

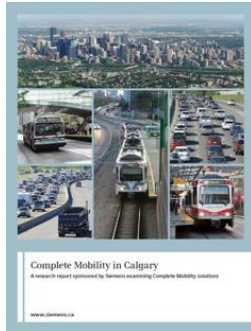
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For the business press

## New transportation study shows sustainable growth in Edmonton threatened by urban sprawl

Edmonton, AB, October 3, 2011

### Siemens Canada releases comprehensive research study on mobility in Edmonton



The report, entitled "Complete Mobility in Edmonton" - was commissioned by Siemens Canada and was conducted by UK consultancy MRC McLean Hazel Ltd. in collaboration with MRC Inc. in Toronto. The study (second in a series of three) aims to provide new insight into the current mobility system of the metropolitan area of Edmonton relative to its global competitors and to establish pathways needed to achieve a sustainable, efficient and user-focused mobility system within the next 20 years.

"The Complete Mobility concept aims to define a system that moves people and freight by developing sustainable, efficient and user-focused infrastructure that offers a high level of service and is safe, reliable and environmentally friendly for cities, metropolitan

areas and major hubs," said Marco Jungbeker, vice president of Siemens Mobility Division.

The Complete Mobility Index uses five qualitative and 10 quantitative mobility indicators that measure the 'sustainability', 'efficiency' and 'user focus' of a city's mobility system. These are plotted against GDP per capita for the cities.

Edmonton currently falls into the 'At Risk' category and is currently the weakest performing of the six Canadian cities included in the Complete Mobility Index. Analysis showed that Edmonton's transport plans are steering the city towards the 'Best in Class' category, but that these plans will fail to produce the desired results without an increased focus on the needs of transport users, and improved land-use management including integration with transport supply. This is all necessary in order to ensure the long-term success of the city due to the context of the urban challenges that Edmonton will face over the coming decades.

"In Edmonton the energy market is the dominant economic driver but this industry can be highly volatile meaning that Edmonton's economy has historically experienced boom and bust periods," said Prof. George Hazel, Chair at MRC MacLean Hazel. Edmonton has recognized the need for its economy to diversify and become more stable. "An important factor for economic diversification in Edmonton will be the success of the Port Alberta initiative which requires strong local, national and international connectivity," according to Hazel. Edmonton International Airport will play an important role in this but currently faces a significant challenge of losing passengers to Calgary Airport.

Economic diversity requires Edmonton to attract other new businesses, entrepreneurs and skilled workers. The city needs to become more liveable for residents and attractive to businesses. Much of this expected population growth will come through migration - from within Alberta, from other Canadian provinces, as well as internationally. Edmonton needs to continue to make it easy for immigrants to move to the city but policy makers need to manage growth to accommodate the increasing population without increasing sprawl; ensure adequate provision of affordable housing; create higher density options that are attractive and available; enhance the role, appearance and perception of the downtown; and ensure that sufficient transit options are available to those living in lower density areas as well as in the central city core.

The dominant personal vehicle culture in Edmonton is also an issue that needs to be tackled. People own multiple cars and use them for most trips. This culture is unsustainable in the long-term, not only because of environmental impacts, but with rising energy prices the personal costs of personal vehicle use for households will increase, making such a car-focused lifestyle economically unsustainable. The challenge will be to provide adequate road and transit networks and create the conditions for integration between all transportation modes. This, along with integrated land-use and transport planning, should create an environment in which mode share can become more balanced and sustainable.

The use of incentives may also be required to promote behaviour change. There is a real need to demonstrate that higher density living and reduced car use does not have to compromise lifestyle aspirations and indeed can enhance this lifestyle for personal and community benefit alike.

#### Research Highlights:

The study provides a detailed analysis of the mobility trends impacting Edmonton, and detailed review of local current and planned initiatives, including "The Way Ahead" and "The Way We Move". The Complete Mobility research was developed through local stakeholder interviews and workshops. The Complete Mobility in Edmonton report presents two future scenarios for Edmonton to 2030 and the impact of each scenario upon the city's future sustainability:

**A "Currently Committed" Scenario** demonstrates the likely developments and progress based on the principal initiatives that are currently committed within the city, region and province. This scenario is based on both funded and unfunded initiatives covering LRT expansion; bus service expansion; Transit Centre development; increased accessible bus coverage and Disabled Adult Transit Services (DATS); bus lanes and bus priority; pedestrian and cycle improvements; a Smart Bus pilot study; transit safety and security systems; the Anthony Henday Drive Ring Road completion; Edmonton International Airport expansion and Port Alberta initiatives; Park and Ride expansion; transit oriented developments.

"Edmonton's policies such as The Way Ahead and The Way We Move are steering the city in the right direction. There are to be some major committed improvements to the city's transport system, and for these steps the city can be congratulated," said Hazel. "However, it was also found that the level of change outlined is unlikely to have enough of an effect on the wider issues in the region such as increasing sprawl, increasing social disparity, decline of the city centre and increasing transport related pollution. Indeed some of the proposals, such as the Anthony Henday Drive Ring Road, may worsen many of these negative trends."

**A "Complete Mobility" Scenario** offers a series of integrated incremental packages in order to move Edmonton towards a transport system formed around the vision of Complete Mobility.

These four packages are:

1. A City Centre Airport Redevelopment Package
2. A Edmonton International Airport and Port Alberta Package
3. A Smart Infrastructure Package
4. A High Speed Rail Mobility Package

The four packages focus on the requirement to create 'one system' that presents a seamless

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Complete Mobility

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choice of mobility options for residents, businesses and visitors. The system would be oriented to their needs but would also help to deliver the city's wider objectives in the context of their future urban challenges. It would take Edmonton into the 'Best in Class' group of cities. The packages really highlight the opportunity that Edmonton has to develop some globally exemplar mobility initiatives which could begin to shift the 'hearts and minds' of its residents and businesses away from car dominance and towards the benefits of a more balanced transport system.



**Key Recommendations:**

The study concludes with an analysis and recommendations as to how Complete Mobility can be delivered in Edmonton:

**Working Together in the Edmonton Region:** Edmonton has the advantage of being the capital of Alberta and therefore is the centre of provincial government. However, the City of Edmonton has relatively tight boundaries and the travel-to-work area is much wider, necessitating joint working with adjoining municipalities. The Edmonton Capital Region demonstrates how when municipalities act together they are more likely to recognize and understand key strategic issues and also to begin to put together solutions that may have to be jointly implemented. This gives the region a greater voice in the province and nationally, one that is appropriate to the increased size of the city.

**Making the Most of Wider Funding Opportunities:** The Way Ahead requires increased funding and to reduce reliance on property taxes. The Complete Mobility approach encourages, and creates opportunities for, the use of more innovative funding streams.

**Getting the Priorities Right:** There is a dislocation between what the province considers to be its priorities and what appear as priorities in the main Edmonton and Capital Region Board plans. Furthermore, there is fragmentation of agencies and authorities responsible for delivery of infrastructure and transport services. A project prioritization framework is proposed. This provides a joint, rational, iterative and transparent process to prioritize projects and initiatives against the city's agreed key objectives. All agencies can then working together to implement it and to manage transportation services across the region.

**Integrating Transport and Land Use:** Integrated transport and land use is a strategic goal of both "The Way We Grow" and "The Way We Move". Both of these plans demonstrate a good level of integration. However, although there are examples of good practice, often new development is continuing to take place in the suburbs and away from transit options. As such there are further requirements necessary to ensure that the growth is properly planned for and integrated into the city.

According to Jungbeker, "Complete Mobility offers a real opportunity to transform Edmonton into a world class, liveable and economically successful city. Looking to the future, the key for Edmonton to prosper will be to strike a balance when it comes to the environment, competitiveness and quality of life."

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