



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Calgary

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Judy Heynen
Gord Lawlor, Mayor, Town of Stettler
Julie Pithers
Cynthia Wagner

9:10 a.m.

Monday, January 12, 2026

[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our very first 2026 public hearing of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission public hearings. I realize that the room is not near capacity at this point, but I still think I'm going to proceed with my formal introduction and presentation. As you can see, there's five of us as commissioners, and our nameplates are in front of us. If you wish to learn more about our background, our biographies are on the electoral boundary commission website.

Our task, when it was given to us back in late March, early April of 2025, was to redraw boundaries in Alberta because of two changes, the high increase in population in the province and the expansion of the Legislative Assembly from 87 members to 89. As everyone is aware, voters in their electoral district elect their MLAs to the Legislature. In terms of population you can see the increase of Alberta's population has been quite significant since the last Electoral Boundaries Commission report that was issued in 2017.

As best estimates we have that somewhat over 800,000 more people live in Alberta or have moved to Alberta, expanded to Alberta over the last nine years. What that means is that if you take the total population of Alberta, which we estimated at the beginning of our electoral boundaries was 4.8 million people, and you compute that over 89 ridings, it's an average population base of 54,929. Of course, population is not the key or only factor in dealing with electoral boundaries. Our task as a commission is to recommend boundaries that provide the magical term of "effective representation" for Albertans.

In terms of the history of what we as a commission have done since our formal appointment in early April of last year, we have worked hard to come to an agreed-upon data source for our population, and you can read more about that in our actual interim report, but we're satisfied that that is the best assessment of Alberta's population for the work of the commission. We arrived at that figure I just showed earlier of 4.8 million. We reviewed hundreds of written submissions leading up to our initial report in October of last year, and we sat around the province and had public hearings all across the north, central, Edmonton, Calgary, and the south. It was a very busy month of May and June for us, and we saw a lot of Alberta in conducting those public hearings. Throughout all that time we worked closely with Elections Alberta and their map and cartography people in terms of where the best place for the boundaries should be, given the new population that we have to deal with.

All those things led up to our interim report, which was released to the Speaker of the Legislature in late October of this last year. This report: every one of us has it. For those of you who are presenting, you don't have to worry; you will not be grilled on whether you read every last word of this report. But we are looking forward to feedback on that report in terms of changes, friendly amendments, things that we can do better in terms of the final report, which is due in March of this year.

We went through all of the legislative characteristics in arriving at this report, and our ultimate goal was to provide effective representation with understandable and clear boundaries. That has proven to be somewhat of a challenge, and any aspect of the challenge that we face: we're looking forward to help and encouragement and possible changes through this process of suggestions for our final report.

We will be meeting and having public hearings from today onwards. Two and a half days here in Calgary, the rest of the week

in Edmonton, and then virtual or online submissions throughout next week out of Edmonton.

So that's a bit of a summary of how we arrived at today's commencement of the public hearing process, and we have close to a full morning this morning. Given those initial comments, I'm going to call on our first public presenter. While we have probably informed the presenters that we've got strict timelines, we are somewhat flexible and happy to not necessarily keep the clock and provide extra time if needed, and we are happy to engage in dialogue and conversation with the presenters as well.

I knew if I dragged this out long enough, we'd get our full commission sitting for our first presentation. Welcome, Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: I'm going to call on our first presenter, Ms Julie Pithers. Please come forward and have a seat at the table. Take a moment and get your presentation ready. Tell us your full name and where you're from and what particular riding or electoral district you wish to comment on. Advise us as well if you've presented before on our first go-around because my memory is not that good. If you did, we're interested in that as well.

Ms Pithers: All right. My name is Julie Pithers, and I did present here before when it was just more of a broad discussion about the approach to the boundaries for Albertans as an Albertan. I guess I'll just start off by saying that I am a big supporter of every Albertan having equal weight to our vote, so riding numbers are important to me rather than, you know – I'm in the country, and we live in a time when you can talk to anybody online, so I could talk to my representative at any time, unlike in the past where it would be arduous to go and talk to your MLA. That was my big thing then. Just so you know, I live in Elbow Valley, which is one of the boundaries that's being considered for change. Right now we're part of Banff-Kananaskis, and Calgary-West is what is the proposition for us to join up with.

One other thing: I'd like to really thank all of you for taking this time because it is such an important part of our democracy, of having representation that represents us equally, and I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Just to begin, I have lived in the Elbow Valley area on and off for 50 years, when highway 8 was called Richmond Road and it was gravel. Now I live in Elbow Valley proper, the community called Elbow Valley Estates, which was developed, I think, in the early 1990s and then finally got built out starting in 2000. It's an unusual neighbourhood for Rocky View. The whole thing is about 1,000 acres, and of that thousand acres 700 of it is green space, which is lovely. I'll get to that later on in my piece.

For the most part we're a community of young families. I'm an exception to that rule. That's why I have time today to come here on the northeast side of the city. These families: the parents typically work in the city. Their children are students. If they're older, they're definitely in the city, and even some of the younger ones are bused to city schools.

We all use Calgary's infrastructure, like roads, schools, sports facilities, medical facilities, but one somewhat interesting thing is that our sewer system is a luxury that goes to the city, which is rare for a rural community. We are hooked up to the city's Bonnybrook system. We pay Rocky View directly and then they pay the city. That's one of the main infrastructure things.

9:20

Therefore, our daily household concerns are aligned with the city more so than Canmore, Banff, and even especially Jasper, and it's become even more of a visual attachment since the southwest ring

road has been finished off a few years ago. On top of that, there is a little chunk of Calgary that darts into our community. It's a park called Clearwater Park. It crosses the typical Calgary boundary right into Rocky View, where we're officially a part of. Because of all of this, some residents in Elbow Valley feel so connected to Calgary that when they have an issue, they incorrectly phone a councillor in Calgary to complain about it, forgetting that they're part of Rocky View.

Probably the biggest reason for me coming here today goes back to the layout of our neighbourhood, which is very much forested. It's green space. It's beautiful, and it's a fire hazard, particularly for the people who live downwind of us, which is Calgary-West. On my way here today, coincidentally, I heard the story that Alberta safety has taken up a very big problem in our community, that we have a private company that provides us all with water. That water is expensive. You know, that's another issue. But we have fire hydrants, and they have so far said they don't need to supply the water pressure required for those essentially decorative fire hydrants. Rocky View has gone to battle with them, saying, "Well, you really should," and they've said, "Well, you've never made us do it before, so therefore we don't have to do it," so now it's gone on to the next step.

Our neighbourhood is exactly that. We do not have fire suppression coming out of those hydrants, so if push comes to shove and the droughts that keep being predicted happen, we're going to be a problem for Elbow Valley. Even if a drought doesn't come or isn't as bad, that private water company pulls water directly off of the Elbow River before it reaches the city of Calgary, before millions of people get their water out of the reservoir. Calgary-West has a direct interest in sharing the same MLA with us for this particular reason.

We're in Rocky View, a different municipality. I'm sure the city doesn't really want to annex us, and I know that Rocky View doesn't want to give us up, so this is kind of a really nice way for those two communities that have so much in common to have at least one group that we can all go to and find a good compromise to whatever's going on.

The Chair: Can I just interject here, ma'am?

Ms Pithers: Absolutely.

The Chair: I'm wanting a visual of Elbow Valley, and I've asked Mr. Roth. Can you just – is it north of the Bow River?

Ms Pithers: We're southwest of the city. The community actually is on both sides of that highway, but everything is south of the Elbow River, and we're just north of the Tsuut'ina Nation.

The Chair: North. Okay.

Ms Pithers: So that's our south border.

The Chair: Oh, and that's highway 8. Okay. Yep.

Ms Pithers: Yep. And then the ring road, of course, sort of follows the border.

The Chair: And you have a golf course in there?

Ms Pithers: We do. Yeah. It's called Elbow Springs. It's not really part of the neighbourhood, but it's there.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry for that.

Ms Pithers: Oh, no. That's all right. I mean, it used to be a racehorse track, and it used to be a trout farm. It used to be a bunch of things, but it was bought by Rob Peters back in the 1990s and finally developed.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Pithers: Yeah. I mean, it's quite suburban in its nature compared to the rest of Springbank in particular. Springbank: the smallest lot they have is two acres, and they don't want to go anything below that. Everybody else is on wells and septic systems. We're one of the only neighbourhoods – there's a couple of other smaller ones, but we're the biggest one.

The Chair: Okay. So am I correct that right now you are, under our proposed maps, in Banff-Jasper?

Ms Pithers: We are, yeah. I mean, it's a big, big riding, and we're a fairly big chunk, but then you've got the major towns of Banff, Canmore, and I think it's a little bit of Jasper now. But I think the new boundary would include all of Jasper.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Ms Pithers: You know, they're lovely. I would imagine there are a number of people in our neighbourhood that have a secondary home in Canmore in particular.

The Chair: Really?

Ms Pithers: Yeah, it's a pretty well-to-do place. We're in a duplex. You know, whatever is going on with them is fine, but their day-to-day livelihood really is more attached to Calgary.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Pithers: All right. So I'm for it.

The Chair: You're for?

Ms Pithers: For the boundary change: that we are taken out of Banff-Kananaskis and put into the joint Calgary-West-Elbow Valley.

The Chair: Okay. And just for everyone's benefit . . .

Dr. Martin: Calgary-West.

The Chair: Is what?

Mrs. Samson: Are you looking at 141?

Mr. Clark: Yeah, it's page 141.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Mrs. Samson: Calgary-West-Elbow Valley.

The Chair: Number 29.

Mrs. Samson: There we are.

The Chair: Okay.

Questions from the commission?

Mr. Clark: I guess, the only thing that I find interesting – and you raised it and spoke to it a little bit. Maybe I'll ask you to expand a bit. What I'm hearing is that you've got a commonality with Calgary because you've got infrastructure shared, the nature of the housing, a little bit more density, that it kind of orients towards Calgary in terms of where you shop and kind of live and even some

schooling and things even though you're not physically within the boundaries of Calgary.

Ms Pithers: Right.

Mr. Clark: But that's quite different than Springbank, as you say, right?

Ms Pithers: It is.

Mr. Clark: You'd say that Springbank kind of orients, you know . . .

Ms Pithers: A little – I wouldn't say "rural" because . . .

Mr. Clark: No, it's not.

Ms Pithers: . . . really, so many of the large ranches have been subdivided down to two- and four-acre lots. I would imagine that most of those people work in the city as well. But I would say that it's the sewer line and also just the way our neighbourhood is designed. I mean, it is very treed. It looks like Kananaskis. It's beautiful, but it's one of those things that is considered a fire risk. What do they call it? A WUI, a wilderness-urban interface?

You know, we do have FireSmart. We do allow beaver activity so that we have a lot of wetland in there to stop fires. But the water situation is tough; having a private company selling us our water and not having to provide the fire suppression that's required, especially for a treed area like that. And large homes; I mean, you know, we're all made out of petroleum-based products, all of our homes. It'll go up pretty fast if they're out of control.

We do have a fire department just on the other side of – I can't see it here, but on range road 31, which is pretty close. But if they do come to Elbow Valley and try to hook up to our hydrants, they won't work. They'll have to bring a bladder, fill it, try to fight the fire, and then keep refilling that bladder.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Ms Pithers: You're welcome.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thanks.

Do you think that your situation vis-à-vis infrastructure is unusual in the periphery of Calgary?

Ms Pithers: Very much so. Very much so. In fact, there's a neighbourhood to our west called Elbow Valley west. I'm not sure if it's going to be part of the boundary. It might be. Anyway, they were supposed to be hooked up with sewer just like our neighbourhood, but Rocky View and Calgary got into quite a fight, and the mayor at that time of Calgary literally poured concrete into that pipe to put a stop to it so that there would be no sewer. It's since been lifted, and they have shut down – they had big giant septic tanks that they had to pay for for 10 years, and only recently have they been allowed to have the sewer. There's a constant discussion about allowing Rocky View to take advantage of more Calgary infrastructure, sewer in particular. But Rocky View so far hasn't allowed the kind of density that they allowed in Elbow Valley.

9:30

Dr. Martin: Right. I want to pursue that a little further. The infrastructure is an obvious constraint on the growth . . .

Ms Pithers: Of Rocky View.

Dr. Martin: . . . of the population in the whole Elbow Valley, and it therefore is a constraint on developers and so on because of risk and the like.

Now, could I ask you to speculate a bit? If you went north of the Elbow River into Springbank per se – you suggested that they're rather different because they have somewhat smaller lots – is it your expectation that they, too, are going to share Calgary schools and bus routes and work and the like as you characterize your own neighbours as doing?

Ms Pithers: There is a strong and vocal group that wants to stop any kind of development there. In fact, there are big chunks further out highway 8, still on the south side of Elbow River, but are owned – they bought out the ranches there – and they're waiting and hoping for that infrastructure to come out highway 8. I don't see any appetite for it between highway 1 and the Elbow River. I know that there are ranchers on highway 1 that are not happy with the two- and four-acre owners fighting them against development. They're not able to develop.

Dr. Martin: Thank you for that, but I was more interested, really, in the other point. Do people in this far eastern part of Springbank, if I can put it that way . . .

Ms Pithers: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: Do they, too, typically work and go to school and shop inside Calgary?

Ms Pithers: They do. Yeah. Probably the rarest of the rare would go to Cochrane, but nearly, I would say, 90 per cent, 95 per cent would do all of that except the school. Like, there's Springbank school, where most people go. But there are private schools on the western border of Calgary that I know – there's a hockey school; there are a couple of high-end private schools – that they go to.

Dr. Martin: All right. Thank you.

Ms Pithers: You're welcome.

The Chair: Susan?

Mrs. Samson: I don't have any questions. It's a good presentation. Thank you. I want you to know that we had quite a few people making presentations along that same theme. Thank you for coming in person and adding that detail about the utilities. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms Pithers: You're welcome.

The Chair: John?

Mr. Evans: I don't have any, but thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, and thank you for being our first presenter on our second round . . .

Ms Pithers: I'm breaking the ice.

The Chair: . . . and giving us encouragement in this area. Thank you so much.

Ms Pithers: All right. Thank you.

The Chair: Please stay for the rest of the morning.

Ms Pithers: All right. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Okay. Our next presenter is Stephani Clements.

Please have a seat at the table and introduce yourself and tell us where you live and what electoral district or districts you're commenting on.

Ms Clements: My name is Stephani Clements, and I live in Calgary-Bow, but I'm also the president for Calgary public teachers local 38. Part of my presentation is in reflection for all of Calgary because those are the 251 schools for the teachers where my representation matters.

The Chair: Just out of curiosity, did you present at the first round?

Ms Clements: No. No. This is my first kick at this kind of can.

The Chair: Okay. Please precede.

Ms Clements: Thank you and good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Stephani Clements, and I live in Calgary-Bow. I'm participating in this process because I care deeply about fair and effective representation for Calgary and Alberta as a whole. Electoral boundaries shape how communities are heard, how accessible MLAs are to residents, and how well government can respond to rapidly changing realities on the ground.

I want to begin by acknowledging the complexity of the work you do and to offer positive feedback on the interim report while also advocating for additional representation for Calgary. It reflects the scale and pace of the growth of our city. Since the last electoral boundaries review in 2017 Alberta's population has grown by approximately 1 million people, and that growth has not been evenly distributed across the province. Calgary has absorbed a significant share of that, and that increase continues to grow at a faster rate than many other regions. This is something that we see specifically within our schools.

The new provincial average riding population has risen almost to 55,000 up from 48,000 or so in 2017. While this interim map generally keeps ridings within an acceptable population range today, the reality is that urban Calgary ridings will exceed that target far more quickly than rural ones based on the growth that we represent.

For that reason, while I appreciate the commission has proposed additional seats in Calgary, I believe that data clearly supports adding one more additional seat in Calgary to ensure that representation remains fair and durable over time, not just at the moment that this map is finalized.

Representation affects more than elections. It influences how population pressures are addressed in areas of school, health care, transportation, housing, and public safety. When representation lags behind growth, urban voices are diluted and services become harder to advocate for at the legislative level.

I also want to thank the commission for largely keeping Calgary ridings within the municipal boundaries. This decision upholds the democratic principle of effective representation and respects communities of shared interest. Calgary is an urban city with distinct infrastructure systems, delivery service models, population density, and those challenges. Urban residents rely on shared transport networks, schools, emergency services, and municipal planning structures that differ significantly from in the surrounding areas.

Hybrid or rural – there's a word – rural-urban, ridings risk blurring that accountability and weakening residents' sense of connection to their representative. I appreciate that the interim report limited the number of these hybrid ridings, and I strongly encourage the commission to avoid expanding them further.

I also want to note the commission's decision to keep Lethbridge urban ridings intact, rejecting the proposals to carve the city into sprawling rural constituencies. That decision demonstrates a clear understanding that cities function best when represented as cohesive urban communities. I believe that same principle should continue to guide the decisions in Calgary.

In Calgary-Bow, where I live, and across the city we have seen substantial changes since 2017, increased density, new housing developments, shifting demographics, and growing cultural and economic diversity. As someone deeply connected to my community through my professional and volunteer work, I see how growth places increasing demand on public systems, especially schools, and how it is important for our residents to know who represents them and how they can engage.

I want to note my strong support for keeping Calgary-Bow in the current boundaries as set in 2017. My riding now reflects a stable, cohesive urban community. Changing it would disrupt well-established community connections without really improving representation. When boundaries align with real communities where people share the schools, the services, the transit routes, neighbourhood identities, people are more likely to participate, vote, and be involved and know that their voice matters. When they don't, engagement suffers.

In closing, I just want to thank everyone for your thoughtful work in public service. The interim report reflects careful consideration for competing pressures across the province. It's not an easy job. I respectfully urge the commission to continue recognizing Calgary's sustained population growth and unique urban character by adding one more seat to Calgary and preserving fully urban ridings where possible. Doing so will ensure fair, effective, and enduring representation for years to come.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Clark, any questions?

Mr. Clark: Thank you. Thank you for being here. I appreciate your submission. I guess maybe I'll just ask you to expand a little bit. I don't know if you were here for the previous presenter.

Ms Clements: I was not. I just arrived. I apologize.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Perfect. That puts you at a decided disadvantage because I was going to ask you to comment on some things that Ms Pithers had to say. You know what? I won't even actually put you in that position if you didn't hear it. It's like giving you a test on something that we didn't teach in class, so we won't do that.

Ms Clements: That I didn't study for. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Anyway, I'll just thank you for coming, and I appreciate your comments.

Ms Clements: Thanks, Greg.

The Chair: Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I want to ask you something wearing your hat as not a member of Calgary-Bow but as the president of the Calgary teachers' association. I want to ask you specifically about your understanding of the forward planning for schools.

Ms Clements: I attend all the trustee meetings that occur for the Calgary board of education, which all of my teachers are employees of, and I understand how their capital planning works and how their requests to put forward for growth . . .

9:40

Dr. Martin: Good for you.

Ms Clements: It's a fun job, and I know that it is seriously lagging and has been lagging for years and that we need 90 new schools in Calgary to fit the growth, but that's not reasonable or doable. I believe there are 13 schools that have been fast-tracked, but that's still – Calgary schools are filled at 95 per cent as an average. Now, 85 per cent is workable. That is like you're still using the gym for class and the band is on the stage at the same time, which doesn't really work. That is one of the key reasons why effective and appropriate representation for the population is so important, because it is the voice for those schools and those teachers trying to do what they do in such limited space.

Dr. Martin: Can I push you a little further on that, a little more granular? We're all about the granular here. Where are those new schools? I mean, obviously they're prioritized in some fashion or another, so the priority is to put them in the areas of the most screaming need. What part of Calgary is that?

Ms Clements: I mean, basically if you look around the outer areas in the northeast of Calgary, they're building schools in Redstone, in Skyview, and there's a new high school coming up in that area as well. Down south we've got a school in Seton, but now we need something on the southwest corner because we have that growth in Legacy and Walden, and we just keep growing and we keep not keeping up. Evanston, I think, is slated to get two new schools, an elementary and a middle school, and that's still not enough because then you have Carrington and Livingston and all of these other places. I can't even remember the names of them all. It's just that the growth has been so huge.

The problem is that when you don't get those schools built in time, then you have kiddos who are in Redstone travelling all the way to Forest Heights and Keeler to get to an elementary because that's the only space that there's left. So knowing that we have to be able to plan forward is really important.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your presentation, and thanks for coming out today. I wanted to just make a point more for your own information that we received 1,100 submissions to the interim report, and we heard over and over again that cities like Calgary and Edmonton need more electoral divisions. We only got two extra divisions to work with, so the request: I can't help you. You know, you really can't, so I think I want to make it . . .

Mr. Evans: How do we get a soft landing? Well done.

Mrs. Samson: No problem. It's early. It's early, and I'll do better on the next one.

I guess what I'm saying is that that's something you should engage with your MLA because that's where the seats came from. It's a decision of the government how many seats we get to work with.

That's one point, and the other thing is that we heard often in the submissions on Calgary-Bow from residents who live there. Are you familiar with the district Montgomery?

Ms Clements: Yes. I actually live in Montgomery.

Mrs. Samson: How do you feel about the placement of Montgomery in Calgary-Bow?

Ms Clements: You know what? It fits. In 2017, when I wasn't really aware of, you know, a lot of this, just trying to do my work in a classroom and then to be joined with Calgary-Bow, which is mostly across the river – but I do a lot of my shopping and a lot of my connections are in those spaces, are in that northern part. I have good friends, a lot of the schools that I work at, so for me I think it makes sense. I think if we were to be smushed back with Calgary-Varsity in the change, which I think has been suggested, I feel connected to the places that I'm connected now. To go back in time then I have to reimagine and do all of that work again to connect with other communities. I think it was a good choice in 2017, and I recommend keeping it going.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you. Any comments? We also heard some comments on the district Wildwood. Are you familiar with that one, and how do you feel about its placement?

Ms Clements: I find it really similar to Montgomery in a way. Like, it's a wonderful community with schools that are connected. Some of our students end up going to a Wildwood school from our area. There's a lot of interconnectivity already. I mean, I can't speak for Wildwood because I don't live there, but I think things as they are should stay. You have better chance for representation.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms Clements: You're welcome.

The Chair: Okay.
John, anything?

Mr. Evans: Yes. First, thank you for participating. Susan normally would be very gentle in how she would have phrased that. I would have said it like she said it, but maybe we're going to switch roles. I'm going to be good cop this time.

Mrs. Samson: Okay.

Mr. Evans: Now you said that you were a representative. Was that for the ATA?

Ms Clements: Yeah. ATA is all the teachers in public schools, and I represent the teachers in Calgary public schools.

Mr. Evans: That's why you're engaging with numerous schools. You're not in one particular . . .

Ms Clements: We have 251 schools.

Mr. Evans: But I mean you specifically.

Ms Clements: I have teachers in 251 schools and interact with all of them, barely.

Mr. Evans: But my question is: you don't have a school that you teach in?

Ms Clements: No. I'm seconded. Sorry. I work 100 per cent for the ATA, and that gives me the time to go to many of those schools.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Then I don't know how familiar you are with the legislation, but I'm going to take you to section 14. What I want to know is: in regard to what you've told us today, I'm going to ask

you about the various factors and where you would put them in terms of weight, you know, so that I can understand better your submissions today.

Under 14, which is the portion that gives us the authority to determine the area to be included in the boundaries for each proposed electoral division, the first one, 14(a) is “sparsity, density, and rate of growth of the population;” (b) is “communities of interest, including municipalities, regional and rural communities, Indian reserves and Metis settlements.” Between (a) and (b), which, in regard to your submissions, would you say is more weighted, more important?

Ms Clements: I think that the growth of population – I mean, fully representation by population, which might mean some horribly far distance for rural MLAs to get that 55,000 people. But I think it’s important because you . . .

Mr. Evans: Let me take you then to the next one, which is geographical boundaries.

Ms Clements: Okay.

Mr. Evans: If we have sparsity and density and rate of population growth and communities of interest, now we add to it geographical features. How important would that be?

Ms Clements: Well, I see the communities of interest really aligning within those boundaries. I mean, our rural areas are a lot more similar to itself than say, you know, Okotoks or areas that are urban, as I like to say.

Mr. Evans: I’m thinking more in terms of, say, a river dividing or, say, major thoroughfares dividing an electoral district.

Ms Clements: You know, I don’t think that’s sparsity. I mean, other than the road being cut up right now across the space because of water issues, it’s just as quick to drive there as it is to go all the way up into Varsity.

Mr. Evans: Then the next one is availability of the means of communication and transportation between various parts of Alberta, which probably isn’t all that applicable in terms of what you said today. But then the next one is the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries, maybe connected somewhat to geographical features. How important would that be? Where would you weight that?

Ms Clements: I don’t think it’s as important. I think of the map as drawn. I look for the lines. I don’t look for the geographic features. You show me where my area is, and I can clearly see those lines. That makes sense.

Mr. Evans: Okay.

Then the next one and the final one is any other factors the commission considers appropriate, and that’s a bit of a catch-all. What I’d like to ask you on that one is: where would you weigh voter turnout in each electoral district?

9:50

Let me give you an example. You have electoral district A and you have electoral district B. Both of them are more or less within the population range, but one has a voter turnout significantly lower than the other. How would you say that impacts effective representation?

Ms Clements: I would say that lower voter turnout is actually a sign of ineffective representation. Again, as I said in my

presentation, you know, if you feel connected to space and place, you feel like your voice is heard, you are more likely to be lining up to make that vote. If you feel disconnected because there is no – someone has to make it happen. It’s not just instinctual.

Mr. Evans: You’re assuming every individual in a constituency is a voter. That’s not the case – right? – yet all are factored . . .

The Chair: Mr. Evans, I’m going to have to cut you off here.

Mr. Evans: All are factored into the demographics, all are factored into the population as a general.

Ms Clements: You know, I can’t speak to that.

Dr. Martin: I just wanted to say that Mr. Evans is just enrolling you in our dilemma.

Mr. Evans: Welcome to my world.

The Chair: He’s the lawyer on the panel, ma’am, so surprise, surprise.

Ms Clements: I don’t wish that I was on that side of the table. I do really appreciate the work and the effort of all of you because it is important work and it’s not easy. I appreciate it. Thank you.

The Chair: I know we’re running a little over. I’m going to take my prerogative as Chair and just ask you a question.

First of all, thanks for coming. Your role as kind of an overseer of Calgary as a city is very valuable. Have you submitted a written submission at all?

Ms Clements: No. We had a strike, so I was a bit busy.

The Chair: I heard that. I heard that. Yeah.

The question I have is – you gave us a lot of information on Calgary, but all of a sudden Lethbridge popped up. I’m curious about that because we have a lot of written submissions from Edmonton, and every once in a while, Medicine Hat pops up. Why did you focus on Lethbridge?

Ms Clements: Two reasons. One, again, to use it as an example about, you know, something that has been suggested that I would not want to see in Calgary, the Okotoks, the Diamond, so using that as an example. But the other thing is that there are 55 local presidents across the province that support the communities within their areas, and in conversation with the local presidents from the Lethbridge and area, just having conversations: that’s the second line.

The Chair: Good. That’s very helpful. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms Clements: You’re welcome.

The Chair: We stretched your presentation out, Ms Clements. You were grilled.

Ms Clements: Hey, I’m sure these people are like: get her off the stage.

The Chair: Thank you so much. I’ll excuse you, and please stay for the rest of the presentations.

I guess we’re only about five minutes behind time. Ms Amanda Chapman, good morning and make yourself comfortable.

Ms Chapman: Good morning.

The Chair: Introduce yourself and where you're from and what riding you are commenting on.

Ms Chapman: You bet. My name is Amanda Chapman. I am the MLA representing the riding of Calgary-Beddington, and I also live in the riding of Calgary-Beddington.

The Chair: Okay. For the keeners, what number is that?

Mrs. Samson: Two.

The Chair: Two? So you beat Calgary-Acadia here today in terms of presentations, which is number one.

Ms Chapman: Oh really? Okay.

The Chair: Good. Please proceed.

Ms Chapman: Thank you. I'm just going to watch my clock. Even though I don't think I have six minutes of content, now that I'm a politician apparently I can just talk endlessly.

The Chair: Don't worry. You're looking at five clock-watchers.

Ms Chapman: First, I'd just like to start by thanking you folks for all the really great work that you've done. Even just listening to you ask questions of Ms Clements right now, it's clear that what you're doing is very complex work. And I know that when you have a province as big as Alberta, where you've got growth that's really centred, like a population that is growing in your cities and your rural areas with declining population, as you say, you had two new seats to work with. So the balance that you had to find here, I suspect, was probably very difficult. I also would not like to be sitting on the other side of this table. So thank you for your work very much. I appreciate it.

When it comes to the riding of Calgary-Beddington, it's largely the same. I feel a lot of gratitude that Nose Hill park got to stay in Calgary-Beddington. It is one of my favourite places in the city. I can walk to it right out my back alley. Essentially, the change that was made is that you have just kind of shifted the riding. We used to have that little tip there, the little wing of Country Hills. Now, I did say I used to think the riding looked like a penguin and Country Hills was his little flipper sort of coming up at the back. So you cut off the flipper and you've extended out to the west – maybe you can remind me because I left my boundaries stuff in Edmonton – and it increased the number of residents in the riding by 5,000 or so.

Mr. Clark: It's 56,024 now. And Beddington – sorry; let me just do a sort here. Calgary-Beddington before was 56,209 as of 2024. From 56,209 it's basically the same.

Ms Chapman: Oh, it is basically the same.

Mr. Clark: And 56,024: like, that's about as good as it gets.

The Chair: It's in the sweet spot.

Ms Chapman: Yeah, that's interesting. Okay; that's interesting to me just from knowing Country Hills and knowing the Hamptons a little bit. I thought we would have increased a little bit.

I think all the things that I said in my first presentation are really well reflected in this boundary redraw. We've got really natural corridors in Calgary-Beddington. The riding remains largely unchanged except for the swap of those two communities. So in terms of where people access services in Calgary-Beddington, where the rec centre, the library, the grocery stores, the way the road network works, you have kept a riding together that I think works

really well. It fits really naturally. Probably a little bit of a shift in terms of, like, socioeconomics of the population, of the folks who live in Calgary-Beddington, but nothing significant.

I think that we'll see, like, a lot of similarity in the population, how they move around. In terms of representing them as the MLA – again, because I think that we've got some pretty similar populations here – it definitely makes my job a lot easier, certainly a lot easier than when I think of, like, when we're talking about changing ridings to include both parts of the city and parts of rural. I see a lot of complications with trying to represent those types of population mixes simply because the needs of the communities are very different. But with this kind of, you know, right smack in the middle of the city riding, you have kept it to a place where I do think that it will be easier for me to be able to represent the needs of the constituents.

There you go. That only took me four minutes to say. I do think that's all I want to say other than, I mean, I do wish that we could have added some more seats to the cities simply because of the population growth that we're having in our cities. But, again, you know, difficult choices had to be made by you folks, for sure.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation and thank you for your understanding. That comes through clearly.

Any questions or comments from the panel?

Mr. Clark: Maybe I'll just ask if you can – you've talked about Beddington and kind of communities of interest and things. One of the things we always grapple with a bit – and I don't know if you were here for the very beginning. This is the second time I've had a round here at Ms Pithers' kind of comments about Calgary-West-Elbow Valley. I don't know if you heard that.

10:00

Ms Chapman: No.

Mr. Clark: I'll take a run at it. I think, if I can paraphrase, there's a connectivity in Elbow Valley, if you're familiar with that part, just north of Tsuut'ina. The sort of urban form. There's some higher density housing. There's an infrastructure, like utilities connection, into the city of Calgary. That's different than Springbank, for example, which is, like, two to four acres larger, not rural, and there's some connection there into Calgary, but it's sort of decidedly not Calgary. I guess maybe more just a general question on your view on hybrid constituencies as a tool that we could use or not. How you define kind of, you know, connectivity in communities of interest.

Ms Chapman: I do think that I can see how hybrid communities could be very difficult. I've never had to represent one, right? I live in the suburbs, in a particular part of the suburbs. Honestly, even if you're looking at Calgary, you see a lot of differences between your inner city – I mean, Beddington is almost inner city at this point with the rate that the city is growing – but I kind of think of it as concentric rings, right? You've got your very inner city, and then I would be in the first level of doughnut. Maybe I should have said onion because then we've got layers, right? I think you do see a lot of differences in terms of the population. Who wants to live there? Who wants to live in the inner city versus who wants to live at the outer edges of the city?

Those same differences apply when we're looking at not just rural areas but even smaller towns. People choose to live in, well, I was going say Airdrie, but gosh, I mean, Airdrie is basically a big city at this point. Growing up, my mom's best friend lived in Airdrie. Airdrie was a small town at the time, of course. They lived there specifically, right? They made a conscious choice to move out

of Calgary because they wanted to live, you know, at a different pace. They wanted a different amount of space, and they've just kind of had to keep moving around, of course. As Airdrie grew bigger, they moved out to Nanton because that was the next place that they could find that had that small town sort of feel.

I think there's the – I sound like my kids now; it's the vibe, right? – vibe of living in a small town. But it's not just that. I think it is about priorities. It's about the kind of space you want. It's about the kind of services that you want to have access to or you don't feel that you need to have access to. So I think when we blend those ridings, like when we try to push our municipals out into rural areas, it does just make it very complex to represent the needs of those populations because they're just different. They're very different.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I just wanted to comment that it is a general presumption, and I think it's yours as well, that the spectacular population growth we've seen in the last four or five years will continue, and it will not. All the demography shows us it's going to crash. Yes, we're in the business of figuring out how to service all this population through our various institutions, whether they be electoral districts or schools or what have you, but population growth is now crashing down to 1 per cent. Alberta being Alberta, maybe it's going to be 1.5 per cent growth.

Ms Chapman: Sure.

Dr. Martin: The unmanaged and unmanageable growth we've seen in the last two or three years is off the table now. So it does affect how we have to consider, you know, our work because the rates of growth we have seen are not the rates of growth to be anticipated.

Ms Chapman: Well, and that's fair. I mean, I guess that's the nice thing about this committee, that every eight years it gets to meet again and redo that work as opposed to, like what Ms Clements was talking about, those needs for schools. That's much more difficult, like, to manage your infrastructure needs, as you say, because we need the schools, as she said. We need them right now. Will we need them 10 years from now? Well, it's not clear, right? This is very complex work. How do you manage that?

Dr. Martin: I get that the school board issues are very, very complex. I grew up in a world of ATCO trailers, because I was early baby boomer, and that was just the way we all grew up. I know it's not desirable, but, you know, by the same token, the infrastructure built for schools is huge and it's a constant problem for trustees and the teachers' association and the like. Ours is a rather different problem.

Ms Chapman: Totally. Yeah.

The Chair: I'm just going to interject here. Just so you know, Ms Chapman, I wasn't distracted. I was writing notes and I shared them with my colleagues. I think we're going to cancel the morning break this morning and just keep going, because the flow of the presentations is going very well and we'll finish well before noon. I know that in the past we've had some informal discussion with presenters after. This whole hybrid thing is a real conundrum for us as a commission, and we can't really solve that, but I'm happy to have a conversation with previous presenters after we get through all the formal presentations. So just so you know that I wasn't being distracted. I want to kind of maximize our time here.

Mrs. Samson, any questions or thoughts?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out. I appreciate your time today. I wanted you to know that the commission identified the penguin wing as a shark fin. So you've got to up your game. That's a shark fin.

But I guess I want to follow up the question on hybrids with something specific. Your explanation or your thoughts on hybrids focuses more on the rural mixing in with urban or city. What's your thought on Calgary as a city taking on another city like Airdrie? Could you see a connection there that would make sense?

Ms Chapman: That's an interesting question because you're right: then we're looking at two municipalities. The interesting thing about Airdrie for me, because we had close friends there growing up and I spent a lot of time in Airdrie, is, you know, the folks I was mentioning fled Airdrie when it got too big, but many people didn't. It's hard to move. It actually is hard to pick up and move to a different community. It's not something that people do easily or lightly, in my experience, the majority of people. So when I think about Airdrie today, I think that there are still a lot of people who live in Airdrie because it's not Calgary, right? Even though Airdrie is a growing city; of course, it's a much smaller city. I wouldn't call it a small town the way it used to be, but it is a much smaller city than Calgary. And I do think that people make a deliberate choice on what type of municipality they want to live in.

There are a lot of differences between Calgary and Airdrie, the same way between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. I don't know if I know enough about what the priorities of the people of Airdrie are when it comes to provincial representation to actually make a well-informed enough comment to you right now on whether I feel like there is enough overlap between Airdrie and Calgary, because I think I'm just using my own sort of personal lens right now when I'm thinking about the two municipalities.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you for your comments. I appreciate it.

Ms Chapman: You bet.

The Chair: Mr. Evans?

Mr. Evans: Thank you for coming and presenting twice.

Ms Chapman: Yes. I remembered to introduce myself this time.

Mr. Evans: That's a positive. You heard my questions to the other presenter. I want to, rather than go through that whole list – and I'm happy to help you if you can't remember some of the items, but would you be able to weigh, give me your assessment of the importance of the various factors, and then, finally, where you would weigh in terms of the importance of voter turnout as a factor in assessing effective representation?

Ms Chapman: Yeah. The voter turnout was – I don't remember all the factors, but I do recollect the question about voter turnout, which I thought was a really interesting question because when you look at voter turnout – and, again, I'm not as well informed about voter turnout rates anywhere other than where I live, well, Calgary. I mean in Calgary. I mean, I really know the turnout rates in Calgary-Beddington, but I have a sense of the turnout rates across Calgary.

10:10

To me, to my interpretation, there does seem to be a correlation with socioeconomic status and voter turnout, which is not surprising to me. Well, and age. I mean, age is a huge factor, of course. I was just actually speaking to some parents and students the other day. A young person wanted to see more reflection of the

needs and values of young people in political party platforms, and I said: you need to start voting. She didn't like that very much.

Mr. Evans: Would you be able to share what the voter turnout numbers have been in your riding?

Ms Chapman: Oh, that's a good question. I don't know it as a percentage. No, I can't do it for you off the top of my head.

Mr. Evans: Can you give me the total number of turnout?

Ms Chapman: It was 40,000 voters, and then turnout was somewhere between 16,000 and 18,000.

The Chair: In Calgary-Beddington.

Ms Chapman: In Calgary-Beddington. I feel like I should know this because my recall petition – they need 10,000 votes, and that's 60 per cent of eligible voters, so it's got to be around 40. I want to say around 40 per cent.

I hope Greg is looking up the real answer.

Mr. Clark: Sixty point three.

Ms Chapman: Sixty point three. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: When was the last election? Twenty twenty-three.

Ms Chapman: Twenty-three. Yeah.

Mr. Evans: What was the voter turnout?

Mr. Clark: Sixty point three.

The Chair: In Calgary-Beddington.

Mr. Clark: In Calgary-Beddington, shark fin and all.

Ms Chapman: Shark fin and all.

So from talking . . .

The Chair: Sorry. I'm not a math wizard, but 16,000 out of 40,000: that doesn't seem like . . .

Mr. Clark: Total votes cast: 20,820.

The Chair: Oh, okay. I thought I heard 16,000.

Ms Chapman: Sorry. Ten thousand is the . . .

Mr. Evans: Twenty thousand.

Ms Chapman: Yeah.

Just from my experience of many years of, you know, canvassing to look for votes or to ask for people's votes, my impression is that when your socioeconomic status is lower, there are a lot more barriers for voting. Largely it's time, right? If you are a working family, both parents are working, you have two kids, you're maybe working multiple jobs or you're working jobs that don't have a sort of standard 9 to 5, making it out to the voting station is actually a difficulty.

Socioeconomic status is only one factor when we look at how well a population – like, when you're representing a population, it's always easier to represent people who have similar, you know, needs or the community has similar needs. If we're including sort of wild variations, like if you were to take the poorest riding and marry it with the richest riding in Calgary, I do think it would become very difficult. That's not the only thing that affects voter

turnout – I know that – but that's just the way that I thought about it when I heard you ask Ms Clements the question.

Mr. Evans: Where would you weigh it in terms of a factor? You know, the factors we're looking for are those which are going to be demonstrative of effective representation. Do you think it is a factor to be considered in determining this elusive concept of effective representation?

Ms Chapman: I don't know if I feel well informed enough to answer that because I don't think that I understand all the factors that affect voter turnout. I'm sorry. I've got no good answer for that question. Obviously, a factor to be considered, but I don't know how I would weight it, and I forget all the other factors even though you just said them 10 minutes ago.

Mr. Evans: Well, the major one is, of course, population density.

Ms Chapman: Yes, which I do think is the most important, like without question, right? Having your ridings be as equal as possible in population density I do think is the most important factor.

The Chair: Ms Chapman, thank you very much for coming. It's always helpful to have members that knock on doors and talk to the constituents, so thank you so much. Please stay if you can and hear the other presenters. As I said, we're not going to have a break. We're going to go right through, so I excuse you from the table now.

I'll call on Ms Cynthia Wagner.

Ms Wagner: Hello, hello. Hi.

The Chair: Good morning.

Ms Wagner: Good morning. Happy Monday, everyone.

The Chair: Thank you. Please tell us where you're from and what electoral district you wish to comment on.

Ms Wagner: Yes. I believe I can make comments on a couple, so that's what I'll do. I live in Calgary-North West, so some comments about that, and then Calgary-Edgemont: I volunteer, hang out there quite a bit. Those are the two principally that I wanted to talk about. Then also, listening to the presenters this morning, I think I have two other general comments. I will do this because this is how I remember that I have two things to say, because there's one and two, so I will keep my fingers like this until I have the opportunity to make those points.

Yeah. Calgary-North West: I don't have all of the border committed to memory, like the visuals of it, but I don't think there was too much of a switch in the boundaries in Calgary-North West, which is great because I think the boundaries right now really make sense. Twelve Mile Coulee is a very defined line about what is the city of Calgary and what is outside of the city of Calgary, and that is the sort of western border of Calgary-North West.

On the populations from some of the other northwest ridings: like, I think Calgary-Edgemont is 55 K, Calgary-Foothills is 57 K or something, and Calgary-North West is 50 K. So it might seem . . .

The Chair: Fifty-two.

Ms Wagner: Fifty-two.

So it might seem like it's a little bit under the average, but that dog leg there that goes on the river: that is a huge new development, and it's maybe only at 15 per cent capacity right now. It's almost like another big Tuscany out there. By the time the next election

sort of comes around, that'll probably be your extra 3,000 or 4,000 people right there, right? So on the population piece while Calgary-North West may seem like it's under on the population number, I think, yeah, by the next time it'll be right back up there. Like, all of the other neighbourhoods are really quite established. The borders are, you know, very defined, so that is really the only place where I think there is going to be a lot of growth other than one-offs, like somebody builds something in a double house or whatever. But big, big developments: that's the only one. I think the lower population right now in Calgary-North West totally makes sense. Yeah. That was my bit on Calgary-North West.

Then in Calgary-Edgemont, like, it totally made a lot of sense to take the Hamptons out of Calgary-Edgemont because if you look at Country Hills Boulevard just sort of walking out and about and, you know, going to the different parks and everything, you have to walk it almost feels like 30 minutes to be able to get from one crossing to another to be able to walk over to the Hamptons neighbourhood. So keeping the Country Hills as the northern border for Calgary-Edgemont I think makes a lot of sense.

10:20

Then on the sort of general population growth and everything, as I had mentioned earlier, like, northwest has that big area, Rockland or rock cliff, whatever it's called, that's really growing. Edgemont doesn't have any big developments like that, so the neighbourhoods are going to be pretty stable, and keeping the borders defined like that in that 55 K: I think it makes a lot of sense.

Yeah. Like, Country Hills is a very, very big barrier, if you want to call it that, on, you know, people who are walking around, people who are riding their bikes around, even driving. If you're driving down Country Hills, you have to go quite a bit of the way down there to then go cross over and go to the Hamptons. So I think it makes sense to keep all of the neighbourhoods in Calgary-Edgemont really bordered by Country Hills and Stoney and Crowchild and Shaganappi on the other side because it just seems to make sense with the way the roads are. Those are my two things on that.

Then general points: should I make those now, or do you want to ask questions?

The Chair: No. Go ahead and finish.

Ms Wagner: Okay. General points. I'm a very rural person and live in a city now and stuff. I know a lot of the times it gets paid a lot of attention, but rural overrepresentation is a huge issue, and it is starting to really be in the unfair part of representation. The cities are growing through the roof, and everybody needs to have as equal as possible type of representation. If that means having all of, you know, eastern Alberta as one riding from Cold Lake down to Lethbridge or something – it's population, and it's basic math. I'm saying this as a rural person. When there's too much representation for too few people, it skews things unfairly for the entire province. That was point number one about rural-urban ridings. Like, the cities need more seats for sure.

Then, second: hybrid. One of the cities that I've lived in, Saskatoon, for example: Saskatchewan did some sort of switching of boundaries – I don't know – late '90s or something, early 2000s. They sort of did a pie and had the city in the middle and then all of these rural areas. It doesn't represent the city well. It doesn't represent the rural well. Having these hybrid ridings I don't think is fair to anybody either because if you're a rural person put in, like, 70, 75 per cent urban stuff, your voice is lost anyway, and then you just get mad. Then the cities are the same thing. So I think it's way better to have, you know, groupings of communities or different

interests in one riding because then you can actually represent it more. Trying to have the hybrids that take in everybody: I don't think that's a great model to sort of emulate. Yes.

The Chair: Well, thank you for your presentation. Anybody that shouts out Saskatoon in my world needs to be commended.

In your first general comments – I'm not sure if you realize this – you voiced a very American concept of one person, one vote equal representation. I guess it leads me to my question, and it may be a bit of an ego thing for the commission. Did you read the first 60 pages of our report?

Ms Wagner: No, no. I just read the, like, executive... [interjections] I know. Yeah. Like, the executive summary.

The Chair: We're all hurt now.

Ms Wagner: Yes, yes.

The Chair: We go to some lengths to explain why we're not American, and that is one of our concerns. That is a very American concept: one person, one vote. Canada, through our jurisprudence and through our historic practice, focuses on effective representation. It may be a shock to many Canadians that we have never had the principle of one person, one vote in any Legislature or Parliament. So I want to make that correction.

Then the hybrids. You touch on the hybrids as your second point. That is a struggle that we have had from day one. It is an optional tool given to us by history, the legislation, and the courts, but how you square that circle is difficult, and you've touched on the problem that we have.

Ms Wagner: Yeah.

The Chair: Anyway, I just wanted to comment on those two general propositions.

Ms Wagner: Thanks.

The Chair: I'll start with you, Mr. Evans, if there are any questions or further discussion with Ms Wagner.

Mr. Evans: I'm going to be beating the same drum of voter turnout and how that is a factor that could be considered. If we take, for example, Calgary-North West, in 2023 Calgary-North West had a voter turnout, percentage-wise, of 70.15 per cent.

Ms Wagner: Pretty good.

Mr. Evans: That's pretty good. The provincial average, so everywhere in the province: voter turnout would have been 59.5 per cent on average. Would you agree with me that if we are looking at that as a factor, what we would do would be to increase the number, to take Calgary-North West and get it closer to the voter turnout percentage of the provincial average? We would do that by increasing the number of people, so increasing the density of that riding. That makes sense to you?

Ms Wagner: Well, I think if you, let's say, add 5,000 people to it, you can't really necessarily assume that they won't vote and it'll bring the average down.

Mr. Evans: I guess one of the factors here: we just use general population.

Ms Wagner: Yeah.

Mr. Evans: When the statistics are run on voter turnout, they have calculated it based on eligible voters, which would be different. So the population of that riding would have been something like 52,000, for example, with eligible voters of 35,000.

Ms Wagner: Eligible voters or people that participate, participatory voters?

Mr. Evans: Eligible. And then the vote count is what gets the percentage.

Ms Wagner: Yeah, yeah. But everybody, like, the 52,000: they're all eligible.

Mr. Evans: No. That's just the population. These numbers, if you're looking at this . . .

Ms Wagner: Oh, that includes all the others under 18.

The Chair: Children.

Ms Wagner: Oh, okay.

Mr. Evans: If you have a pulse, you count.

Ms Wagner: Okay.

Mr. Evans: So the numbers that you see as it relates to each electoral district in the draft report represents alive people, unlike Quebec, where they represent dead people. Here we only use those that are alive. Eligible voters are not factored into that number.

Ms Wagner: Okay.

Mr. Evans: So is that a factor that you would consider important, the eligible voters in each electoral district and factoring in or considering voter turnout historically as it relates to effective representation?

Ms Wagner: Yeah. Like, voter turnout goes up and down, right? Like, four or five federal elections ago there was turnout that was maybe cracking 50 per cent. Maybe. And then it just – like, I think Elections Canada did a huge, big push, and everybody else did a huge, big push. Once enumeration stopped, the electoral list was even less and the turnout just got less and less and less, and then . . .

10:30

Mr. Evans: Let's take Calgary-North West, for example. The last two elections, 2019 and 2023: in both instances it was about 70 per cent.

Ms Wagner: Awesome. Yeah. Just working to recognize that voter turnout is an indicator of how involved people are, how interested they are, how aware they are of what's going on, and, like, getting people to participate. It's a bunch of different factors. Just increasing or decreasing the population doesn't necessarily translate a hundred per cent one to the other.

Mr. Evans: Do you think it's a factor that should be considered, eligible voters and voter turnout historically?

Ms Wagner: I don't know. Taking the amount of the population and then the turnout and that margin: I'm not sure. Yeah. I'll definitely ruminate on that one and think about it, but in all of my stuff on voter turnout I don't think that has ever popped in.

Mr. Evans: You haven't thought about it?

Ms Wagner: I don't think so, no.

Mr. Evans: Well, thank you for thinking about it.

Ms Wagner: That's a specific correlation between if there is a change in population and voter turnout, if that specific factor influences it. Like, if you have 100,000 people, 50,000 are new, and if the original 50,000 are going to participate at 70 per cent and the new 50,000, I would just think that it would even out and sort of be around the 70 per cent anyway. But maybe – like, I've never thought about adding a whole chunk of population and how that would encourage or discourage the other part.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thanks for coming out. I appreciate your time today. I just wanted to make a comment on Calgary-Edgemont. I'm glad that you like the boundaries because that's something we strive for, to have clear boundaries that make it easier for the voter to know which district they're in. I think that Edgemont was one of those that came out really nice, and I'm glad you agree with us.

Ms Wagner: Yeah.

Mrs. Samson: The other one is that we talk about hybrids a lot. We got a lot of submissions about: yes, I like them; no, I don't like them; I'm sorry you didn't use them. In the case of Calgary-North West we have a chance to look at Springbank, taking parts of it. How do you feel about that as a community of Calgary-North West if we looked at Springbank?

Mr. Clark: I think you mean Bears paw.

Mrs. Samson: Oh, Bears paw. I'm sorry. Thank you.

Ms Wagner: I was going to say: Springbank? That's totally the other side. How would you even – yeah. Crow flies, sure. But not lay-of-the-land type of thing.

Mrs. Samson: Sorry. Thank you, Greg. Yeah.

Ms Wagner: So Bears paw. Bears paw is where right now? Sort of in Banff, Airdrie, or that sort of stuff, right?

Mr. Clark: We'd move it in with Cochrane.

Ms Wagner: It's in with Cochrane. Okay. Possibly. I think my thing for not completely agreeing with that right out of the gate is that Twelve Mile Coulee Road is the natural barrier between city of Calgary and not city of Calgary. East of Twelve Mile Coulee is Calgary-North West, and west of Twelve Mile Coulee is Bears paw. So right off the top of my head I would say no because that area, I think, is Rocky View county, and it does not consider itself part of the city of Calgary. Like, populationwise and because, yes, it abuts the city of Calgary, I don't think, community-of-interest way of looking at it, that it would fit into the city of Calgary because it's always had different municipalities. It's never belonged to the city. Frankly, a lot of the time as soon as people are going down Crowchild and they get to that intersection, it's like, "Oh, I'm in the city now," but when you're on the other side of it, you're not in the city. I think it would probably make more sense to keep it in Cochrane-Springbank because that is a lot more similar types of neighbourhoods.

Mrs. Samson: I think we got the comments because of employment, shopping routes, that kind of thing, that Bears paw came into the discussion to be joined in, so it's good to know, from someone who lives there, the lay of the land. Thank you.

Ms Wagner: Yeah. From my understanding, like, a lot of the sort of history or people who want to live in Bears paw: they don't want to live in the city. So if all of a sudden later they are in the city, I don't think that would really jibe with – I just said such a millennial word – a lot of the reasons why people would want to live in Bears paw instead of living in, you know, Rocky Ridge or something, right?

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I want to pursue along similar lines. I've heard your general opinion, and that's fair enough, but I want to take you actually to look at the map. You said that the area that is nominally called Bears paw, that long finger that goes up the river, is about to grow a lot.

Ms Wagner: That is either called Rock Cliff or Rockland.

Dr. Martin: Okay. So you reckon it's going to grow a fair bit?

Ms Wagner: Yes. There are construction trucks every minute at that intersection.

Dr. Martin: Okay. But what I don't see there are roads.

Ms Wagner: Right. Yeah. The only way is sort of in through, like, Nose Hill, right? So you go down Stoney, and then you go Nose Hill. That goes right into that area.

Dr. Martin: What I do see in this little bay of Bears paw is lots of built-out roadways of a suburban kind.

Ms Wagner: It does not have the same, like, density as suburbs in any way.

Dr. Martin: No, no. Let's just look at: the infrastructure is built out so people could work in Calgary.

Ms Wagner: Okay. At the very, very south part of Bears paw, because Twelve Mile Coulee Road has always been the border, if you live in the very, very south part, like Lynx Ridge or whatever, you have to drive all the way up to Crowchild to be able to get out. They're not, like, that . . .

Dr. Martin: I don't see that being the case.

Ms Wagner: That Rockland Park, or Rock Cliff, which is in Calgary-North West, is only accessible to Calgary-North West through Nose Hill, but the Bears paw part is only – like, they don't hook up. They may look like a road, but then when you drive or walk around there, it's one of those things that has the roundabout and the big stop sign, and you can see it, but it's not like they're continuous roadways. They're very, very divided. Even the north parts of Rock Cliff or Rockland that are sort of going out to Haskayne park, you have to drive all the way around, go down Crowchild, and whip around to get back.

Dr. Martin: I have to go and point at the map because I don't know the neighbourhoods by their names.

Ms Wagner: Yeah. Do you want me to come over and point?

Dr. Martin: Yeah, that'd be good, too.

Ms Wagner: Okay. Yeah.

Dr. Martin: What I'm looking at – first of all, my first question was that you say this is going to grow, but there are no roads.

10:40

Ms Wagner: Yeah. It's right here. Like, all of this big new suburb is starting right here.

Dr. Martin: Okay. So some day they'll have roads?

Ms Wagner: Yeah. Like, right now it's just Nose Hill to get in here.

Dr. Martin: I have what I call the Tyvek test on growth, and I don't think I'm going to find it there.

Ms Wagner: Tyvek? Like the plastic?

Dr. Martin: Yeah. The stuff you put on the side of new buildings. That's as far into the future as we typically want to go, so there's nothing here for us.

Ms Wagner: No. It's all sort of right here right now.

Dr. Martin: Yeah, but there are no roads.

Ms Wagner: Right.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Now, here there are roads.

Ms Wagner: A few, yeah.

Dr. Martin: Quite a lot, actually, and I posit – but you disagree with me – that these connect you to here.

Ms Wagner: Like, Tuscany only has two entrances from Twelve Mile Coulee, right here and right here, so even if it looks like you can get there from the bottom part, you can't. You have to go all the way up.

Dr. Martin: But you can go to there, right?

Ms Wagner: Yeah, but all of these people here, for example, you know, you have to drive all the way up to Twelve Mile Coulee and then over. Even, like, this stuff: it looks like it's very close as the crow flies, but yeah. You can walk there, but you can't drive there.

Dr. Martin: Okay. So just to recap: somehow this is quarantined from the city of Calgary?

Ms Wagner: Yes.

Dr. Martin: And this has no buildings and roads yet?

Ms Wagner: It's going through the roof. Like, there is a huge, big suburb being put in right there.

Dr. Martin: My colleague perhaps has a more updated map.

Ms Pithers: That's what it looks like right now.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. It's quite open.

Ms Pithers: It's under construction.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Google to the rescue.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Yeah. I was going to ask a little bit about that. I just wanted to go back to Mr. Evans's questions. I'll preface this by saying that I stand to be corrected because this is a query I've just put to ChatGPT, so I think we need to do a lot more detailed research to make sure that this is actually factually correct. I don't think voter turnout has ever been considered as a relevant factor for electoral boundary commissions. Generally it's been population and not eligible voters. Those are the kind of frameworks that we're working from.

I won't necessarily ask you to comment on that, but I guess I was going to ask a bit about Bearspaw. I've got the same Google map up here. Would you agree, if I can paraphrase I think it was MLA Chapman earlier, that – and maybe, you know, you as somebody who grew up rural and used the Saskatoon example – when you're in Calgary, you're in Calgary; when you're not, you're not? Would you say it's fair that people live in Bearspaw specifically because they don't live in Calgary?

Ms Wagner: Yeah. I think so.

Mr. Clark: Okay. I was asked to keep it short, so I'll keep it short. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here. Appreciate that.

Ms Wagner: Yeah. No problem.

The Chair: Well, thank you so much for your presentation and your dialogue. That makes it the most valuable.

Ms Wagner: Yeah. Okay. Thank you very much. This was very fun.

The Chair: I'll excuse you from the table, but please stay if you could and hear the rest of the presenters.

I believe we only have two more presenters. We've not had a coffee break. We'll go straight through. Is there coffee outside?

Ms Wagner: There is.

The Chair: Okay. Anybody want one on the commission besides me? If you could bring one up.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms Wagner: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gord Lawlor.

Mr. Lawlor: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning.

Mr. Lawlor: I am the counterpoint to a couple of the points that have been made. I made myself some notes while I was sitting here because this is my first go at this. I'm a two-term councillor in the town of Stettler, and I'm the new mayor.

The Chair: Sorry. Two-term councillor and mayor of where?

Mr. Lawlor: The town of Stettler, so I'm in the Drumheller-Stettler constituency.

I would ask if you would . . .

The Chair: South of Wainwright.

Mr. Lawlor: What's that?

The Chair: South of Wainwright.

Mr. Lawlor: South of Wainwright, yeah, if you want to use that. Sure. It's like Saskatoon but different.

The Chair: North of Brooks. Sorry. We had a hearing in Wainwright, and I drove home, and I almost ran out of gas and Stettler didn't have a gas station open. That's why . . .

Mr. Lawlor: The Co-op gas station has the 24-hour self-serve.

The Chair: But it's a cardlock.

Mr. Lawlor: No. No. No. The Co-op gas station, yeah, has the liquor store.

The Chair: Oh, the Co-op. Yes. Sorry.

Mr. Lawlor: That's okay. I'm not offended.

I would ask you to ask me tough questions, though. Like, please be bad cop. I like it. I've made myself some notes here. I want to say that this is friendly but formal and it's comfortable, so thank you for that. I would not want to be on your side of the table. I'm going to ask you to ask me a question about schools and about voter turnout because that's not part of my presentation, so I'd appreciate that.

I am here for rural in the city of Calgary, of Country Hills Boulevard, and I live in Country Hills. I have to drive to go anywhere. We don't have transit.

Going to my presentation, I'm Gord Lawlor. I'm the mayor of the town of Stettler. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here to represent and speak about rural Alberta as a municipal leader and on behalf of residents in central-east Alberta and all of Alberta about the electoral boundaries. I've only recently learned about the electoral boundaries because it wasn't in my wheelhouse as a councillor. I was more concerned with immediate local. These changes will reduce rural representation by three MLAs and increase urban representation by five MLAs. While the Drumheller-Stettler constituency is not being affected at all on paper, the principle and the reality of diminished rural representation does affect all of us.

The Drumheller-Stettler electoral district covers a vast rural portion of east-central Alberta, spanning over a large geographic area that includes the towns of Drumheller, Stettler, Hanna, Oyen, and many smaller communities and agricultural regions. We are very capably represented by the hon. Nate Horner, a gentleman who actually nominated me for and presented me with the Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee medal in 2022. I suspect that Nate was predicting my future as a municipal leader better than I did. I never saw myself as becoming mayor.

According to the electoral district profile the current Drumheller constituency has a population of about 50,000 – that's residents – and it covers a tremendously large area that spans many thousands of square kilometres. Electoral lists show that the number of registered voters in Drumheller-Stettler is significantly lower than the provincial average, reflecting our rural population spread over a low density outside of urban centres.

Urban ridings concentrate voters into dense areas, neighbourhoods with proximate services, frequent transit, centralized government access. By contrast, rural ridings face things like distances measured in hours, not minutes; emergency service response challenges that require MLA advocacy far beyond typical city concerns – I've sat on our ambulance authority for eight years, and I had Nate Horner do some intervention, and our health minister came to Stettler three times regarding our ambulance service – health care access issues where local clinics and hospitals serve large areas with limited resources; infrastructure demands

from gravel road maintenance for my county partners, bridges, regional drains, and fire halls.

In our riding, for example, a resident in Consort or Oyen may travel more than three hours round trip for specialist medical care in Red Deer or Edmonton. Our agricultural producers in rural counties operate across hundreds of kilometres with unique water, land-use, and environmental issues. On-call staff in our small firefighting and our EMS units: they juggle long shifts and long calls without the same support scale that's seen in urban centres. These are not abstract challenges. These are day-to-day realities rural MLAs must understand and advocate for. When rural representation is reduced, it weakens the voice of communities that already struggle to be heard above the noise of concentrated population and political influence.

Why reducing rural MLAs is a problem. I understand that Alberta's population, the urban population specifically, is growing. We should plan for fair representation that reflects population shifts, but population alone shouldn't be the sole metric. Geography matters. Accessibility matters. Community distinctiveness matters. Service delivery realities also matter. Rural Albertans do not live close to our MLAs' constituency offices, we don't have transit, and we don't have frequent municipal forums. We have vast distances and diverse local economies, from farming and ranching to tourism, small business, which I am part of that factor. Ignoring these factors in favour of a strictly numbers-only approach fundamentally weakens rural Albertans' ability to be fairly represented.

10:50

One thing I want to make clear is that my constituency has not been affected by the proposals. I guess you could say that I'm here because staying silent because it doesn't affect me directly would be wrong. It affects all of rural Alberta. This is why I'm here. I'm here to advocate for rural health care sustainability, address EMS, wildfire preparedness, municipal emergency planning, champion agriculture infrastructure and investment, bring forward local voices on the provincial policy that directly affects rural livelihoods. These outcomes are not theoretical. They are real lived experiences in Drumheller, Stettler, county of Stettler, Paintearth county, Starland county, and many families who make rural Alberta their home.

Rural Albertans are not asking for special treatment. We are asking not to be diminished. By reducing rural seats and increasing urban seats – and what I want to speak to specifically is that the two additional proposed MLAs added to each of Edmonton and Calgary makes sense. Removing three rural MLAs to then put them into the urban centres increases voice and decreases voice.

One of the realities that we face is that with the proposed boundary changes there are constituencies where it's up to a five-hour drive to get from one end to the other. I urge the commission to consider representation that balances population with geography, community context, and accessibility so that rural Alberta's voice remains strong and heard.

I appreciate your time.

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

Mr. Evans: I'm going to ask you about voter turnout.

Mr. Lawlor: Voter turnout. The point is well made in the sense that a high voter turnout shows intensity and involvement. Speaking specifically to rural and our constituency, when Minister Nate Horner ran for a second term, our voter turnout was below the provincial average. I would consider that satisfaction. I'll say complacency, but satisfaction with representation. Pretty much a sure thing, so I really don't need to take time off the tractor to go

and vote. So I see it kind of in a counterpoint. It's not lack of engagement but more of a complacency: my neighbour is going to vote for Nate, so I don't have to because we got this.

Mr. Evans: In 2019 it was based on the population.

Mr. Lawlor: About 46 per cent ish, give or take.

Mr. Evans: It was 49, and it dropped in 2023 to 45. I understand what you're saying in terms of there's a satisfaction level there, so the complacency, you know, accounts for the drop in the percentages. But what about the concept of: if we're going to look at it, one, is it a factor that has value, in your opinion, in helping us define or determine effective representation and what that means in Alberta? If that were the case, would it then make sense to where there was high voter turnout increase the population, which, without diving into it in more detail, would dilute the voter turnout to bring it in line with the provincial average? The same would be true with respect to low voter turnout; you would reduce the population in that electoral district. Is there any value there?

Mr. Lawlor: Well, I see value there. You know, to sit on your side of the table would be total brain sprain for me. Like, I just couldn't do it because there are so many valid points being made that completely contradict each other.

The 2019 turnout was higher than 2023. In 2019 Nate Horner was running to become an MLA, and he was running against I'd say a pretty formidable opponent. Thus, people came out and made their voice heard. In 2023, I believe at that stage, he was the agriculture minister. He was doing an exceptional job representing our community. I have his personal cellphone number, and he answers my calls. I'm in a town of 6,000 people. How does he do that and still do what he does? Now he's Finance minister.

We're in a position where we have probably one of the busiest MLAs in the province. Everybody wants a piece of his time, yet he still represents us well, partially because he's got an incredible assistant. You have a meeting with Michele, you're having a meeting with Nate. They'll drive four, five, six hours at a time, and she will cover all the ground that's been talked about. So I see the lower turnout in 2023 as being a satisfaction more so than a complacency.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Lawlor: Thank you.

Anybody have one on schools?

Mrs. Samson: Not yet.

Mr. Lawlor: All right, fine. I'll wait.

Mrs. Samson: Thanks for coming today. It was a long drive.

Mr. Lawlor: It was.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. I appreciate that. Drumheller-Stettler is a very, very large riding, yet the population was low, and we struggled with Drumheller. Although you might think that it didn't change much, we did take Hardisty in – Hardisty was not in the riding before – because we needed the population numbers.

Mr. Lawlor: So you encompassed Hardisty in, which really is not a hardship in the sense of the coverage for our MLA, but the reality was adding the population. I understand that.

Mrs. Samson: You know, in the end, I know we talk population numbers a lot, but Drumheller-Stettler fits together quite nicely. I

think that there are lots of areas of interest and common interests and the whole thing. Outside of that change, it pretty much remained the same. But it is a big riding, and we have heard from a significant number of Albertans, and there are a lot of comments on the value of rural voice versus that in urban and vice versa. So I understand completely what you're saying, and I don't think there's anything I could say that would make you change your mind because it is a balancing act, and that's where the changes came from.

Mr. Lawlor: It's a tricky one, and I don't envy you your position. No matter what the outcome is, the fact that I and some of my colleagues have had the opportunity to present the counterpoint, to represent rural voice – we're challenged by getting, let's call it the attention of legislators, getting meetings in Edmonton to talk about aging rural infrastructures.

Now, I'm a new mayor since October, but I have joined the central Alberta mayors and reeves caucus to meet with other colleagues to talk about what our mutual concerns and challenges are. Also the Mid-sized Cities Mayors' Caucus I've joined, and these two organizations are basically working in alignment with Alberta Municipalities, not against. I mean, I've got infrastructure they're working on underground that's 130 years old, and over the decades it's been a challenge keeping up with the dollars that we get for funding.

That's the unsexy stuff. That's the stuff that nobody sees. That's the stuff that – God, I don't want to throw a stone here – prevents major water infrastructure issues. We own our own water treatment plant. We provide potable water, as a supplier, right out to Consort to the east and almost to Camrose to the north. We did have a break that had to be fixed. We did go into water conservation mode, and the public never found out because we got it fixed within 48 hours. So, yeah, we have our little tiny version of what's going on in the bigger centres, but aging infrastructure is huge. That's why we need a voice.

11:00

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. Thank you.

Mr. Lawlor: Thank you.

The Chair: I'll stop this discussion between two mayors and move along.

Dr. Martin.

Mr. Lawlor: Moving right along.

I like your smile. Like, you're grinning at everything. That's like: oh, buddy, I'm in trouble.

Dr. Martin: Well, thank you, Mayor Lawlor. I wanted to, first, say that you're like every other presenter here this morning; they don't envy us on this side of the table, so I don't know why I'm grinning. It must be awful over here.

Mr. Lawlor: You'd better pay more.

Dr. Martin: You've heard, as we've discussed with many of the other presenters, the array of factors that we are charged to think about as we determine boundaries. The act also asks us to do it – not come up with a weighting that is cookie cutter, but individualized to each electoral district under our consideration, which, of course, makes our life that much more difficult. One of the factors, and we see it a great deal in the rural areas, is that to achieve anything that looks plausibly like effective representation in very, very large footprints, we have to consider the distances travelled by the MLA. As a mayor you'll know some of this as well.

In your description of your MLA, busy man though he most certainly will be, he is travelling the entire electoral district in his car with a wireless phone and that sort of thing. There are a lot of good roads in Drumheller-Stettler in the summer, and I must confess to having driven probably too fast on most of them.

Mr. Lawlor: Me too.

Dr. Martin: You can get around reasonably well. In other rural districts it's completely not the case. It's very awkward, particularly in winter. Do you think the size of this riding affects your MLA's ability to be an effective representative?

Mr. Lawlor: Yes and no.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Lawlor: How's that for an answer? Yes, it does in the consideration of what his responsibilities are at the provincial level, the volume of work that he is actually having to do in the Legislature, outside of his constituency. So, yes, it affects it there.

The no part is the fact that he is an incredible human being in the sense of what he can accomplish, what he will accomplish. I had to send him a text one day saying: I have to say thank you. And he says: you're welcome; thank you for what? "Thank you for standing in the doorway of the Health minister and refusing to move until she committed to coming to Stettler." His response was: you know me well.

He represents us well. We needed that meeting; he got us that meeting. He didn't have to leave Edmonton to do it; he just had to go down the hall.

Dr. Martin: Well, that's a lovely anecdote. I'm glad that you're proud of your MLA.

I have one other question, which bears somewhat upon my colleague's remarks, but mine are about eligible voters, not the percentage that actually show up at any given time. Elections Alberta collects and keeps faithful records on the eligible voter populations in each electoral district. At this present time if you divide your population, you end up with a quotient of 32,000-ish electoral voters.

Mr. Lawlor: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: You're at 29 and a half. So even though you're a relatively small overall population, you have a quite robust eligible voter pool.

Mr. Lawlor: Right.

Dr. Martin: Now, most of the adults, most of the people over 18 in your riding are eligible voters. You don't have a large population of new Canadians who are not yet eligible voters, the way we see in some of the big cities.

Mr. Lawlor: Percentagewise I would find myself agreeing with you. I can speak only to Stettler directly. We have an amazing Filipino community. I kind of contribute that they were part of how I got elected as mayor. I had a very formidable opponent against me, and too many of them aren't eligible voters yet. Literally all of their goal is to acquire Canadian citizenship, be able to vote, make the difference, if you will.

Dr. Martin: This is useful. So in your experience, which must be considerable as the mayor, you know, there is an identifiable

population of people who are new Canadians, to put it crudely, who are not yet citizens, and they are living and working in and around Stettler.

Mr. Lawlor: Yes.

Dr. Martin: Do you anticipate that number to grow?

Mr. Lawlor: Yes. The Filipino community has. The part I really love about the Filipino community is that although they are distinctly in our community, they are also intermingled in our community. They don't just sort of all live in the same area, only go to the same things, only do the same things. They participate in our parade and they're out there with their beautiful costumes and doing the dancing. They participate in the community when we have cultural days. We have a Filipino day where they host the day, the food, the events, the activities. We have a growing Indo community as well. I'm actually, as mayor, looking into the rural renewal stream just to find out more about it, because we're not part of that. Yet 38 communities not dissimilar in size to mine are, in the sense of foreign workers, to assist the fast food, the seniors' lodges, and all the areas where there's need for employment.

It's out there in the sense of: they're taking all the jobs, they're taking all the jobs. Well, they have two or three jobs because there are people not willing to do those jobs for those wages. Who's right and who's wrong? So I really feel that it will be growing for us, very much so.

Dr. Martin: Good. That's great.

Mr. Lawlor: We've been very successful in getting doctors. I guess you could say that Stettler is the poster child for going from six doctors to 15 now in a very short time. It had to do with financial incentives, no question. Unfortunately, that's the world we're living in, but it also had a lot to do with doctors bringing doctors. You know, you get a South African doctor in Stettler, and he's got a friend, or she's got a friend, and now we're in Nigerian doctors. One had a special-needs son, so she chose to move to Red Deer because she had that need. Then she left Red Deer, joined us in Stettler because per capita, for what we are for size, we offer a tremendous level of service for special needs and our schools can handle that. We have a Catholic school and a public school, and I'm waiting for the school question, but did that answer your question?

Dr. Martin: It did. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Lawlor: Thank you. I'm glad.

The Chair: Mr. Clark?

Mr. Clark: Thank you. First off, I just want to thank you for being here and showing up and for your service to your community. I think it's a real testament. It's not easy being elected, you know. You get pigeonholed in the grocery store, and everything is your fault when it goes wrong, and if it goes well, that's the way it was supposed to be.

Mr. Lawlor: I don't envy Jeromy right now.

Mr. Clark: But, you know, first off, I guess I just want to say that, and I think you've done a really nice job of laying out the grand challenge that we have, in reflecting that there have been some positions here on urban being underrepresented, and now you're bringing the rural perspective. I'm very sympathetic to that, to just the geography.

But I also am encouraged by Stettler. Drumheller-Stettler, in particular, is a really good example of, as Justice Miller said: "We don't do one person, one vote. We do effective representation." So without tipping over into the kind of almost extreme scenario, Drumheller-Stettler is about 23 per cent below the provincial average, and I don't think I'm speaking out of turn when I say that when we all looked at that, we went: "Yeah, fair enough. Like, fair enough." That's a big, vast area.

Also, I think not just the fact – I do agree. I think your MLA is a particularly capable individual, but it's encouraging that you seem to have pretty good access to ministers, and you're very particularly fortunate I think. You've got a minister as an MLA, and he'll pigeonhole the health minister and things like that. But the one thing I wanted to pick up on was that you made a good point. I think you said Minister Horner's assistant Michele, is that . . .

Mr. Lawlor: Michele Toews.

Mr. Clark: Would it be helpful if there were more Micheles?

Mr. Lawlor: Oh, man.

Mr. Clark: Right? So not just for Drumheller-Stettler, but if there were some way, and unfortunately this is beyond our scope, to say: "Well, wait a minute. What if one of the ways we could bridge this challenge is to say: let's have actually a significantly greater number of office staff compensated appropriately so they can do the work." Do you think that would help?

11:10

Mr. Lawlor: Absolutely. We have a constituency office in Stettler, and Christie Greiner is the office manager there. She also is remarkable. I was on the Parkland regional library system board for eight years. We had a meeting scheduled with Nate Horner at the constituency office, and when we got there, Ron, the executive director of Parkland, was just very disappointed, deflated that Minister Horner couldn't be there so we were meeting with Christie and with Michele. I said: "Trust me, this is almost better than having Nate here, because he'll be thinking of seven different things. They're focused on what we're talking about, and Nate will hear this in detail from both of them."

Yes, effective assistant-level representation who could help carry the weight of "the Canadian flag over there is tattered." If they can carry that stuff and not have it – because I've been there a very short period of time, but I've been on council for eight years. It amazes me the number of things that come to me now that didn't come to me as a councillor. So yes, I fully agree. Good, strong, well-compensated – so you get quality people – assistants: that will really help in the big rural ridings. If you're going to make them bigger, get more extra people, I think we're golden.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much.

Mr. Lawlor: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lawlor: Please ask for schools. Please ask about schools.

The Chair: Okay. In 90 seconds or less tell us about schools.

Mr. Lawlor: One school: elementary, middle, high, all one physical structure that they bonded together.

The Chair: Stettler?

Mr. Lawlor: Yes. The school is underpopulated, as our constituency is underpopulated. Now, I learned that the school was underpopulated two years ago because we had a Clearview school municipal day with Alberta education and infrastructure, and we're talking about an upgrade to our schools: \$14 million to \$17 million, give or take.

Our elementary school is older than I am. It's band-aided together. It's had multiple different HVAC renewals. New schools are going up everywhere. They need to, right? They very much need to. The reason our school is underpopulated is because we're rural. So we have a welding shop, we have an auto mechanic shop, we have a carpentry shop, and Stettler built a beautiful performing arts centre about 32 years ago. Ultimately, I think about 16 years ago, give or take, we sold it to the Clearview school division for a dollar because it's physically attached to the school, and they use it for the drama. So we sold it to them for a dollar as a really good choice, and then we have coparticipation. That square footage is calculated into their education space, including the seats.

So we are underpopulated by the provincial standards. We very much need a new school, and by the end of that second day I'm sitting with the Alberta infrastructure guy, because I always sit with somebody I don't know and it turns out I'm sitting next to the senior guy, and I said, "Okay, \$14 million to \$17 million turns into \$19 million. Is this even possible?" And he says, "That's easier for me to sell for an underpopulated school than an upgrade."

We're not there yet. Our name hasn't hit the top of the pile. That's my goal in four years as being mayor is to get us a new school build in Stettler, but the demand elsewhere for population: I get it.

Thank you. I appreciate your time today. Any other questions for me?

The Chair: No. Thank you very much. I'll excuse you, but please remain.

Mr. Lawlor: I will.

The Chair: And if you have a written copy of your submission, that would be great.

Mr. Lawlor: Thank you all for your efforts and time.

Mr. Clark: I need two. Sorry.

The Chair: Sure. Okay. You've got enough for everybody here.

Okay. We will not have a formal break, and maybe I should have, an hour ago, had a break, but we only have one more presentation.

Mrs. Judy Heynen, please come forward. Take your time. Get comfortably seated at the table, and Mr. Clark will be back shortly.

Mrs. Samson: Tell us who you're talking about, and I can flip my maps around.

Mrs. Heynen: Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Fish Creek. A big riding in terms of population.

Mrs. Heynen: Well, you've taken away part of our population and added in a couple more pieces.

The Chair: Yeah. Just give us a moment to get that map on the screen, ma'am.

Mrs. Heynen: Yeah. You bet. It gives me time to get my paper ready. I'm not a screen person.

The Chair: Okay. Please introduce yourself formally and tell us again where you're from and what constituency or constituencies you wish to comment on.

Mrs. Heynen: Sure. You bet. My name is Judy Heynen. I live in the Midnapore, Sundance area of Calgary, and I'm part of the current Fish Creek constituency. I'm here to suggest that the current boundaries of Fish Creek should be left as is with good reason.

The Chair: Sorry. You know, you just touched on something that I probably as chair should have corrected. When we use the term "current boundaries," do you mean the boundaries before our report?

Mrs. Heynen: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Let's call that the 2017 boundaries.

Mrs. Heynen: Okay. Perfect.

The Chair: I probably should be a little more careful on that because current could mean different things to different . . .

Mrs. Heynen: Right. We just haven't had them changed formally yet. Right?

The Chair: Right. Yeah. So you don't like what we did in October. You want us to go back to what it was. Is that what you're saying?

Mrs. Heynen: October of this past year?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mrs. Heynen: Correct.

The Chair: You don't like it. Okay. Shoot away.

Mrs. Heynen: All right. I think that I can justify Fish Creek staying as it is with good reason and that this can be done by also considering proposed changes from the 2017 zoning for other areas of the city.

I've lived in Midnapore and Sundance area of Calgary since 1989. We moved there when Sundance was being developed as the most southern community in the city. The kids got to grow up in the mud. Both Midnapore and Sundance were designed with mixed-use housing, side-by-sides, townhouses, some apartments. Each has co-op housing and a range of sizes of single-family homes. Each community has schools and green spaces. There is some commercial development providing services and local employment. These communities since 1989 have become established. With Calgary zoning densification bylaws being reconsidered and the existing land use as it is, I think we can assume that these neighbourhoods will have relatively stable populations and I would say relatively stable voting-eligible populations. We may get turnover where there are more children moving in with their parents, but I think the number of voting people per household will probably stay fairly stable.

To the north and east of us in the slightly older neighbourhoods of Bonavista, Parkland, Deer Run, Deer Ridge, and Queensland, many of us have had parents and family. These neighbourhoods are similar. They, too, have mixed densities of housing with the probability of stable voting populations.

In addition to their stability, there is connectedness. As an example, the gifting with gratitude program allows neighbours to gift and ask for items that they would like to share with their neighbours that include a variety of household items. The communities chosen to participate in this exchange group have

school, church, sporting, commerce, entertainment activities in common. The communities involved in this group include Lake Bonavista, Parkland, Deer Ridge, Deer Run, and Queensland. The exchange program exemplifies neighbourly bonds and community. I think we need to get something like this going in Mid-Sun.

11:20

Bonavista and Parkland in particular are not divided along Canyon Meadows Drive; they are joined by it. It is a road with multiple exits into both communities, crosswalks, a bus route used by both communities, and a fairly extensive biking and walking population that goes back and forth. The same could be said about Sun Valley Boulevard, but that is not what is in question here.

The natural northern division of Fish Creek area is Anderson Road: four to six lanes, walled on both sides for the most part from the communities on either side, limited access to communities due to the more expressway nature of the road. To the west the commission's suggested inclusion of limited property along Fish Creek is – sorry – nonsensical. The community of Evergreen has been split in two. Part of the new boundary is a walking path within the community. Fish Creek Boulevard does not run straight east and west connecting with James McKeivitt; it bends, and the walking path uses that space. I cannot speak to the connectedness of Millrise to Shaughnessy, but if asked I think constituents would agree that they are more connected with each other than to Mid-Sun on the other side of Macleod Trail.

To me in Midnapore Macleod Trail is a barrier. It separates and defines our current community. As Macleod Trail has grown into a major thoroughfare, it defines leaving the community. Both Anderson and Macleod are also recognized as boundaries for Calgary electoral district of ward 14.

The final barrier road is Stoney Trail to the south. Stoney Trail is more natural than the suggested boundary of Chaparral Boulevard that splits the community of Chaparral in two. The suggested boundary separates Chaparral Ridge and Chaparral Valley from the rest of Chaparral. There are no schools or shops in Chaparral Ridge. I cannot imagine that they don't have extensive connections to the rest of Chaparral.

Finally, the impact on other constituencies of leaving Fish Creek as it currently is must be considered. To the south Calgary-Shaw would gain back Chaparral. Currently the interim report appendix E puts Calgary-Shaw at a plus 4.9 per cent variance of voting population, and it is in a growth area still to be built out. Perhaps in eight years from now or before this commission reaches its final conclusions Calgary-Hays, Calgary-Peigan, Calgary-Shaw, and Calgary-Okotoks may need to shift borders, but for now, as far as Fish Creek is concerned, Calgary-Shaw should include Chaparral.

To the west Calgary-Lougheed is at a minus 4.9 per cent variance. This, too, is a high-growth area, but would putting half of Evergreen or a smidge of Evergreen, Shawnee Slopes, and Millrise back into Lougheed affect that number too much? There seems to be room for a lot of growth as Fish Creek is currently slated to be at plus 9.3 per cent, and that is considered acceptable. The variance for Calgary-Lougheed would be approximately 14 per cent that they could grow without reaching where Calgary-Fish Creek is at.

Lastly, to the north Acadia is an unusual constituency, isn't it? It includes Canyon Meadows but carves out Chinook Park and Kelvin Grove, and now it runs in the north into Confluence, the new constituency that guts Klein in spite of June feedback that largely suggested Klein should be left alone, shrinks Calgary-Buffalo, and gobbles up the north end of Acadia. I actually have no idea how many homes are in the area north of Glenmore and immediately east of Macleod, so perhaps this area presents a negligible change for Calgary-Acadia. But they, too, are at a proposed position of plus

4.9 per cent variance. Putting Bonavista back into Calgary-Fish Creek might balance that out. Bottom line for me is that I do not have enough information about street-by-street numbers to have suggestions for improvements in the centre of the city. However, I do feel my comments regarding Calgary-Fish Creek have value.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that the existing communities of Fish Creek put together with the pre-2017 constituency alignment work well together. The boundaries that have created Calgary-Fish Creek should be left as is.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak.

The Chair: Thank you. I'm going to start, Mrs. Heynen, with the population. Our projected or recommended electoral division has a population of 60,044 for Calgary-Fish Creek. I'm embarrassed to say that I don't know what the previous one was. Do you have any idea?

Mrs. Samson: I can tell you. I just looked at that.

Mr. Clark: Fifty-two thousand eight hundred thirty-eight. That's 2024.

The Chair: Okay. So we've added a lot into this riding.

Are you saying that the area south of Stoney, which includes Chaparral, should be taken out of our recommended Calgary-Fish Creek? Is that what you're saying?

Mrs. Heynen: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. And if that was done, you'd be happy?

Mrs. Heynen: If you left Bonavista.

The Chair: In on the other . . .

Mrs. Heynen: On the other end.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Okay. Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. Again, I mean, I just appreciate so much people who decide to come out and participate. As you can tell from the packed house, that isn't actually a massive number of people. But it's incredibly important, and I think what's especially important for us is to hear from people who live in those neighbourhoods.

I guess I would ask, if you don't mind, if it's possible – I didn't see a written submission from you.

Mrs. Heynen: No. I was told that it was being recorded, so there was no need for that.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. But if you could leave that with us . . .

Mrs. Heynen: Sure.

Mr. Clark: . . . or send us a copy through Aaron, it would be really handy. There's a lot of – you know, you sort of talked about a lot of different communities. I've tried to write down as many as I could.

Mrs. Heynen: Sorry.

Mr. Clark: But it's great. It's really, really helpful. I live in those neighbourhoods, so I'd love to know more. That stuff is really, really valuable when we start to do the fine tune. It's great stuff.

One of the first things you noted was the stability of the population of those neighbourhoods. Is there much development? I mean, it sounds like it's all built out, right? There's not a lot of

greenfield. Is there much infill? Some of this blanket rezoning: is that happening in any of these neighbourhoods, or is it pretty stable?

Mrs. Heynen: It is happening somewhat with resistance. I'm not sure, if the blanket rezoning is pulled back, how much it will increase. There are a few areas that it makes sense to have perhaps some more apartment-style buildings, but a lot of it is single family. What doesn't seem to work is single family, single family, an eightplex, single family, single family, so there's resistance to that type of development. These are communities that were done when you had the grand, sweeping, turny roads and cul-de-sacs. They're actually similar in that. The build-out that was done, though, in the initial construction, like I said, did include several denser developments. It's a nice blend. I think they've done a decent job.

Mr. Clark: Nice neighbourhoods.

Mrs. Heynen: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. That's great.

Mrs. Heynen: You're welcome.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I don't know this area, but you've touched on my question. Really, as best I could tell it, other than the peripheral roadway like Macleod Trail, the only internal roadway across Fish Creek is Bow Bottom Trail road. Is that correct?

Mrs. Heynen: Bow Bottom is parallel to Macleod.

Dr. Martin: But it's the only one that connects the communities on either side of the creek itself.

11:30

Mrs. Heynen: It doesn't cross the creek at all. It stops before it gets to the creek.

Dr. Martin: Oh.

Mrs. Heynen: Essentially, Midnapore and Sundance are on the south side of Fish Creek, and Bonavista, Parkland, Queensland, Deer Ridge, Deer Run are all on the north and east sides of the creek. While Midnapore and Sundance – like, when we first moved in, we would refer to going into town. So if you were crossing Fish Creek, if you went across Canyon Meadows Drive, you had entered the city because we were that far south. At the same time that we felt that type of separation a long time ago, 30 years, 35 years ago, Bonavista and Parkland were already connected.

I think that what the suggested boundary change has not recognized is the cohesion of the Parkland-Bonavista connection, which are on either sides of Canyon Meadows Drive, which runs east and west. Bonavista people using Fish Creek park walk across Canyon Meadows Drive. Canyon Meadows Drive has bus routes running up and down it so that, you know, people taking the bus to other places in the city are getting on the same bus, whether they're coming from Parkland or coming from Bonavista. So I think there's quite a strong connection, especially between those two communities.

The communities of Queensland and Deer Ridge, Deer Run, Diamond Cove: there's really nowhere else to put them, not that you would want to put them anywhere else. They blend together even though Bow Bottom is quite a secondary road from, say, Bonavista. It's also flanked on the other side by the river, and the river is the bigger boundary of the two.

Dr. Martin: Following on that very thought, would you say that there has grown to be a cultural connectivity with the people around the Sundance Lake neighbourhoods and those north of the creek?

Mrs. Heynen: I'm actually surprised at how many people refer to familial connections because what happened is that a lot of people grew up in Bonavista and then couldn't afford to move in there themselves or the friends of their parents weren't selling. At that point, Midnapore, Sundance were much more affordable, so the whole population just kind of shifted south.

Dr. Martin: So there are quite literally communities of interest, I mean familial interest.

Mrs. Heynen: Yes. Yes.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Heynen: Not everybody, of course, but it's certainly a part of the fabric of those two groups.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation and for the historic anchor that you've laid out for us in 1989. I mean, it's amazing how I remember distinctly the late '80s, being at Fish Creek park, way in the south of Calgary, at a family reunion. I don't know what happened, but it's not in south Calgary anymore.

You made the reference. When you crossed – what was it? You were going into town?

Mrs. Heynen: Oh, Canyon Meadows. Going across the bridge, the Macleod Trail bridge at Fish Creek.

The Chair: Would you agree with me that the terminology has now changed? You're not crossing and going into town. Many people are jumping on the C-Train and going to work.

Mrs. Heynen: Yes, there are a lot of people doing that.

The Chair: I mean, it's not an exact equivalent, but the C-Train didn't really exist in '89.

Mrs. Heynen: No.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Heynen: You're welcome.

The Chair: Thank you.
Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thanks. Thanks for coming out. I really appreciate your time here today. Fish Creek was one of the communities inside Calgary that saw a lot of change, so thank you for bringing those detailed communities to our attention. Now is the time. If there's a chance of changing, we'll do it now. So thank you again for that information and leave it with us.

Mrs. Heynen: Thank you. That would be awesome.

Mr. Evans: I have nothing. Thank you.

Mrs. Heynen: Okay. May I make one comment, though?

The Chair: Sure.

Mrs. Heynen: You have asked other people about whether there's a difference between voter turnout and . . .

The Chair: You were geared up for that, weren't you?

Mrs. Heynen: I was. I have to admit that I completely disagree with you on the principle. I think voter turnout is a reflection of availability of voting stations, which I think is an issue for a lot of people in rural Alberta, it is about the satisfaction with the candidate, and it is about the energy invested by the constituency associations within that area to get out the vote. If you penalize an area for having good voter turnout, it's kind of like smacking the kid who gets 80 per cent and saying: well, you know, really you only got 50. I think it's a reflection of the effort that goes into the community, not something that should be altered because the intensity wasn't there. Sorry. I just wanted to throw that in.

Mr. Evans: Now that you've brought that up, what about eligible voters as a demographic? Bear in mind that's different than population, which is every living, breathing person in that area, right? Eligible voters is a different demographic. Is that a factor that should be considered?

Mrs. Heynen: Yes. I would say yes. I don't think it matters. I mean, when we moved into Sundance, it was referred to as rabbit hill. It

wasn't because there were a whole bunch of competent adults; it was because all of us had three and four kids and there were just children everywhere. It didn't mean we needed more representation. We needed more schools, but we didn't need more electoral representation I don't think.

Mr. Evans: You mean the population didn't represent the eligible voters?

Mrs. Heynen: Correct, but I think it was fair to measure it by eligible voters.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, and thank you for staying.

Mrs. Heynen: You're welcome.

The Chair: Now I just want to make sure, Mr. Roth: we have covered everybody that's formally listed to speak?

Okay. Thank you. We'll close this morning's session and break for lunch. We'll be reconvening at 1:30.

[The hearing adjourned at 11:37 a.m.]

