evans.

Mr. Howard: Your questions were too hard on the last guy.

The Chair: No. He handled them, and he might get some more if we have time.

Mr. Evans: Me specifically?

Mr. Howard: No. Just everyone. I thought the questions were very thoughtful.

Mr. Evans: Oh. Mine are softballs.

I want to ask you about your understanding or what you're trying to convey to us with respect to effective representation and how you delineate the difference between effective representation in an urban versus a rural setting and, specifically, why there's such trepidation on your part with respect to looking at a hybrid situation.

Mr. Howard: Yeah. One of the thoughts I had when preparing this is actually thinking of an ideal state of mind. Kind of, in my thinking, the ideal state of existence is that my riding federally is the same as my riding provincially, and it's the same as my ward in the city, so it's very easy; you can have very easy, linear demarcation of responsibilities. My problems are mine, but I know where to go to, and my neighbours' problems are all very similar to mine. In the mixing context, I just think you get such wildly different challenges in communities.

I spend a great deal of time in the community of Canmore, and I would say that their problems are wildly different in a lot of respects than Calgary-Elbow, say. I do not have a lot of experience in a, say, farming sense other than driving around the edges of Calgary. I do have some experience from a work perspective, having worked in the oil and gas industry in and around Calgary, Turner Valley, et cetera. The issues are different, and the issues around farming, oil and gas regulation, more industrial land use, versus the major issues that we have in a civic context could be a relationship between the city of Calgary and the province of Alberta, civic infrastructure, et cetera. I just think it's hard to get effective representation from an MLA that has to bridge such issue gaps.

1:55

Mr. Evans: I got the sense – and I want you to just clarify for me – that in addition to the municipal boundary idea, in terms of rural versus urban, you are also focusing on the idea of voter parity.

Mr. Howard: I recognize those are basically the two levers of contrast that this problem hinges on.

Mr. Evans: So how set are you on the idea of absolute voter parity?

Mr. Howard: To prioritize, I would – and I think the experience in the United States, which has a very high voter parity in their U.S. House of Representatives districts; I don't know exactly what the stat is, but they are almost even to the person. But they are really ineffective by the way that they are drawn out. So if you're asking me as a citizen: what would I prefer, pure voter parity or a geographic sense that honours, say, communities and history, I

would be compelled to say that I would take the geography over pure voter parity if only based on the experience in the United States, where they had voter parity above all and gerrymandered districts to no end.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. And thank you for coming out. I think you had one statement, and I'm going to quote you.

Mr. Howard: Oh, thank you.

Mrs. Samson: "The loss of voter trust when ridings look funny." I got started on this, and I started looking at the ridings. When you hit the cities, man, they all look funny. You know, it's only when you're out in the rural, where you have the big spaces, that you can draw nice curvy lines. I think it's going to be a real challenge because clear boundaries are not possible when you have these high-density areas, and the numbers are the starting – it's not necessarily the priority measure, but it's the starting point of how we build the ridings. Wow, loss of voter trust because Calgary looks funny; so does Edmonton.

Mr. Howard: Yeah. I haven't taken a close look at it. If you are asking for my comment, I mean, the strangeness of our ridings pales in comparison to some of the most egregious examples you see out of the U.S. in terms of gerrymandered ridings. So I don't see our ridings as looking funny, because my context is ones that are inexplicable. I think the better way to put it, especially in civic settings where you could have large swaths of land that are industrial in context and don't have people in it – right? – I think it has to be, I guess, believable that the best intention of the panel or the commission was to uphold the trust in our democracy versus what you see in the U.S., which are these really funny districts in civic settings that are drawn almost exclusively on, say, socioeconomic or ethnocultural lines within large cities. That's just not explainable. It's not believable to rational people that may not be partisan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. That was an excellent comeback. I'm going to change "funny" to "inexplicable" in my notes.
Thank you.

Mr. Howard: It has to be. To me that's the test. Yeah.

The Chair: Thank you.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much. I want to probe a little bit into some present examples of radically different housing forms. Calgary-Foothills: we had a representative here to talk about it. It was good. But as we talked further, we realized that we've got residences, a lot of them new and burgeoning. We have gravel pits. I love gravel pits – and there are a lot of them – because without the gravel pits Calgary doesn't build roads. It also has, in Calgary-Foothills, a huge footprint of agricultural land all plowed.

Now, the question I put to him, obviously, was: how do you juggle the putatively different interests of these different sectors? He confessed that he was in conversations with the gravel pit owners, which is great, but he hadn't really reached out to the farmers. I guess my real point is that there's a perfect situation of: you've got rural land use inside the city of Calgary and lots of it.

If you juggle that mentally, what would you say about that social fact?

Mr. Howard: Good observation. I would ask – I’m not here. I don’t have the data. The questions where I would ask for additional context would be: if you took a look at the large, you know, ridings, electoral districts in Edmonton and Calgary, put them together, how many of them would have farming? Is it just Calgary-Foothills, or is Calgary-Foothills almost the exception that proves the rule that it shouldn’t be done, right? So there are six of...

Dr. Martin: Maybe seven.

Mr. Howard: Six, maybe seven.

Mr. Ellingson: Between both cities.

Dr. Martin: No. Around Edmonton.

Mr. Howard: Okay. I mean, that’s good data. Then what is the context of, like, the population differences between those rural – say you are the landowner, that citizen farmer, and your issue is yours and distinctly different than the 55,000 other people in your district, and you’re one person. Are you effectively being represented there, or would you more effectively be represented in the district next door where there are 55,000 people that, you know, engage in a life that’s much more like mine.

It’s not to say that it’s – what we have today is not perfect. I’m striving for more perfection, I guess you could say, into the future.

Dr. Martin: I think that’s a good answer. I mean, obviously, we can’t solve this in any overly precise way, but I’m just – I want to stimulate your thinking about what constitutes a representative footprint of people for an electoral district. There are many such as Calgary-Foothills which are perhaps anomalous in the way people tend to think about urban and rural. That’s all.

Thank you.

Mr. Howard: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: I’ll just dig a little deeper on that because that’s something I think a lot about as well. It’s not so much that – I mean, I guess the farmer example is an interesting one in Calgary or Edmonton. There may be some agriculture on the edges of the city but not for long. That’s not the intended purpose of that land within the boundaries of the city, right? That’s eventually going to become houses and transit and shops and things. That’s perhaps one subtle difference.

The other question I guess I’d wonder about is: is part of the concern a balancing of interests? For example, in this rural example if we’ve got 10 farmers on an edge corner of the city which we then blended in with a different constituency or you’ve got, you know, sort of an imbalance – right? – where you’ve got one very small minority group and they’re being represented by an MLA who has got a bunch of other priorities from the vast number of their constituents, that group may feel unrepresented. I guess I’m just interested in your thoughts on that.

Mr. Howard: I would ask the 10 farmers on the outskirts of Calgary: where do they actually engage in their civic engagement? Like, when they have common cause to engage in civics, are they engaging in it with their rural neighbours? Are they attending the small-town meeting in the small town next to Calgary, or are they engaging in Calgary’s civic matters? Are they up in arms about

rezoning, or does rezoning not at all affect them? That’s how I think you get the balance, where those individuals would tend to engage in civics. Where are they going to? Are they going to Calgary, or are they going to the county office to raise their concerns about the roads nearby?

2:05

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Howard. Much appreciated. You’re excused, but please just return to the gallery. If you can stay, stay, and if you’ve got some time, I’m sure we can continue this conversation.

Mr. Howard: Perfect. Just a parting comment. Thank you very much. Like, the five of you are what make this a great, great democracy, so please carry out your duties. We thank you for everything.

The Chair: By the way, you are the first presenter that brought a bot along.

Mr. Court Ellingson. Please identify yourself. Tell us what riding you are from although we have a pretty good idea already.

Mr. Ellingson: Hi. My name is Court Ellingson, and it’s probably pretty easy to know that I represent Calgary-Foothills in the provincial Legislature. I also happen to live in Calgary-Foothills. Unlike the previous presenter, rather than bringing a bot into the presentation, I’m going to bring to the presentation a lot of on-the-ground talking to people in the constituency and door-knocking roughly 35,000 houses in the last few years.

First of all, I do want to recognize that I appreciate that the work that you are doing is challenging. I appreciated, Dr. Martin, the questions that you had about Calgary-Foothills, and I expect we’ll talk a little bit more now that I’m here.

Calgary-Foothills is also maybe an example of a riding of why we are doing this work, right? It is a riding where you can see intersections of different activities. It is also a riding that is growing in population very quickly. It’s not the most populous constituency in the province, but it’s up there, and the growth is high. Sorry. We’ll get back to the slide that shows the 2016 population and 2024 population. In part, that’s why you’re doing your work.

I wanted to talk about kind of the fabric of the communities. We can talk maybe a little bit later in Q and A of, like, where the growth is happening and what that looks like. I just wanted to talk a little bit about the fabric of the communities and the work of keeping communities together and acknowledge some of the challenges that are there in keeping cultural communities together, in keeping kind of urban and rural maybe where they may have similar concerns and issues and questions.

Also, if there are any questions around voter parity, I grew up in Central Peace-Notley. I grew up in Valleyview, Alberta. I was just there this past weekend. It was a fantastic weekend in Valleyview and Grande Prairie celebrating pride. It was amazing to be back home. So I also know that when it comes to voter parity, I represent a constituency that has twice as many people as Central Peace-Notley, but I also know that it takes five hours to travel from one end of Central Peace-Notley to the other. I wholly appreciate that you can’t just, you know, like, wave a magic wand and make a northern Alberta constituency the same population as Calgary-Foothills. It becomes very challenging because the physical distance between communities becomes almost impossible for an MLA to manage. I get that. I get that.

Talking a little bit about, like, “What are some of the things that people think about in Calgary-Foothills?” one of the big things that

they talk about in Calgary-Foothills is schools: access to schools, where their kids go to school, and just kind of the challenges that they face there. This is something that unites Calgary-Foothills even though there are some differences between communities.

When we look at the communities north of the Ring Road with respect to schools – Sherwood, Kincora, Nolan Hill, Sage Hill, and now Glacier Ridge, so we're talking about five, and I'll also carve off the piece of Evanston that we have – there is not one Calgary board of education school in any of these communities. The people who live there, the parents who live there: it's one of their biggest concerns. I think it helps them maybe, like, with that unified advocacy. They know that they currently have an MLA across the riding. That is something that they are unified on, that issue, and it's a very compelling way for them to come together and advocate and have conversations with their MLA.

It connects a little bit, too, even when we think about Citadel and Arbour Lake. What it reflects there is that because they do have a few schools in Citadel and Arbour Lake, what it means for them is that many, many of the children north of the Ring Road are coming to their schools, which means that their schools are crowded and overpopulated and facing those challenges, too. So they feel it maybe from a different angle, but they're feeling the same thing.

Now, what I also want to talk about is that I know that the same challenge for schools exists in Airdrie-Cochrane and in Airdrie-East, but they're a different school division. Again, the parents in my constituency are working with the Calgary board of education versus, like, just north of us it's the Rocky View school district. Again, it's kind of an electoral division that exists on another level that compels people to be advocating and working together for that issue. Schools matter deeply to my constituents. You'd struggle to find something else that matters as much.

Now, I also want to talk about communities of faith and cultural communities and about the concerns and conversations and representations with those conversations. I want to appreciate, too, that in the work that you're doing, these cultural communities span constituencies. It's not that all South Asian Muslims live in Calgary-Foothills. South Asian Muslims also live in other constituencies. But Calgary-Foothills is a little bit unique in and of itself in that it's an incredibly diverse constituency. Approximately 65 per cent of the population of the constituency is not White.

The Chair: Sorry. What was that percentage?

Mr. Ellingson: It's between 60 and 65 per cent. Like, 62, 63 per cent maybe is not White. It's also evenly divided or kind of evenly divided. You'll find, if I can remember the numbers off the top of my head, that 18 per cent of the population is Muslim, 20 per cent of the population is Chinese, 16 per cent is South Asian, 12 per cent is African, right? So it's diverse within its diversity, which also maybe makes it a little bit different than a place like Calgary-North West or a place like Calgary-North East, where they might be more kind of South Asian and less Chinese. That diversity within the diversity makes Calgary-Foothills a little bit unique and special compared to the others.

Now, what I'll also say is, like, the gathering places of where they come together – Calgary-Foothills has not a mosque but a place of prayer. It is a gathering place for mostly South Asian Muslims. They have a singular gathering place in Calgary-Foothills. You think about, too, what that gathering place means and how those people are coming together and what that means for their approach to and their understanding of the provincial electoral process.

African and Caribbean communities are also maybe, again, not specifically unique to Calgary-Foothills, but you will see that that is an element that you won't necessarily see in Calgary-Edgemont

or Calgary-Beddington; maybe a little bit in Calgary-North West. With respect to the African and Caribbean communities, the relationship between us and Calgary-North West we have the Royal Vista Business Park, which, if you're looking at the map, you would be like: why is the Royal Vista Business Park a part of Calgary-Foothills and not part of Calgary-North West? Well, you might also notice in the Royal Vista Business Park a lot of halal stores, African stores, South Asian grocery stores, and they're serving mostly people who live in Calgary-Foothills because that's where those communities live. They don't live in Tuscany, right? Maybe that was something that you were thinking about eight years ago, about why you put Royal Vista with it because that's where the people who live in Calgary-Foothills go and gather and where they shop, which is kind of interesting.

2:15

I'll also say that when we're looking at not just urban-rural divide, I think you'll look at and see that the cultural diversity of Calgary-Foothills is maybe different than Airdrie-Cochrane. That's what is kind of like a separation between the two. I think that when we're thinking about these cultural communities, if you are in a constituency where you're a small cultural group within a larger cultural group within an electoral constituency, you may feel disenfranchised. You may start to feel like, "does your vote matter?" because you are different than everybody around you. That's maybe what makes Calgary-Foothills feel special, that that disenfranchisement maybe disappears a little bit in Calgary-Foothills because you see kind of like an equal representation between all of those different groups.

A little bit with the urban and suburban in those neighbourhoods, how they might see things differently. They may see the relationship of environmental concerns. Social justice causes may be viewed differently in urban areas than in rural areas. I think we can talk a little bit, because I'm probably over time, in the Q and A of, like: how am I serving the rural parts of Calgary-Foothills? Do they feel like they belong to Calgary-Foothills, or do they feel like they belong to Airdrie-Cochrane? That might be a valid question because they may have different perspectives on what they feel is important and how they want to be represented.

Now, I also want to talk about natural gathering spaces. In Calgary-Foothills, and this is kind of one of the important things, the newer communities do not have community centres. They don't have community halls. The only physical gathering place for the communities north of the Ring Road is Symons Valley United Church. You'll see in that church that from a faith-based perspective it brings together both Christians and Muslims. They both use it as a place of gathering and a place of prayer and a place of community.

The only community halls that we have are in Citadel and in Arbour Lake. That kind of ties together south of the Ring Road and north of the Ring Road in that if you live north of the Ring Road, you're probably going south of the Ring Road, again, for some gathering places because only Arbour Lake and Citadel have community halls.

I think the commission also needs to think about: what are those gathering points? What are those gathering places that bring people together? In those places they will also talk about politics, right? That might break down some cultural barriers that might exist because they come to that physical place and they're together in that physical place, and that's where they're going to talk about stuff that they care about.

I think I will leave it on that. You can see that we go to, like, skating parties in the dead of winter when it's really, really cold.

We'll go back to that map. Can we go back to the map that you're using for everybody? I'll just say thank you for your work. I know it's hard. I too have spent a lot of time thinking about the stuff that you're thinking about. You know that my riding is a little bit different than maybe some of the others, so let's put up that map and hit me with some questions.

The Chair: Mr. Ellingson, thank you very much. I may sound like a broken record to my colleagues, but we really appreciate when the MLAs come and present, because you've knocked on the doors, you've walked those sidewalks, you drive those streets time and time again.

I'm just curious. How long have you been the MLA?

Mr. Ellingson: I was elected as the MLA in 2023, so I guess I'm relatively new.

The Chair: You don't sound like a rookie.

Mr. Ellingson: I'm part of the new cohort, the cohort of 2023.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Evans, can we start on your end? Any questions of this presenter?

Mr. Evans: I just want to make sure that I understood you correct when you listed off the schools and you said that not a single one was part of the Calgary board of education. Or was it the opposite of that?

Mr. Ellingson: North of the Ring Road: no Calgary board of education schools. There are two Calgary Catholic schools. Calgary Catholic is special as a district because it also includes Rocky View. That's where public has two different school districts, but the Catholic does not. So north of the Ring Road we have two Catholic schools. One of those is in Evanston. The other is in Sherwood. But there are no CBE schools north of the Ring Road.

Mr. Evans: And that's significant why?

Mr. Ellingson: Because there are about 50,000 people living there, and their kids go to school anywhere from Forest Lawn to Mayland Heights.

Mr. Evans: There are no schools there. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Ellingson: The parents there, the one thing that those parents really want is a public school that's closer for them. Their lives are complicated. Let's be honest. A lot of parents drive their kids to school, and their lives are complicated. Taking one kid to Mayland Heights, another kid to Huntington Hills, and then they drive downtown to get to work, or something like that, right? Like, it is an issue that unifies them in the challenges that it presents in their life.

You know, it was interesting. I even had a conversation with city councillors a couple of years ago about the green line in transit, and they were asking me why I care about a northern green line going up to the transit centre. My response is: because there's a brand new Calgary public high school at that terminus, and it makes people's lives easier to drive their kids to high school, get on the train, and go to work, right? I think that even the members of city council weren't necessarily thinking about the physical relationships that people have in their lives.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out. It's been most interesting. Earlier in the day the CA spoke to us about the riding.

Mr. Ellingson: Yeah. Pranav.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. I enjoyed his presentation, too, and learned a lot.

One thing I want to ask you specifically. Because of the population that we're faced with in your riding, we had focused in on Evanston, to talk about pulling it into the neighbouring riding, but we also got talking about Citadel and Arbour Lake. Now, after listening to you, I'm not so sure that we should even contemplate that. I'm not sure what the population numbers are when we start taking Evanston. Do you know what Evanston is?

Mr. Ellingson: I'm going to say that our piece of Evanston probably is 4,000 people, maybe. Maybe a little bit less. Like, it is a decent size. Our part of Evanston probably has as many people as Sherwood, so maybe 4,000 or 5,000 people.

When you were talking earlier about: do any of the urbans make sense? Calgary-Foothills has both a piece of Evanston – and when I'm out in the community, sometimes I joke that we have the piece of Evanston that the minister didn't want. I spend a lot of time with my neighbouring MLAs, so I actually see him at so many community events. But we also have Citadel. It's also divided, right? There's a piece of Citadel that is east of Nose Hill Drive. It's a very small piece of Citadel. It's called Morningside.

Mrs. Samson: Oh, I see it now. Yeah.

Mr. Ellingson: That also is – if I'm going to be honest, the people who live there sometimes are confused. And I know, if it's okay for me to share, that I have a little bit of an idea of the conversation that you had with my colleague.

Mrs. Samson: Yes.

Mr. Ellingson: When you look at the natural boundary of west Nosehill Creek, part of Sage Hill is east of that creek, and it does create some complication for the people in Morningside. It's part of Citadel. They know that they're represented by Calgary-Edgemont. It confuses them, because then they also feel like they don't belong to the Citadel Community Association, which they do. They don't belong to the Hamptons Community Association.

2:25

It's the same with Sage Meadows, like, at the bottom of that hill and beside the creek. It looks like they should be part of Evanston, but they're part of Sage Hill. From a community association perspective the communications that they get, what they get mailed to them, is from Sage Hill, not from Evanston, right? It's complicated.

Mrs. Samson: It really is. I did not get a clear direction from this conversation.

Mr. Ellingson: I apologize for that.

Mrs. Samson: I know, but you brought the points to our attention, which is important. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin, you probably have no questions.

Dr. Martin: That's true because your CA answered them.

Mr. Ellingson: And I really appreciate the questions that you asked him.

Mr. Clark: I guess I'll try to be brief and take that broad hint as well on timing.

Mr. Ellingson: Actually, before we go to Greg, can I answer some questions you didn't ask them? I'm going to think of, like, from a municipal perspective and whether or not that influences people's provincial perspectives. The rural areas in Calgary-Foothills were annexed into the city, right? Slowly, over time, they're becoming urban. They were annexed into the city. The planning guidelines and the taxes that apply to them are grandfathered and attached to what they had when they were part of Rocky View, so they do have some differing views of the world, that they remain rural even though technically they're within the boundary of the city of Calgary.

I'll be honest, because you asked a question of Pranav earlier. I wholly appreciate the complications for, let's say, the Member for Airdrie-Cochrane. They have urban areas, they have a slice of Airdrie, they have all of Cochrane, and then they have all of that rural in between and around. It's physically not easy to get to all of those places as an MLA. Again, I'll go back to: when there's no physical gathering place that makes sense for the people who reside there, that also makes it more complicated.

Sorry. I'm not making your work easier.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ellingson: Back to Greg.

The Chair: Yes. Sorry, Greg. Your time's up.

Mr. Clark: That's entirely unsurprising.

This has been a great conversation, and I just appreciate the nuance and understanding in more detail, you know, of Calgary-Foothills, because there's just a lot of complexity.

You're too big. That's the challenge, right? Twenty per cent over.

Mr. Ellingson: Yeah, and the one north of me is even bigger.

Mr. Clark: That's right.

You know, as I said to another MLA, recognizing that *Hansard* is forever and you wouldn't necessarily want to tell any one of your current or potential future constituents that you have a preference one way or the other, so please don't take this as implying that, but if you were sitting up here and you needed to make a change and say some areas of this need to move somewhere else – and you don't have to answer that. It may not be a fair question for you, right? But I think, continuing on with the theme which I feel strongly about, we do want to try our best to keep like with like.

Mr. Ellingson: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: You know, just that ravine in Sage Hill: we were looking at it the other day, and not until you look closely at it do you go: oh, there are houses there. Right. Like, let's just be careful, if we do draw a line there, that we don't draw a line over top of something. Just kind of those nuanced sorts of things. If you have an opinion on that, which you're not required to, but if you do, I'd love to hear any thoughts you have.

Mr. Ellingson: What I'm going to say is – and I know that you don't make your decisions based on the emotional response of an MLA. Because I was elected in 2023, these boundaries were set in place for 2019. I know that the name Calgary-Foothills has changed many times. The physical boundaries of Calgary-Foothills have

changed many times since it was created in the 1970s. But I was elected into it in 2023 with the boundaries that it has today, and I'm going to be honest that we work within the boundary that we have, and because of that we become attached to it as it is. So when you ask us, "What would you take out and what would you leave?" like, any response is going to feel like a punch to the stomach because from the moment that I said that I was going to put up my hand to be an MLA, it's been these neighbourhoods, right? So it's tough for me to divide it in any way.

Mr. Clark: That's a totally fair answer.

Mr. Ellingson: I think that a lot of MLAs would respond that way to their constituency, that those are the neighbourhoods that they have come to know, so removing and adding anything is – if you're running again, it's going to feel awkward and you're going to feel a little bit dislocated, to be honest.

I'm going to go back to those physical gathering places. If the commission thinks that Arbour Lake is big – Arbour Lake has got 12,000 people – so if you took away Arbour Lake, maybe you're getting closer to Foothills being normalized. I know that neither Calgary-North West nor Calgary-Edgemont are facing population pressures. They're both kind of, like, around the target population that you're looking for. Calgary-North West is growing a little bit; Calgary-Edgemont is not really growing very much. But you also take away a physical gathering place for Foothills. Like, without fault, almost every single indoor event that we have is in Arbour Lake because it's the only physical gathering place that we have, so if Arbour Lake disappears from Calgary-Foothills, it becomes very challenging. Now anywhere we go to gather is outside of the communities of Calgary-Foothills. I'll just say that.

Mr. Clark: That's really helpful. Thank you.

The Chair: Yeah. That's a rock and hard place. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Ellingson: I'm saying that it's a rock and hard place. We are growing quickly. It's not just the addition of Glacier Ridge; Sage Hill itself is still going to add another 4,000 or 5,000 people. The density in Sage Hill is markedly higher than the other communities.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Ellingson. Much appreciated. You're excused. Do please stay if you can because if we have time at the end, we'd maybe continue the conversation.

Mr. Ellingson: I really loved listening to the two people before me, so I'm going to try and stay for one or two more and see what they have to say.

The Chair: Great.

Craig Hutchenreuther, please come forward.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: Very good. You got the last name right the first time.

My name is Craig Hutchenreuther, and I live in Calgary-Edgemont. A bit about myself. I am a dual citizen. I grew up in the U.S. and moved to Canada when I was about 21, so the majority of my life has been as a Calgarian. I've lived in Calgary my whole time in Canada in various neighbourhoods. I work as a musician. I'm a violinist in the Calgary Philharmonic. My political identity over that time has been, you know, once I became a citizen, which I did some time ago because I feel that one ought to participate where one lives, that I vote for whomever I feel is going to do the

best job. The best job includes things like honesty in governance, effective government, things of that nature. Yeah. We can include motherhood and apple pie if you want.

2:35

I'll try not to eat too much of your time because I feel that all those who spoke before me spoke very eloquently and very much to the point. I do want to underscore what the first speaker was talking about with gerrymandering.

I grew up in Detroit, Michigan, and one of the things that I found that really fractured democracy was playing games with the electoral process, whether that be creating bizarre-looking electoral boundaries or things like not making polls accessible to certain neighbourhoods and certain ethnicities. Over time what this does is that it creates a lot of cynicism or, to use your word, Dr. Martin, a jaundiced view of things. I know that you've heard the message about no gerrymandering, no jiggery-pokery with boundaries or trying to have politicians choose their electors, so I won't weary you any further about that.

I will point out that when I think about electoral boundaries, I don't envy you people, with the decisions you need to make, because you're shooting at a moving target. Yesterday's maps are not the same as today's, and they won't be the same as today's tomorrow.

You know, I was looking at a neighbourhood like Calgary-North, which currently is one of the smaller in terms of electors. But every time I turn around – I like to ride my motorcycle up that way to get out of town – I see more and more buildings, more and more houses. Very soon it's going to be a full-sized district. I would be cautious about combining that with another riding unless you have good information on where it's headed and soon. I would say the same thing about Court's riding. I believe that not so long ago Court's riding, Calgary-Foothills, was smaller than Calgary-Edgemont, and now I think that it's actually larger in terms of number of electors. It's continuing to grow at quite a rate. Yeah. I don't envy you your choices in that department. That's going to be a tough one.

In the interest of not making you listen to the same things over and over again, I'm going to cut it short right here, because other people have spoken most eloquently before me.

The Chair: Well, thank you, and thank you for your comments and your courtesy, I guess, which is much appreciated because then we can have a more fulsome dialogue.

I'm going to start with Mr. Clark on the end.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for being here. I'm interested in just digging into a little bit more about Calgary-Edgemont specifically. You're our first presenter from Calgary-Edgemont, and Mr. Ellingson noted it seems Calgary-Edgemont is growing at a slightly lesser rate. As it stands now, your numbers – and take this please as the compliment in which I intend it – are almost the most average in the province. Not quite but very close. You're right on, almost exactly on the number.

I'm just interested in sort of what you can tell us about the growth projections. Are you expecting growth, or is it maybe not even absolute growth but perhaps relative to the rest of the city? Do you have any insights on development pressures and potential future growth in Calgary-Edgemont?

Mr. Hutchenreuther: I look at the boundaries as being evidence that the preceding commission did its job well, and I hope for similar results from this commission.

I think that Calgary-Edgemont is going to be fairly stable. When I look around the community, there isn't that much room for new

development. There is a hill behind us, which I hope forever remains a green space, and it would be most impractical to build on anyhow, being a hill and all. I think, you know, there'll be some inevitable pluses and minuses when some buildings come down and others go up. I think it's going to remain fairly stable is the short answer.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Just one. An impressionistic question. It's about the neighbourhoods south of Nose Hill and the neighbourhoods to its north and northeast. Are they compatible?

Mr. Hutchenreuther: I wouldn't want to pretend to have a learned answer to that. What defines compatible? I know that in Calgary-Edgemont, like Calgary-Foothills, we have quite a diverse population, represented by many ethnic groups and religions, and I would describe us as compatible. I would be wary of packing and cracking, like the first speaker brought up. I love those terms. I've seen what happens when they are put into use, and it's not pretty. I grew up with it, and I don't wish it on anyone.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: There is one other thought I wanted to underscore regarding the urban and rural. Being urban, you know, people around me tend to focus on what this would do to the urban people and the representation. I also have friends that live in the rural districts, and I can only imagine how frustrating and annoying it would be for them to be lumped in with a city. Totally different things that they need to have represented. I just want to add that in to the arguments you've already heard.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: No questions, but thank you for the presentation. I appreciate your time.

The Chair: John.

Mr. Evans: No questions. It's unfortunate you didn't bring your violin.

Mrs. Samson: Yes.

Mr. Evans: You could have done your presentation in song.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: Well, I would instead invite you down to Jack Singer Concert Hall next fall when we start playing again. We have some good programs.

Mr. Evans: I'm going pencil that in. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much. I know it's easy to take potshots at our friends south of the border.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: Unfortunately, my fellow citizens south of the border are making it all too easy.

The Chair: I have to acknowledge the blessings of the differences between us as Canadians. We have not gone the route of one person, one vote that forces this, you know, ugly makeup of democracy.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: Do you really feel that it's one person, one vote that's forced that?

The Chair: Largely it has.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: I don't agree.

The Chair: Well, we've gone the effective representation route for which our courts have interpreted section 3 of the Charter, and we are fortunate as Canadians in that respect.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: I do feel fortunate – my Canadian side feels very fortunate. My U.S. side is in mourning.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much again, Mr. Hutchenreuther.

Mr. Hutchenreuther: Yes.

The Chair: If you can stay, please do.

We're going to go right through. We're not going to have a break. Ms Andrea Llewellyn is present? No?

Okay. Dale – sorry; I just have “w” – Dale W., please come forward.

Mr. Wascherol: I think there's only one.

The Chair: Okay. You're the right Dale? Please have a seat. Identify yourself, tell us where you're from, and begin your presentation.

2:45

Mr. Wascherol: Good afternoon. Can you hear me all right?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Wascherol: Good afternoon. My name is Dale Wascherol. I'm a retired professional engineer, and I live in the riding of Calgary-Elbow. I'd like to suggest boundary adjustments to the Calgary-Elbow electoral district that would better reflect the principles of effective representation, community identity, population balance, geographic consistency, and clarity. Sounds familiar.

Under the principle of contiguity and clarity I recommend removing Glamorgan from Calgary-Elbow. Glamorgan is not physically contiguous with the rest of the riding. I've heard some words this morning describe how the ridings are a little bit erratic. It lies west of 37th Street, and it's separated by major roads and disconnected from the communities that form the core of Calgary-Elbow. It really belongs, you know, more logically with adjacent western neighbourhoods in another district.

Secondly, I also propose removing Lower Mount Royal. This neighbourhood is highly urban and shares far more in common with the dense, downtown-oriented communities of Calgary-Buffalo in terms of housing, transit patterns, and lifestyle. Keeping it in Calgary-Elbow undermines community identity and effective representation. Its concerns are very different from the other more suburban and mid-density communities.

In addition, Lincoln Park, you know, while small, is more aligned with military, institutional, and postsecondary uses, and its population profile is notably different. It fits better with the adjacent district of Calgary-Currie. Removing it allows Calgary-Elbow to consolidate around communities with more similar characteristics and concerns.

While removal of these three areas slightly lowers the population of Calgary-Elbow, we can restore balance and respect the principle of relative population equality by making thoughtful additions with other contiguous and more aligned communities. The Lakeview community is a natural fit, and it is currently split across electoral districts. It sits directly south of the existing Calgary-Elbow

communities, and it is closely aligned in demographics and community concerns. Secondly, Richmond Knob Hill should also be included in Calgary-Elbow. It falls partly directly adjacent to the community of South Calgary, and if added it should be included in full as dividing it would weaken the voice of a coherent, historically rooted community.

These changes result in roughly the same population representation as currently in the district and allows for expected growth in and around 3,500 people resulting from announced municipal policies, including the West Elbow local area plan and blanket rezoning. Together these changes strengthen community cohesion, maintain geographic logic, and meet the required populations of electoral fairness. Most importantly, they align with the commission's responsibility to draw boundaries that respect how people actually live and engage with their communities.

Thank you for your time and your commitment for upholding democratic integrity in Alberta. Thank you.

I also took the time here of drawing a nice little map of, you know, what that would include.

The Chair: Oh, your proposal?

Mr. Wascherol: Yes.

The Chair: Do you have a couple to just give us here?

Mr. Wascherol: I do. I made two copies here.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Wascherol: I just included the puts and takes for additions and subtractions.

The Chair: Puts and takes. That's a finance term.

Dr. Martin: That's nice.

The Chair: We're going to replace nip and tuck with puts and takes.

Mr. Clark: Puts and takes. I like that.

The Chair: Mr. Wascherol, I'm going to have Mr. Clark start off because he will be most interested in engaging with you and your proposal.

Mr. Clark: I do have a tiny bit of experience with Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Wascherol: I studied extra hard knowing that one of the commission members used to be the MLA for the constituency.

Mr. Clark: That's right. I'm going to ask you very specific population – no, I'm not.

I very much appreciate your presentation. I guess the one question I would have is Lakeview. I found it strange. The boundaries changed in the time that I was in the Legislature from 2015 to 2019. That little North Glenmore Park notch south of Glenmore Trail getting added in always seemed a bit odd. I know technically that is North Glenmore Park and that's where the community hall is because it predates Glenmore Trail, so that's, I guess, the history. That was the piece I guess I was curious about. A lot of what your submission was is kind of natural geographic boundaries, and Glenmore Trail is a pretty big wall, right? To extend beyond that, maybe you can just talk a little bit about your thinking around adding Lakeview in. It doesn't flow necessarily naturally with the rest of the constituency.

Mr. Wascherol: Well, that's a really good question. I think the question is: where would you put Lakeview? It's north of the reservoir, and it would make no sense to go south of the reservoir. I think that by default it just about begs to be part of a constituency association that's north of the reservoir. The fact that it's split up today – I don't even want to use the word gerrymandering. I don't like the word; I don't think it applies here. To have it as part of a CA that's north of the reservoir, I think that's where it has to be. When I look at it, it seems to be relatively straightforward. The reservoir is just too big a boundary to divide a community and a constituency association, in my opinion.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Julian.

Dr. Martin: No. I've had my run on this particular set of issues for this district, so I'll pass.

The Chair: This is not to diminish your very precise proposal, but we had, I think, someone else this afternoon. I think yesterday we had some Calgary-Elbow. Yeah, we had the MLA actually present as well.

Mr. Wascherol: Okay.

The Chair: Although he didn't make those suggested changes because it's difficult for MLAs to make those suggestions.

Mr. Clark: Yes, as we've heard.

The Chair: Susan, any questions?

Mrs. Samson: Yes. Can you explain Richmond Knob Hill? Did I get that right?

The Chair: Maybe you could just grab the extra mic there and go to the map and point it out to Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Oh no, it must be this. I'm just not sure which one it was.

Mr. Wascherol: No, that's Glamorgan. Glamorgan is out.

Mrs. Samson: Oh right.

Mr. Wascherol: Richmond Knob Hill is this community that's just west of 20th Street and north of 33rd Avenue. It borders on Crowchild Trail, and it kind of goes a little bit further north, as far as the Children's hospital. This division here at 20th Street, we're saying: well, let's just extend this all the way to Crowchild Trail and include this in here, where my left hand is.

Mrs. Samson: Okay.

Dr. Martin: Is that Bankview?

Mr. Clark: No, Bankview is north.

The Chair: Okay. Any questions?

Mrs. Samson: No, I just wanted clarity. Thanks.

The Chair: John?

Mr. Evans: I'm trying to sort out Knob Hill.

Mrs. Samson: It's right there, but that doesn't help.

Mr. Evans: Okay, Richmond Knob Hill.

Mr. Wascherol: Again, it's the community immediately west of 20th Street, and it borders between 20th Street and Crowchild Trail, and I believe it goes as far north as the Children's hospital.

Mr. Evans: What's your thoughts on that area just below? I think it's called Linden Drive SW, even below Lakeview, across 66th Avenue SW. Would you include that? Lakeview is one of the ones you're saying you would like in. That would take it right to the right to the reservoir.

2:55

Mr. Wascherol: Right. Exactly. Right to the reservoir. Otherwise, it just ends up being divided again and being part of another constituency association. I think what we've heard here consistently amongst presenters is that what we strive to do is have the needs and concerns of residents kind of shared in the same CA. You know, it follows the thinking that residents that live in the same community share those same concerns as well.

Mr. Evans: I'd like to ask you about – you're wanting to keep the Mount Royal campus in the constituency, correct?

Mr. Wascherol: I think that's actually part of Lincoln Park.

Mr. Evans: That's being removed as well. Okay. So Glamorgan and the campus and Lincoln Park out.

Mr. Wascherol: Right.

Mr. Evans: I asked a previous presenter about Glamorgan; I think it was last night. Tell me about that community. I think the question I asked the presenter was the connection between that community and the rest. She assured me there was one; tell me why there isn't one.

Mr. Wascherol: I've never lived in Glamorgan. I've lived in Signal Hill, and now we live in South Calgary. I think just from a geographic perspective it's kind of further west, and if you're trying to consolidate and make a box around a community, it just seems to be further west. I'm not sure when we talk about the cities, you know, whether there's that much diversity there. I was born and raised on a farm. I was hoping I could ask some farmland questions because those needs are very different, but I can't actually come up with a reason or rationale why it's materially different than the rest.

Mr. Evans: Is your proposal here mostly based on geography and less, for example, focusing on community interests and that sort of...

Mr. Wascherol: That and maintaining kind of a reasonable size to the electoral district. It's just like Mr. Clark's question. You know, if you wanted to make a change, what change would you make and what would be the consequence? That kind of was my thinking. Well, if you are going to make a change and you want to rationalize things, how would you propose to do that? I was sitting down there, and I said, "Well, this works really well for Calgary-Elbow," but what it does is that it triggers other changes for other electoral districts, and that's the part that I say – to me, the only way to describe it: that's a headache for you, the commission. There's no other way to effectively describe it.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay. Any other questions? Mr. Wascherol is the last presenter this afternoon.

You mentioned something about farms. Did you want to present something on rural?

Mr. Wascherol: Well, I mean, other than I was born and raised on a farm, and I left my raising to attend postsecondary education, I'll just say this. The livelihood of farming today is not the same livelihood as when I was raised. It's not farming anymore; it's a business. You know, I'll just say the reason that interests in farming are very different than urban settings: to make a farm profitable or to continue to exist as a farmer or in the agricultural business, you have to make business decisions, and those business decisions are very, very different than living in an urban lifestyle. I was an engineer. I worked in the pipeline business my whole career. Completely, completely different types of concerns.

I think that it can still work. I'll just say, though, that the MLA that represents areas like that: it's a very, very different type of MLA, a very, very different type of job. And yes, I think it's way more work than it would be in an urban setting or a rural setting. I mean, I think that it can work. I can't see why it couldn't work. But those farms that are near the cities: if you look at what's growing on those, what the farmers are using for those lands, I'm not so sure that you need to be – how do you want to call it? You have everyday concerns, you know, of your MLA. Eventually those lands – somebody said it on the panel – will become part of the city as well.

Mr. Evans: If I might, can I just make a – would you agree with me that there is, and I think we should be cautious about this, a conflation of municipality responsibilities and Legislature responsibilities? Many of the agricultural concerns and urban concerns with respect to rezoning or land use, those are city and municipality concerns – right? – so the farmer is going to go to their county or their municipal district; likewise, somebody living in the city of Calgary is going to be talking to their alderman. You're not going to your MLA on those issues, yet they seem to be conflated in our thought process here. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Wascherol: I do. I always say that, you know, there's a thing called the Municipal Government Act, and that's what gives the municipalities the authority to deal with all those issues like land use and land-use changes and development, of course.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you. Right.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Wascherol. I am taking away the distinction of you being the last presenter, unfortunately. I'm excusing you, and someone else has just stuck their hand up.

Mr. Wascherol: No problem at all. I don't know if there's any grace of being the last presenter, anyway.

Mrs. Samson: There is not.

The Chair: Thank you. Please have a seat in the gallery.

Mr. Andrew Stewart.

Mr. Stewart: Thank you, Justice. For the benefit of the record, Stewart, first initial A. Sorry; force of habit. I'm a lawyer in my free time.

The Chair: Oh, okay. Sorry. No extra charge for you signing up late. You pay the same rate as everyone else, and we'll give you 10 minutes.

Mr. Stewart: Thank you. I had simply appeared here today to observe proceedings, but I do note that there were a number of questions. I can indicate that I reside . . .

The Chair: Sorry. I just want to be clear. Is Stewart your last name?

Mr. Stewart: Stewart is my last name. Andrew is my first name.

I reside in the CA of Calgary-Hays. In the interest of full disclosure, I was a candidate for the Alberta NDP in 2023, so I have some knowledge of Calgary-Hays. Mrs. Samson, I don't know if to you – but to me that looks like a rifle. I don't know if that shape is weird, but it is a riding nonetheless.

Mr. Clark: I'll never unsee that.

Mr. Stewart: It's how I can explain it to the people that I was door-knocking. It's a very approachable shape.

As we had discussed earlier from Mr. Malkinson, we do have the riding split by Deerfoot Trail. What I can indicate is that there is a marked difference between the communities that are to the east and the west of Deerfoot Trail. In the west of Deerfoot Trail, closer to the Bow River, you have houses built on artificial islands consisting of millions of dollars' worth of investment into a single house. As you get into the east of Deerfoot, you have varying degrees of socioeconomic status, you have very dense housing in apartment buildings, you have very affordable housing projects in the riding, so there is a tremendous disparity between the very high and the very low. You also have – I don't know how long this will take; probably the heat death of the universe – the green line. We have people that are very supportive of the green line who reside on the east of Deerfoot versus less of a desire to see that on the west of Deerfoot.

My understanding is that Calgary-Hays has existed since about 2004. Dr. Martin, you had indicated previously with one of the other speakers that the Calgary-Elbow riding has elected multiple MLAs of varying parties. That is not the case in Calgary-Hays. A Progressive Conservative or a United Conservative member has been there. Ric McIver is a very long-standing member of the Legislative Assembly, and he has been in that riding for all but one of the campaigns in this riding.

3:05

Today I was just trying to attempt to answer any questions that people may have. I don't know if other members of the public have spoken about the riding of Calgary-Hays. It is a very compact riding. From one end to the other it's about a 15-minute car ride. My understanding in looking at the maps is that it's grown about 13,000 people from 2014 to 2024. That is one of the more significant areas of growth in just having a quick look at the maps that were provided in the back of this room.

Again, the overall theme and timbre of the conversations we've had today is to keep like with like. We have a very delineated boundary. We have a very clear group of people who have similar socioeconomic interests. Aside from west of Deerfoot, we have a similar desire to see a green line, a similar desire to utilize public transport, and the desires of this group may run contrary to the desires and needs and interests of people that reside on the opposite side of Deerfoot. When you are faced with the awesome task that is to apportion these ridings, these are some of the things that may be

of assistance to you in considering what it is a community of like interest.

I do invite questions from the panel because I think that's actually probably the most helpful to see where . . .

The Chair: First of all, thanks for stepping up because we haven't heard anything on this, unless I'm forgetting. I'm going to . . .

Mr. Stewart: To that point, Mrs. Samson, the very clear boundaries are that 130th area to the north. North of that is pretty much empty space, open space. Then to the south we have Stoney Trail. That's a major thoroughfare which provides that southern boundary. Then, again, you have part of Deerfoot Trail which provides the westmost boundary as it bleeds into the area closest to the Bow River.

The Chair: Okay. Now I forget what my question was.

Mr. Stewart: I'm sorry, Justice.

The Chair: I'm going to pass the buck to Mr. Evans. Any questions of this presenter?

Mr. Evans: I was actually just looking at trying to sort out the portion you were talking about that the houses are built on islands. That would be . . .

Mr. Stewart: If you'll just allow me.

The Chair: Feel free to go up to the map if you want. Grab the mic so that we can pick up your audio.

Mr. Evans: I was looking at it and seeing how it tied into Calgary-Peigan.

Mr. Stewart: It is this area that is the artificial . . .

Mr. Evans: Oh, I see. The lake.

Mr. Stewart: It's this area here, right? This is an artificial island constructed for the benefit of the houses that are placed on that artificial island. As you might intuit, it is a gated community. It has a high level of affluence, which is an outlier if you were to compare it to some of the other areas in the same riding to the east of Deerfoot.

Mr. Evans: Can you tell me about, following along the Bow River, the communities or the neighbourhoods that go along the Bow River moving towards the Douglas natural area?

Mr. Stewart: That's right. If you go north along Deerfoot, this river area, those are similar in socioeconomic scale. Maybe they're not artificial islands, but they are similar in age, similar in housing style.

Mr. Evans: Is there more affluence going along the river?

Mr. Stewart: Yes.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Everything that side of . . .

Mr. Stewart: Deerfoot.

Again, as echoed by one of my presenter colleagues, Deerfoot is a delineating feature of Calgary depending on what side of the road you're on as well as the Bow River and the . . .

Mr. Evans: What about Promenade Way? What's that community like?

Mr. Stewart: Yes. The Promenade Way area is single detached housing, but it is far more – I apologize. I don't think it's actually single detached housing; it's duplexes. It is more dense. [interjection] Mixed use, yes, but it is not the same quality. It is not a single detached; it is different despite its seemingly close geography to the area on the other side of Deerfoot Trail.

Mr. Evans: You'd be familiar with the reference case of the Supreme Court of Canada that we're dealing with? Okay. Can you identify in . . .

Mr. Stewart: Just so I have it, just briefly: the name of the case that we're discussing?

Mr. Evans: The Saskatchewan reference.

Mr. Stewart: Right. Okay.

The Chair: Well, Carter.

Mr. Evans: Yeah. I just want to know if you can identify for me, from your experience and your knowledge, any communities of interest that are dissected by the boundary.

Mr. Stewart: I would suggest that there is a bifurcation here, this area. This boundary bifurcates this area with that.

Mr. Evans: What would be the commonality there, the common interests that you would identify?

Mr. Stewart: The common interests, commonality would be high socioeconomic status. They're closer to the river. They are going to be less proponents of things like the green line, mass transit, compared to the communities that have a direct neighbourhood relation to the proposed stops along the green line.

Mr. Evans: I'm monopolizing time here, but I think we have time. Tell me in a thumbnail, you know, the arguments for and the arguments against the green line.

Mr. Stewart: I have to defend the green line? Well, okay.

Mr. Evans: No. As objectively as possible, for and against, just to inform me.

Mr. Stewart: My learned friend, Mr. Evans, the idea behind increasing the mass transit infrastructure is to reduce the overall level of congestion on major urban thoroughfares like Deerfoot, like Stoney. It provides a way for people that may not have a vehicle to get to and from work, the hospital to the south, the university to the northwest that may otherwise be very difficult for them. The idea of the green line, from what I understand, is that it is a massive transit corridor from Calgary all the way down to the Seton South Health Campus. Again, my understanding of the riding of Calgary-Hays is that there is a somewhat large health care constituency there because of the hospital being so close.

Mr. Evans: Right. So what are the negatives of the green line? People who are opposed to it say: we're opposed because A, B, C, D.

Mr. Stewart: Again, I don't wish to speak ill of the people that are opposed to the green line. My understanding is that there is always going to be a character argument that this is something that is not necessary, that we've had these existing modes of transport, that we've had these existing transit corridors that have functioned and are continuing to function. They see major upgrades and

expansions, and that seems to be doing well. Okay? That's my understanding.

Mr. Evans: Is that the same argument that they made against light rail transit way back when?

Mr. Stewart: Yes.

This is kind of the issue that we have. We have a major urban centre. We have a major urban centre that is growing all the time. We have a major urban centre that is very carcentric and has a mass transportation system which is lacking. You know, most traditional light rail is the X and the circle. We don't have that; we have kind of an X, maybe a Y. We don't have a mass light rail transit that gets to all corners of the city, and that butcher's bill is becoming due. The neglect of getting those initiatives done, put in the ground, has a consequence, and we are starting to see congestion, accidents, things like that that are as a result of a focus away from mass transit.

My lovely wife, who moved into the area – oh, I'm going to get in trouble for this – in 2013, 2014: they had promised a green line then. The idea was that, you know, she had moved into an apartment building that was going to be right on the green line. That was 10 or 11 years ago. These communities have been promised these mass transit upgrades that have never materialized. Again, there is a desire for this. We can see it in fits and starts in Calgary to have these things completed. It's just that there's always issues of intergovernmental jurisdiction.

3:15

Mr. Evans: Appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Susan, do you have any questions?

Mrs. Samson: Yes. Thank you for your presentation. You are the first to talk about or to identify a gated community inside an electoral district. I know there are such things. Talk about like communities. Like, why don't we just move them?

Mr. Evans: They're on an island, after all.

Mr. Stewart: Well, they are on an island in some people's eyes.

Mrs. Samson: Like, they're locking everybody out.

Mr. Stewart: Mrs. Samson, thank you for that question. I think, in all fairness to this community, to any gated communities, there's a desire for security. There's a desire for exclusivity. There's a desire for a like group to maintain like, especially on something like that. They probably all know their neighbours.

This is one of the things that I wish to encourage, that other speakers wish to encourage with respect to keeping like communities together. We have potentially a system where, because of the constraints placed on you and the awesome responsibility that you have, some ridings may become rural-urban hybrids. Again, as best as one can do, the desire from the majority of speakers is to avoid things like that because of things like the sense of community, police response, fire response, where their children are going to school, what the major communal gathering areas are. When you start incorporating large areas of rural space into a former urban riding, that sense of community gets lost.

In this situation this is a very extreme example. What are we to do with it? We have to put them with – they cannot be their own constituency. That's not possible. But we have to put them with as similar as because their desires are similar to their surrounding

neighbours. They are not simply an island unto which nothing around them is the same. That's not true. They have a similar level of desire. They have a somewhat similar level of affluence. They have a similar desire to utilize services in a certain fashion, to utilize civic services in a fashion that is going to be different from other socioeconomic areas: the utilization of transportation, the utilization of hospitals, schooling, right? All of these things help build a sense of character into a community. Again, that is why we are trying to keep these communities together.

In this riding we have somewhat of an anomaly because of this disparity between literally this demarcating point of the Macleod Trail.

Mrs. Samson: Deerfoot.

Mr. Stewart: What did I say? I said Deerfoot, yes?

Mrs. Samson: Macleod.

Mr. Stewart: I apologize. Deerfoot Trail.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you again.

Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: No, thank you. This is very helpful. The complexities of living along the Bow are much higher than I would have thought although, you know, people will pay extra money to see water.

Mr. Stewart: No, and that is one of the . . .

Dr. Martin: It's a deep truth, so I could see why people pile up on the banks here.

Mr. Stewart: The other thing, again, as you bring to the attention of this panel: you have things like flood mitigation strategies. We know that being close to the Bow River potentially puts you at risk. We have seen flooding, so obviously the concerns about those sorts of things are going to be markedly different than the people who are east of Deerfoot Trail, where that sort of thing is a sheer impossibility.

Dr. Martin: Right. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. The Deerfoot is just such an obvious, you know, natural barrier. You're exactly right. I mean, it's great that we have someone here from Calgary-Hays. It's one thing to look at it on a map, but it's another to understand the literal lay of the land, right?

Mr. Stewart: Mr. Clark, it does, on first blush, look like a very contiguous, fair riding. The population is a little bit high, but you look at it and you're like: this is pretty square considering we've got all these geographic features. But as you develop an understanding of the communities, you have members of the city come forward and give their experiences, there are differences. There are discrepancies that need to be sussed out as you go about redistricting.

Mr. Clark: So what I'm hearing, then, is that in your opinion, then, notwithstanding that on the east and west side you've got something called McKenzie Towne and McKenzie Lake, those are quite different things.

Mr. Stewart: Do not be fooled.

Mr. Clark: Sorry. I guess I'll just ask: 130th Avenue, then, is also a substantial barrier. I'm just curious as we go further north and then west again all the way – is it Diamond Cove, Douglasdale?

Mr. Stewart: Yeah. Douglasdale is more contiguous with McKenzie Lake as it has proximity to the river; 130th, basically, is a major mall, commercial area. There's a strip mall that runs from Deerfoot Trail along 130th. It has a number of shops, a convenience store, grocery stores, things of that nature. Then north of that is relatively undeveloped, from my understanding.

Mr. Clark: Got it. Yeah. It looks very industrial. It's not going to be new houses. It's just taken up by . . .

Mr. Stewart: And the landfill and in the – yes. It has the Shephard landfill.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I think that's a limiting factor on future residential development.

That's all I have. Thank you.

The Chair: I'm not clear, Mr. Stewart. Did you tell us where the green line was proposed?

Mr. Stewart: Yes. My understanding is that the green line – Justice, what version of the green line are we talking about?

The Chair: Oh, just give me two.

Mr. Stewart: My understanding, generally speaking, is that at some point the green line was proposed down 52nd Street, so that would be the second – sorry; if you'll allow me. Once upon a time I did live very close to 52nd, and there is a carved-out corridor sort of roughed in for this sort of expansion. Yes, there was this promise of stops along the way down 52nd to South Health Campus.

Now, with respect to the modern refactoring of the green line, I'm not exactly sure where that's going to come down or how far it's going to go. Again, these are other budgets and other fights.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much, and thanks for stepping into the gap and doing this. It's very, very helpful.

Mr. Stewart: I'm glad to shine a light on Calgary-Hays.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. I think that is all the presenters that were listed and that we could compel to come forward. Thank you very much.

We will adjourn the proceedings until this evening at 6:30. If you're not interested in watching television tonight, please return. We've got a fairly full evening, maybe three-quarters full, starting at 6:30. So we'll adjourn, but we will not leave, and we're happy to talk.

[The hearing adjourned at 3:23 p.m.]

