



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission  
Public Hearings

Edmonton

Monday, June 2, 2025  
1 p.m.

Transcript No. 4

## **Legislative Assembly of Alberta**

### **Electoral Boundaries Commission**

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## **Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Edmonton**

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Charles Gachnang  
Christina Gray, MLA, Edmonton-Mill Woods  
Terry Howlett  
Nam Kular  
Neil Singh



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Monday, June 2, 2025

[Justice Miller in the chair]

**The Chair:** Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this afternoon's session of the Electoral Boundaries Commission in Edmonton. This is our first day in Edmonton. We had a full morning this morning.

It's my understanding that we have one presenter already here. Mr. Gachnang, if you want to come forward. Yeah, you can have a seat here, sir.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Right here?

**The Chair:** Yeah. We limit the presentation time to seven minutes, but by the number of people in this room we're prepared to grant you a little more time.

Well, first of all, I should do a little bit of an introduction so that you know who we are, okay? We are the Electoral Boundaries Commission of Alberta. My name is Justice Dallas Miller. I'm the chairman of the commission.

To my left is Susan Samson, a long-time resident of Sylvan Lake, Alberta. By the way, I'm from southern Alberta, which is the Lethbridge, Medicine Hat area. I serve as a judge down there. We think of Sylvan Lake as central Alberta, okay? Susan is an experienced municipal politician who has served a four-year term as mayor.

Now, was it two terms you served, you said?

**Mrs. Samson:** Two terms, three years each, so I'll just say six.

**The Chair:** Okay. Six years as mayor.

Susan has been named citizen of the year in Sylvan Lake and received the Queen Elizabeth II diamond jubilee medal for community service. She is a dedicated volunteer in her community with a focus on health care.

We are not here with a full complement. We're missing one member. Mr. John Evans will be joining us this evening. He's a lawyer in southern Alberta.

To my right is Dr. Julian Martin, a retired history professor from the University of Alberta. Julian has volunteered on many committees in his region of the province, being the Sherwood Park area, and served on provincial tribunals such as the Surface Rights Board and the Land Compensation Board.

At the end of the table is Mr. Greg Clark, a Calgarian entrepreneur and consultant focusing on the information and knowledge sectors. Greg also served as an MLA for one term from a riding in Calgary, Calgary-Elbow, so we're really pleased to have someone with that experience on the commission. Greg, too, is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee medal, and he currently serves as chair of the Balancing Pool of Alberta and consults and advises organizations relative to proper governance.

We are the Electoral Boundaries Commission. There are a whole bunch of other things I normally would go through, but because the group is small, we can have a bit more of a dialogue. First of all, we are an independent body established by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and we've been appointed by the Speaker of the Legislature. We are embarking upon a process that takes about a year in length, and we're two months into the process. One of the main things that we have to factor and we have to consider is that we've been given instruction through the legislation to expand the number of electoral districts in Alberta from 87 to 89. So by the time the next provincial election rolls around, there will be 89 electoral divisions up for grabs.

Our timeline is such that in late March we were appointed by the Speaker. We've had a couple of meetings in April as a commission ourselves, and then last week we started our public hearing session. We'll be going until June 23 for public hearings. We're going to be across the province. We'll be here in Edmonton one more day tomorrow.

Our task will be such that within seven months of our appointment we have to supply what has come to be known as an interim report to the Speaker of the Legislature. By late October we will have to have that report in to the Legislature. The public input that we receive at these public hearings is very important in that process. Then we will continue to have some hearings after our interim report is released, and those hearings will be specifically to receive input and feedback to that first report. Then finally we wrap up our task by submitting a final report in late March 2026 to the Speaker of the Legislature, and if the Legislature is happy with it, they will approve it and pass appropriate legislation to reflect the contents of our report.

As you know, each electoral division or riding or constituency elects one Member of the Legislative Assembly, and it's only individual voters in that constituency that have a right to elect a member. To give a bit of historic perspective to this whole process, the last Electoral Boundaries Commission report was issued in 2017. That report was based on a population of just over 4 million people. Our report will be based on a population significantly increased, and that's going to be 4.88 million people. In 2017 there were 87 constituencies or electoral districts. The population was 4.062 million people. That brought about an average of 46,697 for each electoral district. The target is not that 46,697, but the target population is that range of below 25 to plus 25, and those figures are obvious there.

As I said, two things have changed for us at this stage. The population has increased significantly, such as 4.88 million-plus, and we have 89 electoral districts to deal with. The average, then, for each riding would be 54,929, and the plus-minus, then, would bring it to 41,197 to 68,661. The challenge that we're faced with is that the population growth that we've seen over the last eight years has not been uniform throughout the province. It's been in various pockets. We have to deal with that in terms of creating the new electoral divisions.

Our task as a boundaries commission is not to cut the province up into equalized pieces that have one person, one vote, but to make sure that our boundaries that we recommend provide for what the case law has described as effective representation. The factors that we will be considering are the relative density and sparsity of population throughout the province, the whole concept of community interests, common community interests and organizations. This morning we had a really interesting presentation that reflected those concerns. We'll also be considering, because it's not only city and the country and more so in the country, geographical features as to where the boundaries should go. As well, communication and transportation factors across the province will be a factor.

The overriding goal, though, is to provide understandable and clear boundaries. That will be the challenge for us as a commission. We have a catch-all phrase whereby we can consider other important factors. The legislation allows us to consider those, a more open-ended approach.

Our whole task is to hear from the public. As I said, we had a very full morning. We started last week in the southwest corner of the province, Pincher Creek and the city of Lethbridge. This week we're in Edmonton. We're going to outlying areas as well. We want to hear from people who are interested in giving us input.

Mr. Gachnang . . .

**Mr. Gachnang:** Charles is fine.

**The Chair:** Okay. Charles, thank you very much for attending. I see you've got some notes. If you have anything in writing you want to leave with us, please leave it with Mr. Aaron Roth, who's the committee clerk.

Don't feel restricted to seven minutes. You can start.

1:10

**Mr. Gachnang:** Thank you very much, commissioners. It's a real pleasure and an honour to be here. Thank you so much for letting me speak. Justice Miller, I may be repeating some of the things you just mentioned, so bear with me, please, sir.

My name is Charles Gachnang, and I'm here to advocate for the preservation of the name of the Edmonton-Mill Woods provincial electoral district. My aim is to demonstrate that maintaining the integrity of the Edmonton-Mill Woods district aligns perfectly with the principles of effective representation. Edmonton-Mill Woods is more than just a geographical area; it is a mature, fully built-out community with a strong, cohesive identity. This is a community where neighbourhoods have grown together and where residents have identified strongly with its Mill Woods name.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act mandates that while population parity is important, the commission shall also take into consideration other crucial factors for effective representation. These include

- (c) common community interests and community organizations . . .
- (d) whenever possible, the existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary . . .
- (g) geographical features, including existing road systems, and
- (h) the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries.

My position for the Edmonton-Mill Woods riding is rooted in these very considerations.

Shall I continue?

**The Chair:** Yeah, please.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Preserving common community interests. The 2017 Electoral Boundaries Commission final report itself recognized the importance of common communities of interest when it recommended renaming Edmonton-Mill Woods-East to Edmonton-Meadows. This was precisely because the proposed riding contained only a small portion of the Mill Woods neighbourhood but most of the Meadows neighbourhood. This precedent highlights the commission's understanding that electoral boundaries should reflect actual community identity, not fragments. Edmonton-Mill Woods as it stands embodies a coherent community of interest. Edmonton-Mill Woods has established neighbourhood boundaries and community structures. Unnecessary destruction of these established boundaries would create confusion, lose local representation, and undermine the sense of community that residents have built over decades.

The 2017 report noted Edmonton-Mill Woods' population of 50,265, which was 7 per cent above the provincial average of 46,803. This variance is well within the plus or minus 25 per cent permitted by the act. For a mature, built-out area like Edmonton-Mill Woods future population growth is anticipated to be slower, meaning the current variation is sustainable and does not necessitate such drastic boundary changes. Fragmenting Edmonton-Mill Woods would have a detrimental effect. It would erode community identity, create confusion, weaken effective representation. An MLA representing a fragmented district might struggle to address the diverse and potentially conflicting needs of newly divided communities.

My conclusion and call to action is this. The Edmonton-Mill Woods electoral district in its current form represents a cohesive community with a rich history and strong cultural identity. Its population variance is well within the legal parameters, and there is no compelling reason to change its boundaries.

Please permit me to speak on some overall electoral boundary issues as well. The process of redrawing electoral boundaries is a monumental undertaking, requiring a delicate balance of legal mandate, demographic reality, and community considerations. It is a process that touches every citizen and shapes the future of our democratic representation. I understand that the commission must navigate a multitude of factors including population shift, geographical features, and the preservation of community interests, all while adhering to the principles they'll find in the electoral boundaries act.

While acknowledging the commission's diligent efforts, I wish to highlight some key challenges that often arise during this process, which could lead to public concern and impact the perception of fairness. The perception of gerrymandering. While gerrymandering is often associated with partisan manipulation, even unintentional boundary decisions can lead to the perception of unfairness. In a highly polarized political climate any boundary change, no matter how well intended or legally sound, can be scrutinized and interpreted through a partisan lens. This perception can erode public trust in the electoral process itself. The commission's transparency and clear rationale for decisions is crucial in mitigating those concerns.

The core tension of Alberta's rapid urbanization. Urban areas advocate for more districts to reflect their population surges, while rural areas emphasize unique challenges of representing large geographic constituencies and their economic contributions. Historically, Alberta's electoral system has faced criticism for favouring rural areas, leading to situations where a rural life may have a higher impact than an urban one. The commission's challenge is to achieve voter parity with the legal limits of the act while also considering the participation of rural representation. Redrawing boundaries especially in densely populated urban areas for historically cohesive rural communities carries the risk of fragmenting the existing communities of interest. This could divide neighbourhoods that lose local identity and make it more difficult for residents to identify with their electoral district and their representation.

The goal. The act explicitly encourages considering common community interests and community organizations and existing community boundaries, and adhering to these principles helps ensure that the electoral districts are not statistical units but reflections of genuine social and cultural community. It's already an understandable political boundary.

The practical impact. Complex or illogical boundaries can lead to more confusion regarding their electoral districts, polling stations, or even which representative to contact for local issues.

The ideal. The desirability of understandable and clear boundaries is not merely an aesthetic preference but a practical necessity for an accessible and efficient democratic provision. Using identifiable geographical features like major roads or rivers can create this in this regard.

The work of the electoral commission is vital for the health of Alberta's democracy. By openly acknowledging and addressing these inherent challenges, the commission can further strengthen public confidence in the fairness and integrity of our electoral system. I absolutely commend your commitment to a transparent and consultative process, and I trust that your final recommendations will reflect a thoughtful balance of legal

considerations, ensuring effective and equitable representation for all Albertans.

Thank you sincerely. If you have any questions, let's do those now.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you very much, sir.  
Yes. Dr. Martin.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. That's a very laudable presentation of values and principles. But let me put a hard case to you, sir. Edmonton-Mill Woods has too many people in it now. Testament to its success, perhaps, but with our delicate sensibilities we are still faced with a population problem. We were talking this morning with the MLA for Edmonton-Meadows, who recognized that this is a torturous problem because he, too, spoke a great deal about communities of interest, as one might expect, yet he recognized the difficulty that we have with some of the – you know, he's got too many people, plus we've got some funny boundaries, and if you have too many people, where would you change the boundaries if required?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Specifically?

**Dr. Martin:** Yeah.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Edmonton-Mill Woods has sort of gone north-south, so I think there is some . . .

**The Chair:** Sir, we're just going to try and get the map up on the screen so you can have a reference point.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Right. I'm going to use 23rd Avenue as my point of reference. In the last few elections 23rd Avenue was sometimes part of Edmonton-Mill Woods and sometimes not part of Edmonton-Mill Woods. So I think there is some ability to go south of 23rd Avenue. If you wanted to add on south of 23rd Avenue, I would say that that's a possibility of expanding. Then Edmonton-Ellerslie, which would be south of Edmonton-Mill Woods: you would have some flexibility in moving that up because people living south of 23rd Avenue are still considered part of Edmonton-Mill Woods.

**The Chair:** Sure. Okay. So are you suggesting – sorry, you weren't finished. Go ahead.

1:20

**Dr. Martin:** I guess not. The very first presenter we heard this morning suggested that there's a distinction to be made, in his mind, between old housing stock, you know, neighbourhoods that have been there the longest as it were, sort of north of 34th for sure but also down to 23rd Avenue, and then he suggested there was a difference in the community profile as well as the real property characteristics in the eastern part, which is now Meadows, and south of 23rd Avenue. Is that your experience as well?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Yeah. I could even be more specific and say that where I live, within 1 kilometre, if you go from what could be considered almost like inner city, so even within a one kilometre distance, you could see quite a divergence. So even within the Edmonton-Mill Woods area, that would be untraditional. You can see a diversity within a thousand metres.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Great questions.

**Mrs. Samson:** I have just one question. When we look at the map, there are a couple areas of growth. In the northeast corner there's not a lot happening there, and then in the area of the hospital.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Yes.

**Mrs. Samson:** And that's where in being a resident in that area or in the Mill Woods electoral division, is it correct that we would expect to see more growth in those areas?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Well, again, this is about the convergence of many things. Obviously, this is often tied-in with Edmonton's infill situation and things like that. The area that you're talking about around the hospital, sometimes called Tawa, T-a-w-a, is generally speaking – generally speaking – more multiple family dwellings, small apartments, and things like that. Whereas, if you go north of that into what would be wood-built communities, let's say the community of Hillview, you are looking at more single-family dwellings. So, yes, one would imagine more growth in that area just because it's more apartments and probably more families moving in, so that would necessitate greater numbers, without a doubt. Yes, ma'am.

**Mrs. Samson:** Okay. Thank you.

**Dr. Martin:** If I could, the northern part is Jackie Parker Park, so we're not developing that, I don't speculate.

**Mr. Gachnang:** No, it's not enough green space, actually.

**Dr. Martin:** And immediately south of the hospital, that's a shopping mall. Yeah?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Yes. And there's anticipated growth there with – again, I don't have the exact plan. You're looking at about a 12- to 13-storey structure. What you see now as the shopping centre will be reconfigured into a high-rise.

**The Chair:** Really? What's the expected timeline?

**Mr. Gachnang:** You'd have to contact the – like any project, you're looking at years, not months.

**The Chair:** I thought I understood you to start out by saying the name. Did I understand you correctly? Part of our job as a commission is to recommend names. Did you say anything about the naming of it?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Well, I realize that there's some flexibility in the boundaries. Again, federal politics has nothing to do with provincial politics. But our Edmonton-Mill Woods was changed in the southeast, and it did create confusion, and it took away some of that identity because for decades we've worked on Edmonton-Mill Woods. So that is sort of where I'm coming from is that I noticed that there was confusion with the federal. I just didn't want to see the same thing happen here at the provincial.

**The Chair:** So keep it at Mill Woods.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Keep it at Mill Woods. Yes, sir.

**The Chair:** Am I correct in understanding that to your east, which is now Edmonton-Meadows . . .

**Mr. Gachnang:** Edmonton-Meadows. Yes, sir.

**The Chair:** Was it called Edmonton-Mill Woods East before 2017?

**Mr. Gachnang:** Again, I was under the – it had the word “Mill Woods” associated with it, but it never became official. I believe there was talk about that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Gachnang:** That immediately created that confusion because Edmonton-Meadows is Edmonton-Meadows, and then you put this Mill Woods part in it. So I think the commission quickly realized that that probably is in the best interest of Edmonton-Meadows to not be part of it. That was part of the confusion.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Okay.

**Mr. Clark:** It was Mill Creek after 2010. Mill Creek and then Mill Woods. I imagine we have good reason that we perhaps don’t want two Mills-something.

**Mr. Gachnang:** That’s right. Fair enough.

**The Chair:** Even I would be opposed to that, with the last name Miller.

**Mr. Gachnang:** That’s right. Do you hyphenate or don’t hyphenate, right?

**The Chair:** Yeah.

Okay. Any other comments or dialogue with Mr. Gachnang? Okay. Thank you so much. If you have an extra one, if you want to leave it with Aaron, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Gachnang:** Thank you, too.

**The Chair:** Good afternoon, ma’am. Are you Kerry Day?

**Ms Day:** I am.

**The Chair:** You are scheduled for 2:50 this afternoon, but we are a very flexible group here.

**Ms Day:** Well, I’ll try to be flexible, too.

**The Chair:** Okay. So just take your time, and when you’re ready to start, we’ll hear you. We have said publicly that we limit the presentations to seven minutes with three minutes of questions, but as you can see, we’re flexible, and we may give you 7 and a half minutes.

**Ms Day:** Okay. Well, I hope the questions don’t drag on until four o’clock.

**Mrs. Samson:** We don’t have anything better to do.

**Ms Day:** Well, anyway, I’m really glad to be here. I think this is such an important thing, and I was expecting the room to be full of people.

**The Chair:** So were we.

**Dr. Martin:** They’re all coming tonight, I’m sure.

**Ms Day:** Well, anyway, you know my name. I was born in Edmonton. I grew up not very far from here in south Edmonton. In fact, one of my great-grandfathers farmed in an area just north of Southgate, so although I’m a very urban person, I have some rural roots in central Alberta as well.

My first provincial election was 1975, which is 50 years ago. You’re now figuring out my age. The Progressive Conservatives

had ousted the Social Credit in ’71, and in that election, they were further reduced to four MLAs. The population of Alberta was 1.7 million people and there were 75 MLAs, so they each were sort of responsible for about 23,000 people. But what was really interesting to me, and I didn’t know this at the time, but in looking back I discovered this, the number of MLAs had actually been increased by 10 between 1967 and 1971, so there was a large change in the number of MLAs at the time, which I thought was quite interesting.

Now, clearly a lot has changed, and going forward I understand we will have 89 MLAs with – forgive my math, but that works out to, in my opinion, around 55,000 to 56,000 people per electoral district.

**The Chair:** Ma’am, the PowerPoint says you’re almost dead on.

**Ms Day:** Oh, good. Well, I’m 2,000 off, but you know. Anyway, the question there is what the population is, and I’ll get to that later. Okay?

Anyway, many of the people who voted for that big change are dead, because I was probably one of the younger voters, and so I would submit that the population of Alberta has had a pretty much complete turnover in my lifetime. Of the people that are here today, many of them were not born here. There may be, you know, boomers such as myself and our children, but there are millennials and different generations and we are certainly farther from the rural place that we were.

You may check my stats as well, but from my calculations about two-thirds of Albertans live in Edmonton and Calgary, and I’ve also seen stats that suggest that if you include the satellite communities around Edmonton and Calgary, that the numbers are more like 80 per cent and 20 per cent.

**1:30**

Now, the reason I’m here is because the recent federal election and even the American election have really highlighted to me the importance of process and preparation for elections between elections, and so I really think the work that you’re doing is so important. In fact, I think Elections Alberta could really teach our American neighbours a lot.

It’s not just about avoiding interference, or voter fraud, or campaign finance; I think that’s what really makes it in the media. My concern is that there’s a declining voter turnout and people who think their votes do not matter or are perhaps worth less than the votes of others in other electoral districts. Certainly in Edmonton, anyway – and it could be because we tend to be in opposition – there’s a common phrase that basically says: an urban vote is worth about half of a rural vote. You know, that’s not true for every electoral district, but it is certainly true if you were to compare a particular electoral district with another. That, I think, has an effect, and it’s your job to try and limit that effect.

I mentioned earlier that I think there’s a data integrity problem that you’re facing because you rely on the 2021 census, which will be six years old. Is that not the most recent?

**Mr. Clark:** We have good news.

**The Chair:** Yep. Go ahead. We’ll . . .

**Ms Day:** Okay. Anyway, this is my concern because certainly the 2021 census would be six years old by the next election, but I’ve certainly seen numbers that suggest Alberta’s population is already probably over 5 million. Your number is lower than what I saw most recently. Edmonton and Calgary are growing at a rate of 100,000 people per year. I also think it was clear in the last report that there were trends identified that have continued. The issues that



were raised in that report have sort of been confirmed by reality. So I would just encourage you to consider whatever data is available to you.

One of the sources of data, I think, is the electoral list. My concern is that all these new people may not be on those lists, that there perhaps needs to be some additional effort to make sure that they are because if they haven't had a chance to vote, they may not have thought about it, and really they're entitled to representation now, not just at the next election. They may not even know who they're supposed to be turning to.

Anyway, another reason that I'm here, I think, is that I was a little bit concerned by the more recent changes in the applicable legislation. I confess that I am a retired lawyer so not everybody may have focused on it in the same way, but I didn't think that an increase in two seats was sufficient, nor did I like the fact that there seems to be four special districts, which seems to be up from two. And when I say "special districts," those are the districts where the populations are significantly below the provincial average and more than 25 per cent, I would think. I was able to identify two, but I'm still not sure who the other two are. I think the legislation used to say, "It may be up to four," and then they changed the wording around that to sort of specify that it would be four.

I would like to state that I think there are lots of alternatives to counteract the size geography issue in the modern era. There's social media. You can have multiple offices. You can have multiple voting locations. You have advanced voting. You even have special ballots. So the arguments that were put forward to justify that in the past, in my view, are weaker.

I talked earlier about voter turnout. Between 2019, where the voter turnout in Alberta was 67.5 per cent, it dropped in 2023 to 62.4 per cent, but that was actually high for Alberta. Alberta had had a previous problem where we sort of bottomed out in 2008 at around 40 per cent. I was sort of pleased with the fact that things were getting better, when all of a sudden they took a turn. I think we need to make sure that effective voter representation and parity isn't reacting to concerns around whether a vote is an equal vote.

Now, when I looked at the voter turnout from the last election, I couldn't see any indication that rural constituencies, despite their larger size and perhaps geographic challenges, actually have a lower turnout. The average seemed to be about the same. There were some exceptions. I think Fort McMurray had a fire going on. I mean, that's a pretty good excuse. But we need to make sure that those criteria in section 15(2), I think it is, of the act are applied appropriately, and I leave that in your capable hands.

I would like to speak as well to the issue of communication particularly after redistribution. As I say, I think that this isn't just an election-time issue. People need to know who to call. I actually live in Edmonton-Riverview in a little section south of the freeway, which is Patricia Heights, Rio Terrace, Quesnell. I've actually been moved around a bit, and in the past I've had double mail. I've had no mail. In fact, quite recently in the federal election, which isn't your problem, I had people calling me for signs and money when I in fact had no longer been in that riding of Edmonton-Centre, you know, for three years.

It caused me to look into the federal system, and one of the things I noticed on their website is that they actually after redistributing go through the results of the prior election to confirm that the boundary changes would have had no impact on the results. I didn't see that in your materials. They go into it on a poll-by-poll basis and say that if they changed the boundaries, the results would have been unaffected. I think the transparency around that would actually be helpful because people would then say: well, this boundary change wouldn't have changed the results.

I think the elephant in the room for me, I guess, is that I believe there's a bit of an appearance of rural bias in Alberta these days. It's very important to me that the proposed changes don't look like they principally benefit the current government or particular MLAs, and I leave that in your hands as well.

There was another phrase that I thought was important in looking at the other prior report, and that was: communities of interest. It's one of the criteria that you are to consider if you are in fact not going to redistribute something or if you're planning to move the boundaries. It seemed to really think in terms of geography, towns and reserves and Métis settlements and roads and that sort of thing, but I'm really wondering whether it isn't time to sort of also consider demographics. That would be age, Albertans, new Albertans, new Canadians', ethnic groups because I think effective representation, which is the objective of all of this, really requires resources correlated not just to the number of people but to the people who actually live there.

One other point really relating to the case law, which is going back to my lawyerly training in the past, is that I noticed that some of these cases were quite old. In fact, the Saskatchewan reference case is from 1991, which is, as you will recall, before cell phones, before the Internet, before social media, before Zoom meetings, before distance work, before advance voting to any degree. I think that some of those population issues that were mentioned in there have therefore become less critical and can be compensated for in ways other than having these really large areas.

Just to conclude, I guess, there was a quote in the Alberta reference case, which is from 1994, which says that a system which dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared to another's runs the risk of providing inadequate representation to the citizen whose vote is diluted and that effective representation, it said later on, needs to reflect the diversity of our new social mosaic.

I think Alberta has a very different social mosaic than it had in the past. The solution, I think, is that any change needs to be tested with the view that it's in the best interest of all Albertans, not just a particular constituency. It might be slightly more awkward for someone, but unless it really advances the interests of the whole, I think that just has to be dealt with.

1:40

I do think as well that money can't drive the decisions, but money perhaps has to be used to compensate for the effects. If people end up having unusually large constituencies, they may need additional money. If people live in constituencies that are challenged by geography, perhaps they need more money. But I don't think the number of MLAs should actually be determined by that factor or your work, for that matter, because I don't suppose you control the purse after you've made the decisions about what should happen. That's it.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you very much, Ms Day. I appreciate your comments, and I think that you, in a sense, posed a question or two to us . . .

**Ms Day:** Right.

**The Chair:** . . . which I think, between all of us commissioners, we'll be able to answer. But maybe we should just allow us to ask you questions first.

**Ms Day:** Sure. I'll try to answer.

**The Chair:** Starting with you, if you have any, Susan.

**Mrs. Samson:** Thank you. I just wanted to make a comment on your presentation, which was very good, and thank you for that. You talked about electoral votes and how that plays into the big picture. I agree with your comments, but we are, by the act, using only 2024 Canada census information, and we base the decisions on the electoral divisions on the population of that area because, in fact, everybody in that area we assume sooner or later will vote. So that's who we're counting now. Even those who are not eligible to vote will eventually become Canadians, we hope, or they will get old enough to vote. So that's how they're all brought in together, and there is quite a difference in the numbers that we're dealing with, but it is all Canada census 2024, every individual in that district.

**Ms Day:** Well, 2024 is a lot better than what I thought because I really thought it was 2021. So I'm glad to hear that, but I still think 2024: have we actually even seen the results yet? Yes. Okay.

**The Chair:** By way of clarity, you missed the introductory part of what I presented. The act specifically says that we have to rely on the most recent decennial census of Canada, which, you're right, is 2021. Something I didn't know until I took this job is the Alberta Treasury Board updates that regularly, and Statistics Canada does a much more extensive survey of the population than just the census every five years. So we are using a figure, which is in this slide, 4.888 million, which is the validated figure of the last decennial census plus the information garnered and verified by the Office of Statistics and Information of the Alberta Treasury Board. That's as of July 2024, as Susan said, so that's the population figure we're using.

Now, after we met as a commission and had advice from statisticians and economists, some news reports came out and said that Alberta's population is 5 million. That causes some confusion, but we can't help that. We're relying on the bar that was reached and validated by July of 2024. So that's the number we've got, and that's where she . . .

**Ms Day:** So the act refers to the census, but you are relying on information coming from Alberta Treasury to update that.

**The Chair:** Which is also coming from Statistics Canada.

**Ms Day:** Okay. All right.

**The Chair:** It's a very detailed analysis, so we're satisfied, yes.

**Ms Day:** That's good. That's good. I mean, certainly more current is better, and I would expect you probably get presentations from the AUMA and the city of Calgary that talk about trends. You know, what's clear to me, and having looked at the last report, is that although they were trying to rely on the current data, they were also trying to extrapolate a bit about the way things were going.

**The Chair:** That's easy in some electoral districts or divisions but not necessarily in all of them.

**Ms Day:** Right. Because you don't want to be right just for a moment; you want to be right when, actually, the election takes place.

**The Chair:** So we're on a bit of a timeline. We were appointed in March of this year, and we're stuck with what the legislation says, so we have to take the statistics as they come, and we have to report as required. I don't want to say it's a moving target, but there's some fluidity to it. I hope that answers your question.

**Ms Day:** Yes, it does. That's good. Actually, you know, I think my comment stands; it's just that I'm glad to see that you've already actioned it, actually, because I was thinking that you needed to look at the StatsCan numbers, which were different than they are.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any other questions? Julian?

**Dr. Martin:** Yeah. Thank you. Personally, I don't think lawyers ever really retire. You just give up paying a licence fee.

**Ms Day:** Well, I used to say a recovering lawyer, but then people kept getting the wrong idea.

**Dr. Martin:** I wanted to draw on your legal frame of mind. You've spoken a great deal about voters, which I think all the case law I've looked at dwells upon. In this act we are asked to look at populations, which is a very different pool of persons. So while I fully approve of your analysis of equity for voters and the like, it can't ever be our paramount focus here, annoyingly to my mind, but nonetheless I'm very taken with your thought that communities of interest reasonably today should include demographic features and age cohorts in particular and so on and so forth. How would you ask us to use that data?

**Ms Day:** Well, I think it ties into your obligations to populations, really, because, you know, you have information about the electoral list and you might even be able to extrapolate the age of those people to a particular group, but people have perceptions about what Alberta is like. I think they might think that Edmonton was younger, or Edmonton and Calgary were younger than rural Alberta. It may not be true. I'm not saying it's true. I'm just saying that there are perceptions and certainly concerns expressed that young people have to leave rural Alberta for the big cities or what I call the rural cities, which are the cities in rural areas that are getting bigger themselves, for opportunities.

Those people need an opportunity, and I'm concerned sometimes that those groups may not vote in the same way. I think certainly I've seen data that suggests older people vote and younger people don't with the same frequency. It's, I think to some extent, because of their faith in the system, and we need to augment their faith in the system. It needs to be as important to vote as it is to post some critical comment on social media, needs to be much more important.

**Dr. Martin:** Again, you talk about voters, but we're asked to, you know, turn a blind eye to voters.

**Ms Day:** Well, I think at the end of the day, you may – you know, you could have districts where the population was the same but the number of voters was very small.

**Dr. Martin:** Oh, that would be true.

**Ms Day:** That could be for a number of reasons. It could be because the electoral list was not adequately augmented, or it could be that the population there is younger and they haven't made the list yet, and certainly it's the obligation of an MLA to act in the best interests of all of those people, but they still take their marching orders from the people who vote.

**Dr. Martin:** There's a theory of representation lurking behind here that we have not fully discussed among ourselves, but we have MLAs who are elected by the electors and then are charged with looking after everybody in the population, not just the electors. Fair. But I don't think the case law is helpful, because the case law is all

about voters and equity among them. The challenge we have is about populations.

**Ms Day:** Yes. I think that's true.

**Dr. Martin:** Oh. Okay. Good. I'm not a lawyer, but I was present in reading the law.

**Ms Day:** I think that's true. But I'm not sure we necessarily know enough about populations, you know, other than what we get from the census or Stats Canada or how they vote.

1:50

**Dr. Martin:** Elections Alberta.

**Ms Day:** I mean, I think MLAs certainly need to remember that they represent not just the people who voted for them but all of the people who didn't vote for them . . .

**Dr. Martin:** True.

**Ms Day:** . . . even though they voted.

**Dr. Martin:** Or even those who can't vote.

**Ms Day:** And those who can vote, for sure.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, by the way, for this. I really appreciate you coming. I'm curious. Maybe I'll steal one of Dr. Martin's questions that he likes to ask, and that is that Edmonton-Riverview itself is somewhat below the population, I think by my calculation around 8 and a half or so per cent beneath the average. One of the great challenges we have, of course, is balancing all of that out. Obviously, it straddles the river. That is a little bit unique for Edmonton. There are some on the north and some on the south side. But I guess I'm curious. If you needed to bite off a little chunk here and there and tweak Edmonton-Riverview, which communities sort of belong together? Where are the natural break points? Is it the river, or are there other considerations?

**Ms Day:** I don't think the river is a factor at all as long as there's a road across the river. Having lived on both sides of Edmonton-Riverview – I grew up in Parkallen, then I moved to the west side of the river and lived in Laurier Heights for a long period of time, and now I live in an area which has been moved in and out of Edmonton-Riverview, so I was at one point in Edmonton-McClung, I think it was – it doesn't really make a difference to me.

I think it's clear that sort of the central urban areas will need some tweaking, too, unless the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary actually reach their objective of increasing the density in those places, right? Otherwise, I think they tend to remain fairly stagnant unless there's some significant public policy way to make them more dense. They have intentions, but I don't think it's actually arrived yet. So you might have to tweak the boundaries within the central parts of the city to accommodate the significant growth on the perimeter.

I think people, you know, on the perimeter of the city probably have more in common with the people in the centre than they do with the people in the rural communities 10 miles in the opposite direction. You know, I think they're probably driving downtown for work.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to move on.

**Ms Day:** Yeah, for sure.

**The Chair:** We have other presenters. I have one question for you, a more general question. Part of the task of our commission is to provide names for the electoral divisions. I assume, looking at the map of Riverview, you're completely content with Edmonton-Riverview being named that. Do you have any comments about any other districts of the city?

**Ms Day:** No. Actually, to be honest, I found the focus on naming sort of funny. I mean, I just didn't think it mattered that much to me. It doesn't matter to me what it's called.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms Day:** It matters to me how it works. That's my comment.

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, thank you very much, Ms Day. We appreciate it.

**Ms Day:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Our next presenter is Nam Kular. Mr. Kular, we said that we would restrict presentations to seven minutes. We're a little more flexible given the list today, so don't necessarily feel bound by that. We will have some questions, I'm sure, of your presentation.

**Mr. Kular:** As you can see, I came with a big list. No. Just a little bit of misunderstanding. We thought it was going to be more of a presentation and kind of questions and answers from you guys and kind of give our input versus presenting. But that's okay. I still wanted to come and listen in and put my points across and ask a couple of questions and kind of give you the scenario of where I live and what we think and feel might be of importance to you guys as you draw these boundaries or redraw these boundaries.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Kular:** I've been in Beaumont for about 11 years now. Currently it's the Leduc-Beaumont riding, which is partial – Leduc county is cut off and is part of the other riding. So Leduc county is partial and then the city of Leduc and the city of Beaumont, currently called Leduc-Beaumont riding. I've grown up and I've lived in south Edmonton for 30-plus years, including 10 years in Beaumont.

My point was that living in Beaumont – even though it's grown in population immensely, as you guys probably know and see, it feels like a city. It feels like it could be part of Edmonton. But the reality is that the people of Beaumont, myself, the reason we moved out there was that the people that we're interacting with are not necessarily city people. Not that there's a good thing or a bad thing to the city. But that being considered, the population interactions in Beaumont in and around are more so of rural people and the facilities they use and the work environment and the facilities that are in and around that area.

If we look at, then, the south part, the southeast part of it, particularly in Edmonton, Ellerslie has also grown in population. I mean, there's no comparison, right? It's like, I think, at 85-some thousand, and it should be around the 47,000 or 45,000 or whatever that originally was.

**The Chair:** Can I just interrupt you and ask you a question? Does Leduc-Beaumont border Edmonton-Ellerslie?

**Mr. Kular:** Yes, it does.

**The Chair:** Directly to the south?

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah. Directly to the south.

**The Chair:** Okay. Good.

**Mr. Kular:** And some of the land from the city . . .

**The Chair:** We're going to find that. Mr. Roth is going to find that.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah.

If we look at now the population mix – there's a twofold question. If we look at the population of that particular riding, Edmonton-Ellerslie, which has grown, because it's the southern part and that's where cities grow. Sure, Edmonton-Meadows does have, I think, a 40 per cent immigrant population, but Edmonton-Ellerslie has a 47 per cent population of immigrants. The growth is obviously more because there's land to grow and build on and do that, so a lot of new population is living there, but not necessarily is that population eligible voters. They could have work permits, they could be students, and they could be just permanent residents that are not planning on taking citizenship or are just in the process of it. How do we consider that portion?

The other part of it was that now that if we think Edmonton-Ellerslie has grown and Beaumont's grown, I didn't want Edmonton to be attached with Beaumont just because the population number works out, per se. Beaumont should be separate, maybe with the rural areas and split between, whatever, Leduc county or maybe even some of Devon or some under Sherwood Park would make more sense versus if we said, hey, this 25,000 population of Beaumont, and then we cut a chunk of Ellerslie off at the bottom. They're, you know, attached at the hip in terms of the locality and where the boundaries cut off. I think what we've seen previously is that the polls are different, people are different, the style of work, and the population cohort and how they interact are different. In terms of just including Beaumont with an Edmonton population would be, I think, an unfair riding.

**The Chair:** Obviously, we have to do something with Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah. That's right. A hundred per cent.

**The Chair:** Are you saying: oh, please don't cut Edmonton-Ellerslie two-thirds, one-third, and then throw Beaumont in with the one-third of Edmonton-Ellerslie?

**Mr. Kular:** That's exactly what I'm saying.

**The Chair:** Okay. I think I picked that up. I think that was clear.

**Mr. Kular:** Then the other portion of it was that with the population, I understand, there are eligible voters that are, you know, over the age of 18, citizens versus eligible voters that are nonvoters but they live in Ellerslie, right? Then we have to compensate. We can't put two MLAs in there just because the population is bigger, but maybe we do need two MLAs in there because the population is bigger even though the eligible voters are a smaller portion of that population. Beaumont also now just being on the south side with Leduc and the airport and the Amazon – I don't have the latest numbers on Beaumont. Beaumont does also have an increased immigrant population just because of where we're situated in terms of work and location to the airport and the south side to Edmonton.

**The Chair:** The numbers are up there; I just can't read them. Is it about 46,065? Is that where it is?

**Mr. Kular:** That's right. But what I'm trying to get at is the immigrant population that is not eligible to vote; they're not Canadian citizens.

**The Chair:** That breakdown. Yeah.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah. I think there's been an influx of the immigrant population into the Leduc-Beaumont riding as well.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you for your dialogue presentation, which I forced, I guess.

How have Beaumont and Leduc got along in that constituency for the last two elections? Like, it's two unique, urban . . .

**Mr. Kular:** Very well. We did the presentation to the federal electoral boundaries board as well, the commission. Originally Beaumont was supposed to be, just because of the population size, thrown in with Sherwood Park just because the number of population worked. Say 100,000 was Sherwood Park and then 20,000 for the federal. So we made presentations with the MLA boards, and I was on the board of the chamber of commerce for Beaumont, and we said that Beaumont does not reflect the same population, the same voting as for, you know, on a daily – the core of the population was Sherwood Park. It would rather stay with Acheson, with Leduc, with Nisku, with the rural population.

2:00

So, yeah, it worked well, and we made sure at least we tried, and it worked, but now we are – the federal constituency is Beaumont, Leduc, Wetaskiwin, and further down south with the rural population rather than just making the southeast Ellerslie population with Beaumont or Sherwood Park, because that riding was also quite big. Edmonton-Wetaskiwin had, you know, I think twice the number of population required by the law constitutionally.

They worked well. I think we tracked quite well with the southern rural Leduc, Nisku population than we do with the Edmonton population.

**The Chair:** Great. Thank you. I've been monopolizing the questions here. Are there any questions?

**Mrs. Samson:** No. I'm good, thanks.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Clark:** I'm curious, and thank you very much again. I really very much appreciate your presentation and your perspective. It's obviously a growing area. Where would you say the growth pressures are? Is it more in Leduc, more in Beaumont? I've got a little bit of magic data tools here on my computer. I'm sort of trying to draw little boxes and determine kind of where the people are. Clearly, they seem to be concentrated in Leduc and Beaumont. It's the vast majority of the constituency, but are there areas in Leduc and Beaumont or in between where there are growth pressures?

**Mr. Kular:** Yes. So if you look at – I'm going to point my pointer here. Can you guys see this here?

**Mrs. Samson:** Yeah.

**Mr. Kular:** So this straight down here was part of the annexation lands that the city of Edmonton had taken from, at the top here. So the population core growth is north of Beaumont here because it's closer to Edmonton, and then the population grows to the west of

Beaumont because it's closer to Nisku, and the Leduc population is closer to the airport. And as we come into Leduc, the population growth has been just around the east side of Leduc here, because that's where the land and the services and the schools are here. It's been to about on the west side of Leduc here, just being closer to the airport, the Devon area, the Calmar area, and not so much to the north because it's more industrial with Nisku.

**Mr. Clark:** So if we needed to amend these boundaries, and it looks like we probably do just given how much over the percentage it is, is there a part you feel would naturally make sense in a different constituency and, conversely, a part that's really important to stay together?

**Mr. Kular:** Yes. So if we look at – you know, you could have the Devon area and the rural areas just south of Edmonton here, not to say that riding could be a rectangular piece here with Beaumont all the way to Devon. Then if we look at Beaumont and kind of southeast here, New Sarepta, just north of Wetaskiwin and Millet here, and we could, you know, maybe cut it in between Leduc and Beaumont and have a little bit of that pie shape that's going down to New Sarepta and some of that area along with some of the Leduc county area here that's closer to kind of south of Beaumont, the Vistas and Royal Oaks, that population.

If we look at the population of Leduc county just in these kind of 3, 4 corners, they're using the Beaumont schools. They're using the Beaumont grocery stores. They're using the Beaumont rec centre facility. They're doing their daily business from a perspective of sports, from a perspective of shopping, going to school in Beaumont rather than actually going all the way to Leduc per se. Edmonton-South is too far away from schooling, from facilities such as rec centres or anything like that. If this is portioned here, then you could kind of go down kind of southeast here, or you could go across to Devon and then you'd get some of that Leduc county. Right now, Leduc county is split, I think, into two for sure, maybe even three ridings.

**Mr. Clark:** So you're suggesting perhaps go a little bit more of an east-west orientation than the north-south, and then Leduc and Beaumont being in separate constituencies is . . .

**Mr. Kular:** Yes. It solves your population problem, and it still keeps Beaumont separate, out of the city.

**The Chair:** Off the top of your head, do you know the approximate population of Beaumont, the urban area, and Leduc?

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah. You might have it better, I think, from what I'm sensing. But I think Beaumont's now gone over probably about 25,000 riding now.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Kular:** Just the actual city of Beaumont. And then if we look at the growth that has happened in the Leduc county area just to the west of Beaumont, I would say you're probably – if you included some of the Leduc county to the south in and around Beaumont, you'd be close to 40,000 to 45,000 population.

**Mr. Clark:** Twenty-four thousand, five hundred and ninety-three.

**Mr. Kular:** There you go.

**The Chair:** Pretty good.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** That doesn't even need an approximation.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah, so both the 25,000, and then there's the growth of Leduc county there where the airport in the south part of Edmonton is – that's been increased – and then obviously the south as well.

Leduc, I thought was probably, I want to say close to about 45,000 to 50,000, city alone. Then obviously if you look at some of the growth that's happened in and around the Leduc county, south and north – I said keep it closer to Beaumont, but just the Leduc county around, so not so much growth in the rural, but just the city itself – it could be closer to 50,000, you know, in the next few months if we kind of set that up.

**The Chair:** Julian?

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you very much. I wanted to ask you a different kind of question since you know the district at this granular level. I'm going to pepper you with some questions about it.

**Mr. Kular:** I do real estate by trade.

**Mr. Clark:** Ah, perfect. We need people like you. Tell your friends.

**Dr. Martin:** Well, the first question is – well, really, I'm interested in your sense of residential growth pods. Immediately to the west of the existing city of Beaumont are two sections, right? You mentioned it.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah. West is the Elan area which has grown immensely.

**Dr. Martin:** Here.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah, that's right. So not this quarter section here . . .

**Dr. Martin:** No, the next section.

**Mr. Kular:** This quarter section.

**Dr. Martin:** Yes, that's right.

**Mr. Kular:** That's right. It's grown immensely. They've got a new development going in there. They've got the dog park there. They've got the baseball park there. It's right across from the rec centre, walking distance to the school. New apartment buildings have popped up in Beaumont. It's growing at a significant rate.

**Dr. Martin:** Okay. My next question is about 50th Street.

**Mr. Kular:** Yep.

**Dr. Martin:** You know, obviously a major commuting route. Now, people have been – I don't know if people in the room know, but people from Beaumont have been complaining about 50th Street for 50 years, right, because there's such an increase of the volume of traffic along that roadway. Do you see much growth, much development happening adjacent to that roadway? Okay. So that may be inside the traditional boundaries of the city of Beaumont or maybe north of them, but there's still development occurring all along there. It would seem natural that that would happen.

**Mr. Kular:** That's right. If we look at right where my cursor is within the city, that's the midway point here. That quarter section here on the right of 50th street is the Le Rêve area, which is, again, under development. The next quarter section has already got the NSP plan to the city. East of 50th Street, both of those quarter sections are probably getting developed within the next 5 to 6 years;

one quarter section is already more than halfway developed. If you guys have driven down there, most people will know the Old Yale brewery that will come up there is one of the best in Alberta. It's been busy – go, Oilers, go – and we've been there a few times. That thing has taken off. I think the growth is going to be there.

And then the same thing if we look at 50th Street just south of Edmonton, most of the developments are just going south of 34th and 50th and in between 91st and 50th Street. I don't even take 50th Street anymore if I want to come to Edmonton. I go to 91st Street and go to Anthony Henday because it's a single road. The city of Edmonton has not developed that road wide enough, and they've put intersections on it. It's just chaos.

Beaumont's already developed, I think – yeah. So, Beaumont was up to where my cursor is right now, where it says "Leduc-Beaumont." They had doubled that 50th street, Highway 814 all the way to the edge of the city of Edmonton. The city of Edmonton didn't do anything, and they've now just annexed it. That double part that was done by Beaumont or Leduc county with Alberta Transportation, now half of it is within the city of Edmonton. That growth is exactly happening in and around that 41st Avenue and that south portion of Edmonton, with the dome and then that Orchards area and some of that industrial area coming in there with Amazon.

2:10

**Dr. Martin:** Now, the last time I was in Beaumont, I went west on 510 and then connected with 91st that flows up this way.

**Mr. Kular:** That's right.

**Dr. Martin:** So my general point is that there's an awful lot of commuter traffic in and out of Beaumont, but it doesn't have an industry, so people are commuting to work or to whatever. You know, there's heavy pressure on these particular roadways we've spoken on. Whether you're going to Nisku or to the airport or whether you're circling around one way or another to come back into Edmonton proper, that is characteristic of what people in Beaumont do.

**Mr. Kular:** And that would be ideal, having our own MLA, having our own riding to represent and speak for Beaumont. Getting us 510 widened; 625, getting that widened; 50th Street, attaching to Edmonton, getting that widened would immensely help the Beaumont community grow and then keep growing at the rate and be safe, not be stuck on, you know, single-use lanes that do not have high lighting or do not have, you know, turning lights.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Better let you go, Mr. Kular, but let me just throw one scenario out, if you can just answer yes or no. I know that in 2017, I'm quite certain, the commission governed for Edmonton-South and Edmonton-South West for future growth.

**Mr. Kular:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** I take it you are suggesting that we couldn't go wrong if we govern Beaumont for future growth.

**Mr. Kular:** That's right.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Kular:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Ms Gray.

**Ms Gray:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Oh, welcome. Welcome. Please come forward and have a seat.

**Ms Gray:** I thought I was coming early to watch others, but this is great.

**The Chair:** We have a challenge in terms of scheduling and time here. We have been allowing more than seven minutes, so you can be a little more – you can be relaxed that we're not going to cut you off in seven minutes.

**Ms Gray:** Got it.

**The Chair:** Welcome.

**Ms Gray:** Hi, everyone. I'm Christina Gray. I am the MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods, and I have been a Mill Woods resident for 22 years. Back in 2003 I bought my first home in Mill Woods, got involved with the local community there, my community league, the Edmonton transit advisory board, started volunteering, and that kind of set me on a path to getting involved politically. Now I've represented the area for a decade. I just had the anniversary, which was amazing. I am coming to share a few of my opinions about electoral boundaries, but more importantly, I am hoping to just help the boundary commission understand: what is Mill Woods?

I did send a PowerPoint. I'm wondering if that's possible. Thank you very much.

Mill Woods is a very unique area because it was created in the '70s to deal with housing affordability issues created by one of the largest land assemblies or land bank projects, working with the city, the province, and the federal government to acquire nine square miles to plan and develop this community. Some people refer to it almost like a town planning process that happened.

In the 2017 boundary commission hearing one of the planners, Mr. Sarty, came and gave a presentation. I called him. I said: oh, do you want to come talk again? He's in his 80s now. He said: I'm not feeling up to it.

The thing I want you to understand about Mill Woods is that in the '70s it was created with a development concept to create a socially planned community that was inclusive for all, that focused on neighbourhoods and green spaces, and was deliberately designed with curvilinear roads, so getting lost in Mill Woods was a planned thing, if you've ever heard someone talk about that, to try and build more of that town concept.

There are nine communities built around Mill Woods Town Centre, a big mall. The Grey Nuns hospital is in the centre. It had a lot of visions for planning in a way that would allow for some high-density development, if necessary, but also just a real community itself. The other thing that makes Mill Woods very unique is that every single neighbourhood has affordable housing built into it. I actually have one of the highest number of Civiida housing units of any representative, and that's because when Mill Woods was created in the '70s, they deliberately wanted to have that density and different economic residents.

This map that I'm showing you is – think of it as just a point in time. I come from a programming software background. I've forgotten most of it now that I've been a politician for 10 years, but I found this data visualization. It's based off Edmonton's 2017 property assessment, so it's not only out of date as far as what property assessments would be, but you'll see that Meadows and Ellerslie are not built up because in 2017 that hadn't fully started. What it does show you is that Mill Woods is separate from the city of Edmonton by two big tracts of industrial space. Between the

north and the west these industrial districts – I'm just going to get this slide. Not only that, but even just looking at the property assessment value, you can see that the Mill Woods pieces are priced differently than the other homes to the west, which is Rutherford, or even to the north, which is getting into more of the kind of Strathcona areas.

The communities here are built around various neighbourhoods that are part of a community league system. I'm going to bounce back and forth between these two slides very briefly. We've got the nine community leagues based around the Grey Nuns hospital and the Mill Woods Town Centre. Each community league is made up of two or three neighbourhoods. The community league system in Mill Woods in particular is incredibly strong. Each has a hall. Each has pairings with sports groups and schools. Some of them have daycares within their halls. All of the presidents of the community leagues in Mill Woods get together in something called the Mill Woods Presidents' Council, and they support each other. A lot of residents in Mill Woods know which community league they are a part of, and that is a foundation of some of the Mill Woods pieces that we have and people's identity as a Mill Woods resident.

The current riding of Mill Woods encompasses all of the community leagues along the west side of Mill Woods, along the middle of Mill Woods, and one of three neighbourhoods that are part of the Ridgewood community. Just further south here is a community that is technically part of Mill Woods – it's considered Southwood – but it's cut up right now. Part of it is in Ellerslie, and part of it is Meadows. My first recommendation to you is that as you are considering what you're going to be doing around that Mill Woods area, I'd like you to understand that it is its own distinct community of interest and also where the community league boundaries are. I would recommend to you that an MLA should represent all the neighbourhoods of a community league. If that can be done within the numbers, that might make sense.

The second thing I wanted to talk about was that the estimates for population change that have been published on your site show that Mill Woods is 7 per cent over the average. Now, when the 2017 commission made their recommendation, they put Mill Woods at 7 per cent over because it wasn't expected to have as much growth as other areas. The number of 58,000 surprises me because that's higher than I would expect. Now, there is a bit of a – there's a housing crisis. There have been a few small developments that have gone in. Since the 2017 boundary commission there's a new Sakaw Terrace housing, with 150 suites, that was created. There was one first place program where surplus school sites originally designed for schools has now got some housing on it, and that has about 100 units of housing.

2:20

Mill Woods was fully built from the '70s through to the '90s, and there are no new neighbourhoods that are coming on in the last – like, we're hitting our 50-year anniversary of the start of the Mill Woods development concept, which was originally signed in March 1971. So 8,000 new people within the existing boundaries doesn't feel quite right to me, but I don't know how that number was reached, and it could be fully accurate. We're not seeing a lot of infill housing yet. It's just starting to trickle in but not in the same way that you see in more centrally located ridings. I'm just flagging that I'm curious about how that number was reached and what that might look like.

That being said, the Mill Woods Town Centre has been purchased by Maclab Development with plans to build more high-density housing there, starting with the first phase of a pair of 22-storey rental apartment towers with a total of about 550 units. That's something that as a boundary commission you might not be aware

of, but right in the centre of Mill Woods Town Centre they're going to start building some more housing. We've now got an LRT that comes to Mill Woods Town Centre, so it's a really exciting idea and part of what Mill Woods was originally developed and designed for. It's kind of now 50 years later that that's coming to fruition. We do not have a timeline on that project, so I'm more just flagging it, that we know there's going to be a little bit of growth there in the centre.

I'm just looking at my notes as to what other things I wanted to flag or say other than, again, when you're looking at decisions about Mill Woods, I hope you consider the community leagues. I hope you recognize that it is significantly different. The one thing I'll point out is that one of the community leagues of Mill Woods, Jackson Heights, is on the north side of the Mill Creek ravine. Right now that piece is currently grouped with Meadows, and I would suggest that that works fairly well, both because of the ravine but also because you'll note that the houses there, the property value, some of them are that dark red. They're a little bit more expensive and fit more with the Meadows concept.

I am happy to take questions as to how I can help.

**The Chair:** So you don't want that back, then.

**Ms Gray:** Well, I don't know if all nine square miles of Mill Woods could fit into one riding and the numbers would work. I think that may still be too many people, so my potential suggestion would be to consider including the other two neighbourhoods of Ridgewood that are not currently part of my Mill Woods, so that would be the neighbourhoods of Minchau and Bisset potentially, or Southwood, which is Daly Grove, Crawford Plains, and Pollard Meadows. That section potentially makes more sense.

One of the reasons why I'm emphasizing this is because the federal boundary commission just finished their work. I will be honest; I was involved with the Legislature and I didn't tune in to that process at all until I saw that they had cut Mill Woods in half. Now federally there is an Edmonton Gateway, which is the old part of Mill Woods plus the neighbourhoods that are in Rutherford on the other side of Calgary Trail, and then the new part of Mill Woods got grouped with Meadows. Not only was I surprised and disappointed to see that because I think it's going to cause a lot of confusion, but a lot of the community league presidents and volunteers I talked to were not happy about that. I'm hoping we don't see that kind of popping up Mill Woods in a way and grouping us with other communities that might happen.

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, thank you very much, Ms Gray.

I know very little of Edmonton except I do know Mill Woods a little bit because my wife's parents lived there, so as you described this, you know, you brought back late '70s, early '80s business for me. I have some more questions; that was just a useless comment. Sorry.

**Ms Gray:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Susan, any questions?

**Mrs. Samson:** I was just going to comment because I know it's a concern of yours. You said that you're not sure where the population number of 58,725 came from. That came from the Canada census, and unfortunately that's the number we have to work with. I get that you wonder where those 8,500 people came from, but that's what we're going to work with.

**Ms Gray:** Understood. Fair enough.

Can I just probe that? You mentioned the word “census,” and my understanding was that the last census was done in 2021. For this 2024 number do you know what goes into that?

**The Chair:** Yeah. You know what? I’ve explained this a few times. I’ll let somebody else.

**Ms Gray:** Honestly, if you trust the number, then I’m fine. We don’t need to argue about it.

**The Chair:** I have a three-page analysis from a statistician.

**Ms Gray:** Well, maybe there are more basement suites than I realize.

**The Chair:** I’ll let somebody else explain that.

**Dr. Martin:** We all puzzled over how a census arrives at numbers. Let me begin by shocking you. There is no empirical census. Those two words don’t go together. A census is an amalgam of high-probability estimates of various strands of expected population growth. For example, it is considered legitimate to add up and project thereupon new Alberta health card applications. I mean, it’s obscure, but nevertheless it’s not unreasonable to see that as an indicator. But they’re all partial rather than absolute. A census is never empirical. People move; they die; they are citizens; they’re not citizens. It’s very fluid. As soon as a federal census is done, the demographers set around and within six weeks sometimes are issuing a correction. So it’s an ongoing feast.

**Ms Gray:** Okay.

**Dr. Martin:** The numbers that we have chosen and agreed will be our base numbers, our stable numbers, this patchwork quilt of estimates that’s been tested repeatedly: we’re going with July 1, 2024. It’s not bleeding edge because that could be highly volatile, so July 1, 2024, is what we have agreed will be our number.

**The Chair:** And that number is 4.888 million overall, and I have a slide for that.

**Ms Gray:** All good. All good.

I do see huge amounts of growth in the south when I visit the gurdwara, the mandir, the mosques, or even our churches, like, the number of new people. Mill Woods is a bit of a community hub. Lots of people come to Mill Woods for cultural events or for faith. So I would certainly argue that, I think, of the two new seats Edmonton south – that absolutely makes sense that there needs to be another seat around there.

**Dr. Martin:** I have another question again. In your presentation and characterization, particularly when you’re speaking of community leagues and what a cultural magnet those have become, you want to exclude Jackson Heights and Kiniski although, as I under it, they are some of the old original communities as well, are they not?

**Ms Gray:** In fact, the way Mill Woods was built, that is the last part that was built, and it was built more in the late ’80s and ’90s. Mill Woods started building over in the top left corner – actually, can I stand up and just point this out?

**Dr. Martin:** Please.

**Ms Gray:** Awesome. Thank you. Fun fact: if you’re paying close attention, there’s one house right there that is literally beside the Pakistan Canada Association hall and the mandir over here and is a residence of Mill Woods but stands off to the side.

When Mill Woods started getting built, this is the very first community, and then it kind of started to fill in this way down through the middle and then building more this way, with Jackson Heights and these pieces being the last that were built in these communities. Ideally, I think, people who live all over here but also all over here all say they live in Mill Woods. Like, they think they’re in Mill Woods even though they may be in Meadows or somewhere else because Edmonton southeast is just considered Mill Woods. But the literal Mill Woods is that grid of the nine community leagues, and if that could be the provincial riding, I think that would make sense. It would match exactly what people expect. I just think it’s too many people, and so then decisions just have to be made. Because of the ravine and because it has historically been paired with the Meadows side, I have suggested that, but if it could be included, I could understand that as well. Yeah. Thanks for letting me point that out.

2:30

**The Chair:** Any other questions?

**Mr. Clark:** No, just, I guess your numbers are – yeah. You’re a little above average, 58,725 on the 55,000 or so, so almost 7 per cent over, but in terms of, to borrow a phrase from a famous Edmontonian, skating to where the puck is going to be, would you suggest that what is currently Edmonton-Mill Woods, if for some reason we were just able to keep the boundaries exactly as they are, do you feel like the growth in the rest of not just Edmonton but really kind of the province, would that number as a percentage – very tough to know. I mean, a lot is going to happen. Populations grow and shrink all the time, especially in Alberta, but do you feel that the rate of growth in Edmonton-Mill Woods, the constituency, is more average or below average to the rest of the province?

**Ms Gray:** Well, using the numbers that the boundary commission has, it seems to be exactly average, because in 2017, in the final report, Mill Woods was considered 7 per cent over, and today Mill Woods is considered 7 per cent over, so that trend seems to be bang on, with the one caveat being that we know of the Mill Woods-Town Centre development that may be happening, but it’s not approved yet. There’s no construction. The timing on those major projects shift. We have tariffs. I don’t know what’s going to happen there. But yeah, thank you for that question. I appreciate that. I think that the work you’re doing is really cool. I hope someday in the future I might get to sit on a boundary commission. Greg, you give me hope that a former MLA could be a member.

**The Chair:** There’s life after.

**Mr. Clark:** They don’t just float you out on an iceberg.

**Dr. Martin:** Well, as you can see, much of our current work is made easier than previous commissions by virtue of there being interactive GIS programs, but it does become a bit obsessive, so you have to watch out for that if you ever join this commission.

**Ms Gray:** Fair.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you so much, Ms Gray for your very balanced and entertaining presentation. I love the assessment.

**Ms Gray:** If you go to the website that does this, even if you just Google “Edmonton 2017 property assessment visualization,” you can zoom in and out. You can see other parts, so other areas of neighbourhoods you might be interested in seeing different pieces of.

Thank you for your time.



**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Other presenters: Mr. Roth, could you . . .

**Mr. Roth:** Terry Howlett.

**The Chair:** Oh, okay.

**Mr. Howlett:** Good afternoon.

**The Chair:** Mr. Howlett, you were probably told that you have seven minutes, but we're a little bit more flexible this afternoon.

**Mr. Howlett:** I don't think it'll take seven minutes.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Howlett:** I'm not a politician, just a farmer and a rancher that lives on the edge of the city.

So straight to the point, I'm here about the boundaries for Edmonton-West Henday. As I was going over the boundaries, a question came up, and I realize you folks can't answer it, but why is Calder, Wellington, and Athlone part of the West Henday constituency? In the map, if you look at it, it's way up in the north corner. I'll preamble here. If you let me preamble for a couple minutes, I'll explain my position why it shouldn't be part of . . .

**The Chair:** Can you just repeat those communities again, sir?

**Mr. Howlett:** Sure. That's Calder, Wellington, and Athlone. If you're familiar with where the Calder train yards are, it's in that area.

So my name is Terry Howitt. I serve on the board of the Summerlea Community League in west Edmonton. Over the last decade I've had the opportunity to work with various community leagues in the region while meeting with the city of Edmonton over certain issues. I've worked with communities such as Belmead, Terra Rosa, La Perle, and Lymburn, all part of Edmonton-West Henday. It's been a positive experience.

In the past I and other community league members have presented our positions to the city of Edmonton regarding the Valley Line west LRT, feeder roads to the West Henday freeway, public transit routes and transit centres in west Edmonton, and the use of recreation facilities in the area. In my opinion, we've made a positive difference.

I'd also like to mention that these communities share many of the same public facilities in west Edmonton, such as the westend seniors centre in Terra Rosa, the Belmead community centre, Callingwood library, and of course the Callingwood Recreation Centre.

Of course, I just want to mention that many of our community members in West Henday share the same roads. We're stuck on Winterburn Road for 20, 30 minutes going to work and coming home. We're stuck on 87th Avenue trying to get on the West Henday freeway. We share the same rec centres. We watch our children play soccer in our parks. We shop at the same grocery stores. We have all these commonalities, and we basically have the same goals. We want west Edmonton to thrive and be a great community to live in.

What I've learned is that when various community leagues collaborate, it can result in better ideas, better relationships, and we even might have positive outcomes with the city of Edmonton, and it's only my opinion that in the next few years the communities in west Edmonton are going to need to work together even more. We need to interact with the city and hold the city accountable. Transportation issues, new transit centres and transit routes, and we have a serious shortage of schools and school space in Edmonton-

West Henday, and the location of low-cost and affordable housing are some of the major issues facing west Edmonton. Of course, when you talk with the city of Edmonton, the issue always comes up of funding from the provincial government, so we need to collaborate.

What does this have to do with boundaries? As we examine the Edmonton-West Henday and the constituency map, you'll notice, as I pointed out, that Calder, Wellington, and Athlone are situated in the far northeast corner of Edmonton-West Henday, far away from the major communities in Edmonton-West Henday. Most of them are located in the southwest region. Calder, Athlone, and Wellington are separated from the west of the constituency by a huge swath of industrial areas. It's kind of cut off by the Yellowhead freeway and partially cut off by the CN train yards. When you get on the map, you can see where the trains are. They're right in the top corner.

I believe that the communities of Wellington, Athlone, and Calder, their needs are different compared to other communities in Edmonton-West Henday, and they would be better served in the constituency of Edmonton-North West. If the communities of Wellington, Athlone, and Calder were to become part of Edmonton-North West, approximately 9,700 people would become constituents of Edmonton-North West. I use that 2021 figure. I'm sorry; I'm not a politician. I'm not really up to date. In return, to balance it, I suggest that Summerlea community, which is roughly 2,200 residents from the Edmonton-McClung constituency, and Glastonbury, approximately 6,900 residents from Edmonton-South West, to join the Edmonton-West Henday constituency. That's a total of 9,085. So pretty close numbers.

2:40

I also want to state that Edmonton-West Henday is growing. I couldn't really find any solid facts on how much of the areas of Trumpeter, Hawks Ridge, Suder Greens, Rosenthal, Starling are growing. But when you drive by there, it's quite evident that there's a lot of construction, and it's a growing population.

In conclusion, I feel that the MLA for Edmonton-West Henday would be better able to represent the ideas and concerns of their constituents if all the communities in the Edmonton-West Henday constituency are located in the same general region. Unfortunately, Wellington, Athlone, and Calder communities are geographically separated from the other Edmonton-West Henday communities. Secondly, they do not share a lot of the same concerns we have in the southwest. Examples of Edmonton-West Henday concerns are feeder roads such as 87th Avenue going on to the western portion of the West Henday; the extension of the Whitemud freeway, which is highway 60, otherwise known as the Devon highway. We need to rebuild the Winterburn-Stony Plain road overpass due to high volumes. A lot of our residents are sitting there for 30 to 45 minutes going to work, going back home.

Schools are a major, major problem. When I would talk and work with these other community leagues – we need a high school really bad; we need a junior high. We also have a shortage of classroom spaces.

There's going to be a lot of talk about a location for low-cost, affordable housing that we need an MLA to work with us and with the city of Edmonton, and there's always talk about health care, a hospital somewhere located in southwest Edmonton.

I don't want to take up any more of your time. Thank you for listening to me. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you very much.

Go ahead, Greg.

**Mr. Clark:** Yeah. Thank you. That was a really interesting presentation. It's two things. I was able to do a little bit of data magic with the tools they give us. The three communities that you've identified, as far as I can tell, are about 11,800.

**Mr. Howlett:** Yes, that's about right. That's the first mistake I've made all year.

**Mr. Clark:** You're allowed one. No.

What's interesting is that your population is about 15 and a half per cent over 63,000. So that would take it down to 52,000. It's a little below average, but, you know, with a little bit of tweaking, I mean, that could work, especially if there's growth happening. What I am, though, curious about is – we talked about keeping this within the four walls of Edmonton. We haven't really talked about the areas due west. We've heard some submissions that it may make some sense to combine some of the areas west towards Acheson and Spruce Grove perhaps and have perhaps Spruce Grove and then kind of bite a piece out of west Edmonton, Edmonton-West Henday, in particular. What are your thoughts on that? Do you feel there's enough commonality in terms of the communities, or are they different places?

**Mr. Howlett:** Five or six years ago I would have said that, yes, there's a big commonality. Now, in the particular region of southwest we've had a lot of immigration from other provinces, and we've had a lot of new Canadians – good thing – but a little different from Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, or Acheson. I farm out that way. There would be some differences, but it would be workable, I think.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you very much. I'm very interested in the thing that you pointed out right away. There's the vast light industrial and commercial landscape that divides the current two pods, as it were, of your riding. You know, everything to the east of St. Albert Trail you suggest potentially could be absorbed into one of the other ridings. They're kind of full up. Edmonton-Glenora is a little light, but that would mean going across the Yellowhead. I mean, we're boxed in and perplexed no matter how we do it.

**Mr. Howlett:** I wouldn't want your job. But just this morning I used Google Maps just to see how long it would take to get from Terra Rosa, which is probably close to where Stony Plain Road is and 170th Street . . .

**Dr. Martin:** Just north of the mall.

**Mr. Howlett:** Yeah, it's north of the mall.

It came up as a 22-minute drive. Yeah. So there are some problems.

**Dr. Martin:** Now, I wondered if I might just supplement by looking at one of the other nodes at the south area, which is immediately adjacent to the north of the mall in the current configuration. Do you see this area between 178th and the Henday as a coherent neighbourhood?

**Mr. Howlett:** Yes. That's Summerlea.

**Dr. Martin:** Okay. Yeah.

And immediately south of there, which is currently in Edmonton-McClung, do you see that as part of the same coherent neighbourhood?

**Mr. Howlett:** Yeah.

**Dr. Martin:** So the boundaries that were drawn last time were a little bit disparate.

**Mr. Howlett:** I can't comment on that. I'm just an old cowboy.

**Dr. Martin:** Okay. Oh, they say that.

But in this configuration the old Misericordia hospital is included in Edmonton-McClung, which seems an awful long way. The future of that site is to rebuild a new hospital, I believe.

**Mr. Howlett:** Yeah, that's right.

**Dr. Martin:** So you're saying that you really need to see the growth of high schools and hospitals and/or medical clinics in this area, correct?

**Mr. Howlett:** Well, when it comes to the hospital, that doesn't have to be in Edmonton-West Henday, but somewhere . . .

**Mrs. Samson:** In the west.

**Mr. Howlett:** In the west. Yeah.

**Dr. Martin:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Sue?

**Mrs. Samson:** No. I'm good. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Howlett, you touched briefly on or just passingly you said something about future growth. It looks like in the last eight years there's been significant growth, 20,000 more.

**Mr. Howlett:** Yes, sir.

**The Chair:** If you had to compare Edmonton-North West and Edmonton-West Henday, which has more potential for growth? Edmonton-North West or Edmonton-West Henday?

**Mr. Howlett:** I would say, oh, definitely Edmonton-West Henday.

**The Chair:** Okay.

And would your Edmonton-North West neighbours agree with you?

**Mr. Howlett:** I think so. I think that's pretty well a fact that – I haven't looked at the population, but it's pretty stagnant. It's an older area. The houses were built probably in the 1960s, late '50s.

**The Chair:** And there's not as much land either.

**Mr. Howlett:** It's pretty well developed.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Okay. Well, thank you very much for an excellent presentation.

By the way, the diversity of presentations today for a non-Edmontonian has been fantastic. I commend each of the presenters, so thank you very much.

**Mr. Howlett:** Well, thank you very much. I've never done this before, and you guys have made it enjoyable. Thanks again.

**Mrs. Samson:** Thank you.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I guess we've passed our break time. I was giving everybody so much time, and we're 30, almost 40, minutes over break time. We'll take a 10-minute break and reconvene just after 3 o'clock.

[The hearing adjourned from 2:49 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.]

**Mrs. Samson:** Justice, who do we have left?

**The Chair:** We have two more presenters that we are aware of.

Can I have Roxanne Carr come forward, please. Please come forward. We're scheduling you just a bit earlier than what we had at 3:20. Just have a seat. Okay. As I've said before, we have probably told you that you have a limit of seven minutes, but we're a little bit more flexible this afternoon because our schedule isn't as full, so we can probably go over the seven-minute time period. Okay. Please proceed.

**Ms Carr:** Good afternoon, members of the commission. My name is Roxanne Carr. I live in the constituency of Sherwood Park, and that is electoral division 81. Thank you for including me in this hearing to share my views. My background and involvement has been in community building and includes the positions of the director of the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies. I was an economic development officer for Lamont county and a councillor and former mayor of Strathcona county. I was also honoured to be the chair of the first growth plan of the capital region board and served two terms on the Alberta Land and Property Rights Tribunal.

These experiences in and with different communities have led me to see the positive impact when a population identifies itself as a distinct group with common needs, challenges, and opportunities. From that, a municipality can build a specific economic and tourism framework, infrastructure, cultural and health services that will provide the greatest safety and well-being to its residents. When our ridings reflect our common interests and values and when our ridings mirror our uniqueness as an area and a population, then I believe our elected official, our MLA, will be better positioned to most effectively represent our area in the Legislature, ultimately building a better province.

The constituency of Sherwood Park is just such a well-defined entity. It is the largest hamlet in a specialized municipality with a common history, geography, culture, and economy. Sherwood Park was born on Treaty Six land. European settlers developed an urban core in the 1950s. The hamlet offered a uniform base of services, adding infrastructure, roads, parks, schools, homes, businesses, broadening its economy to include its first oil refinery in 1975. Its agriculture base and growing oil industry created a strong and vibrant economy while now our business chamber boasts more than a thousand members. We are a diverse and forward-thinking community that was shortlisted, in fact, for the Governor General's award for excellence in community programming in 2023.

Sherwood Park is known as an urban centre that plans for and provides economic, cultural, recreation, and health services that serve its own population while having the capacity to serve surrounding areas. Our municipal council plans for future growth by building roads and other infrastructure to a high level, a high provincial standard like our multitude of baseball diamonds, which cater to our growing youth and population. You may have been out there this weekend when we actually hosted teams from across western Canada as well.

Our transit system is uniquely suited to Sherwood Park, with its on-demand bus and its express system into Edmonton. Our highways and roads provide rapid and clear boundaries for our electoral division. Sherwood Park has a single communication system, a common system for emergency alerts.

Our MLAs have been able to communicate the challenges and opportunities of our ridings to the province, resulting in the building of a hospital in Sherwood Park in 2014. Currently Sherwood Care, which is one of Alberta's top senior care organizations, is building Sherwood Park's first dedicated palliative care unit. Our strong base of health care services supports the rest of Strathcona county as well as the broader northeastern region.

Yes, our municipality is a desirable place to live. Positive relationships between our municipal and our provincial representatives are a significant key to our success, and this requires clear communication through our MLAs to our provincial government. Because we have such a unique history, topography, and culture and because we are a focused population with common values, it is easier for our MLA to work on our behalf and to represent us effectively in the Legislature.

In summary, given the unique attributes of this constituency and the current effective operation of Sherwood Park as a cohesive riding I hope that the commission agrees with our residents that it is in the best interest of the election process and provincial governance to keep Sherwood Park riding boundaries unchanged.

With that, I thank you for your time and would be pleased to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you, Ms Carr.

Can we get the electoral division map up, please?

In the meantime, as we get that up, our commission will start with questions, Ms Carr.

**Mrs. Samson:** I was looking at the population of Sherwood Park that we're working with, and census Canada says that we're working with 50,493, so 50,500, which shows an increase of 5,000 people – let me just confirm that number – 4,000 people since 2016-2017. You're within the guidelines, under what we're looking at, of the baseline of 55,000 per electoral district. Do you see the growth in Sherwood Park? Where is it occurring?

**Ms Carr:** Yeah. The question is very interesting to me, and it challenges me. I mentioned I was on council and the mayor, but I was the mayor of the entire municipality, which is Strathcona county. Now, we have 100,000 people in Strathcona county, and we have two divisions representing that entire municipality.

Yes. Sherwood Park, as you see, the 81 division goes out east as far as a little beyond Clover Bar Road, but it looks like not – oh. Yes, to highway 21. If we need to expand that boundary, the very best thing to do, in my opinion and experience, would be to push it further east and take on more east and north actually, because if you push it east and north, you're going to get towards Bremner and north you'll be getting into Cambrian. These are the largest growth areas that we have. They have been planned by council, in my time actually. That would give us more population that would suit your vision, I believe.

In fact, if we get creative and inventive, we could look at going to the industrial area because we take in – we go around Fort Saskatchewan, and to the north is more industrial area, which our taxpayers' money goes into in the roads and such. So if there would be a way to go around Fort Saskatchewan and north, fine, but if that causes moving of too many division boundaries, then I really suggest that we look at going east and north, that way, without going kind of west-north.

3:20

**Mrs. Samson:** Right. Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'm interested in the current boundaries. If they were kept the same, what is the potential for growth within the current

boundaries based on your experience in those communities? Like, are there large developments online?

**Ms Carr:** Depending upon your definition of large development. If you look at Emerald Drive, Lakeland Drive area, then in that northeastern region – actually, isn't Cambrian already – it's south of the CPR. Could you check that, the Cambrian development? It doesn't have it on this map. Yes, it is. It's exactly west of highway 21. I don't have the exact numbers that Cambrian expects, but it is in the order of several thousand.

**Dr. Martin:** Okay. I live in Sherwood Park. I'm near Clover Bar Road, so I'm sensitive to everything you're speaking of. You're quite right. If you go to 21 and the Yellowhead, there is development, already got Tyvek on the buildings, going on up there. There's also the pod on Lakeland Drive, immediately north of it, and east of the community hospital and so on up there at the top. So Emerald Drive – this whole pod is available for development it seems to me.

**Ms Carr:** Yes. There are a lot of apartment buildings in the exact area, a new seniors residence up there as well. There is a lot of potential for growth there. As I noted, Sherwood Park, the council, is very forward looking, and they're zoning changes. We have added in the last year multilevel buildings.

**Dr. Martin:** I have two more points if I might. One is about Bremner. I spoke to one of the county councillors who looks after that, I guess, zone 1 or something, where Bremner is. It's immediately north of the Yellowhead, for those who don't live in the mighty hamlet. If they open ground this summer, as I understand that they are likely to do, some component of it – it may take 20, 30 years – it would be the next commission that would have to deal with the puzzle that development presents to us. What I would be very curious to hear your thoughts as the former mayor of the county is about immediately south of the hamlet, just south of Wye. There's a fair bit of apartment and condo development in there now. Do you recall when that was planned for, at the corner of Wye and Clover Bar Road, down to there, just north of the Catholic school?

**Ms Carr:** Yes. That building started fairly recently, in the last decade. Is that the area you're talking about?

**Dr. Martin:** Yeah, I guess so.

**Ms Carr:** I think it is.

**Dr. Martin:** It's just very kind of ragged edge to the hamlet . . .

**Ms Carr:** Yes, it is.

**Dr. Martin:** . . . at the south end, and the last part of it is sort of a mysterious and ambiguous dotted pod. But as I understand it, when I drive down through there, it's getting built out fast.

**Ms Carr:** It is getting built out, but there are limits to it. I would prefer that administration and the technical people give you the exact zoning, but they're very sensitive to the perimeter of Beaver Hills.

**Dr. Martin:** Right.

**Ms Carr:** And that will come up in that area. I just can't picture it in my mind. It would be good to look at the perimeter of Beaver Hills.

**Dr. Martin:** Both you and I could sit in a corner and gossip about little bits of our territory, but for the present purpose you would agree that there are sufficient known building zones within the current hamlet boundaries?

**Ms Carr:** I would agree that this commission I don't expect will have to deal with an overrapid growth of population in this division.

**Dr. Martin:** Thank you.

**Mr. Clark:** That's a fabulous segue. First off, a technical question. Again, thank you very much for being here. This is really, really interesting stuff. The Strathcona-Sherwood Park constituency: does that trace the boundaries of Strathcona county? Is it that the entire county is within . . .

**Ms Carr:** Are you talking about division 81?

**Mr. Clark:** Strathcona-Sherwood Park. Sorry.

**Ms Carr:** So 81 and 84? You're talking about those two?

**Mr. Clark:** Yeah. Put those two together. Is that the entire area of the municipality?

**Ms Carr:** No. If you look at 84 and look at highway 16, it seems to be the northern border on mine. Is that right, that highway 16 is the northern border of 84?

**Dr. Martin:** That's correct.

**Ms Carr:** Okay. That doesn't show enough, doesn't show all of our Industrial Heartland.

**Mr. Clark:** Right.

What I'm curious about – when I look at the population, you're right. The population by my numbers is almost exactly 100,000 between the two, but the growth trend has been less than the provincial average growth trend. When these constituencies were first established, they were both almost exactly the average of the Alberta constituencies, and since then they're both just a little bit under. Let me just get my actual numbers here. Strathcona-Sherwood Park is now 7 per cent under and Sherwood Park is 8 per cent under, so the two of them are each below the average. If we needed to find a little more population to add into one or both, where should we look for that?

**Ms Carr:** You should consider – I know you're saying what the growth rate is, but I think sitting down with Strathcona county economic development department would illustrate that their plans for growth are going to take up that room that you need. I don't think these boundaries should or could be . . .

**The Chair:** So you're saying: don't change the boundaries; think of the future. Let the future fill it up. Is that right?

**Ms Carr:** I don't think you're going to have that problem until the future, but if you change the boundaries, what I am asking is that you just bring into the boundaries more of Strathcona county proper and that you not go down to Beaumont, that you not go and take up or expand into Fort Saskatchewan or take in other municipalities.

My whole experience has been that the planning has been so good in this particular municipality that the ratepayers, the taxpayers, are actually building things within their own community that add to the homogeneous aspect and outlook of them. Am I making myself . . .

**Mr. Clark:** I hear you. I'm sorry; I'm a mere Calgarian, so I'm afraid I don't understand all this, which is fantastic.

I've just gone to our magic friend Google. Strathcona county itself is actually quite a bit larger than I realized. It goes all the way up to Bruderheim, all the way down to almost Beaumont but not quite. Okay.

**Ms Carr:** Yeah. So if you took some of that territory and put it into either one or both of these divisions . . .

**The Chair:** You'd be content with that.

**Mr. Clark:** So as long as whatever we do would still be Strathcona county: that's the sort of core criteria. That's what I need to understand.

**Ms Carr:** Yeah. Because that gets municipal dollars working within their own area.

**Mr. Clark:** If you don't mind, just one. What if we were to reach west into the city of Edmonton itself and blend between either one of those constituencies and part of Edmonton?  
What do you think of that idea, or are they different places?

3:30

**Ms Carr:** I think the history of this is that – was it part of Mill Woods that was actually part of this division 81 in the past and then it was moved? Am I right there? I thought Edmonton was pre-1990 even.

**The Chair:** Are you thinking provincial or federal?

**Ms Carr:** Maybe I'm mixing it up.

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Ms Carr:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Yeah. I couldn't perceive Mill Woods being part of . . .

**Ms Carr:** No. That's right. That's federal. And I don't think, if you asked the average Sherwood Park resident, Strathcona county resident, that is a good thing or a positive thing at all. Strathcona county: their vision, their attitude, their awareness, their whole vision is urban-rural. If you add a very urban area, a densely populated area, you're mixing messages to that municipality, and your MLA is going to have more challenges and more different, very different history, culture, topography even.

Most of Strathcona county is knob and kettle terrain; hence the bioreserve that we have, Beaver Hills, made sense to them, and they put their thoughts, their planning, and their money into things that make sense to them. If you base it on a municipal boundary where possible, and that's not – if you go into Edmonton, obviously that's a different municipality – then you're asking the councillors on the Edmonton city council to think outside their box, and our councillors in our urban-rural municipality are now going to have to think outside their box. I say that is a serious and negative mixed message to the MLA, which he then has to take through to the Legislature.

Darn good question, Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, thank you very much, Ms Carr, for your presentation, for your most winsome and coherent presentation. You're excused, but please stay in the gallery if you can to hear, I

think, one more presentation.

Mr. Neil Singh.

**The Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Singh:** Yes. I live in the Leader of the Opposition's riding in Edmonton-Mill Woods, and I totally agree with what she said, but my presentation is not really about any single riding, but it's about some of the names of the ridings in Edmonton.

**The Chair:** Okay. Good.

**Mr. Clark:** This is helpful.

**The Chair:** This is the part of our job we keep forgetting.

**Mr. Singh:** I find some of the names in Edmonton boring compared to our Calgary neighbours. Edmonton-South West, Edmonton-South: I think they're too similar. Edmonton-North West also doesn't say much. Geographywise, there's a problem with – I'll give an example of the riding of Edmonton-South West. You have a portion that is Windermere, which is in the southwest portion. Then you have areas like Glastonbury, that are totally west. So how does the name Edmonton-South West make sense to that? And for the residents how does it make sense when you live in, like, Granville or Glastonbury, in that area, and your riding is called Edmonton-South West?

One of the things I like is having some of the ridings named after our Premiers. Like, Edmonton-Manning is a great example. Calgary-Klein. I know that Laurence Decore was not a Premier, but he was a very influential Leader of the Opposition in our province. I think a riding should be named after Premier Getty. I think maybe either Edmonton-South or Edmonton-South West should be named after Premier Getty, because I believe his old riding, Edmonton-Whitemud, before there was development in all those areas, was probably relatively in that area. So I feel like we should have our ridings in Edmonton named after individuals.

Edmonton-North West: its name should be changed. There should be some kind of community like maybe Hudson or Oxford or maybe called the Palisades. I believe those communities are sometimes called the Palisades by developers.

My presentation wasn't long. It was just mainly to – I feel like the names are a bit confusing. I mean, Edmonton-South is a very generic name. I mean, if you do not want to name it after a person, you could call it, like, Heritage Valley, Edmonton-Heritage Valley, because all those communities are called the Heritage Valley area.

**Mrs. Samson:** I think you're on the right track, because what the names are meant to do is to tie the area specifically for clarity for the people who live there. So if you lived in Edmonton-South or Edmonton-South West and you were new to the region, how would you know, really, which one it was? I think the challenge for us, because we don't, like, I don't live here in Edmonton, would be: what would be a better name? I know I don't want to put you on the spot right now, but if you think of or if within your community of friends someone thinks of names that would be meaningful for those areas, that would be very helpful, I think.

**Mr. Singh:** I think for Edmonton-South, you could call it Edmonton-Heritage Valley. I mean, a lot of those communities are in, like, the Heritage Valley area. Edmonton-South West: I mean, Windermere, if you called it Edmonton-Windermere, that can kind of offends the west portion – right? – of the riding. So I would

honestly say maybe you should name that one, like, Edmonton-Getty.

**Mr. Clark:** Sorry. What's your recommendation for Edmonton-South? You said Heritage Valley?

**Mr. Singh:** Heritage Valley. Yeah.

**The Chair:** Your point about, if I can paraphrase you, the boring nature of the names is well taken. As I recall reading the last report, there was some controversy about naming electoral districts after politicians either living or passed away, so I think we'd have to go back and look at that. There is some controversy about naming. I don't think the 2017 commission recommended any names of individuals. They just limited it to what was already there.

**Mr. Singh:** But, I mean, we already have them named after individuals, so what are we going to do, get rid of Calgary-Klein, get rid of Edmonton-Manning, change the names?

**The Chair:** Well, we weren't thinking of that. What do you think of Edmonton-Gray?

**Mr. Singh:** Yeah. Absolutely. Well, I'm in favour of the last presenter. I want to keep Edmonton-Mill Woods. It's an iconic place in Edmonton.

**The Chair:** Okay, so we won't name that Edmonton-Gray, then. We'll keep it Edmonton-Mill Woods.

**Mr. Singh:** No. Anything else. Maybe Edmonton-Gold Bar could be named that. I'm not sure.

**The Chair:** But, no, your point is well made, and there is some conversation surrounding that issue, but your Heritage Valley and Windermere: we'll certainly look at those. We'll look at the Getty issue as the name, but we haven't had that discussion, quite frankly, but my recollection of the last commission report was . . .

**Mr. Singh:** I would strongly recommend that one, because he was . . .

**The Chair:** For Edmonton-South West?

**Mr. Singh:** Yeah, for Edmonton-South West or even Edmonton-South.

**The Chair:** Well, there are going to be two southwests, probably two.

**Mr. Singh:** Yeah. I mean, he was a Premier from our city, right? That's why I would strongly recommend that.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Singh. Aaron, one more?

**Mr. Roth:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Okay. And she's here?

**Mr. Roth:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms Fedor? Yeah, please come forward. Were you on the list already, or are you . . .

3:40

**Ms Fedor:** No, I'm kind of an addition.

**The Chair:** Okay. Come on in. Good. Could you spell your last name for us?

**Ms Fedor:** F-e-d-o-r.

**The Chair:** Cynthia. Okay.

**Ms Fedor:** Thank you for taking an addition. I came to listen today, thinking I wasn't really sure if I was going to speak. I'm not a public speaker, so if you're kind of patient with me today. I really appreciate a lot that's been shared today, so I'll try not to repeat. Because of that, I thought I was sure. A lot of key themes here today. I just wanted to share that I agree with that new seats should be added to reflect the reality of current population growth.

Oh, I should introduce where I'm from. I am a Edmonton-South resident. I thought what I also should share would be that I had a family farm in Leduc county, so right on the border of Edmonton-South or roughly Ipiihkoohkanipiahtsi, the municipal boundary with the county of Leduc, so I kind of can relate to being in both courts there.

I'm a firm believer that municipalities should be kept intact and not be broken up into multiple ridings. I'm really sorry to forget her name, but I think that what she shared about municipalities not being broken up into – because each have their own unique needs and having MLAs represent those needs accordingly. These communities have things in common. Again, I just feel that economic and geographic commonalities should be respected.

I had a chance to read the past Electoral Boundaries Commission report, and I tend to agree. I found that there were some common themes between municipal councils as well as the addition of school districts and transportation corridors. I just wanted to agree with that.

Something I just wanted to – the gentleman that spoke about the hospital in Edmonton-West Henday: in 2017, in addition, the NDP government under Rachel Notley did approve a new hospital. It was at Ellerslie Road and 127th Street. It was to be opened, actually, in 2026, next year, but it was scaled back in 2019 under the Kenney government, and it was cancelled last year, in 2024. If you are from Calgary, that's sort of the history. It was a large property.

I don't know if I have anything else here.

In regard to the county of Leduc, as well, it may not seem like a huge amount populationwise. I had a chance to look up their strategic plan and their 2024 population. If, let's say, you did combine it with Edmonton-South for any reason or even Beaumont – the county of Leduc population is 14,416, for example. They have 800 businesses. If you ever did seem to combine parts of Edmonton, it would be a huge undertaking for an MLA.

Again, that's just my objection to trying to combine. That's basically what I'm here to say. If you have any questions, please feel free.

**The Chair:** Well, Ms Fedor, you don't have to apologize. Anybody who has read the last report and municipal town plan, you have come very prepared. Thank you for your presentation. It's obvious that you take this very seriously and it's an important issue for you. Thanks for volunteering at the end, for coming forward.

Any questions?

**Mrs. Samson:** How do you feel about Heritage Valley?

**Ms Fedor:** The name?

**Mrs. Samson:** Yeah.

**Ms Fedor:** I feel it's not a serious name. To tell you the truth, it sounds like a ski resort to me.

**Mrs. Samson:** Do you have a suggestion?

**Ms Fedor:** I would take some time to think about it.

**Mrs. Samson:** You can get a hold of us. You can get back to us on that. That's an on-the-spot question.

**The Chair:** You'd get a lot of tourists if people think it's a tourist destination.

**Ms Fedor:** Well, we have a Heritage Valley. We have the community league as well. It might be something to think about.

**Mrs. Samson:** It has to resonate with you. Particularly, if you're a resident, you're the best to test the idea out on.

**Ms Fedor:** It's not a criticism. Actually, sorry; that came right off the top of my head. I think that it needs to be something that we're – elections are very serious, and it has to be a name that we can easily look up and find and something that is memorable, not associated perhaps with something else, not a committee to meet. You know, elections to me are very serious. That's what I have to share.

**Mrs. Samson:** Thank you.

**Ms Fedor:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Oh, there might be some more questions now. No?

**Mr. Clark:** No. I mean, aside from a word of thanks. We appreciate you doing this.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

That, then, completes our list. A full day. Thank you very much, those of you who are still here and can hear me, for expressing your interest and coming forward and giving excellent presentations. In many ways you're not making our job easier, but that's still our job, and we gained a lot of insight and have benefited from all the presentations today. Thank you very much.

We are reconvening this evening here. Do we have any spots available, or do we have a full slate?

**Mr. Roth:** I just filled the last one.

**The Chair:** Oh, okay.

If you can't find anything good on television tonight, please come and watch this evening's presentation.

[The hearing adjourned at 3:47 p.m.]











