

# EDMONTON'S NIGHTTIME ECONOMY STRATEGY

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Edmonton's Nighttime Economy Strategy from

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EXPLORE  
EDMONTON

Edmonton





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# + THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY IN CONTEXT

## THE GLOBAL NIGHTTIME CONTRIBUTION

Nightlife companies and venues are an important part of the economy in many cities. Many venues are small, independent businesses, not owned by large international corporations. Many also hire locally; even venues that attract international performers hire local artists and production staff to support these events. The nighttime economy is also culturally significant, beyond the experience of a 'night out', as it supports the production of arts, culture and heritage events such as recorded music, theatre, dance and visual art.

Therefore the creation of a nighttime economy strategy is pivotal for supporting Edmonton to flourish during the evening and nighttime, helping the city to recover from the impact of Covid-19, while also finding solutions for those living or working in the area who have been impacted by its nightlife.

Within the ENTE, some segments faced tough operating conditions in many cities even before Covid-19 struck. Over the past decade, rising rents and changing urban demographics have forced nightclubs and bars to close. As residential areas and nightlife districts increasingly overlap spatially in ex-industrial areas of cities, tensions arise with new, affluent residents, and venues come under threat of noise complaints, fines and closure. In many cities worldwide this has been compounded by unsupportive official attitudes that view nighttime activities primarily as a neighbourhood nuisance. This is relevant to Edmonton because the population of residents in Downtown Edmonton is projected to double to over 40,000 residents by 2040.

As Alberta seeks to diversify its economy beyond the resource industries, cultural industries have been identified as a potential area of growth. The cultural economy is closely linked to the nighttime economy.

Between 2010 and 2017, the cultural industries in Alberta grew by 17%. Within this, Alberta's music industry showed particularly strong growth of 25%. In 2017, Alberta's music sector generated a total output (direct, indirect and the 'induced effect' of music industry workers spending their wages in the economy) of \$4.18 billion CAD (of which \$1.3 billion CAD was from Edmonton). The music ecosystem supported 21,260 jobs in Alberta, including 7,100 in Edmonton.

The same research identified over 480 venues showcasing music across the province's two metro regions, Edmonton and Calgary; and 71 music festivals across Alberta in 2017, of which 36 took place in greater Edmonton.

## POPULATION IN EDMONTON

Edmonton is historically a prosperous city, with real gross domestic product per capita that was 23 percent higher than the country as a whole in 2019. The city's population grew by 8.3% between 2016-2021, faster than the growth rate for Alberta or Canada. Edmonton is forecast to grow from a city of one million people to a future city of two million over the next 40 years. By 2030, there are forecast to be 121,000 extra jobs in the Edmonton economy. This projected growth in population only showcases how important a vibrant ENTE is to attract the workers that industries need.



# + THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY IN CONTEXT



## EMPLOYMENT IN EDMONTON

In 2022, out of a total Edmonton labour force of 589,733, Accommodation and Food provided 43,085 jobs (the fourth largest employment sector for the city) and Arts, Sports, Entertainment, and Recreation provided 8,806 jobs. These figures include night and day jobs, but typically the Accommodation and Food Services and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries have a relatively high proportion of nighttime workers.

In 2020, workers in Edmonton earned, on average, \$44,000 as compared to the Alberta provincial average of \$44,800 and the Canadian national average of \$41,200. However, in 2022, recent data shows the average annual wages in the Arts, Sports, Entertainment, and Recreation Industries were only \$24,363.79, while Food Services were \$23,761.43. This shows a large wage gap between those two sectors and the average.

In Canada, many workers in the nighttime economy, such as bartenders and wait staff, have their pay mostly in tips, with low minimum wages. Artists and performers tend to be freelancers or self-employed and are not easily covered by traditional employer unemployment assistance if they lose a job.

The ENTE in Canada is experiencing labour shortages in an increasingly 'tight' labour market. Data has shown that accommodation and food services had the highest number of job vacancies in Alberta in quarter 3 of 2022, with a vacancy rate of 10.3%. Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport had a vacancy rate of 9.1% in the province.

## BUSINESS IN EDMONTON

There is no statistical category for the nighttime economy - and the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) does not distinguish between nighttime and daytime businesses - but the Accommodation and Food Services and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation groupings are associated with nightlife, including pubs, bars and theatres. In 2020, Alberta had 9,490 active employer private sector businesses in Accommodation and Food Services and 2000 in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. Both industries had been steadily growing from 2010 to 2019 but suffered a drop in active businesses in 2020, likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2023, the City of Edmonton had 1601 businesses with at least one night-time category licence, including 229 licenses for alcohol sales (consumption on-premises/minors prohibited), 10 bingo/casino and 1 after hours dance club. There were also 1024 Alcohol Sales permits (Consumption On-Premises/Minors Allowed) which are likely to include most restaurants/hospitality venues.

## THE FISCAL CONTRIBUTION

The ENTE can generate significant tax revenue for cities. For example, although Downtown Edmonton is only 1% of the city's land area, it generates about 10% of the tax base. This shows why investing in Downtown and the ENTE is strategically important and benefits all taxpayers.





## + THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY IN CONTEXT



### TOURISM IN EDMONTON

Tourism is a vital engine for economic growth in Edmonton, contributing billions of dollars to the local economy. Edmonton's visitor economy experienced considerable expansion over the past decade, with a record six million visitors coming to the city from around the globe. In 2019, this generated \$1.7 billion CAD in the city and surrounding areas. Tourism creates opportunities for local businesses, tax revenues for local and provincial governments and enhances Edmonton's reputation as a great place to live, work, play, learn, and invest. Downtown Edmonton has approximately 15 hotels with more than 3,000 rooms.

Edmonton's tourism and hospitality sector has tended to rely heavily on business travel and conventions, and the pandemic significantly impacted its growth trajectory. In 2020, visitor numbers fell to 3.3 million, contributing just \$315 million to the local economy as compared to the \$1.7 Billion of the year before. Three years on, the business environment continues to be tightly constrained, and demand is not projected to return to 2019 travel demand levels until 2023/2024, according to Tourism Economics. However, between now and 2030, visits are expected to grow by nearly 40% over 2019 levels – up to 8.5 million visitors. Some markets, including travellers visiting friends or relatives and leisure travellers, are expected to rebound quicker, while business and event travellers are expected to recover more slowly.

Visitor spending levels in Edmonton are not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2026. This is because of the slower recovery of higher spending markets such as business travellers and international travellers. Nevertheless, visitor spending is still forecast to grow by more than 50% above 2019 levels by 2030 (\$2,702 million CAD).







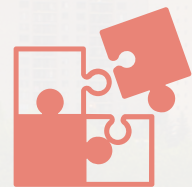


# + TRENDS IN THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY



## FOOD AND DRINK

One trend that has proven popular in Canada's nighttime economy is the rise of craft breweries and distilleries, as well as the popularity of craft cocktails. Many people enjoy visiting these establishments for tastings, tours, and the 'Instagrammable' experiences that places provide. A second feature of Canadian cities is the huge range of food choices from around the world, providing customers with variety and the chance to try something new. Canadian diners love trying new restaurants and cuisines. A third trend is a growth in delivery and takeout meals, a legacy of the pandemic when restaurants were closed and pivoted to providing hospitality at home.



## EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

There is a growing demand from families and individuals for cultural and heritage events at night, which could tap into a sizable market of potential ENTE users. After the experience of Covid-19 lockdowns, families are keen to enjoy events together outside the house. This is a growing market, but there are some issues to overcome, especially regarding marketing and logistics. Edmonton's low population density provides unique challenges as many residents live far from the city centres.

Cities across the globe are finding that an increase in alcohol-free footfall is linked to reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour associated with the nighttime economy. The success of events such as Nuit Blanches, Museums at Night, and cultural festivals such as Canada Day and Lunar New Year show a strong appetite for community activities.

## POPULAR CULTURE

From live music, pub quizzes, or PechaKucha to music jams, open mics or food and drink tastings, immersive activities continue to delight crowds and offer the chance to socialize with like-minded people, while creating that all-important point of difference for businesses. Games and sports-themed hospitality is a current trend, including axe-throwing, arcade-style games and ball games. Another trend is late-night board game cafes, which appeal to ENTE users outside of the drinking and partying crowd.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

A shared social experience is a key factor in the current popular offer of the nighttime economy, as people seek to share moments while participating in something beautiful or exclusive. This creates the potential for valuable promotion and endorsements across social platforms for ENTE businesses. Instagram-worthy experiences can be achieved through eye-catching concept catering in restaurants, and breath-taking mixology in bars or photographable spaces through innovative use of lighting, art, sound and textures.



# + TRENDS IN THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY



## ALCOHOL

In 2019, three-quarters (76.5% or 23.7 million) of Canadians aged 15+ reported consuming an alcoholic beverage in the past year, compared to 78% (23.3 million) in 2017. The prevalence of past-year alcohol use has remained stable over time amongst most age groups. Still, alcohol use among young people aged 15-19 has fallen significantly over time, from 74% in 2017 to 46% in 2019.

Among Canadians who consumed alcohol in the past year, 23% exceeded Health Canada's Lower Risk Alcohol Drinking Guideline (LRDG) for chronic effects, and 17.2% exceeded the guideline for acute effects. That is, they exceeded the guideline of no more than 10 drinks a week for women, and fifteen drinks a week for men, with no more than two drinks a day most days for women and three for men. Drinkers aged 20-24 are more likely to exceed the guidelines than other age groups. (Note that Health Canada issued new, stricter LRDGs in 2023.)

The figures for Alberta were in line with the national figures in 2019 for past-year consumption of alcohol (76.6%). Among Albertan drinkers of alcohol, 23.1% exceeded the chronic risk LRDG guideline, and 15.5% exceeded the acute risk guideline.

## MILLENNIALS, GENERATION Z AND ALCOHOL

Millennials and Generation Z enjoy exercising and staying fit, with a more significant focus than ever on healthy bodies. This shift is partly due to public health messaging about the obesity crisis and the rise in online influencers promoting healthy eating, fitness and the perceived ideal body shape.

Due to the proliferation of social media, younger generations are very aware of being caught on camera drunk and posted online for all to see. These factors, together with rising housing and education costs, are resulting in lower spend on alcohol.



# + TRENDS IN THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY



## DRUGS

Cannabis was legalized and regulated in Canada in 2018 and is the most widely used drug. In 2019, the prevalence of past-year cannabis use (for medical or non-medical purposes) was 21% (6.4 million), an increase on 2017 (15% or 4.4 million) and 2015 (12% or 3.6 million).

Overall, Canadians' past-year illegal drug use remains low. Past-year use of at least one of six illegal drugs (cocaine/crack, speed/methamphetamine, ecstasy, hallucinogens, heroin and salvia) was 3.5% of the population aged 15+ (1.1 million), unchanged from 3.3% (987,000) in 2017 and an increase from 2% (678,000) in 2015. Alberta had the highest rate of illegal drug use among the provinces, at 4.8%.

Nationally, past-year use of at least one of six illegal drugs was higher among young adults aged 20-24 (14%) than among youth aged 15-19 (3%) and adults aged 25 and older (3%). Cocaine/crack, hallucinogens and ecstasy were the most consumed drugs in 2019.

Like many other jurisdictions in North America, Alberta has seen a growing problem of opioid drug poisoning. Edmonton experiences issues with open use of drugs in the Downtown core, particularly in back streets, transit tunnels and pedways. This affects other people who visit Downtown and can contribute to negative perceptions of safety, particularly at night. It is a complex problem for the public authorities in Edmonton who have responsibility for managing the city centre.

## PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

One in three (33%) Edmonton residents aged 15 and older were very satisfied with their personal safety from crime, similar to Alberta residents (35%) but lower than Canadians living in the provinces overall (38%).

Just under half (48%) of Edmonton residents felt very safe when walking alone after dark, significantly lower than the proportion in Alberta (52%) and Canada's provinces (52%). Women who lived in Edmonton were significantly less likely than men to feel very safe when walking alone after dark (34% versus 58%), similar to the wider province of Alberta and other Canadian provinces.

The City of Edmonton's survey of businesses and patrons in the Downtown Business Improvement Areas (BIA) shows a decline in the perception of safety. Reporting from 2017 to 2020 showed a 37.3% drop in patrons who agree that the area is safe, while businesses' perception of safety dropped by 18.7%.

The City of Edmonton has several initiatives to tackle crime and improve safety. In 2016 the City of Edmonton joined the United Nations (UN) Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative to build safe and inclusive public spaces for women and girls in Edmonton. In 2023 a new pilot project was announced, which will see 12 Albertan Sheriffs work alongside Edmonton Police Service officers and the Healthy Streets Operations Centre to help deter and respond to crime and social disorder in the city.



# + TRENDS IN THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY



## CRIME ANALYSIS

According to Statistics Canada's Safer Cities dataset, in 2018, Edmonton police reported an overall crime rate of 8,779 incidents per 100,000 population, 2% higher than in Alberta (8,607) and 60% higher than the Canada average (5,488). In the same year, there were 1,189 police-reported incidents of violent crime per 100,000 population in Edmonton, 10% lower than Alberta (1,319) but 4% higher than Canada overall (1,143). In Edmonton, just over half (52%) of the victims of violent crimes were female, similar to the proportion in Alberta (53%) and Canada (53%). Data also showed there was a fall of 12% in violent crime in Edmonton between 2008 and 2018. However, more recently Edmonton Police Service reported that violent crime increased by 17.9% between 2017 and 2022 city-wide and increased by 16.4% between 2021 and 2022. In Downtown, violent incidents increased by 26.4% in 2017-2022 and 10.2% in 2021-2022. (It should be noted that the official crime data are not necessarily linked to the nighttime economy as they do not specify what time of day or night the offences occurred.)

In 2018, 26% of Edmonton residents self-reported experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour in public, similar to Alberta (25%) but higher than Canada's other provinces (23%). Women were significantly more likely to experience unwanted sexual behaviour in public than men (34% versus 16%). Of those who experienced unwanted sexual behaviour in public, one in eight (13%) Edmonton residents said the most serious incident took place on public transit, similar to Alberta (11%) and Canada's provinces (11%). Of Edmonton residents who experienced unwanted sexual behaviour in public, more than half (54%) changed their behaviour while in public.

## WOMEN AND GIRLS' SAFETY AT NIGHT

Within the last few years, there has been an increased focus on the experience of women and girls at night, in response to a continued high level of sexual offences and sexual harassment. Sexual violence in public spaces reduces freedom of movement, limits participation in everyday life and affects access to, and enjoyment of, cultural and recreational opportunities. Indigenous women, racialized women, under 25 year olds and gender minorities are disproportionately affected by sexual violence.



# + TRENDS IN THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic dealt a blow to Edmonton, but Downtown and the city's wider ENTE have faced unique challenges. Venues were forced to close their doors in March 2020 when the city locked down. Then public health restrictions, distancing and individuals' caution led to cancelled events and limited how businesses could operate. Festivals, concerts, conferences and sporting events were cancelled. 2020 saw just 3 major events as compared to 74 in 2019.



Almost all the usual activity is reduced. Many city or downtown residents permanently moved out of the city to the suburbs; more office workers are working from home, and students are learning online. There have been tens of thousands fewer visits to Downtown every day. This hurts businesses by lowering footfall and weakens the social fabric by making the downtown seem empty- far from the vibrant hub it has the potential to be. Many businesses have been forced to close or change their business models as a result.

Edmonton's tourism and hospitality sector, being skewed towards business travel and conventions rather than leisure travel, was particularly vulnerable to pandemic impacts. City-wide, hotel occupancy sat at just 19.3% in January 2021. By January 2023, it had recovered to 43.2%, which was still 6.4% below the 2019 occupancy level. Edmonton had the lowest occupancy of all major Canadian tourism markets.

## COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The ENTE now faces another challenge from the cost of living crisis. Inflation and high-interest rates impact consumer spending, and businesses face higher costs. Cultural and entertainment venues face rising operating costs simultaneously with slower ticket sales and fewer visitors.

Many ENTE businesses have been in survival mode over the past few years. Consequently, their spending on the supply chain has greatly reduced since the pandemic. This has enabled businesses to survive, but for them to thrive, strategic investment is essential, as venue improvements, equipment, staff training and marketing are necessary for growth. Such spending is also vital to supporting the nighttime industries' broader economic and cultural ecosystem.







# + METHODOLOGY

It was essential for this review to seek the views of a wide range of consumers, businesses, residents and stakeholders to ensure that we captured the essence of Edmonton’s evening nighttime economy in as broad a scope as possible. These views have been considered when drawing conclusions and making recommendations for this report. Additional information can be found in the Appendix.

## SURVEYS

An invitation to participate in an electronic survey was promoted on the City of Edmonton and Night Time Economy Solutions (NTES) website, and the Explore Edmonton (56.4K), City of Edmonton (247.6K), and NTES Twitter feed (1.5K followers).\*

The consumer survey was undertaken by **3301** participants.

The business survey was undertaken by **253** participants.

The student survey was undertaken by **851** participants.

\*Survey data throughout the report is proportionate to the number of responses submitted per question.

## INTERVIEWS

To capture Edmonton's key stakeholders' specific experiences and insights, invitations to take part in phone interviews were sent to participants pinpointed by Explore Edmonton. These interviews ran between 30–50 minutes and focussed on a range of questions that correlated with the themes below.

The interviews were conducted with **63** stakeholders.

## WORKSHOPS & FOCUS GROUPS

**10** workshops and focus groups were conducted online and in person during the audit, generating **92** attendees.

The sessions included:

- Community Services Focus Group
- Education Focus Group
- Students Focus Group
- LGBTQIA2S+ Focus Group
- AKSIS Focus Group
- Chamber of Commerce Focus Group
- Hotels & Hospitality Focus Group
- Business Association & Venues Focus Group
- Community Safety Focus Group
- Arts and Festivals Focus Group

## OVERNIGHT AUDIT

A week-long audit of Edmonton was conducted from Wednesday, 15th February 2023 - Tuesday, 22nd February 2023, including activities such as:

- The University of Alberta Tour
- OPCC Tour
- Rogers Place Tour
- West Edmonton Mall Tour
- MacEwan University Tour
- PSCT Visit
- Edmonton Police Meeting
- Downtown overnight audit
- Old Strathcona overnight audit

## DOCUMENTS AND DATA CONSULTED INCLUDE:

- Census Data
- 2022 Economic Data
- Edmonton Tourism Master Plan 2021-2030
- Downtown Vibrancy Strategy
- Labour Force Survey 2022
- Edmonton Forecast Summary
- Edmonton Economic Action Plan 2021
- Sound Diplomacy Music Ecosystem Study
- Late Night Entertainment Economy Economic Impact Assessment 2016
- Edmonton Demographic Report Environics Analytics 2022
- Edmonton Customer Expenditure Profile Environics Analytics 2022
- Edmontons Strategic Plan 2019-2028- Connect (Ed)monton
- Fertile Ground Report- Alberta Music Cities Initiative
- 2015 Program Review of Responsible Hospitality Edmonton
- Edmonton- Old Strathcona Leadership Summit Planning for Development Summary Report
- Edmonton International Airport Annual Report
- Winter City Strategy
- The City Plan
- Downtown Public Places Plan
- Alberta Health Services Visit Rates, Diagnosis Rates, and Costs
- Edmonton Police Service Master Plan
- Prairie Sky Gondola Master Assessment
- Murals and Tree Lighting Map
- Public Washrooms Strategy
- Patios Program
- Night Bus Schedules
- Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy
- OSBA Bar and Nightclub Feedback 2021

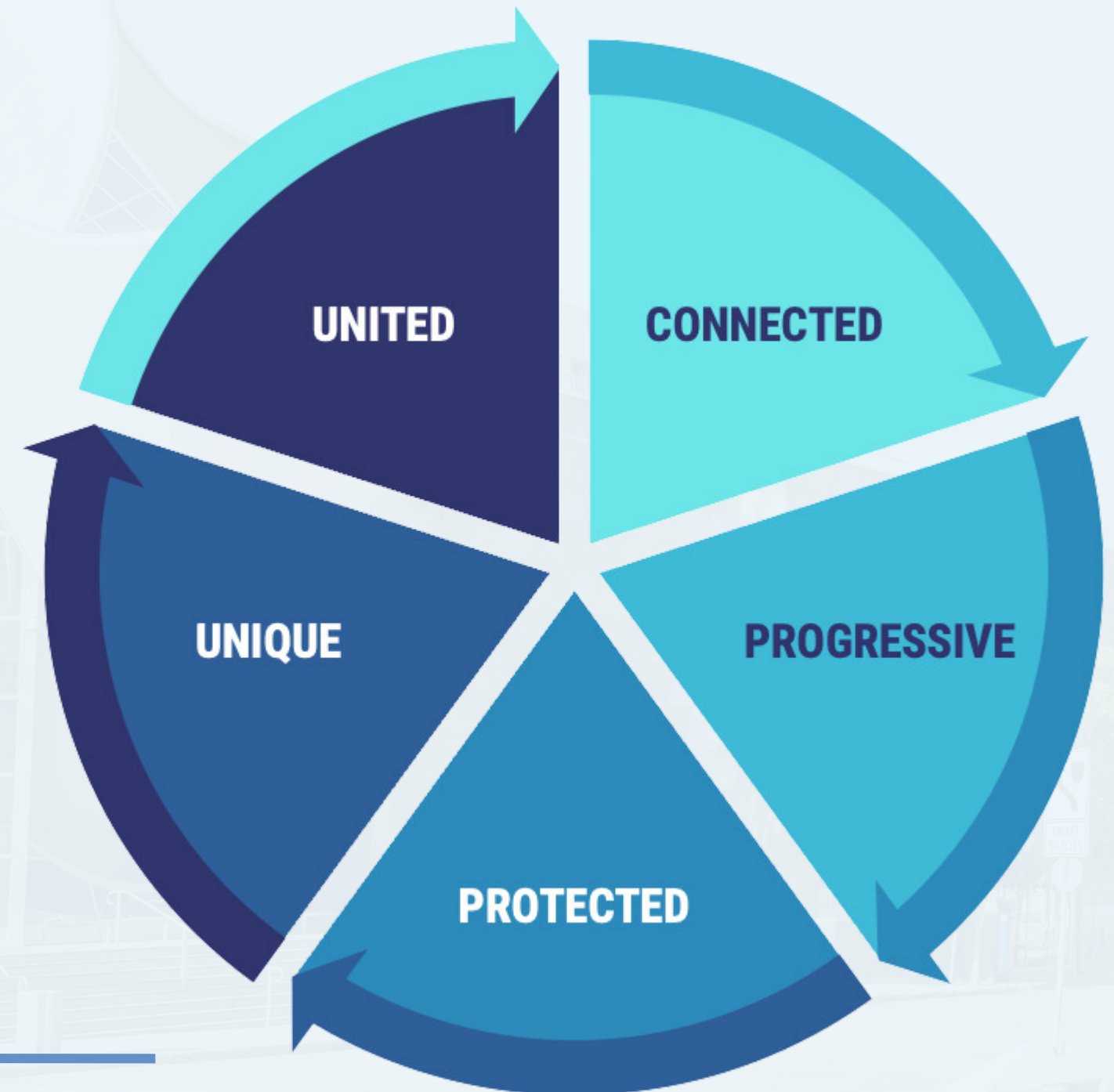


# + THE VISION FOR EDMONTON

The following keys pillar make up the foundation of the overarching vision for Edmonton at night. Edmonton can create a dynamic and thriving nighttime economy by prioritizing unity, connectivity, protection, progressiveness, and uniqueness. The vision for Edmonton is to become:

- **A UNITED EDMONTON**
- **A CONNECTED EDMONTON**
- **A PROGRESSIVE EDMONTON**
- **A PROTECTED EDMONTON**
- **A UNIQUE EDMONTON**

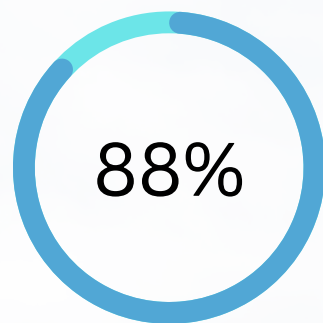
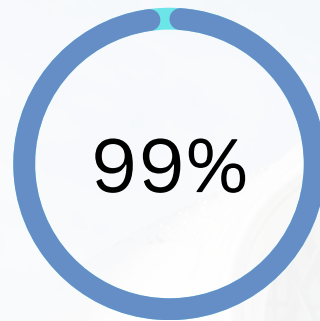
The report breaks down the five important factors that will make for a successful nighttime economy in Edmonton, each addressing a different important pillar. To help make the nighttime economy vibrant and thriving, the report also suggests recommendations for each factor while celebrating Edmonton's unique identity and culture.



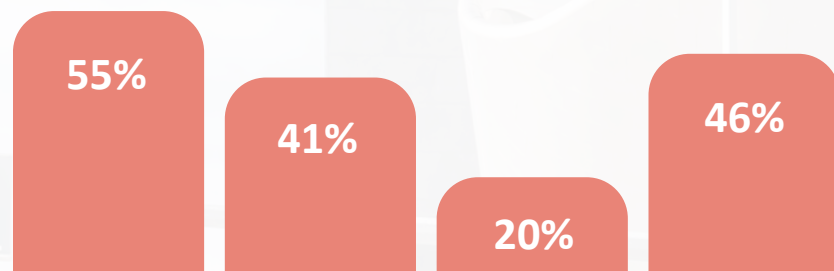


# + USAGE: EDMONTON'S CONSUMERS

99% of consumer survey respondents live in Edmonton - 1% in the surrounding area



83% of consumers go out in Edmonton during the hours of 5pm to 6am

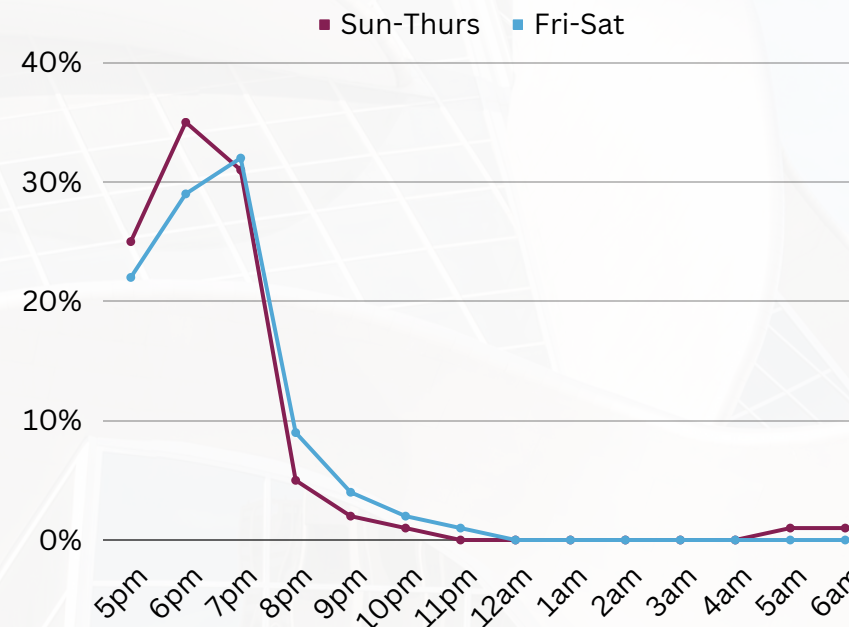


55% of respondents visit Downtown at night, 41% of respondents visit Old Strathcona, 20% visit the West Edmonton Mall, and 46% visit the Retail Power Centres\*.

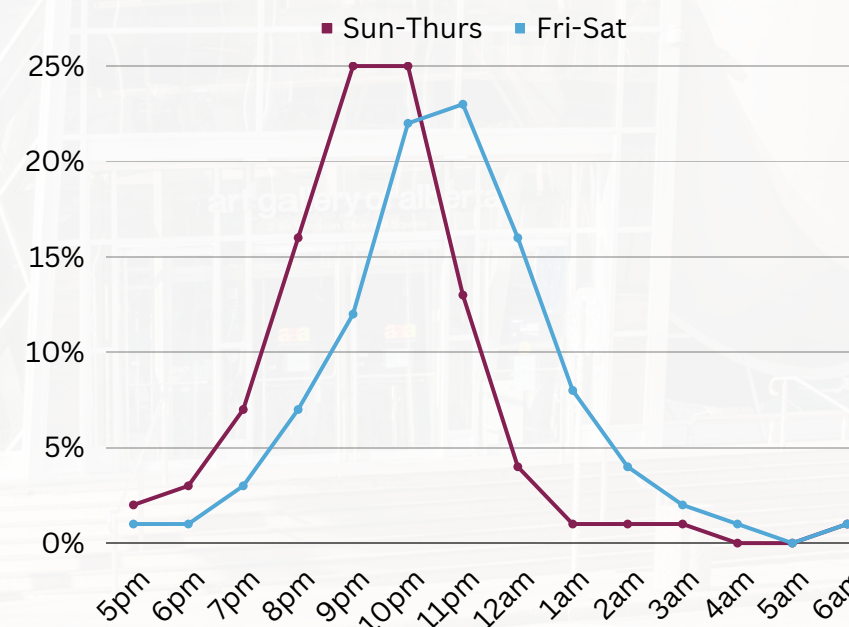
\*Including: South Edmonton Common, North Edmonton Common, Currents of Windermere, Mayfield Common

78% of consumers visit Edmonton from Sunday to Thursday, and 79% of consumers visit Edmonton from Friday to Saturday.

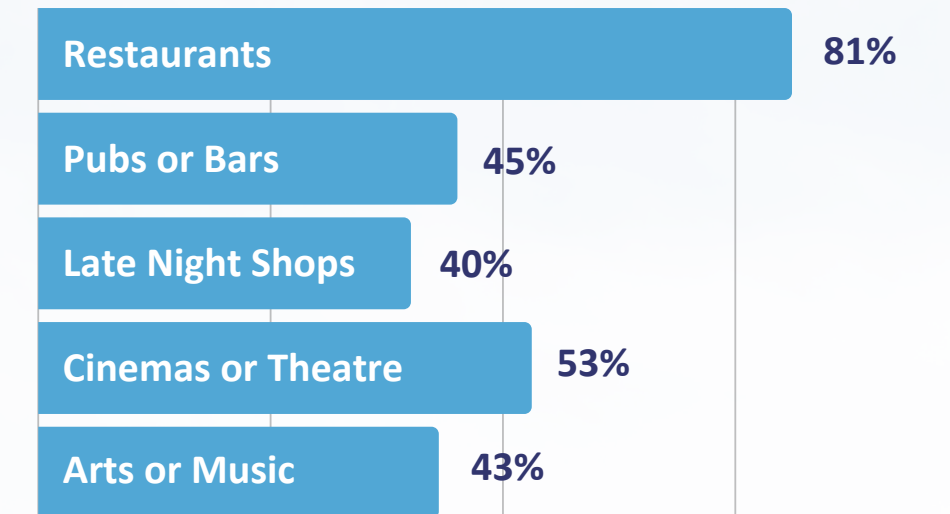
What time do consumers go out between the hours of 5pm and 6am?



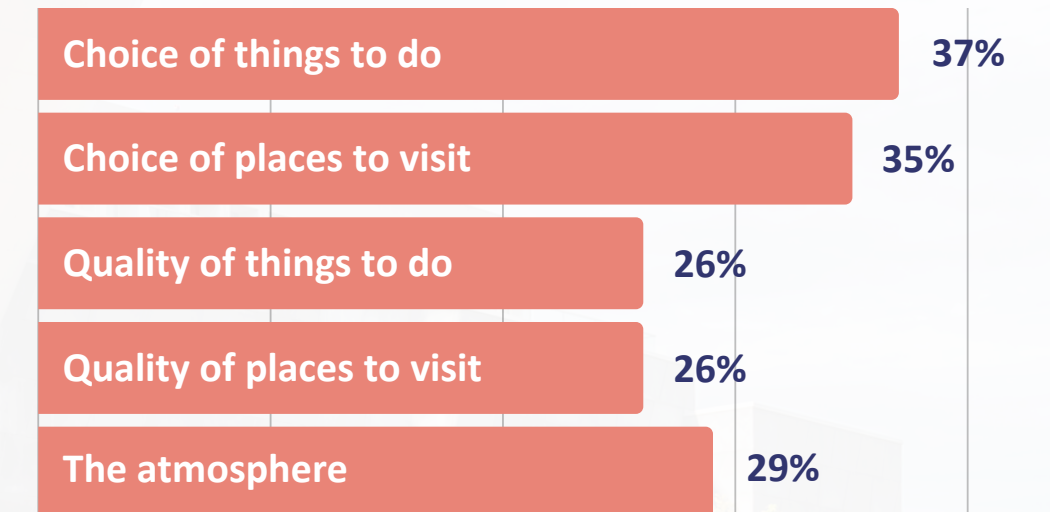
What time do consumers go home between the hours of 5pm and 6am?



Where do consumers visit the most?



What do consumers like about Edmonton?



What do consumers dislike about Edmonton?

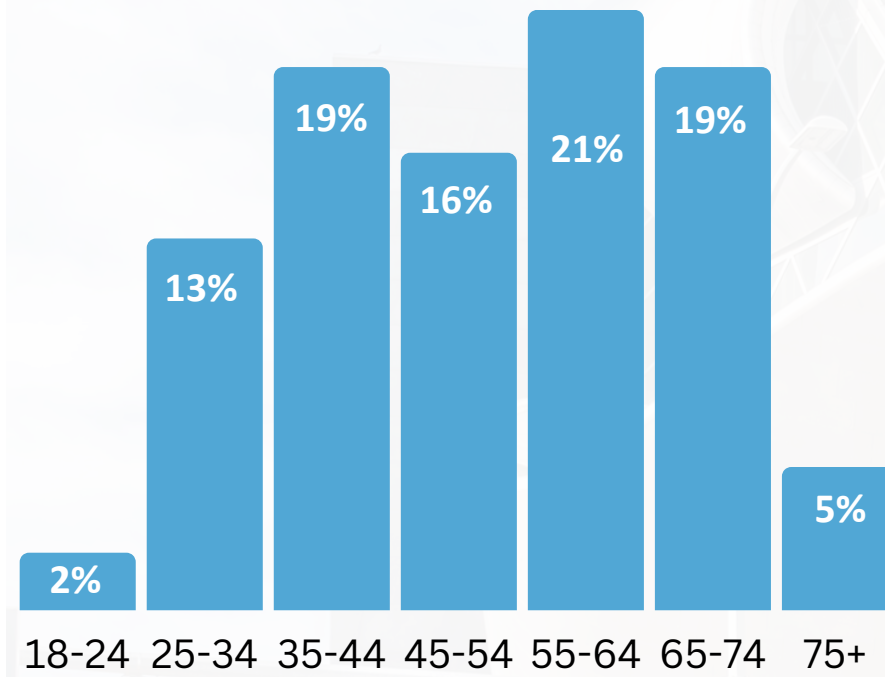




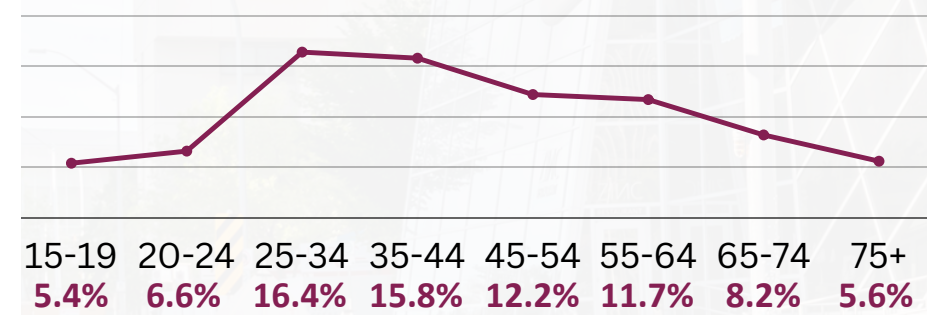
# + USAGE: CONSUMER PROFILE

## Age range

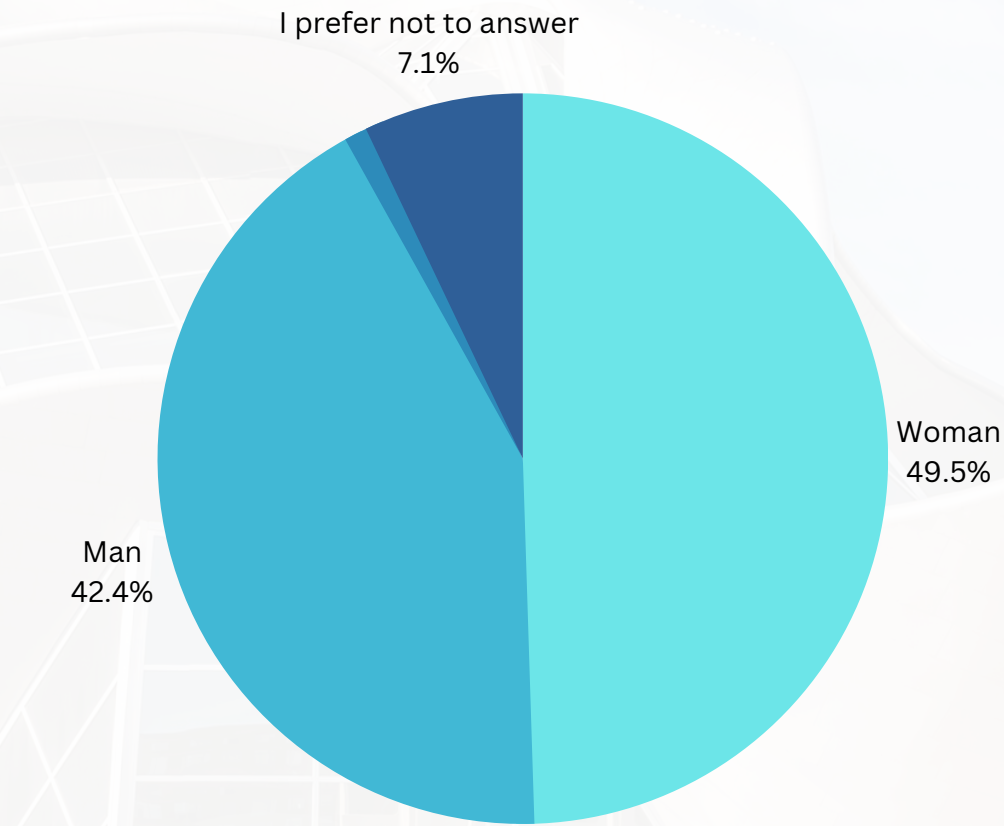
0% of respondents identified themselves as under 18 years old, and 5% selected 'I prefer not to answer.'



## Census comparison



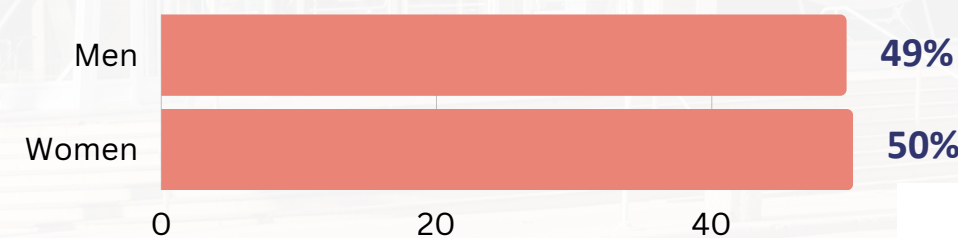
A further 18.2% make up the 0-14 age category.



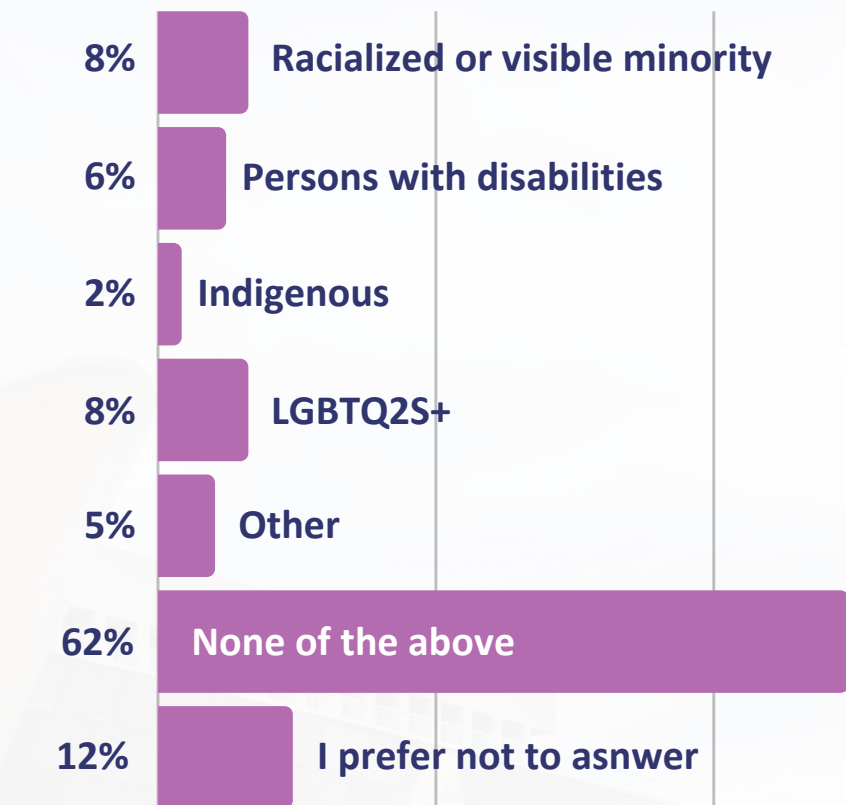
## Gender Identity

1% of respondents identified as Non-binary. 0% of respondents identified as Transgender, Two-Spirit or as another gender not listed. 7% selected 'I prefer not to answer.'

## Census comparison



## How do consumers identify?



## Prominent Consumer Postal Codes

T5K	6%
TST	5%
T6C	5%
T6J	6%
T6H	5%
T6E	6%
T6W	5%







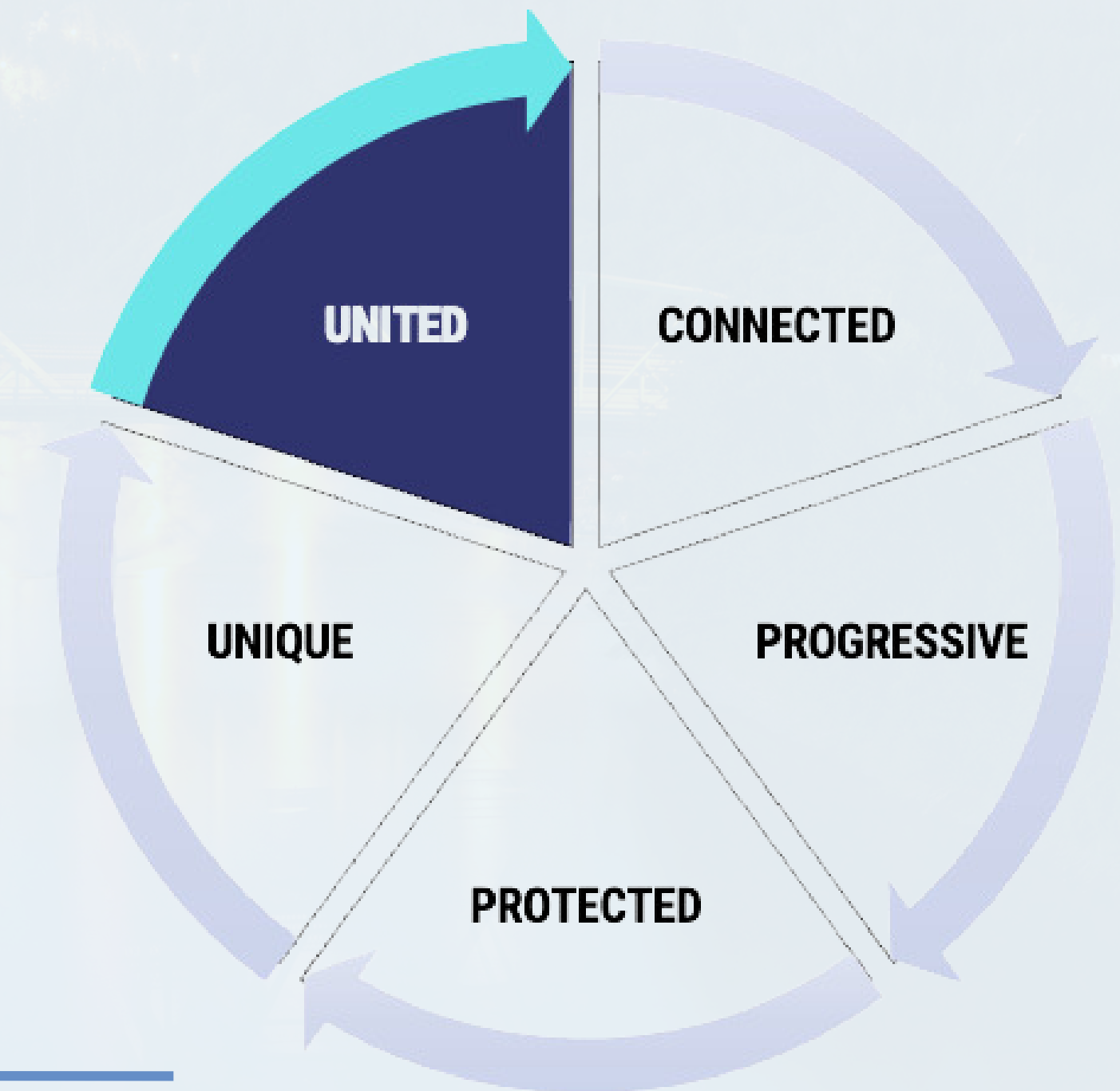
## + A UNITED EDMONTON

The success of Edmonton's nighttime economy and its overall economy depends on the continued use of the city and its offer at night. People and their interactions are at the heart of what makes the nighttime vibrant. We want the experience of the town's cultural and city centres to feel safe, engaging, welcoming and inclusive so everyone is encouraged to use it.

This starts with communication and the ability of government, local businesses and communities to collaborate and communicate effectively with one another to achieve larger goals without running into overlap and competing interests.

This starts with a **United Edmonton.**

UNITED





## + GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

In Edmonton, as with many cities, there are challenges with different government departments working together to address issues related to the nighttime economy. These challenges can be addressed by developing top-down and bottom-up approaches between partnership working and the intersection of responsibility and coordination.

Different government bodies have different specializations and priorities, making working towards a cohesive goal difficult. As such, identifying goals in isolation, as opposed to a more holistic approach, can lead to conflicts and communication breakdowns resulting in the duplication of efforts, missed areas of improvement, and fragmented responsibilities. These issues are exacerbated by budgetary constraints and inefficient resource allocation when working independently instead of working towards common goals.

Top-down lines of communication from government bodies to districts, businesses, and citizens were observed to need to be more efficient and precise. The ambiguity of these communication lines can lead to a sense of mistrust in new initiatives, as well as an internalization of anti-government sentiment.

We found that in Edmonton, there needed to be a clear path for information to be disseminated downward to the community without significant breakdowns or barriers as it was distributed.

During the research, community and stakeholder participants acknowledged that while there is a method for community members, businesses, and BIAs to approach the City with issues and concerns, they would like to see more varied, consistent, and reliable ways for them to do so. Lines of communication were labelled as inefficient and poorly managed, causing distrust in the system and a perceived sense of apathy when it came to problem-solving.

“

***"It is hard to communicate with the administration about the challenges we face as a business when there isn't someone to talk to who has faced our challenges themselves. Solutions aren't provided to us by the government; we have to figure things out ourselves."***

Edmonton Business Owner

Written by Night Time Economy Solutions Ltd (R)





# + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We found in Edmonton that, in addition to the siloed working conditions of many of the larger scale groups, there needed to be more collaborative input into the decision-making processes from community members. There was also found to be a lack of diversity and inclusivity in community engagement efforts.

During the research and engagement, we found limited meaningful opportunities for community members to provide feedback on initiatives or programs. This led to a desire for more community input in the decision-making processes. This can lead to misallocated resources, such as funding or staff for community engagement. This can leave the city's goals and viewpoints with a limited scope of understanding of the diverse needs of its citizens.

We have uncovered barriers to communication between government agencies and community members, resulting in a need for more transparency. We have found that the barriers have led to a perception that government agencies do not listen to community feedback or address their concerns, especially regarding Edmonton's underrepresented communities.

There seems to be a lack of meaningful engagement with underrepresented communities, such as Indigenous people, LGBTQIA2S+ community members, newcomers, or low-income residents, who do not have the same opportunities or

platforms to express their needs as other community members. This can result in a lack of diverse perspectives and missed opportunities to address the unique needs of these communities. For example, during stakeholder interviews, the development of safe injection sites was discussed, particularly the need for more direct involvement or consultation with the local community.





# + BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

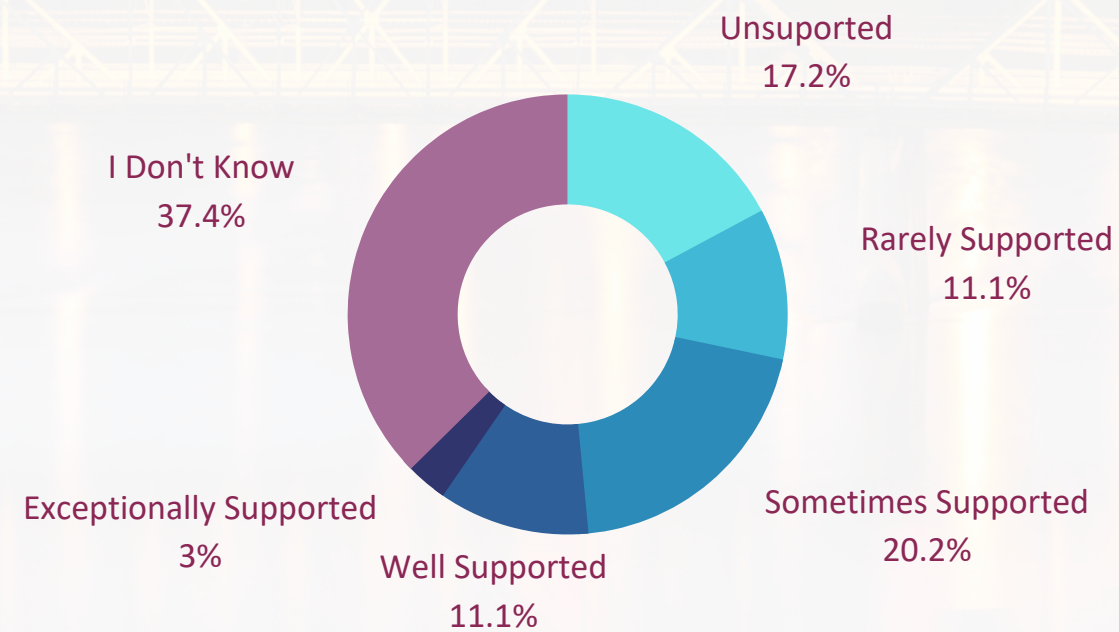
Edmonton’s Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are vital to promoting and enhancing the economic vitality of Edmonton at night. In Edmonton, several BIAs focus on different city areas, including downtown and Old Strathcona. Although these BIAs are generally well-organized and responsible when interacting with their areas, there can be a disconnect between larger goals and those only individually beneficial.

The BIAs in Edmonton seemed fractured in their approach to growth and often worked in competition to receive resources, budgets, and attention from governing bodies. This opposition can cause growth and development stagnation and break down relationships between the BIAs and their businesses. A communal approach within Edmonton BIAs can encourage creativity and innovation within each independent improvement area.

Businesses within the BIAs need more clarity surrounding specific processes, including how to petition for particular initiatives, what can be offered to a business regarding support and whom to talk to when they require help. This has led to businesses going directly to the city with issues instead of working alongside their BIAs.

This results in a lack of trust in the process of the BIAs, and businesses subsequently develop a lack of confidence in the city when they cannot resolve their problem. This causes further divisions and siloed work, resulting in an overlap of initiatives, misallocated funds and projects that do not align with the overall goals of the larger Edmonton community.

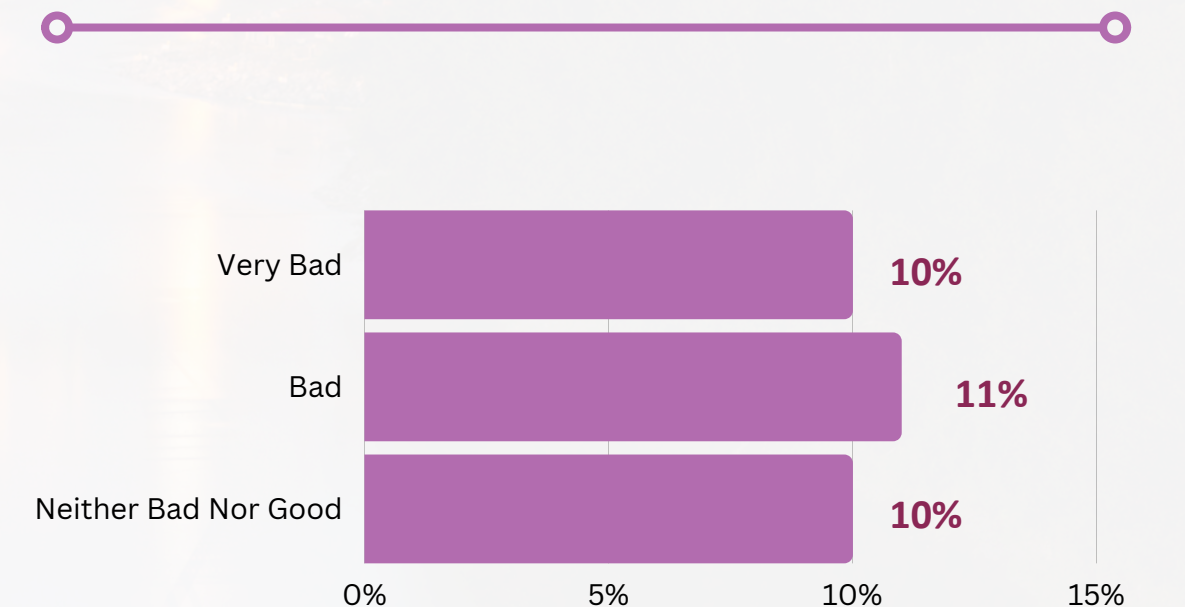
**Perceptions from business survey respondents regarding the support they receive from BIAs varied.**



Edmonton’s BIAs are the key point of contact for initiatives and businesses within the city and act as the funnel for requests and large-scale transformations. Despite this, we found disconnection between the BIAs, each focusing on different goals and experiencing various levels of engagement.

This leads to overlapping projects, unnecessary competition, and underlying resentment undermining future collaborative efforts.

As a unique space with unique opportunities and challenges, stakeholders noted that methods of partnership working in the evening nighttime economy differ from those during the day. To bolster partnerships working at night, stakeholders noted wanting to see a more supportive framework potentially through the use of nighttime advocates or some resource that can affect change or make decisions for the city at night.



**Rating of current partnership working\***

*Business and Employee Survey*

*\*Proportions shown do not account for non-responses.*



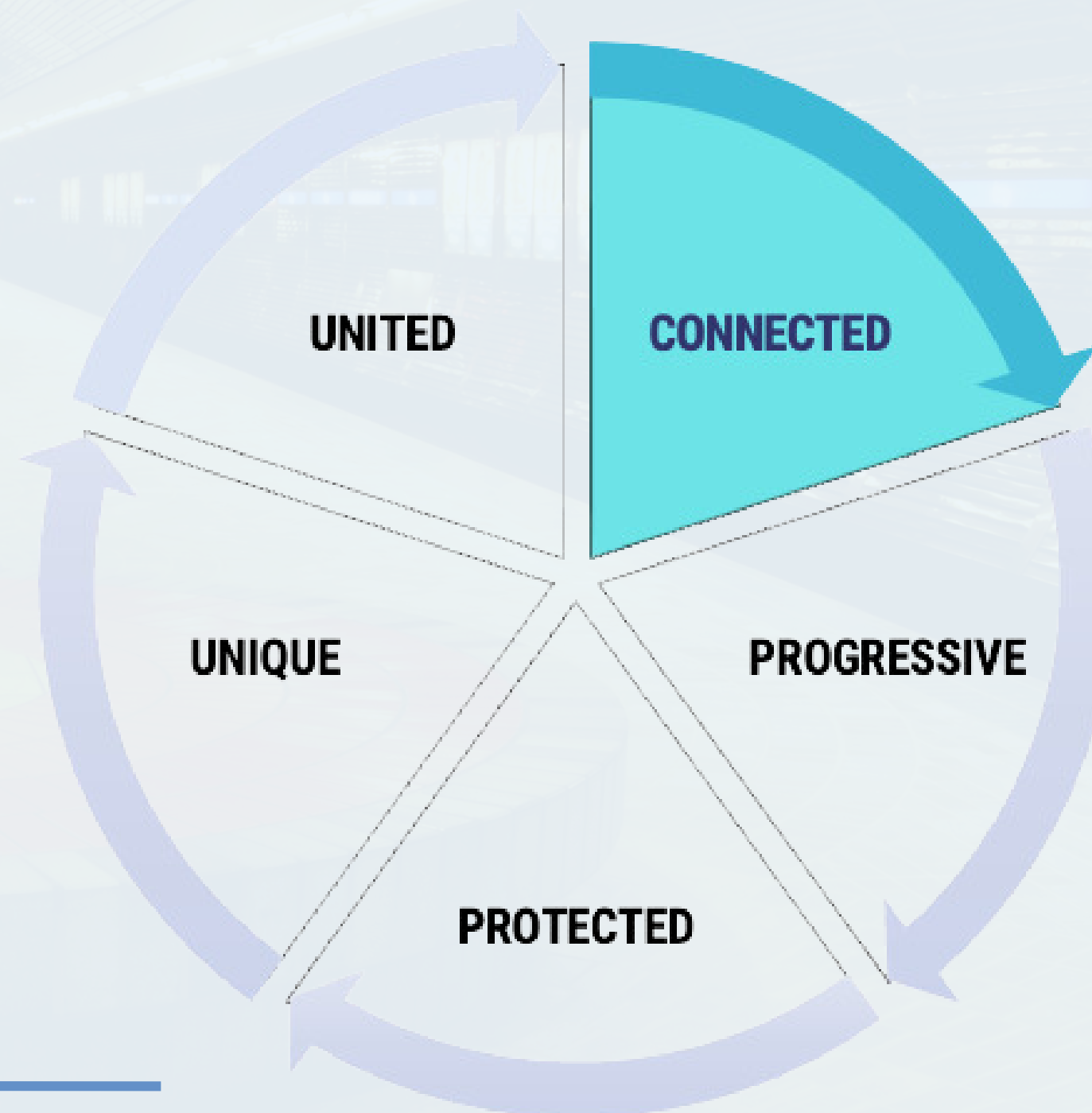




# + A CONNECTED EDMONTON

Connectivity and transportation are crucial components of life in Edmonton. As a large city centre with a population of over one million people, a long winter season, and a population density spread out through a large area, Edmonton relies on various transportation options to support economic growth, mobility, and quality of life for residents. Regarding Edmonton's nighttime economy, safe, accessible and reliable transportation becomes even more critical. Communication between key partners and stakeholders is integral to keeping businesses, consumers, and tourists invested and engaged with Edmonton at night.

This starts with a **Connected Edmonton**.





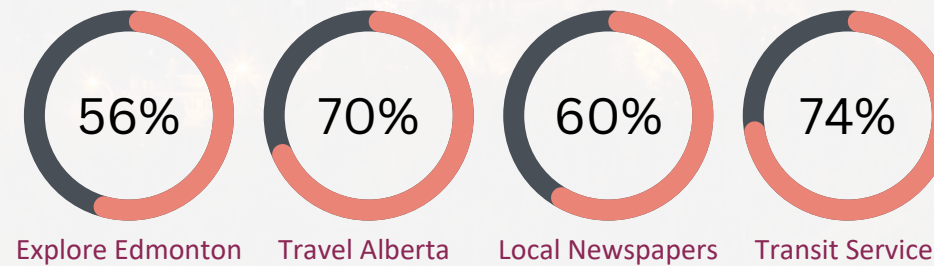
# + OUTREACH AND CONNECTIVITY

We found that consumers and businesses needed to gain knowledge or awareness of what Edmonton offers at night and how they can get involved across the city. When surveying members of Edmonton's student populations, most were unaware of incentives to encourage students to go out at night, highlighting a missed opportunity and area for growth where actively connecting the students with the city is concerned. This experience is broader than just the student population. Stakeholders and residents also noted that due to a lack of information relating to what is on offer in other areas of Edmonton, it is typical that they engage with one activity or venue before travelling home.

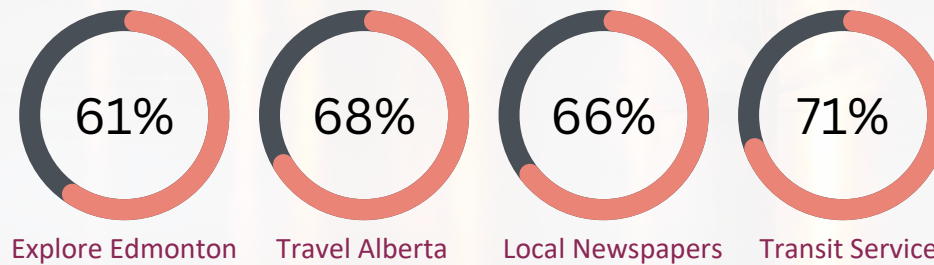
Visible promotional materials and marketing are essential to ensuring the nighttime economy is visited by all. However, we found that 75% of city residents and 59% of businesses hear about events through word of mouth. Though word of mouth is a helpful tool that suggests positivity and intrigue around events, physical and visual materials must reach all community members to be able to have the highest attendance. This has led to a desire for a centralized location for event information.

At all levels, there is a need for greater outreach and connection between Edmonton's stakeholders, residents and businesses.

Percentage of consumers who never or rarely see the promotion of local events happening between 5pm-6am:



Percentage of businesses and/or employees who never or rarely see the promotion of local events happening between 5pm-6am:



Reviewing current marketing and information-sharing strategies to ensure they reach the most significant group is necessary to strengthen connection and community outreach.

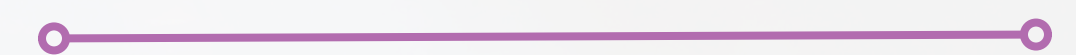
There is also room for Businesses in Edmonton to engage with key stakeholders in collaborative approaches to marketing and promotion.

**56.82%** of businesses don't collaborate with local events or activities in Edmonton

**34%** would like to know more about collaborating

While business collaboration is crucial to implementing a successful nighttime strategy, business focus group participants expressed having experienced negative impacts due to the monopoly of larger venues such as Rogers Place. Business owners expressed that while Rogers Place was supposed to act as a driver for the economy, it detracted from smaller and independent businesses' success, exacerbated by supporters leaving the area directly after the game. Larger venues should be encouraged to collaborate with local independent venues to broker mutually beneficial solutions between businesses and business owners.

To best sustain and celebrate Edmonton's ENTE, information regarding what is on offer and how to access the city at night must be widely circulated and visible. All community members and businesses should be able to readily receive and access information, a factor that will help increase engagement and foot traffic across Edmonton at night.





## + WAYFINDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Edmonton's signage and wayfinding material provision needed to be more consistent across the city, with very little prominent signage detailing key cultural areas and venues. Though stakeholders noted improvement in wayfinding over the years, particularly the new signposts across the city, more significant consideration should be given to those unfamiliar with the area.

The signage and wayfinding are mostly acceptable for businesses, residents and return visitors, though those living further outside the city look for improvements. However, for first-time visitors to the city, the quantity and clarity of signage and information do not facilitate easy movement around the area at night. Not only could this result in portions of Edmonton's nighttime offer being missed or bypassed by potential customers, but it also raises safety concerns.

During audits of the city, getting to the desired location was found to be difficult, even when following the signage. The city's architecture is uniform and, especially in the wintertime, challenging to navigate effectively based on landmarks alone. Key lighting or art installations could help facilitate the city's navigation.

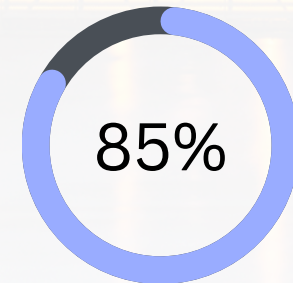
Regarding the city's aesthetics, stakeholders shared that recent improvements to bike paths, parks and street furniture have heightened the look and feel of Edmonton at night.

However, these positive elements risk being counteracted by issues with cleanliness and waste management, which 82% of businesses would like to see improved to enhance the appeal of Edmonton at night, with a further 62% believing it could also increase footfall.

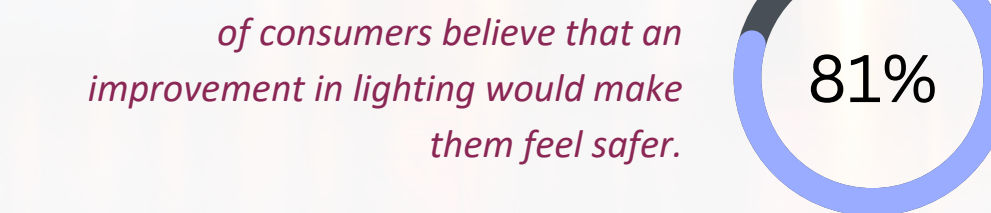
Improving the lighting in the city at night could benefit businesses, residents and the student population.

Though all stakeholders should connect and collaborate on improving the wayfinding and infrastructure across the city, it was found that businesses such as bars and venues have made individual efforts to improve the welcoming feel of the area through their use of lighting and signage. However, throughout business focus groups and interviews, community members felt that more should be done to support these efforts through the city planning department and commercial allowances.

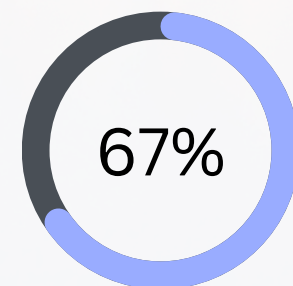
Clear, consistent wayfinding partnered with well-maintained infrastructure improves the look, feel and connectivity across the city at night.



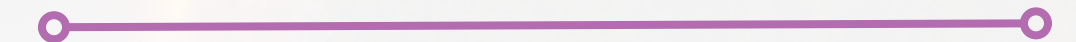
*of businesses believe that improving the lighting provision of the city will increase its appeal*



*of consumers believe that an improvement in lighting would make them feel safer.*



*of students believe that an improvement in lighting would make them feel safer.*

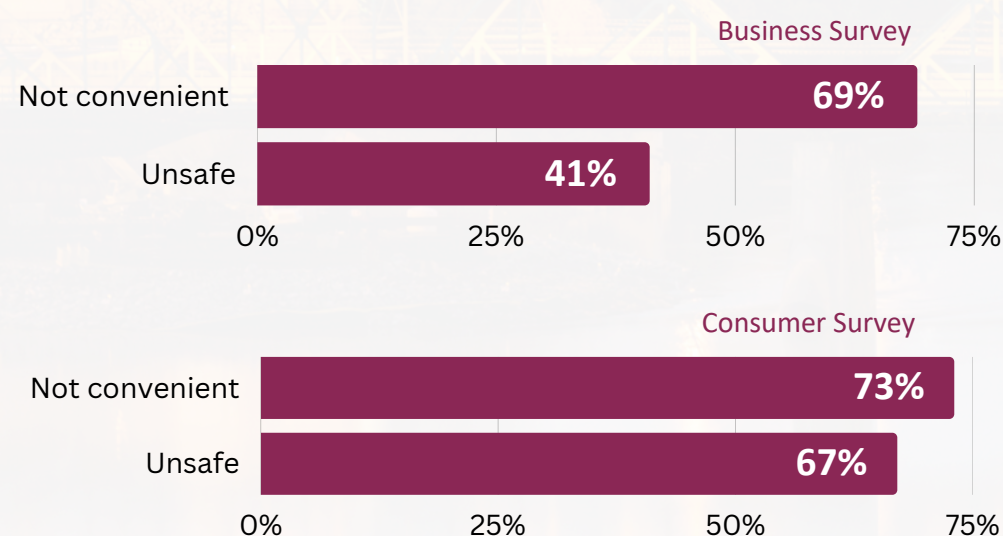




# + TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

To explore and enjoy what Edmonton has to offer at nighttime, it is essential that residents, workers and visitors can reach their destination through reliable and accessible transportation.

The convenience of transportation across Edmonton and the experience of safety when using it are two elements that require improvement.



Many stakeholders shared feeling uncomfortable when using public transportation methods, many of whom said that they drove or took ride-share programs into the city at night should they want to go out. This was particularly the case for female stakeholders who noted not feeling safe on public transit throughout the city, particularly on buses, as they were highlighted as hotspot areas for drug use.

65% of residents noted using a car to travel into the city at night, but despite this prevalence, the ability to find and obtain a car parking space in the city is viewed as problematic. It was also found that the pricing of car parking currently available could be more suitable for people of all incomes. Additionally, many viewed parking across the city as unsafe, with local news reports documenting cars being broken into or damaged in Downtown Edmonton at night.

Reliance on car travel was prevalent for stakeholders and residents who the outskirts of the city or in residential areas with little to no direct LRT or bus access. A lack of access to public transportation often restricts the time spent in the area and increases the costs associated with getting there. As a result, we found that many of the stakeholders we engaged with would prefer to stay home rather than work to overcome these challenges.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) was another aspect of Edmonton's public transportation that was explored. For 33% of business survey respondents, the LRT feels unsafe, with 21% rating it as unsafe.

In contrast to its purpose, we found that public transportation at night is responsible for residents and students staying at home rather than responsible for taking them home after a night of enjoying what the city has to offer.

During the audit and when conducting focus groups with community safety partnerships, it was noted that there had been incidents of harassment and assault on the LRT, which were not prevented or dealt with after the fact by security. In addition to workers feeling unsafe, stakeholders noted uncertainties regarding who works to safeguard the transit systems and a lack of clarity on which bodies to engage with regarding challenges and opportunities.

Expansion works on the LRT could help better connect city areas that currently do not benefit from efficient transportation systems; however, concerns over the disruption this may cause to other transit modes are high. Similarly, stakeholders noted their concerns regarding how such an expansion may impact homelessness in certain areas, which would increase community access.

The Pedway Systems were found to be challenging to navigate and isolated, particularly at night. As these are open access, there are issues with activities such as drug use in these spaces. Safety concerns were raised by businesses, residents and stakeholders alike regarding how they are accessed and by whom. However, locking down the pedways in certain areas creates issues around transit, wayfinding, and safety. Edmonton should use creative solutions to help facilitate better access and usage for all.



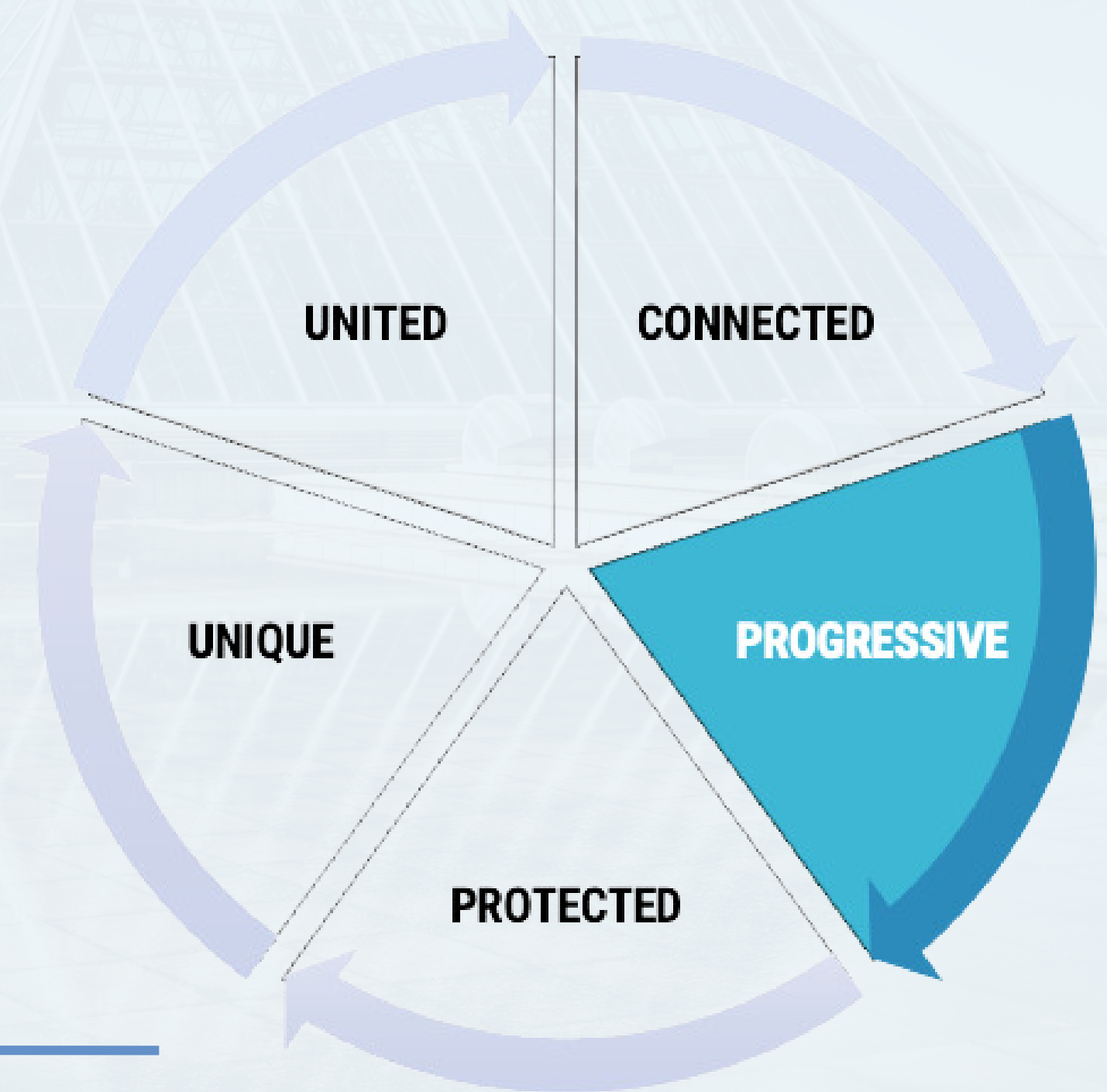




# + A PROGRESSIVE EDMONTON

For Edmonton to become a leader in the nighttime economy, it needs to be progressive and forward-thinking. That means being open to new ideas and ways of doing things and constantly pushing the boundaries of what's possible. To become a thought leader in this area, Edmonton must prioritize inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability in everything it does after dark. This means promoting a safe and welcoming environment for all while supporting local businesses and artists contributing to the city's vibrant nightlife. By doing so, Edmonton can establish itself as a city that knows how to have a good time after dark and is committed to making its nightlife a reflection of its values and aspirations as a community.

This starts with a **Progressive Edmonton**.





# + A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY

Having a city that is safe and welcoming for all is achieved by ensuring there is a culture of inclusivity running through every process and every structure in the city, passed down through collaborative working and education.

For most stakeholders, the research found that Downtown Edmonton is perceived as everybody's Downtown and that inclusion and diversity are championed in this area to significant effect. And while stakeholders thought the city had done a good job at marketing Edmonton as inclusive and safe for all, the consensus from focus groups and interviews with members of the LGBTQIA2S+ and Indigenous communities indicated that inclusion often felt tokenistic and needed more meaningful engagement or action.

During focus groups with Indigenous community members, it was expressed that there is a gap between the community representing their needs versus what is achieved. Engagement with the community across Edmonton remains an issue, as evidenced by survey participation. Only 2% of respondents identified as Indigenous, but Edmonton has Canada's second-largest urban Indigenous population, making up 5% of the total population.

Minority groups noted feeling a heightened sense of unsafety at night due to the threat and experience of discrimination and abuse.

There is also a need for appropriate and varied offerings for specific community groups. While this is partly a result of inequalities experienced by these in all aspects of society at various times of day, Edmonton's nighttime economy should be a place where everyone can celebrate their culture and community and engage in a range of activities to equal effect.

Although an action plan to address drug use and other criminal activity still requires further work, the established offering for Edmonton's Chinese demographic should be looked at as an exemplar and used to guide the building of nighttime offers for other groups in the community, Edmonton's Indigenous population do not have clear and identifiable spaces or offerings and the celebration of this community appears limited to artwork and displays.

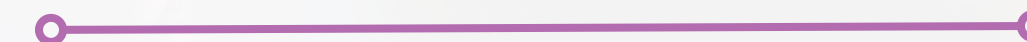
Stakeholders felt that LGBTQIA2s+'s current offer had increased. It was thought that the city's stakeholders had made some impactful efforts to reach out to the LGBTQIA2s+ communities and have helped to identify spaces for the community through the installation of Pride Corner and rainbow crossroads.

However, it was found that the offering for the LGBTQIA2s+ and Indigenous communities needs to be vaster to foster the inclusivity the city should strive for.

With events typically being run and resourced by individual community members and nightclubs still struggling due to the pandemic, more needs to be done to help support these spaces. Very few venues cater to the LGBTQIA2S+ community, and it was generally viewed that participation and promotion during Pride month resulted from tokenism and rainbow capitalism. As a result, trust in the government about issues facing the community has significantly decreased.

Experiencing discrimination in the city at night was found to be the reality of many members of Edmonton's minority groups. Representatives from the LGBTQIA2s+ community felt afraid to be visible at night; additionally, stakeholders living and working around Edmonton's Chinatown noted that there had been a rise in hate crimes against the community ever since the Covid-19 outbreak.

With few visibly signposted or promoted services and not-for-profits operating to support Edmonton's minority groups, stakeholders must come together to build on existing efforts to foster and grow its culture of inclusivity.





## + VARIETY AND DIVERSITY

Evening nighttime activities across Edmonton should be broad enough to ensure there is something suitable and enjoyable for everyone.

It was found that for Edmonton's senior population, the range of things to do and spaces to engage with are significantly lower than the offer for the younger population. While the city's cultural offerings provide some areas and events for this group, this is not a consistent offer due to these often relying upon seasonal scheduling or national tour dates.

However, the theatres, events and galleries of Edmonton were viewed by many as a real highlight of what the city plays host to and something that businesses, residents and stakeholders would like to see extended across the evening and nighttime operating hours. Having a cultural offer in addition to traditional nighttime offerings such as nightclubs and bars helps entice a broader range of people into the city. With only 9% of residents wanting to see more nightclubs, it is clear that the city wants diversity.

For some, the cost of admission or tickets to events and shows in the city at night often prevents individuals and families on lower incomes from engaging. The price range of activities across the city at night is narrower than required to avoid community groups from being priced out of the city.

Bringing a non-alcoholic offer into Edmonton's venues and events was something stakeholders and residents believed could help diversify the city at night. Currently, the alcohol-centric evening nighttime economy model prevents individuals from specific cultural and religious backgrounds from engaging in addition to families and teenagers.

Stakeholders noted that families with children rarely visit Downtown after 5 pm due to the lack of family activities, with 28% of consumers reporting that having more family-friendly events would bring them into the city more.





# + PROGRESSIVE SOLUTIONS

Houselessness and open-air drug use across Edmonton were discussed in almost every aspect of the research. The city hosts vulnerable populations without permanent housing and/or regularly abusing substances. Stakeholders and consumers noted that these issues are often interconnected and occur in the same geographical areas.

When asked to prioritize the top three improvements they would like to make in Edmonton at night, most stakeholders ranked houselessness and a lack of visible support for this community as their top priority. Additionally, 68% of businesses believe managing panhandling and houselessness would enhance the city's appeal at night.

For many, houselessness and open-air drug use significantly contribute to Edmonton's feeling unsafe at night. This is compounded by the large amount of drug paraphernalia scattered around the entrances to LRT stations, the pedway systems and Chinatown, in particular. During the consultation with the local police and security officers, it was noted that the prevalence of vulnerable community members in this area also attracts individuals looking to exploit these individuals or commit crimes in a landscape where they may not be as easily detected.

While the use of public infrastructure cannot be policed and restricted for certain groups, stakeholders and residents

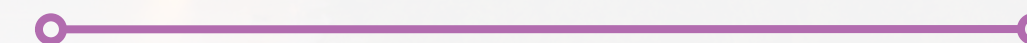
noted being unable or afraid to use infrastructures such as benches and other street furniture alongside transit systems such as the pedway and LRT stations due to the prevalence of drug use and public disorder. Additionally, stakeholders noted an increase in individuals under the influence of substances, using the bus and rail services in the evening and at night to have a warm and safe space to take drugs in the hope that should they experience an overdose or fall ill, they are in a safer environment. Similar experiences were shared by security officers and businesses, who noted that individuals using drugs would often do so in front of security cameras in order to get medical attention quickly in case they overdosed due to substance abuse.

It was also found that due to the religious foundations of the city's houseless shelters, some members of the houseless community who do not ascribe to that belief system or who have experienced religious trauma do not engage in the services. Community members have set up encampments in the surrounding areas, exacerbating the prevalence of broken windows syndrome, visual disorder and paraphernalia.

Undoubtedly the houseless shelters and services in Edmonton do essential and impactful work; however, there is a distinct lack of suitable organizations south of the river. As a result, public buildings and educational facilities are encountering issues with houseless community members and intoxicated individuals entering the grounds.

Additionally, residents, stakeholders and businesses noted feeling unsafe due to open-air drug use and houselessness; members of the houseless community and those suffering from substance misuse reported being victims of thefts when leaving their encampments to engage with services. These experiences and traumas have resulted in a lack of engagement.

As a significant contributor to the 53% of residents who do not go out at night in the city because of safety concerns, open-air drug use, and issues associated with the city's houseless community should be addressed through harm reduction strategies, collaborative partnerships and increased support provision.







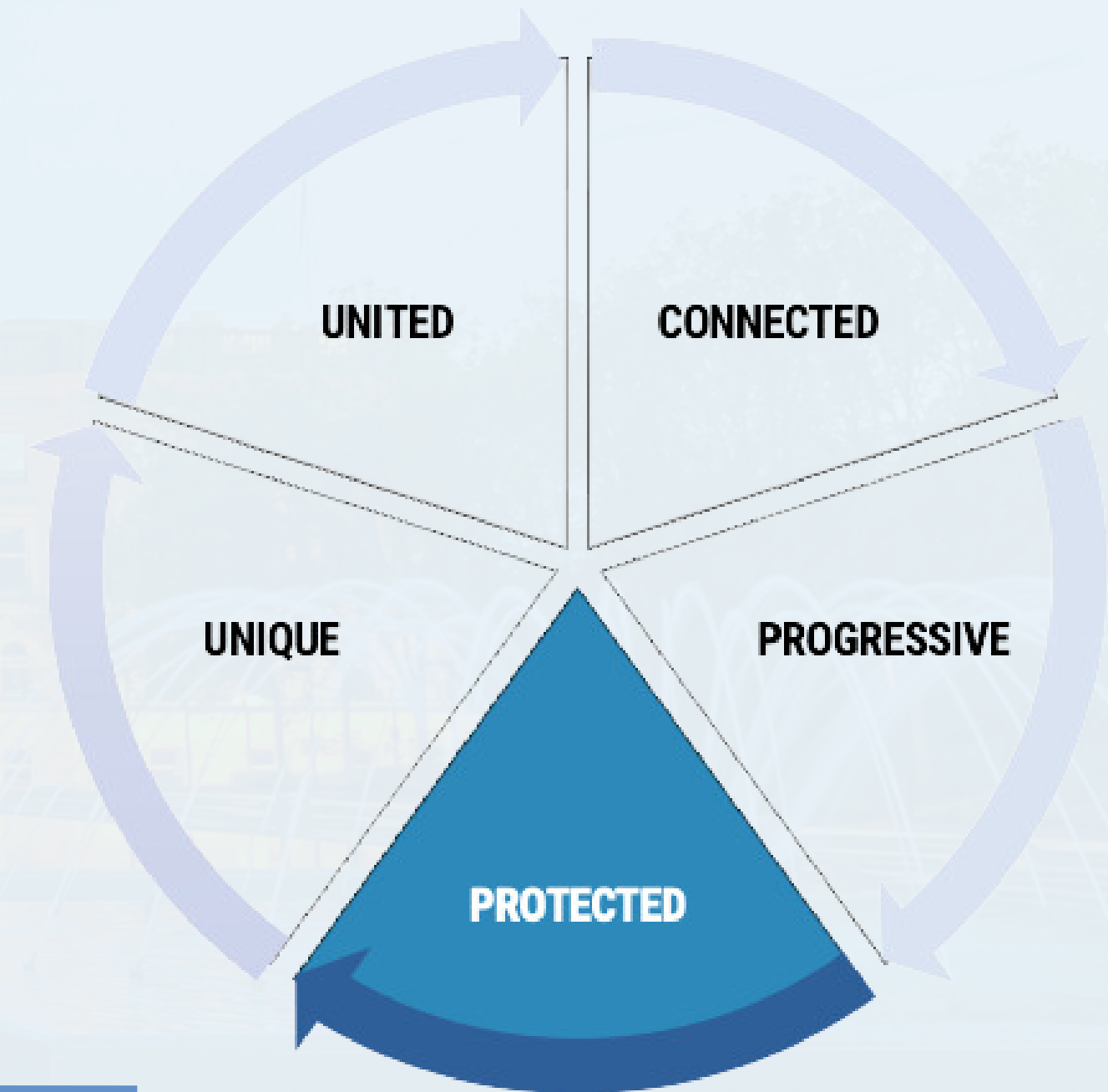


## + A PROTECTED EDMONTON

Ensuring citizens feel safe within the city is essential to any city's nighttime economy. The improvement in safety and the perception of safety primarily comes from consistent policing and structured rules followed by nighttime establishments to ensure compliance. By prioritizing venue governance, enforcement, safety perceptions, and training, Edmonton can create an environment where businesses can thrive and patrons can enjoy themselves responsibly.

This can also make residents feel confident that their community is safe and well-managed, providing a positive feedback effect of community participation. This can help boost economic growth, attract visitors, and enhance Edmonton's overall quality of life.

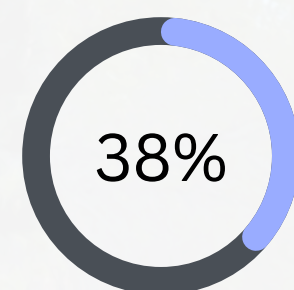
This starts with a **Protected Edmonton**.



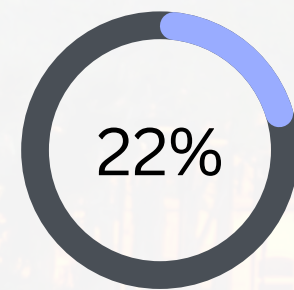


# + TRAINING AND POLICY

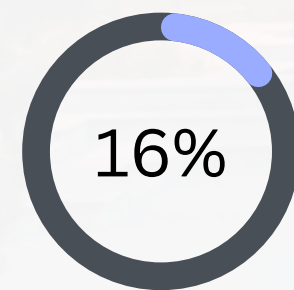
Implementing and mastering safeguarding and best practice procedure within ENTE businesses is best achieved through active engagement and learning opportunities for employees. Engagement from Edmonton's businesses in night safety initiatives and campaigns presents room for improvement and growth.



*of business survey respondents stated they have not done any training*



*of business survey respondents stated that they take part in the safe walk program*



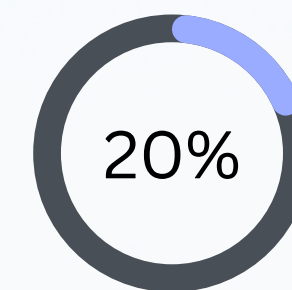
*of business survey respondents would like to receive more information on available safety training and campaigns*

A lack of robust training was observed during venue visits and in survey findings. Considering the percentages of people who feel unsafe at night, venues and stakeholders should try to train and educate staff on keeping customers and themselves safe.

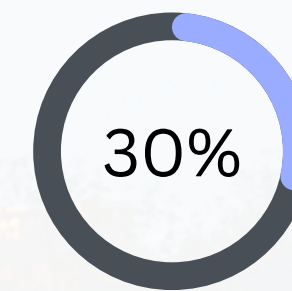
An absence of a clear safety policy, such as a dispersal plan, was evident, particularly in larger venues where crowd control and dispersal seemed inefficient and poorly planned. Similarly, staff across the City did not seem to be checking identification or refusing entry to drunk people, an issue particularly prevalent on Jasper Avenue and Whyte Avenue.

Training and policies help protect, inform and safeguard those working within the City's evening and nighttime economy, its customers and broader community members. By failing to engage in nighttime economy-specific training, core values of Edmonton's nighttime vision, such as safety and inclusivity, become harder to achieve.

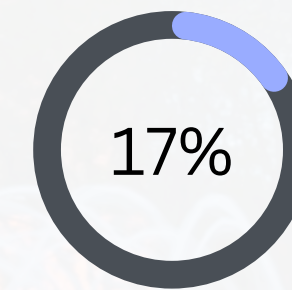
Training and broader safety campaigns regarding the evening nighttime economy should be regularly reviewed, redeveloped and reissued to ensure the most up-to-date policies, best practice procedures and safety legislations are included.



*of business survey respondents said they receive training every 6 months or less*



*of business survey respondents said they were unsure how often they offer/receive training*



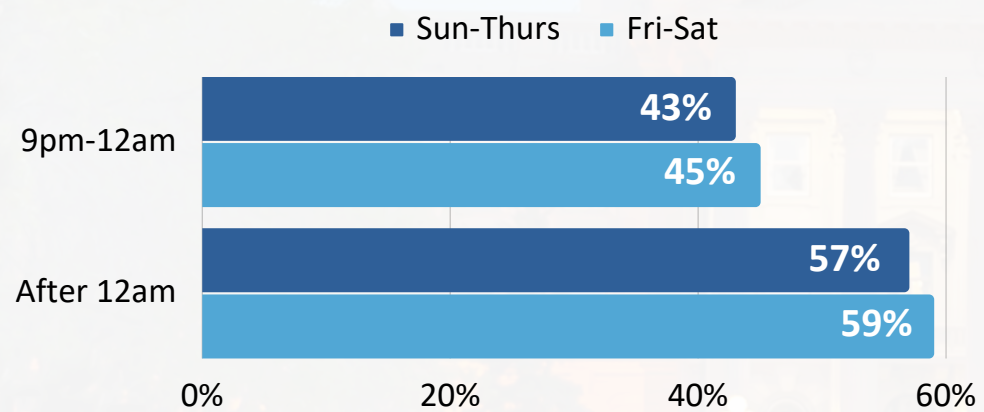
*of business survey respondents said they only received training upon starting their employment*



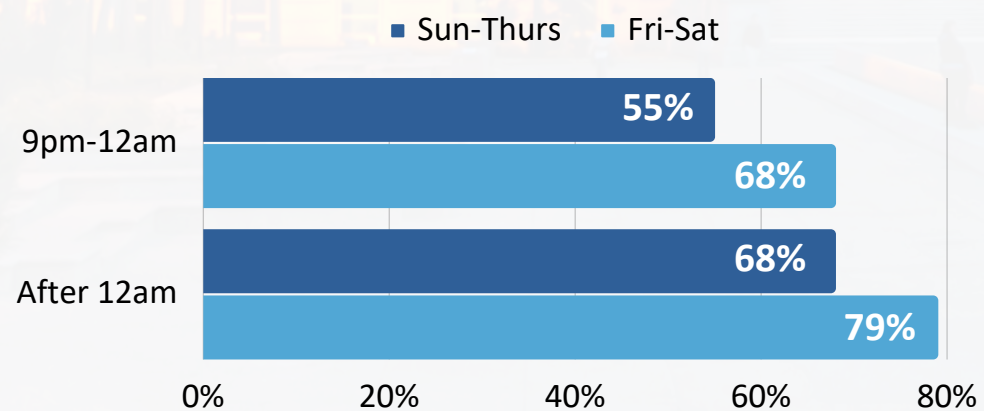
# + PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

The experience and perceptions of safety have been an undercurrent throughout each pillar of this strategy. From transportation to public infrastructure to engagement in activities, stakeholders, residents and businesses alike have discussed safety's role in using Edmonton's spaces and places at night.

## How many consumers feel unsafe or very unsafe?



## How many employees feel unsafe or very unsafe?



While there is a difference between how safe one feels and the actual harm one may encounter, making people feel safer both in perception and reality should be a key priority for the city as it moves forward through its evening and nighttime strategy work.

Our research found that many people feel that Edmonton is unsafe regardless of whether they are a city stakeholder, a resident, or someone working in the city at night. When people feel unsafe, foot traffic decreases, disproportionately affected groups become isolated, and the area's reputation may be damaged.

For Edmonton, feeling unsafe disproportionately affects businesses and employees, which could affect staff retention and lead to a skills shortage in an industry still recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Considering that employees of the ENTE are regularly the last people left in the city at night, the low foot traffic coupled with the city's darkness could be the reason for the decreased perception of safety.

Consumers, stakeholders and employees highlighted a noticeable increase in crime and disorder as the night progresses across Edmonton. This resulted in discomfort in visiting the city late at night and missed opportunities to take

advantage of some of the later-night offers. In particular, stakeholders discussed Downtown as having seen a noticeable decrease in safety and a noticeable increase in disorder over the last few decades.

Despite this, stakeholders noted being aware of safety initiatives that are in place in the city; however, only some could name any and indicated that more significant promotion and information sharing about these would be needed to show people that efforts are underway to help make them feel safer.

Those working in local government believed that the money provided to Edmonton's vibrancy and safety programming by the Province of Alberta could be further utilized and capitalized upon. However, it was acknowledged that finding time to implement these initiatives and affect the desired change has been difficult.

For Edmonton's minority groups, many feel unsafe in the city at night due to discrimination, abuse, and the threat of violence that impacts these groups disproportionately to the broader community and has resulted in isolation and disenfranchisement. During focus groups with the LGBTQIA2S+, it was noted that on several occasions when threats or acts of violence have been committed against the community, these reports were not followed up, causing a lack of faith in the police.

Feeling safe in Edmonton underpins the nighttime experience of just about everyone. The requirement and opportunity for improvement must be realized and capitalized upon to make the vision of the city's evening nighttime economy a reality.



# + ENFORCEMENT

Feeling safe and protected from harm relies on the existence and signposting of services and enforcement bodies in the city at night.

An active and visible presence of police and peace officers was one element of nighttime enforcement in Edmonton that stakeholders, residents and businesses alike wish to see bolstered and improved.

While temporal and financial resources are stretched for police and peace officers, a visible presence across the city at night is essential to their service. Though some stakeholders noted rarely seeing officers, others noted that officers are patrolling and responding to incidents in police vehicles instead of proactively patrolling on foot.

Visible policing can bring many benefits to the experience of safety in a city at night, from the perception of safety to the deterrence of potential criminal behaviour. However, it is essential to consider the perspective of minority populations when planning to bolster police presence.

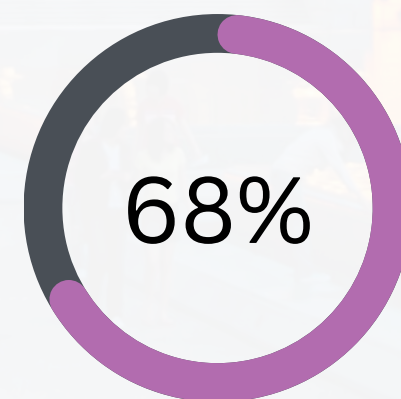
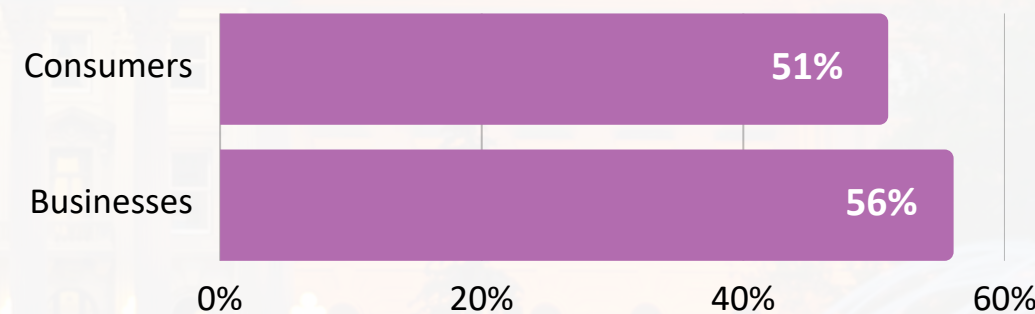
Strained relationships between the police could cause further disengagement from some members of Edmonton's ENTE. Edmonton should consider a combination of police presence and other more progressive forms of enforcement

or services, such as; well-trained security guards, street angels, night safety buses, outreach programs or other voluntary organizations. This provision will help take pressure off services such as the police and offer alternative spaces and resources for vulnerable community members to access without fearing criminal charges.

In particular, groups focusing on drug and alcohol harm, vulnerability, and violence against women and girls should be introduced into Edmonton's nighttime spaces, whether in the form of pop-up triages or signposting to online resources and contact information. Stakeholders recalled the rollout of emergency phone systems across the city but noted that some have not worked for many years, and there has been little visible effort to fix these.

Accessing and being aware that dedicated groups on the streets are available to support those in need is vital to ensure that Edmontonians feel well-protected.

Consumers, businesses and employees who thought police presence would increase footfall



*of businesses and employee respondents believe that a visible presence of police or peace officers would make them feel safer in Edmonton at night.*



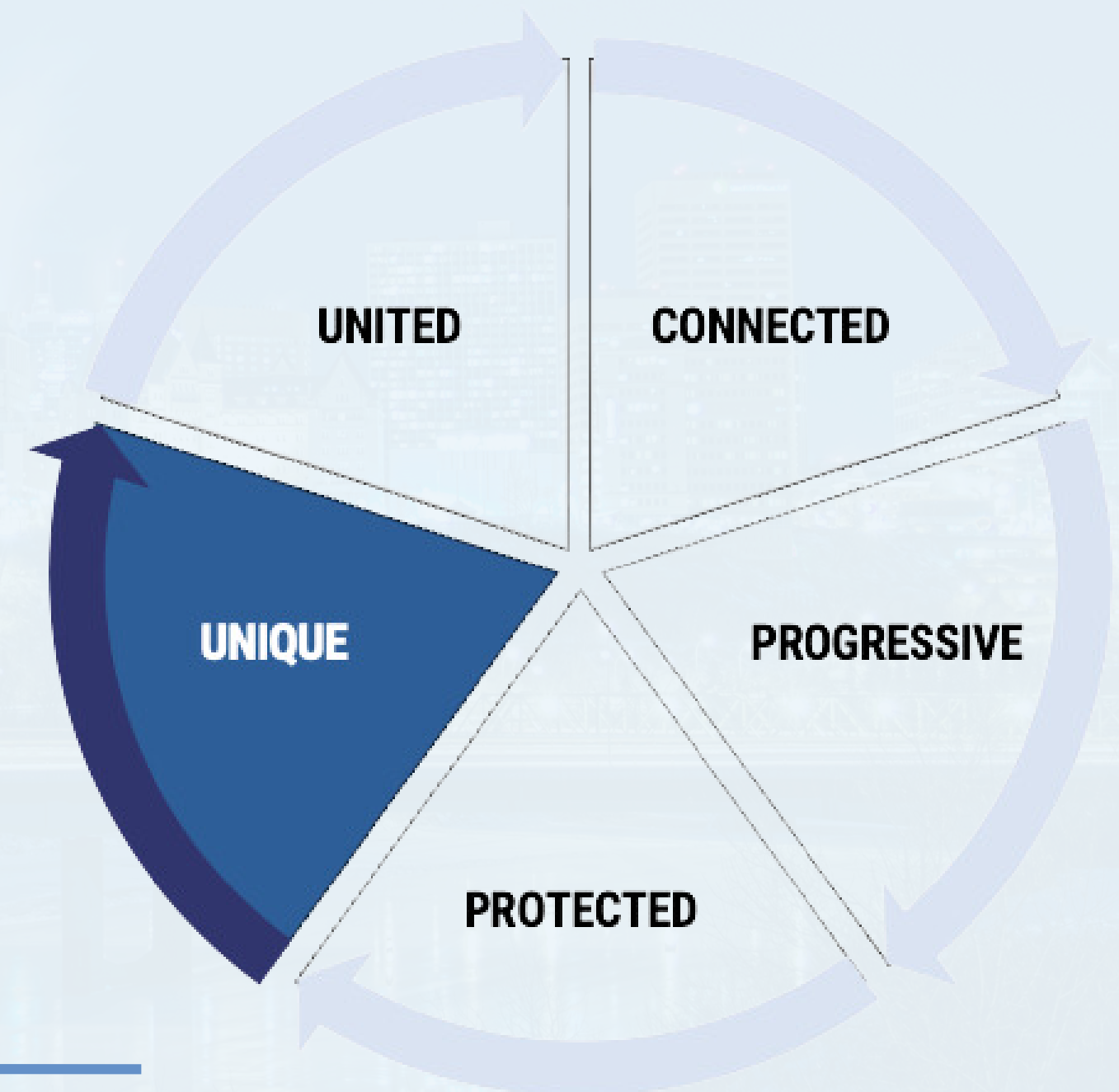




## + A UNIQUE EDMONTON

The City of Edmonton's area and population is unique in several ways. The population is spread over a large area, providing unique challenges regarding population density and allowing the area's natural beauty to shine through effectively. Edmonton is also a diverse city, with a population of different ethnicities, demographics, cultures, and backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in the city's vibrant and robust food, music, and arts scenes, which offer residents and visitors a wide range of experiences. With a young population averaging approximately 35 years old, there is a lot of energy, vitality and population buy-in to community events and activities. People in Edmonton like to be able to go out and enjoy themselves, participate with their fellow community members, and will seek out opportunities to do so. This is seen by the over 50 festivals hosted annually, which draw tens of thousands of community members and visitors.

All of this makes up **A Unique Edmonton.**





# + THE OFFER IN EDMONTON

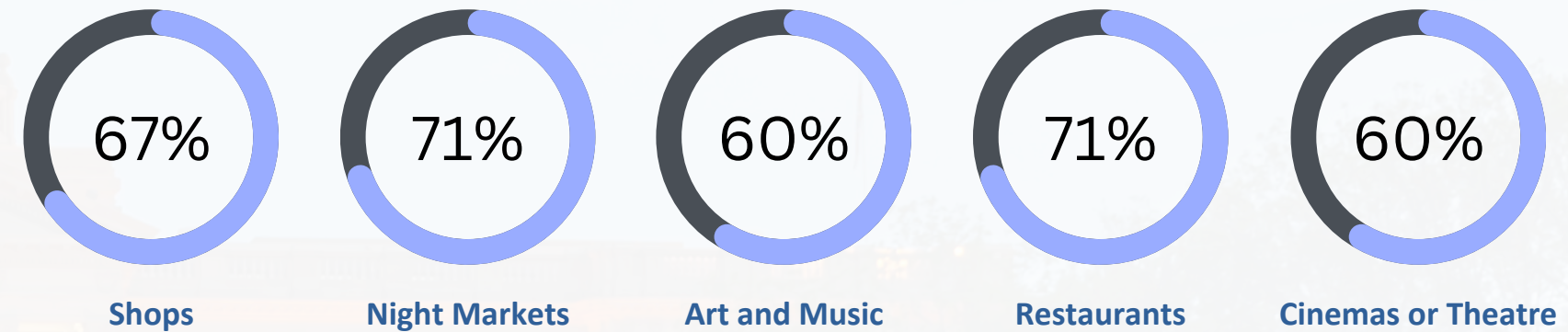
For any city, playing host to an offer that brings locals and visitors into its centres is a core aspect of sustaining and growing the evening and nighttime economy.

Many contributors expressed a desire for Edmonton to offer a broader selection of activities and businesses that remain open later into the evening.

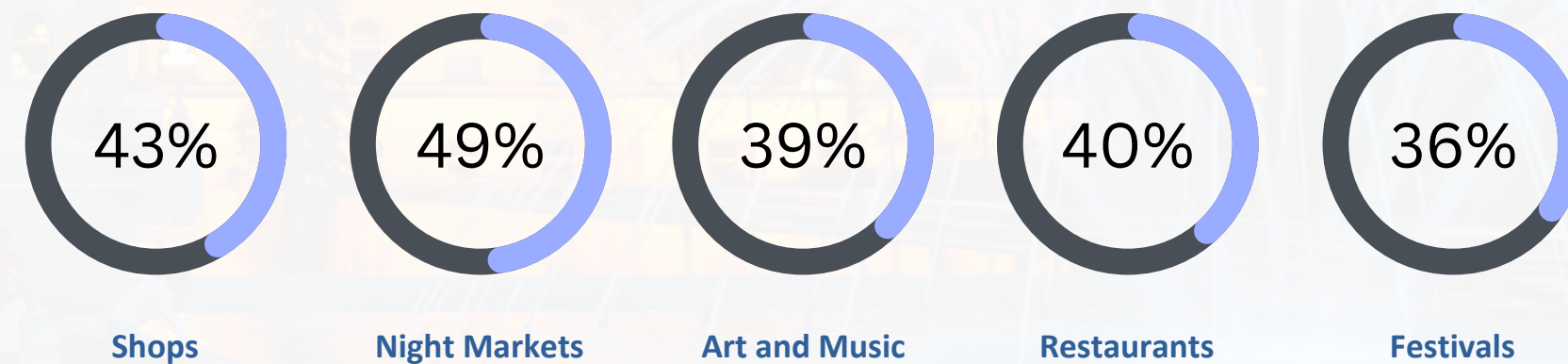
Later opening retail and the rollout of night markets and nighttime festivals are viewed by businesses as activities and offerings most likely to increase foot traffic. Still, stakeholders would like to see a greater focus on a non-alcoholic offer and extended opening hours for cafés. Creating opportunities for communities to celebrate culture in the evenings was also highlighted as a requirement for future strategy.

To enhance its appeal and foster inclusivity, Edmonton can benefit from diversifying its nightlife options through expanding activities, events, and gatherings or offering a wider range of goods and services.

What would people like to see staying open later at night?  
Business Survey Results



What would people like to see staying open later at night?  
Consumer Survey Results



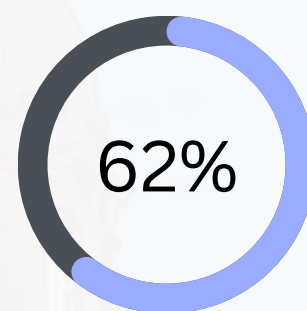


# + FESTIVAL CITY

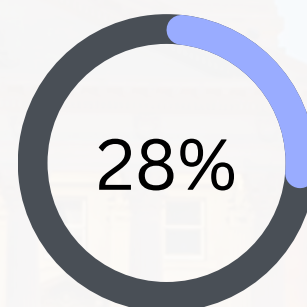
Edmonton currently has over 50 festivals per year. The research found that stakeholders feel strongly about seeing a change in bylaws that would make hosting festivals more efficient and potentially increase the program.

Stakeholders involved in city planning and events noted that although increasing the types of festivals on offer may help bolster diversity and increase engagement, increasing the number of festivals may only add to the competition regarding resources and time. There is a 34% desire for more festivals in the community. From our engagement, we found that many existing festivals need to be marketed better to reach the entire population. This was observed during audits of the city during which transportation workers taking people to and from the Silver Skate Festival noted that they had yet to be aware of any such event.

Although Edmonton's festivals positively impact the vibrancy throughout the year, stakeholders felt local media needed to support these events' publicity or reputation. Stakeholders noted that newspapers no longer review theatre or arts shows regularly, media outlets have stopped publicizing events without compensation, and local newspapers focus on negative aspects for sensationalist appeal instead of highlighting the festivities positively.



*of businesses believed that an increased number of events and festivals would subsequently lead to an increase in footfall.*



*of respondents said they would be more likely to interact with Edmonton's nighttime economy if there were more positive media about the positive events happening within the city.*

Event hosts noted that most marketing and publicizing events are done through word of mouth or repeat business, a notion evidenced in Pillar 2.

Where the Ice District is concerned, stakeholders and businesses believed that the current offerings, such as free ice skating and lighting festivals, could offer a gateway to broaden the festival calendar in the area. Involving local businesses in the city's festivals is an efficient way to showcase what is on offer and add to the connectivity between businesses and city stakeholders.

However, while the increased footfall from festivals often positively impacts the perception of safety in the area, stakeholders involved in the events industry noted being uncomfortable and skeptical of running festivals Downtown due to safety concerns. Additionally, stakeholders noted that during festivals, safety concerns or incidents tend to fall upon the organizers to handle with little support from enforcement, even when these issues have developed from different aspects of the city's evening nighttime economy.



# + UNIQUELY EDMONTON

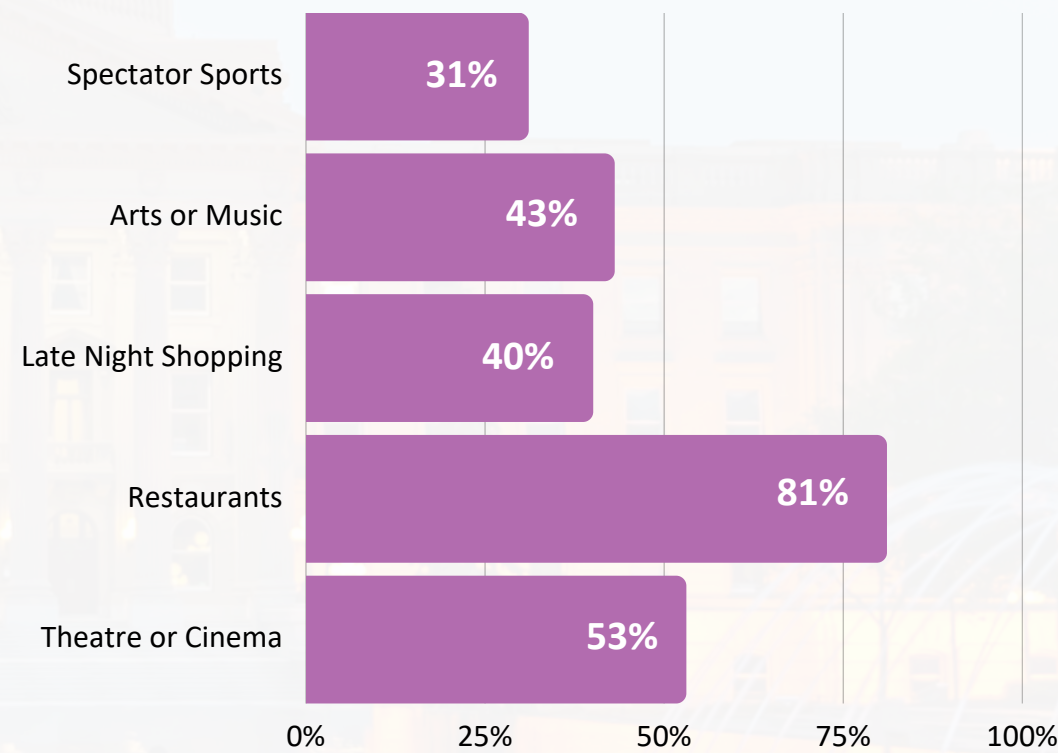
Visiting Edmonton at night should be a memorable and unique experience, but according to a recent business survey, 38% of businesses rate the city's appeal as bad. To improve this, collective dedication and enhanced partnership working will be essential to city-wide success. Edmonton's stakeholders and partners should take a more holistic approach to solving Edmonton's current concerns while formulating a strategy to develop a clear and consistent identity. Stakeholders feel the city is already on a journey to improve its appeal and create a recognizable identity, but that work is still needed to actualize their efforts.

Edmonton already has foundations on which to build its identity. The city should capitalize on the wide range of activities that residents, businesses and visitors already engage with and enjoy.

Edmonton should work on ensuring that the city facilitates a wide range of businesses, services and activities that allow the population to experience the night they want. All citizens should be able to engage in activities such as eating, dancing, watching a show or going to a gallery across the nighttime hours. Reliable and convenient transportation systems should give citizens control over when they want to start and finish their night, and services should be in place to allow them to do so safely.

This will allow consumers to fully explore and experience the best of Edmonton throughout the night by travelling to various destinations.

### What do consumers go out at night to do?



Downtown and Whyte Avenue are the cultural hearts of Edmonton's nighttime economy, as identified by stakeholders, consumers, and audit participants. Both areas are observed to work in competition to ensure the sustainability of their nighttime activities; however, they should instead focus on

each area's unique and independent offer.

The BIAs should collaborate to draw out a plan for their areas and formulate a strategy to highlight their differing offers and how to capitalize on market opportunities that fit within their goals, vision, and brand.

Roger's Place has demonstrated the potential of successfully planning and zoning an area within a city. With over 30,000 attendees on game nights, Roger's Place has been able to cater to mass audiences of different demographics while maintaining the area's vibrancy, safety, and cleanliness. Edmonton should capitalize on the increased footfall during game days to ensure consumers use the rest of the city.

Zoning plans should be considered to help regulate land use in Downtown Edmonton to help manage growth, promote safety, and encourage economic development. Although a slow process, planning the city with longevity in mind allows the city to develop in a way to improve compatibility with residents and businesses alike.

Edmonton should seek to enhance and promote its unique characteristics, capitalize on the existing natural beauty, and engage a motivated community to help make Edmonton a must-visit destination city in the day and the night..







OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>Establish and implement a framework for a Night Mayor and accompanying Nighttime Economy Alliance.</p>	<p>Appointment or Election of a Night Mayor for the City of Edmonton.</p> <p>The Night Mayor will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Represent Edmonton’s nighttime economy strategies and agendas at a municipal level.</li> <li>2. Facilitate the creation of a Nighttime Economy Alliance for the City of Edmonton to act as a city-wide partnership for key stakeholders and community representatives involved in Edmonton’s ENTE.</li> <li>3. Set up the alliance membership from the following organizations and bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Explore Edmonton, the City of Edmonton, Edmonton’s BIAs, Edmonton Police, Licensing Authority, Business and Cultural Venues, Hotels and Hospitality Venues, a representative from the Indigenous Community, Transportation, AGLC, Alberta Health Services and any other relevant stakeholder groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Create internal project plans with KPIs and goalposts to assign tasks within the strategy implementation. These should be reviewed at the Nighttime Alliance meetings.</li> <li>5. Organize and chair an annual program, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Monthly Nighttime Alliance Meetings</li> <li>◦ Quarterly round-table events to gather feedback from businesses and community groups</li> <li>◦ An annual conference to bring together thought leaders in the NTE space.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The Nighttime Economy Alliance will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a marketing strategy and create an identifiable name, logo, tagline, hashtag, website, and community engagement methods for The Nighttime Economy Alliance.</li> <li>2. Curate and update a website for the Nighttime Economy Alliance to be used as a tool to inform residents and consumers of what work is currently underway.</li> <li>3. Working with EPS and the City of Edmonton, create a data protection protocol to enable and facilitate sharing of real-time information and data and the creation of a data dashboard, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Crime data, alcohol and health data, composition data, foot traffic data, perceptions, patronage, and economic growth.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>2023-2024</p>
<p>Creation of a Nighttime Inventory.</p>	<p>The Night Mayor and Nighttime Economy Alliance will commit to collating and regularly updating a nighttime inventory of Edmonton to be made publicly available on the Nighttime Alliance Website. This should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commission monthly reports on ENTE footfall data with a breakdown of time indicators.</li> <li>2. Commission quarterly ENTE business reports establishing expenditure trends and transaction value within the ENTE sector.</li> <li>3. Collate a full list of all current nighttime economy venues and businesses operating in Edmonton after 5pm.</li> <li>4. Work with business and educational facilities to collate a full list of all current nighttime economy venues and businesses providing student, under 18’s, non-drinking, LGBTQIA2s+, family, or other specific or targeted events or discounts.</li> <li>5. Collate a calendar of annual events, including; festivals, outdoor events, indoor events, night markets, sporting events, and seasonal or holiday events.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2024</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>Creation of a city-wide culture and creativity action plan.</p>	<p>The action plan should consist of the following activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of current spaces and places where street art and animation could be used to improve the vibrancy of Edmonton.</li> <li>2. Develop and submit funding applications for implementing creative animation and street art projects, working with local art collectives and artists.</li> <li>3. Identification of important historical and cultural information for the development of QR codes that can be placed throughout the city to promote the history and heritage of Edmonton.</li> <li>4. Collaboration between The Nighttime Alliance and Edmonton’s licensing and regulatory bodies, such as the AGLC and the PSCT, to assess opportunities for increased activity in the open space areas of Downtown Edmonton, Whyte Avenue and the surrounding area, focussing on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Street Food Markets.</li> <li>◦ Night markets.</li> <li>◦ Street entertainment or theater.</li> <li>◦ Local vendors showcase markets.</li> <li>◦ Street closures for cultural events.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Create a governing body for the festivals to help them collaborate better with the city.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2024</p>
<p>A robust engagement strategy should be created for sustainable access to the ENTE and information sharing with new initiatives.</p>	<p>The engagement strategy should include the following activations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual e-surveys should be conducted, including; transportation, consumer usage trends, worker usage trends, student usage trends, and perception surveys.</li> <li>2. In conjunction with the Night Mayor’s annual program, night surgeries should be held by city council representatives and the night mayor quarterly to address any current issues being experienced by Edmonton’s population at night.</li> <li>3. Develop a series of research and engagement pieces to consider the current nightlife offer for the following community groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Indigenous Communities, LGBTQIA2s+, Persons with disabilities, Racialized or visible minorities, Religious Groups, New to Canada, Under 18’s, Families, Students, and non-drinking persons.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. A feasibility study relating to the future implementation of an Edmonton ‘City Pass’ that works with venues, transportation and hotels to promote internal and external tourism and allow for lower-priced parking, public transport, room hire, and event access rates when going to events or staying in the city.</li> <li>5. A review of current engagement practices available for different community groups (as listed above). The review should take into consideration the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Access to reporting services for experiences of hate crimes or abuse</li> <li>◦ Methods of communication and language used.</li> <li>◦ Consultation and engagement forums.</li> <li>◦ Inclusive marketing and promotion.</li> <li>◦ Sensitivity and cultural training for main points of contact.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>2023-2024</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>Development of a public realm master plan for Edmonton.</p>	<p>Edmonton's Public Realm Master Plan should include the following provisions and programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regular audits should be performed by the Nighttime Alliance to assess the themes highlighted in this report. Subsequent reports should be authored and shared amongst key stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Development of a guide to Public and Private Realm considerations to be shared with stakeholders and developers to ensure cohesion throughout Edmoton at night.</li> <li>3. Identify and implement creative lighting solutions across Edmonton's Downtown core to encourage walking routes and safety in the city.</li> <li>4. The installation of additional LED lighting in LRT stations and stairways.</li> <li>5. The Nighttime Alliance and Police should work together to assess the feasibility of installing additional CCTV cameras. This work should include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ An overhaul of existing processes relating to communications between departments, training and information sharing, ensuring fibre internet connections are available at potential sites of cameras, identification of high-risk areas that would benefit from the installation of cameras, training of staff on the technology and usage of the equipment, and infrastructure put into place(including lighting) to aid in the overall efficacy of the initiative.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Signage installations throughout the city, directing to landmark locations and highlighting their walking distance (e.g., Rogers Place - 5 Mins, Chinatown - 12 minutes, Coffee Shop - 8 Mins) to promote walkable areas and increase ease of transportation. This could also take the form of innovative artwork installations that can act as city 'waypoints' to increase vibrancy.</li> <li>7. Review the current procedures relating to waste management, street cleaning and collection, specifically paraphernalia clean-up.</li> <li>8. Review of the impacts of the broader use of CCTV cameras and the surveillance associated with them. Policy should be developed in line with existing laws. This could be a specialized Public Safety Charter that outlines the powers that the Police have regarding the use of CCTV or a new unit that works alongside the Police to ensure they are working within the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2028</p>
<p>Development of a night safety and welfare strategy</p>	<p>Plans for ensuring safety and welfare at night should be compiled into a strategic action plan. The strategy should be divided into specific work streams based on core elements of safety and welfare in Edmonton.</p> <p>The safety training and services workstream should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Nighttime Alliance should create a charter for Safety at night in Edmonton. To sign up for the Edmonton Safety Charter, businesses and venues must adhere to practices, policies, and required training. Before activating the charter, the Nighttime Alliance should review what safety training is available to nighttime economy venues and what the uptake is.</li> <li>2. Development of an Edmonton-wide vulnerability management strategy and accompanying policies. Edmonton Police Service, the ETS, and the Nighttime Alliance should lead this.</li> <li>3. A visible and well-communicated zero-tolerance approach to negative public behaviours inside and outside of venues, in the street and on public transport, such as sexual harassment, violence, anti-social behaviour, homophobia, transphobia and racism.</li> <li>4. A review of daytime services performed and an assessment made on which of these services should be available also at night, along with a cost and benefit analysis for doing this.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2028</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>Development of a night safety and welfare strategy cont.</p>	<p>5. A data analysis should be performed by Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health Service, with particular focus being given to the intersections between violent crime, intoxication and ambulance call-outs. From this, a data dashboard should be created and reviewed, monitored and corresponding actions supported by the Nighttime Alliance.</p> <p>The houselessness workstream should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A feasibility review conducted by The Nighttime Alliance to assess the suitability of a contactless giving scheme such as <a href="https://www.changeup.com/">https://www.changeup.com/</a> being introduced to daytime and ENTE spaces to facilitate donations to local houseless shelters and charities. This should be produced with consultation from local businesses and the towns' houselessness outreach charities. Additionally, a clear representative from the houseless outreach centers should be a key voice in the Nighttime Alliance.</li> <li>2. Development and roll-out of a system to help report and record the houseless community and help connect them to local services that can support them, such as <a href="https://www.streetlink.org.uk/">https://www.streetlink.org.uk/</a>.</li> <li>3. Development and roll-out of a service that provides accommodation for 16-25 year olds who are without houses or living in inappropriate accommodation, such as <a href="http://www.openhomes.org.uk/">http://www.openhomes.org.uk/</a>. The service should provide emergency accommodation in the homes of trained volunteer hosts, with a supported lodgings project for longer-term accommodation.</li> <li>4. An improvement strategy for management of the houseless population on severe weather alerts at night. Low footfall stations should be identified throughout the City to transform into temporary refuges during severe weather alerts. The Nighttime Alliance should lead this in collaboration with transportation stakeholders, ETS, and the police.</li> <li>5. The roll-out of training for all staff members or volunteers for those who work with or encounter the houseless population within their roles. The following training programs should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Drugs and alcohol training, mental health first aid, signposting to support services, Non-violent communication skills, the law surrounding houselessness, drugs and mental health, personal safety (including confidentiality), data collection, listening skills, best practice case studies, handbook and policies, gangs and organized crime groups, sexual assault and harassment, prostitution and sex work.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The safety interventions and installations workstream should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Nighttime Alliance should work with the OPCC and Edmonton Police Service to assess the viability of installing help points in areas of dense nightlife activity and crime rate. The Nighttime Alliance should advocate for and help to provide a Night Safety Bus for busy nightlife areas such as; downtown Edmonton and Whyte Avenue.</li> <li>2. Edmonton Police and the City of Edmonton should work together to provide alternative options for care in the ENTE. These services help to reduce strain on policing and medical services. Examples of successful services to help manage the ENTE include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Street Angels, the development of a safety app, safe walk schemes, safe taxi schemes, and nighttime escorts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The Nighttime Alliance should create an LGBTQIA2S+ toolkit to ensure inclusive and safe spaces.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2028</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>Development of a night safety and welfare strategy cont.</p>	<p>The venue safety and compliance workstream should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of current ABST (Alberta Basic Security Guard Training Course) license holder training and encouraging ABST license holders to undertake further training related to issues in the NTE. The Nighttime Alliance should work with the PSCT (public safety compliance team) to conduct this review.</li> <li>• Development of a published door security complaints policy and procedure for any occasion where it is felt that the security team did not fulfill their roles and responsibilities, a clear procedure for all major incident types for security staff that must be read, signed and renewed every 6 months.</li> <li>• The development and circulation of clear policies and procedures for crowd management and dispersal that consider the impact on women’s and girls' safety.</li> <li>• The City of Edmonton should establish a grant program that supports nighttime economy businesses and fosters vibrant nightlife.</li> <li>• The Nighttime Alliance should conduct regular reviews and audits of nighttime businesses to ensure their adherence to existing policies.</li> <li>• The implementation of incentivized grant programs that reward businesses for operating within these policies. For instance, industries that fully comply with nighttime economy regulations should become eligible for grant programs.</li> </ul> <p>The policing of Edmonton at night workstream should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of nighttime economy training should be rolled-out to Police Officers responsible for policing the nighttime economy to enable them to deal more effectively through partnership working and vulnerability management.</li> <li>• A comprehensive review of policing the ENTE in Edmonton with a focus on deploying visible resources and current enforcement practices, including the use of Peace Officers and Park Rangers.</li> </ul>	<p>2023-2028</p>
<p>Development of a transportation improvement strategy and activation plan.</p>	<p>The development of a transportation improvement strategy and activation plan should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A feasibility study relating to extending routes and service hours for current bus and LRT services. This should be led by the Nighttime Alliance in collaboration with key transportation stakeholders and representatives to produce a feasibility report.</li> <li>2. Quarterly audits of Edmonton’s car parks, pedways, LRT stations, alleyways, and green spaces at night. The audit should include a review of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ticketing machines, lighting, safety, graffiti, crime, users and non-users with a focus on dissuading those with a street-based lifestyle from begging and or drinking/taking drugs in the area, maintenance of street furniture and greenery, clear sightlines, signage and wayfinding, litter, drug paraphernalia, broken glass and other hazardous materials, bins and waste disposal facilities, provision and suitable use of disabled car parking spaces, management and upkeep of spaces, security presence, accessible and suitable sizing dimensions of walkways, pavements, car parking spaces and other public realm access routes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. A log of issues and repair times should be kept and monitored. If suppliers do not meet the standards, there should be performance management in place to ensure consistent standards are maintained.</li> <li>4. A review of current procedures relating to transportation checks at night. Specifically at the LRT stations and bus routes.</li> <li>5. Regular monitoring and surveying of footfall at stations to identify low-use stations or stations within close proximity of each other to gauge the usage of the houseless population to identify high-risk and low-risk areas. This should be led by ETS.</li> </ol>	<p>2023-2028</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
Development of a transportation improvement strategy and activation plan cont.	<p>6. A feasibility assessment should be created to explore the potential of offering additional park and ride options for commuters traveling from locations further away from the city center. This should be led by The Nighttime Alliance</p> <p>7. A feasibility review of implementing turnstiles in LRT stations with high footfall. The Nighttime Alliance should work with transport representatives to thoroughly assess this.</p>	2023-2028

The estimated cost for strategy delivery, without varying infrastructure costs has historically been shown to be between \$3-\$5 million dollars.