



A Conversation with **Linda Sloan**

CITY COUNCILLOR WARD 1

Roads are essential to our growth, economic development, safety and quality of life. We have over 4,500 kilometers of roads in Edmonton and while they are something we often take for granted, the City, and in particular the Transportation Department, take this vital infrastructure very seriously.

The Situation

The City works to meet the demands for new roads while making sure our existing roadways remain safe and viable. Each year, as more new residents move to Edmonton in search of employment opportunities created by our thriving economy, we need to build new roads to accommodate their needs. Since 2001, Edmonton has grown by over 46,000 persons, and expects annual population growth of around 18,000 people. We are essentially looking at 10 years of growth in only five years time, and with over \$80 billion in announced or proposed construction in Northern Alberta in the next five years, \$30 Billion in Edmonton region alone, the situation is not likely to change.

Challenges

With the City growing at a faster pace than our transportation infrastructure, and needed rehabilitation required on our existing roadways, Council held a special meeting, dubbed "Transportation Day", in September 2006. The focus was to outline current and emerging issues related to city growth and transportation infrastructure.

There are two key factors affecting our ability to deliver on planned infrastructure projects. One, as previously mentioned, is the increase in population growth. Growth forecasts previously developed do not reflect the current economic environment. In fact, even Calgary has had to revise its forecasts to reflect a population growth of over 250,000 within the next 10 years, and indicators point to even more rapid growth in Edmonton.

Secondly, overall inflation for transportation capital projects has been running at over 20 per cent between 2005 and 2006. We anticipate costs for most transportation projects to be 10 to 20 per cent higher each year over the next three years. This

represents significant erosion in buying power and may lead to delays in some planned construction.

Last year, the City Transportation department estimated that they were only able to fund 30% of arterial roads, 5% of collector roads and only a few neighbourhood roads in need of rehabilitation.

Opportunities

The City's challenge is to ensure that key investments reflect overall transportation requirements, and that performance is optimized in an environment of reduced funding and rapid growth. Funding from the Federal Fuel Tax, the Alberta Municipal Infrastructure Program and the Province's 5-cents-per-litre Fuel Tax Rebate Program will be used to fund the major transportation projects. The City is also in the process of updating the 1999 Transportation Master Plan, expected to be complete in June 2008. The purpose of the Plan is to establish a framework for how the City will address its future transportation needs. An update is needed to ensure that continuing transportation decisions for an integrated network can be made within the context of recent development trends and growth pressures.

Provide Your Input

I encourage you to find out more about the City's transportation infrastructure and the Transportation Master Plan by visiting www.movingedmonton.ca. You can provide your input by emailing me directly at linda.sloan@edmonton.ca, calling me at 496-8122, or mailing: Councillor Linda Sloan, 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7.

