



Community Connections and Community Projects

Background

One important aspect of the Community Health and the Built Environment project is creating connections with the community. To do this in North Central Edmonton we partnered with a group of key community stakeholders. Our community partners represented the diverse nature of the community and included members from:

- Action for Healthy Communities,
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton,
- Edmonton Public Libraries – Sprucewood Branch,
- City of Edmonton (Community Services, Recreation, Walkable Edmonton, Communities in Bloom),
- Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, and
- Healthy Alberta Communities.

This group of representatives helped to guide the research that was conducted in the community. In addition, they have been working with the researchers to develop community projects. The projects help residents be more physically active and eat healthy food. Through conversations, the representatives from North Central Edmonton identified a few directions for community projects: (1) a community walk, (2) survey to understand insider and outsider perspectives of the community, (3) development of a walking map for the Avenue Communities, and (4) evaluation of the Avenue Communities Walking Map.

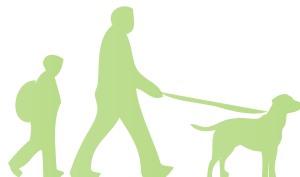
Community Walk

In the summer of 2008 the researchers, community representatives and community members partnered together to host a community walk. During the walk six community destinations were visited, including: two beautiful gardens, two historic houses, a unique café, and the Alberta Avenue Community League. Walk participants were provided with a community passport (shown to the right). The passport included a map for the walk and a description of each of the community destinations. The purpose of the walk was to bring community members together to get out and enjoy the local neighbourhoods.



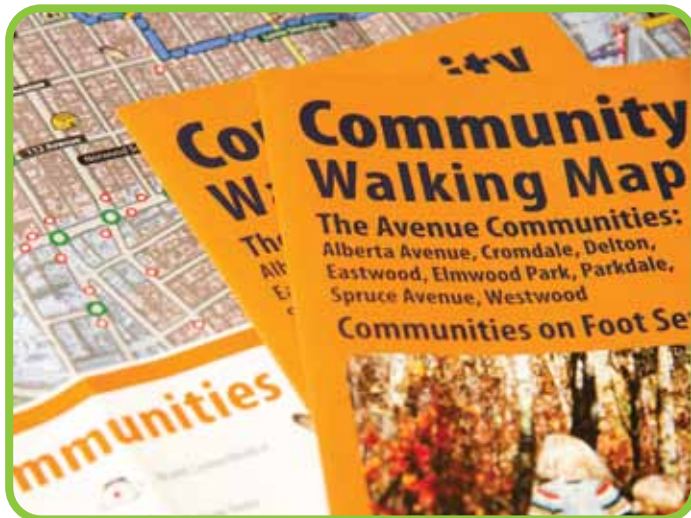
Survey to Understand Perspectives of the Avenue Communities

Through discussions with community partners it was identified that they wanted to understand insider (i.e., North Central Edmonton residents) and outsider (i.e. residents from other communities) perspectives of the community. The Community Action Dash, a local family fun run event held in central Edmonton, was identified as an ideal location to conduct this type of survey. Race participants and volunteers were asked to answer 17 survey questions following the run event. Participants were asked what they thought about the area and if they would visit again. A detailed summary of the survey results is provided on the DVD included with this package.



Development of the Avenue Communities Walking Map

This was a joint project between community members, the City of Edmonton (Walkable Edmonton and Community Services), and the research team. Local community members identified destinations they like to visit and key routes throughout the community for the map. The maps were created by local community members to be used by other residents. The Avenue Communities Walking Map (shown below) includes the following communities: Alberta Avenue, Cromdale, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale, Spruce Avenue and Westwood.



The purpose of the map was to create a tool that could be used by residents to explore their community. The goal was to promote physical activity and active transportation, while getting people out to enjoy their community. The Avenue Community Walking Map was distributed to all households in the map area in the July 2010. An electronic copy of the walking map can be found on the DVD included with this package.

Evaluation of Avenue Communities Walking Map

In the summer and fall of 2010 the research team evaluated the use of the walking maps in the community. The evaluation results will provide both the community and the City of Edmonton with important information about:

- residents awareness of the walking maps,
- short term changes in physical activity or active transportation habits,
- usefulness of the map,
- benefits to the community, and
- ideas about how the map could be more useful.

A summary of the evaluation results can be found on the DVD included with this package.

Next Steps

The researchers are continuing to look for opportunities to partner with the community to undertake similar types of projects in future years.

