Realities of a REVITALIZED DOWNTOWN

A Look at Negative Perceptions and Why They are Outdated
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IDENTIFYING NEGATIVE ‘MYTH-PERCEPTIONS’
1995: The Year Downtown Hit Rock Bottom

LINGERING PERCEPTIONS OF 1995

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DOWNTOWN EDMONTON
New Realities

SAFETY: SECURE STREETS

ACCESSIBILITY: MAXIMUM MOBILITY

USES: A PURPOSEFUL PLACE TO BE

SOCIABILITY: MOVING IN. VIBING OUT

CONCLUSION

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
10121 Jasper Ave NW Edmonton, AB T5J 4X6
edmontondowntown.com

Author: Luca Petryshyn

Design: Kelle Cloutier, CGD / kelle@7thstrangercreative.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Downtown is in the midst of reaping the rewards of revitalization projects spanning the last twenty years. Decades of municipal planning and recently catalyzed private investments have led to increased economic activity, a growth in the residential population and improved infrastructure. As insiders celebrate the future of Downtown Edmonton, have Edmontonians’ perceptions caught up with these changes? As Edmontonians we all share Downtown, but do we all see Downtown the same way?

This report is an investigation into the negative ‘myth-perceptions’ that exist about Downtown. These ‘myth-perceptions’ can often be a barrier to economic and residential vitality, and in the worst case they may discourage investment. The goal of this report is to understand, challenge and shift these negative ‘myth-perceptions’ to help Edmontonians connect with how much their Downtown is developing.
IDENTIFYING NEGATIVE ‘MYTH-PERCEPTIONS’
Downtown Edmonton was once the undisputed heart of the city, both commercially and culturally. However, due to many factors throughout the 1980s and 1990s including desirability for suburban lifestyles, an increase in shopping malls, and the effects of a recession, the Downtown core experienced a steady decline that drained its vitality. The damaging effect on its reputation as a desirable place to live, shop, play and learn was considerable. In 1995 Downtown arguably hit a commercial and cultural rock bottom.

For those who remember living in Edmonton in 1995 you might recall catching a Trappers’ game in the new Telus field where the team would go on to win their three titles. Patrons of the arts might remember the 10th anniversary of the Works Art and Design Festival.¹ You might remember grabbing a show at the much loved SideTrack Café that sported an entire train caboose in its bar. You might recall the excitement at the groundbreaking for the construction of the Winspear center. 1995 was also the year that the Downtown Business Association launched its Downtown Dollar to address complaints about the price of parking for patrons.² Also in 1995 the Downtown Business Association launched Downtown … Edmonton’s Gem an international leasing brochure that portrayed Edmonton positively in an effort to attract business tenants.³

Despite these notable events it was a year that could only be defined as terrible for Downtown. Vacancies in Downtown were at some of their historic highs. A report done in June of 1995 estimated Downtown retail vacancy at 25% compared to average City vacancy rate of 11%.⁴ Office vacancy was reported at 16.25% with a scarcity of top quality space, especially for tenants looking for upwards of 30,000 sq. ft.⁵ Although the office vacancy rate had declined by 1% from the previous year, this was only due to buildings being pulled off the market to save costs. No single incident speaks better to the tough market then than the sale of the 90,000 sq. ft. Corner Point building at 105th street and 102nd avenue for the grand sum of one dollar to a west-coast developer.⁶
Other troubling developments included Shaw moving its headquarters from Edmonton to Calgary (into its Downtown no less), and the closure of the iconic Hudson’s Bay building on Jasper Avenue. 1995 was also the year Downtown lost its last major grocery store: McCall’s Shop Easy Foods. Downtown would not see another one until the completion of one on 109th street. Many buildings sat fallow. For example, the historic Hecla Block sat gutted by fire with no rescue plan in place. Vacant storefronts contributed to dampening already poor street vitality and patronage of Downtown.

Safety too was a concern in 1995. One particular incident demonstrates the chaotic nature of crime that sometimes characterized Downtown Edmonton. Just north of the current arena construction, a news article described a fight that broke out among one hundred and fifty to two hundred people, by police estimates, to which twenty seven police officers were dispatched. Four people were injured and two were stabbed in the fight to which “one guy was carrying a kitchen sink” and another “had a seven-foot-long two-by-four”. Another story described how one July evening a pair of drunken twenty year olds stole an ambulance and crashed it Downtown. Even sensational robberies hit the commercial core that year. For example, a man tried to rob the CIBC on 101st street, and four masked men held up the Grand Hotel at gunpoint, when it was full of patrons. Far more important than crime statistics, stories like these gave Edmontonians strong reasons to consider Downtown unsafe.

The hard times of rock bottom 1995 would shape perceptions of Downtown Edmonton for decades. Downtown revitalization, even with the successes of the 1997 Capital City Downtown Plan, would never go far enough to convince people that Downtown was reviving. For example, in 2001 a study done in Calgary blasted Downtown Edmonton for its lack of vibrancy:

“Downtown Edmonton lacks the critical mass of office, retail, residential and attractions to make it a vibrant Downtown. The Downtown also lacks continuity. It is full of vacant buildings and storefronts as well as surface parking lots… From a tourist’s perspective, Downtown Edmonton has no ‘must see or must do’ things.”

Today Edmontonians’ perceptions of Downtown are still colored by the trauma of rock bottom 1995. Edmontonians’ perceptions have yet to catch up to Downtown’s developing story.
LINGERING PERCEPTIONS OF 1995

Lingering misperceptions of 1995 have come up in several recent studies on Downtown. For example, a 2012 study by the Canadian Urban Institute on investing in Canadian Downtowns recognized that “Downtown Edmonton remains challenged by the misperception that it is unsafe”.

While security and safety will always remain a dynamic issue many of Downtown’s residents do not share this misperception. On average people who live and work Downtown feel up to 20% safer on Jasper Avenue at night and after midnight than someone who simply works Downtown. Why this is so is debatable, but Downtown residents have arguably the most accurate understanding of Downtown safety at different times of day.

Another way to gauge lingering negative perceptions of Downtown is to tap into our collective consciousness on the internet. Chris Miller invented the Google love/hate index which rates perceptions of a city by comparing the number of love and hate search hits. While results are highly volatile, the number of hits around “I hate Downtown” for Edmonton compared to the other top five Canadian cities suggests that our Downtown deals with greater negativity online than the others.

To further investigate the specific misperceptions Edmontonians have towards Downtown in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with a wide range of Downtown stakeholders including employers, employees, residents and patrons. The list of misperceptions that emerged was unsurprisingly rooted in the history of Downtown’s decline and state at rock bottom in 1995: security, cleanliness, vibrancy, accessibility, parking, and walkability were suggested as issues where Edmontonians perceptions continued to be unfairly negative and did not take into account the reality of today’s Downtown.
TOP 5 REASONS THAT DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM COMING DOWNTOWN

1. TOO MUCH CONSTRUCTION
2. LACK OF RETAIL
3. DON’T FEEL SAFE
4. NOT AESTHETICALLY PLEASING
5. LACK OF AFFORDABLE PARKING

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO FEEL SAFE ON JASPER — 2010

Google Hate Index Downtown

Downtown Hate Search
PERCEPTUAL SURVEY

To capture the current state of Edmontonians’ perceptions towards Downtown the DBA hosted a survey that asked what brought them Downtown and what kept them away. The survey received just under 1400 responses of which 16% lived Downtown, 73% lived in Edmonton, with the other 11% either living outside of Edmonton or visiting.

HOW EDMONTONIAN’S OPINIONS OF DOWNTOWN HAVE CHANGED RELATIVE TO ONE YEAR AGO

There is evidence that ‘myth-perceptions’ about Downtown do change when Edmontonians spend enough time in the Downtown core. In 2005 the DBA conducted a survey comparing the attitudes of employees who had recently moved Downtown and those that were about to move Downtown during the consolidation of Capital Health Centre (now Alberta Health Services). The results show that negative ‘myth-perceptions’ towards security, parking and shopping had shifted positively when new employees spent time working Downtown. Spending time Downtown contributes to shifting perceptions to more positive ones, and revitalization has accelerated these changes. For example, an increase in recommending Downtown as a good place to live is likely influenced by revitalization efforts.

Another sign that revitalization efforts have been improving safety perceptions is evidenced by the increase in the number of people who work Downtown feeling safe at night and after midnight on Jasper Avenue.

The 2014 DBA survey asked if people perceptions of Downtown had changed relative to what it was a year ago. With so much development occurring in Downtown negative ‘myth-perceptions’ are being slowly replaced by the sentiment that Downtown is continually improving. For example, 54% of respondents answered that their opinion was their opinion was more favourable relative to a year ago. Only 7% of respondents felt their opinion had become less favourable.

HOPE FOR CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS WHO RECOMMEND DOWNTOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>71%</td>
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THE POWER OF PERCEPTION

Why Myth-Perceptions Matter: A Question of Branding

At their worst ‘myth-perceptions’, spread through word of mouth, can discourage business recruitment in the Downtown, reduce potential investment, and discourage people from seeking to live Downtown. Those seeking to improve Downtown should recognize the impact that negative ‘myth-perceptions’ can have on Downtown vibrancy and the power of myths to influence people’s minds long after the original facts have changed.

Managing negativity is common in brand management where marketing and communication tools are used to position the image that consumers have of their purchases. Can a place be a brand? A growing body of research has argued that places are brands. Studies have documented the best practices involved in successfully promoting, revitalizing and marketing of places like Downtowns.

Although primarily focused on promoting cities, place branding techniques have been successful in business revitalization districts like the area that the Downtown Business Association represents.

What makes a Downtown vibrant is a matter of great debate. However, it would be hard to argue that vibrancy does not have its roots in a diverse local population, a desirable business mix, and enthusiastic patronage from across the city. Research has shown that “the greatest influence on Downtown patronage intention is the overall image the shopper has of Downtown”.  

Furthermore, the overall image a shopper has of Downtown, or its brand, has been found to be more influential than the business mix or sense-of-place in promoting patronage.

Case studies have shown that researching, diagnosing, and incorporating perceptions into city planning and branding were instrumental in creating a significantly more positive image. Creative communities, strong leadership, and robust business networks need strong brand management to overcome negative perceptions. Consequently, the authors conclude that the “development and marketing of a cohesive brand for a Downtown can prove economically beneficial”.

### CHANGE IN EMPLOYEE SAFETY PERCEPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO WORK DOWNTOWN WHO FEEL SAFE</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDNIGHT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Downtowns that manage brand effectively can be more successful in promoting economic development and vibrancy than those who do not manage their brands. The consequence of neglecting brand can manifest in the domination of ‘negative parochialism’, resistance from rival district centers and narrow interests which can overpower efforts to regenerate urban cores. Overcoming negativity concerning a Downtown district is a crucial step in ensuring that revitalization plans have the desired impact. Simon Anholt, the creator of the Nation Brand Index, argues that effective place branding relies on clear and honest communication with the media and public opinion. Place branding does not work to white wash the realities that people experience in your Downtown and you cannot brand your way out of real issues. Instead Anholt argues that strong stories of negativity are only killed by stronger positive stories which tell compelling kinetic narratives full of human interest that are as engaging as the dominant negative ones. Negative ‘myth-perceptions’ must be addressed appropriately through positive kinetic narratives.

Although Downtown has developed dramatically since 1995 perceptions have proved to be more difficult to change. This is due to the ‘sticky’ nature that strong negative narratives have. In many ways negative ‘myth-perceptions’ are the persistence of misinformation in the face of the introduction of new information which should dispel the grounds for negative views. Cognitive research in the field of challenging misinformation, summarized in *The Debunking Handbook*, argues that “it’s not what people think that matters, but how they think”. The handbook explains the cognitive processes that lead people to reject new accurate information in favor of familiar inaccurate information. For example, simply listing facts to combat misinformation has little impact, and sometimes giving too much information can lead people to mistrust you. Furthermore, it has been found that when people cling to outdated information it’s because they have built a mental model that provides them with an explanation. When trying to challenge the misinformation you create a gap in the person’s mind, which must be replaced with a narrative that is more convincing. As such, trying to challenge outdated negative ‘myth-perceptions’ must include offering an alternative narrative explanation that addresses any gaps for why the original explanation no longer applies. This supports Anholt’s assertion that place branding is best served by kinetic people based stories.
NEW REALITIES

Are negative ‘myth-perceptions’ still deserved? While issues remain, in the past 20 years Downtown Edmonton has been a developing story with major shifts in aspects of its security, accessibility, economic uses, and sociability. This report details the changes that have occurred and continue to take place in significant aspects of Downtown over and above its property development boom. The stories suggest that Downtown Edmonton is becoming more than a prosperous place; it is also becoming a successful place.
SAFETY: SECURE STREETS

Geographic Deployment, Community Collaboration and a Future District

If people feel a place is safe, clean and attractive they tend to spend time there. As Downtown has attracted more residents and investment it became part of a revolution in policing strategy that will continue to contribute to a safer Downtown. Since 2007 the Downtown District Police District has been hard at work promoting and improving safety in at least three ways.

In 2007 the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) strategically initiated a Geographic Deployment Model (GDM) that divided Edmonton into policing districts designed to ensure that response times and workloads were equitable across Edmonton. A 2010 report summarizes the operations of the policing model: “Through accurate and timely intelligence from investigations and other areas of input, the EPS will identify where, when and by whom crime and disorder is happening, and then utilize that intelligence to deploy resources in the most efficient and effective way possible.”

Having police officers rooted in certain districts enables them to better engage with the community to focus on local issues, concerns, and solutions.

The main advantage of the GDM is that it allows police to use technology and analysis to be proactive about crime. For example, daily geographic analysis of crime locations lets police target high crime areas. In extreme cases police can use this analysis to plan a ‘blitz’: a proactive concentration of officers at statistically relevant locations where crime is an issue. New technologies like online reporting of graffiti and crime will continue to help police locate and proactively manage crime; while new tools like Segways will help beat officers move through the Downtown with ease.
The second successful aspect of recent policing strategy in the Downtown is an increased use of partnerships. EPS ensures that each district has a Community Liaison Constable who enables the community to be a part of improving security. One successful partnership was established between EPS and Edmonton City Centre Mall Security. The relationship, born out of a bi-annual Security Summit hosted by the DBA with the EPS, is best characterized by constant collaboration and communication. Together Edmonton City Centre Mall Security and EPS work to improve reporting allowing for better intelligence on disorder trends in the community. Better information helps police blitzes be more effective in reducing disorder.

Another example of building successful partnerships by the EPS is the launch in the summer of 2014 of a pilot project between ETS Security and EPS taking their long standing partnership to a new level of collaboration. In the past these two parties have partnered to run educational sessions, to work transit beats and to increase their visible presence in troublesome areas. A new focus on the LRT will allow for ETS Security, which deals mostly with disorder and EPS, who deals with crime, to collaborate on managing those involved in both. This partnership will increase information sharing and collaboration between two crucial services to better police transit locations.

Third, future plans will see the emergence of a smaller policing district in Downtown that will further provide equitable response times and work load. Historically the policing division that included Downtown had the largest share of police work in the city. The effect of the smaller district will help police leverage their analytic tools, new technologies, and community partnerships to keep Downtown safe. However, with expected increases in residents and patronage increased resources will surely need to be part of the picture to keep Downtown safe.

Perceptions of safety in the Downtown core have been heavily influenced by its past. With nicknames like ‘stabmonton’ and comments that satirically portray Edmontonians as ‘twitchy-eyed, machete-wielding savages’ Downtown has always been situated in a perceptual battle between safe and unsafe. However, most commentators who see Downtown Edmonton as unsafe either do not spend enough time there or are unaware of the impact of new policing methods on crime over the last several years.
These are maps of Property (green), Disorder (light blue) and Violence (yellow) Crime Occurrences in Downtown for 2007 and 2013. The data are randomly distributed around the intersections and do not represent the actual locations of the crimes.
ACCESSIBILITY: MAXIMUM MOBILITY
Downtown has to facilitate the movement of a massive employee base, city commuters, local residents, and patrons. On a typical fall weekday 470,450 trips are made to and from and through the Downtown between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.\(^{38}\) The daily maximum accumulation, the number of people traveling into Downtown and staying the day, has grown by 24% between the years 2009-2012 an indication that Downtown is attracting more people.

As Downtown develops people are changing the way they move into Downtown. For example, between the years 2009-2012 LRT ridership was up by 29% and automobile use declined. A trend is emerging that people increasingly walk and use transit to get into Downtown. This is good news as the City of Edmonton is transforming Downtown’s transportation infrastructure to create sustainable long-term accessibility.

Upcoming improvements include the addition of six new stations in Downtown from two LRT lines (Valley line and the Metro line), an expansion of the Pedway Network with new office tower developments, and a planned bicycle path that will support increased ridership. All these will shape Downtown to be more accessible to Edmontonians, and more enjoyable to get around on foot. Even as automobile use declines and other modes of transportation move to the forefront new parking management measures will be improving the parking experience in Downtown. The new virtual pay stations that will be installed will allow greater convenience for drivers by offering multiple forms of payment without having to return to your vehicle to top up. The pay stations will create a 10% increase in on-street parking as measured spaces are removed. Whether you are a walker, cyclist, parker or transit user, Downtown will offer greater ease in mobility as it develops.
Walkability is a crucial aspect of Downtown vibrancy as any business will tell you that getting people on foot is better for sales. Indeed, studies measuring the impact of improving pedestrian access have shown that increased foot traffic improves retail incomes. The upcoming increase in residential density will lead to more walking use of Downtown. Furthermore, the increasing number of Downtown employees will add to pedestrian counts as surveys have found 70-80% of employees walk during their break. Downtown Edmonton is the most walkable neighborhood in Edmonton according to Walk Score, an international analytics firm.

In the past, discussions around access to Downtown have uninspiringly focused on the availability and price of parking. Many have argued that a vibrant Downtown relies on lots of free parking. Some commentators have gone so far as to call for nationalizing city parking to avoid the challenges of market driven parking rates. However, no Downtown anywhere has succeeded based on parking alone; instead a diverse mix of transportation modes is necessary to support Downtown vibrancy and increased use.

As many private and residential developments begin construction both planned improvements to transportation infrastructure and better management of transportation demand are developing. These changes will promote both economic and social life in the Downtown by making Downtown easier to access and navigate. Downtown is developing to maintain its position as Edmonton’s most walkable neighborhood and its most accessible one.

The Attraction of Feet

Influential picture taken in Munster, Germany in 1991 showing footprint of different modes of transportation.
Downtown Edmonton is a special place because it is a centre of employment in Edmonton. 65% of office space in Edmonton is located in the Downtown district. Its economic use has flipped since 1995 as commercial vacancy has largely stayed at 2% or under for the last seven years even with rents increasing on average between 15 -20%.

The City of Edmonton estimates that Downtown currently has 70,000 employees. However, the daytime peak of Downtown’s population can be hard to capture. For example, if you add to the number of workers, roughly 12,000 students who frequent the thirty Downtown learning institutions, shoppers, tourists, and residents maximum daytime Downtown population could approach close to 90,000. As Downtown develops creating more jobs it is also developing into a new and exciting business community that is attracting many of Edmonton’s top firms.
If you were to walk through the Warehouse district in 2009 you might not see it as a hub of anything in particular. However, the story of Startup Edmonton is one that has changed what the Warehouse district is now known for in the small business community: entrepreneurship.

When Startup Edmonton began hosting regular meet-ups in 2010 a year after forming as a grassroots community, it soon became obvious that Edmonton had the necessary talent, investment climate, and local business experience to support a successful startup community. When startup moved in the top floor at the Mercer building it was to be close to many of social spaces where business networking occurred in Downtown. In addition, Downtown offered walkability, transit connections, and proximity to the Edmonton business community.

These crucial ingredients would allow students, investors, and entrepreneurs to connect in ways that allow for powerful business experimentation. Betting on a Downtown location has paid off with Startup Edmonton experiencing growth in the number of its members, attendance at their events, and vibrancy of the startup community.47

Connectivity, proximity to other Downtown businesses and community is also what drew Oliver Apartment, a custom woodworking shop, to the Downtown core from a workshop located in Beaumont. Working with many of the new restaurant and nightlife establishments opening in Downtown owner Landon Schedler explains about wanting to be Downtown “we wanted something with more character, liveliness and culture… it’s a big thing for us to be a part of a community”.

When Edmonton’s longest running Improv Group, Rapid Fire Theatre, was forced to give up its space in Old Strathcona, they received a warm welcome in Downtown’s cultural core. While they looked at spaces all over the city their move into Zeidler Hall in 2012 allowed them to increase their programming and audience. Some changes were unexpected. “We have more diversity in our audience now” explains Amy Shostak, Artistic Director explaining about greater reach and patronage. In the future Rapid Fire Theatre is looking for a permanent home Downtown, and one they can own.

The economic uses of Downtown are attracting many new firms, whether corporate, independent, or non-profit, who see value in connectivity and community. Many new additions to the business community find natural advantages to being so central, not least of which is employee retention and satisfaction.

The increased use of Downtown is difficult to measure as there is insufficient data to speak to Downtown’s commercial profile in terms of independent ownership or number of new businesses. However, market driven municipal taxes can act as a proxy for growth in property values which exemplify how increased use translates into economic benefit. This year for the first time municipal taxes have brought in over a hundred million dollars to city coffers. This amount is close to three times the amount brought in three years ago.

If anyone still holds onto the belief that Downtown is irrelevant economically, or that its commercial use is unrealized they are unaware of the developing story of Downtown attracting many exciting Edmonton firms. The growth in property value, as captured by growth in tax revenue, speaks to Downtown’s developing market vibrancy.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Other Residential</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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One of the most important developments in Downtown’s revitalization has been a surge in residential growth. Since 2007 the residential population in Downtown has grown by over 35%. The growth in Downtown residents has also been mostly young in character. Over the last decade the proportion of Downtown residents aged twenty to thirty four has gone up by 10%. According to the most recent census over two thirds of Downtown residents are under thirty four.

The growth in residents has been largely driven by three key segments: young professionals, students and ‘empty nesters’. Although they are differentiated in terms of age and income, surveys have shown that Downtown living appeals to both millennials and baby boomers because both want the same things: walkable communities, multiple transportation options, and housing that allows aging in place. For students, Downtown offers a centrally located neighborhood connected to all of Edmonton’s major educational centers. Downtown Edmonton is one of only a handful of communities that offers this type of lifestyle with an added perk of having many of Edmonton’s most unique attractions.

The diverse perks of living Downtown are further increased by potential cost savings associated for those choosing to also work there. For example, living and working Downtown can save you $9,500 annually, the average cost of owning a car, let alone the costs associated with parking Downtown.
With Downtown continuing to attract young people the sociability of Downtown has been changing. The effect of an increased population has been more vibrancy and a growth in after work business catering to the entertainment crowd. A recent article explains the connection between Downtown’s recent boost in vibrancy and the growth in the Downtown’s population. Increasing vibrancy has been one of the goals of longstanding revitalization projects and the 2010 Capital City Downtown Plan recognizes the value that an increased Downtown population has on diversifying and expanding after work establishments.

Edmontonians who still say that Downtown is dead after five in the evening have yet to witness the boom in nightlife businesses over the past few years. While at one point Edmontonians lamented Downtown’s lack of cultured evening establishments, today’s Downtown is home to many of the region’s most exciting new restaurants and bars. Since 2007 there has been a 23% increase in overall licensed premises in the Downtown core (including Jasper Avenue West) and a 67% increase in the number of late-night premises. Late night occupant loads, the number of people establishments can accommodate, have increased by over 50% for the same period. The surge in residency, and the particularly youthful character of new Downtown residents, has fueled the evening use of Downtown.
CHANGE IN DOWNTOWN DEMOGRAPHICS

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POPULATION BY AGE

NIGHTLIFE GROWTH 2007-2013

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Late Night Premise</td>
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<td>Late Night Occupancy Load</td>
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Negative ‘myth-perceptions’ of Downtown exist, and they are rooted in the cultural and commercial low that Downtown experienced in 1995. ‘Myth-perceptions’ influence behavior and need specific and effective strategies to replace them with more current and accurate positive perceptions of Downtown.

While the Downtown business community has celebrated Downtown revitalization it is not the growth in number of new developments or the total amount of investment dollars that will convince Edmontonians that their Downtown will be a successful place. On the contrary, new construction can often make negative perceptions worse as patrons, employees, and residents become frustrated by access, noise and debris. However, the stories that can change negative ‘myth-perceptions’ are the honest positive stories that communicate the type of place Downtown is becoming.

Downtown is a developing story in four keys areas: safety, accessibility, uses, and sociability. Communicating the stories of change in these four categories is essential for Edmontonians to reacquaint themselves with what their Downtown is quickly becoming: a successful place.

CONCLUSION
Please Note: The numbers included in this report are approximate and were obtained from City of Edmonton and Partner publications and their representatives. Although the best attempt was made to ensure their accuracy, they are approximate values and should be used cautiously.

The Crime Map Visualizations were created by Darkhorse Analytics. Check out their amazing projects here at darkhorseanalytics.com. Darkhorse does optimizations, simulations, forecasts, and statistical analyses by using data to identify new opportunities, algorithms to increase efficiency, and visualizations to aid decision making. info@darkhorseanalytics.com
1-800-267-1832, @dhanalytics, 10507 Saskatchewan Drive NW, Edmonton, AB, T6E 4S1