

# Ward 6

## UPDATE

August 2006

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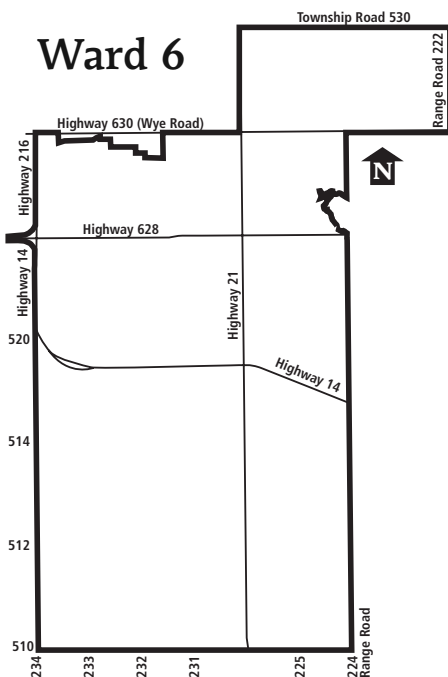
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County

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### Ward 6



#### Distribution of this newsletter

This newsletter is intended for residents of Ward 6, as shown on the map above. To economize, it is being distributed according to delivery zones established by Canada Post, which do not coincide with ward boundaries.

A limited number of households in Wards 5 and 7 may receive a copy as a result. If so, please enjoy the information and make note of the councillor for your area.

Ward 5, Councillor Jacquie Fenske, 464-8147

Ward 7, Councillor Glen Lawrence, 464-8003

### from your councillor



Councillor Alan Dunn puts the "pedal to the metal" to hear the views of Ward 6 residents. For more, see *Summer survey* on page 2.

During this term, Strathcona Council has made a number of difficult decisions. Most of the strife has been generated by rezoning and land use.

Many of these decisions have resulted in considerable fiery rhetoric in the local press and in the community. Perhaps now, then, would be time to talk about how I arrive at my position when deciding whether to support or object to a proposal.

In my view, the first aspect that must be considered is the overall benefit to the community under such headings as economic, environmental and social. These must be concrete, measurable benefits that evaluate net financial impact, job creation, preservation of lands, air quality, traffic, crime and general quality of life.

We need facts and hard data not unsubstantiated doomsday scenarios, clichés and motherhood statements. These can never be the basis for a decision.

Furthermore, whatever benefits are perceived must relate directly to those who live and have businesses within the municipality. These are the folks who have to live with and pay for those decisions.

We have no responsibility to support business interests from outside the county except to the extent that doing so enhances life for those already here. Nor do we have a duty to provide housing and facilities for those who would like to live here but do not.

This segues into the second aspect of decision making: the opinions of the residents. Municipal government is a representational democracy. The most important job of an elected official - some would say the only job - is accurately

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## UPDATE

*Councillor's message, continued from page 1*

to reflect and support the wishes of the electorate.

We are not entitled to impose our own values upon the residents of the municipality, rather, most of us are here because our values align with theirs.

People know what they want. It is insulting to their intelligence for us to foist decisions upon them "for their own good" in clear opposition to their stated desires. Naturally, difficulties arise when the desires of some residents conflicts with that of others or when the views of residents are unclear. Then, we must trust in the democratic process and hope that the decision is at least in the best interests of the majority.

### Summer Survey

In order to be clear on what folks truly believe and desire I have started my promised survey of residents and you may see me out pedalling about in the rain.

There have been few surprises so far and I am hearing pretty well the same messages that I heard several years ago.

Please accept this as my invitation to return your comments about life in the county. Even if you are pretty satisfied, which most folks seem to be, there is always something that can be improved and anyway, I would enjoy hearing from you.



### Rural water and sewer

I have been getting a few calls on this, especially by those who live next to Range Road 225, the routing for the service connection to the new Crimson Leaf development.

Here, then, is a brief recap. All new Country Residential developments must be connected to municipal sewer and water systems. These would be the rural standards: STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pump System) for sewer and Trickle for water.

Existing Country Residential subdivisions will be retrofitted with both services over the next many decades, starting with those closest to suitable trunk lines.

Two things remain to be done before we can start this program. One, we must develop a process that is fair to those who have recently upgraded their systems so that investment in stranded assets is not lost. Two, we must determine the order in which to carry out the retrofitting.

Any resident interested in upgrading either their water or sewer systems is strongly advised to contact the County's Engineering and Environmental Planning (or me) before spending any serious money. I hope to have more definite information within the next month or two.

### Rural trails

We are getting some increased interest on Council for a rural trail system.

The Wye Road trail was approved for this year's budget and work is underway. For the 2007 budget, I have made a Councillor request for a trail along Range Road 231 between Highway 628 and Wye Road to link up to the Sherwood Park trail system.

The Roads Master Plan does not call for any upgrades to Range Road 231 for years, if not decades, and residents are quite understandably clamouring for action now.

In addition, a resident of Waterton Estates has proposed a trail funded as a local improvement as an alternative should this item not make it through the budget process. Anyone interested in this is invited to call me.

### Centre in the Park Community Centre

Council has recently approved a \$3.5 million addition to the current budget to fund detailed design and engineering for the proposed Community Centre. The funds would be provincial government grant money.

The Community Centre has also been referred to as the Civic Centre or Civic Precinct and is to be integrated into Centre in the Park. It would consist of much-needed space for the library, municipal offices and council chambers.

I was of two minds whether to support this as I am not convinced of the need for this project; however, I did support the allocation of these funds as the only way to determine the cost of the Community Centre is to complete some serious engineering work. Otherwise, any attempt to balance need versus cost would be meaningless.

### Whitcroft Community League

Watch for upgrades to the community hall as the league has been working in partnership with Strathcona County's Recreation, Parks and Culture and Facility Services departments on two substantial initiatives.

The first will see the covered patio on the south side of the hall being enclosed to construct a meeting/leisure room. The second is building an addition on the northeast corner to house a larger storage room.

Community league members are excited to have raised 50 per cent of the project costs and just recently completed and submitted a grant application seeking the remaining 50 per cent from the Alberta Lottery Fund's Community Initiatives Program.

## Roads and highways

If a dozen Strathcona residents were murdered annually by biker gangs, there would be panic, yet we routinely kill that many on our roads every year.

A report of the Traffic Safety Committee paints a gloomy picture to which we must add the humiliation that drivers in the Capital Region are now the worst in Canada. Any discussion about roads and highways must recognise that safety has to be the main concern.

### Highway 21 Twinning

In the past, I have been outspoken in my opposition to the twinning of Highway 21. In my survey, several of you have told me that I am backing a loser; many folks along this highway would like to see it twinned as soon as possible citing difficulty of access as the principal reason.

Also, the RCMP detachment provided me with accident statistics from the past few years illustrating profound differences in mortality rates between the twinned and untwinned sections. This is primarily due to the high incidence of "crossing the centre line" head on collisions that could have been avoided by a centre median separating the two directions of traffic. It is the median rather than the twinning that

reduces severity of collisions; still, it seems we cannot have one without the other.

Sensitive to both residents' opinions and actual data, I must back down as gracefully as I can and announce my support for the Highway 21 twinning project.

Anything to reduce the carnage on our roads is worth a try. Twinning does not solve all traffic problems; however, in this case, it may help.

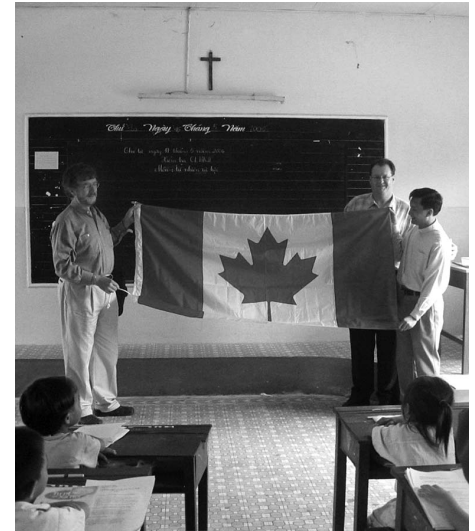
### Highway 628/Whitemud Extension

The intersections at Range Roads 233, 232 and 231 and the Whitemud extension continue to plague us. Left turns are impossible during much of the day. No improvements may be expected until this highway is upgraded sometime after Highway 21 work is completed, five years hence. These intersections will continue to be hazardous for many years.

### Range Road 233 Upgrade

For the upgrade of Range Road 233 south to the Whitemud extension, the primary issue was how to deal with the intersections that connect to country residential subdivisions.

## Intergovernmental Affairs - Vietnam



### Partnership with community in Vietnam

Councillor Dunn, left, and Kevin Glebe of Strathcona County visit a classroom in Vietnam where they presented school supplies along with a Canadian flag. Over the next two years, Strathcona County and the port city of Vung Tau will take part in a partnership sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

## Colchester Community League

After working with Strathcona County's Recreation, Parks and Culture and Facility Services departments just a few years ago to upgrade the interior of the Colchester Community Hall, the league is again considering more upgrades.

This time around the league is thinking about converting the parking area on the south side of the hall into a larger grass area which fits better with the existing ball diamonds and picnic tables. The existing parking area located beside the diamonds would then be relocated to the north side of the community hall.

Another idea being considered includes the construction of a deck on the south side of the hall as an added feature for community functions and social rentals and possibly more upgrades to the basement.



## Household Hazardous Waste Round-Up and Paint Exchange

If it has been a while since you've used that container of wood preservatives or that jug of antifreeze, chances are you need to dispose of it. Proper disposal is important not only for your safety, but the safety of the environment.

Strathcona County's semi-annual Household Hazardous Waste Round-Up and Paint Exchange takes place in September. This one-day event gives residents the opportunity to safely dispose of a variety of materials from around the home and garden.

There's also a paint exchange, and an e-cycle bin for computers and other electronics devices.

The date, locations and times are still being confirmed. Watch local newspapers or visit [www.strathcona.ab.ca](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca).

## Growth & development

Two development proposals in Ward 6 have been prominent on Council's agenda since my last newsletter.

### South Wye/Harbour Development

South Wye/Harbour proposed additional commercial development on the south side of Wye Road east of Wal-Mart. After several meetings between the developers and County administration, and a number of meetings between the developers and area residents, including the residents of Campbelltown Heights, the proposal was presented to Council at a lengthy public hearing on the evening of May 23, 2006. After considering the proposal again at the Council meeting of June 13, Council voted not to proceed with the development.

### Meadow Hawk Development

The Meadow Hawk development on the west side of Range Road 231, just south of Wye Road, was also the subject of a lengthy public hearing before Council on June 27. The developer proposes a mix of parcel sizes, with larger traditional country residential lots surrounding smaller, estate residential lots. A total of 53 lots is proposed. Council voted in support of first and second reading of the Meadow Hawk Area Structure Plan bylaw. Third reading of the bylaw will be brought back for Council's consideration in early fall.

## Pesticide reduction program

For a number of years now, Strathcona County has adopted practices to gradually reduce the amount of pesticides used to control weeds and brush at roadsides.

Taking this one step further, in 2007 the County is planning to introduce a formal pesticide reduction program. This will focus on two areas: first, reducing herbicide still further in municipal operations, including more mowing and spot spraying. Along with this will be a program to increase public awareness of appropriate and responsible methods of managing vegetation.

### Draft 2 of the Municipal Development Plan being prepared

On June 27, Council was asked to provide formal direction to Administration to permit the preparation of Draft 2 of the new Municipal Development Plan or MDP. Decisions made at that meeting will be reflected in the next version of this document, which will be available to the public late in the summer. Here are the important issues at this stage:

#### 1. Proposed growth node

There was considerable discussion as to whether we had a demonstrated need for a Growth Node at all in view of the fact that Strathcona does not have any planning data around growth rates and desired population. Nevertheless, Council elected to proceed on the decision as to the location of a Growth Node without this information.

The previous draft showed Growth Node 1—Colchester—as the preferred area for expansion. For the next draft, two areas North of Highway 16 have replaced Colchester: Node 2 east of Highway 21 and Node 4 west of Highway 21.

The reasons for this change were firstly the strong resistance that developed in the Colchester area in opposition to high density urban development in the area and secondly, problems around the validity of the analysis favouring this area. No doubt there will be much discussion before a final decision on the location has been established.

#### 2. Expansion of Urban Service Area Boundaries

Council decided not to expand the Urban Service Area from Sherwood Park to include the country residential area south of Wye Road. This does not preclude minor adjustments in this boundary to “clean things up,” but it does mean that increased density in a transition area is not contemplated at present.

The County will, however, consider expansion of the boundaries of the rural hamlets (Ardrossan, South Cooking Lake, etc.) where practical and desirable.

### 3. Horticulture-Small Holdings Policy Area

Council decided to retain this designation, but to move it from the proposed location along Hwy 16 to the northwest part of the County along Highway 15.

### 4. Beaver Hills Moraine

Council agreed that the new Beaver Hills Moraine Policy Area should be as proposed in Draft 1 the MDP with a few minor adjustments to rationalize boundaries. This is an expansion of the previous Lakeland Policy area and will preserve a significant environmentally sensitive area from uncontrolled development.

### 5. Transition Area 1 west of Highway 21

In view of the selection of this area as part of the growth node, this would no longer be a transition area.

### 6. Other questions the MDP should address:

- “Themes” for the rural hamlets.
- “Beautification” projects for Sherwood Park.
- Redevelopment of certain areas of Sherwood Park.
- Provision for secondary suites in Sherwood Park.

What each of these means will, we hope, evolve with time.

A final question with much more impact and importance in the “Other” category was: Council decided not to specify a maximum planned population or a growth rate for the County. I have no idea how we as a municipality can plan for infrastructure, services and the need for growth areas without knowing how many people we are to serve and when.

These are fundamental planning parameters, and I am frankly astonished at this direction or lack thereof.

The next version of the MDP, incorporating these changes, should be available around the beginning of September. We intend to provide information on the proposed plan to all residents. The final Municipal Development Plan is to become law in October or November of this year.