



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

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6:30 p.m.

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Edmonton

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6:30 p.m.

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[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, it's 6:30, the scheduled time to start. I could go on for 12 to 15 minutes to give my introductory comments, and I'm sure those gentlemen along the wall would love to hear it again.

Mr. Clark: I have a better idea. We could do it for you.

The Chair: Oh, yes.

Mrs. Samson: Just tell them the part about Susan Samson.

The Chair: Yeah. There's one person you have to make happy at this table.

We don't have any presenters except the young lady in front who, I believe, is Heather Sweet.

Ms Sweet: I'm early.

The Chair: Yeah. That's good. You're not scheduled to speak till 7:20. Do you want to speak to a full house, or do you want to speak now? Please come forward.

Mrs. Samson: You've got to come real forward.

The Chair: Come forward to this table. Now, unfortunately, you've not heard my 12-minute introduction.

Mrs. Samson: You could ask questions.

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Roth: Are you doing your introduction, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Evans: You've got to have *Hansard* complete.

The Chair: I don't have it. Oh, it is coming up.

Okay. We'll give you your money's worth, Ms Sweet.

We do have a chance to edit this in *Hansard*, don't we?

Before you is the independent body established by the Legislative Assembly, the Electoral Boundaries Commission. As you can see, there are five of us. If you want our full biographies, go to the website. I won't read them line by line.

To the far left, Mr. John Evans. He's a litigation lawyer from southern Alberta. He practises his law throughout the province. He's been recognized for his legal skills by way of being designated the KC, or King's Counsel. He also volunteers on the Alberta Justice advisory committee.

Next is Susan Samson from Sylvan Lake, the grand village of Sylvan Lake. She has a tremendous amount of experience in municipal politics and has been honoured for her volunteer work by way of receiving the citizen of the year award and the Queen Elizabeth II jubilee medal. She's been the mayor of Sylvan Lake, so she loves the interaction between provincial politicians and municipal politicians.

I'm the chairman of the commission. My name is Justice Dallas Miller. I also sit as a trial judge in southern Alberta.

Next, to my right is Dr. Julian Martin, who lives in Sherwood Park, volunteers in many capacities there, and also serves on some provincial tribunals, and he is a map geek. If you want the stuff shifted around, he knows how to do that.

Then to the far end of the table, Mr. Greg Clark. You probably know Mr. Clark. He has had the honour of serving Calgary-Elbow in the Legislature, and we're so happy to have someone with that

experience on the commission. It's illegal for a sitting MLA to sit on this commission, but retired ones we allow. That's a privilege and a benefit for us. That's the crew you've got before you.

Quickly, to go over the timeline for our commission, we were all appointed by the Speaker in late March. Once we're appointed, the clock starts ticking, and we have some big legislative timelines to meet. We met in April as a commission to discuss various matters. We started our commission public hearings last week, and we're going all the way through to June 23. This evening is the last session in Edmonton. We spent all day yesterday in the Ellerslie constituency in the Four Points by Sheraton. As non-Edmontonians we learnt a lot yesterday and today.

We conclude our hearings in June, and then by late August we are required to file an interim report with the Speaker of the Legislature. It'll become public. It will go into *Alberta Gazette*. You and all of your 86 colleagues – by then you'll have 86 colleagues – can chew on it and give us feedback, and we'll have another round of public hearings with a view to finally have our final report in late March filed by the Speaker. Then you and your colleagues in the Legislative Assembly do with our report what you will in terms of implementing legislation.

By the way, I've got a – no. I've got to finish my introduction. Sorry. But I do have a question even before you start presenting.

Ms Sweet: Already? Uh-oh.

The Chair: Of course, you know better than anyone that the voters elect their MLA in their constituency. In 2017 when the Bielby report came out, it relied on a population amount or figure of just over 4 million. The formula that they used was 4,062,609 divided by 87 constituencies. That gave us the average or the middle figure of 46,000. Effective representation gives us the range from low of minus 25 to plus 25. The range for 2017's report is before you.

Our population figures for this commission are 4,888,723. That population figure is basically the 2021 federal census, which is regularly updated and verified by both Statistics Canada on a regular basis and by Treasury Board Office of Statistics and Information. That figure is what we as a commission have decided to use. Okay? Then that gives us the average amount and the range of minus 25 to plus 25. So you have, then, some context of what we're working with.

The task of our commission is to hear from Albertans in this first round of hearings, take what we hear, take the population statistics, take the information we've heard about boundaries and come up with a report that provides for effective representation. When we do that, we will be focusing on several things, the relative sparsity and density of population throughout the province, common community interests and values and organizations. We've heard it loud and clear from Edmonton. We've learned a lot about the importance of community in Edmonton. More importantly, probably, in the rural areas are geographic features, although geographic features have a role to play in city ridings as well. Communication and transportation lines and how they affect the riding are taken into consideration. We're also obligated to make sure that we provide understandable and clear boundaries that people can recognize and recognize where the limits of each riding are. Then, finally, there's a catch-all phrase in the legislation – these terms are all in the legislation, as you're no doubt aware – of any other issues that we think are relevant to come up with our report and our recommendation.

Now we're at the stage where we want to hear from Albertans. That's the map that is in effect currently, and we're going to expand that by two and make some new lines.

Having heard that, are you still ready to present?

Ms Sweet: Sure.

The Chair: Okay. Great.

Ms Sweet: You said you had a question, though.

The Chair: Yeah. Let me wait till you're finished because it's feedback for our second round, actually. That's my question.

Ms Sweet: Okay. Ten minutes?

The Chair: Yeah. I'm not a strict policeman on the seven minutes.

Ms Sweet: Oh, okay. Seven.

A quick introduction just for *Hansard's* purposes. I'm Heather Sweet. I am the MLA for Edmonton-Manning, and I have been elected for three terms, so this is my second boundary commission redraw. The reason that that's important to me is that I want to give a little bit of context about sort of some of the troubles that we went through in the last boundary for my riding specifically.

6:40

Also, just to let you know, part of my job as well is not just being the MLA for Edmonton-Manning, but I also do rural economic development, agriculture, and forestry as the critic, so I spend a lot of time travelling around the province, speaking to many of our constituents across rural communities. Happy to chat a little bit about the conflict between urban development, density populationwise, and then the needs of representation for rural Albertans.

Specifically talking about Edmonton-Manning, when we did the boundary draw or evaluation with the last commission, there was a conversation about doing an indent off 66th Street into Edmonton-Manning, about 144th Ave and a little bit north, going up to 153rd. That community is called the McLeod community, and McLeod was not very happy about that idea.

The Chair: We're going to get that map up, and if you feel comfortable, come up and show us where in that riding you're referencing.

Ms Sweet: Sure.

I guess while we're doing that, I should back up. Right now if we look at the percentages in the northeast, Edmonton-Manning is plus 22 per cent on the equation.

The Chair: Okay. What number do you use?

Ms Sweet: Based on the commission's website, so I've used your data.

The Chair: So 66,994.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. I just looked at the plus 22 per cent and was like: oh, I'm up there.

I share boundaries with Castle Downs, which is only plus 3; Edmonton-Decore, which is a negative 1.9; and then Beverly-Clareview, which is negative 1.7. So if we look at the boundary of the northeast of Edmonton, I am significantly over in comparison to my colleagues surrounding me.

I can go look at the map. You can look even as you see the Manning freeway moving out, all of that is now going to be development. I was just at a neighbourhood open house for one of my newer communities where the home builders groups identified 70,000 new homes to be built in the next five to six years in my riding.

Mrs. Samson: How many?

Ms Sweet: Seventy thousand. I will be the new south.

The Chair: Sorry. Others have mentioned the Manning freeway. Not being an Edmontonian, can you tell me what it is?

Ms Sweet: This is Manning Drive, which goes through Edmonton, and then this goes out to the Manning freeway, and if you keep taking 15, eventually it will take you out to the Fort McMurray exit, highway 63.

The Chair: And that's known as the Manning freeway?

Ms Sweet: Yeah.

There's a big gurdwara on the north side of it where the 15 sign is, but this is a trailer park, and this is Quarry Ridge. All of this now is being cleared and developed, so there are houses coming in here already. This is now the city of Edmonton park that they've made, their newest addition to the river valley park system, so it will not be developed, but they're saying 70,000 in here.

The Chair: Homes or people?

Ms Sweet: Homes.

I will be the new south side. All of the dynamics that the south side are dealing with in Ellerslie, southeast, southwest will be in Manning. A consideration to think about is that I'm already over plus 22. By the next boundary redraw – I know I'm projecting out – it will be exceeding that 22 by significant numbers, and we will be facing similar to what we're facing on the south side, which is a huge population explosion and maybe only two seats to consider.

I do know that there are some people in the room that are not going to like what I'm about to say, but I do think we need to look at 144th Avenue on the map, which if we look at the east side of my riding is the boundary between Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview and Manning. Then it kind of juts down to 137th Avenue to 66th Street. It would be a clear defining line if we just did 144th Avenue across, and then the decision by the boundary commission would be: who takes those two communities? Those communities are York and Steele Heights. The reason that I've said the 144th divide is because there is a community league, and I'm sure you've heard about our community league systems that are identified within those neighbourhoods.

The 144th cut-off is the Steele Heights-York cut-off on their northern part of the riding, so it would be a natural division to move to a different riding, potentially Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, because that would make sense, without disrupting the McLeod community, which is the northern part of that piece. That was the community that they were going to split in half last commission, and the community was very upset, and once the boundary was drawn, everybody came out to look at the maps and was like: please don't do this. The 144th is much cleaner than doing some weird jut into Manning.

I can go back and maybe show you, if you want, but it doesn't . . .

The Chair: Yeah. I would appreciate that. Yeah, we would.

Ms Sweet: Okay. So, 144th Avenue: this is Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview now, and then this is me. If we just did this, which is the continuation of 144 across, it just naturally takes this bottom out. What they were going to do last commission for some reason was put a line in here, go down this road, and cut in here. It was going to cut this whole section in half, and that's actually a community that's attached to a community league. That was why it upset people. This community has been in existence, like, since 1950, and

they want to continue to be their collective whole, if that makes sense. That's the only clean line that I could recommend if we had to adjust my population.

The Chair: Any idea what that population would be? No? Okay. We'll figure it out.

Ms Sweet: I thought that on the drive here. I was like: I should know.

The Chair: Oh, it's better than I thought, then: 5,600.

Mr. Clark: Five thousand six hundred and seventeen.

Ms Sweet: No. It's not very many.

Mr. Clark: So it's something.

Ms Sweet: It helps.

Mr. Clark: What else can you do?

The Chair: It's a good start.

Ms Sweet: I really like my people in the northeast, so I feel like this is not politically the best conversation for me to have.

Mr. Clark: Sorry. *Hansard* is forever.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. I mean, what I would say is: please don't add any more. Even the conversation – like, Edmonton is Edmonton. There were conversations at some point about Redwater and Gibbons and, like that, Morinville, Sturgeon. It doesn't make sense to come into this riding. It is going to be urban sprawl and high density. You know, they say 70,000 in the next five to seven years. We'll see as the economy kind of figures itself out over the next little bit if it'll actually be that many.

The Chair: There's some possibility that the next commission can deal with the growth.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. I think so.

The Chair: It doesn't have to be that far projecting.

Ms Sweet: No. But just recognizing that there are definitely tons of new builds already existing that weren't counted in 2021. Even those northern communities that are just inside the Anthony Henday, there are way more houses and high density in there now than there was before.

The Chair: Okay. Anything else?

Ms Sweet: No. I think I ran out of time.

The Chair: Okay.
Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Just a quick question. When you're talking about taking the bottom off at 144, as we move to the east in that next – I guess it would be a pyramid shape. Would that be of any benefit? Or tell me why we wouldn't consider 153, cutting it off and taking that section so it's right across from 153. One side of it would be Manning Drive, 153, and the bottom of the boundary would be that 144th Avenue, and then it starts at the North Saskatchewan.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. Going to the Anthony Henday. My worry is that's what's going to happen.

Mrs. Samson: Oh, okay.

Ms Sweet: It's because all of the new development is going in that area. I'm just thinking as we're projecting forward: if, let's just say, the next boundary commission decides they're going to split this riding into two, the natural split would be the Manning freeway, right? So if we can try to keep that east side as cohesive as it is, knowing that there's so much development happening in there, I think it would make it cleaner so that we're not pushing things back into other ridings later.

6:50

Mrs. Samson: Right. Thank you. Good to know.

The Chair: John, any questions?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you.

The Chair: Julian? Our resident capital city rep.

Dr. Martin: And fellow leftie.

Ms Sweet: Yes. I like lefties.

Dr. Martin: You know, we've been struggling with the size, like you have, of your riding, and we've always been puzzled – haven't we? – about: why is this big blank space still there? Now you're here to tell us that it won't be long before it actually gets roads and houses and things.

Now, my question is very specific to that because developers say a lot of things about their future plans, and there are so many contingencies about capital and God knows what. We've heard people talk to us about future growth, which of course we're very interested in hearing about, but we have to know about what I call imminent and tangible construction rather than speculate about the future. If we really could speculate about the future, we could just shut down commissions because we could solve it for 100 years and be all done. But we don't, like anybody. That's just absurd. So I don't want to lean too much on the prospect of 70,000 going in here.

I have a similar problem somewhere between Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan at Bremner: ultimate build-out is 70. But what's going to happen in the next five years is the critical thing.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. Same developers, too.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. It doesn't surprise me because you need to be a fairly big player to contemplate such a thing.

Ms Sweet: Yeah. I think it would be safe to say there's at least 20 only because we do have four neighbourhoods that have the infrastructure, and everything's been laid, and there are houses popping up kind of lot-wise in those communities. We're also seeing the Ontario splurge, I guess. Like, I literally went to an open house, and people are buying them without even seeing them because to them, they're cheap. Right? They're not. They're, like, \$800,000 houses, but – you know. That works. There are houses in my area going within, like, a week on market.

Dr. Martin: I drove through this district two weeks ago, and I was stunned. I mean, we go down 153 Avenue to the Henday and all through there is chock a block. I think there's still, you know – there's, like, an old cemetery and a few bits of historical stuff, but it is becoming a very dense set of neighbourhoods. So, I'm not here to dispute your claim about the growth. It's just: how much are we going to see? How soon?

Ms Sweet: Right. I think, you know, in fairness, as a representative I'm happy to continue to do whatever comes in the next year and a half, maybe longer. We'll see. But there's been substantial growth since the whole time I've represented the area, and so you just adjust. There is a trend. If you lived in the south part of the northern ridings – like McLeod and Kilkenny and Fraser – you probably just bought a house a little bit north into the newer area. My whole street is everybody went to high school together. Like, we say north side, and we mean it. We all grew up together, we all went to school together, and we will continue to raise our kids together.

Dr. Martin: Right.

Mr. Evans: It's the hood.

Ms Sweet: It's the hood. It is totally the hood. Yeah. So different than the south side. They have no idea.

The only other thing – sorry. I know you want to move on, but another consideration is naming opportunities. It would be a sweet riding if you could change it. But Edmonton-Manning is . . .

The Chair: Oh. Sorry.

Ms Sweet: It took you a second.

Mr. Clark: It's been a long couple of days.

Ms Sweet: It took a minute. I know. I'm the longest-serving MLA for the riding.

But, no. Edmonton-Manning is the same name federally as it is provincially, and every time we have an election, it doesn't matter if it's a federal or provincial election, people call me, and they are like: why aren't you running? I'm like: because I'm not running federally.

Mr. Evans: What if we went: Manning-Edmonton? Would that change it up?

Ms Sweet: Yeah. Who knows? It is . . .

The Chair: Is that just recent? Or has that always been?

Ms Sweet: No. Since they created the federal riding. I think the feds took it.

Mr. Clark: Do you have a suggestion for what else we could call it?

Ms Sweet: No. I mean, I would have to think about a name option. Like, there is so much history in the northeast. It was the steel area during the rail – we have some really cool history. I don't know.

Mr. Evans: What about Edmonton-Sweet?

Ms Sweet: Yeah, right? I think it should be an Edmonton-Sweet. It would be a sweet riding, I'm telling you. One day it's gonna happen.

Dr. Martin: Horse Hill?

Ms Sweet: I mean, Horse Hill is that whole area. Edmonton-Horse Hill would make sense. To be honest, I didn't really think it through as to what the new name should be except that it would be really great if they weren't both the same. I mean, I can do more research on the history of the north.

The Chair: Why is it named Manning?

Ms Sweet: Ernest Manning.

The Chair: No, I realize that. Did he live up there, or does he have a connection to that area of the city?

Ms Sweet: No. I think it was a new riding, and they wanted to honour his commitment to the province.

Mr. Evans: What about Horse Hill?

Ms Sweet: Yeah. Well, now you've got two votes. It could be. I mean, it is the area for sure, and lots of things are named after Horse Hill in the community. We've got the pilot area, too. All of our new neighbourhoods are named after World War II pilots. Pilot Sound is also kind of a fun thing. I kind of like to stay away from names of people, to be honest; I like the names of the history of the area. Like, Beverly-Clareview has got a really great history about, you know, the old Beverly.

The Chair: You know, feel free to give us a written submission on naming once you've had more of a chance to think about it.

Mrs. Samson: That was my comment. That was exactly my comment.

Mr. Clark: Sorry. I just wanted to make sure that I'm clear on what I heard you say earlier. Manning freeway is a natural boundary. So we talked about taking perhaps that 144th piece of the south part that you noted, but if we were to follow the railway lines up the Henday, that corner bit there, there are quite a few people there. Victoria Trail, like, that whole area: how much growth are we going to see? That would get you down below towards 50,000 or 51,000. We'd need to find somewhere for those other ones to go.

I guess what I'm trying to think about is – I keep stealing from the famous Edmontonian: skate to where the puck is going to be. If Manning is going to have a bunch of growth – look at the growth you've had, absolutely. You were just a little above average in 2017, and now you're almost above 25 per cent over. So we have to take a big bite out of it. If we're going to do that, do we want a little like some of the south Edmonton considerations? Like, do we want to overshoot a little bit and kind of reduce it down so that growth picks it up so that you don't end up with 80,000 people at this time eight years from now?

Ms Sweet: My response to this is that I'm having an emotional reaction, which is quite funny for me. I love Fraser, which is that community, just because of the history of it. I think that you're going to have to make that decision because my heart is attached to many of my communities just because I've represented them for almost 10 years. Like, 144th cut-off with York and Steele was very clear to me in the sense of just – yeah, I spend a lot of time at Fraser. We built their playground. I'm not the one to ask this question to. Don't make me give away . . .

Mr. Clark: The bigger question is: is it a natural grouping that should be together somehow?

Ms Sweet: Yeah. I think that it would make sense. I mean, where that gap is above 153rd, though, is being developed as of right now, inside the Anthony Henday. It looks like there's nothing there, but there are houses now. It's Gorman. It's the new Gorman community.

Then on the other side of the Anthony Henday by the trailer park is also all new development, and there are a ton of subdivisions in there already. It's just that the problem is that at some point, I actually believe, where the Anthony Henday is, that whole E section

is going to be its own riding at some point, which is why I'm hesitant to pull stuff out. But it's also because I love Fraser, on the record.

Dr. Martin: There's lots of development just east of Kuhlmann's greenhouse, is that right?

Ms Sweet: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: That's a big development pot, because once people have committed to cutting up black earth to put in neighbourhoods, they're going to continue to do it.

7:00

Ms Sweet: Yeah, that's where the 70,000 are going to be. Yeah. And there's going to be conflict. I mean, the greenhouse, Kuhlmann's, is there. Like, Arrowhead is there. But, yeah, that's right by the trailer park.

Dr. Martin: Yeah.

Ms Sweet: And the people that are all sitting watching us are actually north-siders, too, so I'm sure this will all – don't hold it against me.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. That was really . . .

The Chair: Actually, my question was not in relation to anything here, but in the process as I was going through the timeline with you, you were following closely. If we issue our report in October, our interim report, how do you want – what would you say about us just simply having virtual hearings leading up to the final report?

Ms Sweet: On the map?

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms Sweet: I actually think your engagement is going to be higher. People can go online and look at the map. It gives them time to think about it, too. I'm a big fan of giving opportunities as many ways as we can.

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms Sweet: I also want to say thank you. Like, this is really hard, sitting on committees and doing it for three days straight without, really, a break. So I appreciate you for doing . . .

The Chair: Three days? A whole month.

Ms Sweet: Well, Edmonton. Yeah, I can't believe you're going till the end of June.

Mrs. Samson: We are.

Ms Sweet: I appreciate you doing all of this.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for your great conversation and presentation. As I've said to other MLAs, all presentations are equal, but it's especially gratifying to hear from people, elected representatives that walk those streets, drive that pavement, and know the riding inside out. So thank you so much.

Okay. Our next presenter is Susan Jubb.

Ms Jubb: Hello.

The Chair: Good evening.

Ms Jubb: My name is Susan Jubb. I think they have Judd.

The Chair: Oh, did I say Judd? Sorry.

Ms Jubb: Yeah.

The Chair: Jubb. Okay.

Ms Jubb: My riding is Edmonton-Manning.

The Chair: Oh, but you're not the MLA.

Ms Jubb: No, I'm not. I live in Edmonton-Manning. I've been there for about 17 years. What I've heard is that there was some talk about including rural voters into this riding and splitting it up so that rural voters would be included in this riding. I'm opposed to this. Like, we have different priorities between rural and urban. They're more concerned with agriculture, resource management. My concern as an urban voter is public transit, housing density, affordable housing. For example, I take the train to work twice a week. When I walk through Clareview station, I get on the train, I'm always assessing safety. Is this person safe to sit with? Is this person safe to stand with? I don't think that's an issue that a rural voter would have.

Also, I think it would be – because we have competing interests between rural and urban voters, I don't think my MLA would be able to adequately represent both voters. I think we also often have competing priorities. I feel that as an Edmonton-Manning constituent I would have less representation or would have unequal representation. I also think you would be doing the rural voters a disservice because they would be very underrepresented with all the urban people in that riding.

That's all I have to bring up.

The Chair: Okay. Questions, starting with Greg, then.

Mr. Clark: No, I just am always curious about, you know, as part of the conversation we were having before, any thoughts you may have on what parts of the community belong together although I do think MLA Sweet gave us a pretty good synopsis as to sort of what goes with what and what some of those options are. I know you've spoken a bit about the rural-urban mix. I mean, I do find that persuasive. I do see that there really does seem – and we've heard quite a bit of that. We've heard a couple of different perspectives, for sure. But I find it persuasive to say that there is an urban way in the things you deal with on an everyday basis.

Any other examples you can think of – or maybe I'll ask you a challenge question.

Ms Jubb: Okay.

Mr. Clark: What if I said that you're going to have to have a scenario where the MLA is straddling a boundary. What opportunities does that present? Do you feel you'd maybe find ways to work with your rural neighbours, or do you feel like that would just be sort of a hill that you couldn't climb?

Ms Jubb: I just think that my MLA would have to be, like, a specialist in rural priorities over in urban, and then I think that both of us would be disserved by that.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Julian.

Dr. Martin: Thanks. Thank you. You'll appreciate that this riding has been so popular that it's now got too many people in it, from our point of view.

Ms Jubb: I've been there for 17 years, so, yeah.

Dr. Martin: And that therein is our problem. I hadn't thought about connecting you to a rural constituency; you've got a big parcel of rural stuff already. Really, the practical question for us is that we've heard from – how to put this – your MLA about the imminent development of new neighbourhoods outside the Henday as well as inside the Henday, you know, 153 and the like. Do you anticipate outside the Henday on the west side of 15 – Manning freeway, that is – new neighbourhoods going in that area as well? The Manning freeway goes up here towards Fort Sask, so we're looking at down by Kuhlmann's there that are new developments and probably more. But are there any coming out here, do you suspect?

Ms Jubb: Not that I know of, but there's, like, a lot of development coming in, like, just north of Clareview station. They've got, like, three or four big condo complexes, just the framing set up, and they're huge. I'm not sure how many people that's going to be.

Dr. Martin: Okay. That's just on the west bank of Fort Road?

Ms Jubb: No. It would be on Manning, but it would be just north of Clareview station.

Dr. Martin: Okay.

Ms Jubb: Just, like, walking distance to Clareview station.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I spotted it now.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. Do you have any other suggestions on a name for Edmonton-Manning?

Ms Jubb: We could go Edmonton-North East. It's boring, but it's not named after anybody.

Mrs. Samson: If you think of something, you can always submit it. I know that's sort of a pressure question.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

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

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

Ms Jubb: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for coming.

Lesley Thompson is our next presenter. Introduce yourself, ma'am, and tell us which riding you're from.

Ms Thompson: My name is Lesley Thompson. I'm from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, a lifelong north-sider. So, yes, from the hood. I'm here to talk about Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and I'm here to speak in strong support of keeping Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview with the existing boundaries that we currently have. This is because it's more than just a map.

I have up there a small version of the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview map. We're a community. We're all connected. We have a cohesive history, and we're a growing part of northeast Edmonton. We reflect how people live, work, move, and connect, and splitting it apart and changing the boundaries right now would fragment the community that's there. Like I said, all of our communities are connected. I got a photo of one of our community leagues as well, and they work hand in hand with the communities

in the area. We actually have a community league zone per se where everybody kind of works together and helps support each other.

7:10

You can move to the next slide. We have many communities in our area. We have Beverly and Belvedere, and that's in south and southwest parts of our riding. These are some of our older communities, and they have a history of working people. We have Beverly, that was originally a coal mining town, a Ukrainian settlement. It's working-class people, and it still is working-class people. Belvedere was key postwar growth and a hub. It was also known as the packing district for Edmonton. So Gainers, Packers, all of them: that's where it was. It's being redeveloped now. There's new housing that's going in, and we have all walks of life there. As well, the Belvedere LRT is an anchor for our area, where people from Beverly come in to use the train. It's a quick bus ride there, and it connects to the major transit. Now in Edmonton with our expanding LRT line, it takes people anywhere in town.

We have our strong intergenerational ties and our cultural identity. It's more than just Ukrainian people. We have Somali people. We have people from all over Europe, Africa, you name it. North Edmonton was a place and still is a place where newcomers come, and they make it their home.

Now to the Clareview part. We started in the '70s with newcomers as well. We have diverse, family-oriented, transit-connected neighbourhoods, transit-oriented neighbourhoods. We have the Clareview LRT station there, and within walking distance from the Clareview LRT station you have major grocery stores. You have Superstore, Clareview, can even walk to Costco and bring a buggy and take it downtown or whatever, but people are connected. People can get to where they need to get quickly on foot, on bicycle, or via vehicle.

Then our central hub in the community, whether it's in the southern part or the northern parts, is our rec centre. The Clareview rec centre within the last 10 years was renovated, and it now includes a pool, a skating rink. The library is there. There's a school for kids that are upgrading their high school that didn't graduate in the three years of high school. That whole area connects the vibrant community that we have.

As I was also saying earlier, our community leagues: we share resources. We volunteer ideas. We have community leagues that share different groups for events. We have a community league in the south, Beacon Heights, who does an annual music festival. We have Bannerman, who is now doing monthly music nights in the summer, and even though these people are about a 10-minute car ride away and you wouldn't think they're connected, they are because they work in the neighbourhood. They live, eat, sleep, play in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. We're not a silo.

We also have a diverse community; 34.9 per cent of our community is a visible minority. It's not just Caucasian folks, White people; 10.8 per cent is Muslim, and we have 10 per cent Indigenous. So as you can see, it's a varied community, and it's different from our surrounding communities and bedroom communities like Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan. Very, very different.

That also leads us in here to the socioeconomic difference. We have the homes in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. It's one of the most affordable neighbourhoods or ridings in the province, in the city. I took Edmonton-Gold Bar here. It's a little bit higher. And then you have Sherwood Park, that's even higher. Edmonton-Gold Bar is to our south.

Our river to the south of us is a dividing line. We have Anthony Henday on the east, which is somewhat a dividing line as well for where the people live in our riding.

And that's it. Thank you. All of our photos are from the neighbourhood. This is from lovely Beverly, where the swing is.

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

Mr. Evans: It looks like Clareview is actually in Edmonton-Manning. Is that right?

Ms Thompson: No. Clareview is in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Evans: I must have a broken map.

Ms Thompson: We are – 50th Street is a dividing line, so when you look at the Clareview LRT station, the east part of the Clareview station is Beverly-Clareview; the west entrance for the LRT station is Edmonton-Manning.

The Chair: Aaron, can you put up the riding map again?

Mr. Evans: The question I really wanted to ask was: how many community leagues do you have?

Ms Thompson: Hairsine, Bannerman, South Clareview, Beverly, Beacon Heights, and Homesteader. Six.

Mr. Evans: Wow. Okay. Thank you.

Ms Thompson: Six community leagues, but South Clareview actually houses many communities. South Clareview is the community, but it houses Sifton; it houses Belmont; it houses Kernohan; it houses Canyon Ridge.

Mr. Evans: What do you mean when you say it houses them?

Ms Thompson: If you take Bannerman, for example, it's an easy area. The community league is right in the centre of the neighbourhood, then everything around is Bannerman proper, whereas if you look at South Clareview, that's the community league. It has the neighbourhoods of Kernohan, Canyon Ridge, Belmont, Sifton. It has four.

Mr. Evans: As part of their community.

Ms Thompson: Yeah. So they bring all those into them.

You see that sometimes in newer communities, where they build one community league and then they absorb other neighbourhoods.

Mr. Evans: That's true.

The Chair: Susan, any questions?

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

The Chair: Julian?

Dr. Martin: No. Thank you. Oh, well, I have one. It's a constant puzzle to me how Beverly-Clareview in all these maps for donkey's years ends up with all the gravel pits on the other side of the river.

Ms Thompson: Yes. We have gravel pits and the garbage dump.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. That's true, too. At any rate, you know, the river is beautiful where you live, so that perhaps makes up for that.

Ms Thompson: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: You described the connectivity for your community leagues through public transit typically. Again, as I pointed out to someone this morning, I mean, once you have to cross the

Yellowhead, there are only two major ways to get across the Yellowhead to go south or to go north, as the case may be.

Ms Thompson: Yeah, 50th Street.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. There's 50th Street, and there's another road.

Ms Thompson: Victoria Trail.

Dr. Martin: Yeah.

Do you find that that's problematic? I mean, they're wide enough for pedestrians?

Ms Thompson: No. It is not problematic. Actually, something that he didn't mention: we have two parks, Hermitage and Rundle, and they connect through walking and bike paths. As well, it connects to the Kennedale ravine – that's kind of dead centre in the middle of the riding – and they all connect with a path. As well, the sidewalks and the roads are wide enough to get in with ease, and Victoria Trail and 50th Street: double lanes.

Dr. Martin: Perfect. Thank you.

Ms Thompson: You're welcome.

The Chair: Mr. Clark?

Mr. Clark: Just quickly, you saw MLA Sweet's sort of suggestion there. Any thoughts on that or any alternatives?

Ms Thompson: What was her suggestion?

Mr. Clark: Everything south of 144 and west of 15, which would be Manning freeway, move into Beverly-Clareview. Does that sort of fit with you guys, like, Manning Crossing, York park, that stuff?

Ms Thompson: Not necessarily because not all the areas connect as they currently do. Everything that's east of Manning Drive or Manning freeway doesn't have a natural connection to those areas. The Kirkness and Fraser area do have a connection to Beverly-Clareview, but . . .

Mr. Clark: But York.

Ms Thompson: There's not a tie-in between Beverly-Clareview and York as it currently stands.

Mr. Clark: All right. Thank you.

Ms Thompson: They fall in a different district and community.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Ms Thompson. We appreciate your presentation.

Ms Thompson: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Brad Istace? Brad is not here? Okay.

Susan Shaw is not here? Okay.

Andrew Traynor.

7:20

Mr. Traynor: Good evening, commissioners. My name is Andrew Traynor. I'm a resident of the riding Edmonton-Rutherford, but I will actually be speaking today about the ridings I spent most of my life in and which I'm most familiar with, specifically St. Albert and Morinville-St. Albert. I'm currently a lawyer, but I've previously had the wonderful opportunity to work in provincial politics as well

as a campaigner and an organizer as well as a constituency assistant in St. Albert and the surrounding area for more than six years.

My starting thesis here is that I believe that the previous commission had to draw a fairly generally effective map and that there's a lot that this commission can preserve from that map to meet Alberta's present needs and ensure that our elections continue to be fair and representative with only minor changes. I'll first provide a brief overview of effective representation before elaborating on what I would argue is the most straightforward way for the commission to guarantee effective representation, specifically by pairing like communities with like communities.

Next I will share some thoughts on the two ridings that I know and love the best, St. Albert and Morinville-St. Albert. I'll also discuss some of the ways in which the boundary changes could affect our constituency offices and their ability to provide services to residents.

The purpose of Alberta's electoral boundaries is to guarantee effective representation, as required in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The other criteria that the commission may consider – for example, population growth, density, geography, communities of interest – must all be considered in light of that core policy purpose. Effective representation is defined by the Supreme Court of Canada under the preference for electoral boundaries of Saskatchewan as a balance of two goals that have a bit of a kind of countervailing aspect to them: ensuring relative parity of voting power by ensuring that as many votes as possible are effective – for example, that they're not diluted unreasonably compared to another group of citizens' votes – and, secondly, ensuring that that pursuit of parity does not eclipse the other goal of providing for a representative Legislature. The court notes that geography, community history, and minority representation are key factors, but it also suggests that shared cultural backgrounds, electoral competitiveness, and shared economic interests should also be factors worth considering.

Therefore, it would follow that dividing Alberta up into 89 equally populated chunks will not provide effective representation, as I'm sure the committee understands. Instead, we must ensure that the map continues to give due deference to the types of communities that Albertans choose to live in, recognizes the reasons why they choose to live in those communities, and allows them to elect MLAs who will effectively represent those shared interests. I believe that the commission can best fulfill this policy goal by ensuring that the boundaries, wherever possible, prioritize pairing like communities with like communities.

People choose to live in suburban, urban, or rural communities for their own reasons. It follows logically that they should be electing MLAs who understand their lifestyle, their values, their cultures and interests rather than having to compete within their own riding against residents who live in a different type of community in hopes that the MLA will prioritize their concerns instead.

Minimizing the number of ridings that meld community types within the same boundaries, while sometimes unavoidable, is the easiest way to prevent these sorts of representation problems and represents the simplest task for the commission to affect parity. Like communities can be paired with like communities, taking account for their cultural, historical, geographical, and economic boundaries until the population threshold is met. In urban centres like Edmonton and Calgary this could be as simple as redistributing the pie to allocate for new high-growth areas. By adding two new ridings to the Legislature, it'll allow for growth to occur in a planned-for manner in our cities, as some of the other presenters have noted with Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview and Edmonton-Manning, without off-loading those city voters into surrounding

rural and suburban ridings and swamping those other types of community voices while also ensuring that the number of rural ridings can remain consistent and not be excessive.

Small urban ridings, which are the ones that I'm most familiar with and most concerned with, have their own challenges, but they also provide an opportunity for the commission to address some of the concerns above. In the last boundary redistribution the commission at the time created what I would call a pretty close to perfect pair of ridings – a little bit biased – in St. Albert and Morinville-St. Albert, which I would submit should both be maintained basically unchanged and which can also provide an effective precedent that the commission can employ for other small urban and suburban ridings throughout the province.

In redrawing the boundaries of the St. Albert area, the last commission listened to community feedback and presented a wholly small urban St. Albert riding as well as a new rural-urban combination riding that reached northwards into Sturgeon county, including the town of Morinville, rather than reaching westwards and including the very separate and very distinct town of Spruce Grove. These two ridings have served very well in providing voters with effective representation and satisfying the factors set up by the Supreme Court and the Legislature. In two elections these ridings proved relatively competitive, with candidates needing to seek and win votes in all portions of each riding in order to have a shot at being elected.

Morinville-St. Albert largely escapes the concerns that I've noted for urban ridings, specifically that one group of voters will be able to dictate the election results to the other, by ensuring that it has a balanced proportion of urban voters in the St. Albert chunk; small-town commuter voters in Morinville, Bon Accord, and Gibbons; and truly rural voters in the smaller towns of Legal, Redwater, and the farming and acreage communities in between. This ensures that no candidate can convincingly win by running the table in one part of the constituency at the expense of the other. In 2023, a very tight, competitive, and healthy election, both of the two leading candidates were able to put together a multicomunity coalition to build a competitive campaign.

Additionally, the riding's design embraced that principle of like with like by pairing communities together to reach a full representative riding. St. Albert residents have enough in common with Morinville to warrant inclusion in the same constituency. They're both Edmonton area suburban commuter communities and have a strong francophone, Catholic, and Métis historical element. They're an economic through line in highway 2, and both see themselves as being distinct from Edmonton and rural Alberta on a lifestyle and cultural perspective enough to be a natural pairing with each other.

Likewise, Gibbons and Bon Accord would have greater similarities to Morinville as does the smaller town of Legal, again francophone, historical, that sort of cultural connection there. The only really ill-fitting addition, I would submit, would be Redwater, which is somewhat geographically isolated from the other communities in the riding. It's not connected to highway 2 in the same way and has a greater cultural, economic, and historical connection to northern communities like Westlock and Smoky Lake. Indeed, in a prior representation order I believe it was actually included with the formerly Athabasca-Morinville-Redwater riding.

Until St. Albert's population grows to an extent where it can support two stand-alone urban constituencies, like Lethbridge or Red Deer at present, the commission should follow the example set by past commissions and maintain a wholly urban St. Albert riding paired with a north region riding that includes St. Albert, Morinville, and other culturally and economically linked Sturgeon county communities.

Turning for a moment to the stand-alone St. Albert riding, I would also submit that these riding boundaries are largely perfect. There's not really much of a need to change. While recent changes to the act would permit ridings in suburban areas like St. Albert to reach into the larger cities of Edmonton and Calgary, I would submit that doing so in St. Albert, and indeed most of the communities surrounding Edmonton, would be a significant mistake and that it would compromise effective representation both for St. Albert voters as well as Edmonton residents and voters. Having grown up in St. Albert – I spent most of my life in the community – I can attest to the fiercely independent community, identity, and distinct history that sets it apart from Edmonton. It's always had a distinct political culture and has the distinction of being one of the only constituencies to have elected Liberal, Conservative, and New Democratic MLAs in the span of less than 10 years, and it remains a competitive and unique riding due to this political culture and tight community character.

For the same reasons that any move to incorporate portions of Edmonton into St. Albert should be opposed, any move to change or split the boundaries of the stand-alone St. Albert riding to bulk up underpopulated rural areas – for example, neighbouring Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland – would also be extremely poorly received by residents. It would dilute the community's character and the ability to elect a candidate who can effectively serve the community's interests in the Legislature, as has been the case for the several past decades that St. Albert has been a riding.

If there's any need to adjust the regional boundaries to accommodate population growth in this area, I would suggest the boundaries of Morinville-St. Albert could be extended slightly westward to encompass the growing Jensen Lakes and Elysian Fields neighbourhoods as well as Deer Ridge and North Ridge while shaving off Redwater to allow it to be added to the less populated Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock riding, with which it has a greater community connection. If the above changes were made to Morinville-St. Albert, the northeastern corner of the city could be added back into St. Albert proper to compensate. For example, this would generally be a return back to the 2012 implementation.

7:30

This combination of a wholly urban seat with a mixed rural-urban seat could also be considered for other regions like Fort McMurray and Medicine Hat. It allows one MLA to represent solely the city itself, giving recognition to the uniqueness of those communities and the reasons why voters choose to reside there instead of a bigger metropolitan centre or a rural area. At the same time it would allow a second MLA to represent the community as part of the larger region, championing its interests but also those of the smaller, more rural communities with which it has an economic connection, in the spirit of the like with like approach that I've harped on throughout the presentation.

In situations where these seats are competitive, residents may even benefit from having MLAs from both government, opposition, and potentially a third party in the Legislature, allowing them to advocate for community needs and those unique aspects of community differences on all sides of the Legislature.

I do have a couple of thoughts I would like to mention about my ...

The Chair: Mr. Traynor, I just saw the length of the page you just turned to. I haven't been strict on time, but it's been 10-plus minutes, and you're a lawyer, so ...

Mr. Traynor: I'm usually used to more aggressive timekeeping. I thought I was good. I do apologize.

I do have one closing thought I would like to make if possible, and then I'd be happy to take questions if there's time. My only concern, really, that I did want to mention from the constituency association, constituency assistant perspective: in a community like St. Albert, if you were to also have to represent and advocate for residents from Edmonton, it would largely double the workload without a requisite budget to match that. I know the budget is not something that's within your scope, but I would really caution against incorporating those city issues into the workload of regional and suburban constituency offices.

The Chair: That's a very good point. Okay. Thank you.

Greg, any questions?

Mr. Clark: No. Really, very thoughtful. We're going to have *Hansard*, but if you wouldn't mind, could you leave your notes with Aaron?

Mr. Traynor: Yeah. I'd be happy to. I submitted something similar to this as well.

Mr. Clark: Oh, you did as well. Okay. Perfect. I thought I recognized the name. That's good. I wanted to get something in writing because there's a lot there.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Julian?

Dr. Martin: Thank you. Thank you for coming and for your presentation. I noticed that one quite interesting feature of St. Albert is very thoughtfully planned empty land pods all around its northern and western flanks, so at some point you have within the city boundaries lots of space. That's clever. Some places haven't done that as well.

I wanted to ask you a few questions on that theme if I might. I'm very interested in the areas in any particular riding that we can claim have imminent and tangible construction. Of course, people will talk about growth in a rather abstract fashion – yeah, we've got a plan – but it's not the same thing as digging the sewer ditch. So for our purposes, that is my rule of thumb on whether we're going to see imminent growth of population or not. I noticed to the northeast of the town we have a large cluster of country acreages and the like in the countryside area. I would anticipate – you tell me if I'm wrong – that that will grow as a concept. Is that correct?

Mr. Traynor: Yes, that is correct. From what I understand – it's been a while since I've been in the constituency office, so forgive me if I'm a bit rusty on the terminology – there is a plan that the city has to expand servicing westward to allow for population growth in that area. We have seen some growth already occurring there. You see on the map there, in that sort of western boundary of the riding, there is population coming in there right now – oh, wonderful – including active construction. The Elysian Fields neighbourhood a bit further northwest of that also has a lot of growth. I did actually provide a bit more detail in my written submission to incorporate that, so I will defer to those, but you could scooch the boundaries a little bit to the west to incorporate areas that likely will be unlocked, especially with Ray Gibbon Drive being twinned and expanded, hopefully, into the new alignment with highway 2.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Any questions?

Mrs. Samson: Yes. Thank you for your presentation. I just wanted to share with you that our website shows that the population of St. Albert alone is 73,000. The suggestion that you offer that we would have one riding for the city as a whole, we can't do because the median is 55,000.

Mr. Traynor: I would just comment on that, Mrs. Samson, that what I'm supporting and what I'm proposing is keeping the boundaries as they are, where there's a riding that is carved out entirely of St. Albert, with the overflow being preserved in the Morinville-St. Albert riding.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you, because I misinterpreted that.

Mr. Traynor: I do apologize.

Mrs. Samson: And you know what? You are one of the few presenters to come to us that has a two-riding system where one is fully the city and one is a hybrid.

Mr. Traynor: It's a wonderful system.

Mrs. Samson: And it's good to know that that's very effective in this case, because there are a few more cities we're going to hear from that are using that, so thank you.

Mr. Traynor: You're welcome. Thank you very much, Mrs. Samson.

The Chair: John?

Mr. Evans: I'm interested to understand your perspective because you seem to wear two hats. You represent that the hybrid seems to be working and you're happy with St. Albert itself, but when you mentioned, in one of the scenarios, that if we had to put a portion of St. Albert into the city or a portion of Edmonton into St. Albert, that wouldn't work because there was such a difference between the suburban St. Albert and the urban Edmonton, but is there really that much of a difference?

Mr. Traynor: I would posit, yes, that there would be actually a fairly substantive difference.

Mr. Evans: But why doesn't it work? Why can't that work as a hybrid when the suburban-rural works as a hybrid?

Mr. Traynor: My overarching approach to this is basically that you should only consider those types of hybrid ridings as a last resort. The goal of effective representation would be ensuring that all voters are electing someone that has a similar experience, similar perspective to ensure that the MLA that they're electing can truly serve their needs and isn't beholden to multiple masters within the same riding.

Mr. Evans: That's happening in Morinville-St. Albert, right?

Mr. Traynor: I would not argue that it is. What I explained in my submission – and I directed the written one as well so there's a bit more detail there – is that in order to actually get elected in that riding, the winning candidate and the losing candidate who came as close as possible both had to compete effectively in all portions of the riding. It wasn't just a matter where you could run up the table in the 30 per cent of the riding that was roughly St. Albert . . .

Mr. Evans: But that's good.

Mr. Traynor: It is good.

Mr. Evans: Yeah.

Mr. Traynor: In certain scenarios.

Mr. Evans: It's good, effective representation.

Mr. Traynor: Exactly, when you can win like that. But it would be more ideal if St. Albert was large enough to have two St. Albert ridings. However, I wouldn't effectively, unfortunately, be able to add another 130,000 people to the city, as much as I think that would be wonderful.

Mr. Evans: That's theoretical. We're talking about what really happened.

Mr. Traynor: Exactly.

Mr. Evans: And that's illustrative about what can happen in other . . .

Mr. Traynor: A hundred per cent. And that means that when the Legislature cannot create those idealized, like-with-like boundaries, those rural-urban fused ridings can be a limited exception to allow for effective representation where the boundaries can be less cleanly drawn.

For example, in a city like Edmonton where, as the previous presenters commented, so much of it is based on community leagues, community relations, those sort of intricate kind of connections reaching across those boundaries into different communities, it would throw off those networks. We've also seen – I would actually direct to the most recent federal redistribution – where something was recognized similarly in the St. Albert and north Edmonton riding, where that Edmonton chunk was carved off, put back fully into the city, and then St. Albert was integrated in with Sturgeon county communities with which it has more of a direct connection.

I would also note that St. Albert is one of the oldest ridings in the province's electoral history. If we were to link it in with Edmonton, it would basically be overturning more than 80 years of provincial precedent.

7:40

The Chair: I'm going to have to stop this because we've got – sorry. Mr. Traynor, you've been a very entertaining presenter.

Mr. Traynor: Thank you.

The Chair: We went way over time. Way over time.

Mr. Traynor: I apologize.

The Chair: Cutting lawyers off is something I'm not unfamiliar with, so I'm sorry.

Mr. Traynor: Duly noted. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair: Make sure your written material stays with us.

Mr. Traynor: I will.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Our next presenter is Susan Shaw.

Mrs. Shaw: Good evening, commissioners.

The Chair: Good evening. Welcome.

Mrs. Shaw: I'm not sure – I sent my presentation to Aaron this afternoon, but I don't know if he got it. I have copies for you if you want them . . .

The Chair: Sure.

Mrs. Shaw: . . . or I can just provide them after.

I'm sorry. I am not accustomed to public speaking anymore, so I will not be nearly as entertaining as the gentleman who preceded me. I've been retired for some years, so this kind of thing is foreign to me now. However, having said that, I am very grateful for the opportunity to present you some information about the constituency of Edmonton-Rutherford in south Edmonton, where I've lived since 1990. I'm basically just going to follow my presentation, and I assume I might get ahead of you, but I might not.

I am a senior, as you can see. I am a wife, a mother, a grandma, and previously I was a social worker, predominantly in Edmonton but also in the Leduc area, for 37 years. I worked for the government, for nonprofits, and also for Edmonton public for significant lengths of time, and most of my work was with children and families, although I did some individual work as well. I've observed a great deal of change, as you can imagine, in Edmonton and the surrounding area during that time. My background is that I came from Regina, where I was born, to go to the U of A, and I just never left.

My understanding is that Edmonton may receive one additional seat for the next election, and as we have unequal populations in various areas of the city, some distribution would likely be required. So what I was hoping to do is give you a bit of my snapshot of Edmonton-Rutherford as it might be helpful from the perspective of someone who's lived there for quite a while. It's changed from being a fairly new suburb, when I moved there, to now an interior one with aging infrastructure and aging people, quite a few of us.

As I've noted in my presentation, 20 per cent of the population is under the age of 18, and about the same percentage is over the age of 65. That's quite a change. Even on my own block there is a significant change in the ages of people and people moving out, and I think that in Edmonton-Rutherford that is happening quite a bit. What it means is that, as transition neighbourhoods go, young people move in, some of them have kids – I see fewer of them having kids these days – so the neighbourhoods fill in. Fifty per cent of the residents in our constituency own their homes, but due to the growing number of seniors, younger individuals are moving in. There are some really large homes in Rutherford, and those homes seem to get snapped up just as fast as the smaller ones. It's amazing to me, considering what they must be worth.

The constituency has been a fairly stable collection of communities within the boundaries, even considering that the boundaries were changed last in 2019. I think that it's come together not too badly. As I noted in my submission, south of Blackmud Creek is a newer area, and – let me think. When my kids were – well, it's not that new anymore, I guess, in some ways, when I think about it. When my kids were younger, about, say, 11, 12, 13 – and my oldest is now 43 – that neighbourhood was just going up down there. Where I am, the house was built in 1980. I think that the homes down there, though, and the neighbourhoods are newer, and I've watched them kind of coalesce and develop community leagues and things like that. They have younger kids than in our neighbourhoods. They used to be just filled with younger kids. Now I think some of them have moved out, obviously.

But what we're seeing is a mix of cultures as well. If you look at your stats on Rutherford, the predominant cultural denomination is White, but it's been gradually changing, which is a good thing. I think that some of that's due to the two high schools because there's

quite a huge mix. It's just like the United Nations in there. It's good to have because it reflects, with the way the rest of the city is, what life in Canada is like these days. As we have immigration coming in, usually those folks are looking for homes, and it's a very good neighbourhood for them to move to.

What I noticed, what I wanted to talk to you about partly, was the difficulties we've been having in Rutherford, and part of it has to do with we have construction. We have a lot. I'm sure other people have come to you and said: oh, well, you know, we have construction. We have LRT going through the middle of our constituency, LRT expansion. There are three major routes that are affected by that: 111th Street, 23rd Avenue, and 119th Street. I think most people who go out in their cars on most days now experience stress from trying to drive around in Rutherford, trying to get through it. Even if you're just going, you know, a few blocks, you run into some kind of problem because of that.

We also have been affected by the construction going on in our next-door community to the west of Whitemud, where they have been having a major, major road construction smack down through the middle of it on Terwillegar. So people have decided that it's a very good idea to cut through our neighbourhood to get around it. That's great for them, but it's not so good for us. So those kinds of things are a concern.

The LRT itself has brought some issues that I think probably our city council could see were coming but, you know, we're not so sophisticated down there that we didn't necessarily see it, or we thought: oh, well, you know, those problems will stay downtown. We've got a few people that come down. Because we're at the end of the line at Century Park there, we have people coming down there who don't live down there, and they don't actually know what they're doing down there. They just come down there and they hang out. That's not necessarily a very good thing.

At the same time, at that very location, the city has decided to increase the density. There's been different kinds of housing going in in the Century Park collection of – I don't know what to call them. It's planned that there will be different kinds of housing going up right in that area, right next to the LRT. It all kind of is to the east of the LRT station, because west is all developed, so they left a piece open there that could be filled in. It used to be a mall. The mall was taken down, and now it's being filled in. That's going to make a considerable difference.

7:50

When you were talking before, Justice Miller, about your interest in building projects and that kind of thing, that is actually happening in that area in Rutherford right now. I'm so sorry; Dr. Martin, pardon me. I'm going by where the sign is. So it is actually happening, that kind of thing, for us right now.

We have LRT construction going every which way, and we have construction in the middle of Rutherford. It's not as bad right now as it is sometimes because they've completed a couple of things and they're just working on some other things in that particular area. They don't do them all at once, but they're planned. It's a lot of stress, I think, that wasn't there; even five years ago that stuff was not there. So the neighbourhood is in a lot more state of flux, I guess you'd say.

Having said all that, Rutherford is still a very desirable place to live. Except close to those major thoroughfares and the construction areas, it's pretty quiet. The crime rate is low. There are good schools at all levels. We're fortunate enough to have two high schools in our area. It's a well-served community, I would say.

Things did change after the 2019 boundaries were changed, I think, just because of the expansion. The services are more stretched now. Because we have more seniors and just a higher

population, as I've noted there, I think that there are just more issues. We have, of course, low vacancy rates, because we have that all over Edmonton, but there are more financial concerns. The last couple of years have really stressed people's finances, and we see more people with health issues. They can't get doctors. I have some acquaintance with the MLA of our area, and I know that they receive a crazy number of calls for help in that office, so they're really using the MLA and her resources to a very great degree.

As I have suggested to you at the end of my report to you, I believe that we haven't really finished adjusting to the last expansion. We went up in size by about a third. The area to the south that was added: the concerns are a little different than ours, and they are within the north part. I live on the north part there, and what I see is that on the northern side of Rutherford there are more issues than there are in the south. But altogether there's quite a lot.

I think that, perhaps, it's not the time, if the boundaries didn't have to be changed. If they do, they do. I mean, people adjust – right? – but it seems to me like we're still trying to adjust to the last time.

Yes, sir.

The Chair: I'm wondering if I can kind of maybe focus in and just confirm that you have the same numbers we do in terms of the population in Rutherford.

Mrs. Shaw: Okay.

The Chair: Back in 2017 they relied on figures that said your population was 47,353, and this time around we're relying on figures from 2024, which puts you at 52,757. Does that sound about right, a roughly 5,000 increase?

Mrs. Shaw: I'm not sure. I know that the city's intent is to increase our density, and that's what they're working on.

The Chair: Okay. So you do see some growth potential, then, based on the city housing zoning proposals?

Mrs. Shaw: Yes. Absolutely.

The Chair: Okay.

You've also referenced back to 2019 boundaries. Are you content with those for now? You see them remaining unchanged going forward out of our report?

Mrs. Shaw: Yeah, I think so.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Shaw: I do think it's a bit of a stretch for the MLA because of the things I've referenced. It's tough. It's a lot of work.

The Chair: Yup.

Mrs. Shaw: You know, just looking at it from the point of view of services and that kind of thing, you can't ever go backwards. But if it stayed the same, I think then the community would continue to adjust to it.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Shaw: I know that having looked at the boundaries, physically the boundaries seem to make sense. There doesn't seem to be anything too odd about it. I mean, you can't always set up boundaries to suit the physicality of an area either.

The Chair: Can I maybe move into some questions from the panelists?

Mrs. Shaw: Absolutely.

The Chair: Mr. Evans, do you have any questions at all?

Mr. Evans: I don't.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for the presentation, but I have no questions. It's well done. Thank you for the copy of it.

The Chair: Yeah, thank you for providing it.

Mrs. Shaw: Oh, you're welcome.

The Chair: Julian?

Dr. Martin: I don't think so. I mean, I know the area reasonably well, and I agree with a lot of your characterization. All I can say about the public transit is that it will some day end.

The Chair: The construction.

Mrs. Shaw: I think you've been through there maybe.

Dr. Martin: Well, I've done 121st . . .

Mrs. Shaw: I don't recommend it.

Dr. Martin: No, no. I entirely hear you. Thank you.

The Chair: Greg?

Mr. Clark: No. Better than Calgary; we don't even bother building it in Calgary.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you very much for the printed copy, Mrs. Shaw. I appreciate it.

Mrs. Shaw: You're welcome. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

The Chair: Okay. We're going to move on to the next presenters. It may be a pair or a duo. Paul Briones and Maria Briones. Yes, please come forward. Good evening. Just have a seat. Normally we've been under a time limit of about seven minutes per presenter. Are you okay with giving you 14 minutes together?

Mr. Briones: No. Seven minutes, actually. I wrote it down, so if it's faster for me to read it, and then you can . . .

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Briones: I'll say what I want and be direct to the point.

Hello. My name is Paul Briones, and this is my wife, Maria. We would like to begin by thanking the commission for giving us the opportunity to be here and speak about the electoral boundaries. I'm going to share my personal observation as a resident and community member. I have lived in Edmonton-South West along with my wife, Maria, for eight years. We live in the community of Uplands in Riverview and have family and friends in other surrounding communities in Edmonton-South West. We enjoy living in this area and appreciate the strong sense of belonging and community pride as well as the cultural and ethnic diversity in the area.

8:00

Our community has experienced significant growth and diversity since its development began. This has brought in a large mix of families from different ages, languages, and cultural backgrounds. The ethnic backgrounds of citizens in Edmonton-South West are very diverse, with visible minorities such as Chinese, South Asian, African Canadian, and Filipino Canadian, like my family. The diversity has led to richer community life, with various cultural festivals, shared community spaces, and opportunities to learn from one another. My family had the opportunity to participate in unique events such as a regular Filipino get-connected at church and also volunteering at AsiaFest in Windermere. We are grateful to live in a community where everyone's culture and heritage are valued and celebrated.

When taking into consideration the electoral boundaries, I would ask the commission to consider the diverse culture and heritage that distinguish Edmonton-South West from other communities. What brings us meaning is our culture. We don't want our riding and community groups to be separated and attached into a large rural community. We want to ensure that our community and culture groups remain intact in the new electoral ridings. It is important that our communities and our interests are well represented by our elected officials. I have been lucky to have Nathan Ip as my MLA. He represents the cultural diversity that I see in my community, and I appreciate his work in supporting the many communities that make up Edmonton-South West and advocating for us.

I thank you very much for your time and consideration.

The Chair: Thank you.

Anything you wish to add, ma'am?

Mrs. Briones: Oh, nothing. I just thank you for the opportunity to be able to present our side in the matter. Being immigrants, I am thankful for what Canada has provided for us, and I'm so thankful for the community that we are in right now. It's so welcoming and so diverse as far as race, religion, language, colour, and everything like that. We feel so much accepted in the community that we are in right now.

The Chair: You indicate you've been living in Edmonton-South West for eight years.

Mrs. Briones: Yes.

Mr. Briones: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Is that your first community you've moved to in Edmonton?

Mr. Briones: No. We've been coming from the south side, from Mill Woods.

The Chair: Oh, so you were in Mill Woods at one point.

Mr. Briones: Yeah, we're going back because of work, and we've had just, like, five moves since we were here in Edmonton.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: I wanted to know that, too. You've been in Edmonton. You're now in the southwest, but before that you were in Mill Woods.

Mr. Briones: Right. In Tamarack.

Mr. Evans: In Tamarack. I'm interested in the community connection that you're talking about. Tell me the difference between where you are now in that community sense that you're talking about and Mill Woods. What's the difference?

Mrs. Briones: Yeah. We noticed that in the community we're in right now, in the southwest, the community is more diverse. In the south side it's more like predominantly a different community. But now, you know, because it's a growing community the southwest is – Mill Woods is a more established community. There are already people settled there for quite some time. I noticed that immigrants have been coming not only from other countries, but also they're moving from other parts of Canada. They've also been moving into the southwest area.

So we've met a lot of people from different parts of Canada, from the east mostly. In fact, my daughter recently got married to someone who is coming from the east. It became diverse, right? My other daughter is married to a Chinese immigrant family. Then we have neighbours who are from different parts of Africa and even one from Ukraine, so you can imagine the diversity of the community. But it's very welcoming, and actually we like each other. We don't treat each other as, like, foreigners or something like that or someone different from us. We've learned their different cultures, different traditions, some which we share. Like, some are similar with our tradition. I noticed that it's more colourful. You know, it improves your understanding of human nature and how people interact with each other, coming from different areas or parts of the world, right? It's very, very interesting for us.

Mr. Evans: Do you have community leagues there, or do you have community association groups?

Mr. Briones: Right now we're a part of Edgemont because the Uplands is just, you know, growing and booming, and I've been trying to be involved with the officers. They said that if we want to consider doing our own, they will help us out. But we're still part of the Edgemont community, which is already established.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. I just wanted to let you know that your MLA, Nathan Ip, was here earlier today expressing the same kind of sentiments about community that you did. I would like you to expand on this thought that I was presented with earlier. That is that your MLA and your community represent a visible minority, and that's what makes Edmonton-South West so unique, that there are many, many different nations and people that make that up. How important is that to you, that your MLA is also a visible minority?

Mrs. Briones: Yes. Because we feel that we're connected with him, and he understands the situation that we immigrants are in in this community, right? Being from an immigrant family, also, he knows the challenges that we face.

We even consulted with him one time. We were hoping that we could create a program, maybe, or a compilation of services that the community, or agencies, or organizations in the community can offer individuals like immigrants or maybe people from other parts of Canada. Because sometimes, like, even for us, when we were studying, we don't know: where should I go if I need to know something about this kind of service; what should I do; who should I talk to? I don't think that there's that compilation or a particular resource, let's say, that people can go to and access, that: "Oh. I need something like this." Then I can go to the business of the

person, or this is the number I call, or is this the website that I go to.

We consulted with Mr. Ip about that. If we could do something about it then. Also we said we can offer our help if we need some way that we call resources or organizations that know what they can offer our community. But it's in the works. We have not done anything yet. We just asked him if we could do that.

Mrs. Samson: Yes.

Mrs. Briones: He is very open to it, and he understands exactly that it's very important. He said that he's willing to work with us on that. He just doesn't know when. We haven't agreed on the time frame, when we're going to do that, but we agree that we need to do that for the community.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. Thank you for that input. I appreciate that.

Mrs. Briones: You're welcome.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Martin: Thank you again. I'm looking at a Google map here, which is always fascinating because I was thinking: gosh; where is that? Now I know. But I see here that there's a lot of construction work going on in your neighbourhood.

Mrs. Briones: Yeah.

Mr. Briones: Yes, that's correct.

Dr. Martin: So it looks like you're in a very popular area because there's lots of scraped open ground immediately south of you as well. Obviously, neighbourhoods and shops are being put in.

Mr. Briones: Yeah. They're starting the commercial centre . . .

Mrs. Briones: Commercial area.

Mr. Briones: The commercial area by 23rd Avenue and 199th Street.

Dr. Martin: Right. Well, thank you for that, because I'm very keen to know if there are imminent and tangible construction activities. Very clearly there are.

Mrs. Briones: There's a lot.

Mr. Briones: I think there's planning for, and we need more schools and to put in an ETS terminal as well.

Dr. Martin: You have city councillors to ask about that.

Mr. Briones: Yeah. Right. I realize that. Just to mention it.
Thank you, sir.

8:10

Mr. Clark: I don't have any questions. I just want to say: thank you very much for coming. It really does genuinely help us get a real flavour and a picture for Edmonton-South West and just the community as a whole.

Mr. Briones: Right. Yeah.

Mr. Clark: I just want to thank you very much for coming.

Mr. Briones: Thank you, sir.

Mrs. Briones: Thank you also.

The Chair: I have a question or a comment question. You realize that Edmonton-South West will very likely have to be divided because the population is way too high.

Mr. Briones: Right.

Mrs. Briones: Yes.

The Chair: There are 76,000 people, and we need to get that down, so we'll be drawing boundaries to take some of the population out of that riding.

Mr. Briones: So the border would be Anthony Henday north and south?

The Chair: We're not sure yet.

Mrs. Briones: Oh, okay.

Mr. Briones: Okay.

The Chair: But we're gaining information in these public hearings to help us make the decision.

Mr. Briones: Mr. Nathan can run in the south; I can run in the north.

Mrs. Samson: Absolutely.

The Chair: Okay. Solved.

Mrs. Briones: Well, don't tell Mr. Ip that.

Mr. Clark: We opened that door.

The Chair: Well, it looks like you may have some people working for you here in the back. They're smiling.

The question I was leading up to is not whether you're going to be a candidate but whether – what do you think of the name? If we change it, do you have any comments or thoughts about the name of the riding? That's part of our job, too, is to recommend names.

Mrs. Briones: Can we keep ours?

Mr. Briones: South West – could be North West, maybe, if they're going to divide it into two.

Mrs. Briones: Yeah.

Mrs. Samson: No, but the existing riding: would you like to change the name?

Mr. Briones: No, we're good for that.

The Chair: You like the name?

Mrs. Briones: We like it.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Well, thank you for this very lovely human exchange. We really appreciate you coming.

Thank you.

Mrs. Briones: Thank you very much.

The Chair: You're excused, but please remain in the gallery if you wish.

Mr. Briones: Okay.

Mrs. Briones: Thank you.

The Chair: Calan Hobbs is our next presenter.

Mr. Hobbs: All right. I've got it on my phone, so I'll just be a moment. And we can keep that map up for Edmonton-South West. Yes. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the future of Alberta's electoral boundaries. Today I'm actually wearing two hats: one, as a citizen of Edmonton for the past 18 years, having lived and worked in many different parts of the city; and two, I am the constituency manager in the Edmonton-South West provincial constituency office with the great MLA Nathan Ip. So, yeah, I'm coming with both of those perspectives.

Firstly, I was motivated to speak today because of Bill 31, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, which removes the mandatory requirement that the commission consider municipal boundaries when considering a new provincial electoral boundaries. I know the Justice minister mentioned St. Albert and Edmonton as well as Chestermere and Calgary. Edmonton and Calgary, obviously, being the big cities, and St. Albert and Chestermere being the smaller kind of satellite cities and, as mentioned, communities of interest, as a kind of a replacement concept. I did want to touch on that because I do believe that the municipal boundaries act as some communities of interest in a way.

I'll first start about my personal experience, having lived in a district that encompassed both urban and rural municipalities. From 2007 to 2021 I did live in the federal riding of Edmonton-Sherwood Park, and I share this as relevant. A Member of Parliament at that time represented a mixed riding that included Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park as well as a few neighbourhoods in northeast Edmonton.

One thing that I remember is that I rarely saw my Member of Parliament and it was difficult for me to contact them. I recall a time wanting an in-person meeting, and them saying that it would take several weeks but I could join or visit them at an event in Fort Saskatchewan, which was a 20-minute drive from my home, but I didn't have a vehicle at the time. I felt that one item was interesting.

I did receive many newsletters, e-mails about events in those other cities, Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan, and I did have a few pertaining to Edmonton and, I know, a member thing, whatever the members in the constituency do, but at the time I was on my condominium board and a member of my community league board. We did have questions from neighbours asking who our member was: is it this person? At one point one of my colleagues on my condominium board invited a different MP to an event just because they didn't know and a lot of the information wasn't out there.

So there was that aspect or a view of a lack of access and understanding. I felt that a lot of my neighbours didn't feel as represented. On the flip side, our provincial boundaries and our municipal boundaries, obviously municipal is just within Edmonton, but the provincial was at the time Edmonton; we did see those representatives quite a bit, and it seemed like they were more connected with our community.

My point is that the riding was stretched too thin, trying to be everything to everyone but not necessarily serving everyone as well. That perspective is the federal versus the provincial at the time. I felt like the provincial representative was more representative and more available. I wanted to mention that and the confusion with a lot of my neighbours.

As the constituency manager in Edmonton-South West I know that the riding will be redrawn – you mentioned it earlier; it's grown

quite a bit – probably significantly. I understand that it's in the top five for highest population growth amongst ridings in Alberta. You had mentioned that the population was – did you say 76,000 at the moment?

Mrs. Samson: Yes.

Mr. Hobbs: Wow. It was about 66,000 in 2021, and that's not very long ago.

The Chair: It was 45,000 in the last EBC, in 2017.

Mr. Hobbs: There you go. Wow. So quite a bit different.

I know that the neighbouring riding, Edmonton-South, has seen similar growth. Yeah. I wanted to point out – and the last speaker did point it out as well – the diversity that is in the riding and bring it back to the urban and rural differences and the previous statement by the Justice minister, removing the municipal boundaries. We are quite diverse in Edmonton-South West. Half of the residents are of a visible minority. By the way, these are numbers that I pulled from the 2021 census. I'll just give percentages. I think that might be better, if that's okay: 11 per cent of the population originates from South Asia, 11.5 per cent is Chinese, and 10 per cent is Filipino, and then we have several different folks from different backgrounds.

The cultural makeup is what makes Edmonton-South West and its neighbourhoods not only unique but what it is. Most of the neighbourhoods are new, built within the past 10 or 20 years. All of these folks from different walks of life have been instrumental in building those neighbourhoods from scratch, being involved in community leagues, opening businesses, going to schools and churches, walking into a church regardless of the denomination. You see the diversity, like, right there. We do have a mosque as well.

8:20

Yeah. Those are some of the things that I'm hoping that the commission will take into consideration when the riding is divided up. Yeah. I want to advocate to ensure that these neighbourhoods are part of a riding that shares this diversity, this cultural connection. Also, the neighbourhoods being brand new, a lot of folks who come here come from different parts of Edmonton or Alberta but also different parts of the world, right? So a lot of folks share that newness, that building together. It's quite unique in some of the neighbourhoods, Edgemont and Hamptons there. It's quite exciting. It's something that I think is unique to different parts of Edmonton that are more established.

The Chair: Mr. Hobbs, can I maybe get right . . .

Mr. Hobbs: Right to the point. Absolutely.

The Chair: Because of your rich resource and background in that you run the constituency office, do you have a recommended, suggested boundary whereby we can make a division with Edmonton-South West? Have you given some thought to that?

Mr. Hobbs: Well, not necessarily like the boundaries themselves, but I do hope that they are within the Edmonton city limits. One recommendation that I would have is that the neighbourhood of Edgemont and then the smaller neighbourhoods, Stillwater, River's Edge: those neighbourhoods are bound for significant growth whereas . . .

The Chair: Are they below the river or above the river?

Mr. Hobbs: They are above the river though, I guess, between the river and then west of the Anthony Henday. I guess on the map you can see Lessard Road, so south of Lessard Road, west of the Anthony Henday, then north of the river. I don't have specific stats, but it's my understanding that the majority of that land is vacant; however, it has been sold to developers and is currently under development, or it's going to be under development in the next decade or so. So we're expecting significant growth in that portion of the riding as well but also south of Windermere as well, expecting growth, maybe not as fast. I know a lot of that land is not necessarily sold off to developers, but I do think that portion of Edgemont, when included and within boundaries, takes into account that we could see similar growth to that we saw in the past 10 years.

The Chair: Can I open it up for questions?

Mr. Hobbs: Yeah. Absolutely.

The Chair: Any questions?

Mr. Clark: No, I don't think so. I mean, I think the people of Edmonton-South West have represented very well here, so I think we've got a pretty good handle. I mean, it's a challenging area – right? – of growth, but understanding that, again, it does help very much to have your perspective. So thank you.

The Chair: A lot of diplomats live in Edmonton-South West. They're very positive ambassadors for that region.

Mr. Hobbs: There you go.

The Chair: Julian?

Dr. Martin: No. I think, between you and your MLA earlier today and the previous speakers, we've got a really good sense of the character of the current riding and some of the exciting growth that has been undertaken very recently. As you will have heard, I'm very interested in knowing about imminent and tangible construction. It's very clear that a lot of that is going on.

Mr. Hobbs: Yeah. Absolutely. I'd say that Edgemont, which I mentioned, also Windermere south of Ellerslie Road: a lot of construction in that area, and we know that the city is going to expand further south past 41st Avenue S.W., so expecting that. Yeah.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: I'm good, but thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Hobbs: Yes. My pleasure.

Mr. Evans: Thank you. No questions.

Mr. Hobbs: Okay. Perfect. Well, thank you for having me, and thank you for having folks come up and do this. I will say that we have had a lot of folks reach out to the office, interested in the commission. I don't know if that's unique to us, but we do have a lot of folks that recognize we're growing a lot.

The Chair: So our advertisement is working, then?

Mr. Hobbs: The advertisement's working, there you go.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Hobbs.

Mr. Hobbs: Yeah. My pleasure. Thank you.

The Chair: Next is Mr. Abdul Abbasi. No? Pedro Almeida. No? Oh, I was rushing here because I thought I had six more. Okay. Abel Savard.

Dr. Martin: Going once, going twice . . .

The Chair: Mr. Hobbs, I apologize for rushing you because I thought I had six more people. That's why I was kind of pushing you a little bit.

Mr. Hobbs: Can I come up again? No. I'm kidding. I got my points by.

The Chair: Carolyn Walker. Good evening.

Mrs. Walker: Well, I have my presentation written, and I hope you don't mind if I read to you. I'll try to be entertaining.

The Chair: No, no problem. Go ahead.

Mrs. Walker: Good evening. My name is Carolyn Walker. I'm a semiretired teacher who subs. When I prepare to persuade, it is in my nature to look at all the angles that I can. This comes from my background as a debater in school, then as my work as a teacher and a school administrator. I therefore am aware of some of the legislative parameters, administrative considerations, and democratic principles of electoral boundary design. My presentation will work to convince you to keep Spruce Grove and Stony Plain together in one electoral division district.

My motivation for this action comes from being fairly newly retired and having a desire to become involved in my new community. My specific interests for this commission are to impress upon you the economic growth, cultural unity, community voice, and identity that would be negatively affected by the separation of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain in the electoral process and riding representation.

As someone who has lived in many ridings across the province, I have an understanding of the difference between rural, urban, and semi-urban ridings. Rural ridings have many unique concerns; for example, in accessing services, in balancing protected land and growing needs for agricultural production. The semi-urban are concerned, for example, with transportation within the community and maintaining their cultural identity. Urban centres have to focus on things like infrastructure, densification, and, as we heard earlier, the LRT.

The unique relationship between our communities makes them seem like one place with a short country drive in between. The speed is slow. There's even a walking and biking path right down the side of the road in between the two communities. It is often in use by bikers and walkers alike. When we sold our acreage to come to town, we were eager to look at bungalows in either community as it just seemed like moving to town to us. The low inventory at the time made it necessary to make a quick decision. We made a quick but good decision and now call Spruce Grove home, but I still think about what it would be like to live in historic Stony Plain. I can't imagine breaking up this electoral riding for any reason than to dilute our voice and damage engagement.

Growth in our two communities has been rapid. Spruce Grove had a population of 42,513 in 2024, the 12th-highest growth in the province of smaller cities. The population of Spruce Grove has increased 3.75 per cent year over year and increased 11.6 per cent in the last five years.

I should have brought my water with me.

Since 2017 Spruce Grove and Stony Plain have grown 11.6 and 5.37 per cent respectively. There have been several – oh, thank you.

Oh, my goodness; from all sides. Thank you. There have been several developments in this riding that point to collaboration between all levels from transportation to cultural and recreational facilities.

8:30

Spruce Grove numbers for building in the last year: I printed from the *Stony Plain Reporter* the number of some permits that were granted in 2024. For example, there were 173 residential permits granted in 2024, with the average being 126 in the past between '19 and '23. I didn't give anybody my notes, but if you want this little table, I can certainly leave it with you. And then there's commercial. The numbers are about the same. Industrial increased. Alterations and additions went up by a few percentages as well.

What makes our riding special is the seamless integration of opportunities between two communities. Cultural opportunities are scheduled for both communities in a co-ordinated manner. Spruce Grove's transportation plan includes planning with Stony Plain. People live in one community and work in the other. We shop in one, have a gym membership in the other. My friends live in both communities. We also share economic interests, for example, in transportation and logistics. People have family in both communities, and Catholics meet in between the two at the Holy Trinity church.

I feel that splitting our riding and attaching either community to a more rural or more urban setting would water down the voices from both significant and growing communities. It might even put us at odds in competing for scarce resources rather than having the co-operative relationship we do now. I can see it as a source of division for a new neighbouring riding and within the new configuration as our needs would be dissimilar from other members of this so-called new riding. It could even also contribute to a source of confusion and potentially keep people from voting since our federal government has put us in the same riding, too. In my opinion, splitting our riding and separating our two communities would be a disservice to democratic principles that we as Canadians have come to expect in our electoral process.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you, and I hope you have no questions.

The Chair: I'm not sure I can fulfill that hope, ma'am.

Mrs. Shaw: Sorry. I'll do my best.

The Chair: Greg, any questions?

Mr. Clark: This is just really interesting. I've got a little bit of data magic here that I'm just sort of drawing from. So Spruce Grove is bigger than Stony Plain populationwise, but it's newer, you said. Stony Plain is sort of the more historic . . .

Mrs. Shaw: Yeah. Stony Plain is older. Yeah.

Mr. Clark: What's the natural kind of flow? I think you talked a bit about that, right? It's a little tough when I look at it on a map compared to, you know, you who kind of live that every day. How much interaction do you have, like, going into Edmonton? Is it sort of that you go to Edmonton, you maybe go to school there or shopping? Is it all pretty self-contained, or how do you . . .

Mrs. Shaw: It's pretty self-contained. Of course, people shop in Edmonton. I'd be lying if I said they didn't. But I do believe we're getting a Costco, and that'll be the end of that. You'll never see us again. Educationwise no; only postsecondary. The high schools are all there. As I said, I have the same number of friends in both communities. It becomes somewhat of a retirement community for

professionals in the outskirts and, I'm sure, others, but a lot of my teacher friends live either in Stony or in Spruce.

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

The Chair: Okay. Julian?

Dr. Martin: No, I don't have anything. I'm just captivated by maps. I do notice that they have maintained – it's a very interesting feature – the industrial and commercial aspects of the two municipal – one's a town and one's a city. But in the case of Spruce Grove all the industrial is to the south of 16A, and the obverse is true with Stony, where, you know, the old town is south and the commercial and industrial is all north. So you guys have been kind of eyeing each other up, circling around each other for a long time, I guess, because we've also got all these quarter sections of farming and Parkland that divide the two.

You heard me go on and on about tangible and imminent construction. Have you seen any indication at this time that those Parkland and green quarter sections and sections are going to get developed?

Mrs. Walker: I don't. I don't know. I lived in Parkland county. I moved from that acreage, and I worked really hard because I'm a teacher, and I didn't look at that very much. Sorry. I don't really know.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Walker: I'm sorry. I don't know.

The Chair: Refresh my memory. Which side do you live on?

Mrs. Walker: Of Spruce?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mrs. Walker: I live in Spruce.

The Chair: Oh, okay. And how long have you been there?

Mrs. Walker: A year.

The Chair: Okay. You obviously love this community.

Mrs. Walker: I do. I love Spruce Grove. As I said, I really kind of had my wagon hitched to old-town Stony, but, you know, whatever. We were happy to be in either community because they're so fluid and so connected.

The Chair: Okay. Susan, any questions?

Mrs. Samson: No, I don't. Thank you for your presentation.

The Chair: John?

Mr. Evans: I'm just mesmerized by the unrequited love you have for Stony.

The Chair: It is a unique riding. Thank you for highlighting it for us.

Mrs. Walker: Yes. And the numbers: you know, with 42,500 in one and almost 20,000 in the other, it's smack dab in the lovely number zone.

The Chair: If you can leave a copy with Aaron, please do.

Mrs. Walker: Sure. You can have it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Walker: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Jarrad Marthaller.

Mr. Marthaller: I need someone to bring me water this time. Thank you for making the time today. I didn't bring a slide show, so only my words to listen to, unfortunately. I'm speaking, again, to Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

The Chair: Sorry. Could you identify yourself?

Mr. Marthaller: Oh, yeah. My name is Jarrad Marthaller. I'm making a similar point about the cohesiveness of these two communities. I'll introduce myself. I have deep roots in Spruce Grove, and my family has proudly called this community home for three generations. My personal history is deeply intertwined with both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, from attending Millgrove elementary school to taking Ukrainian dance lessons at the Stony Plain Community Centre. My formative years included countless interactions like sports events where Spruce Grove composite high school students competed both alongside and against our peers from the Stony Plain Memorial high school. I share this not merely as personal reminiscence but to establish the profound and long-standing cultural, social, and practical links that inextricably bind these two municipalities.

For residents the lines between Spruce Grove and Stony Plain are often blurred. We live, work, access services, and participate in community life interchangeably across them. This creates a powerful shared community of interest that is vital to electoral representation. This deep integration is not just anecdotal; it is formally recognized and actively fostered through numerous shared services and collaborative initiatives such as our integrated public transit systems. Our communities benefit from a connected public transit system, which encompasses on-demand local transit, commuter services, and vital accessible transportation for our elderly populations and our people with disabilities.

Now, there's collaborative infrastructure development occurring all the time. Spruce Grove and Stony Plain consistently collaborate on significant capital-funded projects and shared facilities. Our respective municipal capital budgets reflect strategic allocations for infrastructure designed to support our collective regional growth and are often included in capital region plans together.

We have shared housing solutions for the ongoing housing deficits these communities face. We address these challenges through unified effort. The Meridian Housing Foundation, as one example, provides essential, affordable, and supportive housing supports for seniors across Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and the surrounding Parkland county. Furthermore, our collaborative regional housing guide offers comprehensive resources for residents across both municipalities. Lastly, just as one small example, a part of our shared identity and a real cornerstone in the community is the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre, which services sports and recreation across the entire region.

8:40

Beyond these operational economic interdependencies, there are significant political commonalities and a shared trajectory. The prospect of future amalgamation of these two municipalities is a recurring discussion, as evidenced by this geographic circle that you mentioned earlier, and reflects the ever-closing geographical and functional boundaries between our municipalities. Importantly, the two already exist harmoniously within the same federal electoral district of Parkland, as represented by Member of

Parliament Dane Lloyd, and demonstrates the precedent for recognizing our unified nature.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that our municipalities function as a singular cohesive community. The myriad connections, from daily commutes and shared recreational spaces to joint infrastructure planning and social support systems, all serve to form the bedrock of a distinct and indivisible local identity.

We understand that Elections Alberta faces the complex task of redrawing boundaries to reflect population shifts all across the province. Many ridings, as we've discussed even today, require significant adjustments. However, the electoral district of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, which is also a very convenient naming convention for our residents, does not require the same changes and already achieves an effective balance of representation. It respects the deeply embedded community of interest, facilitates effective representation by grouping residents with common concerns and services, and reflects the lived reality of those who call this region home. To arbitrarily divide or significantly alter the boundaries of this riding would be to fragment a community that is in practice and spirit already whole.

Therefore, we respectfully and strongly encourage the commission to recognize the unique and integrated nature of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, and we ask that you prioritize the preservation of our current electoral boundaries as much as possible, keeping it similar to its present form, thereby ensuring that the intrinsic ties that bind our communities continue to be reflected within our democratic representation.

Thank you. I do not mind questions.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Evans?

Mr. Evans: No, I don't have any questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: None. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: The decided disadvantage of being late in the day and the second on Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

The Chair: The second speaker on an almost-perfect riding.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. On the one that fits so nicely right in the green zone there for numbers. We do appreciate it. It is actually very, very helpful for someone who doesn't really know the communities all that well to just get a real flavour of it.

Thank you.

Mr. Marthaller: Perfect. Well, I will answer one question that nobody asked, and that's that land development between the two cities of Spruce Grove going west and Stony Plain going east continues. There has been some land development right on the easternmost boundary of the riding but largely, like, pushing west rather than east at present. There was a recent annexation of land in that way. There has not been much to the south of Spruce Grove, and I can't speak as much about the northern Stony Plain boundary of land annexation, but they increasingly encroach together closer and closer, and year after year amalgamation is simmering for discussion.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you to both presenters on this.

Okay. Who am I missing? Oh, Mr. Abdul Abbasi.

Mr. Abbasi: Good evening.

The Chair: Good evening.

Mr. Abbasi: Thank you so much for having me here. First of all, my name is Abdul Abbasi. I'm the vice-president external for the University of Alberta Students' Union, and I'm here today representing the voices of 37,000 undergrad students to speak about the critical importance of ensuring fair and equitable electoral boundaries that accurately represent our rapidly shifting population, especially concerning our student demographic.

We have observed rapid and dynamic shifts in where people live within Edmonton, and this directly impacts the student population. A significant trend we have noted is that students are increasingly moving outward from campus, often driven by the pressing issues of housing affordability. Looking at some specifics, between 2019 and 2023 several areas in north and central Edmonton have seen substantial increases in our student population. The number of University of Alberta undergrad students living in major postal code blocks within ridings such as Edmonton-West Henday, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and Edmonton-Meadows has increased by 30 to 50 per cent. To give you a sense of scale, around 2,000 University of Alberta students currently reside in these specific ridings.

The changes in south Edmonton have been even more dramatic during the same period. Major postal code blocks in Edmonton-South West, Edmonton-South, and Edmonton-Ellerslie have seen their student population increase by 44 to 55 per cent. What is particularly concerning about, again, the south riding is that they're all currently more than 25 per cent above the average size. We estimate that around 4,000 U of A students live within these three ridings alone.

The issue of oversized ridings is not, again, merely an academic one; it has tangible impact on our democracy. Oversized ridings can unfortunately devalue an individual Albertan's vote and their representation, and it is imperative that students deserve to have their voices and votes count as much as their neighbours.

Furthermore, the demographic trends are not expected to slow down. In fact, they're projected to grow. Alberta's current student population is growing rapidly, with an estimated increase of 40 per cent between 2021 and 2025. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that any new seats that are created reflect the reality of this significant population growth, especially when it comes to students.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

The Chair: Thank you for a concise presentation.

Greg?

Mr. Abbasi: Have you got any questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Just your opening statement on students sort of going further and further out. Maybe you can just speak a bit to that and maybe sort of some of the root causes of that and if that reflects sort of a broader – is it a development issue? Is it sort of like things that we may need to consider in terms of that population? Is that population hollowing out, or are students being priced out? Just maybe help me understand that a little better.

Mr. Abbasi: Thank you so much. I think it's a bit of both. When we're looking at the Garneau area, where the University of Alberta main campus is mainly located, that has a one-person vacancy rate, and it's becoming really hard for students to afford housing. That has been something that has been – again, we have seen students especially living more near a transit area, so it's easier for them to

travel. We have seen students, again, moving away from downtown and moving away from near the university.

Secondly speaking, as well, the University of Alberta plans to increase their population by 16,000 over the next seven years. It is important – again, the housing is not building up to that pace and making sure that we have that housing. I would say that those are the big reasons, affordability and increase in population.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Julian?

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much for bringing our attention to the issues of students and the growth in the students as a significant part of not only the population but the economics of Edmonton as well. We had a colleague of yours earlier, the president of the students' union at MacEwan University, and he was talking about students as well. I would encourage you two to put your heads together on these sorts of things.

It's implied, I think, in your remarks about how students have to go away from the core, as it were, to find adequate housing opportunities, that that's simultaneously a matter of where public transit goes, correct?

Mr. Abbasi: Yes. Something that we have with the universities and postsecondaries across Edmonton is a mandatory U-Pass. Students pay \$180 for U-Pass a semester, and they get unlimited rides, whether it's with the LRT or with transit in buses. Again, even if students are living further away, it's costing the same, but the time and everything – like, students have early morning classes. It's really hard for them to come, especially when we're looking at vulnerable populations, if they're living further away. Transit is not always so safe, especially when we're looking at women and/or minority communities.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: I was just going to add to Dr. Martin's comments. We also had a written submission from MacEwan University outlining the same kinds of problems. For us it's an alert or a red flag of where the population is coming from and the kind of numbers you're projecting with the U of A, so thank you for bringing that to our attention.

8:50

Mr. Abbasi: Of course. And if it's helpful to the commission, we do have data from 2013 till 2023 in three-year intervals of where students have moved. If that may be of importance to the commission, happy to, again, share that.

The Chair: Anything you have, you could leave it with Aaron.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: John, any questions or comments?

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

The Chair: Mr. Abbasi, I have some – maybe it's the lateness of the hour. I'm not sure I understood you on a couple of points. Just towards the end of your presentation, I thought I understood you to say that the University of Alberta is planning to increase the student population by 15,000.

Mr. Abbasi: Yeah, 15,000, 16,000.

The Chair: That's going to be the increase?

Mr. Abbasi: Yeah. So right now . . .

The Chair: When I started university, the university was large; at that time it was 13,000.

Mr. Abbasi: Right now, if we include grads and undergrads, it's around 45,000 students at the U of A, and across Edmonton I believe it's 110,000, 115,000 postsecondary students.

The Chair: Okay. So it's going to be an increase of 15,000. Over what period of time?

Mr. Abbasi: Oh. By 2033, only at the U of A. It also includes . . .

The Chair: Okay. So eight years from now.

Mr. Abbasi: Yeah. The government of Alberta has estimated that between 2021 and 2033 there will be a 40 per cent increase in the student-age population as we have been seeing with them putting money into middle school and high schools. Once these students come to postsecondary, we'll see that increase.

The Chair: I thought you said at the beginning of your presentation that the overflow of students is spilling into three different ridings. Did you not say that?

Mr. Abbasi: Yes.

The Chair: Could you tell me which those are again?

Mr. Abbasi: I did mention a few ridings. When we are looking at, like, Edmonton-West Henday, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and Edmonton-Meadows, those have seen an increase of 30 to 50 per cent between 2019 and 2023. But south Edmonton, whether it's Edmonton-South West, Edmonton-South, and Edmonton-Ellerslie, have seen student population increase by 44 to 55 per cent. It's anywhere between 30 and 55 per cent.

The Chair: Okay. So you can track that data very easily?

Mr. Abbasi: Yeah. We do have some information from the registrar's office to see where students have moved in those years, and, again, I would be happy to share that.

The Chair: Good. Well, that's interesting.

Well, thank you very much for your very clear – and I apologize for not hearing, not processing . . .

Mr. Abbasi: Oh, no. No worries at all. It's late in the day.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Abbasi: Thank you so much.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: I believe there is an Abel Savard.

Mr. Savard: Just go whenever?

Members of the redistricting committee, my name is Abel Savard, and I've lived and worked in Spruce Grove-Stony Plain for most of my adult life. It's given me great pride to see these two communities grow and develop over time. I have fond memories of Main Street as a boy, going to my grandfather's mechanic shop that was on Main Street for many years until he died in 1995. I remember the murals and stuff around Main Street that have sort of this connection to the history and identity of the community.

Also, one of the things that I've loved over the years is seeing Stony Plain and Spruce Grove grow. Seeing this vibrancy means that these towns are going to have a future going forward. You know, I've got great memories of, like, going to the old theatre in Spruce Grove but also going to the new one there, that opened a decade ago. I also, like, remember going to the community pool in Spruce Grove and then later to the Tri Leisure Centre. So as we see this growth and development, we also see this improvement. It was in Spruce Grove that I got my first job working at a Safeway.

I'm speaking to you today to keep these two towns in the same electoral riding because these two towns have basically become a single entity over time. You know, the police station was somewhat recently combined and moved over to the western side of Spruce Grove to better serve both communities. I think if these two towns are divided up into two different provincial ridings, this would be to deny the self-determination of these two towns to freely associate together and to form and shape their own unique community. Furthermore, when it would be divided up, they would be forced to combine with other different areas – I believe, like, Spruce Grove was once part of St. Albert – which necessarily means that one single representative is going to be representing a very different sort of set of interests and constituencies. Inevitably, they will have to choose which one to represent. And it'll probably be the one that they receive the most support for, leaving the other to languish, as it were.

Now, there could be a truly exceptional person that could represent such a diverse and geographically disparate riding effectively, but I don't think that's really a possibility. Representative democracy has shown time and time again that the best form of representation is that of self-representation, a person of the community for the community. I think that's the best way to go about doing it.

Especially, like, I've become concerned about political parties gerrymandering the district. You know, making sure that they're excluding voters that are – excluding neighbourhoods that oppose them, including the neighbourhoods that support them. I feel like this is kind of dangerous for democracy because it leads to these ridings where the politicians can't really be unelected over any sort of normal election. This would lead to, you know, stagnation, corruption becoming entrenched within our political system. In our current day and age of populism and some other less savoury political movements, I think having responsive public officials is the most important thing right now.

I want to thank the committee for hearing my submission, and thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions on this side?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Just one really quick question. I just realized that a few Spruce Grovers – there have been, I think, eight quarter sections of land that have been just newly annexed south of town. You know, I'm totally putting you on the spot here with a potentially very technical question. I'm just reflecting on the mayor's submission requesting that we make sure we include those. It's not a massive change. It looks like there's no population at the moment.

Mr. Savard: Yeah. I know those areas are kind of empty down there. I can't really say about, like, any housing down there.

Mr. Clark: Okay. No. That's fine. I just wanted to – I saw this, so I thought I might ask.

Mr. Savard: Yeah. It does feel like it's been expanding southward for a while now.

The Chair: Somewhat of a trivia question. Both the previous two presenters talked about discussions about amalgamation. Is that real? Is that imminent? Is that something that you know much about?

Mr. Savard: I've watched the towns come closer together over the years. Like, the police station is located just smack dab in the middle, between those two towns right there. It wouldn't surprise me if other things like hospital services – well, I suppose the hospitals not necessarily because they want it to be close to everybody, but seeing more services move towards that middle area. You know, there's a reason why they built the Tri Leisure Centre there. Like, it's exactly between the two towns. Yeah. I didn't want to say too much else.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Savard, for speaking. We've got a very good idea of Spruce Grove now.

I believe that's everyone on the scheduled list. There is one add-on though.

Chantal McKenzie. You did not have a reservation, but we found a table for you.

Ms McKenzie: I thank you so much. I want to say thank you for allowing me. A few of the people in the back of the room have already spoken. Just based on your questions and that I originally wasn't able to attend tonight, that's why I had not registered.

Just to give you a little bit of my background, I was born and raised in Spruce Grove. I have lived there my whole life, and that's over 50 years. So that's, you know – my parents actually still live in the same house that they bought in 1969, and they're in their 80s now, and they're still there. So I do come with a lot of passion. Back in 2019 when the change went, where Spruce Grove used to be part of some of St. Albert and some of Parkland and Stony Plain, it made a lot of sense that they put the two together, so I really would want to encourage that.

9:00

Also, to give you my background, I was a city of Spruce Grove councillor from 2017 until 2021. I ran for mayor in 2021, and I have announced that I am seeking mayorship again in the coming election this October. Just to give you a little bit of my insight on that, as a councillor working with Stony Plain council, there is a lot of work together. The two communities have been amazing over the years, you know, whether it be transit, whether it be having the hospital in one area, again, as some of my colleagues spoke to, the Tri Leisure Centre, where we work, as well as Parkland county. The reality is that these three communities really work well together.

But Spruce Grove and Stony Plain – I made jokes when I was in junior high. We used to call it Stony Grove and Spruce Plain. There's a lot of, you know, that bickering back and forth. It's a bit like an Edmonton and Calgary thing. But the reality is that we have transit that works in between both communities, all of that sort of thing. So there are a lot of similarities, whether we're looking provincially, federally, or at the municipal level, and where the residents have the same issues. I just wanted to get up and speak to that.

Yes, the current map does show the annexed lands, I believe. What was annexed – and that's when I was on council – is part of the land along – actually, I apologize. No. The Century Road is where it is. I would just show you . . .

Mr. Clark: We'll give you a microphone so we can record this properly.

Ms McKenzie: Oh, sorry. I'll show you that page. Okay. This then comes across and goes up to Pioneer Road. So these are the lands that were annexed. In the current annexation discussion of it, that is 25 years out, really, for development.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms McKenzie: Then there is – even within Stony Plain we know a lot of it is 30-plus years. I know myself, too, as my background, I am also a civil engineer so I understand development and all that sort of land use. The reality is that the numbers fall within. It made sense in 2019 to amalgamate them together as one riding, and I really want to encourage the commission that you guys keep it that way.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to come up and speak.

The Chair: Just for clarification, the 2017 Electoral Boundaries Commission created this.

Ms McKenzie: Yes.

The Chair: And it sounds like it's universally loved.

Ms McKenzie: I really do believe so.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms McKenzie: Yeah. It made a lot of sense. I know that even me, growing up, how was I part of St. Albert? You know, to me St. Albert was a long way away. We have Spruce Grove hockey, it used to be, but now we do have Spruce Grove and Stony hockey. But even our ringette, we have Spruce Grove ringette, which actually encompasses Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. There's all of that amalgamation. It made sense in 2017, so it would be highly encouraged from a lot of us.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Any comments, questions?

Mr. Clark: No.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clark: I appreciate the context on the annexation and all of that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms McKenzie: Thank you.

The Chair: And thanks for clustering the presenters in such a way because it makes . . .

Mrs. Samson: Yeah.

The Chair: You know, after two solid days our minds need help in focusing. So thank you.

Ms McKenzie: Yeah. Well, in Spruce Grove-Stony Plain we also have a great constituency association. That's where they – we've got some really good team members.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms McKenzie: I was going to let them talk, but based on some of the questions and because I was able to make it, I just thought I could provide some clarity.

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms McKenzie: Thank you for your time and working on this.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I think that's the entire presentation list. We will adjourn. We will reconvene in Westlock tomorrow afternoon.

[The hearing adjourned at 9:04 p.m.]

