
2019 Annual Report

124 Street Business Association

124 Street

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**9 124 STREET BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA ECONOMIC
INDICATORS 2019 21**

1 VISION, MISSION & PRIORITY AREAS

1.1 Vision

124 Street is Edmonton's premier destination main street shopping district, home to the city's finest local independent restaurants, art galleries, boutiques, and premium services that is characterized by a pedestrian-friendly, low to mid-rise urban form.

1.2 Mission

To create a vibrant and prosperous business community for the 124 Street Business Improvement Area (BIA) members through ongoing business recruitment and retention, streetscape and beautification, advocacy, community partnerships, member support, marketing and promotions, event facilitation, and multimodal transportation strategies and initiatives.

1.3 Priority Areas

- Business Recruitment and Sustainability
- Streetscape and Beautification
- Urban Design and Architecture
- Multimodal Transportation Accessibility
- Parking
- Member Relations
- Marketing and Events

2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES & STAFF

2.1 Board of Directors

Andy Akle, Investors Group

Garner Beggs, Duchess Bake Shop

Sandy Muldrew, The Prints & the Paper

Sarah Proudlock, The Tea Girl

Linda Ritter, Salgado Fenwick

Terry Synyshyn, mudHoney Salon

Glendon Tan, CSIC Services & Holding Ltd.

2.2 Executive Committee

Terry Synyshyn, Chair

Garner Beggs, Vice-Chair

Andy Akle, Treasurer

Sarah Proudlock, Secretary

2.3 Streetscape & Beautification Committee

Sarah Proudlock, Chair

Garner Beggs

Seble Isaac, Tiramisu Bistro

Linda Ritter

Glendon Tan

2.4 Marketing and Events Committee

Andy Akle, Chair

Marie Olah, Lando Gallery

Linda Ritter

Glendon Tan

2.5 Office Staff

Jeff McLaren, Executive Director

Judy Smith, Office Administrator



3 MEMBER RELATIONS

3.1 Communication with Members

The 124 Street Business Improvement Area (BIA) (Business Association) engages and maintains constant communication with its membership through a variety of means including monthly newsletters, email, website members area, Facebook, Twitter, Annual Open House, Annual General Meeting, business mixers, phone calls, meetings, and in-person visits.

3.2 Annual Open House

On June 12, 2019, the 124 Street BIA hosted its Annual Open House at Passport Restobar (10810 124 Street) for 124 Street business members, property owners, vendors, community members, City officials, and local dignitaries. The Open House is an opportunity for the 124 Street BIA to thank its many partners and supporters and to provide an opportunity for networking and socializing. Approximately 62 persons attended the Open House.



3.3 Annual General Meeting

The 2019 Annual General Meeting was held on October 9, 2019 at the Commissionaires building (10633 124 Street) where the proposed 2020 Budget and 2020 Board of Directors nominations were approved by the 124 Street BIA membership. Following the event, a reception was held for business members to network and socialize. Approximately 28 persons attended the Annual General Meeting.

4 STREETScape & BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

In 2019, the 124 Street BIA undertook a number of streetscape and beautification initiatives to improve the overall aesthetics, functionality, cleanliness, safety, and pedestrian-friendliness of 124 Street to attract and enhance the overall experience of patrons in the area. Numerous studies support that business districts that are clean, aesthetically pleasing, have good lighting, public gathering places, trees/landscaping, and public art, attract more patrons and tourism and have higher pedestrian traffic and overall sales.

4.1 Mural Program

In partnership with the Rust Magic International Street Mural Festival, the 124 Street BIA assisted in the coordination, grant procurement, and partial funding (\$6,000) of four murals along the 124 Street corridor in the summer of 2019. The building locations and artists of these murals are: 1) Atomic Zombie - 10121 124 Street (Takes), 2) Peter Robertson Gallery - 12323 104 Avenue (Amuse126), 3) City Cellars – 10505 123 Street (Jill Stanton), and 4) the Westmount 107 building – 10643 123 Street (Adam Fujita). The 124 Street BIA is currently working again with the Rust Magic International Mural Festival to complete more mural projects in the 124 Street area in 2020.



4.2 Summer Beautification Program

The 124 Street BIA continued to partake in the very successful City of Edmonton “Bloomin’ Boulevards” Program by installing 106 hanging flower baskets (\$20,140) on each corner of 124 Street along the entire BIA (Jasper Avenue to 111 Avenue). An additional two flower planters (\$600) were installed in Helen Nolan Park (12327 108 Avenue). Also, the 124 Street BIA businesses purchased four hanging flower baskets and 44 flower barrels to make a total of 156 flower barrels and hanging baskets purchased by both the BIA and its business members to beautify the 124 Street BIA.



4.3 Winter Beautification Program

As part of the 124 Street BIA’s continuing winter beautification program, 32 illuminated pots (white pots that illuminate at night), planted with evergreens and decorated with lights, were installed on 124 Street between 105 and 107 Avenues and within Helen Nolan Park (\$4,375).



4.4 Decorative Lighting Program

LED Globes

In conjunction with All is Bright on 124, the 124 Street BIA purchased and installed an additional 28 decorative LED multi-coloured light globes (16 inches) in the trees along the 124 Street corridor from Jasper Avenue to 108 Avenue including the High Street area and Helen Nolan Park. Further, 100 LED components were replaced in the globes in addition to numerous repairs and maintenance done to have all the globes in working order for All is Bright on 124 (\$14,900).

These globes supplement the existing globes installed in previous years along the 124 Street corridor for a total of 284 globes installed and maintained by the 124 Street BIA. Not only does this decorative lighting contribute to the experience of All is Bright on 124, it also creates luminescence and warmth in the 124

Street area over the long dark winter months. There are currently plans in 2020 to continue this program and install additional decorative lighting within the 124 Street BIA.

Tree Lighting

The 124 Street corridor from Jasper Avenue to 111 Avenue has 230 trees and Helen Nolan Park has 15 trees with electrical outlets for decorative tree lighting (note: there are no electrical outlets for the trees between 107 and 109 Avenues). The 124 Street BIA has been working in partnership with the City of Edmonton over recent years to identify power supply, electrical outlets, and materials issues to make the appropriate repairs and installations as needed. This work is ongoing with the majority of trees on 124 Street now installed with working decorative tree lights. It should also be noted, as part of a pilot-project with the City, programmable coloured string lights were installed within all the trees in Helen Nolan Park.

124 Street Crossing Street Lights

Over recent years, the 124 Street BIA has installed 34 decorative string lights crossing 124 Street from Jasper Avenue to 111 Avenue that now require some yearly maintenance as the first phase of these lights were installed in 2013 (\$5,646 – Maintenance). These decorative string lights along a commercial corridor are quite unique to Edmonton and further augment our existing decorative lighting that contribute to 124 Street’s unique sense of place.



4.5 Cleaning and Maintenance

A private contractor was once again retained for the months of April to October 2019 to maintain cleanliness in the BIA by picking up litter, sweeping sidewalks, and reporting any graffiti (\$2,314). Clean-up activities were conducted twice a week within the BIA which resulted in a comprehensive clean-up of the entire BIA each week. Also, the 124 Street BIA funded a local community group (26th St. Peters Scouts) to clean up litter in a two-block radius on 124 Street once a week for 16 weeks from May to September (\$1,280). The Scouts collected and removed a total of 64 bags of garbage from 124 Street over the duration of 16 weeks.

4.6 Decorative Light Pole Replacement

The 124 Street BIA has been working on a project with the City of Edmonton over the last few years to replace the existing decorative light poles (green) that were first installed on 124 Street in 1990. In 2017, the first phase of this project began where the green decorative light poles were replaced by the City with new black decorative light poles from Jasper Avenue to 107 Avenue. The next phase was completed in 2019 where all the remaining green decorative light poles were replaced with the new black decorative light poles from 107 Avenue to 111 Avenue.



4.7 Light Pole Banners Project

In 2018/19, the 124 Street BIA undertook a pilot-project in which four sets of banners were installed on 107 Avenue adjacent to 124 Street to replace the existing old yellow metal banners in these locations (\$1,786 – Discretionary Streetscaping). There are two different sets of banner materials (mesh and vinyl) installed for comparison and evaluation. The 124 Street BIA is currently exploring opportunities for a more extensive build out of the banners at key entrance ways into the 124 Street BIA.



5 MARKETING PROGRAM

In 2019, the 124 Street BIA continued its marketing strategy of employing primarily a social media and web-based marketing strategy over traditional forms of marketing such as radio and print. Ongoing research and consultation have supported these platforms as the preferred choice to receive and access information regarding 124 Street businesses, promotions, events, activities, and programs. Further metrics analysis over the years indicate that this marketing strategy is a successful and a relatively cost-effective strategy of reaching the 124 Street BIA target markets.

5.1 Website

In October 2018, the 124 Street BIA launched its new website to reflect more accurately its updated branding that was rolled out in 2018 and to improve the overall functionality and user friendliness of the website. The website continues to be the primary marketing platform for the 124 Street BIA and a key portal to the respective social media platforms (\$759).

In 2019, there were 39,422 total visits (sessions) to the website with 87.3% of those visits being first-time visits. This is a modest decrease of 2,393 (6%) from 2018 where there was a total of 41,815 visits, however, there was slight increase (2.5%) in the percentage of first-time visits compared to 2018 with 84.8%. The decrease in visits is likely attributable to the increase in visits resulting from the promotion and launch of the new website in 2018 and also that visits decreased 5.65% (637 visits) from 2019 to 2018 during the week of All is Bright on 124 which significantly generates the most web traffic during the year.

The average session was 1 minute: 24 seconds with an average of 1.99 pages per session which is fairly consistent with previous years. In respective order, the All is Bright, Food, Restaurant & Bars Directory, Directory (general), and Art pages were the top five visited pages in 2019.



5.2 Social Media

The 124 Street BIA manages the following social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a digital Newsletter to market and promote the 124 Street BIA to the respective target audiences. These accounts are managed and monitored on a daily basis through ongoing engagement and promotional campaigns by social media marketing contractors (\$45,695) and augmented with post promotions to increase audience reach (\$1,784).

Overall, the BIA has continued to increase its followers and audience reach over previous years. However, with the exception of Instagram and the digital Newsletter which have had significant increases, the increases for Twitter and notably Facebook, have relatively plateaued or even decreased in some metrics which is consistent with overall social media trends. Some of the reasons for this include change in user behaviour to other emerging platforms, privacy concerns and general distrust of platforms (notably Facebook), a general decline in organic reach resulting from saturation and increased competition of content, new algorithms implemented by these platforms restricting content and audience reach, and continued social media fatigue and negativity due to a variety of sociopolitical factors.

Subsequently, other strategies continue to be explored to increase followers, engagement, and audience reach which have produced encouraging results to date. Further, a complete evaluation of the social media marketing strategy, cost benefits, and its implementation is being conducted in 2020-21.

The following are a few analytical highlights of the various platforms employed:

Twitter

- Followers increased to 15,131 from 14,768 in 2018 (2.5% increase)
- Impressions (number of times content has been displayed on screen) increased to 1,461,400 from 1,299,857 in 2018 (12.4% increase)
- Engagement (total post retweets, replies, favourites, link clicks) increased to 6,757 from 6,310 in 2018 (7.1% increase)

Facebook

- Followers increased to 13,320 from 13,205 in 2018 (0.9% increase)
- Impressions decreased to 850,897 from 1,250,040 in 2018 (31% decrease)
- Reach (total number of unique users who saw any content from page) decreased to 200,725 from 263,015 in 2018 (23.7% decrease)
- Engagement (total post likes, comments, shares, link clicks) increased to 23,842 from 22,502 in 2018 (6% increase)

Instagram

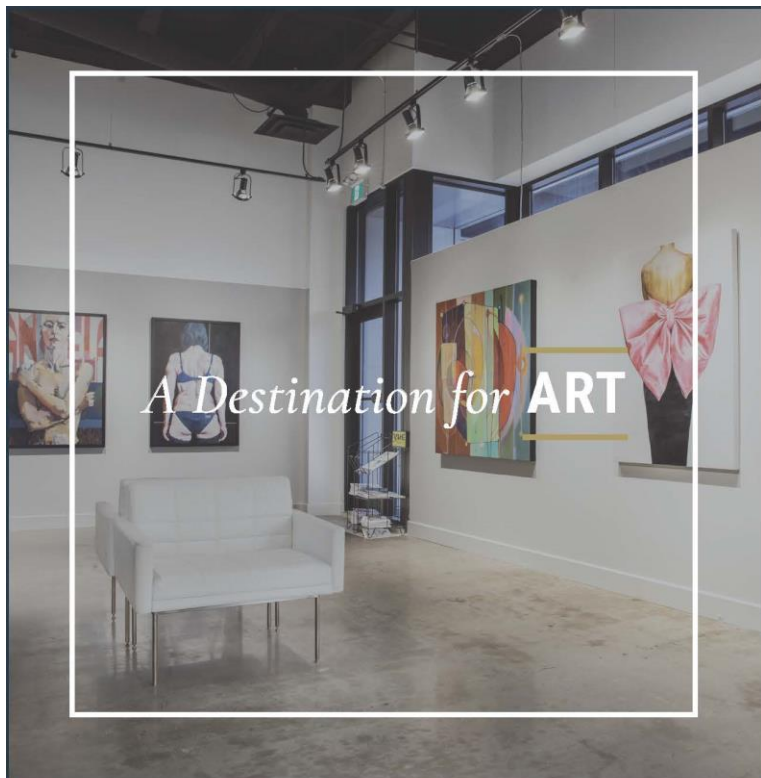
- Followers increased to 6,649 from 4,595 in 2018 (44.7% increase)
- Reach increased to 263,800 from 179,020 in 2018 (47.4% increase)
- Engagement (total likes, comments) increased to 13,481 from 7,963 in 2018 (69.3% increase)

Digital Newsletter

- Subscribers increased to 1,571 from 1,303 in 2018 (20.6% increase)
- Average Open Rate of 44.3% which is significantly above the average open rate of all industries and sectors of 21.33% (Mailchimp)
- Average Click Rate of 7.1% which is significantly above the average click rate of all industries and sectors of 2.62% (Mailchimp)

5.3 Print

To reinforce the 124 Street brand, the BIA continued to maintain a modest print marketing presence in the publications of the Info Edmonton City Guide and Cool Winter Guide and in one issue (November/December) of The Tomato magazine (\$7,571). Also, ads were placed in 4 issues each of the surrounding community newsletters/magazines of the Westmount Window and The Yards (\$3,626).




A Destination for ART

BE INSPIRED

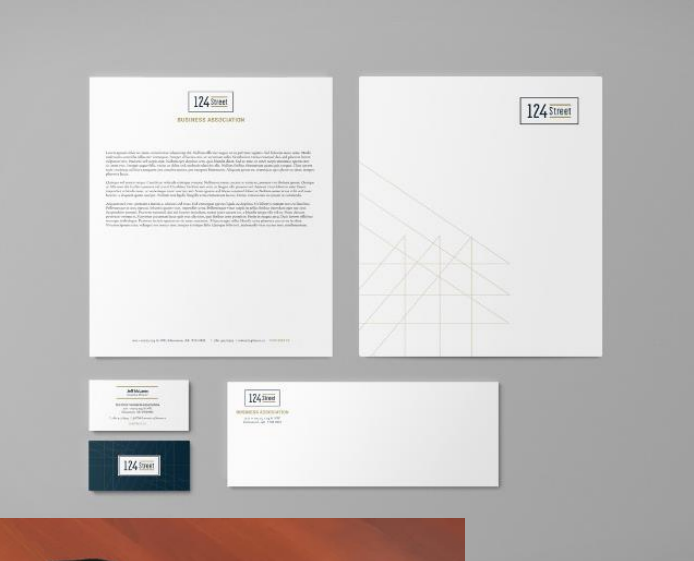
From eye-catching murals to galleries featuring contemporary, fine, and First Nations art, let us introduce you to the best of authentic Edmonton.

Experience creative at [124STREET.CA](https://www.124street.ca)



5.4 Branding

The 124 Street BIA continued the roll out their new branding which was launched in 2018 with the purchase and distribution of branded promotional items such as tote bags, pens, and decals for 124 Street businesses (\$4,029). The feedback received about these items, especially the tote bags, has been very positive with more items being purchased and distributed in 2020.



6 EVENTS PROGRAM

The 124 Street BIA continued its strategy of sponsoring and hosting a few key community events within the BIA. Overall, these events were very successful in that they brought awareness and people to the BIA, facilitated cross-promotional marketing and branding opportunities, enhanced community relations and partnerships, and strengthened the 124 Street brand as a vibrant destination and shopping district.

6.1 Make Music Edmonton

Make Music Edmonton is part of a global live music celebration that started in 1981 and takes place every year on the summer solstice, June 21, in over 100 countries and over 700 cities worldwide. La Fete de la Musique made its way to Edmonton and 124 Street in 2014. The sixth event in 2019 saw approximately 1,000 people converge on 124 Street to experience 60 free live performances at 12 outdoor venues along the 124 Street corridor. Make Music Edmonton is organized by Alliance Francaise d'Edmonton in partnership with the 124 Street BIA (\$5,000).



6.2 All Is Bright on 124

The 124 Street BIA hosted its seventh annual All is Bright on 124 on November 16, 2019 on 124 Street between 107 and 109 Avenues. All is Bright on 124 is a free outdoor, culturally unique community event that celebrates the coming of the winter season in Edmonton through light installations, live entertainment, art, and family programming. The primary theme of the event is “light” where a variety of light installations (e.g., art installations, ice sculptures, illuminated pots, programmable string lighting, storefront decorations, tree lights) are utilized to facilitate the celebration of winter, community, and culture in Edmonton. The celebration of “light” culminated with a “Light Up the Night” event at 6:00 pm which kicked off an evening fete featuring a variety of local musical artists and programming.

Overall, by means of our own internal analysis and external feedback, we are generally satisfied with the correlation between the planned goals of the event and the actual outcomes. Of note, the closure of 124 Street from 107 and 109 Avenues and other layout changes worked really well from a logistical and site traffic flow perspective providing more room for attendees, vendors, and programming alike. It is estimated that 15,000 people attended the event over its duration which is a notable increase from 2018 which had an estimated attendance of 10,000-12,500. Further, there were 4,144 visits (sessions) to the 124 Street website on the day of the event with a total of 10,640 visits during the week of the event which represents approximately 25% of all website visits for the entire year of 2019.

The total cost of the event was \$67,045 (\$52,045 All is Bright Expenses + \$15,000 All is Bright Administration) with revenue coming from sponsorship (\$18,000), Edmonton Art Council (\$15,400), festival income (\$10,722), City of Edmonton (\$5,000), and the 124 Street BIA (\$17,923).



7 ONGOING ACTIVITIES

7.1 Community Partnerships

Community relationships are integral to the success of the 124 Street BIA. As such, the 124 Street BIA is actively engaged with various community stakeholders such as the Westmount Community League, Oliver Community League, Groat Estates Residential Association, and the City of Edmonton on an ongoing basis.

7.2 Advocacy

The 124 Street BIA staff and Board members meet regularly with City of Edmonton staff and Ward 6 Councillor Scott McKeen to advocate for the BIA on various issues including City construction projects, streetscape maintenance, parking, zoning, planning, infill developments, and permitting.

7.3 Business Recruitment and Retention

The 124 Street BIA is continuously engaged in the recruitment of businesses to locate to 124 Street. Specifically, the BIA maintains an updated vacant space and contact information inventory, responds to numerous inquiries about leasing and real estate opportunities, targets specifically identified businesses to locate to 124 Street, and facilitates communication between potential business proprietors and property owners/managers. Subsequently, according to the 124 Street BIA Economic Indicators 2019 Report (attached), this work has helped contribute to 30 new businesses opening within the 124 Street BIA in 2019 and an increase of 15 total licensed businesses from 2019 (total 310) compared to 2018 (total 295).

8 EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

The 124 Street BIA Executive Director, Jeff McLaren, represented the BIA on a couple of external committees including the following:

8.1 BIA Council

The Executive Directors of the 13 BIA's within Edmonton meet approximately every six weeks to discuss mutual issues and concerns regarding BIA's. The members of the BIA Council work together to promote BIA's and to find solutions to continue to support the work of the various BIA's.

8.2 Valley Line West LRT Citizen Working Group

The Valley Line West LRT Citizen Working Groups consist of neighbourhood-based groups representing a cross-section of respective communities/stakeholders that are located along the Valley Line West LRT route. The purpose of these groups is to facilitate engagement between community stakeholders and the City of Edmonton including information-sharing and dialogue; support the identification of issues, opportunities, and concerns; and seek opportunities to minimize and mitigate impacts related to detailed design and construction.



124 Street and Area

Business Improvement Area Economic Indicators 2019

The 124 Street area is one of Edmonton's most vibrant shopping districts, and is home to some of the city's finest local independent restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries, boutiques, and premium services.

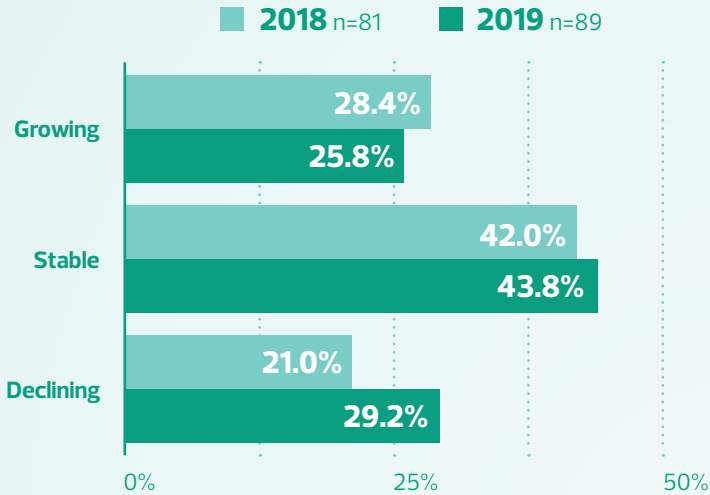
This Economic Indicators project was initiated by City Council to understand the overall economic well being of Edmonton's Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). In partnership with each BIA, the City has developed a set of indicators which can be measured annually to track and report economic trends.



Edmonton

INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES ARE THRIVING

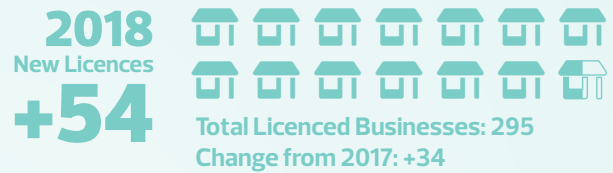
BUSINESSES REPORT THEY ARE STABLE, GROWING OR IN DECLINE



Decrease in respondents who reported growing success*

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES WITHIN A BIA IS STABLE OR GROWING

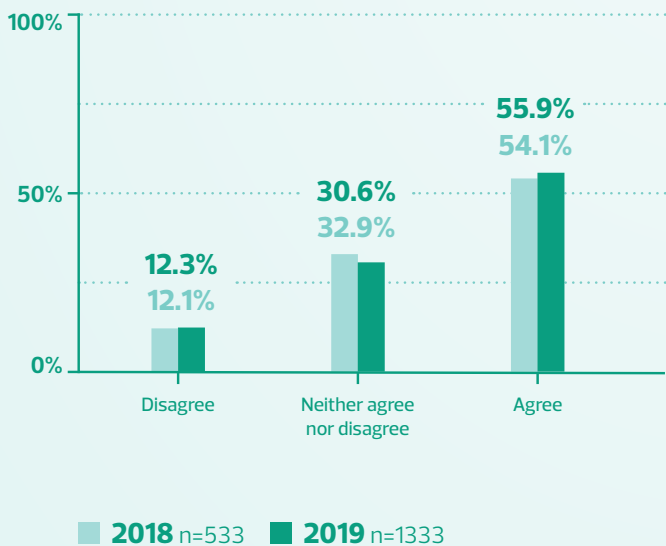
NUMBER OF LICENCED BUSINESSES, YEAR-OVER-YEAR



Decrease in New Licences*

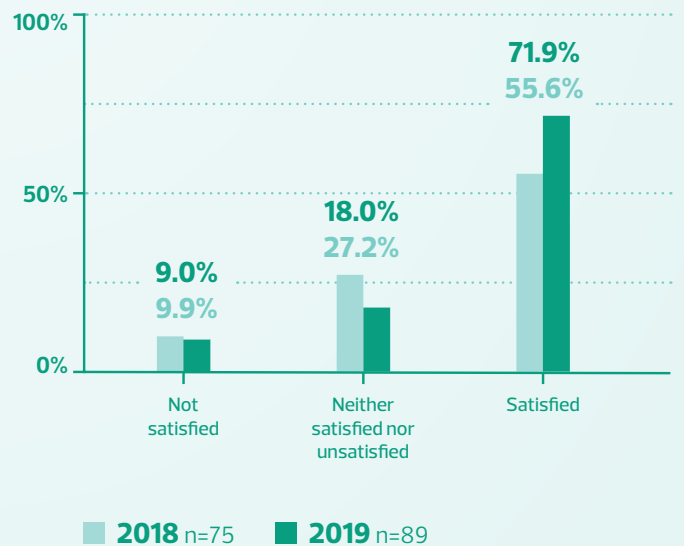
Increase in Total Licences* = 4 New Business Licences

PATRONS REPORT THE BIA IS AESTHETICALLY PLEASING



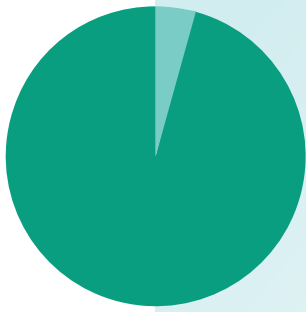
Increase in respondents who agree*

BUSINESSES REPORT THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE MIX OF EXISTING BUSINESSES IN THE AREA



Increase in respondents who reported satisfaction*

* Data for 2018-2019

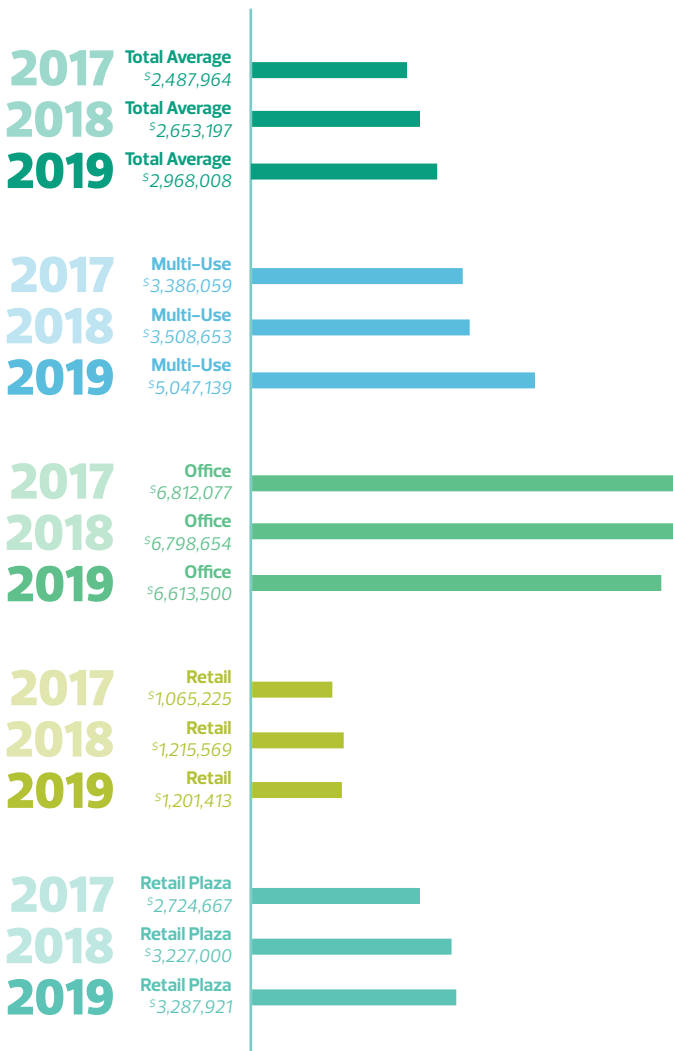


RETAIL STOREFRONT VACANCY RATE

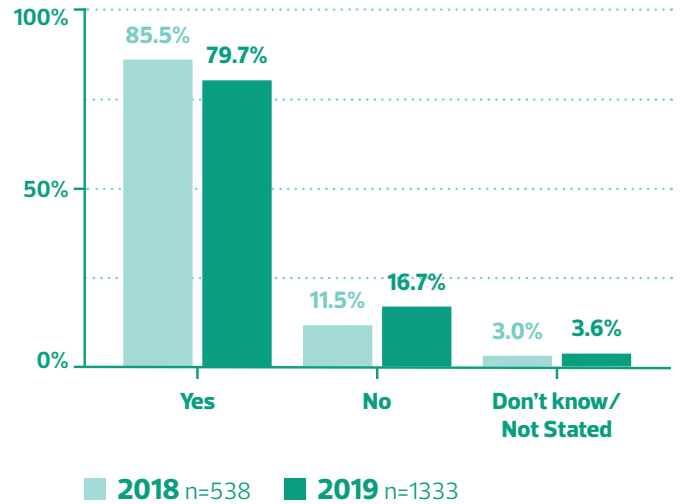
5.66%
2019

BIA PROPERTY IS DESIRABLE

AVERAGE COMMERCIAL ASSESSMENT VALUE, BY ASSET TYPE



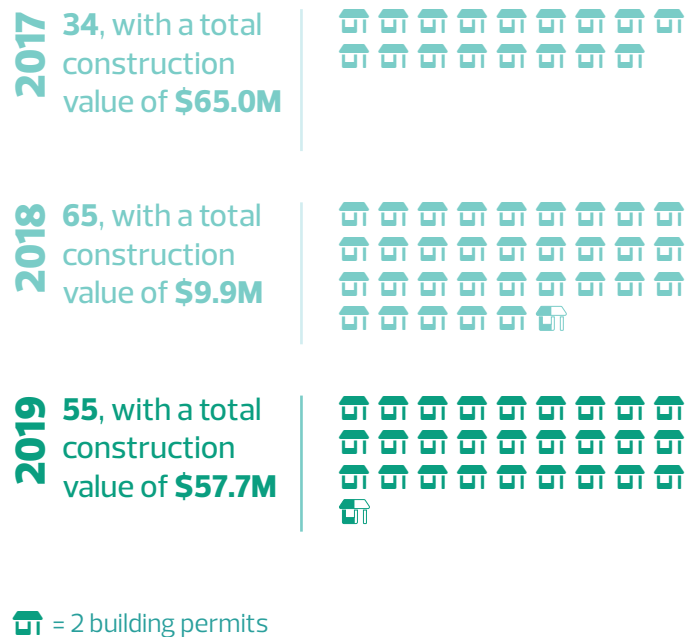
PATRONS REPORT THE AREA IS A DESTINATION LOCATION



Decrease in respondents who stated Yes*

PROPERTY IS BEING IMPROVED

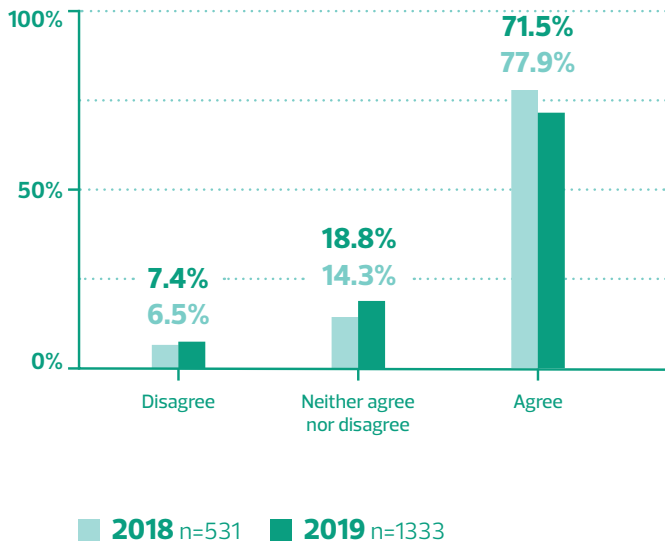
NUMBER AND VALUE OF BUILDING PERMITS



The number of building permits has decreased, while the total construction value has increased*

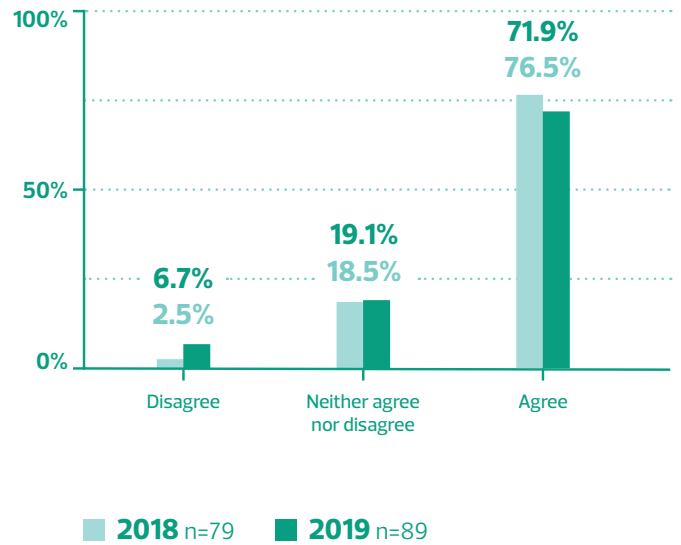
* Data for 2018-2019

PATRONS REPORT THE AREA IS SAFE



Decrease in respondents who agreed*

BUSINESSES REPORT THE AREA IS SAFE



Decrease in respondents who agreed*

* Data for 2018-2019

Methodology

The results in this report reflect data collected from internal City of Edmonton data sources (such as permit and licence applications) and from a series of surveys. Surveys were conducted with businesses and members of the public, including patrons and residents living near the BIA. These surveys were completed online, in-person, and via telephone from September to December of 2019. The study of vacant retail storefronts was conducted in August 2019.

The reporting period for the Economic Indicators is from January to December each calendar year.

For additional information, please contact smallbusiness@edmonton.ca.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support and partnership of the BIAs and their member businesses. We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Executive Directors and Boards for their participation, advice, and direction throughout this project.

