

DON IVESON RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN  
LAUNCH EVENT  
JULY 26, 2017

LA CITE FRANCOPHONE  
8PM

***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

---

Thank you, Sarah...

I can tell you that I would not be standing with you all here today were it not for Sarah's support and encouragement each time we have run for elected public service. And I would not be standing with you all here today were it not for her encouragement to grow and improve myself at each obstacle in our journey. So if you like the work that I do, thank Sarah. And if you know anything about the work she does in our community as a champion of children and women and underdogs in our city, thank Sarah. And if you've met Dexter and Alice, our wonderful children, thank Sarah for being an amazing mom for them when service calls me away.

We've come a long way, with many of you, in our ten years at City Hall. But I need to take you back a bit further to explain why Sarah and I have pledged so much of our energy and passion to our city.

Around twelve years ago, Sarah and I faced some big decisions. We were considering leaving Edmonton, in search of big-city opportunities. We were about to make the same decisions that so many of our friends had made before us. We, like them, we were drawn to more walkable lifestyles, more vibrant street life, less car dependency, more diversity and downtowns worth celebrating. Sounds appealing, right?

But while thinking about where we might live, we also realized that what we really wanted was to build a family, to build a life together. That changed the math. If we were going to raise a family, where would we want to do that? And so we made two choices that I will always be grateful for--- we chose to marry, and we chose to build our life here in Edmonton.

In short, we decided to **bet on Edmonton**.

It was a contrarian choice among our peers. Some people want to arrive in a city and become part of a place that already meets their desires, while others are game to roll up their sleeves and work to build and shape a place toward their vision. Sarah and I chose the builders route, and we committed ourselves to Edmonton, and it has been a great privilege *to serve* in shaping Edmonton's growth and progress.

We believed then, and still believe now, that if we work at it we can have that big-city experience, while still being the best place to raise a family and build a life.

We were inspired then, and remain inspired now by our river valley and our parks, our superb public schools and post-secondaries, our festivals and our cultural life, and the open spirit of collaboration and entrepreneurship that can fill a prairie sky with a sense of possibility.

We also believed then, and still do, alongside all of you, that we can build Edmonton into a beautiful, inclusive, prosperous place with all the advantages of one of Canada's leading big Cities.

We bet on Edmonton.

And so did you. And over the last decade, more than **200,000** more people have chosen to bet on Edmonton. Video game designers and teachers; machinists and surgeons; bankers and social workers. Syrians and Irish; Somalis and Americans. I love that all of these people bet on Edmonton when others were asking, why on earth would you choose to live there?

That's the thing about being underestimated... it's easy to fly under the radar, quietly confident with what you've got in your hand. But we've come a long way since I called Edmonton the most underestimated city four years ago, and the world is beginning to notice what's happening here. The latest example is Google's Deep Mind Artificial Intelligence lab moving into Edmonton, or National Geographic saying we had the best farmers market in the world, or being recognized as the fastest growing and youngest city in the country.

I firmly believe Edmonton's prospects are strong, which is why I'm betting on Edmonton in the strongest way I know how - which is running again to serve as mayor.

We've done a lot in four years.

I've led a change in our approach to our region - setting a new tone, moving past bickering and small thinking - to unite the Edmonton Metropolitan region to seek economic growth *together*. I've pushed to raise density expectations for our city and our neighbours, so we grow efficiently and preserve more of our fertile agricultural land. A strong Edmonton depends on a strong region, and the progress we've made will be transformational.

In four years, I've led Council and City staff to produce over \$90 million dollars in efficiencies and cost avoidances, because value for money is important to me and likely everyone here today. We've overhauled project management at the city. We learned from the challenges we faced, and ensured that those projects,

while delayed, all remained on or under budget. And we've received repeated recognition for our open data, open government, and data analytics work, being named "Canada's most open city" two years running. This is so crucial to building public confidence that local governments are the most effective and open governments - the place where we can come together across political divides.

I've pushed for a one-stop shop for business permits and licensing in our new tower, a 'One Window' approach to meet the speed of entrepreneurs, so that Edmonton is the best city in the continent to do business.

Our Council has opened up opportunities for more density and housing choice, from secondary suites to skyscrapers, but there is more work ahead to offer more affordable housing in more areas of the city - from supportive housing for people with addictions and mental illness to affordable infill like brownstones close to transit, schools and retail.

We've welcomed refugees, rallied against islamophobia, and made it awkward to be a racist or a bigot in our city. We've embraced the call for reconciliation and pursued stronger relations with First Nations, Metis and Inuit edmontonians. As a City, we have modeled canadian values of multiculturalism, inclusion and diversity. But we have more work to do to address systemic discrimination, and more work to do to include all Edmontonians regardless of background.

We have tackled homelessness and poverty by building more housing and bringing in low-income transit pass. But we have more work to do to better support the most vulnerable among us with real pathways out of addiction and poverty for people — breaking cycles rather than managing them.

We secured funding for the Valley Line LRT, and to upgrade the Yellowhead. We repaved hundreds of kilometers of roads, and renewed sidewalks and roads and pipes in dozens of neighbourhoods. We reduced the number of potholes and

increased the number of crosswalks. And yet, in spite of all of our efforts, traffic congestion will worsen with growth, as it always does, in every city. That's why we need to build a better transit system, with LRT as its backbone, and give people more - and safer - options to bike and walk in our city.

We can see this transformation, this urban shift, underway right here in Bonnie Doon. You'll see neighbourhood renewal at work, upgrading the roads and pipes. You'll see a vibrant community of immigrants, students and new families working to make our city better; *une place multiculturel et un place bilange; an inclusive, welcoming place*. You'll see beautiful infill homes just blocks from here that are bringing in new families to support great restaurants like Cafe Bicyclette and neighbourhood schools like Rutherford and Maurice Lavalee. And you'll see construction of our new Valley Line LRT which will spur on even more family-focused development and give commuters a reason to leave a car at home, walk to their neighbourhood station and be in the middle of a vibrant downtown in mere minutes.

What's happening in Bonnie Doon can and should happen in many more neighbourhoods around the city - north, east, south, and west. Building these affordable, vibrant, connected neighbourhoods is one of the main reasons why I'm running for a second term as your Mayor.

When we were making our first decision to bet on Edmonton back in the early 2000s, the economy was surging, and this was the most powerful draw for people to come here. But it came with challenges too: housing prices were shooting up, labour costs were rising, and while it felt like the boom would last forever, we all knew deep down it wouldn't. People joked a bit self-consciously about those bumper stickers from the 80s, you remember - the one's that said, 'Lord, give us another oil boom and we promise we won't...' well, you remember? We did get one more ride after the great recession, and history will judge how well Alberta harnessed it.

But I think we all need to confront the reality that the resource booms of yesterday will likely never come again.

And maybe moving beyond the boom isn't so bad, if we can move past the bust as well.

And so I'm running to ensure that we get fiercely competitive about growing our economy. As a region, we've started to hunt as a pack. Next, we need to make Edmonton the best place in Canada to start and grow your business. City Hall must meet the needs of business for quick turnarounds, sensible rules, and working with businesses to get the city to a culture of 'yes'.

And we need to focus on our strengths in order to drive transformative economic growth. We must support key clusters where we can compete and win, because the economy of the future is based on innovation. From breakthroughs in oil and gas production to manufacturing, to food, to construction and to logistics. We started this work with Health City and building the most fertile ground for health innovation in the country. We have the same opportunity with agri business and leveraging the world's demand for food in the coming century. And our technology sector - and our stellar reputation in artificial intelligence - is an incredible opportunity to build a cluster that can be the envy of the world.

Now - we can continue to be modest about these successes, but I don't think that's good enough. If our city is going to stay competitive, we need to rally as a community, as leaders and builders, to ensure these sectors have everything they need to succeed, whether it's capital, space to grow, or mentors to show the way. *This* is how Edmonton will grow.

We need an 'innovation zone' that runs along the LRT line from NAIT to U of A, passing the hospitals, from MacEwan to Norquest, Startup Edmonton and TEC

Edmonton through the heart of Downtown. We need to think of this train line as our Brain Line, connecting business leaders to innovators physically and figuratively. We need programs to link these innovators and entrepreneurs together. We need to attract more businesses to move downtown. Building this new economy for Edmonton will be a top priority for me both during the campaign and into the next term, and it will need the wisdom and expertise of our community and business leaders to make it happen. But it must happen.

Think about the brain power we have in this city: from our six post-secondary institutions to the ingenuity and expertise that exists in our private sector.

If we can get this right, if we can transform our economy by rallying around our strengths, then no one would bet against Edmonton.

But I can't do this alone.

In 2013, we came together from Londonderry to Lewis Estates, Glenora to Greenfield, to build that great city we all imagined. It hasn't always been easy, but that city is only now just starting to take shape. We've come too far to slow down, too far to stop. We owe it to our kids and grandkids to see the job through.

Building our vision for Edmonton will require focus and leadership from the City Council we elect this fall. When you head to the polls on October 16th, please vote for building a city that is uplifting, inclusive and prosperous. Your next City Council will have a huge say if Edmonton will emerge as the exciting, dynamic city we all want.

So, today, I ask you to:

Cast your vote for more Bonnie Doons.

Cast your vote for safer streets and sidewalks.

Cast your vote for more LRT connecting more neighbourhoods.

Cast your vote for a stronger economy.

But above all, cast your vote for the Edmonton we can build, together.

I've bet on Edmonton. Are you with me?