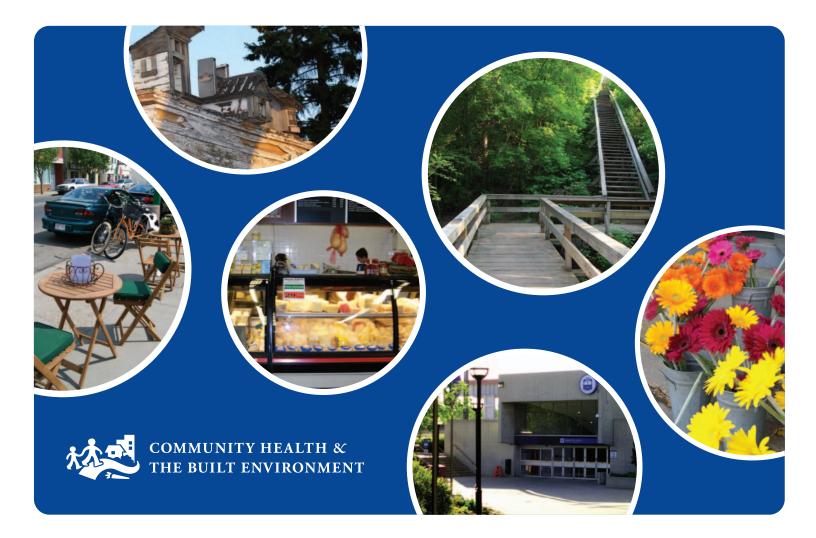# Resident and Non-Resident Perceptions of North Central Edmonton: Summary Report

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Introduction

The current project is part of a larger project based out of the University of Alberta: Community Health and the Built Environment (CHBE). CHBE is a community-based participatory research project. The goal of this project is to understand how community environments influence individuals' levels of physical activity and healthy eating in four communities in Alberta, Canada:

- Eleven neighbourhoods comprising North Central Edmonton (Alberta Avenue, Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Cromdale, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, McCauley, Parkdale, Spruce Avenue, and Westwood),
- The Town of Bonnyville,
- The City of Medicine Hat and the Town of Redcliff, and
- The Town of St. Paul.

As part of this project, researchers have been working with a group of representatives from each of these communities to develop community-level projects. The goal of the projects is to help residents be more physically active and eat healthy. The representatives from North Central Edmonton identified a need to increase their understanding of perceptions of the community.   It was important for them to understand both the insider (i.e., residents) and outsider (i.e, visitors) perceptions. This information can be used by community organizations to better understand how community environments do or do not draw people into the community.

What We Did

In order to understand insider and outsider perspectives, a survey was conducted with participants, spectators and volunteers at a locally run community event: the Community Action Dash. The Community Action Dash was the first and only family fun run event held in central Edmonton. Participants either ran 10km, walked 5km or ran 5km. The goal of the event was to encourage community members to be physically active in their community.

Surveys were administered to participants, volunteers, and observers who were over the age of 18 following the local community event. It took respondents approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete 17 survey questions. Screening questions were used to collect the following information:
- whether survey respondents were over the age of 18,
- if respondents ran/walked in the race, volunteered or observed the event, and
- whether respondents were willing to take part in the study by completing the survey.

All survey questions were read to respondents and respondents verbally replied while the interviewer checked the appropriate box. The survey was comprised of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The demographic information of survey respondents was not collected to help reduce respondent burden, and because the key characteristics we were interested in were respondent perspectives.

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All respondents were asked to answer questions based on the area around their house according to a one kilometer radius or a 10 minute walk from their home. Respondents were asked:

- which area they were from;
- how long they had lived there;
- how they would rate their neighbourhood as a place to walk according to pleasantness, attractiveness and safety based on a five point Likert-type scale;
- how often they walk/run in their neighbourhood;
- how they would rate the North Central Edmonton area as a place to walk/run on a five point Likert-type scale according to pleasantness, attractiveness, and safety; and,
- whether they would visit or spend time in the North Central Edmonton neighbourhood again and their reasoning for whether they would return.

Respondents received a souvenir pin provided by one of the community partners in appreciation of their participation.

What We Found

The following section provides a summary of the results from the survey. *Table 1* indicates whether survey respondents took part in the race (i.e., race participants) or were observers or volunteers at the event. The majority of survey respondents were race participants (46.0%).

Table 1: Involvement of Survey Respondents

	n (%)
Race participants	40 (46.0%)
Volunteers	23 (26.4%)
Observers	23 (26.4%)
Participant & Volunteer	1 (1.1%)
TOTAL	87 (100%)

Table 2 provides a summary of the survey respondents' residence. It is interesting to note that 82.8% of survey respondents lived outside of the North Central Edmonton community.

Table 2: Location of Respondents' Residence

	n (%)
Resided in North Central Edmonton area	13 (14.9%)
Resided outside North Central Edmonton area	72 (82.8%)
Resided outside of Edmonton	2 (2.3%)
TOTAL	87 (100%)

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Table 3 provides a summary of how respondents rated their home neighbourhoods. The majority of respondents found their home neighbourhood to be at least somewhat pleasant (90.8%), somewhat attractive (85%) and quite safe (72.4%). The final row in *Table 3* indicates how frequently respondents walked or ran in their home neighbourhood. The majority of respondents indicated that they walked or ran at least once a day (47.1%).

Table 3: Respondents' Ratings of Home Neighbourhoods

Variable	Home Neighbourhood	
	n (%)	Mean
Respondents' ratings of their <u>home neighbourhood</u> as a place to walk according to **pleasantness** (n=84)		
Not sure/don't know=1	1 (1.1%)	
Not at all=2	2 (2.3%)	4.5
Not very=4	3 (3.4%)	
Somewhat=4	30 (34.5%)	
Very=5	49 (56.3%)	
Respondents' ratings of their <u>home neighbourhood</u> as a place to walk according to **attractiveness** (n=86)		
Not sure/don't know=1	0 (0%)	
Not at all=2	3 (3.4%)	4.3
Not very=3	9 (10.3%)	
Somewhat=4	37 (42.5%)	
Very=5	37 (42.5%)	
Respondents' ratings of their <u>home neighbourhood</u> as a place to walk according to **safety** (n=84)		
Not sure/don't know=1	0 (0%)	
Not at all=2	4 (4.5%)	4.1
Slightly=3	17 (19.5%)	
Quite Safe=4	34 (39.1%)	
Extremely Safe=5	29 (33.3%)	
Frequency that respondents walk or run in their <u>home neighbourhood</u> (n=86)		
less than once a week=1	7 (8.0%)	
once a week=2	19 (21.8%)	2.8
once a day=3	41 (47.1%)	
many times a day=4	19 (21.8%)	

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Table 4 provides a summary of how respondents rated the North Central Edmonton neighbourhood. Respondents indicated that they felt comfortable in the area (92.0%). In addition, the majority of respondents suggested that they thought the North Central Edmonton neighbourhoods were at least somewhat pleasant (86.2%), somewhat attractive (79.3%), and quite safe (83.9%).

Table 4: Respondents' Ratings of North Central Edmonton Neighbourhood

Variable	North Central Edmonton Area	
	n (%)	Mean
Respondents' ratings of **comfort** in <u>North Central Edmonton area</u> (n=85)		-
Yes=1	80 (92.0%)	
No=2	5 (5.7%)	
Respondents' ratings of <u>North Central Edmonton area</u> as a place to walk according to **pleasantness** (n=86)		4.1
Not sure/don't know=1	0 (0%)	
Not at all=2	0 (0%)	
Not very=3	11 (12.6%)	
Somewhat=4	58 (66.7%)	
Very=5	17 (19.5%)	
Respondents' ratings of <u>North Central Edmonton area</u> as a place to walk according to **attractiveness** (n=83)		4.0
Not sure/don't know=1	0 (0%)	
Not at all=2	0 (0%)	
Not very=3	14 (16.1%)	
Somewhat=4	58 (66.7%)	
Very=5	11 (12.6%)	
Respondents' ratings of <u>North Central Edmonton area</u> as a place to walk according to **safety** (n=84)		4.2
Not sure/don't know=1	0 (0%)	
Not at all=2	4 (4.6)	
Slightly=3	7 (8.0%)	
Quite=4	43 (49.4%)	
Extremely=5	30 (34.5%)	
Respondents' indication of **likelihood of returning** to the <u>North Central Edmonton area</u> (n=87)		-
Yes=1	73 (83.9%)	
No=2	14 (16.1%)	

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It is interesting to note that 83.9% of respondents indicated that they would return to the North Central Edmonton neighbourhoods again, as shown in *Table 4*. The most common response as to why people would return was for activities or events. Other reasons included:

- *for the park*,
- *to visit Little Italy*,
- *their children would want to return (for the playground)*,
- *for the local merchants*,
- *could not think of a reason to avoid going*,
- *because it is quiet*, and
- *because it is convenient from downtown*.

Respondents also indicated reasons why they would not return to the North Central Edmonton neighbourhoods. Some of these reasons included:

- *there are a lot of nicer areas in the city*,
- *crime*,
- *there were syringes on the ground*,
- *it is far away from home*,
- *safety*,
- *no need/reason to come back*, and
- *prostitution*.

Conclusions

Understanding perceptions of the North Central Edmonton neighbourhoods is important for community organizations and service providers. In particular, this information could be used for planning future North Central Edmonton "fun runs" and other community events.

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