

Edmonton Heritage Values Survey Summary

September 11th, 2012

The Edmonton Heritage Council (EHC), with the assistance of Clever Trout Consulting, conducted a survey of 546 Edmontonians between February 22, 2012 and February 25, 2012.*

The main purpose of the survey was to have Edmontonians provide us with their understanding of heritage. This aspect of the survey used an in-depth best-worst conjoint to understand residents' core values. In most surveys, respondents are asked to identify their priorities, with the result that they generally identify everything as a priority.

In this survey, respondents were asked to choose between a series of trade-offs about what values are important to them in contrast to others. This approach shows what is most important to people in terms of the magnitude and order of their preferences.

Additionally, we wanted to gain insight into how residents view Edmonton's existing museums and heritage institutions, as well as their feelings about a proposed new museum about Edmonton. Finally, the survey assessed levels of overall citizen engagement.

The results showed Edmontonians are clear about what they value in relation to heritage:

- 80% of respondents identified Preservation, Education, Shared Cultures, and a Sense of Belonging as core heritage values.
- Edmontonians believe in the preservation of our past and want to learn about the city's past and diverse cultures
- Residents believe that our cultural mosaic has a valuable role in our city.
- Finally, the survey indicates the importance of a sense of belonging and a sense of connection, in relation to their city.

These are shared values for the overwhelming majority of city residents.

The results indicated that 70% of respondents are aware of the city's museums and heritage institutions, and again, it is clear that Edmontonians feel that these institutions are an important way of communicating our culture and learning about our past.

*The survey sample was demographically representative, ensuring the same proportions of gender, age and income levels on par with Statistics Canada data for the City of Edmonton. The aggregate results are considered accurate to within +/-3.3 percentage points nineteen times out of twenty, to what they would have been had the entire adult population of Edmonton been included in the survey. **Please see the accompanying survey presentations posted with this executive summary for additional detail.**

The results are mixed on whether the current institutions meet Edmontonians' expectations:

- About half of Edmontonians felt that Edmonton's heritage is important to them
- About half of Edmontonians were satisfied with the quality and selection of museums in the city
- When asked to compare the current offerings of Edmonton's museums, just over 1/3 felt that our museums are on par with those in Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal

When understood within the context of the core values that Edmontonians expressed for heritage, we think there is an opportunity for growth in connecting people to Edmonton's heritage and history.

The survey also gauged the level of interest Edmontonians have for a museum about the city:

- 63% of Edmontonians find the idea appealing
- 62% find the museum's proposed concept focusing on Edmonton's diverse history and culture is a believable approach.

These levels of interest increased for individuals who score high on measures of citizen engagement (appeals to 74%) and for those considered "influentials" (appeals to 80%).

The survey indicated that Edmontonians' levels of engagement and commitment to the city are low compared to results from previous citizen engagement surveys conducted in other Canadian cities and across Alberta as a whole (benchmarks of 60% or higher—see full survey results for comparatives). This survey indicated 44% of Edmontonians are engaged with the community, assessed through the following results:

- About half would tell others great things about the city or would recommend the city as a place to live
- 38% of Edmontonians have an intense desire to stay here
- 42% of residents are committed to improving the future of Edmonton
- 37% feel that their actions make the city a better place.

EHC believes further study and research needs to be done on the matter of citizen engagement in Edmonton to better understand the survey results.

Overall, EHC believes the survey indicated opportunities to improve Edmontonians' sense of belonging through the preservation and communication of our past and by increasing opportunities for Edmontonians to connect with Edmonton's diverse cultures.