

Our values



City Safety

Number of firefighters in Edmonton:

2008: 889

2001: 704

Number of police officers in Edmonton:

2008: 1329

2001: 1122

Number of paramedics in Edmonton:

2008: 346

2001: 275

Source: City Of Edmonton 2009.

Our top priority: safety

When most people are asked about the kind of city they want to live in, they overwhelmingly want it to be safe. As one City of Edmonton focus group participant said, *"if you don't feel safe, nothing else matters."* The majority of us do have a sense of security:

- 77% of us feel safe in our neighbourhoods,
- 61% of us think Edmonton is a safe place to live.¹¹

But focus group participants also identified a gap, between the reality and the perception of safety in our city. Some said they just feel less secure in certain areas of Edmonton. Some expressed anxiety about going downtown at night, particularly when the streets are quiet. One focus group participant told us: *"I felt safer late at night in the streets in downtown Chicago than I do here. I think it's because in Chicago they're urbanites. We're suburbanites. It's like going into a different zone when we go downtown."*

The reality is that both the volume and the severity of crime in the Edmonton area are down. But we do have an above average number of violent crimes, relative to other metropolitan areas.¹²

What we want done about crime

A majority of us think that the best way to tackle crime is by tackling the underlying issues, rather than relying on the criminal justice system. Ninety-one percent of us feel that addressing drug and alcohol addictions is the most effective way to improve community safety.

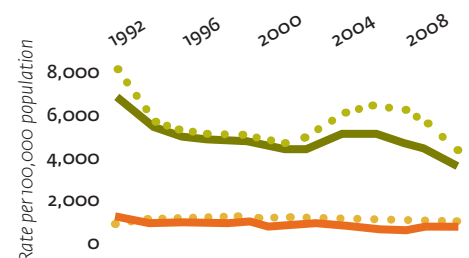
We also want to see:

- investment in child education and development,
- public spaces made safe by design,
- mental health issues addressed,
- community spirit developed,
- help with parenting skills.

Violent and property crime



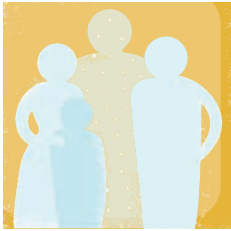
- • • Property crime Alberta
- Property crime Edmonton
- • • Violent crime Alberta
- Violent crime Edmonton



Source: Statistics Canada Table 252-0013.

¹¹ Leger Marketing presentation of findings from a survey conducted on behalf of the Edmonton Taskforce on Community Safety, February 2009.

¹² Statistics Canada 2009. Police Reported Crime Statistics in Canada. Catalogue 85-002-X.



CRUD: Community Response to Urban Disorder

Edmonton's north central communities are some of the most diverse in the city. You can eat Ethiopian, Thai, Mexican/ Salvadorian food; you can enjoy rich community celebrations: Arts on the Ave, the Deep Freeze Winter Festival and the Avenue Goes to the Dogs. But these communities also have their share of problems, such as disorder and graffiti.

So people who live in the community decided to do something: they formed CRUD. CRUD hosts weekly events that bring people out of their houses to enjoy the community. The north central communities have great playgrounds: CRUD started a "park crawl". Families come and meet other community members with children the same age. There are countless dogs in the community: CRUD started a dog walking group. CRUD also runs a fitness walking group and larger events called Avenue Take Overs: people come out and show community strength in a positive way.

We want a great place to raise our kids

While this priority is closely aligned with safety, there are many other key elements in ensuring we have a great place to raise kids. A healthy environment, access to education, health care, community services and activities for youth are all important to our families. If you look at the scatter chart on **page 15**, you'll see that we give this value a high priority rating. However our satisfaction rating is significantly lower.

One of the challenges we're dealing with in Edmonton, in Calgary and in the province of Alberta is children living in poverty. These young people may be going hungry, they may live in unsafe homes and they often have difficulties at school. In 2006, one in six Edmonton children (25,010) lived in poverty. That compares to one in eight (28,420) in Calgary and one in 10 (77,595) in Alberta overall.¹³

¹³ Edmonton Social Planning Council, We Can Do Better Toward an Alberta Child Poverty Reduction Strategy for Children and Families, November 2008.

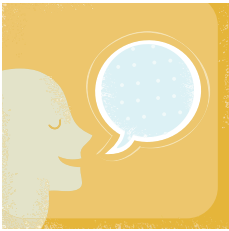


Children in Need

A growing number of Alberta children don't know where their next meal is coming from. The most recent survey by the Alberta Food Bank Network Association found that of the 38, 837 individuals served by food banks during the month of March 2007, 16,700 (43%) were children.

Source: Canadian Association of Food Banks, HungerCount 2007.





Transit Challenges

"In Edmonton it takes an hour and a half to get anywhere by bus. I don't drive and neither does my husband. He works 15 minutes drive from our house by car - it takes him 2 hours to get there by bus. For me - I've got 4 kids, and I have to take them on the bus. I just don't want to do it."

- City of Edmonton focus group participant



How we get around

The vast majority of us (80%) drive to work, and we are spending longer doing it. But when we compare commute times in Edmonton to those in other major Canadian cities, we come out on top. In 2005, Edmonton had the lowest proportion of people commuting for more than 60 minutes a day.¹⁴

A good public transit system is a relatively high priority for us. And more of us are using public transit every year.¹⁵ In City of Edmonton focus groups some people talked of their frustration with the inaccessibility of many places by city transit. Others

How kids get to school



- Car, truck, or van as passenger
- School bus
- Public transit
- Other methods (i.e. walking, bicycling)

Elementary students



Junior high students



Senior high students



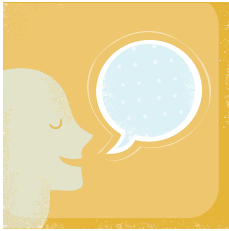
Source: Edmonton Household Travel Survey 2005.

said that they don't feel safe on the buses or the LRT.

¹⁴ Capital Health, How Healthy Are We? 2007.

¹⁵ EcoVision 2008 Annual Report.





Finding Stress Relief After A Long Day In The Office

"I ride my bike, rollerblade and walk through the river valley trails on a regular basis." Carl A. Busch is a big fan of Edmonton's park system. "Whether it's using a public playground, playing soccer with friends in a field or just sun tanning on the grass, parks provide an important opportunity to have fun and get some exercise without having to spend ridiculous amounts of money." While Carl, like many Edmontonians, is happy with the river valley parks, he does feel some parks that aren't along the river could use more attention. "They're often neglected, poorly cared for, or in many neighbourhoods, simply non-existent. I'd like to see more parks in the middle of neighbourhoods and a couple green spaces downtown would also be nice."

- Carl A. Busch (Source: Connect2Edmonton)

We love our green spaces

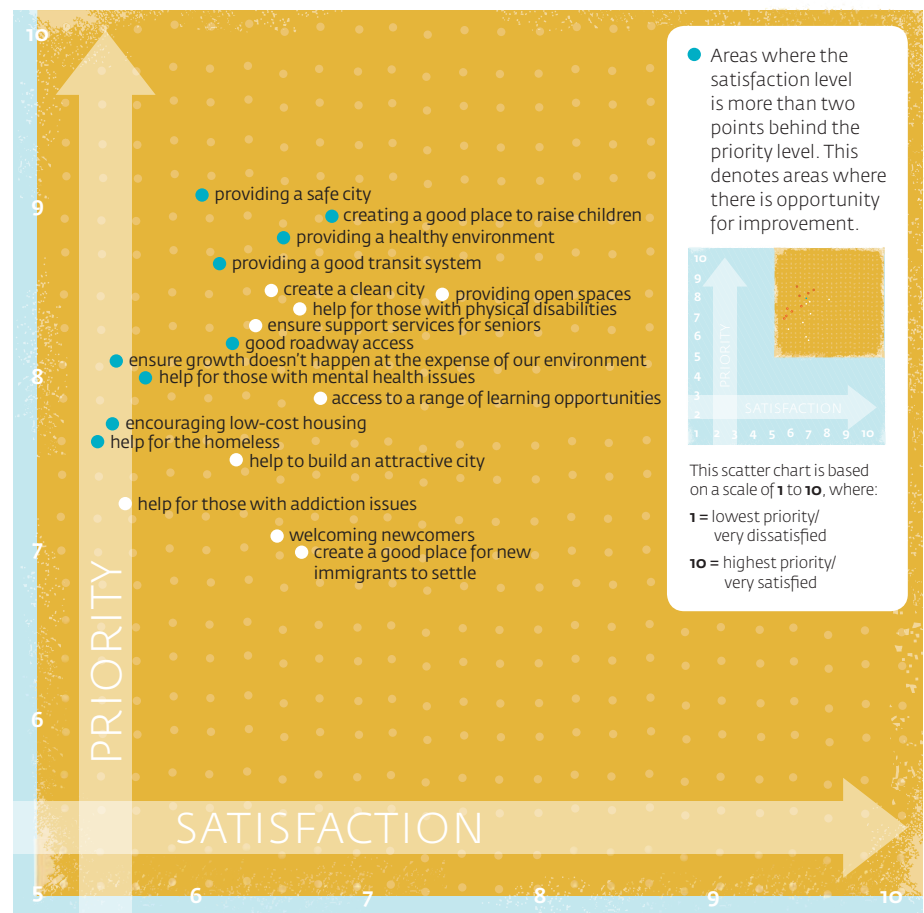
Ninety-six percent of us feel that the local parks are essential in giving children a healthy lifestyle and in our over-all quality of life. Most of us also see parks as an important element in creating a sense of community, where people from all walks of life can gather and interact.

It's not just our city parks that are important, but the amount of green space available to us, that gives us a retreat from the stresses of life. For many Edmontonians, the city is defined by its river valley: the largest urban green space in North America.

Having these open spaces in our city is one of our top priorities in contributing to a city's liveability. Moreover, we think that the city does a good job of providing us with those open spaces that we need: this receives our highest satisfaction rating.

However, we are concerned about the city's growth. It is important to us that growth does not happen at the expense of the environment, and we feel that the city could do more in this area.

What do we want the City of Edmonton to focus on?



Source: Leger Marketing, 2009 Community Values Survey, conducted on behalf of the City of Edmonton Community Services Department, June 2009.

In this chart:

The Community Values Survey asked Edmontonians about the priority the City of Edmonton should give to a range of areas, and how satisfied they are with their City Government in each area.

Overall, more than three-quarters of survey respondents were either somewhat (63.4%) or very (13.9%) satisfied with services and programs provided to City of Edmonton residents.



Arriving in Edmonton

Elaheh, a family doctor, came to Edmonton from Iran, together with her husband and two children.

Mohammed is a dentist. The couple spoke English so they thought they could begin working quite quickly. But they soon realised that their credentials were not recognized by the Canadian professional organizations which regulate family doctors and dentists.

"It was a shock at first," recalls Elaheh. "We had to learn the process, do the exams and volunteer so our colleagues would get to know us."

Do people get the supports they need in our city?

Results from the Community Values Survey¹⁶ suggest the following areas for improvement (areas where the average satisfaction levels are below the average priority levels):

- helping those with mental health issues,
- providing help for the homeless,
- encouraging development of low-cost housing for those who need it.

These are all areas where we are less satisfied with services available in the city. The dilemma some seem to feel, however, is what should be done? One focus group participant articulated it like this: *"I don't mean to be callous, but it comes down to a cost-benefit analysis. It is only a small part of the population and I just don't know if you could improve the situation even if you put all kinds of money and resources against it."* Others felt that these issues come lower down on our priority list because they don't affect many of us directly.

¹⁶ Leger Marketing, 2009 CommunityValues Survey, conducted on behalf of the City of Edmonton Community Services Department, June 2009.



A Better Life ... With Community Help & Support

Charles is a 42 year old Edmontonian

who has spent most of the last 25 years sleeping on the street or in crack houses. He struggled with addictions, and he is HIV positive.

But Charles' life changed when he went into the Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre¹⁷ for a cup of coffee and a shower. The staff there became involved in his life. They helped him find his own apartment, fill out the form for the lease; they helped with the security deposit. And support workers were there to assure the landlord that they would be responsible for the apartment if anything went wrong. Once he'd moved in, a staff member took Charles grocery shopping, showed him how to stretch his dollar as efficiently as possible. He was given some furniture. Then when Charles was ready to deal with his cocaine habit, the Centre gave him the resources he needed. The Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre gave Charles back his life.

Source: Edmonton Committee to End Homelessness, A Place to Call Home Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, January 2009.

¹⁷ The Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre provides resources and referrals for people in west Edmonton who are poor or who are experiencing homelessness.



Elaheh got a job in the Family Medicine Research department at the University of Alberta, and, at the same time, worked towards getting the required Canadian medical certifications. That meant taking exams, each costing as much as \$1,500. Her husband had to pay more than \$150,000 in dentistry upgrading fees. Elaheh and Mohammed both received loans from the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers to help cover their expenses.

Elaheh recently celebrated her acceptance into a residency program which will give her the certification she needs. "Right now, I feel all of the hard work was worth it," Elaheh says. "I have my position at university and in a few years I will be able to practise medicine again."

- Source: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers 2008/2009 Community Report

What about our seniors, or people with physical disabilities?

We place relatively high priority on providing supports for seniors, as well as for those of us with physical disabilities; a higher priority than we place on helping people with mental health issues. Why the difference? Some City of Edmonton focus group participants suggested more of us can see ourselves as seniors, or as living with a physical disability, than living with a mental health challenge. So we can more readily empathize with the first two situations. *"Everyone needs to be treated fairly and equally and have access to the same services"* was one comment that came up in this discussion.

However, there is a difference between our priority rating (over 8 for each), and our satisfaction with services ratings. Survey results suggest that we'd like to see increased services for seniors and for people with disabilities.

Welcoming immigrants

As our city becomes more diverse, communities become better established, and more immigrants see Edmonton as an attractive destination. Some find support here from family members or from other Edmontonians of the same origin. Others turn to city agencies.

New immigrants to our city face many challenges: most importantly, they need to find a job and support their families. Some share Elaheh and Mohammed's experience; but many others are never able to

practise their profession and have to settle for a different, often less skilled, position. Even after living in Canada for 15 years, immigrants with a university degree are more likely than native-born Canadians to have low-skilled jobs.¹⁸

Most of us feel that it's important to welcome newcomers to Edmonton and to provide adequate services.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada 2008. Immigrants' Education and Required Job Skills, Catalogue no. 75-001-X.

