



A connected community is a safer community.

By lending a hand when it's needed and knowing your neighbours,  
we can all help keep Edmonton a very safe place to live.



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Edmonton

## Community Report

# Safedmonton: Looking out for each other 2006



THE CITY OF  
**Edmonton**

  
**safedmonton**  
Looking Out for Each Other



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## City Manager's Message



Safety is a quality of life issue for our communities. It affects our sense of neighbourhood and community. And it has a real impact on our economy.

I am proud of the Safedmonton legacy, unique in many ways across our country. Over its 16-year history, Safedmonton has provided collaborative leadership on many social justice and safety issues. Its

innovative approaches to crime prevention have become a part of the way we work in Edmonton today.

Safedmonton is a catalyst to bring people together. Each month the Safedmonton Advisory Committee convenes to share information, examine emerging issues of community safety and pursue an integrated and collaborative approach to crime prevention. Community members, citizens, partner organizations and police join City staff to exchange ideas and find new ways to build a safe community.

In late 2006, our Police Chief and Mayor joined me to form the Action Committee on Community Violence as a response to community safety concerns. We recognize the strength of the Safedmonton collaboration and intend to build on it to achieve lasting change in our community.

I believe in the "looking out for each other" approach of Safedmonton and the notion that citizens are fundamental to improving and sustaining the quality of life for all Edmontonians.

I applaud the work of our community partners who champion and lead the Safedmonton initiatives. I also recognize the contributions and the commitment of all of our City departments and their staff. Together, we are modeling an innovative, integrated approach to building a safe community.

Al Maurer, City Manager





### *The Safedmonton journey*

Begun in 1990 as the Safer Cities Advisory Committee, Safedmonton has built a legacy of compassionate projects that innovatively address social justice issues and safety challenges. Many of these approaches to crime prevention have become a part of the way we work in Edmonton today. Some now reside with community organizations and others are woven into the fabric of civic departments.

## Safedmonton: Collaborative Crime Prevention

### Who we are

A collaborative initiative of the City of Edmonton, Safedmonton aims to connect people with tips, tools and resources to build a safe and caring community. It focuses on crime prevention and includes diverse representatives from all City departments as well as from the fields of health, community organization, education, law enforcement, business, social services, the aboriginal and multicultural sectors.

Our mandate: To facilitate and promote collaborative local initiatives in crime prevention and to inform City of Edmonton Senior Management about urban safety issues.

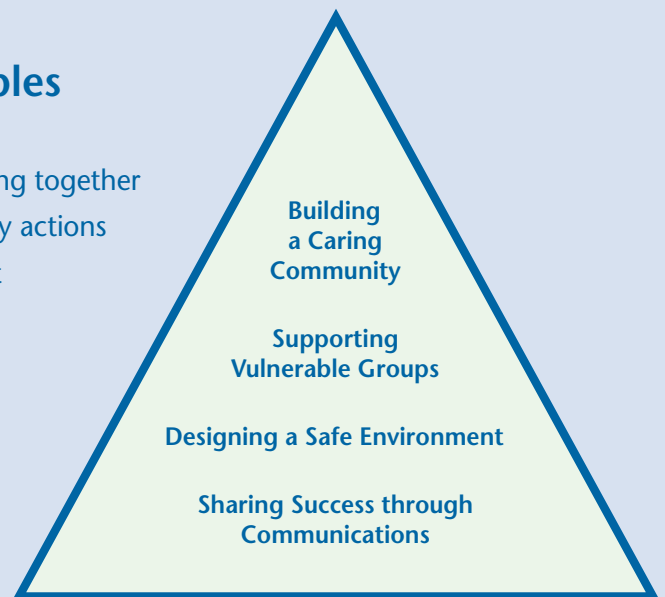
### Our guiding principles

1. Crime prevention
2. Civic departments working together
3. Strategic focus on priority actions
4. Community involvement
5. Community values

### Strategic action

The year 2006 marked the culmination of our three year plan and a beginning of a new strategic plan that will lay out a progressive model for action. As

depicted in the diagram below, it's a model that involves citizens in addressing the root causes of crime, violence and poverty.



- Preventing violence to individuals  
*Safe communities are places where individuals feel a sense of belonging and security, care about each other and respect each others' rights and differences.*
- Supporting vulnerable groups  
*Safe communities recognize that some groups are at greater risk of being victimized and need services and advocacy so that they can work toward their own solutions.*
- Designing a safe environment  
*Safe communities provide physical environments that ensure people of all ages can safely participate in normal daily activities.*
- Sharing successes  
*Safe communities recognize that celebrating success and promoting community pride are critical to promoting security and wellbeing for all citizens.*

# Edmonton's safety tapestry

Safedmonton acts as a central point of contact for the many strong initiatives and organizations working to make Edmonton a safe community. By nurturing new ways of working together, and weaving together common threads, Safedmonton helps to avoid duplication and build synergy so that scarce resources accomplish the greatest possible good. Safedmonton is also instrumental in bringing key issues to City Council and City administration for action.

This tapestry depicts the vast array of groups, organizations and coalitions tackling issues around community safety — from drugs and addictions, to youth resiliency and gang violence. It includes Safedmonton and its various sub committees as well as other key community sectors, agencies and groups that together create a vibrant and strong tapestry of good work. By weaving together common threads, Safedmonton serves to build a safer community.



## Building Capacity the Edmonton Way

Citizens need tools if they are to participate effectively in crime prevention. Safedmonton helps identify what tools are needed and works with partners to put those resources in place. In 2006, Safedmonton focused on learning opportunities, engaging citizens and sharing best practices as part of a new national network of municipalities.

### Charter member of a new national municipal network

In 2006 Safedmonton became a member of a new project of municipalities interested in working more closely together on crime prevention. Hosted by the Institute for Prevention of Crime at the University of Ottawa, the October 2006 gathering enabled colleagues from a dozen major urban centres across Canada to share community safety knowledge, skills and challenges. Edmonton's strongly collaborative crime prevention legacy, with its focus on building a community that is both caring and safe, attracted much interest as the group scanned for best practices. The municipal working group is part of a three-year initiative to build the capacity of Canadian cities to foster safety.

Edmonton's approach to this issue and our way of working through Safedmonton will be included in a literature review of national and international best practices to be published by the Institute for the Prevention of Crime in 2007. The review is part of a three-year project funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre aimed at improving the capacity of Canadian cities to play a pivotal role in crime prevention and community safety. In 2006, the Institute produced a toolkit, *The Key to Safer Municipalities*, in binder and CD Rom. Aimed at municipal politicians and senior staff, the toolkit is available through the Safedmonton office.



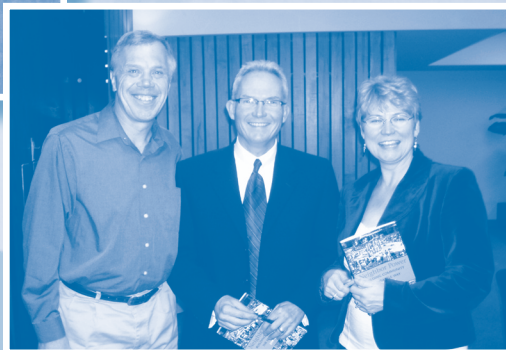
*Safedmonton Co Chair, Kathy Barnhart, and Clr Janice Melnychuk with Claude Vezina and Melanie Bania, Institute for Crime Prevention*



## Jim Diers offers tools of engagement

When properly supported, neighbourhoods can accomplish amazing things that reap financial, environmental and social benefits. That's the message brought by Seattle-based community development expert Jim Diers during a two-day visit in October.

Sponsored by Safedmonton and the City of Edmonton Neighbourhood Revitalization Initiative, Diers spent time learning firsthand about Edmonton's safety challenges and successes, then delivered an inspiring message to more than 500 community partners, local residents and civic staff. His stories of civic-supported, community driven projects illustrated what can be achieved when citizens have the tools to take an active role in setting direction and shaping their neighbourhoods. His concepts were also featured by local media outlets and are also available in his book, *Neighbor Power*.



*"Strong communities can also play a major role in crime prevention... Real security comes from opening doors to community life"*

— Neighbor Power, 172

## Collaborations: Working Together for Greater Good

Safedmonton plays a key role in linking with numerous safety and crime prevention initiatives that share similar philosophies and aims, both within Edmonton and beyond.

### a. Edmonton insights inform Canada West study of core challenges

Safedmonton and the City of Edmonton are part of a three-year effort by the Canada West Foundation to study urban core social problems such as homelessness, prostitution and visible drug use. The Western Cities Project Core Challenges Initiative (CCI), running until 2009, is examining Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

### b. Safedmonton in the spotlight at national drug treatment court conference

Safedmonton hosted and participated in a panel session highlighting innovative Edmonton responses to drug misuse and related issues at the Canadian Association of Drug Treatment Courts National Conference. Current and past Safedmonton partners took part in the panel, along with representatives of the criminal justice system. The panel illustrated how a compassionate coupling of enforcement, prosecution and judicial processes with community resources can facilitate personal and social healing. The vital role of Safedmonton in helping to nurture and facilitate innovative projects and pilot efforts over the past 16 years was a key focus of the discussion.



### *Prostitution Offender Program marks 10th anniversary*

In 2006, the Prostitution Offender Program (POP) celebrated 10 years of remarkable success in holding “johns” accountable for the harm they cause, both to women in prostitution and to Edmonton neighbourhoods, families and businesses. This community diversion program offers eligible first-time offenders the option of paying \$500 and attending a one-day “john” School rather than being charged with communicating for the purpose of prostitution. About 74 per cent of the 2,711 individuals offered that option during the program’s first decade chose to POP; fewer than three per cent of “john” School graduates re-offend. Safedmonton played a key role in the origins of this unique initiative in the 1990’s.

*A key assumption of the CCI is that street level social problems are not the inevitable side-effect of life in a “big city.” Street level social problems can be effectively addressed by proactive and innovative public policy in concert with other efforts such as community action.*

– Canada West Foundation, Western Cities Project

## c. Edmonton Community Drug Strategy takes shape

Safedmonton worked closely with the Edmonton Community Drug Strategy in 2006 to link efforts around addictions and health with safety and crime prevention.

The time-limited task force members include the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service, AADAC, Health Canada, Alberta Solicitor General and numerous other community representatives. The group's final report is due in 2007. Guided by the principle of building on existing networks, the strategy is based on the four pillars of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and policing/enforcement. Already the task force has facilitated some exciting new community partnerships, thanks to Health Canada funding support. Among its accomplishments in 2006, it:

- developed and published a parent resource toolkit on talking to kids about drugs in nine languages
- produced copies of the safe needle disposal toolkit
- distributed drug model education kits to AADAC offices for use in educating parents and agencies about drugs
- developed a *How to Spot a Grow Op* brochure through a partnership with the *Edmonton Stop Marijuana Grow Ops Working Group* and the Edmonton Police Service Green Team

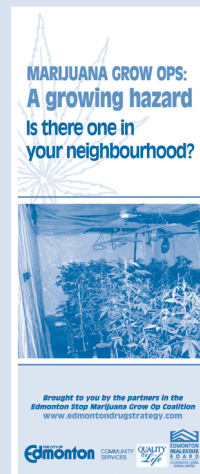
## d. Edmonton Regional Crime Prevention Network links to Safedmonton

The Edmonton Regional Crime Prevention Network, our region's umbrella organization committed to crime prevention strategies, is now a Safedmonton member. The resulting cross-fertilization is essential to addressing issues that rarely respect political boundaries.

A regular e newsletter and learning opportunities are a key part of the network's strategy to support and build capacity in the crime prevention sector.

## e. The Community Solution to Gang Violence builds strategic response

What does it take to protect kids from gangs? Diverse citizens and organizations, including police and all levels of government, are wrestling with that question. Safedmonton maintained links with the good work being done in 2006 by the Community Solution to Gang Violence. The group's projects include a Gang Prevention and Intervention Program and an online database of youth programs and services. Their web site, [www.csgv.ca](http://www.csgv.ca), provides many resources and links in this area.





## Working Group Reports

### I. Preventing Violence and Supporting Vulnerable Groups

Safe communities are places where individuals feel a sense of belonging and security, care about each other and respect each others' rights and differences. Such places recognize that some groups are at greater risk of being victimized and need services and advocacy so that they can work toward their own solutions.

#### *Prostitution Working Group provides tools and connections*

Safedmonton's Prostitution Working Group puts significant energy into ensuring that citizens, frontline services and police have tools to respond wisely to prostitution and related activity. A short list of positive steps seen in 2006:

- provincial legislation to allow police to seize johns' cars, enacted in 2006
- report-a-john signs, mounted in impacted neighbourhoods
- *Reporting Drug Houses* form
- *Who do I Call?* resource list for citizens concerns regarding gangs, drugs, housing and street prostitution
- community gatherings
- electronic newsletter circulated and posted on the web

#### *Snapshot highlights gaps in Edmonton's response to prostitution*

Prostitution is an issue of concern in Edmonton. Numerous individuals and agencies are attempting to respond, but often find themselves in crisis mode with resources stretched to the limit. Recognizing those realities, this Safedmonton working group commissioned a snapshot of prostitution related initiatives in late 2006. The hope is that its findings will inform the strategic planning needed to move beyond crisis, to coordinated action.

#### *Second annual Community Gathering*

The second annual Community Gathering hosted by the Prostitution Working Group was held on April 10, 2006. More than 100 citizens gathered at the Prince of Wales Armoury to hear new Police Chief Mike Boyd. His message of the need for collaboration dovetails with the efforts of the Prostitution Working Group to fund and begin to create an integrated city-wide approach to the issue of prostitution.



### ***Report-a-john: Signs of the times***

More than 30 Report-a-john signs were installed by Edmonton Police Services in July along the 118 Avenue corridor from 34 Street to NAIT, offering citizens a new number to call if they spot suspicious activity. The EPS Report-a-john line, (780) 421-2656, operates 24/7. This new initiative, a joint project of the Edmonton Police Service, PAAFE and the City of Edmonton, including the Prostitution Working Group, is supported by Report-a-john cards. Distributed by beat officers, the cards include space to record a license plate number, vehicle particulars, the time and date of an occurrence and other information to help police identify possible "johns".

## **II. Designing a Safe Environment**

Safe communities provide physical environments that ensure people of all ages can safely participate in normal daily activities.

### ***a. CPTED Working Group***

Believing that community is the focal point of effective crime prevention and that environmental factors are key to positive change, Safedmonton champions Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). As the following initiatives illustrate, this community-based approach aims to reduce opportunities for harm while addressing the root causes of crime.

### ***Nourishing knowledge***

Training and information can nourish grassroots community knowledge. Understanding this connection, Safedmonton undertook to help build our staff capacity in safe community design. Four Community Services front line staff were funded to attend the week long CPTED course offered by Edmonton Police in October 2006. Safedmonton saw this as an opportunity to enhance the ability of our front line staff to help neighbourhoods more effectively and to share knowledge on CPTED safety audits and how they are done.

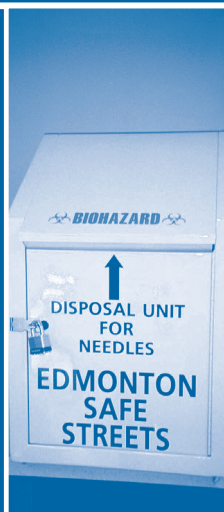
### ***SNUG Phase II: Growing the circle***

As its name implies, Project SNUG offers a circle of immediate emergency support to people arrested for involvement in prostitution

At its heart, SNUG Phase I begun in 2005, focused on sharing information among service providers, streamlining their efforts and using limited resources for the greatest impact on the roots of crime. As the Resource Network broadened and reached out to new partners, the range of supports grew.

SNUG Phase II in 2007 will offer free food hampers from the Food Bank, designated beds at AADAC and the YMCA, full-time staff support from Métis Child and Family Services and administration by PAAFE to women saying yes to help at the point of arrest. SNUG partners also successfully applied for \$25,000 in Alberta Solicitor General funding to continue operating through fall 2007. The project also received funding from the Edmonton Community Drug Strategy, Health Canada and the Urban Aboriginal Fund. Project SNUG offers a glimpse of what can be accomplished by many partners coming together to address risk factors, build capacity and renew hope one woman at a time.





*We are the experts on our own neighbourhoods. By sharing what we know and what we feel, and by working together, we can make change happen.*

– Safety Audit Guide for Crime Prevention, City of Edmonton

## ***Safety Audit tools in transition***

Safedmonton's CPTED Working Group laid plans in 2006 to produce a new edition of the *Neighbourhood Crime Prevention Safety Audit* used by citizens in assessing how safe their communities feel.

This simple but powerful tool, last updated in 2000, can be used to tap local wisdom about things that evoke uncomfortable or unsafe feelings in our surroundings, such as poor lighting, low shrubbery and isolated stretches where a cry for help might not be heard. The audit guide enables residents, local merchants, schools, community services, police patrols and other stakeholders to get involved in addressing safety problems and finding solutions that make their neighbourhoods safer. Visit [www.edmonton.ca/safedmonton](http://www.edmonton.ca/safedmonton) to find out more about Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

### ***b. Safe Needle Disposal Initiative***

Safe needle disposal reduces potential for harm on our city streets, in alleys, parks and trails. Partners involved in strategies to reduce harm from used needles collected nearly 7,000 needles in nine yellow disposal boxes between February 2006 and February 2007, or about 535 needles a month. That brings the total collected since the boxes were introduced in 2002 to nearly 21,000.

Fire Rescue Services crews are playing a lead role in monitoring the boxes and collecting needles. Besides monitoring and emptying disposal boxes, they are developing a new design that can be emptied more safely. Other municipalities are looking at this model that Safedmonton has developed around needle collection .

*To support education and awareness efforts, The Edmonton Community Drug Strategy obtained Health Canada funding to print 500 new copies of the Safe Needle Disposal Toolkit, to be distributed through staff at the City of Edmonton, Capital Health, Child and Family Social Services, AADAC and other agencies. Launched in 2005 and available both in a binder and on the Safedmonton website, this popular toolkit empowers Edmontonians to take action on safe needle disposal.*

### ***c. Derelict Housing Sub Committee***

Derelict housing enforcement, which previously focused on the inner city, expanded in July 2006 to encompass all of Edmonton. That shift was recommended by the Derelict Housing Sub-Committee, an advisory body to both Safedmonton and City Administration, in response to the reality that vacant and derelict buildings are not limited to the urban core.



### ***Derelict Housing Cases***

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Files opened	53	177
Files closed due to demolition	50	56
Files closed due to repairs	11	27
Files open at year end	68	165

The Derelict Housing team gained one building inspector and one support person to cope with the extra work sure to come from the expanded territory. Those expectations came true, with 177 files opened in 2006, more than triple the previous year. Citizens living near derelict buildings previously outside the team's jurisdiction welcome upgraded enforcement and faster response time.

The team makes every effort to successfully conclude a derelict housing file within six months, whether the result is demolition or upgrade of the offending structure.

Building inspectors associated with Derelict Housing enforce both Alberta Safety Codes and Municipal Government Acts. A Problem Properties brochure developed by the Derelict Housing Sub-Committee in 2005 continues to be a useful tool for public education. It describes how to identify a problem property and indicates who to contact for help.

Thanks to expanded staff and mandate, the Derelict Housing team responds to concerns about buildings that compromise community safety anywhere in the city.

## **III. Sharing successes**

Safe communities recognize that celebrating success and promoting community pride are critical to promoting security and wellbeing for all citizens.

### ***a. Looking out for each other***

There's safety in numbers. That truism is especially relevant to crime prevention: we're all safer when the entire community takes responsibility for keeping crime at bay. Safedmonton helps to encourage involvement by spreading the news that, together, we are already making a difference

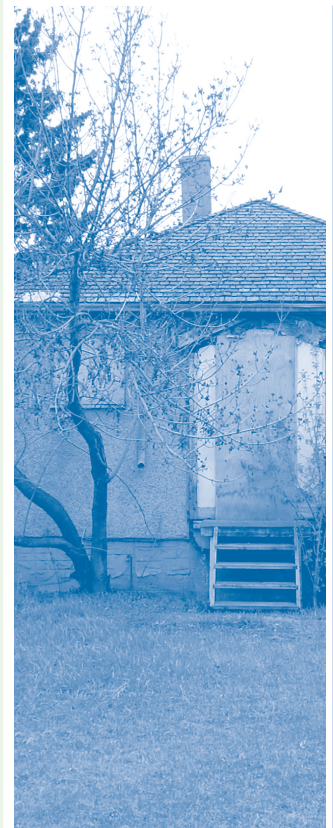
## ***Where trees are planted, communities grow***

It's well known that trees provide environmental benefits. Two trees can produce enough oxygen to sustain a person for a year. Acting as the "lungs" of the city, trees absorb gaseous pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and airborne particulates. Now we're learning that trees can enhance safety as well.

CPTED principles might be interpreted to say that trees invite crime by providing cover for would-be criminals. Several recent studies, however, tell us that residents living in greener surroundings actually report lower levels of fear, fewer incivilities and less violent behaviour. In fact, the more trees, grass and other plants in a building's surroundings, the fewer reported crimes.

Possible reasons include the fact that vegetation alleviates mental fatigue, one of the precursors to violent behaviour. Pleasant surroundings also draw people outdoors, deterring crime by putting more eyes on the street. Neighbours who are out and about get acquainted and develop greater sense of community, leading residents to behave more civilly toward each other. What's more, unlike most municipal infrastructure, trees appreciate in value over time.

Given all those social, economic and environmental positives, no wonder Safedmonton heartily recommends protecting and adding to Edmonton's wealth of trees.



The public education campaign, *Looking Out For Each Other*, launched in 2005 alongside a name change to Safedmonton, encourages Edmontonians to do the little things that contribute to both personal and community safety. The year 2006 saw continued integration of the slogan into citizen consciousness, supported by a full rollout of the following tools and resources:

- a 15-minute film in VHS and DVD format that highlights local safety success stories, used in talking with community groups, crime councils and forums
- an e-newsletter offering information, resources and grassroots successes
- a set of *Looking Out for Each Other* posters featuring Edmonton people and scenes
- cling on window decals for office or vehicle

These tools are available by contacting [safedmonton@edmonton.ca](mailto:safedmonton@edmonton.ca).



Spot a civic vehicle or a business window in our city, and you'll see the Safedmonton slogan, reflecting the growing determination to make community safety everyone's responsibility. All City of Edmonton and Edmonton Police Service vehicles now sport *Looking out for each other* decals.

Ads in SOS Children's Safety Magazine ([www.soskids.ca](http://www.soskids.ca)) helped spread the *Looking out for each other* message to doctors offices, schools, police stations, childcare facilities and other spots frequented by parents, children and educators.





## **b. Sharing successes**

Community awareness of the many local initiatives that make Edmonton safe is vital to building a culture of safety.

Realizing that fact, Safedmonton puts considerable energy into nominating deserving organizations and individuals for a variety of awards and honors. In the past three years, Safedmonton has submitted successful nominations for the Alberta Solicitor General Crime Prevention Awards. This year's successful winners were The Beat of Boyle Street, an aboriginal youth hip hop program, and Rat Creek Press, a grassroots community paper. Both contribute significantly to building a safe community and deserve emulation.

### ***Beat of Boyle Street***

Walk into the Boyle Street Education Centre in downtown Edmonton, and you'll find at-risk youth fully engaged in music and dance. In partnership with Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation of the University of Alberta, Beat of Boyle Street offers youth from the streets lessons in writing, performing and producing their own style of music. Being connected to urban youth culture — their culture — gives students at risk of dropping out direction, focus and a reason to come to school every day.



### ***Rat Creek Press***

Fueled by volunteers, this community newspaper has served north central Edmonton since 1999. Its mission is to build community and motivate positive change among residents and businesses in seven neighbourhoods along 118 Avenue through dialogue and grassroots ideas. A true capacity builder, *Rat Creek Press* works with several area community leagues to keep everyone plugged into local issues such as crime and revitalization.



*"Looking out for each other" speaks to our notion of what a safe community is all about. It is part of everyday conversations and for that reason encourages people to see how the little everyday actions they take do make a difference.*

– Don Grimble,  
Chair, Safedmonton  
Communications  
Working Group,  
2002 – 2006

## Safedmonton Partners 2006

Alberta Solicitor General & Public Security

Capital Health Authority

Changing Together for Immigrant Women

Citizens at Large

City of Edmonton, Asset Management & Public Works

City of Edmonton, Community Services

City of Edmonton, Community Services – Emergency Response

City of Edmonton, Corporate Services

City of Edmonton, Planning & Development

City of Edmonton, Transportation

Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee

Edmonton Community Drug Strategy Task Force

Edmonton Council of Business Revitalization Zones

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Edmonton Neighbourhood Watch

Edmonton Police Service

Edmonton Regional Crime Prevention Network

Multicultural Health Brokers

Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton

Region 6 Child & Family Services Authority

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities









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