



## North Central Edmonton:

Sharing Local Knowledge through Pictures and Stories



COMMUNITY HEALTH &  
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



# Executive Summary

## THE PROJECT

This project will help researchers understand how residents of North Central Edmonton see their community's built environment. This project looked at features in North Central Edmonton that helped or prevented people from being physically active and eating healthy food.

This project is part of a larger project at the University of Alberta called **Community Health and the Built Environment**. The goal of the larger project is to understand how people's decisions to make healthy choices are partly shaped by features in the community where they live. The project is taking place in four communities throughout Alberta: Bonnyville, North Central Edmonton, Medicine Hat/Redcliff and St. Paul.

## PICTURES ARE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!

How did the researchers do this project? They had residents take photos of their community. Then they told researchers why those photos helped to describe physical activity and healthy eating in their community. This kind of project is called **photovoice**.

## THE PHOTO-TAKERS

Ten people participated in the project from North Central Edmonton. These participants generally represented the community. There were 8 female and 2 male photo-takers. Many of the photo-takers were already involved in community organizations. We tried to make sure that all residents of North Central Edmonton had the chance to be a part of the project. Despite this, the group of photo-takers we interviewed represented only a small range of community residents. Therefore, the interviews did not capture the perspectives of visible minority groups, youth, or more transient population.

## THE PHOTO-TAKERS' JOURNEY

1. Each of the photo-takers met with the researcher one-on-one to talk about their community.
2. The photo-takers were provided with digital cameras and were shown how to use them.
3. The photo-takers were given 2 weeks to take pictures. The pictures helped them talk about opportunities and barriers to physical activity and healthy eating in their community.
4. The pictures were developed.
5. Each of the photo-takers met one-on-one with the researcher again. During this time, the photo-takers told their stories about each picture.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

After photo-takers shared their community stories, summaries were created for the top 5 pictures from every photo-taker. All of the photo-takers had the chance to review these summaries. These summaries were used to create a presentation and this report to share with community members and local decision-makers. Residents and researchers hope that the pictures and stories will help others gain insight into the North Central Edmonton community. Remember, the stories were told by the residents themselves!

## THE PHOTO-TAKERS' STORIES

North Central Edmonton was described as a vibrant, community-focused area. Photo-takers had pride in their community for a variety of reasons. They valued the central location within the City of Edmonton, which allowed residents to access other areas of the city. Participants liked how it was easy to access services in the community. The large attractive lots with mature trees, the unique architecture, and the heritage homes were also described as positive features of these older neighbourhoods. All photo-takers spoke of close ties to their neighbours, which increased their feelings of safety as well as sense of community.

Overall, photo-takers talked about a number of different things when describing their community. The key topics are highlighted below; the full stories are available in the community report.

- a culturally rich community
- interest in improving social problems
- excited about 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue revitalization
- variety of community meeting places
- a good community to go walking in
- dogs in the community serve as a supporter and a barrier to walking
- community trail system provides access to services
- public transportation options
- photo-takers' passion for gardening
- participating in physical activity through yard work
- parks and green spaces are positive community features
- the river valley is easily accessible
- physical activity facilities provide important recreation opportunities
- community grocery stores a place to access a variety of healthy foods
- variety of ethnic restaurants
- varied reaction to fast food restaurants
- local farmers markets provide access to local food

## WHO WE ARE

The researchers from the University of Alberta have partnered with a group of stakeholders from the North Central Edmonton community. This group helps to represent the diverse nature of the community and includes members from Action for Healthy Communities, Boys and Girls Club, Edmonton Public Libraries - Sprucewood Branch, City of Edmonton (Community Services, Recreation, Walkable Edmonton, Communities in Bloom), Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and Healthy Alberta Communities.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The researchers work with community stakeholders to develop community projects. The goal of the projects is to help community members be more physically active and choose to eat healthy food.

One new project currently underway is the development of walking maps for the community. These maps will highlight popular walking routes and local destinations in North Central Edmonton. Watch for these maps in the Spring of 2010!

## THANK YOU!

The researchers and community stakeholders would like to thank all of the photo-takers for sharing their stories. All of the pictures in this summary document were from the project.

For more information about this project, please contact:

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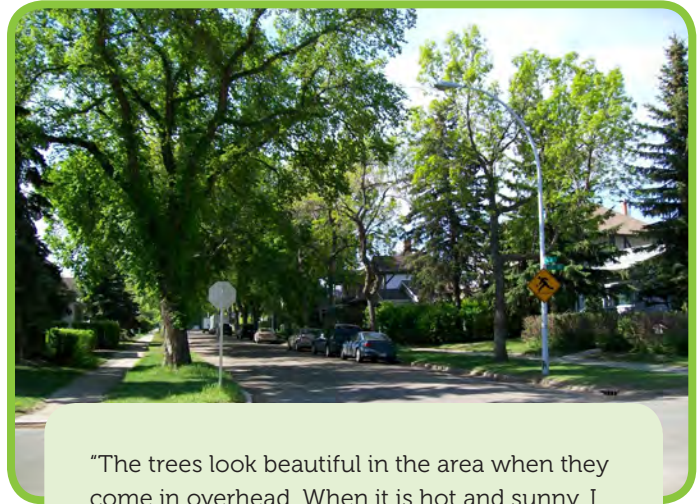
Laura Flaman (Project Coordinator) at [lflaman@ualberta.ca](mailto:lflaman@ualberta.ca) or at 780-492-8883



## The Project

This project will help researchers understand how residents of North Central Edmonton see their community's built environment. This project looked at features in North Central Edmonton that helped or prevented people from being physically active and eating healthy food. The **built environment** includes features in the community like:

- parks and green spaces,
- residential areas,
- public transit,
- indoor and outdoor activity options
- fast food restaurants and grocery stores,
- how a community is maintained, and
- how the roads and sidewalks are designed.



"The trees look beautiful in the area when they come in overhead. When it is hot and sunny, I will vary my usual walking route to walk down this shady street" (Alberta Avenue resident).



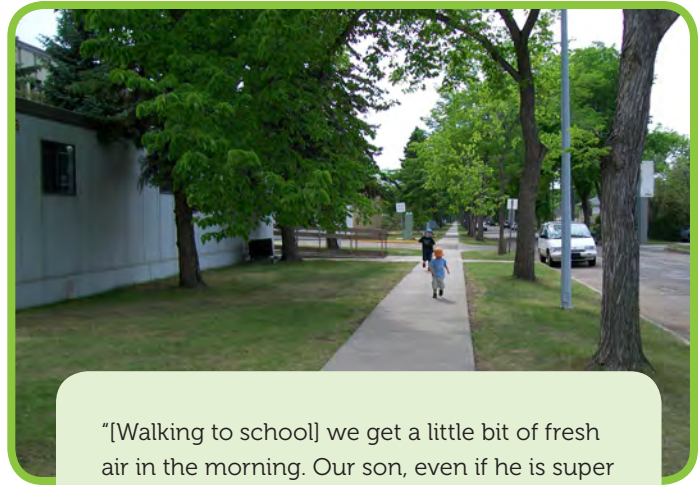
"The variety of ethnic restaurants in the community is amazing. These businesses are vital. They create the destination; they create the structure right now, which gets you out in the community. I love going, I just love the idea that the people who owned, who made my food, served my food and I paid them. I want my community to do well and it helps to spend your money in your community" (McCauley resident).

These types of features may also affect the community's social atmosphere. The **social atmosphere** may include a community that feels friendly or having a good neighbour. Together, built and social features may influence the health of residents.

This project is part of a larger project at the University of Alberta called **Community Health and the Built Environment**. The goal of the larger project is to understand how people's decisions to make healthy choices are partly shaped by features in the community where they live. The project is taking place in four communities throughout Alberta: Bonnyville, North Central Edmonton, Medicine Hat/Redcliff and St. Paul.

## Pictures are Worth a Thousand Words!

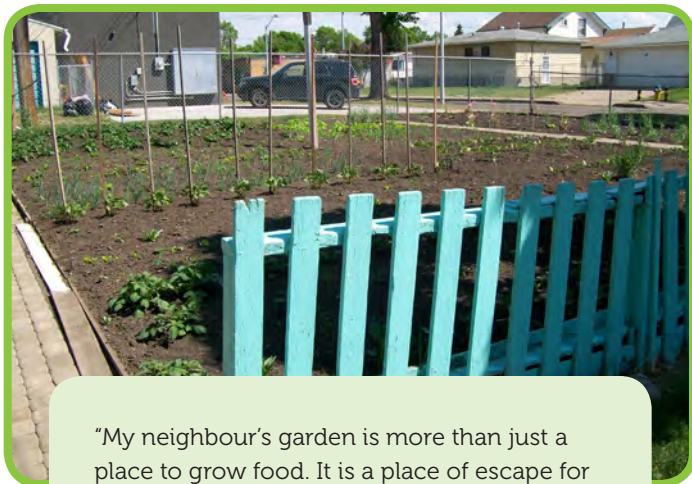
How did the researchers do this project? They had residents take photos of their community and then tell researchers why those photos helped to describe physical activity and healthy eating in their community. This kind of project is called photovoice. Photovoice is a commonly used research method that is used to gain a local perspective. Photos can engage people better than words alone. Photovoice is a good way to begin conversations with local residents about their community.



"[Walking to school] we get a little bit of fresh air in the morning. Our son, even if he is super grouchy in the morning, by the time we get to school he is like totally happy"  
(Spruce Avenue resident).

## The Photo-Takers

Ten people participated in the project from North Central Edmonton. These participants generally represented the community. Participants were recruited through posters, e-mail and word-of-mouth by other community members. There were 8 female and 2 male photo-takers. None of the photo-takers identified themselves as part of a visible minority. The photo-takers had lived in North Central Edmonton between 3 and 40+ years. Photo-takers ranged in age from mid 20's to 65+ years. Photo-takers reported



"My neighbour's garden is more than just a place to grow food. It is a place of escape for her. Recently, it has been the backdrop for getting to know and understand each other"  
(Alberta Avenue resident).

annual household income levels ranging from less than \$25,000 per year to over \$100,000 per year. Many of the photo-takers were already involved in community organizations. We tried to make sure that all residents of North Central Edmonton had the chance to be a part of the project. Despite this, the group of photo-takers we interviewed represented only a small range of community residents. Therefore, the interviews did not capture the visible minority groups, youth, or more transient population perspectives.



## The Photo-takers' Journey

1. Each of the photo-takers met with the researcher one-on-one to talk about their community.
2. The photo-takers were provided with digital cameras and were shown how to use them.
3. The photo-takers were given two weeks to take pictures. The pictures helped them talk about opportunities and barriers to physical activity and healthy eating in their community.
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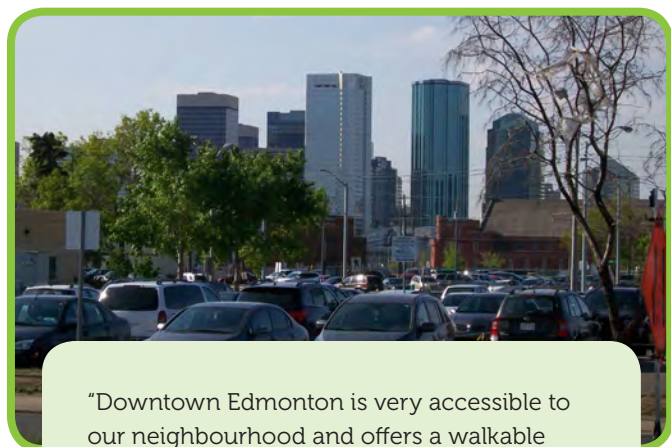
"I took this picture to represent physical activity through outdoor work. It is much easier to work hard when you have a purpose and something to accomplish" (Parkdale resident).

## Bringing it All Together

After photo-takers shared their community stories, summaries were created for the top five pictures from every photo-taker. All of the photo-takers had the chance to review these summaries. These summaries were used to create a presentation and this report to share with community members and local decision-makers. Residents and researchers hope that the pictures and stories will help others gain insight into the North Central Edmonton community. The stories were told by the residents themselves!



"This is a picture of some graffiti on Norwood boulevard. The busy streets in this area are full of garbage and crime, and I would not walk there after dark. Graffiti bylaws do little to improve the situation as deeper solutions to social problems are needed" (Alberta Avenue resident).

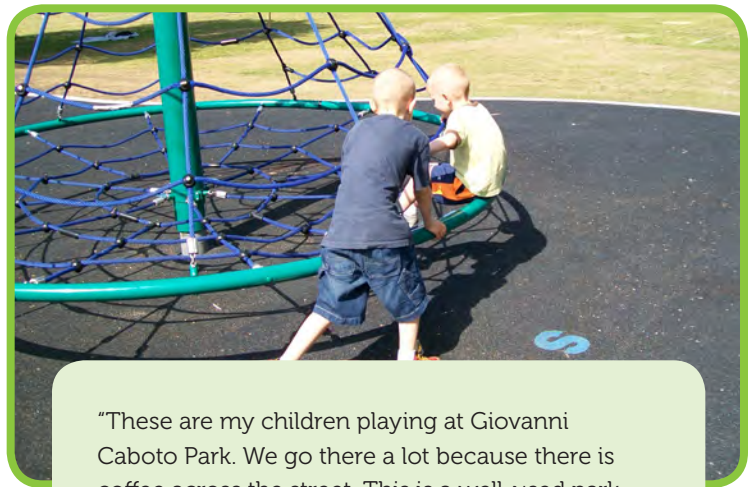


"Downtown Edmonton is very accessible to our neighbourhood and offers a walkable destination. Unfortunately, there could be some safety issues walking downtown late in the evening when the businesses are closed, as there are places where people loiter along the way" (Spruce Avenue resident).

## The Photo-takers' Stories

### THE NORTH CENTRAL EDMONTON COMMUNITY

North Central Edmonton was described as a vibrant, community-focused area. Photo-takers had pride in their community for a variety of reasons. They valued the central location within the City of Edmonton, which allowed residents to access other areas of the city. Participants liked how it was easy to access services in the community. The large attractive lots with mature trees, the unique architecture, and the heritage homes were also described as positive features of these older neighbourhoods. All photo-takers spoke of close ties to their neighbours, which increased their feelings of safety as well as sense of community.



"These are my children playing at Giovanni Caboto Park. We go there a lot because there is coffee across the street. This is a well-used park, especially when the spray deck is on. It is a super basic spray park with no structure at all, but it is my kids' favorite. People often come over from the Italian Centre with sandwiches and eat them at the park benches or picnic tables, and there are several community events there throughout the year" (Spruce Avenue resident).



"I love having the café, I love having the store. It creates an immediate sense of community" (McCauley resident).

### A CULTURALLY RICH COMMUNITY

North Central Edmonton was described as an ethnically and culturally rich community. This is reflected by the variety of services available in the community. In particular, the Italian Centre Shop was mentioned by almost every photo-taker as an important community resource. Photo-takers thought that the Italian Centre Shop added value to the community by offering a diverse range of quality foods, a convenient meeting place (see left picture), and major sponsorship for recent improvements to Giovanni Caboto Park (another central community feature).

### COMMUNITY SOCIAL ISSUES

While photo-takers spoke very positively about the community, they also were interested in improving many of the social problems in the area. Drugs, prostitution, vandalism and graffiti were mentioned by almost every photo-taker (see picture and caption on next page). Many of them spoke about how having people present in the community was a good way to prevent crime.

## 118TH AVENUE REVITALIZATION

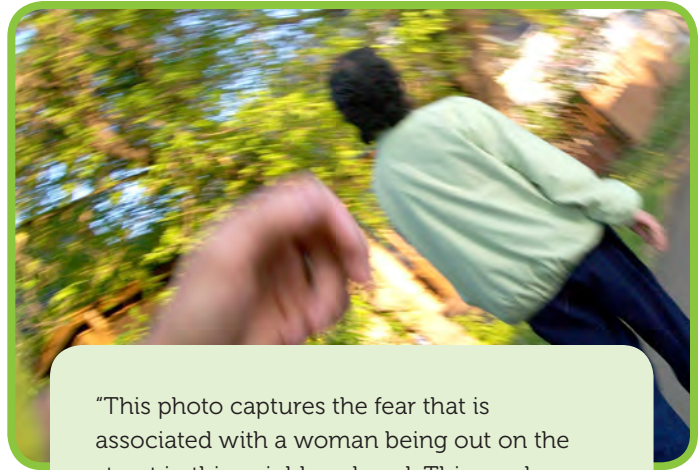
Photo-takers were excited about the revitalization efforts along Alberta Avenue (118th Avenue). They recognized that these efforts were starting to draw current residents and people from surrounding communities into the area. As one photo-taker explained: *"I really think that the improvements that they have made on the Avenue are terrific. They are going to be great for getting a lot [of people out] enjoying the street life, and being part of the community, and adding to the security end, the comfort of the area, the neighbourhood"* (Delton resident).

## COMMUNITY MEETING PLACES

The Carrot (a Community Arts Coffee House; see picture to the right) and the Sprucewood Library were specifically mentioned as important meeting places in the community. Several photo-takers also indicated that the food fair at Kingsway Garden Mall was another valuable social space, acting as an informal meeting place for the community.

## TALKING A WALK THROUGH THE COMMUNITY

Walking in the community was an activity mentioned by every photo-taker. Participants talked about walking for exercise, recreation, and for transportation. They were motivated to go walking because of the beauty of the trees and the architecture in the area. The mature trees were also valued because they provided shade in the summer (see picture and caption to the right).



"This photo captures the fear that is associated with a woman being out on the street in this neighbourhood. This can be a big detriment to being out and active in this part of the city. Being a younger man I have never felt that personally, but I do know that it is out there and a lot of people talk about it" (Delton resident).



"The Carrot is a nice place to go to, and it is a good reason to walk up to 118th Avenue" (Alberta Avenue resident).



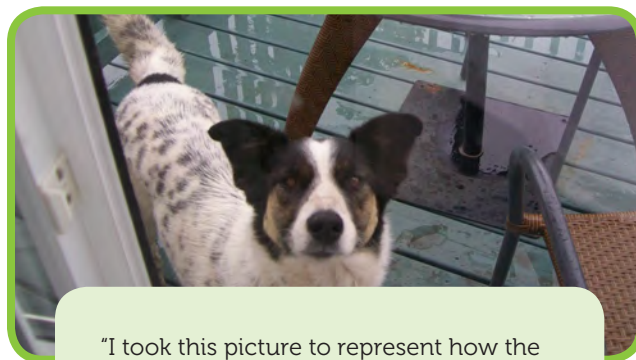
"I wouldn't walk down a certain way because it was hot... I would duck down this street for the shade" (Alberta Avenue resident).

Photo-takers had different opinions about how much crime and social issues affected their decisions to walk in the neighbourhood. Many photo-takers suggested that they walked and biked less in the evening for safety reasons.

It was also noted that, in some of the neighbourhoods, sidewalks and trees were not present on both sides of the street.

## COMMUNITY DOGS

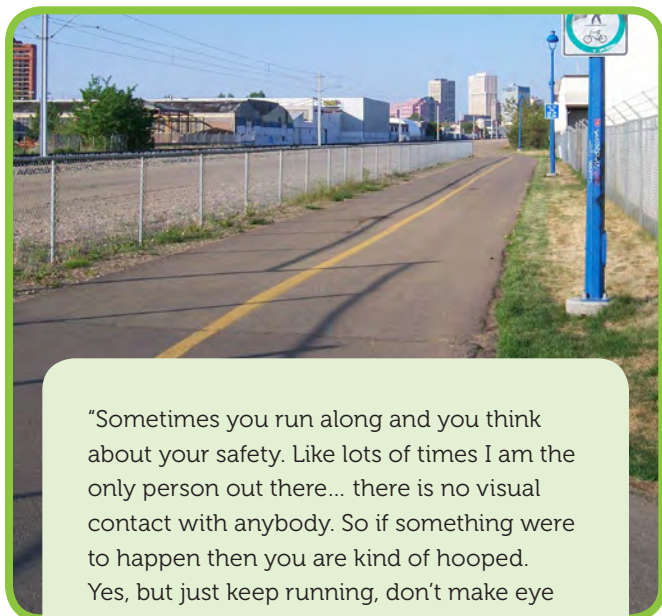
Many of the photo-takers were dog owners and they talked about how having a dog motivated them to go walking (see picture and caption to the right). However, dogs were also mentioned by a few photo-takers as barriers to being active in the community. For example, many spoke of being afraid of aggressive dogs, this limited the number of streets they felt comfortable walking down.



"I took this picture to represent how the rain can make it a little tougher to go outside. My dog is saying 'hey, come on, let's go' anyway" (Parkdale resident).

## COMMUNITY TRAILS

Photo-takers mentioned that there were few designated walking or cycling trails in the area. Present trail systems were very much appreciated by photo-takers. *"It is just nice to have even just a teeny little bit of path. Where if you want to get up in the morning and go for a run, you actually have a place where you can go and run and it is like on pavement and it is kind of flat and clear"* (McCauley resident). Photo-takers mentioned that the paths provided links to public transportation, particularly LRT stations. Despite the positive features of the paths photo-takers suggested they were concerned about their safety (see left picture and caption).



"Sometimes you run along and you think about your safety. Like lots of times I am the only person out there... there is no visual contact with anybody. So if something were to happen then you are kind of hooped. Yes, but just keep running, don't make eye contact, carry your key with you" (McCauley resident).

## GETTING AROUND THE COMMUNITY

North Central Edmonton has a traditional urban design, which means that it is made up of mixed land uses (for example, retail and residential). This mix of land uses supported residents walking or biking for transportation. In addition, photo-takers placed a high value on the number of services that they had within easy walking distance in the community. All of the photo-takers reported frequently walking to these destinations (for example, the Carrot, Sprucewood Library, and the Italian Centre Shop). A few of the photo-takers also reported



"This pedestrian bridge helps me cross 97th Street easily. I like not having to stop when I walk so I can keep my heart rate up. The bridge allows me to keep going and also gives me extra exercise on the stairs going up and down" (Alberta Avenue resident).

riding their bikes for transportation. They did suggest that because North Central Edmonton is an urban neighbourhood they were always dealing with traffic. While this, did not prevent them, from cycling it might be a barrier for less-confident cyclists.

The pedestrian overpass on 97th Street was described as a safe way to get across a busy street. This is illustrated in the picture and caption on the left.

Photo-takers also talked about the intersections in the community. Suggesting that some intersections had long lights; this increased the time it took to travel between destinations and encouraged jaywalking.

Other barriers to walking in the area included missing curb cuts and uneven payments. This was particularly the case for older (or more senior) photo-takers as it made it more challenging for them to walk safely.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Many of the photo-takers made use of the variety of public transportation options in the community. This was seen as a key advantage to living in the area. Public transportation contributed to physical activity, as walking to LRT and bus stops helped photo-takers reach their daily targets for physical activity. However, some photo-takers were discouraged from using public transportation due to the dirty conditions of bus shelters and fears for personal safety (see caption and picture on the right)

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

The land use mix (for example, retail and residential) was seen as a positive community feature. In particular, several of the photo-takers noted how well the Glenrose Hospital fit into the community. This central location provided opportunities for interaction between patients and community members. Even the large parking lot of the hospital, which some may consider an eyesore, was seen as a positive by one photo-taker (see picture and caption on the next page).



"Most people gob in here and that is why I have taken the picture of the floors like this. And they spit huge globules, like – and you walk in there and it is just fresh – you can't even go in there. Even when it is cold you don't go in there and people are smoking" (Alberta Avenue resident).



“This is the parking lot after hours at the Glenrose Hospital, known as ‘the racetrack’ by my boys. The lot is empty on evenings and weekends, and it is absolutely their favourite place to ride their bikes. It provides a safe, smooth surface for kids to ride bikes or play with remote controlled toys. I think they like it because they feel so free when they are there. They don’t have to worry about crossing streets or cars or following their parents. We set up lawn chairs there to watch them, and others in the neighbourhood do the same, so it is a bit of a social thing as well” (Spruce Avenue resident).

## A PASSION FOR GARDENING

The other most common form of physical activity reported by photo-takers was gardening and yard work. Many of them spoke of the culture of gardening in the community. Gardening not only contributed to photo-takers’ physical activity, but it was described as a way of connecting with the neighbours. *“I think most of the people I know in the community are like that. Partly it is that we really just care about our homes and partly it’s just something that we all really enjoy doing, gardening and all the yard work and stuff like that”* (Alberta Avenue resident). This is also supported in the caption below.

The bonds between neighbours helped to increase their feelings of safety and connection to the community. Gardening also gave some photo-takers more confidence and motivation to venture out walking in the community (see photo and caption to the right). As one photo-taker noted, *“it encourages me to go farther if I am enjoying my time and seeing lots of thing that make me happy. I am going to spend more time out there walking around... I am also going to meet neighbours on the way and say did you see this and that and exchange that information and hopefully get new ideas of places to go”* (Delton resident).



“Just the socialization that you get, by just sitting in your backyard and looking into three or four yards down and people, you know further down will say oh hi, how are you doing ...come over and see my roses blooming ... so it’s a good way to socialize and again, emotionally it is very positive” (Spruce Avenue resident).



“This is a picture of our new vegetable garden. Because we are new gardeners, it has given us the opportunity to learn about something new and to use our creativity in developing it. We like to eat organic, so we are trying to grow as many of our own vegetables as we can, but gardening is also just a really nice kind of activity to do. I feel it is really good for your spirit too, to get time outside and to be doing those things”  
(Alberta Avenue resident).

Homegrown produce was highly valued for health, economic and social reasons. Many photo-takers were concerned about chemicals on the food bought in stores. Photo-takers suggested that having their own gardens was a way to ensure a fresh supply of organic produce.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGH YARD WORK

Photo-takers spoke about being more motivated to do work around the house and yard than to exercise for the sake of exercise (see picture and caption to the right). Having a yard to work in encourages physical activity because there is always a lawn to mow or sidewalk to shovel. This, makes physical activity necessary, natural, and of practical use. This kind of activity allows the entire family to be involved.

“I will be honest I don't really enjoy doing yard work, but when I am out there doing it, I feel good doing it, because it is an opportunity for some solitary time and I usually use that to work through issues”  
(Parkdale resident).



## PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Parks and green spaces in North Central Edmonton also contribute to physical activity in the community, especially for photo-takers with children. Parks were seen as not only important to children's fitness, but to the parents' fitness as well. As one photo-taker noted, *“there is not a much better workout than running through sand playing with kids”* (Parkdale resident).

Giovanni Caboto Park was mentioned by almost every photo-taker in the project. The park is described as important for its playground and water feature, and because it provides a social space for the community. It is the venue for many community events, such as Giovanni Caboto Day and the

Community Action Dash. It is also well-utilized on a daily basis by community members of all ages.

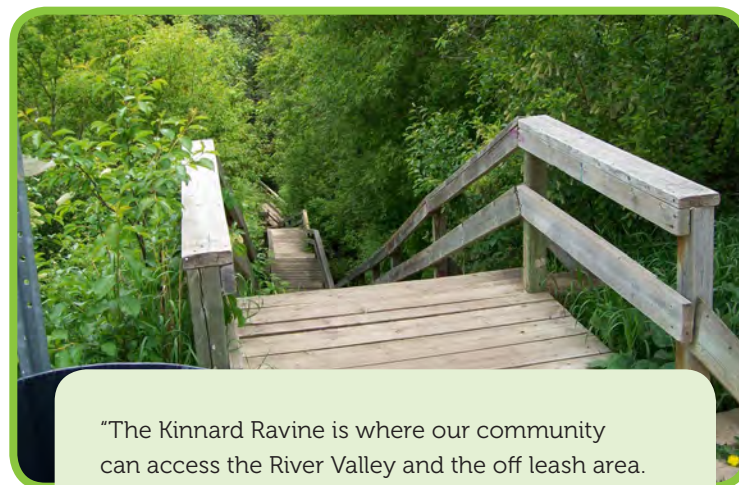
A few photo-takers also spoke about the importance of community leagues and community halls for providing recreational opportunities in the community. The Spruce Avenue Community League, for example, runs the skating arena and snow shack program in the winter and the community soccer league in the summer. This programming was described as vital to getting people out in the community.



"Spruce Avenue school adds to the health of the community because it is an active school. If it were closed it would create a huge gap within the community. The school is partnered with our community league to redevelop the park and playground area" (Spruce Avenue resident).

### ACCESS TO THE RIVER VALLEY

North Central Edmonton is not located on the river valley. Despite this, access to the river valley trail system is provided at the edge of the community through the Kinnard Ravine. Several photo-takers noted how access to this area was very important to them because it contributed to their use of the paths for physical activity. Photo-takers also noted that this is the only dog off-leash area nearby. Personal safety in this area was again talked about as a possible barrier to use of the paths. This is because of homeless camps, graffiti, and vandalism in the area (see picture and caption to the right).



"The Kinnard Ravine is where our community can access the River Valley and the off leash area. My kids, my dog and I all love to go down there. Unfortunately, the graffiti and vandalism in the River Valley takes away a bit from the experience of being there, and the homeless camps in the area may discourage others from using the area" (Parkdale resident).

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACILITIES

Most photo-takers we interviewed talked about getting their exercise through gardening or walking. Yet, they also talked about other specific exercise facilities in the community, Commonwealth Stadium Sports and Fitness Centre was mentioned as an important facility to provide recreation to residents of the area. One barrier that was highlighted that prevented people from accessing the Fitness Centre was the lack of childcare available at the facility. The drop-in basketball offered at the Fitness Centre was specifically described as an opportunity for a diversity of individuals to come together in sport.





Photo-takers were excited about the upcoming improvements to the facility. Although, they expressed concern about the effect the improvements could have on recreation opportunities in the community because the facility would be closed for two years. This would be particularly concerning for residents who do not have access to a vehicle to attend other facilities in the city.

Other photo-takers talked about how the revitalization efforts in Little Italy have helped to attract new businesses. One example is the yoga studio, Lotus Soul Gym (see the picture above).

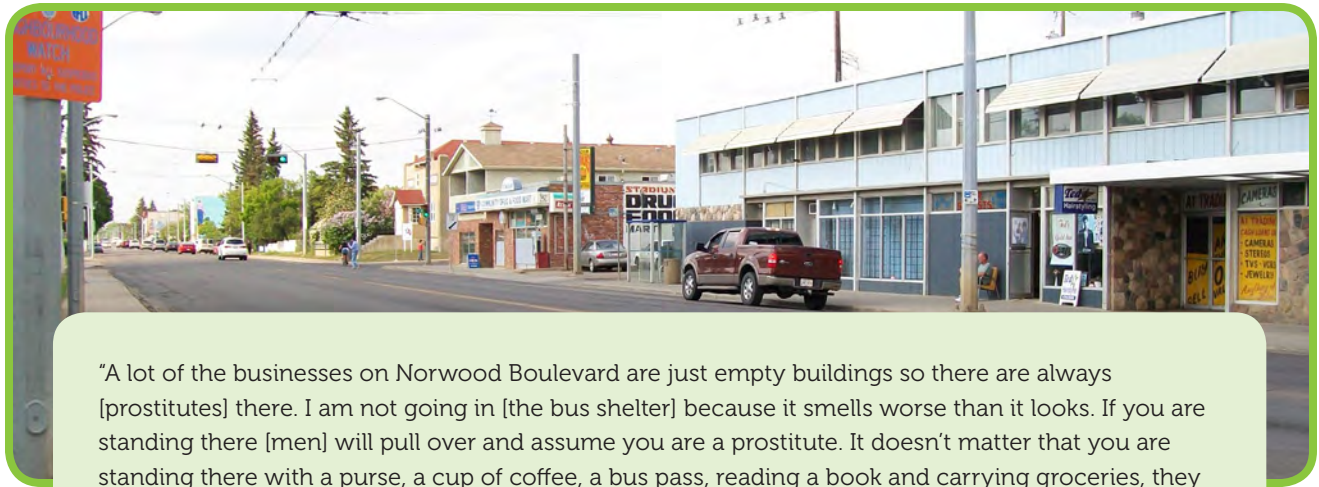
## COMMUNITY GROCERY STORES

The cultural diversity in North Central Edmonton is reflected in the variety of ethnic restaurants and grocery stores available in the community. In particular, the Lucky 97 Food Market and the Italian Centre Shop were mentioned many times by photo-takers as places to access a variety of healthy foods and produce at reasonable prices. In fact, these two stores have also become popular destinations for the entire city. While this is positive for social and economic reasons, it has also resulted in increased traffic congestion. As a result, it is not as safe to travel in these areas by foot.

Most of the photo-takers reported easy access to grocery stores in the area. One exception to this was one photo-taker from Alberta Avenue who did not drive. This photo-taker noted that there was nowhere to buy vegetables in a large area of the community along 118th Avenue. As a result, the Dollar Store in the area was



"[Lucky 97 provides a] wide selection of food, particularly a wide selection of produce too, at a good price, and it is within walking distance, and biking distance, and in fact again you would never, I never drive there, because it is a parking nightmare" (McCauley resident).



"A lot of the businesses on Norwood Boulevard are just empty buildings so there are always [prostitutes] there. I am not going in [the bus shelter] because it smells worse than it looks. If you are standing there [men] will pull over and assume you are a prostitute. It doesn't matter that you are standing there with a purse, a cup of coffee, a bus pass, reading a book and carrying groceries, they still do it. So I don't go to Save-on because I am waiting there" (Alberta Avenue resident).

selling potatoes to fill this void. Another photo-taker who relied on public transportation in the area felt she could not access the Save-on-Foods store on 82nd Street because she felt unsafe waiting for the bus. She felt unsafe because of the people hanging out in the area (see photo and caption above).

Most of the photo-takers reported that there were grocery stores close to them in the community (see

left picture). However, many photo-takers, particularly those with children, drove to the stores. This was because they tended to purchase large orders and walking home with the groceries was difficult. Some of the photo-takers reported going outside the community to buy groceries because they felt the organic produce available in the community was very limited. *"It is great to have a grocery store within a few blocks of home. The flipside is that both the Safeway and Save-on-Foods tend to have limited selection of a lot of good things. You don't get a lot of the good fresh produce; the selection is limited compared to other stores. So we may end up actually to have to drive farther away from home to get the food that we are looking for"* (Parkdale resident).



"People come from all over the city for a lot of the restaurants around here and that is definitely one of them" (Alberta Avenue resident).

**COMMUNITY RESTAURANTS**

Several photo-takers' spoke about the variety of ethnic restaurants in North Central Edmonton. These restaurants were generally seen as very positive community destinations. Photo-takers suggested that they provide healthy food, they are locally owned and provide employment in the community. Many have become destination restaurants for the entire city.

One photo-taker also noted how food could act as a bridge between cultures. These ethnic restaurants act as *“the facilitator, definitely, or liaison or whatever between [ethnic groups] that is something common to everybody that you can talk about that is outside, it is a shared experience . . . that isn’t personal”* (McCauley resident).

## FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

Several photo-takers described the easy availability of fast food in North Central Edmonton. This was particularly evident in the area around Kingsway Garden Mall. While all photo-takers acknowledged that the foods served in these restaurants were not healthy, many also noted the opportunity for social contact that these businesses offered. In particular, the reaction to McDonald’s varied (for example, see right picture and caption).

Photo-takers spoke about the convenience, attractive taste and pricing of fast food. These things encouraged them to eat it, despite the knowledge that the food was unhealthy. *“You know the supersized foods, as much as I like cramming in as much as I can, – I recognize there is not much healthy about that. But, you know, then they price it accordingly, the small one is almost the same price as the big ones, so they really encourage you”* (Parkdale resident). One photo-taker summed up the message many participants had about fast food with her pictures of a local drive-thru:



*“[McDonald’s] is actually a nice meeting place. When I walk down there I meet all sorts of neighbors in the summertime ... seniors walk over there for ice cream. It is safe well lit, open about 24 hours a day, but well lit”*  
(Spruce Avenue resident).

*“[McDonald’s] is a determinant to our environment because they will, the customers will come out of the drive thru and into our community and dump the garbage”*  
(Spruce Avenue resident).



*“You want to enter and maybe you don’t want to enter. It is the choices, you know what I mean”*  
(Alberta Avenue resident).

## LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET

Several photo-takers mentioned the new farmer's market that was just starting up (at the time of the project) on 118th Avenue. Photo-takers were very excited to have the opportunity to buy local produce in the area. However, most of them also mentioned that the market had little fresh produce available, noting this was likely due to the lack of local produce available early in the year.

## Summary

One photo-taker nicely summed up a common message we heard in North Central Edmonton about how the built and social environment affects physical activity and eating well, and how that in turn relates to health:



"So much of what gets me out of the house and into the community is chatting with the neighbors and getting to know people and building a safer, stronger, unified group of people in the neighborhood. The more people I know and can say hello to the safer I feel and the more willing I am to go out, and not only just be in the outdoors, but also to share produce from the yard and eat better that way. Or share recipes or – yes it is all tied together, it is all one holistic way of living, that is very much focused on people" (Delton resident).

## Who We Are

The researchers from the University of Alberta have partnered with a group of stakeholders from the North Central Edmonton community. This group helps to represent the diverse nature of the community and includes members from Action for Healthy Communities, Boys and Girls Club, Edmonton Public Libraries - Sprucewood Branch, City of Edmonton (Community Services, Recreation, Walkable Edmonton, Communities in Bloom), Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and Healthy Alberta Communities.

## What's Next?

The researchers work with community stakeholders to develop community projects. The goal of the projects is to help community members be more physically active and choose to eat healthy food.

One new project currently underway is the development of walking maps for the community. These maps will highlight popular walking routes and local destinations in North Central Edmonton. Watch for these maps in the Spring of 2010!

## **Thank You!**

The researchers and community stakeholders would like to thank all of the photo-takers for sharing their stories. All of the pictures in this summary document were from the project.

### **For more information about this project, please contact:**

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## Our Community Partners:

Action for Healthy Communities

Boys and Girls Club – McCauley Club

City of Edmonton (Community Services,  
Communities in Bloom, Recreation, Walkable Edmonton)

Edmonton Public Libraries – Sprucewood Branch

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

Healthy Alberta Communities

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