

The City of St. Albert  
First Quarter Report  
January – March 2006



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In the first quarter of 2006, the City of St. Albert continued to make progress on a large number of projects and initiatives. This report to Council and the community documents the City's key achievements and areas of focus for the first quarter. It also demonstrates a high level of transparency and accountability. The report is organized by the seven outcome goals and corporate progress in each area. It also identifies which activities are tied to Council Priorities for 2006.

## Service & Operational Excellence

To consistently and reliably deliver services by valued and satisfied employees; to meet the needs of citizens and businesses through efficient, effective and customer-focused civic processes, programs, facilities and community amenities; to continuously improve and innovatively approach service delivery and manage the cost of service delivery.

The City of St. Albert is proud to deliver a high standard of service and operational excellence to residents and businesses. The City aims to provide quality services while exploring innovative delivery methods to improve efficiency and effectiveness.



### A Business Friendly City

The City of St. Albert is continuing to implement initiatives to cut red tape and clarify the processes for those wishing to do business with the City. A progress report on the Business Friendly Review was provided to Council and stakeholders in early January. A few highlights of our first quarter include:

- Reduced processing time for standard land sales by two weeks as a result of delegating authority to the City Manager.
- Reduced processing time of development permits by two weeks by substantially modifying the role of the Municipal Planning Commission.
- Established a public consultation policy for developments.

The City committed to the statutory requirement of making development permit decisions within 40 days of the submission of a complete application. The actual timelines for decisions shows an average processing time of 8 days in the first quarter.

The City committed to the statutory requirement of making subdivision application decisions within 60 days of the submission of a complete application. Actual timelines for decisions on subdivision applications were 41 days in first quarter.

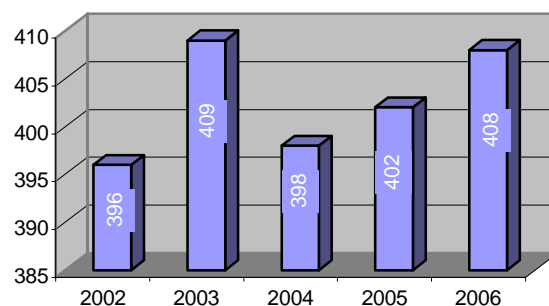
### Building a Strong Workforce

In the first quarter, the City experienced a record number of competitions stretching the Human Resources department to the maximum. All Human Resources staff have been reassigned from regular duties to screening, interviewing, and reference checking.

### Excellent Services to Citizens

A modified version of residential street snow removal occurred in March due to the late snowfall. Instead of using a full contingent of contractors, City plow trucks were used to clear roads. This modified service allowed Public Works to make a pass through all residential streets within 3 days whereas a standard snow clearing would normally take 10 days.

Development Permits



### International Children's Festival

Ticket sales for the first quarter of the Children's Festival are 47,713 compared to 29,259 for the first quarter of 2005 - a 63% increase.

### Arden Theatre

The Arden Theatre experienced positive revenue from higher than expected ticket sales in performance programming (\$42K) and advance revenues for the Children's Festival (\$47K). Some of these revenues were collected in 2005 for performances in 2006. These revenues have enabled the theatre to offset higher than expected artist fees (\$71K) to bring in performers.

### Annual Participation in Community Services Programs (including Arden Theatre Events & Attendance)

	Jan-Mar 2002	Jan-Mar 2003	Jan-Mar 2004	Jan-Mar 2005	Jan-Mar 2006
Visual Arts Program Participants	229	292	381	287	206
Performing Arts Participants	163	266	262	351	315
St. Albert Children's Theatre Participants	22	26	28	22	26
Recreation Program Participants	783	733	600	505	658
FPRC Attendance	89,952	91,029	89,945	83,740	90,268
Arden Theatre Events	N/A	27	36	25	47
Arden Theatre Attendance	N/A	16,432	18,918	20,662	20,340
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,149</b>	<b>108,805</b>	<b>110,170</b>	<b>105,592</b>	<b>111,860</b>

### Recreational Facilities and Services

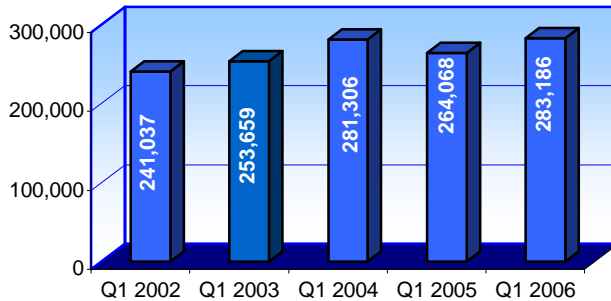
Community usage of clubhouses and school gymnasiums is at a maximum. Gymnasiums are becoming difficult to book by community groups because of expanding school needs. The arenas are maximized for prime time use, but there has been a slight decrease in late evening and early morning use.

### Grosvenor Pool/Grandin Clubhouse Project

The pool and clubhouse are under construction and scheduled to open in mid June 2006. The Grosvenor Pool and Grandin Clubhouse both received a \$125,000 CFEP grant (for a total of \$250,000 in provincial grants). As of March 15th 2006, the project is on budget.

### Providing Excellent Transit Services

St. Albert Transit's commuter service between St. Albert and Edmonton continues to attract a good number of riders, with an increase over the first quarter in 2005. The increase in ridership has resulted in an increase in transit pass revenue. Also in the first quarter, costs increased due to the timing of the structural refurbishment project, rising fuel costs and CUPE wages.

**Transit Commuter Ridership**

*Transit ridership experienced an increase of 19,118 over the same period in 2005.*

### Providing Openness and Accountability

The City participated in ongoing mediation with the Senior Citizens' Club and supported the development of a communication protocol. There is substantial optimism that the mediation process will result in a positive outcome.

## Managed Urban Growth & Form

To flexibly and responsively accommodate the housing demand; to collaboratively and effectively develop land through the Municipal Development Plan; to provide liveable and walkable communities in a modern urban context; to maintain a small-town feel.

Through careful planning for the future, the City of St. Albert will be better able to meet community needs and manage long-term costs.



### Land Use Bylaw - Signage

The signage survey and focus group feedback were completed early in the first quarter. Survey results were presented to Council with the recommendation that the existing regulations for portable signs on private property strike a reasonable balance and should remain.



### Building the Multipurpose Leisure Centre

The Multipurpose Leisure Centre is on time and on budget. By the end of March, 73% of the project construction was complete. Site tours, presentations and proposals continue to dominate the work of the Fundraising Committee. Plans for the April 22, 2006 "Raise the Roof" event are progressing well. Over 700 tickets have been sold and much excitement is surrounding the evening, which will include dinner, entertainment, a sneak peak of the MPLC and silent and live auctions.

where  
do you  
fit in?

The Fundraising Campaign has raised \$4,150,102 to date. This fundraising total includes \$940,000 of designated funding which is being directed to specific projects such as Campbell Arena Modernization. The "Name Your Seat" campaign will be launched at the April 22, 2006 "Raise the Roof" event.

### Space Planning

The Civic Space strategy was completed for review by Council in this quarter. Administration will bring forward the strategy, including the approach to consulting the public, to a Council meeting in early April 2006.

### Ted and Lois Hole Tribute

A Lois and Ted Hole Tribute Committee has been working on a process to select an artist to complete an art piece to appropriately recognize the Hole's.

### Lois Hole Provincial Park

A regional Committee has been designated to create a long-term plan for the Lois Hole Provincial Park. Recreation staff will take direction from the regional committee in planning the park in the context of Council's vision and St. Albert's Red Willow Park Master Plan.



### Constructing the West Regional Road

Construction on the West Regional Road continues on time and on budget. In fact, the contractors are slightly ahead of schedule and finished prior to the March 31<sup>st</sup> environmental shutdown date. In the first quarter, all pier work on the bridge was completed and guardrails were installed where possible.



### Planning for future growth

The Municipal Government Board hearing on the merits of St. Albert's annexation application continued January 25 - 27, 2006. Lawyers for the City and County made final arguments on January 27. The hearing was not closed in order to give the Board jurisdiction to reconvene if, during deliberations, the Board finds that they require additional information to finalize their recommendations. The Board is in the process of formulating its recommendation to the Minister of Municipal Affairs but it is uncertain when the recommendation will proceed to the Minister. A decision is not likely to be issued prior to July 2006. The anticipated effective date for the annexation (assuming the annexation application is approved) will be January 1, 2007.

### Affordable Housing

The St. Albert Community Housing Plan was submitted and accepted by Council in the first quarter of 2006.

## Safety & Security

To ensure the safety and security of people, including citizens, staff and visitors to the community; to ensure the safety and security of property, including City facilities, residential and business assets.

The City is perceived by its residents as a safe place to live and Council places a priority on maintaining high safety standards.

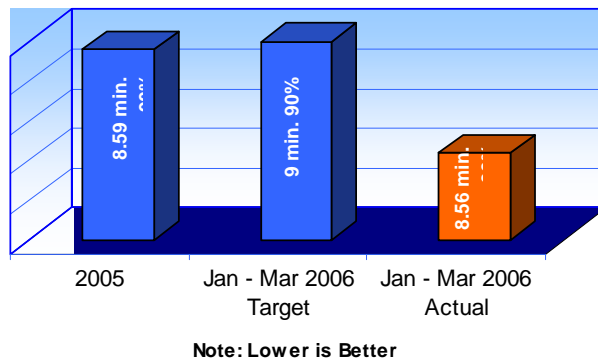


### Ensuring Quality Emergency Services

Fire Services continue to monitor their compliance to the response time service standard that Emergency Services respond to 90% of fire and emergency medical calls within nine minutes. For the first quarter, Fire/Rescue achieved response times of 8 minutes 56

seconds 90% of the time and EMS achieved results of 8 minutes 39 seconds 90% of the time.

#### **Emergency Service Average Response Time Index**



#### **Emergency Access to Off Road Locations**

This quarter also saw the development of the Trail Emergency Access and Response Project to be considered in the 2007 business planning process.

#### **Photo Radar**

While we are monitoring more vehicles, the percentage of violators has remained the same indicating a high level of compliance with posted speed limits.



#### **Updating the Traffic Bylaw**

The new Traffic Bylaw was given third reading and approved on March 6, 2006 with the bylaw coming into effect on July 1, 2006. The City forwarded the bylaw to the provincial minister of Infrastructure and Transportation for approval of the provisions related to Dangerous Goods.

#### **Block Party Initiative**

The St. Albert Task Force on Vandalism and Youth Issues is planning a Block Party for a St. Albert neighbourhood. This event will encourage neighbours to look after the neighbourhood and to help with safety/crime prevention by knowing who lives in their neighbourhood/ community.

## **Expand, Enhance & Diversify the St. Albert Economy**

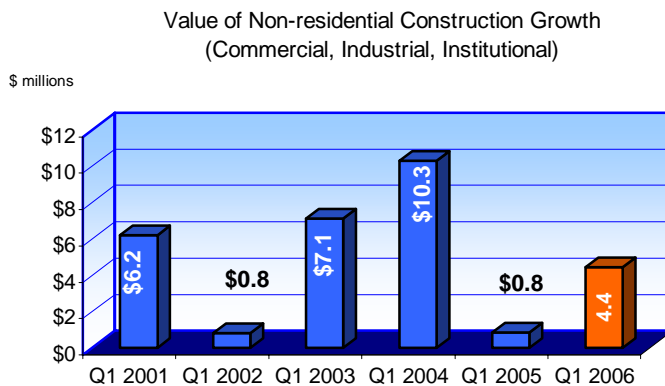
To ensure improved and effective use of land to improve business investment; to manage the decline in the proportion of non-residential tax assessment; to increase the proportion of taxes funded by commercial and industrial development. To maintain an appropriate portion of taxes funded by residential taxpayers and to implement the Economic Development Master Plan strategies.

### Investing in the Community

The Mayor's Business Visitation program continued in this quarter. This popular program involves the Mayor and members of City Council along with staff from Economic Development & Tourism visiting with local businesses to seek input and identify issues.

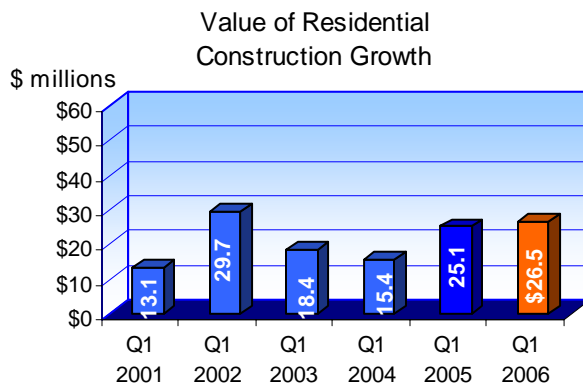
### Non-residential Construction Growth

Non-residential building permit values are expected to exceed \$10 million this year (subject to land availability). Non-residential building permit values for the first quarter reached \$4.4 million, compared to only \$820,000 in the same period of 2005. Development will be focused in Campbell Business Park North and the commercial phase of the Hospital Urban Village.



### Residential Construction Growth

Residential construction growth continues its strong growth trend in the first quarter with an increase of \$1.4 million in the value of residential construction, over the first quarter of 2005.



### Campbell Business Park

Throughout 2005, interest in purchasing lots in Campbell Business Park North increased. Numerous negotiations were underway late in 2005, leading to the sale of a total of 9 lots (11.67 acres) for a total value of \$1,577,100 in the first quarter of 2006.

### Challenges

- There is a concern with the ability to meet housing demands in 2006 (range of housing stock, increasing housing costs, limited supply of residential lots, etc.).
- Limited supply of commercial/industrial lots continues to impact business growth. Our inability to accommodate business interests in St. Albert with available land,

zoning and lot sizes, has generated upward pressure on lease rates. The lack of commercial corridor land and the fact that the private sector, commercial/industrial landowners and developers have not proceeded with development at a pace that supports business demand.

## Effective Infrastructure Management

To ensure effective physical infrastructure by managing investments in existing and new St. Albert civic assets including utilities (water, waste water, storm water); roads and sidewalks; buildings; vehicles; bridges; parks and trails; and traffic signals.

The Infrastructure Branch published the Phase 2 report in the Gazette.



### West Regional Road

For an update on the progress of this project, turn to page 6.



### MPLC

For an update on the progress of this project, turn to page 5.

## Fiscal Responsibility & Leadership Excellence

To maintain accountability to the community and act cost effectively; to practise prudent financial stewardship; to continue long-term planning; to engage and involve the community; to maintain strong regional and intergovernmental relationships.

### Improving Business Processes

The Public Works department went through a review that resulted in changes to operations which: allow the department to accommodate future growth; provides for succession planning; and redistributes workload in a more equitable fashion throughout the department.



### Carefully Managing our Budgets and Investments

- Work is proceeding on the RFP for the natural gas and electricity and the photo radar contract.
- Average per litre price of gasoline was higher than budget

### Achieving Excellence in Tax Assessments

Assessment Services achieved exemplary statistics for assessment equity via the provincial audit database system. The target Assessment Sales Ratio was 96% and the City achieved 97.3% (2005 assessment for 2006 taxation).

### Long Term Planning

Council approved the Transit Long Term Plan on February 13, 2006.

# Sound Stewardship of the Environment

To manage natural assets responsibly; to minimize negative impacts of growth and development on natural assets.



## Keeping the City Beautiful

A consultant has been engaged to assist the City to develop our direction and time frame for the Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan. This project will be ongoing over the next three years and will address some important issues including: a tree and natural assets bylaw, maintenance standards, landscape standards, integrated pest control, and integrated corporate parks master planning.

## Former Landfill and Sewage Lagoons – Riel Park

The *Site Management Alternatives: Former Sewage Lagoons and Dry Landfill Site* report was presented to Council on March 6. Based on a meeting with the regulators on January 31, they are satisfied with the City's staged approach and support the implementation of the landfill risk management strategy as outlined in the report. The report was also presented to the Environmental Advisory Committee for input and a public information session was held on March 22. The landfill risk management strategy will be developed with regulator and stakeholder involvement and presented to Council in the second quarter.

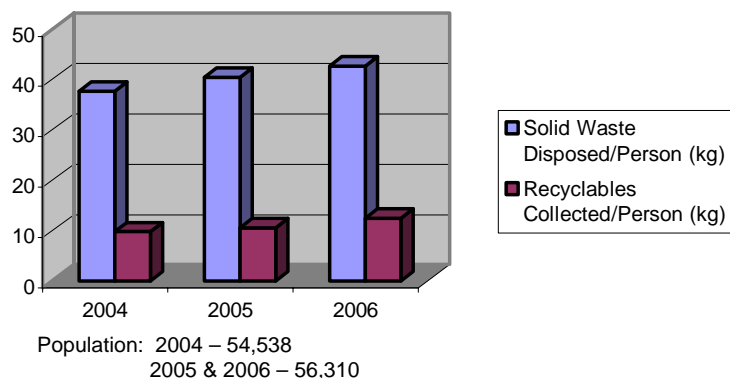
## Environmental Advisory Committee

The inaugural meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee was held on February 23. The Committee reviewed the Environmental Advisory Bylaw and discussed the roles and responsibilities of the committee. A review of potential environmental issues in the next year was also completed. A review of the *Site Management Alternatives: Former Sewage Lagoons and Dry Landfill Site* report was the main focus of the March 23 meeting.



## Recycling our Waste

St. Albert continues to perform well in terms of recycling. The overall amount of solid waste has increased due to the increase in population, but the amount of recycling per person has also increased at the same time.



# City Council Priorities



Deliver Value for Taxes Paid



Confirm West Regional Road as a Provincial Roadway



Open the Multipurpose Leisure Centre on time and on budget



Manage Infrastructure Effectively



Market St. Albert as “The Community of Choice” in the Capital Region



Exercise Stewardship over our natural areas and green spaces



Update the Land Use Bylaw



Update the Traffic Bylaw



Implement the Affordable Housing Strategy



Key Planning Activities

For further information, contact the City of St. Albert:  
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[www.stalbert.ca](http://www.stalbert.ca)