

Vibrant Communities Response Summary

In March of 2011 NextGen administered a survey to its constituents regarding sustainable communities. 469 responses were received from neighbourhoods across Edmonton. The results brought to light numerous aspects Edmontonians feel make their communities liveable, vibrant and sustainable. Analysis of the results focuses on identifying key, repeated themes throughout the responses. This report summarizes those main themes.

Accessibility / Amenities

Arguably the main theme emanating from the survey is the desire for quick and easy access to various neighbourhood amenities. Respondents seek vibrant communities where they can easily access the following:

- Shopping
- Restaurants / Cafés
- Cultural activities / Entertainment
- Recreation

It is felt street life derived from such accessibility brings communities closer together with less need to leave the neighbourhood. Respondents indicate the desire for many of the services and amenities to be independent businesses as it is felt this helps contribute to the uniqueness of a region.

Access to transportation is also a pressing need for the sustainability of communities. Primarily this was noted as easy access to public transportation (bus, LRT) with some respondents noting easier access to roadways to link them to other parts of the city as important.

Character / Beauty

Neighbourhood cleanliness is often noted by respondents. They note that keeping neighbourhoods more attractive and beautiful make them both more liveable and sustainable. Residents should properly maintain their homes and yards as that care is a reflection of the neighbourhood as a whole.

Residents regularly comment about the need for greenery to enhance a neighbourhood. This could come from mature trees, well maintained boulevards, local parks or landscaped homes.

The range and style of homes is also often mentioned as providing character to a community. Residents recognize new developments will occur in their neighbourhoods but want those to fit in with the existing look and aesthetics of the community. They also want all buildings (houses, apartments, condominiums, businesses) to be well maintained as derelict properties have a negative effect on the image and look of a region.

People / Community

To no surprise, respondents indicate the people in their neighbourhood are crucial to how they feel about their community. Having great neighbours that they get to know clearly plays a strong role in the connection to a community.

People walking outside, kids playing, and recreation opportunities are at the heart of a sustainable community. Active community centres, or lack thereof, are also noted as important. Residents want hubs where they can interact with neighbours and many pointed to the fact that doesn't exist in their community.

There is a strong correlation between community feel and access to amenities. Some respondents note that the need to leave the neighbourhood for shopping or recreation has a negative impact on getting to know neighbours and seeing vibrancy near their homes.

Parks / Recreation

Recreation and parks are seen as key elements to a vibrant neighbourhood. As noted above, easy access to recreation plays a key role in bringing people and community together. Respondents note the desire to have green space for walking, relaxing and congregating. They appreciate that these spaces often involve paths that easily link them to other communities and parts of the city. They also like parks for sports and where kids can play. Access to other, often indoor, facilities is also seen as important to not only provide diverse recreational opportunities but also limit the need to leave the community.

Additional support for this theme comes from some respondents noting with disappointment about a lack of easy access to bike paths, green space and parks in their neighbourhood. It is felt by some the prevalence of cars and traffic negatively impacts their neighbourhood's ability to provide easy and safe recreational opportunities.

Infrastructure

A major source of frustration for respondents is their community's physical infrastructure. These comments covered a wide range of areas with poor sidewalks, crumbling and narrow roads, street gravel, snow removal and underground infrastructure most often mentioned.

Construction and the resulting disruption (noise, traffic shifts, dust) are also often noted as sources of frustration. Despite this, some did note they can live with such disruption as they appreciate and are excited about the pending improvements.

Access to neighbourhood schools was noted at times throughout the survey but surprisingly not as often as might have been expected. With 72.5% of the respondents aged between 25 and 50, it was expected that schools would be a larger issue throughout many questions in the survey but that does not appear to be the case.

Activities

Community activities round out the overall living experience for residents. Cultural and kids' activities, engaged people and an active community league are all felt to enhance vibrancy in a neighbourhood.

The survey asked respondents to note how they currently use their neighbourhood and services they would like to see more. Currently 38% say they use their neighbourhood for entertainment but 56% said they would like to see more. This 18% difference was the largest upward trending category indicating a strong desire for increased, local activities.

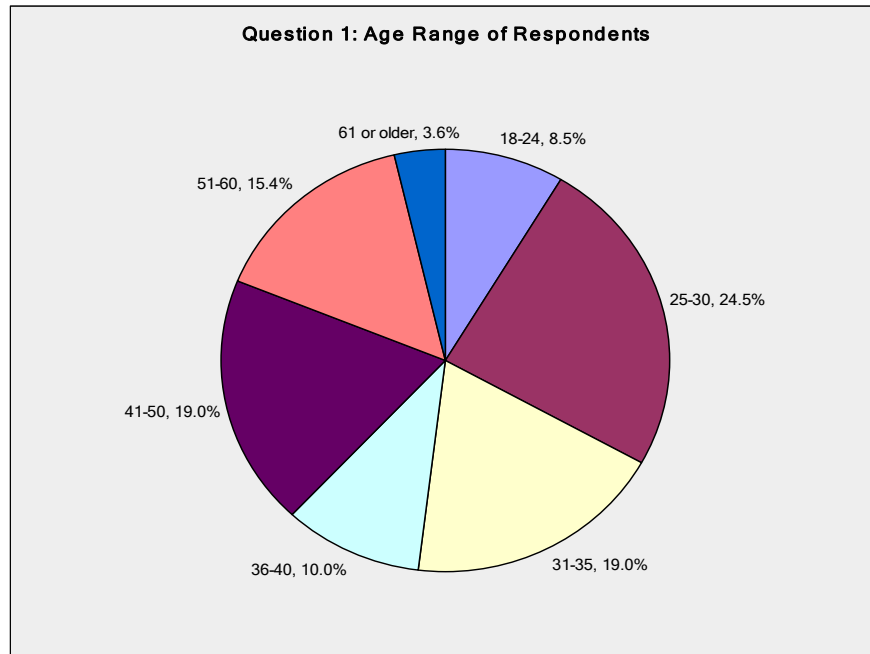
The nature of proposed activities range from community festivals to smaller family barbecues but all fall under the banner of providing balance to life in communities. There is also a strong sense that events could be specifically programmed or planned but that some more sporadic activities are also very welcomed.

Walkability

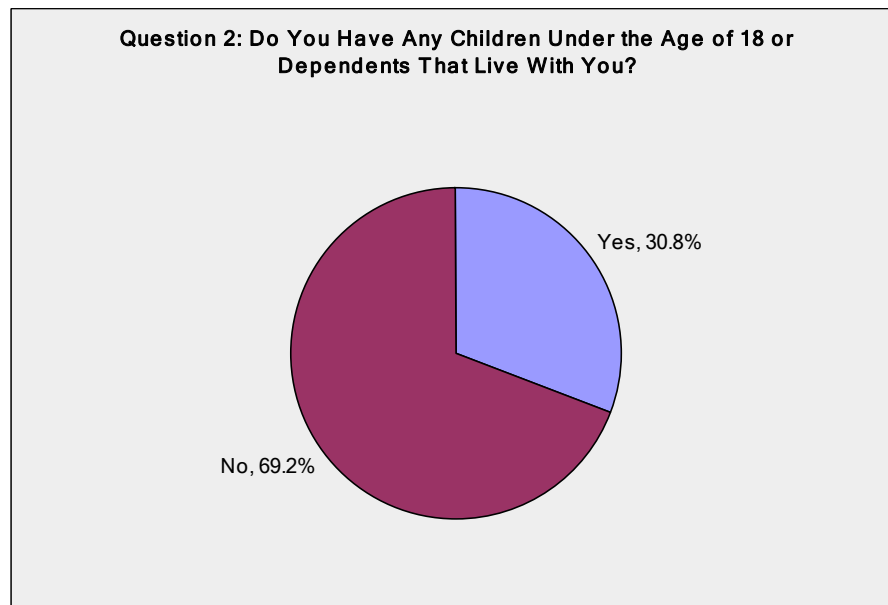
The aspect of walkability has been alluded to with previous themes but it is noted enough by respondents to warrant its own section. It is clear that many people support neighbourhoods that allow them quick access to much of what they need be it amenities/services, activities or recreation. Not only does this reduce the need for car traffic but density and a more pedestrian lifestyle can help bring communities closer together making them more attractive for residents and ultimately more sustainable.

Graphical Summary

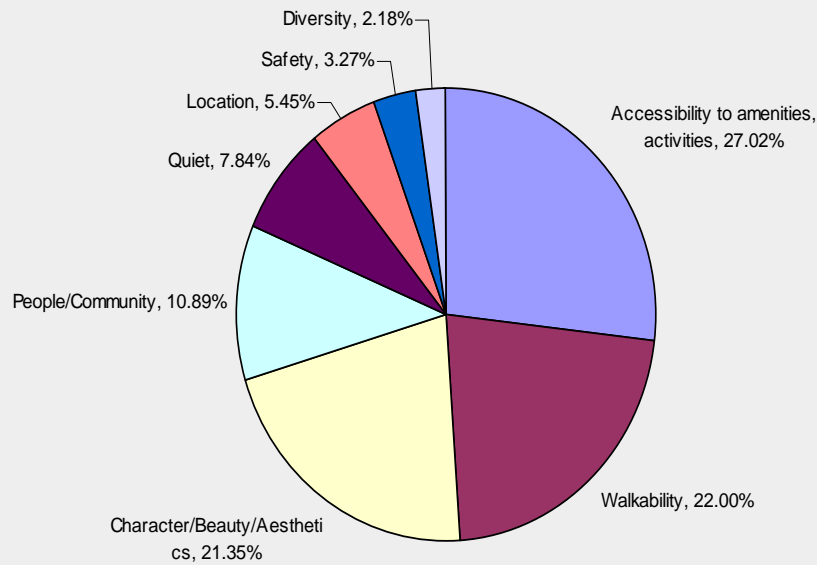
This section provides a graphical summary of each question. For qualitative questions, responses were grouped by theme and then charted to indicate prevalence of answers.



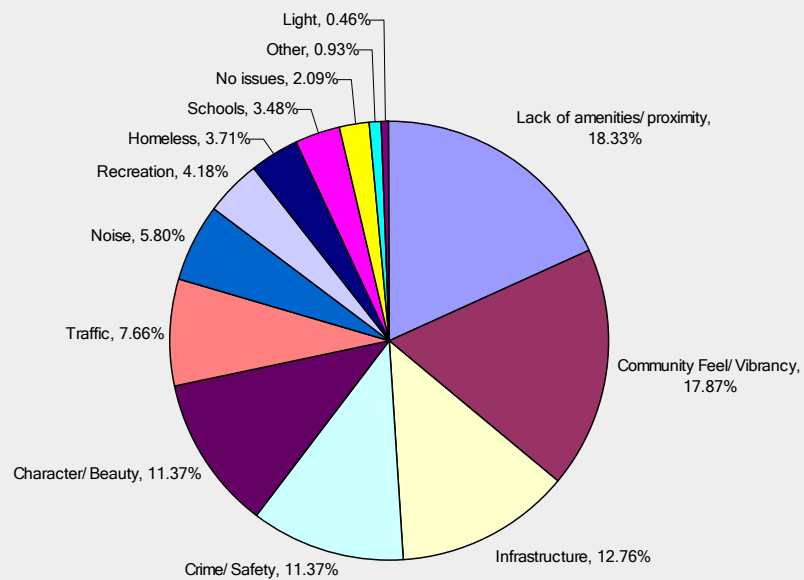
62 % of respondents were from the Next Gen age bracket (18 – 40)



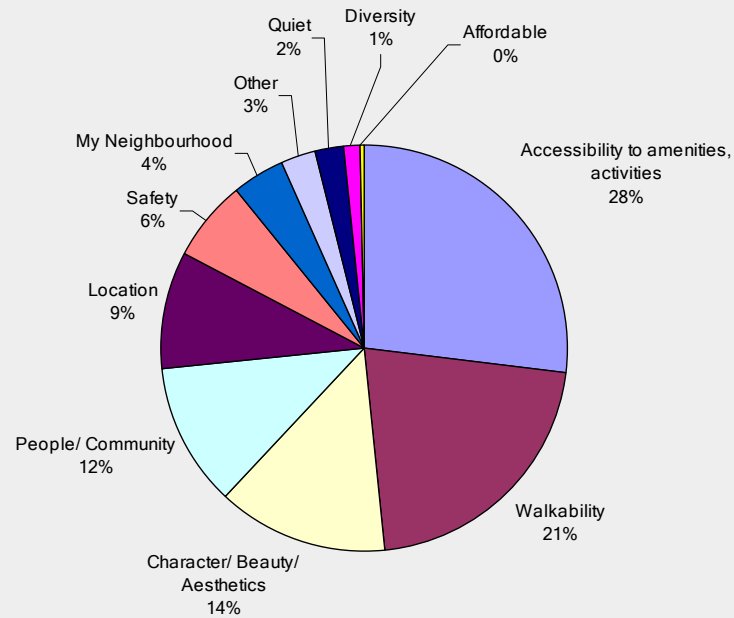
Question 3: What Do You Like Most About Your Neighbourhood?



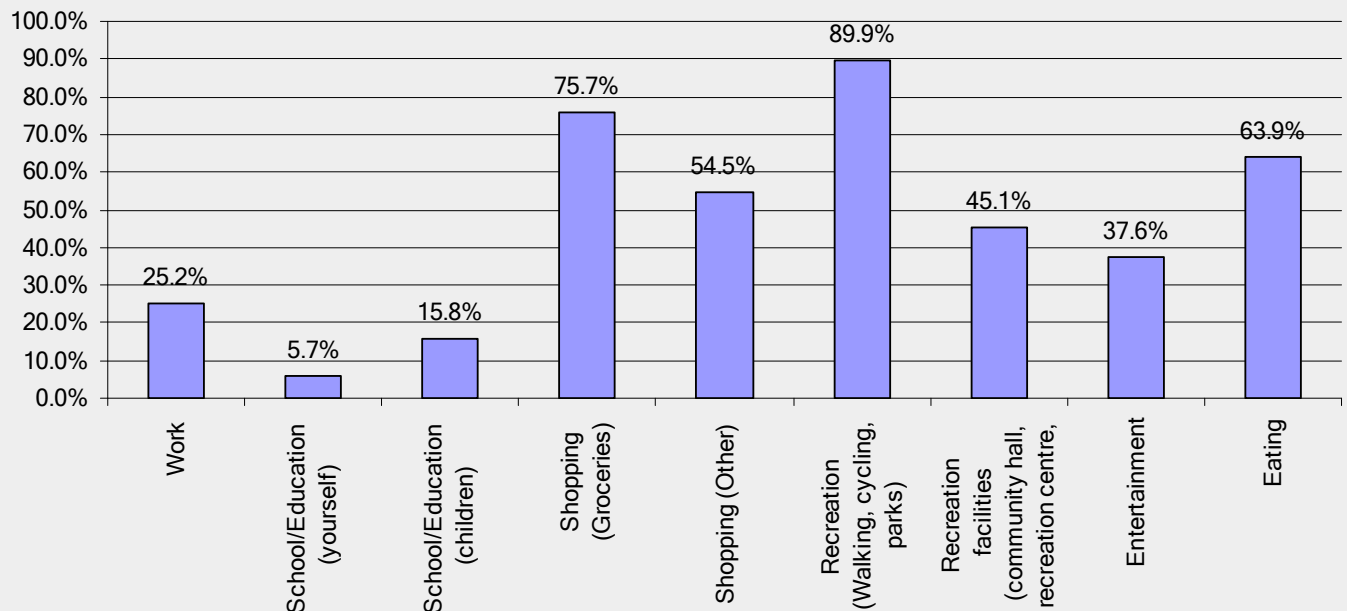
Question 4: What Do You Like The Least About Your Neighbourhood?



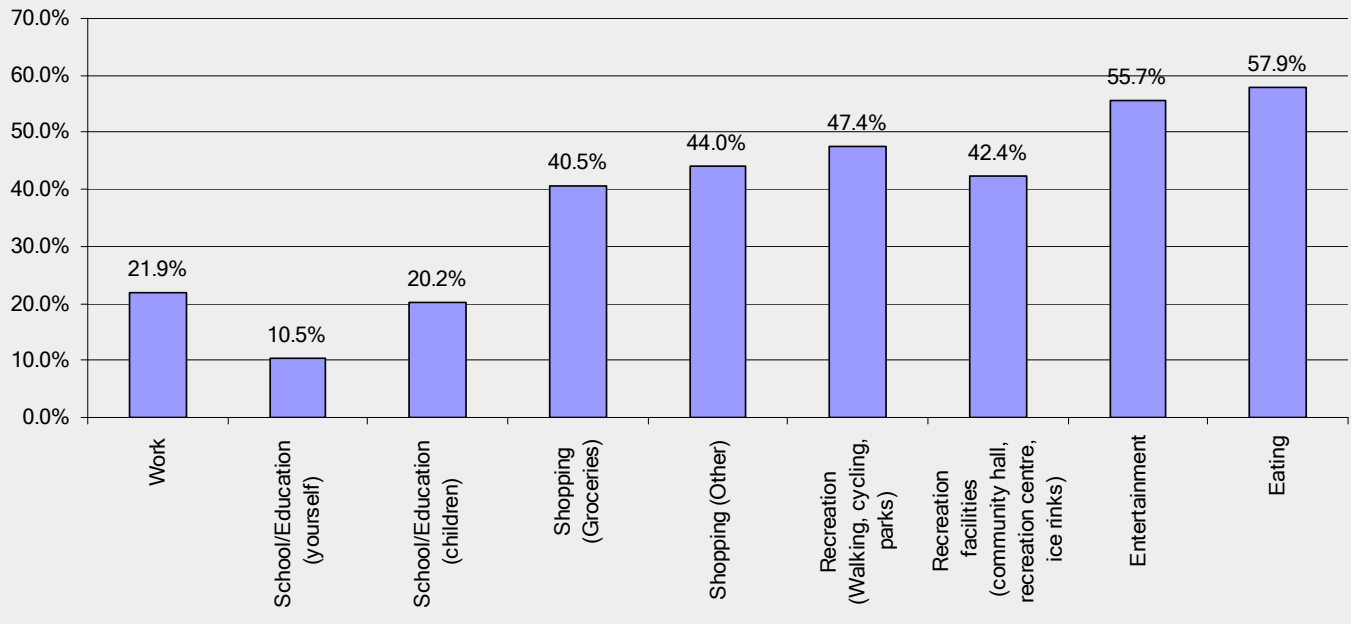
Question 5: What Is Your Ideal Neighbourhood? Why?



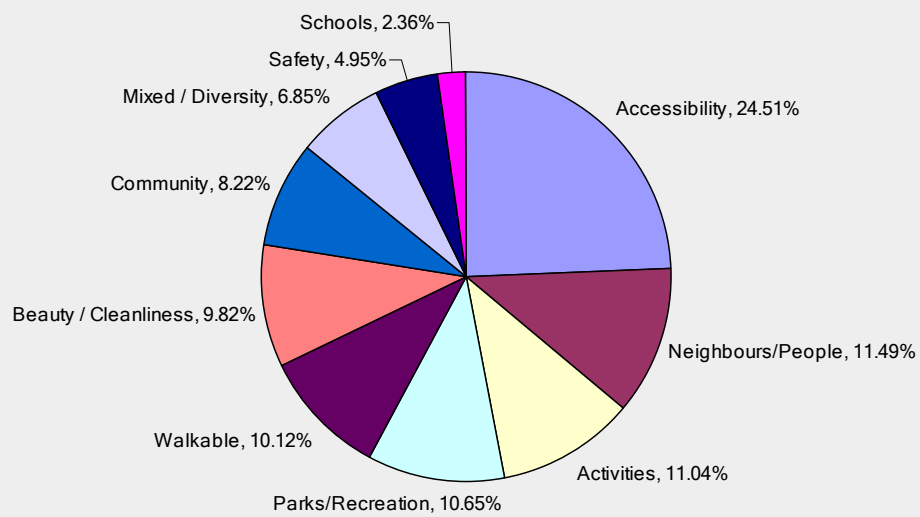
Question 6: How Do You Currently Use Your Neighbourhood?



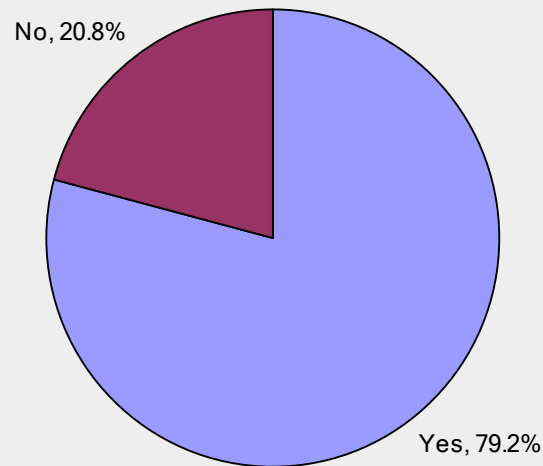
Question 7: What Would You Like To See More Of In Your Neighbourhood?



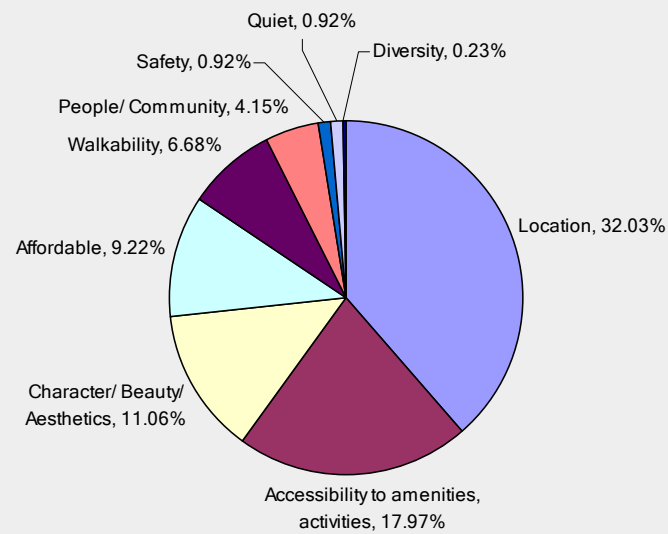
Question 8: What Makes A Neighbourhood Vibrant?

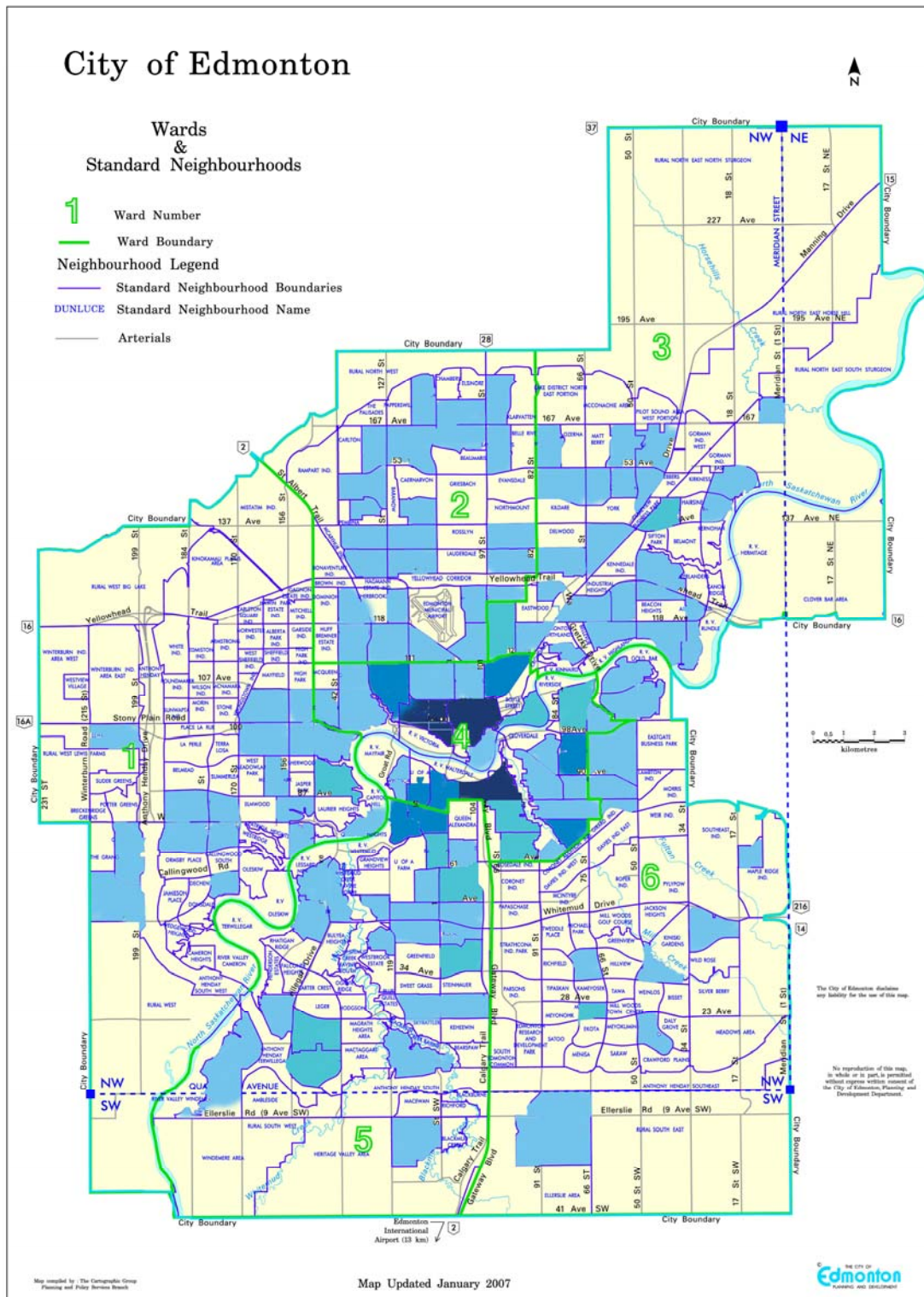


Question 9: Are You In Favour of New Multi-Family Units Being Built in Existing Mature Neighbourhoods?



Question 10: Why Do You Live In Your Current Neighbourhood?





Dark blue indicates over 15 responses.

Medium blue indicates between 10 – 15 responses.

Light blue indicates less than 5 responses.