



Who We Are

A Snapshot of Edmontonians:
Setting the Stage for Consultation and Planning

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

2009

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The purpose of this report is to provide information about the characteristics and values of people living in Edmonton. This information will be used for consultations, which will inform the City of Edmonton's strategic planning aimed at making Edmonton an even more liveable city. References in this report to the 'City of Edmonton' refer to the municipal corporate entity. The word 'city' simply refers to this place where we live.

Our demographics, education and jobs



Our rich history

Edmonton is a place rich with history and fascinating stories. It began as an ancient and sacred site, a meeting place for Indigenous Nations dating back 8000 years. They came to trade, to share stories, to take part in cultural activities. It was a ceremonial site, where leaders and Elders found spiritual guidance and political direction. It played an important role in building and maintaining relationships among Indigenous Nations and with newcomers from Europe. It's had many names over the years, one of which was *Pehonan* - the Cree word for 'the gathering' or 'waiting place'.

Today, thousands of years later, we are still a gathering place; a city that welcomes newcomers, offers opportunity and works to improve our quality of life. We're a city that's growing; very recently, in the early 2000's, record numbers of people came here, many looking for work, putting down roots and becoming Edmontonians.

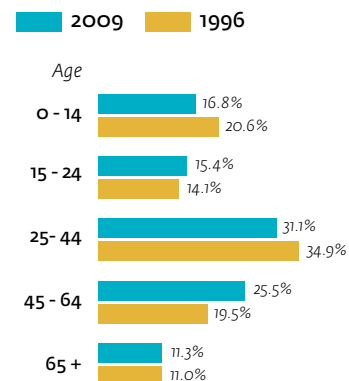
In 1986, there were almost 600,000 of us; now there are almost 800,000. The expectation is that by 2031, there will be more than one million Edmontonians.

We're an aging population – but young compared to Canada overall

A significant proportion of us (around 57%) are between the ages of 25 and 64. However, like that of many other developed countries, we are an aging population. Our average age has risen from 34.7 in 1996 to 37.4 in 2006. That's despite our rising birthrate in recent years. Canada's average age in 2006 was 39.5.¹

¹ Federal Census 1996, 2006. Statistics Canada Census Trend Data 2006.

Our age profile now and 10 years ago



Source: Federal Census, 1996. Edmonton Municipal Census 2009.



Edmonton: I Won't Be Leaving

"I love the sense of community in my neighbourhood, walking the streets and bumping into parents of children from the schools my kids attend. The happiness of my children here most makes Edmonton feel like home for me. There are fantastic facilities for them - hockey, gymnastics, ballet, tennis, baseball... the list goes on and on. I can run or bike with my son down from our neighbourhood into the river valley. Even in winter we can get out and about. It's wonderful to have skating rinks for free like Hawrelak and the legislature. Add in the trails, ski hills, etc, and there is so much here. I have considered an offer from Calgary. My family is happy here, and my community so strong, that I don't feel enough "pull" to leave."

- Source: Mike, Connect2Edmonton²

Our education

Edmonton offers a wide variety of educational opportunities and Edmontonians take advantage of these. Twenty-eight per cent of us have college level, apprenticeship or trades certificates or diplomas. This is equal to and/or higher than the proportion of people in other Canadian cities with similar accreditation. A quarter of Edmontonians have university certificates or degrees, which is slightly more than Albertans as a whole. Proportionately, fewer of us are university educated than in other major Canadian cities: Vancouver, Toronto and Calgary.

Moreover:

- 22% of us have not completed high school,
- 26% of us have only high school education.³

While formal education is key to getting a job, literacy is essential for survival in today's world. In Alberta, 60% of us have the literacy skills we need; conversely, 40% of us don't have the literacy skills needed for knowledge-based jobs.

² C2E is a self-funded, not-for-profit virtual public forum guided by an all-volunteer Board of Directors. C2E receives no funding from the City of Edmonton or any of its agencies.

³ Federal Census 2006.

Our jobs

Almost three-quarters of all jobs in the Edmonton region are in the service sector. As the provincial capital and home to the province's largest university – the University of Alberta – Edmonton has a relatively high proportion of public sector workers (6% of our labour force work in public administration jobs).

As the construction, manufacturing and transportation base for much of the province's oil and gas industry, the Edmonton region has relatively more jobs in these industries than the rest of the province, particularly since the boom in the first part of this decade.

The past ten years have seen an increase in the proportion of us working in the following industries:

- Construction
- Education services
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Trade (wholesale and retail trade)

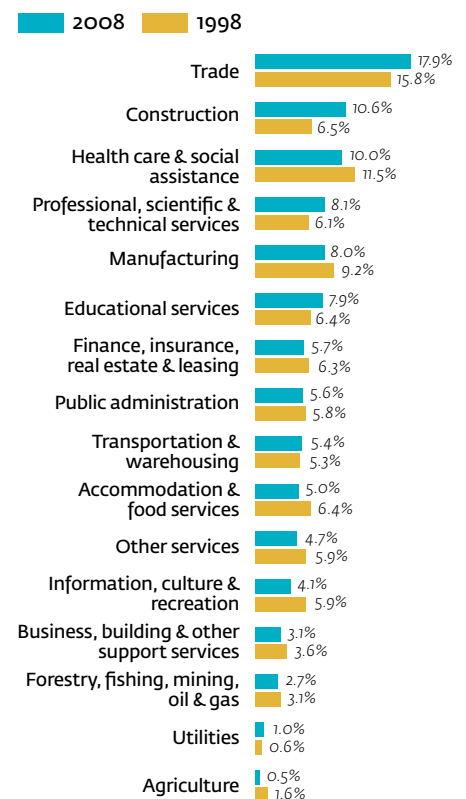
⁴ Labour force statistics and facts for Edmonton are drawn from the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), as many Edmontonians work in outlying communities, such as Nisku, Leduc, St. Albert; likewise many residents of those communities work in Edmonton.

⁵ Labour Force Historical Review 2008.

We work hard

In 2008, the proportion of Edmontonians age 15 and older who were working or looking for work (our labour force participation rate) in the Edmonton area⁴ was 73%, a full 5% higher than the Canadian rate.⁵

Our jobs



Source: Labour Force Historical Review 2008.

Our heritage



Language spoken most often at home in Edmonton

84% English

0.7% French

12.7% non-official languages

Source: Statistics Canada, Community Profiles 2006.

We are becoming more ethnically diverse

Edmonton's early immigrants came from Europe, some from the U.S., a few from further afield. But the face of Edmonton is now changing. An increasing proportion of Edmontonians (17% in the 2006 Federal Census) are from a visible minority background. Since 1999, the number of immigrants choosing to come to our city has grown steadily. Some come directly to Edmonton from overseas. Forty per cent of new immigrants are from India, the Philippines and China.⁶ Others

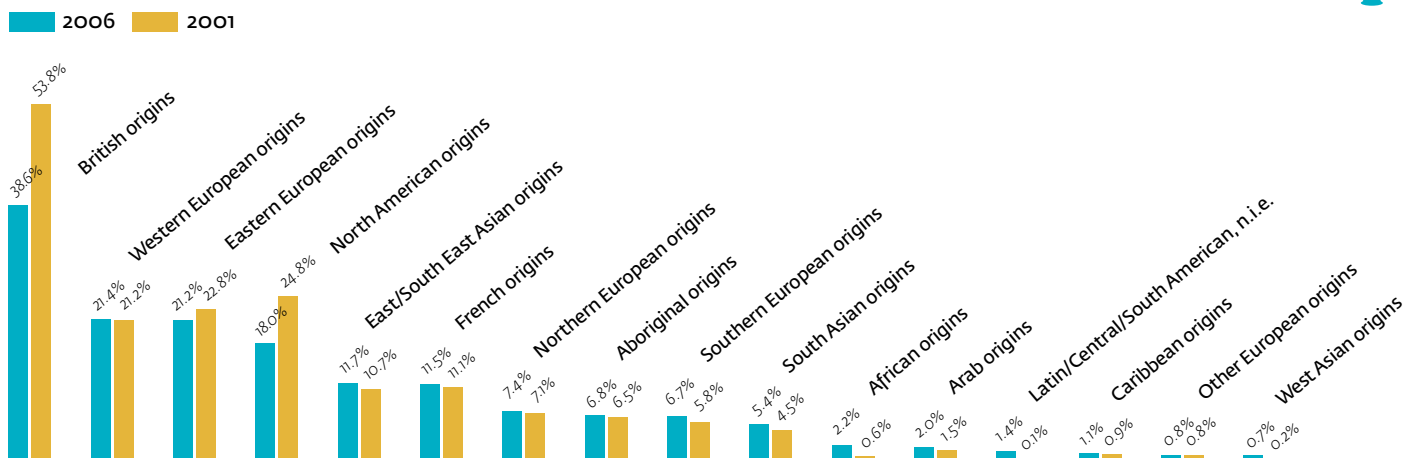
land in another province first, before making their move here (in-migration). Edmonton's African communities, for example, are growing due to in-migration.

Comparing ourselves to the rest of Alberta, a higher proportion of Edmontonians identify their ethnic background as Arab, South and East Asian and Latin American than in the province as a whole.

This city, in fact, is home to over 50 international cultures and 70 unique ethnic groups.

⁶ Federal Census 2006.

Ethnic distribution in Edmonton



Source: Federal Census 2006 and 2001.



Working Together

"Edmonton is home. Since arriving in the late '60s, I've spent my life working within the Aboriginal community and have been fortunate to be a part of Edmonton's growing involvement in the lives of its Aboriginal citizens. As a homeowner, taxpayer, civic and agency volunteer, worker, student, parent, grandparent and great-grandparent, Edmonton has afforded me opportunities for participation and both personal and professional growth that probably would not have been possible in my once-isolated birthplace. As the destination of an increasing number of Aboriginal people, I believe this city is fast becoming the model for other urban centres in this reciprocal relationship. I am proud to have been part of its evolution." - Jane Woodward

Edmonton's First Peoples

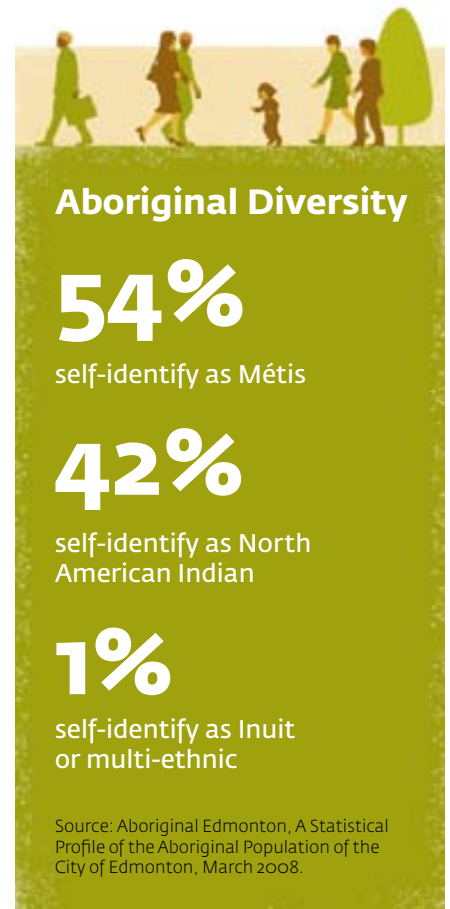
With deep connections to this area, Aboriginal Edmonton continues to play an important role in shaping our city. Over the 10 year period starting in 1996, the Aboriginal population grew by 51%, to 38,170 Aboriginal residents in 2006. Edmonton now has the second largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada (after Winnipeg). In the same time period, Edmonton's population grew by 18.4%.

Our city falls within the boundaries of Treaty 6, and is a major service centre for Treaty 8, as well as for the eight Métis Settlements in central and northern Alberta.⁷

Aboriginal Edmonton is a diverse community, with people self-identifying as Métis, North American Indian and Inuit. First Nation's languages commonly heard include Cree, Stoney, Chipewyan, Saulteaux, Dene, Beaver, Blackfoot and Sarcee. This community faces challenges: poverty, lack of education and health problems. Aboriginal people are half as likely to own their own home and are 6.5 times as likely to be homeless.

But there are significant strengths and great potential here: this is a young community, with relatively more people under the age of 25 and relatively fewer over the age of 45.

⁷ Aboriginal Edmonton, A Statistical Profile of the Aboriginal Population of the City of Edmonton, March 2008.



Our lives at home



Where We Live

~ 55%

of us live in suburban neighbourhoods

~ 50%

of us live in single, detached houses

60%

of us own our homes

40%

of us rent

Sources: Federal Census 2001, 2006.
Municipal Census 2009. City of Edmonton
Planning Department.

Our homes

There's been a change in our city, from 2001 to 2006: the number of homes where 3, 4 or 5 people live together decreased, while those with just one or 2 people increased. Almost one-third of Edmontonians live alone.

On average, 2.4 people lived in an Edmonton household in 2006.

Our income

While our household size is going down slightly, our incomes are going up.

From 2001 to 2006:

- the number of Edmonton households earning more than \$100,000 a year increased: from one in eight ('01) to one in five ('06),
- the proportion of households earning less than \$50,000 went down,
- our median yearly income has increased, from \$47,009 in 2001 to \$49,679 (in constant dollars).





Affordability

More of us can afford to buy our own homes earlier in life than people living in other major cities, such as Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver. Generally, housing is considered affordable when less than 30% of a household's income is spent on rent or home ownership costs (mortgage, property taxes, and utilities).⁸

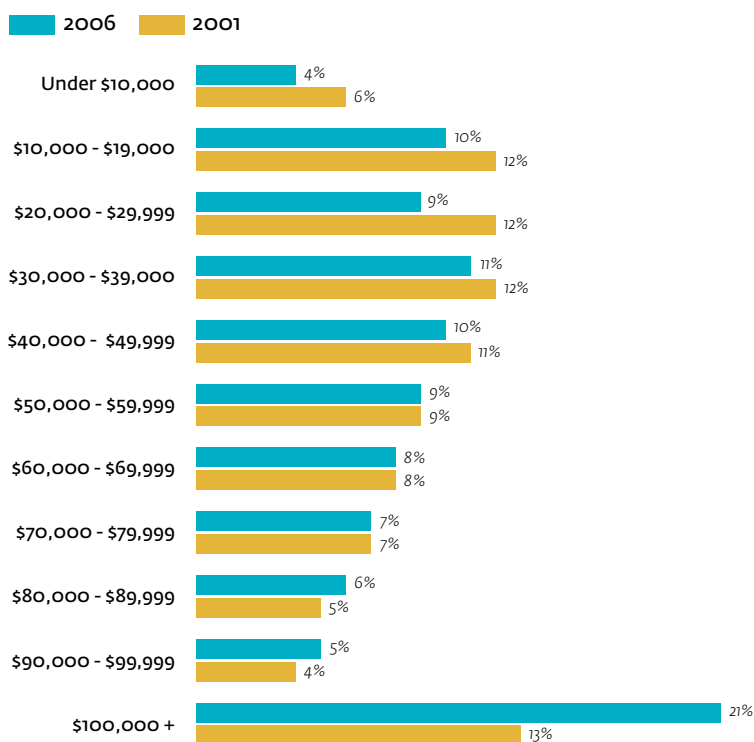
In 2006, the proportion of Edmontonians (15%) spending more than 30% of their income on rent was significantly higher than the provincial rate (10%). Many of these people are from working, low-income households. *"If something were to happen (i.e. I get hurt or sick and can't work), we would be in big trouble"*⁹, said one respondent to a 2008 Edmonton Renters Survey.

Ten per cent of Edmontonians (compared to 12% of Albertans) spend more than 30% of their income on owned shelter.

⁸ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, January 2007.

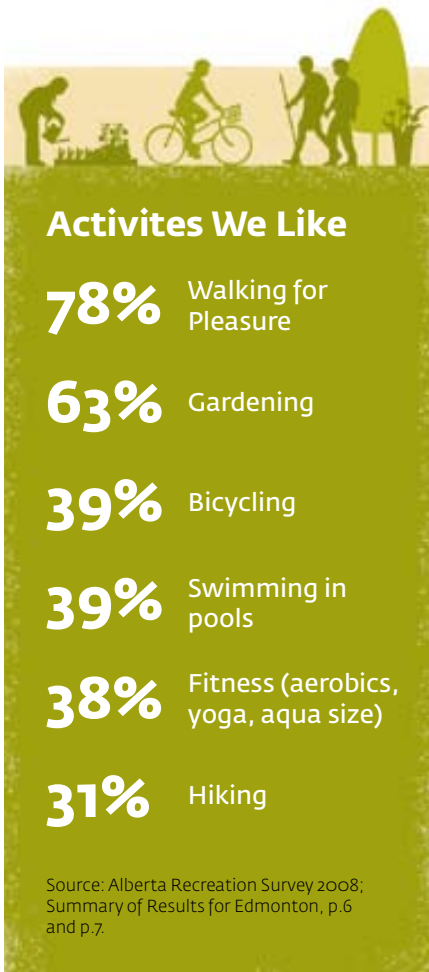
⁹ Edmonton Social Planning Council, Not Just A Roof Over Our Heads Exploring the State of Rental Housing in Edmonton One Year Later, September 2008.

Household income in Edmonton



Source: Federal Census 2006, 2001.

Our activities



Finding a work/life balance

This is one of our top priorities. But the chart on [page 9](#) shows that there's a difference between the importance we place on it, and how satisfied we are with opportunities to find a work/life balance. Our satisfaction rating is lower than our priority rating in this area.

It's a challenge Connie Baxter knows all about. *"I have a disabled son who needs full-time care. My older son is involved in sports and my husband works out of town."* Connie works two jobs, but with careful planning, she's finding the right balance most of the time.

"I make it work for two reasons: I have relatively short commutes to work and to the sports facilities we use." Connie's family goes to the Jasper Place Leisure Centre for the free community swim on Sundays, and her oldest son plays baseball and football close by. *"And I live in a great, supportive community,"* says Connie. *"That's how it works for me."*

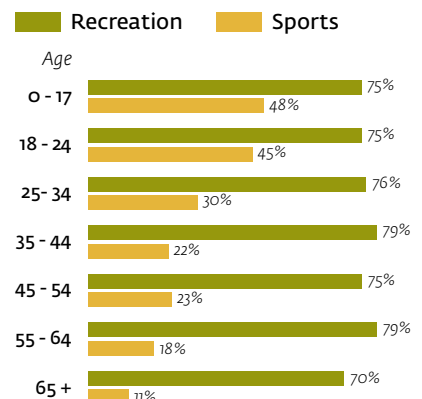
Graph source: R. A. Malatest and Associates Ltd., Current State of Assessment for Sport and Active Recreation Participation in Edmonton: 2008 Citizen Survey, conducted on behalf of City of Edmonton Community Services Department, March 2009.

We like to get moving

Being physically active is another high priority for Edmontonians. In the Edmonton area, in 2008, just more than half of us (aged 12 and older) said we were active during our leisure time. We make good use of our parks, and feel one of their biggest benefits is providing us with the space to be physically active. We particularly like to walk and have lots of opportunity to do so in Edmonton with more than 150 kilometers of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Thirty per cent of us play sports, with soccer being the most popular, followed by ice hockey, bowling, golf, curling, volleyball, softball/baseball and basketball. During winter months we toboggan and ski.

How active we are





The Best Way to Get Around

"I don't think I truly LOVED Edmonton until I took my mountain bike into the river valley for the first time, and found several places where you can stop over the river and feel like you're out in the bush...except that you're still right in the heart of the city. To this day, biking around here is one of my favourite things to do.

I commute daily from Glenora to downtown by bike, too, and while 102 Ave. would be the most straightforward route, I actually take McKinnon ravine and the trail along River Valley Road, because it is so much more peaceful and scenic, and often it is even faster (despite having to tackle the hill behind Royal Glenora to get into downtown). I never get tired of this route, it's just a beautiful and relaxing (and - thanks to the hills - rather invigorating) ride on my way to and from work. And to think it's just a very small percentage of the trails available in the valley." - Dave Sutherland



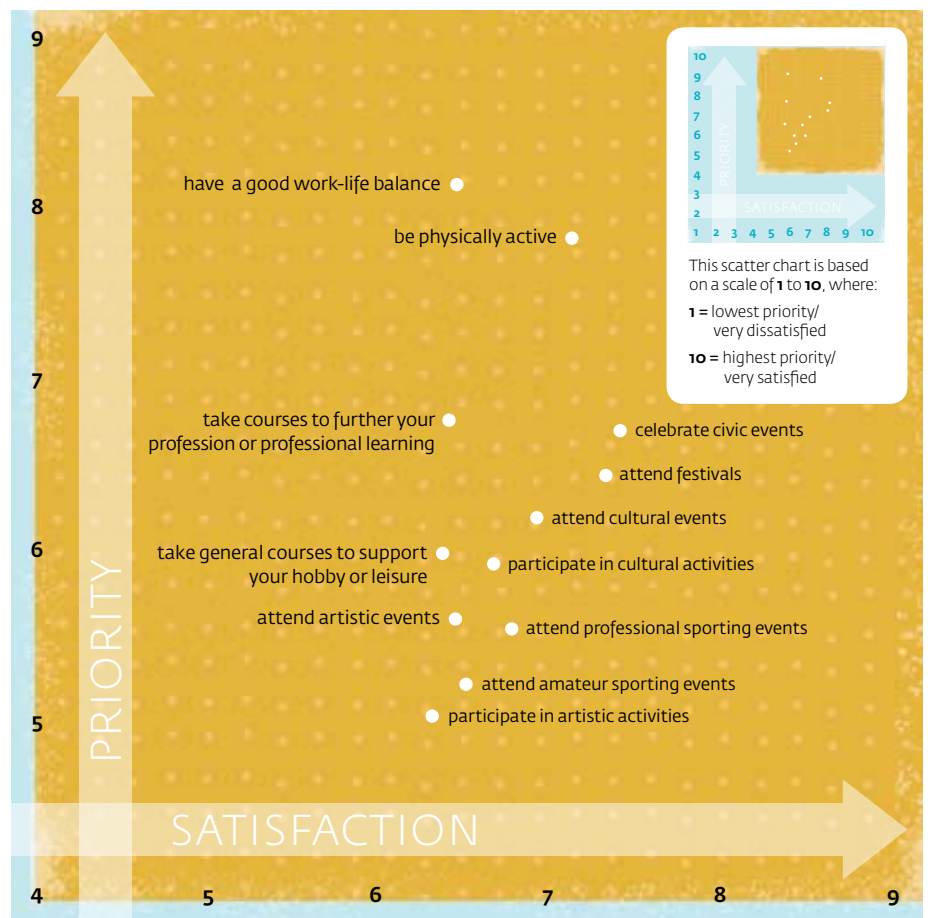
Plotting Our Priorities and Satisfaction

The 2009 Community Values Survey asked Edmontonians about the priority they place on being able to do a variety of things here in the city, and how satisfied they are with the opportunities the City of Edmonton offers in each area.

You can see on the chart on this page, that overall we're relatively satisfied with opportunities for activities in the city.



What do we want to do with our free time?



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



Our Public Library

17

number of Edmonton Public Library branches throughout the city

1.9 million

items housed in our library branches

400,000

number of people who have a public library card

5.5 million

number of visits to public library branches in 2008

Source: Edmonton Public Libraries.

We like to learn

Challenging our minds is just about as important to us as being active, particularly when it comes to furthering our professional learning. It's also important to us to take non-credit courses, and as the chart on **page 9** shows, we're relatively satisfied with the opportunities to do so.

Continuing Education:

- **2007/08:** 50,000 people took non-credit courses at post-secondary institutions. Some of the most popular courses were in the fields of business, fine and performing arts and information technology.
- **2008:** more than 18,000 Edmontonians signed up for literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), community issues and employability enhancement programs, through the Edmonton Adult Learning Association.
- **2007/2008:** more than 16,000 Edmontonians registered in continuing education, academic upgrading and ESL courses, through Edmonton Public Schools' Metro Continuing Education.

Our training and education

Edmonton offers a wide variety of respected, publically funded post-secondary choices for students.

In 2007/8 there were some 95,000 full and part-time students enrolled in credit programs:

- 64,000 students (67%) were from the Capital Region,
- 20,000 were from elsewhere in Alberta,
- 9000 were from other parts of Canada,
- 2800 came from outside of Canada.¹⁰

¹⁰ Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.



Why I Choose Edmonton

"I could live anywhere in Canada to do my job. I travel a lot, and sometimes when I'm in Vancouver or Kelowna, I wonder why I don't live there. I don't because I have too many friends and too many people I love here. I can get from my house to wherever I want to go in 15 or 20 minutes. This is a big city that feels like a small town. We have two superior sports organizations, the Eskimos and the Oilers, and lots of other sports leagues. But these two kingpins provide strong role models for our young people. And all of our teams help put us on the world map. Another cool thing about Edmonton is how involved we are. When this city hosts something, everybody volunteers! We open our arms, find sponsors and turn out by the thousands to the events. There are things we'd like to improve, and we can and do quibble about them, but in the end we're able to collectively move forward. We all want a quality of life – and we have it here." – Tim Alderson

We like to celebrate

Edmontonians like attending city-sponsored events such as the Canada Day celebration and are fairly satisfied with the opportunities we have to do so. Our city's New Year's celebration at Churchill Square made quite an impression on Carmen McKague. She took her 3 year old son. *"What was most fun was all the people who were there; just wandering around downtown with the crowds. Then the fireworks were a great way to end the night."*

We value the opportunities we have to attend cultural and artistic

activities, such as festivals, theatre and music concerts. *"The art scene is great!"* says Fariha Ali. *"The Fringe, Street Performers, Ice on Whyte, the new art building. It's what makes Edmonton, well, Edmonton. We can see local talent you don't see anywhere else. It's why this city is so unique."*

We also place some value on attending other artistic events, professional and amateur sports and, finally, on participating in artistic activities. And we feel relatively satisfied with the opportunities we have in Edmonton to enjoy these experiences.



Our Activities

What Edmontonians did in the last year:

- 65%** attended a fair or festival
- 55%** visited a museum or art gallery
- 54%** watched a sporting event
- 47%** had a craft or creative hobby
- 47%** attended live theatre
- 42%** played video, computer or electronic games

Source: Alberta Recreation Survey 2008: Summary of Results for Edmonton.

Our values



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.

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.

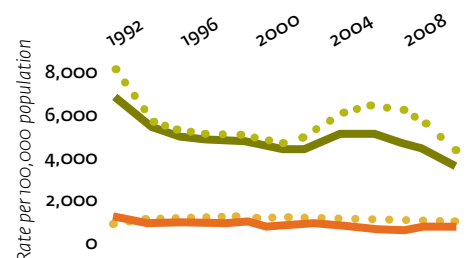
We also want to see:

- 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.



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 me 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

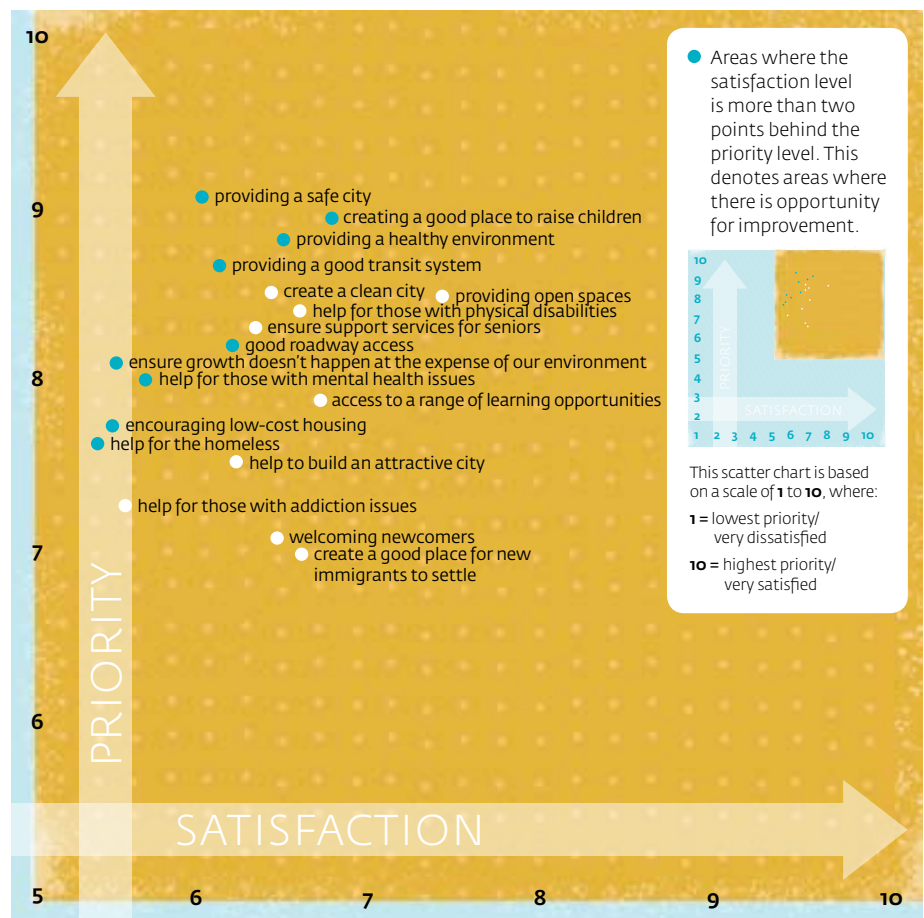
Ninety-six percent of us feel that the local parks are essential in giving children a healthy lifestyle and in our over-all quality of life. Most of us also see parks as an important element in creating a sense of community, where people from all walks of life can gather and interact.

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 received the 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 ethnic 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.



Our communities



Edmonton's Community Leagues

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues is an umbrella organization for our city's 150 leagues.

- Our first community league, now called the Crestwood Community League, started in 1917. Edmonton was the first city in Canada to adopt the idea of this community-based organization.
- Our community leagues provide sports, educational and cultural activities, and give people an opportunity to be directly involved in municipal affairs affecting their neighbourhoods.

Source: Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, 2009.

A city where we belong

Debby Waldman moved to Edmonton in 1992 – planning to stay a couple of years while her husband, an Edmontonian, finished his post-doctoral fellowship. Then they'd move back to the U.S., Debby's home. The move never happened.

"Cut to 17 years later. I can't imagine living anywhere else but Edmonton" says Debby. "This place has become as much my home as Dave's. Over the years he's been offered jobs in cities I would once have jumped at the chance to live in. But when we weighed the pros and cons, Edmonton won every time.

We have a great house in a terrific neighbourhood with wonderful neighbours, there are good shops and restaurants nearby, we can easily get tickets to see shows or concerts or movies, and our kids are getting a good education and have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. And it's all affordable. I wish we were closer to the northeastern United States, but that just makes going back to my other home more special -- and then I come back to this home, our home".

The way Debby feels about our city is not uncommon for Edmontonians. We like where we live and the vast majority of us would recommend living here. The chart on **page 20** shows that most of us feel proud to tell people we live in Edmonton, we rate our quality of life as high and we think the city provides us a good opportunity to make a living.

Liveable communities are defined by people feeling connected to their community. In Edmonton there are some aspects of community building that don't ring as true for all of us:

- just 30% of us get involved in neighbourhood events or activities,
- almost 20% of us feel that we could not count on our neighbours in an emergency.¹⁹

In discussing the reasons for this, focus group participants felt there aren't enough places in their neighbourhood, other than the playground, to get together. Others said that between work and our long winters, they simply don't see their neighbours out and about.

¹⁹ Leger Marketing, Community Values Survey conducted on behalf of City of Edmonton Community Services Department, June 2009.



What's the Deal With These Community Leagues?

"My wife and I were out with some new friends, all of whom had recently moved to Edmonton.

Surprisingly, the first topic of conversation when we sat down was, 'what's the deal with these community leagues?'

Turns out, after living all over the world, and in cities all across Canada, this was the first time they had heard of this kind of community-based organization. Apparently Edmonton is unique, at least in North America, perhaps in the world, for having organized and built itself around community leagues... and, in effect, around the idea of community.

The result is a kind of community spirit that you don't find anywhere else and that, as someone born and raised in Edmonton, I hadn't realized was quite so special." - Winston Pei

What we do for our community

Many of our city's events depend on Edmontonians' willingness to donate their time. From summer festivals, to support for those who find themselves in need, about 46% of us help out by volunteering.²⁰

Take Homeless Connect for example. It's a one-day event offering a wide range of services to Edmontonians who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. It takes place in the spring and again in the fall. Its success is due, in part, to the

hundreds of Edmontonians who volunteer their time to help out.

"I had a wonderful time volunteering that day. My brother, niece and I were very impressed with the amount of services available and organizing that had been done to make the event successful. I found the clientele very appreciative and well behaved. I'll be there in October," commented one Homeless Connect volunteer in the feedback survey.

Edmontonians volunteer for many reasons: we want to be involved in the community; we believe in the cause or we're personally affected by the cause.

²⁰ Volunteer Edmonton Fact Sheet.



Charitable Donations in 2007

24%

of Edmonton tax filers donated to a charity, down from 31% in '91

\$1,923

was donated by Edmonton residents, on average. That's lower than the provincial average, but higher than the national average

50

was the average age of people making donations

Source: Statistics Canada Tax Filer Data and Nichols Applied Management Inc.



A Neighbourhood Where I Belong

Jan Wallace's family has a 15 year old tradition. It's one that, for her neighbourhood as a whole, has an even longer history – 28 years. Every May the neighbours meet, divvy up the chores and start planning their annual block party. It begins with a Saturday morning community garage sale, with goods displayed on people's driveways. When the one-day sale wraps up, the crescent is closed to traffic, the barbecues and lawn chairs are pulled out and the potluck party begins.

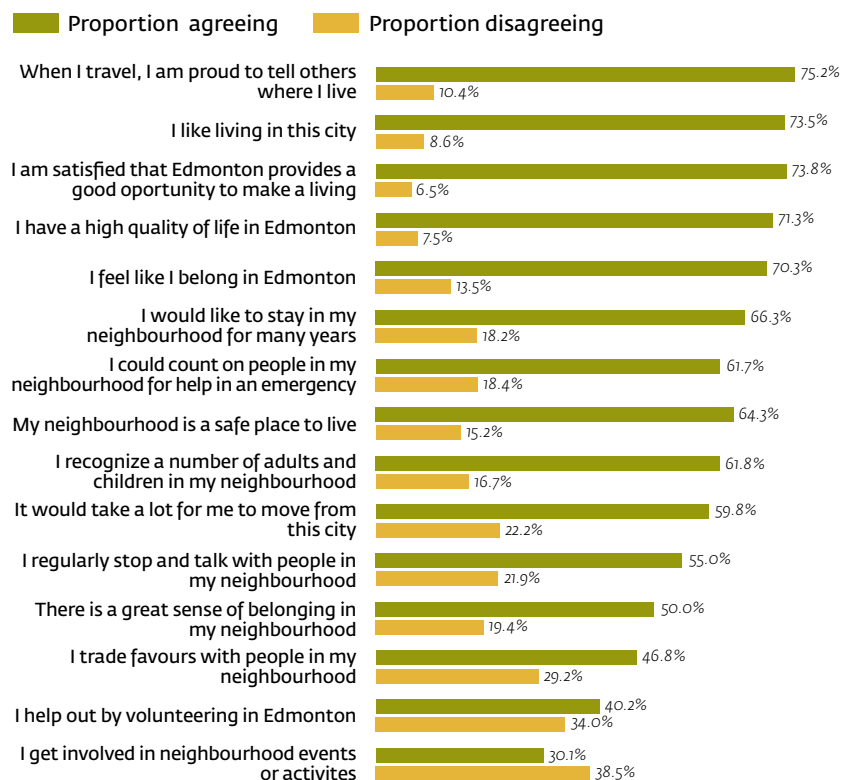
"We always sing O Canada, standing together on someone's front lawn. We welcome new people to the neighbourhood and say goodbye to anyone who's leaving," says Jan. "And we always, every year, take a group picture." Firefighters and police officers from the local detachments are invited and the night ends with a bonfire. But the party's far from over. The next morning, everyone gathers again for a pancake breakfast.

"You really get to know your neighbours. We even hand out guides, listing who lives where and their phone numbers." Jan's family sold their house just recently. But they're not going far. Their new home is right across the street. It's a neighbourhood where people feel they belong; a neighbourhood few want to leave.

– Jan Wallace



Agreement with community index questions



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

Notes:

- Survey data was weighted to reflect the age and gender profile of the City of Edmonton's 18 and over population in the city of Edmonton's 2009 Municipal Census.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is disagree completely and 5 is agree completely.

Toward the Future



The information in this report reveals Edmontonians are by and large very happy with this place we call home.

There will always be challenges, but these open doors to opportunities. The City of Edmonton is seizing these opportunities, encouraging all Edmontonians to let their voices and their ideas be heard, as we plan for the future.

As stated in the City of Edmonton's Strategic Plan²¹, our vision for Edmonton in 2040 is a place where we all, from First Nations to new Canadians, are linked by a common purpose - to learn, to prosper and to celebrate.

²¹ The Way Ahead, City of Edmonton Strategic Plan, 2009 - 2018.



Why I Love Edmonton

Hilton Dinner and his wife own a bustling west-end bakery. They came to Edmonton 20 years ago, from South Africa. As a successful business owner, Hilton chooses to stay in Edmonton. *"It's an easy place for us to do business. We've managed to attract amazing staff. Who we sell to and who we work with - make it worthwhile getting up every morning."* But that's not all. Hilton says Edmonton is a city, but not, in his words, 'an overpopulated metropolis'.

"I can be part of a community, I can make a contribution. I am aware of wonderful things here, like the Winspear and the festivals, which are easily accessible. But I can also see the warts and bumps, like homelessness, teenage pregnancies and poverty. And because I'm aware of these, I can participate, make a difference and not live in isolation."

- Hilton Dinner, owner, Bon Ton Bakery

www.edmonton.ca/TheWayWeLive

