

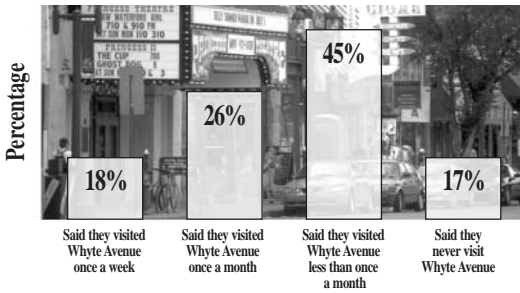
# Poll STATION

With Linda Banister



**T**imes Square in New York. The French Quarter in New Orleans. St. Catherine's Street in Montreal. Young Street in Toronto. There are some areas of a city that are synonymous with fun, shopping, culture and nightlife. In Edmonton, that area is Old Strathcona, more specifically Whyte Avenue. And with the holiday season upon us, and final exams wrapping up for students, this already busy area will assuredly become more abuzz with activity. This month, the *Poll Station* asked Edmontonians about this historical and interesting area of the city.

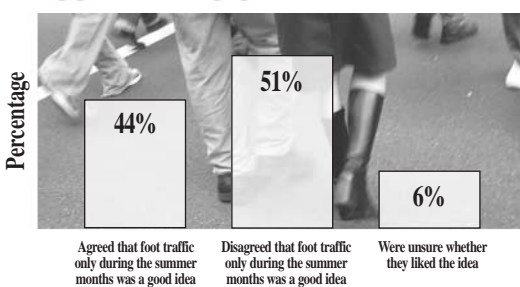
## DO YOU VISIT WHYTE AVENUE AND WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT IT?



To begin, respondents were asked to indicate how often they visit Whyte Avenue. While 18 percent indicated they frequent the area at least once a week, 26 percent indicated they visit at least once a month. Almost half (45 percent) said they make it to the area less than once a month, and 12 percent said they never visit.

Those that do visit Whyte Avenue were asked for their favourite and least favourite aspects of the area. The most frequently mentioned positive aspects were the selection of shopping outlets (32 percent); the history, heritage and culture of the area (19 percent); and restaurants and fine dining (14 percent). These were followed by the nightlife (10 percent); festivals (10 percent); and the Farmer's Market (2 percent). Less favourable aspects of the area included its reputation for rowdy, intoxicated people frequenting the area (54 percent); issues of crime and violence on the Avenue (12 percent); heavy traffic (nine percent); and the heavy crowds and jaywalking (nine percent).

## SHOULD WHYTE AVENUE BE FOOT TRAFFIC ONLY?



When posed with the idea that Whyte Avenue be converted into a "foot traffic only" area during the summer months, 44 percent of respondents

agreed with this idea, while 51 percent disagreed, and six percent were unsure. Of those in favour of the idea, the main reasons were that it would make the area more people-friendly (23 percent); the area is already too congested with cars (21 percent); it is too difficult to access the area on foot (13 percent); sidewalks are too crowded (10 percent); and the traffic is too noisy (eight percent). Those opposed to the idea felt Whyte Avenue is still a major transportation artery in the city that needs to remain open (24 percent); closing the road would reduce access into the area (11 percent); preference for driving around the area (nine percent); and the importance of the road in accessing other areas of Edmonton, such as the University of Alberta (nine percent).

## WHAT OTHER AREA COULD BECOME ANOTHER "OLD STRATHCONA"?

Finally, respondents were asked if they felt the City of Edmonton should develop another street or area like Whyte Avenue and Old Strathcona. The majority of respondents (52 percent) felt the city should explore this further, while 44 percent disagreed and five percent were unsure. Of those who felt the city should revitalize another area, two main areas of interest were mentioned: the Jasper Avenue/downtown area (43 percent) and the 124th Street Gallery Walk area (40 percent). Other areas included the Avenue of Nations on 107th Avenue (four percent), the Avenue of Champions on 118th Avenue (two percent), Chinatown (two percent), and 137th Avenue (two percent).

The *Poll Station* surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓

*Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at [lbanner@edmontonians.com](mailto:lbanner@edmontonians.com) For further information on the firm visit [banister.ab.ca](http://banister.ab.ca).*