

the spoke

“the spoke” is a bicycle project on 118 Avenue that offers youth with prior bicycle related offenses an opportunity to participate in their community and develop their mechanic skill set. Participants get an opportunity to select a bike, that would otherwise end up in a land-fill, and make it their own using the tools in the shop and the skills they gain from weekly sessions. Sessions are facilitated by volunteer mechanics, community members and bike enthusiasts.

Bikes are just the medium - after learning about youth in our community involved in stealing, breaking down and selling bicycles, our means for engagement became evident. “the spoke” fosters a sense of community, confidence, cooperation, and environmental stewardship. In doing so, the aim is to build relationships with participants and reduce the need for traditional youth interventions.



Sabashtin, repairing his wheel at 'the spoke'

We Believe in 118

We Believe in 118 is a community coalition consisting of the Alberta Avenue Business Association (AABA), eight 118 Avenue business owners, the Avenue Revitalization Initiative, and the area Neighbourhood Empowerment Team.

This project is about reclamation – drawing a line around the 118 Ave communities to make 118 Avenue a drug paraphernalia and weapons-free zone. At the beginning of the campaign in November 2009, there were six businesses selling weapons and/or drug paraphernalia on the Avenue. As of June 2010, four have discontinued sales of this nature completely and one has closed, leaving only one business along the 118 Avenue corridor still involved in the trade.

We Believe in 118 speaks to the power of community and the missed opportunity to work more collaboratively with community businesses. The grassroots, multi-disciplined approach to this community concern has seen solid and sustainable results that have had a measurable impact on the safety and well being of 118 Avenue and the surrounding neighbourhoods.



Hanging the banner on the Pho King restaurant at the We Believe in 118 rally on the Avenue March 18th

Get Involved!!!
Want to make a difference? Here's how...

Avenue Initiative working groups are revitalizing the area. New members are always welcome.

Call Judy at 780-496-1913 for judy.allan@edmonton.ca

EPS 118 Ave activity update

- Although call volume is very high at times, there has been a steady downward trend in reported crime and disorder activity throughout the district
- 3 major drug houses have been shut down through evictions. Multiple other drug houses and suites have also been shut down
- Multiple VICE stings have been conducted targeting both Johns and Prostitutes
- The 118 Ave Beat members have been split into 2 squads, with 2 members working each shift creating greater coverage
- CSI Open House was a huge success. It was well attended by community members, as well as organizations working in the community

The Avenue Initiative is committed to supporting local business and talent as much as possible. As a result this update was written, edited, photographed, and designed almost entirely by local people. *EDITOR: Dawn Freeman DESIGNER: Lorraine Shulba*
All images unless otherwise stated, taken by Dawn Freeman.

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Avenue Initiative is published by the City of Edmonton.
If you have any comments or inquiries, please feel free contact us.

avenue initiative revitalization UPDATES & NEWS

Summer, 2010 Issue 6



Old Cycle Building continues moving forward

The Old Cycle Building project continues to move ahead with City, community and arts programs already being run out of the raw space. The Caught in the Act Theatre Series, the Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET) 'the spoke' project and the upcoming Kaleido Festival have all benefited from having this space available to use.

Local organizations Arts on the Ave (AOTA) and Arts Hab will continue

working together throughout 2010 on creating partnership agreements, architectural plans and fundraising campaigns for the long-term future of the building.

Meanwhile the space will continue being used as a community and art space until construction commences in 2012. Shelterbelt Architectural Firm has been hired to design the plans for the final revamp of the building.

Caught in the Act: Theatre Series on 118 Ave

The 118 Avenue neighbourhoods are home to some of Edmonton's finest playwrights, actors and directors, all bursting with ideas for live theatre.

“Many people had approached the Avenue Initiative looking for support for live theatre, but it is impossible to fund everyone individually. However we really wanted to continue supporting the growth of 118 Avenue as a theatre hotbed,” said Judy Allan, Avenue Initiative Coordinator.

The obvious answer was to help change a raw space into a theatre that many groups could use, and the Caught in the Act: Theatre Series on 118 Ave was born. With assistance given by the Avenue Initiative in subsidized rent, marketing and publicity and with the hard costs of

theatre equipment and staging, the arrangement is already paying off as the first show of the series, a premiere performance of *The Gift*, written by Collin Doyle and Jeff Page, was instantly nominated for a Elizabeth Haynes Sterling Award, the highest theatre honour in the city.

Based out of the Old Cycle Building, the Series has also been supported by countless other community businesses and organizations, making it another true community success.

The current installment of the Caught in the Act Theatre Series runs until September. More shows are planned for the future with the idea to make it an ongoing, year-round theatre venue.



Caught In The Act, almost always a happy ending on 118 ave.

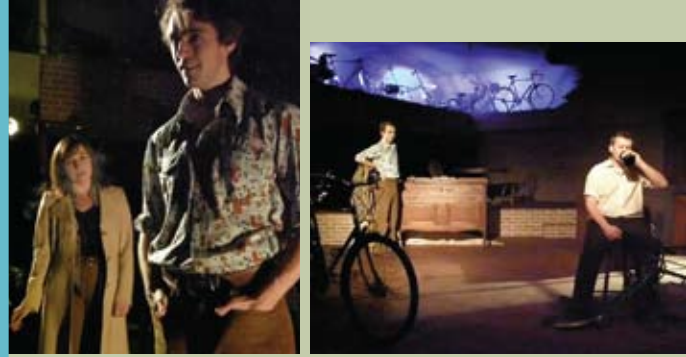


avenue initiative
revitalization

Construction set to run smoothly for third year

Construction on Phase 3 (92 St to 97 St) of the Avenue Initiative streetscape plan has begun and looks set to run smoothly once more. Planting of the trees and flowers in the Phase 2 area (87 St to 92 St) is also on target.

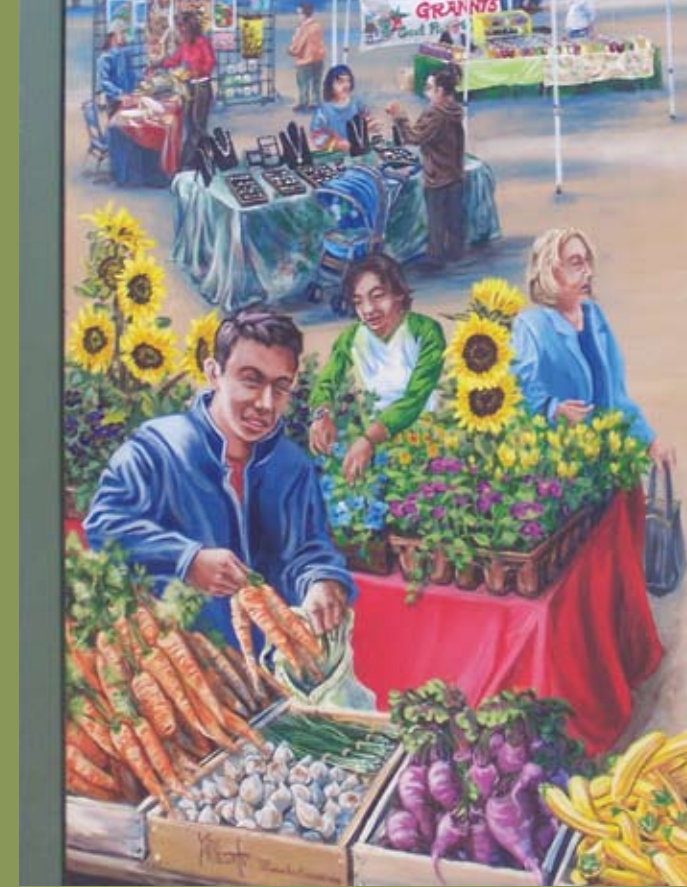
An expansion to the Streetscape plan has been approved by the Streetscape Working group and the City. Due to the many new and existing businesses on the 117 block of 95 St, construction will now be continuing south on 95 St to the 117 Avenue intersection.



Scenes from *Spokesong*, one of the plays in the Serca festival

VivaCity –getting the word out

Earlier this year the Avenue Initiative partnered with Arts on the Ave (AOTA), and the Alberta Avenue Business Association (AABA), to create a one-page info sheet publicizing arts events and dining on 118 Ave. The quarterly broadsheet, entitled VivaCity, is being currently distributed to businesses along the Avenue to share with their customers as well as being spread through social media sites with plans to expand the network to other areas in the future.



Art in community

In June 2010, local artist Kris Friesen's most recent mural project were unveiled at the one-year anniversary celebration of the Alberta Avenue Farmers' Market.

The group of 6 pieces depict scenes from 3 major events that are part of the area's revitalization: the Farmers' Market, and two annual art and culture festivals - Deep Freeze and Kaleido. The murals, designed to be displayed outside, will beautify and prevent graffiti as well as provide a year round reminder of the special place 118th Avenue has become.

This mural trio was funded through the City of Edmonton's Neighbourhood Revitalization Matching Grant, a grant that funds projects initiated by community members to further the goals of the Avenue Initiative Revitalization. They will be hung on the outside of the Alberta Avenue Community Centre later in 2010.

One of the two murals depicting the Alberta Ave Farmers' Market painted by local artist Kris Friesen

Idea Shindig

In February the Avenue Initiative Programs Group hosted a community gathering inspired by Jim Diers called The Idea Shindig. Individuals or groups had an opportunity to pitch their new idea to the participants, as well as build support for existing ones. The event was held at The Carrot Arts Coffeehouse and was full to capacity with a multi-generational crowd.

Some ideas that came out of the Shindig were Stone Soup and the Beautification of Utility Boxes art project (see below), Eastwood community garden, building installations at Kaleido Festival 2010, and the painting of garage doors.

Stone Soup

Everyone knows the children's story about stone soup – a soup that starts from nothing that everyone in the village adds something to until an amazing shared meal is created. This is exactly what happened at this year's That Bloomin' Garden and Art Show in May 2010. With the Avenue Food Security Network organization leading the way and through donations from 13 other businesses or organizations, a communal free vegetable soup was created and enjoyed by over 250 festival participants.



Community gathering at the Idea Shindig

Beautification of Utility Boxes

The Avenue Initiative is teaming with people in the community to create murals on the electrical boxes that line the Avenue. "We thought it would be a great way to bring more color and excitement to the area so as people walk down our Avenue they can see murals that reflect our community", says Jaimie Clements, lead organizer of the project. Residents of the community are being encouraged to submit their ideas for themes of the murals, so people, even if they are not artists, can have an opportunity to be a part of the process.

Then, a young emerging artist will be teamed with a professional artist to create and paint a mural for each box. All artists involved will be from one of the Avenue Initiative communities.

"The aim is to have everything completed by the end of summer", says Clements.

Destination Festival Avenue

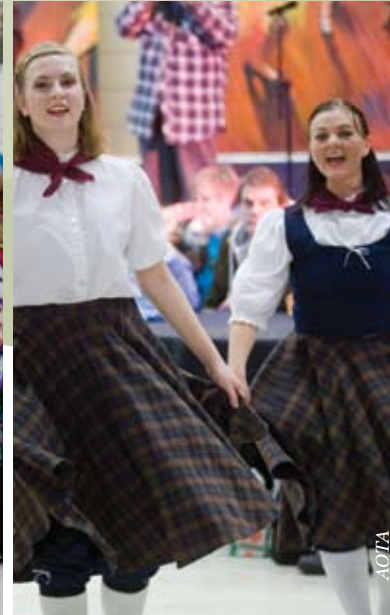
The Avenue Initiative is proud to support the fantastic local festivals that are helping change the image of 118 Avenue into Destination Avenue.

Deep Freeze: A Winter Byzantine Adventure 2010

With the perfect weather and a variety of amazing entertainment and things to do, the Deep Freeze 2010 festival brought over 10,000 people to the neighbourhood throughout its two days of music, culture and winter fun.



The Mummings play 'Fool Tom Fool'



French Canadian Dancers



The beautiful Ice Gardens at night

That Bloomin' Garden Show and Art Sale

With indoor and outdoor vendors, fantastic music and gorgeous weather, the Avenue came alive on the Mother's Day weekend to the colours and scents of art and flowers. A local favorite, approximately 500 people came to see and buy.



One of the many beautiful selections of flowers on display.



Dog Agility Course

Avenue goes to Dogs and Eastwood Summer Kickoff

Combined this year to celebrate the opening of the new dog off-leash area in the Eastwood community, the Eastwood Community Centre and park came alive in June to the fun of all things canine.



Kids having fun in Eastwood park.



Judy Allan



The Dunk Tank was a hit with festival goers

Still to come... Eastwoodfest 2010

The 2nd annual celebration of the Eastwood Community, Saturday August 14.

Kaleido 2010

Book off the weekend of September 9,10,11 for the latest edition of this growing festival. Music, Art, Drama, Dance and more!



Eastwoodfest celebrations



Wall dancing, Kaleido 2009

Besides the festivals The Avenue is becoming well known for, the Avenue Initiative is proud to support many other community events.

Large Item Pick Up

Once again the community came together to help out neighbours and clean up the alleys by taking large unwanted items to the City's Big Bins held at Northlands. Thanks once more to the City and the Avenue Initiative for supporting this event.



Large Item stats:

over 20 volunteers, approx 300 items moved, 3 rental trucks and 2 community members trucks, 8 hours in the hot sun, 3 hours in the hot kitchen cooking a volunteer appreciation dinner. Thanks everyone!

Eastwood Dog Club and Park

In spring 2009 a group of local dog owners had the idea to create a place in the community for their dogs to run and play. They approached Eastwood Community League to use the ice rink space during the summer and by their first week had up to 30 participants. The project was so successful the group decided to petition the City for a designated off-leash area and as of December 2009 the park beside the rink at 119 Ave and 85 St became official. Both the Avenue Initiative and the Eastwood Community League provided generous support towards the park development and the future plans of the group include lighting, water, notice boards and a fence.



Dogs & humans alike love the new Eastwood Dog Park

CSI Open House

On April 24, A Community Safety Information (CSI) Open House was held at the Alberta Ave Community Centre. With information booths and presentations from many City agencies and community safety organizations, local residents were invited to bring their questions and concerns and get answers and assistance from the experts.

The Open House was supported extensively by the Coalition of Crime Councils and the Avenue Initiative as well as the Edmonton Police Service.



New facades from 2009



Façade Program has strong start in 2010

Edmonton Council of BRZ's getting a head start on the year, the Alberta Ave Business Association (AABA) already has 5 new facades approved and 4 more applications in the process.

Water, Paraiso Tropical, The Carrot Arts Coffeehouse, the Lal Building and the El Rancho building, with the latter already half completed.

The Façade Program is a City initiative that encourages commercial building owners to invest in storefront renovations and upgrades by providing grants to cover a portion of the costs. In total 21 businesses in the Alberta Ave BRZ (including those approved so far in 2010) have taken advantage of the program since 2005. Two of those have since won Urban Design Awards – Bedouin Beats and Myhres Music.



New facade in progress at the El Rancho building

"I love this program," said Joe Holtz, Executive Director of AABA. "It makes such a valuable contribution to the look of an area." Holtz makes sure businesses in his area are well aware of the program and its benefits long before the application deadline and it shows in his results.

To date in 2010, façade improvements have been approved for Polar Bear Health and

Pilot project looking at Alberta Ave businesses

Edmonton's BRZ Council are creating an Economic Impact Assessment project and are using the Alberta Ave Business Zone as their pilot. A University of Alberta MBA student has been hired by the Council to determine a baseline measurement on what the businesses within the Alberta Ave business zone add to the City. This template could then be used in the future to assess other BRZ's economic impact on the City. A good response from businesses has been reported so far and the project should be wrapped up by September.

Development Fund Program a new incentive to business

The City recently adopted a New Development Fund Program policy to assist in the revitalization of certain main street commercial areas in need of a leg-up.

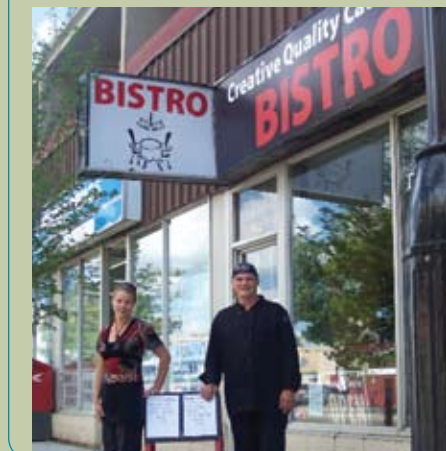
Property owners in these Enterprise Areas will be provided financial incentives if they choose to invest in higher density residential and/or retail and commercial development that will contribute to the revitalization of a commercial strip.

Projects are designated on a first-come, first-served basis until the total project funding of \$2,000,000 is reached or the program term is ended. Hopes are high in the community that this program will bring new development and business to the 118 Ave area.

Business on 118 Ave

Businesses come and go, but the BRZ is relatively stable at approximately 190 businesses, and the new businesses opening are interesting and sustainable says Joe Holtz, Executive Director of AABA. So far in 2010, over 10 businesses have opened, most in the food or clothing arenas.

All businesses in the zone were offered the opportunity to work for free with marketing students from NAIT in a combined NAIT/AABA project, including the business association itself. Look out for a vibrant and colourful new communications/marketing campaign from AABA in 2011.



Creative Quality Catering and Bistro, one of the new businesses on 118 Ave that has opened in 2010, and already infamous in the neighbourhood for excellent food at reasonable prices and fantastic catering.