

Councillor Forum

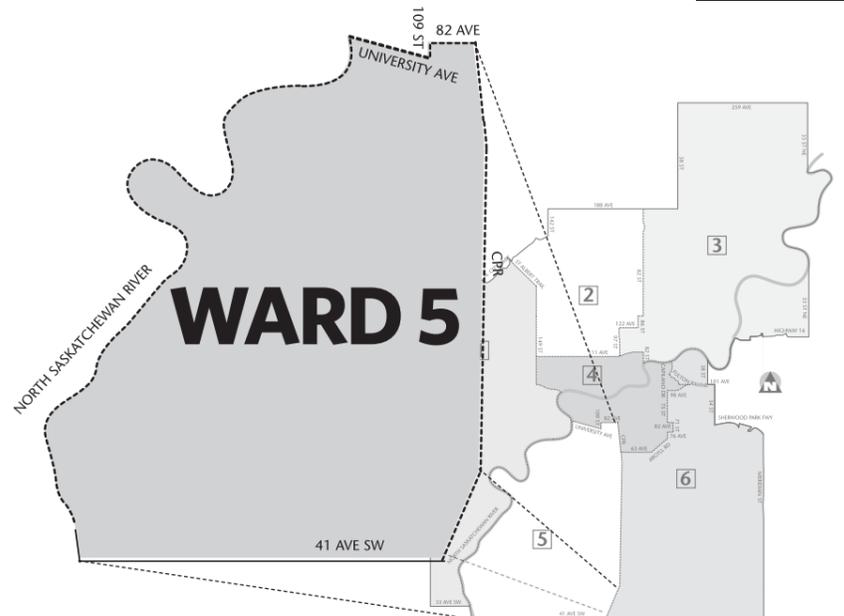
PART 2 OF 2

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER, AND AS VOTERS GET READY TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS, THE GATEWAY SITS DOWN WITH SOME OF THE FRONT-RUNNERS IN WARDS 4 and 5—where the majority of students live—to find out why each believes they are the candidate you should be voting for.

On Tuesday, we interviewed candidates in Ward 4. Today, we move south and a little west into Ward 5—geographically south of the University's main campus, but home to South Campus, as well as a large portion of university students living off-campus.

Housing and the LRT are huge issues for the Ward 5 candidates, and are also much closer to home, as the current LRT expansion, and subsequent transit shuffle will affect Ward 5 more than any other.

COMPILED BY BEN ETTINGER, SCOTT FENWICK, CATHERINE SCOTT, AND SARAH SCOTT
PHOTOS BY MIKE OTTO AND RYAN SHIPPELT



Brett Michalyk

Brett Michalyk worked as the owner of Leduc Auto and RV sales for ten years before getting involved in construction and becoming a carpenter. In 2006, he became president of Blackmud Creek Community League, and has gone on to serve as a board member of the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.

How do you plan on representing students in your ward?

Listening to the issues that matter to them. Have young people become more interested in their world by becoming involved locally and solving the issues that plague the rest of the world. Homelessness, social issues.

What postsecondary issues do you consider most pertinent?

Affordable housing and transit.

What can be done to alleviate housing costs in Edmonton?

Create an Edmonton community investment fund to start developments with non-profit organizations to provide cheaper housing like \$500 per month bachelor pads. Identify areas that could be used such as the U of A farms on Ellerslie Road, which go back to the Provincial Government in 2011; the new towncentre at 25 Avenue SW and 111 Street; lands by the Commonwealth Stadium; and the CP Rail yard at Whyte Avenue. Make a plan and do it.

What can be done to make campus more accessible in terms of transportation?

The transit system is in the middle of an assessment of services. It would be hoped that all affected parties would have a say on how they would like to see routes, times, and rider incentives managed. At present, with the addition of the South LRT to Foote Field and the future student residences, the U of A seems to be well-served.

Write a haiku on why you are the right candidate to represent student interests.

Experience and heart
A chance to make a big change
Next generation



Don Iveson

Don Iveson is the former director of the advocacy department of the Students' Union. A U of A grad in 2001, Iveson has also served as Vice-President of the Malmo Plains Community League, President of Canadian University Press and business manager for the Gateway. This is his first run at city council.

How do you plan on representing students in your ward?

The same way I would represent anyone in Ward 5. All Edmontonians should have a voice with effective representation. Obviously, students are close to my heart though, having worked with them—for them—for the last eight or nine years. So, I feel close to a lot of the issues that are of paramount importance to students, particularly transit, housing. There are areas that are important to the whole city that just also happen to be important for students.

Effectively, compassion for students on particular issues, but it has to balance with the needs with all the constituents of Ward 5. And when you're a city councillor, it's really a two-headed beast. On one hand, you're a local representative, and you have to be an advocate for things in your community—sometimes for, sometimes against them on a basis on what the community instructs you to do. And then the other half of being a city councillor is essentially being like a director of about a \$1.6 billion-a-year corporation. And that's the opportunity to make decisions for the greater good of the whole city, and students are a huge part of what makes this a special city, as there are over 100 000 learners at the major postsecondary institutions. Postsecondary is increasingly a backbone sector, not only of our economy, but of the vibrancy of our city.

What postsecondary issues do you consider most pertinent?

In the municipal context, transportation and

housing. Students need to get to and from where they live, and they need a place to live. Those two issues are of short-term, immediate importance for students in Edmonton. But secondary to that, for the long term, is the question of the kind of city we're building. Are we building a vibrant place that students who study here are going to stay in, start their business, or do their ground-breaking research, or to contribute to their community in one way or the other? Or are we building the kind of city that people simply pass through? My vision is for a city that is not only great for learners, but the kind of place that people, when they come here, won't want to leave.

What can be done to alleviate housing costs in Edmonton?

A number of things—I'm a supporter of the liberalization or legalization of secondary suites in all neighbourhoods in the city. I think we have to have certain rules, but rules are a good thing—we can't throw the doors wide open. But rules are a good thing because, right now, there are no rules for secondary suites. There are a lot of unsafe dwellings out there that have students and other kinds of people that have a tough time making ends meet. They don't meet fire code; they may have mold issues; they may not be well heated. They're not conducive for study. And so, if we legalize them, we can better enforce safety.

And also, we can make it easier to open up more supply in shorter timelines—the same way they did in Toronto, Vancouver, and Saskatoon. That adds density, which helps support public transit. Public transit, by the way, can also help with the cost of housing. If someone is able to get around more economically with efficient, good public transit, that can lower total cost of living for them.

And finally, the City has a role to play in supporting the University's request to build student

housing because I think that's an innovative way to add supply to the market, with very few downsides compared to building traditional public housing—because it doesn't need parking, the University already has the land, and frankly, students will live in quite a small footprint compared to what you would have to supply a bachelor suite [with] as an entry-level product in the marketplace.

What can be done to make campus more accessible in terms of transportation?

I thought that was done. It had a little something to do with the Universal Bus Pass. That's really a start. I mean, accessing campus is a multi-model start—there's still plenty of people who drive and there are a lot of people who bike and walk. I know the University is working on facilities for cyclists: secure lockups, shower facilities, and so on. But I'll believe it when I see it. So, we need to do something for cyclists. But that's in the University context.

What can the City do to enhance access to campus? Well, I'm sure that transit service is adequate or better to meet interest from the U-Pass. At the end of the day, service levels have to be there. I think we need to redesign public transit in Edmonton from the ground up anyway, to make it more intuitive, to make it more reliable, to reassure people that it's safe. And that will make a phenomenal difference too.

We have the Pass. We have the all-access pass system [that] could use a lot of improvement. It's good for students for the most part, but for other students that can't make use of it right now; for many Edmontonians, transit is not a viable option. We still have a long way to go.

Write a haiku on why you are the right candidate to represent student interests.

Ward 5 needs new reps
Diplomatic and focused
It's time for smart growth