Hollow Temples
Churches evolve for the unchurched

HEART SURGERY
Bikes lanes will change downtown—for the better

LOVE THY GAYBOUR
Reflecting on our LGBTQ history

+6 core strength exercises
FRESH AIR FRESH FARE

Edmonton’s Year-round Downtown Farmers Market Returns to 104th Street

“Get Ready, Get Set, Go!”

May 16 to October 10, 2015
Saturdays 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

city-market.ca

CityMarketDowntownSummerlocationEdmonton

facebook.com/CityMarketDowntownEdmonton
@citymarket104
Find your favourite vendors each Saturday at City Market Downtown on 104th!

Adas Soap Shop
AIG Produce Osoyoos
Amberlane Elk
Arc-hive
Atlantic Wood Products Ltd.
Axis Mundu Artistry
B Healthy Foods
Baby and Bee
Balana
Bamboche World Cuisine
Bang Bang Bijoux
Beanstalk Honey
Beary Berry Honey Inc.
Bejeweled
Big G Foods
Bloom Cookie Co.
Bonnons Treasure
Bouquet of Crochet
Café Bel-Air
Caribbean Kitchen
Carmen's Jewelry
Carnival Cravings Ltd.
Chickie Dough
Cinder and Smoke Clothing
Cloud + Lolly
Coal Lake Honey Farm
Confetti Sweets
Crathy Cooks
Crazy Hounds Homemade Tasty Treats
Crispy Beef Cake
Daiphine Bakery & Bistro
Dazzling Designs
Dean's Peanuts
Deeli Coffee
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Doe's Greenhouse Ltd.
Dole & Banana Inc.
Dreamin Green Farm
Earth Nynja Leather Creations
Edgar Farms
Erdmanns Gardens
Ethereal Therapy
Eva Sweet
Fat Franks
Ferrybank Growers
Fibres of Life
Findlay Family Fibreworks
Firelight Engraving & Designs
Four Whistle Farm
Free2Share
Fridge Apparel
Fruits of Sherbrooke
Fudgaliacous
Fuzzy Monkeybottoms
Green Valley Farms
Greens Eggs and Ham
Gull Valley Greenhouses Ltd.
HAN HAN Shop
Hankook Food
Headwaters Clothing
Hey Kiddo
Holy Cow Popsicles and Ice Cream Bars
Homemade Ukrainian Food & Baking
Honest Damplings
Hunts Harvest
Inked Cakes
Inspiring Memories
Irving's Farm Fresh Ltd.
Its Oscar
J and J
J2 Studios
Janies Jewellery Design
Jen's Vegetable Garden
Jewels By Amy
Karen Klassen Mosaics
Karen's Classics
Kaytyne Pop Culture Artist
Kiko Jewellery
Kirk's Moccasins Manufacturing
Kuhlmanns Market Gardens & Greenhouses Ltd
Laura McGlone Photography
Lilyitch Decor
Lines Designs
Little Jack Horner Meat Pies
Lori Frank Studio
Lubas Tortes Ltd
Majesty Industries
Marigold Enterprises
Medicine Man Bison
Michelle Leavitt-Djonic
Mini Kitchen
Mo-jah Jojo Pickles
Mo-Na Food Distributors Ltd
Moonshine Doughnuts
Mr. Jerky
Murro Jewellery Design
Nutty To It
Ocean Odyssey Inland
Oh My Goodies Baking by Stephanie
Oodles of Chocolates
Original Canadian Kettle Corn Ltd.
Pasta By Caterina
Paw Company
Perogie Hut
Peruvian Olives and Treats
Phil's Fudge Factory
Piroshka Strudel
Prairie Cedar Creations
Prairie Mill Bread
Pretty Things
Product of Science and Art
Purple Cat Pottery
Reclaim Urban Farm Inc.
Redneck Roxie
Rescued Textures
Riverbend Gardens
Robots Love Cosmetics
Rustic Beginnings
Salgado Fenwick
Salted Studio
Sara's Korean Kitchen
Serbens Organic Farm
Shady Lane Estate
Shady Lane Estate
Shooting Star Ranch
Sinfully Addictive Snacks
Soma & Moka Design
South Cooking Lake Greenhouses
South Island Pie Co.
Spring Harvest Farms
St. Albert Greenhouses
Steve and Dans Fresh B.C. Fruit
Strathcona Country Kitchen
Sunbest Produce
Sundog Organic Farm
Sunshine Organic Farm
Sweet Alberta Corn
Sweet Jane Studio
Sweet Stuff Cakes
Thai Sab Food Company
The Art of Cake
The Bangle Box
The Cat Factory
The Cheesery
The Dancing Moose
The Happy Camel Inc.
The Jam Lady
The Newget Company
The Tutu Princess
The Violet Chocolate Company Ltd.
Theos Greek Kouzina
Tri Pow
Unique Wood Products
Urban Forest Design Studio
Viking Fused Glass
Walker Orchards Ltd.
Whimsical Wipes
Whiteout Workshop
Wholly Mama
Willmar Farms Inc.
Winifred Babies/Lil Broc: Boutique
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THE YARDS PODCAST
Monthly conversations with influential voices on the past, present and future of our neighbourhood. Find out how the downtown dining scene was resurrected, why coffee shops feed a sense of community and whether McDougall United can be saved. theyardsyeg.ca/podcast

THE (Fit) List
Reclaiming public spaces as your colossal urban gym

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Who are Bike Lanes For?

Shortly before summer, I tiptoe past the accumulative junk on my balcony to a crowded corner and whip off a wrinkled plastic tarp with the flap of a magician. Beneath it a blue, upright bike that performs one trick: it gets me around for the next six months.

But the freedom and delight I get from cycling also opens up a minor domestic tension in my house.

My wife, who owns a little red cruiser she named “Scout,” is too scared to ride it on most roads, so we constantly negotiate how we get to places as a couple—often separately in summers. For Scout to touch the pavement, a practically interstellar alignment of good weather, low traffic and clear sidewalks must occur. By contrast, I mostly avoid the sidewalks—partly because it’s law, partly because it’s statistically less safe—and get a passive aggressive kick out of taming traffic with my two-wheeled presence.

On the cyclist spectrum identified by American transportation engineer Roger Geller, I’m in a small category of “enthused and confident” riders. My wife, however, belongs to the largest subset, “interested but concerned.” Fifty-four per cent of Edmontonians surveyed characterize themselves as likely to walk as drive, and Downtown is one of them. Let’s all work together to improve the level of cleanliness on our main streets, along high-use transit corridors, near bus stops and everywhere else where people congregate. Pedestrians don’t have the benefit of being sheltered by their vehicles.

So in order to make the city walkable, we have to prioritize street and sidewalk cleaning in pedestrian areas.

If You See Litter, Pick It Up

A little bit of effort here and there can go a long way to improving Downtown cleanliness. If you see a piece of litter don’t walk over it, don’t ignore it; take a second to pick it up. It’s a simple act that goes a long way to improving the Downtown experience for everyone.

—Milap Petigara, Treasurer and Development Committee Co-Chair

As of May 12 theDECLboard is: Chris Buyze (President); Ian O’Donnell (VP); Milap Petigara (Treasurer); Erin Duebel; Jillian Gamez; Laurissa Kalinowsky; Christi Lutsiak; Jarrett Mykytiuk; Lindsey Trufyn; Vikki Wiercinski; Scott Winder and Chris Wudarck.

Tidying the City’s Living Room

As the weather warms and people turn out in droves, we’re faced with one of our great challenges: cleanliness. Especially after winter. The amount of garbage, sand, and debris left behind from the “big melt” can be discouraging.

Add to that a short but sudden injection of festivals and outdoor activities and you’ve got the recipe for a mess. In Downtown Edmonton, where a large number of us walk, this mess detracts from the livability of the neighbourhood. Equally unpleasant is the airborne sand and gravel kicked up from the roadside curb by passing vehicles and busses, and thrown into our eyes. Although we organize a spring cleanup that sees dozens of volunteers dedicating hours to the cause, a single day just isn’t enough.

Let’s do better to ensure it’s cleaned faster, kept at a higher standard of tidiness and presentable year-round. Here are a few ways to do that.

Year-Round Street Sweeping

The amount of concrete and asphalt Downtown causes winter snowflats to melt quickly, and the sand and gravel applied for ice control erodes to street side within days of application. And that’s where it remains for half the year. It’s filthy. That’s why we’re advocating to sweep our core streets on a year-round basis, instead of only in the late spring and summer, as we’re doing now.

Prioritize Pedestrian Areas

Edmonton has few areas where people are just as likely to walk as drive, and Downtown is one of them. Make Something Oliver Committee. Examples of the types of initiatives, activities or projects that may be funded include:

• Skill swaps or skill-sharing workshops
• Community activity nights (e.g. board game or craft-making nights)
• Advocacy groups (e.g. bike lane advocacy)
• Drop-in sports nights (e.g. badminton, basketball, etc.)
• Festivals and celebrations
• Public/guerrilla art
• Educational or fitness programs (e.g. bootcamps, yoga)

Find out how to apply for a Make Something Oliver micro-grant, or how to get involved, at olivercommunity.com. We encourage you to dream big as you come up with a way to make this neighbourhood yours.

As of May 1, the Oliver Community League board of directors is: Lisa Brown (President), Jarrett Campbell (Past President); Danny Hoyt; Simon Yackuli (Secretary); Leah Hilsenteger (Treasurer); Amanda Henry; Hossein Zahiri; James Eastham; Justin Keats; Curtis Boehm; Luwan Kiflemariam; Erin Wright; Dustin Martin; Marija Petrovic; Rowan Kunitz.

Make Oliver Yours

In the past few years, Make Something Edmonton has embarked on a new branding exercise for the city. The primary idea behind the city-funded campaign is that Edmonton is “an unusually good place to make something, from the ground up.” Born from the idea that some of our most cherished services and institutions—the Fringe Theatre Festival, Canada’s first mosque and first food bank, Bioware—were conceived, born and nurtured here, the initiative encourages residents to also build something from nothing. Learn more about it at makesomethingedmonton.ca.

We at the Oliver Community League think our neighbourhood is a pretty good place to make something, too. So, we’re exited to unveil “Make Something Oliver.”

We want to financially support activities and projects benefitting the community and aligning with our strategic goals, especially building partnerships within the community. Both individuals and groups are welcome to apply for a Make Something Oliver micro-grant. Individual applicants must be current residents of Oliver or a member of the Oliver Community League; groups must include at least one member who’s residing in Oliver or holding League membership. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

Successful applications will receive up to $1,000 per initiative after adjudication by the League’s Make Something Oliver Committee. Examples of the types of initiatives, activities or projects that may be funded include:

• Educational or fitness programs
• Community activity nights (e.g. board game or craft-making nights)
• Advocacy groups (e.g. bike lane advocacy)
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Growing Wiser

Night courses and a condo help first-time buyer plan for the future

Lex Grootelaar felt ready for a new chapter. While working as a yard supervisor and hot re-fueller (fuelling planes and helicopters that fight wild fires) for an aviation fuel supplier in southeast Edmonton, he rented a basement suite near Whyte Avenue. He’d always viewed the area as a cultural hub and used to go out often, but, he says, “the bar scene was getting old. It can also be sketchy at night.” Seeking a new challenge and an opportunity to meet new people, he decided to go back to school. He enrolled in full-time general evening classes at MacEwan University to earn a Bachelor of Commerce degree. He also started looking for a place nearby.

The first-time buyer wanted something that would work as a rental property in about five years. He chose Oliver because it’s close to downtown without being right in the core, and he can walk to the river valley and farmers’ markets. He viewed several walkups south of 104 Ave. with realtor Alexandra Krutzfeldt until he found a renovated place for a great price. Of his new life, Lex says, “It gives me an amazing sense of pride that I’m slowly carving out my place in the world—after too many years spinning in circles.”

ESPAÑIA
10335 117 ST.
The top-floor suite was Lex’s largest option. Plus the building allowed residents to barbecue on the balcony. But while the spacious living room and the absence of upstairs neighbours appealed to him, and he loved the laminate wood floor, the renos didn’t look professionally finished. The original closet doors especially needed lots of work. He also worried about traffic noise because the building is next to 104 Ave. with nothing in between as a sound barrier.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,033
FLOOR: 4
BEDROOMS: 2
BATHS: 1
LISTED PRICE: $194,900

UPSIDES: SPACIOUS, NEW OVEN RANGE, CLOSE TO OLIVER SQUARE STORES AND OLIVER POOL

DOWNSIDES: RENO QUALITY WAS WORRYING; SECOND BEDROOM TOO SMALL TO RENT TO FUTURE TENANTS; BALCONY FACES PARKING LOT, ALLEY AND DUMPSTER

INNER TOWN MANOR
10320 113 ST.
Lex wanted to do minimal renovations, so this updated suite was the most appealing—and had the lowest list price. It was hard to turn down the bright, open kitchen with plentiful cabinetry and new dishwasher, and a bathroom large enough for a modern vanity. Plus he could furnish the master bedroom with his desk, which freed up the second room for his sister to rent. Although the common areas of the building are dated, Lex says the decision to buy his new condo was relatively easy. “It just was so much nicer for the price than everything else. It really was a no-brainer.”

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 881
FLOOR: 2
BEDROOMS: 2
BATHROOMS: 1
LISTED PRICE: $187,500

UPSIDES: GOOD LIGHTING, BALCONY, DOUBLE KITCHEN SINK, WALK-IN MASTER CLOSET, LAUNDRY ON EACH FLOOR

DOWNSIDES: UNCOVERED PARKING, NO ELEVATOR, BBQ NOT ALLOWED ON THE BALCONY

OLIVER: $287,551 (+$2,330 from Feb–Apr 2014)
• Difference from listing price: -$9,409
• Days on market: 48 (+1 from Feb–Apr 2014)

DOWNTOWN: $369,037 (+65,415 from Feb–Apr 2014)
• Difference from listing price: -$12,863
• Days on market: 45 (-20 from Feb–Apr 2014)

AVERAGE SELLING PRICE FEBRUARY – APRIL 2015

BY TRACEY L. ANDERSON @TRACY_ANDERSON

PHOTOS BY IAN SCOTT

PROVIDED BY REALTORS® ASSOCIATION OF EDMONTON
ITH LARGE URBAN PARKS and rolling trails along the river valley, it’s no wonder Raffaella Loro loves calling Oliver home. “We’re kind of in the suburbs of downtown,” the photographer and communications advisor jokes about the southeast portion known as Grandin. “We’re in the centre of the city but we’ve got a tiny little yard and access to green space.” Best of all, the 20-minute walk to city hall, where she works for the city manager, lets her effortlessly capture Edmonton’s natural and urban transformations with her Canon. “It’s a really exciting place to be right now.”

Through Her Lens

Photographer Raffaella Loro appreciates downtown’s finer details

**1 District Coffee**
10011 109 St.
Raffaella will pop in for a latte in the mornings to fuel her quick commute. “I wasn’t much of a coffee drinker until Nate [Box] first opened Elm Cafe. Now I’ll happily partake in a coffee pilgrimage whether it’s to Elm, District or a stroll to Riverdale to visit Little Brick,” she says about the entrepreneur’s cafe empire around downtown. While there, she might treat herself to an artisanal salted caramel or one of pastry chef Erica Vliegenthart’s fresh baked goods.

**2 John Howard Society Mural**
100 105 St.
She’ll sometimes stroll a block south of Jasper to admire a painting so easily missed by pedestrians and drivers not looking up. “It makes me happy every time I walk pass,” she says. It’s easy to see why: “Transition” tells a story of compassion and environmentalism between two massive creatures made up of bright vegetation and cold industrial buildings. “There’s a lot of depth to it. You can spend a fair amount of time examining the details.”

**3 Zenaris**
10180 101 St.
She meets with friends after work for a bottle of Prosecco at this family-owned Italian restaurant in the middle of Manulife Place. The seating and cocktail bar are nestled in the middle of the busy indoor corridor, making for perfect people-watching and patio dining on the rainiest of days.

**4 Floc Boutique**
10106 124 St.
To squeeze in a few extra steps on her Fitbit, Raffaella scoots down to this 124 St. womenswear boutique offering superbly personalized shopping. Style consultants pair the latest trends from Sanctuary Clothing, Fever London and St-Martens. “I just recently found a great dress and a beautiful navy jacket with an architectural collar and leather sleeves.”

**5 LUX Beauty Boutique**
12531 102 Ave.
Raffaella then tucks into LUX for perfect “gifts to pamper” and tips on the latest luxuries from owner Jennifer Grimm and fellow beauty experts. The specialty beauty shop is known for carrying top-quality, hard-to-find products. “My friends and I are obsessed with this face mask called Glam Glow.”
Urban Athletics

6 ways to reclaim public spaces as your colossal gym

[1] RUN LIKE YOU MEAN IT
If the only obstacle between you and a marathon finish line is a support group, then consider the River City Runners your new best friends. These dozen race enthusiasts meet weekday mornings outside of the Starbucks on 109 St. and Jasper Ave. for casual five to ten-km runs through the river valley, then go hardcore on Saturdays: 30 clicks. It’s obviously not for running virgins; the goal is to compete in gruelling marathons and half-marathons. rivercityrunners.ca

[2] GO WITH THE FLOW
This summer, fitness guru Jesse Lipscombe brings home fitness to North American living rooms with a new DVD workout program, FlowPower. But why not try the tai chi/yoga/high-intensity training hybrid free with the man himself? Find Jesse or his crew every Tuesday and Thursday evening in Constable Ezio Faraone Park, and then sweat your way through jumps, burpees and squats for 60 minutes—regardless of your fitness level. Muscle development is core to FlowPower, meaning you’ll lose weight while increasing your strength, balance and athletic ability. Or join Monday and Wednesday for free boot camp in the same location. Register at wevivefitness.com.

Nothing beats a dip in the open-air Oliver Pool tucked behind the well-treed Kitchener Park. Originally built in 1924 to meet the growing city’s appetite for modern swimming facilities with heated change rooms and excellent water filtration, the pool kept civilized Edmontonians from soaking in the North Saskatchewan River or neighbourhood bogs. Today, the well-maintained pool keeps you from heading indoors on hot summer days. Laps and serious workouts in this 30.5-metre pool prove difficult on busy weekends, but you could hold onto the ledge for some calisthenics. edmonton.ca/activities_parks_recreation

[4] MAKE LIKE JOHN McENROE
Pick up a game of tennis or practice your swing regardless of your skill level at the Kinsmen outdoor courts every Sunday around 11 am. Don’t worry about bringing a partner. Team Edmonton, a local organization promoting LGBTQ sports and rec, pairs you with a player so you’ll be practising your swing in no time. Thin morning crowds mean the wait rarely tops more than 30 minutes to snap up one of the three asphalt courts. teamedmonton.ca

The much-maligned 13-km pedway system is the perfect way to up your heart rate on rainy days. Since exercise is the goal, excuse yourself as you climb the escalators throughout the uninterrupted seven-block route, starting at Shaw Conference Centre. A caution here: though the City’s improved the quizzical signage last year, some spots might still leave you second-guessing your direction. When in doubt, follow the office crowd who know the connections best.

Oilers defenceman Andrew Ference will put you through a gruelling but gratifying regime of running, stairs and more stairs. Rain or shine, the Edmonton chapter of the free fitness movement November Project meets three days weekly at 6 am. Monday’s surprise location is sometimes in your backyard (check @Nov_ProjectCAN on twitter the day before), while Wednesday sees the “tribe,” as they like to be called, hit the stairs at Commonwealth Stadium. Friday’s workout begins from Emily Murphy Park and you can bet it involves running the dreaded Glenora stairs. november-project.com
JUNE 5
Heroes Vs. Villains Market
Creative Edmonton presents a full night of makers, music and food in an indoor market-styled setting, plus costumed heroes and villains compete against one another in a number of themed Fear Factor-inspired challenges.
MacEwan, Bldg. 6, 10700 104 Ave., creativeyeg.ca

JUNE 4–14
NextFest
There are at least 600 reasons to celebrate the emerging artist festival’s 20th birthday. That’s how many artists it takes to build this program of original theatre, dance, music, visual art and film.
124 St. and Downtown, nextfest.org

JUNE 24
Johann Sebastian Bach
The 140th anniversary of All Saints’ Anglican Cathedral features many well-known local musicians, including the cathedral’s own music director and core contributor to choral music throughout Alberta, Jeremy Spurgeon.
10035 103 St., edmontonbachproject.ca

JUNE 3
Beers for Books Trivia Night
Get your game face on, because Yellowhead Brewery’s bringing back a night of good trivia, brewery tours and food, in support of the Room to Read charity for making quality children’s education accessible in underprivileged regions of the world. Trivia questions range from geography to pop culture, but let’s test your skills on downtown history. Match the neighbourhood’s namesake to the correct personality.
$10, Yellowhead Brewery, 10229 105 St., tinyurl.com/BeerNBooks


1. Edmonton’s first mayor, not to be mistaken with a certain self-aggrandizing Oscar winner
2. Built this neighborhood’s first house, later becoming Edmonton’s first hotel
3. Published city’s first newspaper, The Bulletin, used to demonize First Nations
4. Early pioneer who was pivotal to city’s construction

Answers: 1b / 2d / 3a / 4c

JUNE 26
The Works Golden Summer Gala
The signature summer arts festival of the year starts off with an extravagant gala to celebrate the launch of the 30th annual The Works Art & Design Festival. The Wet Secrets and Capital City Burlesque perform while chefs showcase their own creativity via the Food is Art Dinner Experience.
The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald 10065 100 St., theworks.ab.ca

JUNE 8
NextGen Month Kick Off Event
Young professionals and creative types get their own month in Edmonton. If that’s you, then follow this kickoff and subsequent events to network with your likeminded peers.
Iconoclast Koffehuis 11807B 105 Ave., edmontonnextgen.ca

JUNE 11
Pecha Kucha Night
Twenty-two events later, it’s still the best place to exchange ideas. The 20-seconds per slide presentation format promises a concise, fast-paced and fun way to challenge conventional thinking. Find it in beautiful Louise McKinney Park—rain or shine.
9999 Grierson Hill Rd., edmontonnextgen.ca

JUNE 16
Timothy Caulfield
Ever wondered why that celebrity diet didn’t go as planned? Timothy Caulfield knows why. The author of Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong About Everything? debunks and exposes myths surrounding celebrity endorsed lifestyles in the Citadel’s ongoing speakers series.
Citadel Theatre, 9828 101A Ave., ecfoundation.org

JUNE 26 • JULY 31 • AUG. 28
Milner Book Club
Do you love to read and tell others about the books you’ve read? Share your impressions and interpretations with like-minded individuals at this monthly book club that encourages lively discussions on thought-provoking works of fiction and non-fiction.
Stanley Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq., epl.ca

MAKING CONNECTIONS

JUNE 26
The Works Golden Summer Gala
The signature summer arts festival of the year starts off with an extravagant gala to celebrate the launch of the 30th annual The Works Art & Design Festival. The Wet Secrets and Capital City Burlesque perform while chefs showcase their own creativity via the Food is Art Dinner Experience.
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Iconoclast Koffehuis 11807B 105 Ave., edmontonnextgen.ca
JUNE 5
Big Wheels Delivers Meals
Car enthusiasts will love this Show-N-Shine of classic rides topped off with delicious barbecue. All proceeds go to the transportation costs of Meals on Wheels delivery.
■ Save-On-Foods, 10180 109 St., mealsonwheelsedmonton.org

AUG. 22
Al Fresco
Mark your calendars for this action-packed day of fun and excitement in the heart of Edmonton. The event kicks off with the Downtown Edmonton Community League Pancake breakfast and continues on 104 St. long after the Farmers’ Market. Experience thousands of others coming together in the downtown core to enjoy extended patios from your favourite restaurants and wine bars stage performers, fashion and drag shows, plus an armada of food trucks. Funds raised will support the activities of the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters.
■ 104 St., 4thstpromenade.ca

AUG. 22
What the Truck?!
It’s the best kind of road congestion when Edmonton’s food trucks serve up street food with a side of local music. Get there ahead of time—the lineups are serious.
■ TELUS field, 10233 96 Ave., whatthetruck.ca

A BETTER YOU
JUNE 14
Painless Public Speaking
Public speaking doesn’t come naturally to everyone. This three-hour workshop with voice and public speaking coach Alyson Connolly shows how to master the craft with proper preparation and breathing techniques, plus an understanding of the psychological dynamic of speakers and audiences.
■ Chateau Lacombe Hotel, 10111 Bellamy Hill, alysonconnolly.com

JUNE 20
WordPress for Beginners
Whether you’re a blogger or business-owner, WordPress is as important a computer skill as spreadsheet-making. This workshop shows how to install WordPress, navigate it, and edit a theme that’s right for you.
■ Startup Edmonton, 10359 104 St., startupedmonton.ca

JUNE 17
Are You Ready for Entrepreneurship?
Starting a business can be overwhelming, but it could also be an exhilarating challenge. This two-hour introductory workshop offers women entrepreneurial advice to help decide if business-ownership is the right call for you. And if it is, Alberta Women Entrepreneurs organization will set you up with some of the resources you need for this next chapter in life.
■ AWE Head Office, 10310 Jasper Ave., awebusiness.com

JUNE 5
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AMSIN SHUTE BEGAN riding her bike to work, at the Stanley Milner Library, from her Westmount home about five years ago. Originally from Vancouver, the children’s librarian and mother of two finds the ride along 102 Ave. relaxing and therapeutic, especially after a long day working with energetic kids. “No matter what’s happened during the day,” says Shute, 35, “just getting on the bike to ride home, I feel so much better.”

On all but a few blocks, where she has to navigate busy downtown traffic, Shute feels comfortable commuting on two wheels. But getting to the point where moderate cyclists like her are comfortable on Edmonton streets hasn’t come easily—and the work is far from done.

Edmonton cyclists have long been an underserved minority in a city that loves its trucks. For their part, drivers are often faced with navigating around vulnerable and sometimes unpredictable cyclists. For cyclists, the streets can be hostile with crumbling curb lanes, confusing traffic signage, disconnected networks and, at times, tonnes of speeding metal piloted by drivers who just don’t give a damn. Potholes might be the only thing they can unite on. It’s festered discontent on both sides—discontent that’s not unique to modern Canadian cities trying to promote active transportation. But while Vancouver, Toronto and even downtown Calgary have taken huge steps toward peaceful traffic co-existence, Edmonton has been mired in a slow process of incremental construction, conciliation and occasional back steps.

With the planned redevelopment of 102 Ave. putting new focus on cycling infrastructure in the downtown core, policy makers, municipal planners and cyclists in Edmonton are hoping that will change.

At completion, cyclists will be able to pop by the Downtown farmers’ market for some carrots and berries, maybe a latte, visit a boutique or two, check out the action on Churchill Square, attend art galleries, a play, the symphony, and return home—all on one continuous glide from 96th to 136th streets. It’s still several years away, with construction set for spring 2016, but Shute is already dreaming of the possibilities for her and for her kids. “There are a lot of really amazing things that happen in the downtown core and I want them to be a part of that,” she says. “And riding a bike is a great way to give them some freedom and control. If they’re stuck in a car they don’t get that.”

But can the bicycle really take hold in Edmonton’s northern climate and become a tool for change in the city? And what could that mean for the downtown core? With the planning and construction of the 40-block 102 Ave. corridor, Edmontonians are about to get a taste of how dedicated bicycle infrastructure will alter the busy urban transportation network. How things unfold from there will be a matter of both public and political will.

Biking has become a fashionable expression of environmental, health and urbanist consciousness, especially among under-40s. Inspired by these ideals, and by rising fuel costs, parking rates and commute times, more people are getting back on the saddle for the first time since childhood. But it’s not all Jane Jacobs disciples and downtown hipsters spurring the charge, nor is it a new idea—not even for Edmonton.

Back in the late 1980s, when the late educator, activist and politician Tooker Gomberg arrived on the scene, political support was lean for bicycle and eco-friendly initiatives. Gomberg quickly got involved with the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Society, through which he met his life partner Angela Bischoff.

Together they lobbied hard for cycling initiatives. It was an exciting time, Bischoff recalls, but frustrating too. One failed campaign, Rails to Trails, aimed to convert old, downtown railway lines into a network of dedicated bike trails—a completely car-free corridor. “That was one of the big losses for Edmonton,” laments Bischoff. “These were reasonable ideas that were good for the environment, good for the economy, and they just weren’t embraced.”

Tired of battling an entrenched administration, Gomberg ran for city council in 1992 and won. That year, Council approved the city’s first Bicycle Transportation Plan and began expanding and paving multi-use trails in the river valley. Eventually, work began on urban streets, widening curb lanes, adding sharrow (painted markings indicating shared paths for drivers and cyclists) and extending suburban bike lanes. Combined, this system of trails skirted the periphery of downtown occasionally infiltrating the city centre but never quite coalescing into a fully integrated bike network.
Sharrows, introduced in 2010, were especially confusing and frustrating to cyclists and drivers alike. In 2013, then mayor Stephen Mandel lamented that bike infrastructure development was turning into “a nightmare,” after Ritchie residents complained about the prospect of losing parking along neighbourhood streets. It was a major setback for those in government and advocacy who’d dedicated themselves to quelling the growing cultural war.

In October 2014, the bike community learned that funding for cycling infrastructure, including another bike lane north of Whyte Ave., might be axed from the 2015 budget. To rally support, the Edmonton Bike Coalition quickly launched a campaign inviting cyclists to share images of themselves on bikes, holding signs reading “I bike,” “We bike,” and “I would bike.” A video mosaic of over 1,000 of these distinct images played on a loop in city hall. In December, City Council unanimously passed an $8.8 million budget for active transportation in the downtown core, with the 102 Ave corridor as a centrepiece.

The decision to approve the plan, which also calls for a dedicated cycling path along 105 Ave., north of the Edmonton Arena District, was heralded as a sign of renewed support for bicycle transportation in urban Edmonton. Under Don Iveson, Edmonton’s notably pro-cycling mayor, municipal support for bicycle initiatives is at an unprecedented high. But what does the city have to gain from that?

Few riders have logged as many kilometres on Edmonton streets as CJRS bicycle traffic reporter Karly Coleman. Every day, Coleman rides through a cross-section of downtown, across the High Level Bridge and to the University of Alberta, where the human ecology student is also writing her master’s thesis on how cyclists define themselves and construct identity on two wheels. “Riding not only gives you a sense of your immediate physical environment,” says the former MEC sustainability coordinator and Bikeology director, “it gives you a sense of your immediate social environment as well.”

On a larger scale, that question of identity can also be extended to cities. What happens when a city defines itself by its transportation mode?

“I WAS LIKE YOU’RE A STUDENT BACKPACKING THROUGH EUROPE ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET. THAT’S WHAT WE DID: WE TRIED TO PROVIDE AS MUCH BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE AS WE COULD WITH THE LIMITED FUNDS WE HAD.”

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For far too long, downtown Edmonton was defined by the car, says Tyler Golly, general supervisor of the City’s Sustainable Transportation department. “The design philosophy was to move as many cars and to get them in and out of downtown as fast as possible,” he explains. “We were trying to achieve extremely high levels of service for the automobile, which deprived the environment for people living or working here.”

Cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam have been redefined by cycling and active transportation, and how it gives life to public space, reduces vehicle congestion and pollution, and, generally speaking, contributes to better quality of life. Places like Portland, Melbourne and, notably, Minneapolis—which has a climate akin to ours—are successfully following suit. These cities are reshaping their urban infrastructure towards bicycles and pedestrians not because it’s easy, but because it makes sense. But does it make sense for Edmonton?

“IT WAS LIKE YOU’RE A STUDENT BACKPACKING THROUGH EUROPE ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET. THAT’S WHAT WE DID: WE TRIED TO PROVIDE AS MUCH BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE AS WE COULD WITH THE LIMITED FUNDS WE HAD.”

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: RIDING THE CORRIDOR

Writer and longtime cyclist Jeremy Derksen rides and documents the future. theyardsyeg.ca/riding-the-corridor
The number one thing you need to make it work isn’t infrastructure, but bikes. And there are many of them in the core. According to the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada, 80 per cent of Oliver households have at least one. How many of them get used is another matter. Three per cent of Edmontonians ride their bikes daily, according to a 2013 Bannister poll, while 35 per cent ride every week. Those numbers suggest that the potential is there, but what will it take to convert more of them into regular or even occasional cyclists?

Generally, cyclists fall into one of four categories, as identified by Portland transportation engineer Roger Geller. “Strong and fearless” riders, like Coleman, are undeterred by traffic or weather conditions. You might find them charging through stale yellow lights or merging across lanes at the speed of traffic. “Enthused and confident” riders are a little more conservative, keeping to the curb and waiting until all is clear to switch lanes. Combined, these groups account for less than 10 per cent of cyclists.

But then there’s “interested but concerned” riders, which comprise the largest population segment, 54 per cent according to a 2013 City survey. These Edmontonians ride a bike now and then, though not on a regular basis nor solely for commuting. They may get out on the occasional leisurely ride on river valley trails but they’re hesitant to engage with traffic. (The remaining 30 per cent is the “no way no how” group for whom riding is out of the question.) Tamsin Shute is somewhere in the middle. “I’m definitely a fairweather biker,” says Shute, who commutes by bike half the year from April through September. “When I first started riding downtown I was really scared. Just the way the roads work, I have to go into the middle lane and there’s a lot of buses and taxis weaving in and out. So that’s where I have to keep my eyes open and be really cautious.”

Since the fearless and the confident will ride anyway, the City is focused on creating infrastructure for the middle categories, to put them at ease and build their confidence in hopes that they will take up cycling in greater numbers and frequency. According to an independent review by engineering consultant Urban Systems, one of the key things that would make more Edmonton cyclists feel safe is proper, dedicated infrastructure.

That’s where the 102 Ave. bike corridor comes in. The current design concept prioritizes active travel over vehicular traffic, with bike lanes physically separated from the street by a curb or structural divider. “Cars will still be able to use it as an access road, but it’s going to completely change,” explains Golly. “The priority users are going to be bicycles and pedestrians.”

Although Golly’s been working with a renewed and robust guiding document for bike infrastructure development since 2009, the last six years were marred by false starts. On top of the culture war, public resistance and limited funding has prevented planners from realizing the full potential. “It was like you’re a student backpacking through Europe on a shoestring budget,” Golly analogizes. “That’s what we did—we tried to provide as much bicycle infrastructure as we could with the limited funds we had.”

“The result of that was some people not being happy,” he says. “Change is never easy for a city.”

Big change is certainly ahead, but there’s no guarantee on what the end result will look like, yet. The 102nd and 83rd avenue designs are still in consultation, and public input could sway the designs before shovels hit the ground next year. “You can have policies galore,” says Natalie Lazurko, Golly’s colleague in the financial and capital planning department, “but unless you have people advocating for this and willing to put their neck on the line to support it…politically, you don’t have a hope of actually getting there.”

That support wasn’t always there when it was needed in past, from council or administration, she says. “It’s a large corporation with many different years of experience. Some have been working under the old approach for years and years, and so just like we have to change people’s minds in public, it’s the same internally.”

But what if that political will shifts again? Frustrated, vehicle-bound ratepayers could still pressure the City into cutting funding and scaling back plans. It’s happened before. With so many other major capital projects, as well as growing infrastructure maintenance costs, budget priorities can change dramatically year over year, resulting in watered-down versions of grander plans.

As the population swells over the next few years, a legacy of auto-centric urban design will continue to accentuate downtown congestion problems. It will take a consistent, concerted effort by drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, planners and politicians—but the bicycle could be a part of the solution.

“Whatever the result, it will be better than it is now,” says Shute. “If it were a bit more safe, I would definitely opt to take the bike more often when we go out [as a family], I want my kids to feel comfortable on bikes.”

Jeremy Derksen is a former bike courier whose penchant for adventure informs his work, whether it be as a magazine writer, location manager for Alberta film crews or former newspaper publisher.
On a walkabout through my neighbourhood early this winter, I had taken note of the number of places of worship between Oliver and Downtown. I wondered, had these communities of religious citizens come to terms with the area’s drastic change in demographics and topography since they had first opened their doors a century ago? And how do the heads of these central Edmonton churches view their neighbourhood today?

For instance, according to the 90-year-old Grace Lutheran Church on 114 St., “the absence of focus on the unchurched and dechurched in the neighbourhoods surrounding Grace” has resulted in a 10-year stagnation in membership, dwindling Sunday worship attendance and a Sunday school class one-third the size it was in 2000.

And then there’s the substantial, even hulking, brick presence of McDougall United Church that had seemed an incorruptible and timeless artifact of our history—social and artistic as well as spiritual—until last February. That’s when a report to City Hall estimated a repair and renovation bill of $18 to 25 million, citing a congregation reluctant to commit spending millions on urgent repairs for a building without provincial heritage status. Even more distressing was the conclusion of a separate consultant’s report that there existed no community or philanthropic “will” to save McDougall United.

Like all churches, Grace Lutheran and McDougall have their C & E (Christmas and Easter) adherents. Last year, 125,000 people went to Christmas Eve services in Edmonton who may never be seen until April, if not for another 12 months. But what counts to deans, bishops and pastors is who fills their pews the rest of the year.

All Saints’ Anglican Cathedral on 103 St. and Jasper Ave. is an imposing structure with a grand nave, but on Thursday mornings coffee and muffins are laid out in the Cathedral Common before a tax clinic opens for low-income Edmontonians. They arrive mainly from east of the Coliseum and Alberta Avenue and are then invited to Holy Eucharist and Soup and Sandwich Lunch in the lounge. It’s free and “everyone is welcome,” Dean Neil Gordon told me (a Dean is a Cathedral’s head while its Bishop leads the whole diocese). I arrived in his Cathedral office to find out what these modern ‘hoods look like from the perspective of the parish office.

Downtown’s new condo dwellers come too, to bake muffins or drop by for an hour to chat with visitors who wait their turn for tax assessments. They’ve discovered the cathedral because of the concerts it hosts, such as Pro Coro, or for Choral Eucharist and the incomparable Jeremy Spurgeon on the massive organ. “We’re not just handing out food,” declared Dean Gordon. “We talk and learn stories.” The participation of young volunteers is key. They want to do more than just worship; they want face-to-face, hands-on service, whether it’s serving the Friday morning breakfasts or collecting clothes for the homeless. “They also join us in worship,” he noted, “but their primary religious energy is in outreach. I love millennials!”

All Saints’ is metres away from Bay/Enterprise Station—a “gold mine” when the area opens up for business and downtown parking spaces disappear, he said. Many people come to All Saints’ from Cromdale and Southgate because of LRT access. The church even advertised its Christmas Eve services in the stations. But these commuting parishioners in fact represent a dispersed congregation and a new chapter in the cathedral’s history.

During Edmonton’s original “boom” before the First World War, All Saints’ was a “rich person’s church,” according to Dean Gordon, who invited me to think of the remnants of the grand old homes that lined the residential streets along 100 Ave. Then came the crash, the Great Depression, and the focus of the parish’s activities turned from “fund-raising for nice things for the church” (processional crosses and clerical vestments) to relief projects, especially at the outreach mission church in Rossdale Flats. In Dean Gordon’s vivid image, it was “literally the cathedral on the hill, with a commitment to the people living down below.”

Dean Gordon said by the 1940s wealthier Anglicans had moved out of downtown to Glenora, while others from further away began commuting to All Saints’ “for the choir, the organ, the bells and incense”—the liturgical flourishes on offer in a Cathedral setting. In the 1960s, the parish became more “activist” hosting a women’s shelter and, for a few months, the Middle Earth cafe. “Imagine a folk cafe, as in Inside Llewyn Davis. But not everybody was happy with just coffee.” (It was raided for drugs.)

And today, the evolution continues: Sunday afternoon worship services in the Dinko language for South Sudanese Anglicans and, every third Sunday, First Nations services tie the Gospel narrative with Aboriginal storytelling.

I came away exhilarated from my conversation with the very animated, emphatic Dean, with a vision that swoops all around central downtown, from the cathedral steps to the empty lot across from the once Greyhound bus station he hopes will

How churches are evolving to downtown’s changes

Hollow Temples

BY MYRNA KOSTASH
Landmark Cinemas in City Centre Mall, or at the church now meets Sundays three blocks away, at emphatic lettering of City Centre Church. The theatre building that until recently sported the on Jasper Ave. stands the now-doomed Paramount around the corner from All Saints' Cathedral. I wondered what spiritual void were they filling?

AROUND THE CORNER from All Saints’ Cathedral on Jasper Ave. stands the now-doomed Paramount theatre building that until recently sported the emphatic lettering of City Centre Church. The church now meets Sundays three blocks away, at Landmark Cinemas in City Centre Mall, or at the Cineplex Odeon in South Edmonton Common. I chased down one of its staffers, Kevin Machado, who is also a pastor at the downtown “campus,” for an interview at the Milner Library Second Cup.

Despite its preference for large auditorium venues, City Centre Church (CCC) is not a mega-church such as those established by evangelical Christians in newly-minted suburbs. It has origins in a church-planting movement, which Machado told me “seeds through communities” like our own. Machado emphasizes that they are neither counsellors nor psychiatrists, but simply people who have “spiritual awareness.” People who “burn for community.” “I’m passionate about people who come from dark places where your soul is brittle and cold,” he told me. People like he and his wife not so long ago.

It’s the hope of healing that the CCC offers those who join them, even temporarily, at prayer, Muffin Sundays for families, at Hope Mission or Mustard Seed volunteer commitments, or (when they were still in the Paramount) potluck meals in the theatre lobby—often the warmest place for the CCC community on a Sunday night. “People hear about us by word of mouth, or from a friend’ or they walk by our sign. They meet us and it’s okay not to have all the answers. We don’t yell at people while we’re feeding them. We have conversations. They are welcome to stay and pray.”

But there is also this important difference: the CCC is a young church and still “spontaneous,” building itself as it goes along, not proclaiming any special understanding but just coming together, “normal people who have a shared experience,” in Machado’s words. No pews or chandeliers, order of clergy or choirs, not a church “that says, ‘this is what you need to do’” with all the structures that go with it.

Yet, along with All Saints’ and the others, the City Centre Church could be part of a movement, bringing central churches to the ‘hood.

THAT’S WHAT JODINE CHASE HOPES will happen for the 1910 McDougall United Church. The congregation member started campaigning to prove that there is a will to save spaces where the church’s most “feisty” members, plus supporters in the downtown arts’ community. “Right off the bat, we had a dozen ‘Friends of McDougall,’” Jodine Chase told me. Friends of McDougall’s efforts to save the building began with fundraising, accepting donations from $20 to $20,000, “to capture our support and translate it into meaningful dollars.”

This was not a heritage that could be “preserved” simply by renovating the facade and demolishing the interior for condos. For one, the interior, built to seat 2,000, is in good shape and still an ideal acoustic environment for musicians and performers. For another, the building has long been the site of historic developments, as the original home of the Edmonton Opera, site of suffragette rallies in the 1900s, University of Alberta convocation venue, and the auditorium before the Northern Jubilee opened in 1957. “It has been a ‘tool’ for the whole city,” Chase argued. “And all users needed to be at the table with their contributions.”

Then, on April 1, 2015, the provincial Culture Minister announced formal intent to seek provin-
Oliver hasn’t always been LGBTQ’s chosen part of town. It owes its place as Edmonton’s “gaybourhood” to the 1970s and ’80s, when the gay-owned Flashback Nite Club on 104 St. and 104 Ave. was the city’s “in place” (see p. 18). In fact, Billboard once named it one of the 10 Best Clubs in North America. Paired with the Roost, another gay bar across the street, the roots of our community were forming in nearby Oliver as more LGBTQ started moving into its many walkup apartments. The only question about where to live was, “So J” (South of Jasper) or “No J” (North of Jasper)?

Today, Oliver is home to the majority of Edmonton’s gay establishments, but they are few compared to those transformative years, as social networking, acceptance and tolerance has diminished their need. But in the ’90s, we needed them as politicians both provincial and municipal stoked homophobic flames and dismissed us as lesser-thans. That only helped our community organize and thrive.

We often mobilized in a little coffeeshop called Boystown, located in a building on 124 St. and Jasper, with Woody’s night club upstairs and Edmonton Pride Centre in the basement. We had our successes, like in 1998, when we convinced the city to hold Pride Parade on Jasper, letting it roll down the high street before ending in Oliver Park, not far from the afterparty. Despite this significant milestone, we had a ways to go: Gay people could legally be denied housing; employers could legally fire them; and the then-named Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act still didn’t include sexual orientation in legislation. So we faxed, we posted, we petitioned, we protested. Being such a short stroll from the legislative grounds sure was handy.

One of our first protests on the legislature’s steps, in 1991, was after my friend Delwin Vriend was fired from King’s University College after telling his family and church he had a boyfriend. Allies raised money and awareness, and, sadly, had to force our own province to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1998—and we won! Alberta was ordered to include sexual orientation in its human rights protection laws. Little did we know the profound impact it would have, not just in our city but across Canada and beyond: it’s since become a studied human rights case in law schools worldwide.

The momentum continued when, four years later, former mayor Bill Smith refused to proclaim Edmonton Pride celebrations. Boystown cleverly confronted the mayor, adorning its front windows with a huge protest sign right on Jasper. Once newspapers took notice, the mayor had found himself on the wrong side of the fight. City lawyers advised him to sign the proclamation and not a year has since passed without this simple but important mayoral gesture—validation of diversity.

Our fabulous LGBTQ community and allies have come a long way from when we were reputed to be the Redneck Centre of Canada. Just as last spring we successfully fought against an egregious version of Bill 10, in order to protect our youngest with Gay-Straight Alliances in their schools, we continue to stand up for equality. It’s made us feel a bit safer in our awesome little gaybourhood, but it’s also solidified beautiful Oliver as the place to build and grow a vibrant community like ours.

So, won’t you be my neighbour?

Murray Billett is a long-time Oliver resident, former police commissioner and human rights advocate.
The Kids Are Alright
… but age-restrictive bylaws aren’t

A woman stood at my neighbour’s door, screaming at his face. “When I moved in here, I thought no children were allowed!”

He’s a young father with an energetic two-year-old girl that I often hear through our styrofoam-strength walls, often laughing, sometimes crying. “You’re going to have to move to another place, then, because children are allowed here,” he responded with equal fervour. “This is the first time I’ve met you. I don’t know your name, I don’t know anything about you. Have a good day!”

Slam.

Despite my condo’s poor sound-proofing, the man had a point. That is unless the condo board can be swayed to change its bylaws and restrict who can live here, like many other multiunit homes in central Edmonton. If my angry neighbour can convince 75 per cent of condo-owners to place age restrictions on residents, a court will support it. There will be zero legal recourse. Alberta’s human rights laws are the only in Canada that don’t protect tenant’s from age discrimination.

Despite our many playgrounds, pools and summer festivities, few kids live in Edmonton’s densest neighbourhoods due to a cluster of forces: allowance of age-restrictive bylaws, backwards human rights laws, a lack of three-bedroom-plus units, buildings with thin walls and floors and, one suspects, a lingering culture of believing families belong in suburbs. Bev Zubot, planning advisor with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, says the problem is well-known.

Migrating families find a condo close to the core and realize, to their shock, they’re unwelcome. “They’re not accustomed to this discrimination, whether they be from B.C., Eastern Canada or other countries,” she says.

But that’s the legal side of the coin. If buildings in Edmonton were better designed, a lot of these disputes wouldn’t happen. Zubot says that poor regulations and building codes are the crux of the problem. “We still don’t have the proper sound-proofing between floors... in hallways.” Fix these, she says, and conflicts between neighbours that lead to age restrictions dramatically decrease. “We’re setting them up for disputes.”

This is less of a problem in the United States, thanks to federal legislation that forbids tenancy discrimination based on age amongst other things. Even in Ontario, the human rights commission is cracking down on housing ads that are remotely discriminatory, such as “ideal for quiet couple” or “suitable for single professional.”

But in Alberta, said Roberto Noce, a lawyer with Miller Thomson, age restrictions baked into condo bylaws are usually upheld in court, though they’re not common in Edmonton, age-restrictive bylaws are “the exception, not the rule,” he says. It’s the same thing for when you want to bring home something that walks on all fours. In fact, theoretically condos could restrict those with blond hair and blue eyes, though whether our court would uphold that is another question. “I was approached by one condo corporation who inquired whether they could create a bylaw saying only those aged 60 and under can live in the building.”

But why would someone want to restrict seniors? Or children, or any other demographic for that matter? Sure, they’re loud, they’re annoying. But the best part of living in a city is its diversity and living among people unlike myself.

Why would someone want to restrict seniors? Or children, or any other demographic for that matter? Sure, they’re loud, they’re annoying. But the best part of living in a city is its diversity and living among people unlike myself. What galls me is that Alberta recently revised its condo legislation, and age restrictions were left out of the discussion. Nothing’s changing without stronger human rights laws.

More worryingly, our biases toward families seem to replicate themselves in what developers want to build. There are few family-oriented buildings on downtown’s horizon. Zubot has made the problem known to city council for years, leading to a market study on the demand for multi-unit family-oriented housing and, pending results, a possible zoning amendment could pressure developers to increase the offerings. She’d like to see them take cues from Toronto’s city council, which recently required all new downtown developments to have some family-friendly housing.

But until the change comes at cultural, municipal and provincial levels, the young family I share a wall with is going to continue worrying about their kid pissing off the building.

Tim Querengesser is president of The Edmonton Wayfinding Society.
Shutting down a street is hard. But an alley? So long as you’ve got a van to block it off and a couple of rowdy queens on guard you’re set. At least that was the thinking during the days of Flashback—a gay bar considered one of the hottest clubs in Edmonton if not Canada in the 1980s. Some even called it “Studio 54 of the Prairies.” For one weekend every summer the alley behind the converted warehouse on 104 St.—bulldozed over 25 years ago for the Excelsior luxury lofts—hosted the Drag Races, a ritual marking the end of one Ms. Flashback’s reign and the crowning of another. Spectators, mostly gay men, crowded the loading docks or stood amidst garbage bins for a view of the gravel strip where young men challenged each other to tug-of-war fights and three-legged races, and drag queens stumbled and clambered in their heels (the libations didn’t help). It was great summer fun. But much more than that, it was a public show of support and defiance.
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