

**MAKING SENSE OF PLACE: A FORMATIVE CASE STUDY OF
WHYTE AVENUE, EDMONTON, ALBERTA.**

BY

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A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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**Making Sense of Place:
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Of

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ABSTRACT

Sense of place is the experiential meaning of place. This thesis asserts that sense of place forms a deep source of planning knowledge largely unrecognised by traditional rational comprehensive planning. As a result, sense of place has rarely been included in planning theory and practice in proportion to its manifestation in both the literature on place and contemporary landscape.

This thesis contends collaborative planning, a form of communicative action, represents an alternative form of placemaking that is superior for maintaining and enhancing a local sense of place. Using the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area within Old Strathcona (Edmonton, Alberta) as a case study, the phenomena of sense of place, collaborative planning and its impacts are explored through key participant interviews using the grounded theory method of analysis.

Findings confirm that the Whyte Avenue area has a unique sense of place that is identifiable and can be meaningfully articulated and described. Critical grounded analyses of participant interviews established that sense of place is primarily structured according to physical, social and personal dimensions of place and can be theoretically modelled. Furthermore, collaborative planning (i.e. social) processes are shown to affect both manifest and latent sense of place outcomes. Knowledge developed through the meaningful experience of place therefore represents an important source of planning information best pursued through communicative placemaking theory and practice. Recommendations for improving awareness, meaning and communication of place via professional planning are provided.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Orientation	1
1.1.1	The Importance of Place	3
1.1.2	Planning and Place	4
1.2	Problem Statement.....	5
1.3	Goal and Objectives	6
1.4	Significance	7
1.5	Study Importance.....	7
1.6	Hypotheses.....	8
1.7	Limitations.....	9
1.8	Organisation.....	10
2	SENSE OF PLACE	12
2.1	Background	12
2.1.1	Definition	13
2.2	Dimensions of Place Experience.....	14
2.2.1	Individual	14
2.2.2	Socio-Cultural	18
2.2.3	Physical	23
2.3	Summary	26
3	PROFESSIONAL PLACEMAKING	27
3.1	Sense of Place as Planning Knowledge	27
3.2	Situating Sense of Place: A Review Professional Planning in Placemaking	30
3.2.1	Modernism and the Traditional Rational Comprehensive Model.....	31
3.2.2	Post-Modernism and the Communicative Turn	43
3.2.3	Contemporary Planning	47
3.3	Summary	48
4	RESEARCH METHOD.....	50
4.1	Background	50
4.1.1	Rationale	54
4.1.2	Objectives	56
4.1.3	Study Area	57
4.1.4	Method.....	59
4.2	Summary	64
5	RESEARCH FINDINGS	65
5.1	Analysis of Findings	65
5.2	Evolving Place: Reflections of Early Whyte Avenue.....	67
5.2.1	Physical Dimension	68

5.2.2	Socio-cultural Dimension.....	69
5.2.3	Individual Dimension	70
5.2.4	Summary of Early Whyte Avenue	71
5.3	Engaging Place: Collaboration and Consensus Building in Whyte Avenue	73
5.3.1	Relevant and Diverse Interests.....	73
5.3.2	Stakeholder Involvement and Participation.....	76
5.3.3	Real Problems and Practical Tasks.....	78
5.3.4	Self-Organizing Placemaking.....	80
5.3.5	Process Engagement.....	84
5.3.6	Information Creation, Traits, Integration and Outcomes	87
5.3.7	Consensus Building	90
5.3.8	Placemaking Experiences and Lessons Learned.....	94
5.3.9	Summary of Communicative Placemaking.....	99
5.4	Placemaking Impacts.....	107
5.4.1	Business and Commerce	107
5.4.2	Attractions, Culture and History	109
5.4.3	Accessibility, Services and Safety	111
5.4.4	Communication	113
5.4.5	Summary of Planning Impacts on the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area.....	114
5.5	Contemporary Whyte Avenue	117
5.5.1	Physical Dimension	117
5.5.2	Social Dimension.....	124
5.5.3	Individual Dimension	139
5.5.4	Summary of Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area	153
6	SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS.....	163
6.1	An Experiential Phenomenon	163
6.2	An Identifiable Place	165
6.3	A Meaningful Structure	166
6.4	A Theoretical Model	167
6.5	Summary	169
6.6	Placemaking Impacts and Implications	170
6.6.1	The Whyte Avenue Experience and Professional Practice ..	170
6.6.2	Planning with Place in Mind	177
6.6.3	Sense of Place Outcomes	178
6.6.4	Summary	181
6.7	Recommendations	182
6.7.1	Awareness	183
6.7.2	Meaning	183
6.7.3	Communication	184
6.7.4	Future Research Considerations	185
6.8	Conclusion	186

7	REFERENCES	188
8	APPENDICES	192
8.1	Appendix A – Informed Consent Statement	192
8.2	Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Questions	193
8.3	Appendix C – Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition	198
8.4	Appendix D – Photographs of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area in Old Strathcona.....	2002
8.5	Appendix E – Thesis Presentation, 22 March 2004	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Physical Dimension	69
Table 2: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Socio-Cultural Dimension	70
Table 3: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Individual Dimension	71
Table 4: Relevant and Diverse Interests	75
Table 5: Stakeholder Involvement and Participation	77
Table 6: Real Problems and Practical Tasks	79
Table 7: Placemaking Formation, Interaction, Process and Work	83
Table 8: Process Engagement	87
Table 9: Information Creation, Traits, Integration and Outcomes	89
Table 10: Consensus Seeking Outcomes	94
Table 11: Collaborative Planning Affect on Business and Commerce	109
Table 12: Collaborative Planning Affect on Attractions, Culture and History	111
Table 13: Collaborative Planning Affect on Accessibility, Services and Safety	113
Table 14: Collaborative Planning Affect on Community Communication	114
Table 15: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Location	118
Table 16: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Landscape	121
Table 17: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Image	124
Table 18: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Social Experience	128
Table 19: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Objective Place Identity	130
Table 20: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Subjective Place Identity	133
Table 21: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Comparative Place Identity	135
Table 22: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Attachment	138
Table 23: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Experience	143
Table 24: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Consciousness	146
Table 25: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Rest and Movement	151
Table 26: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Inside-ness	153
Table 27: Meaningful Structure of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area	168
Table 28: Collaborative Planning Impact on Whyte Avenue’s Physical History and Sense of Place	179

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: City of Edmonton.....	58
Figure 2: Map of Whyte Avenue Commercial Area in Old Strathcona	58
Figure 3. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (109 Street – 106 Street)	199
Figure 4. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (106 Street – 103 Street)	200
Figure 5. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (103 Street – 99 Street)	201
Figure 6: Example of old historic buildings located along Whyte Avenue between 103 and 104 Street in the heart of Old Strathcona.....	202
Figure 7: Example of streetscaping and architectural detail along Whyte Avenue located in the historic core area.....	202
Figure 8: Photograph of public art located adjacent McIntyre Park and Farmer’s Market near Fringe theatre.....	203
Figure 9: Photograph of Farmer’s Market, a successful adaptive re-use project located immediately north of (i.e. behind) Whyte Avenue at 103 Street.	203

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

Place is essential to human survival, social and even spiritual development. Not surprisingly, people are highly attuned to what their environment affords them in terms of clean air and water, places to gather and bond and even worship. For many, place constitutes an essential element of life.

Implicated in this is the profession of planning which arguably serves to manage and enhance the neighbourhoods, cities and regions we live in. Through communication, interaction and intervention, planning plays a fundamental role in society shaping people's experience and meaning of place. As such, planning directly impacts our sense of place.

However, the opposite of this cannot be said. Planning does not generally recognize sense of place and the grounded knowledge and understanding provided by it. Instead, traditional rational comprehensive planning has emphasized empirical (i.e. quantitative) over experiential (i.e. qualitative) knowledge. As a result, the concept of sense of place has received little attention within planning theory and practice.

This thesis investigates the concept sense of place in relation to communicative placemaking (i.e. planning), specifically collaborative planning. Because the intention and act of planning is fundamentally linked to the phenomenon of place, clarification and development of the concept sense of place is key to informing current theory and practice. Moreover, this thesis asserts that sense of place is integral to the pursuit of inclusive stakeholder representation, openness, diverse ways of knowing, critical discourse, and consensus building particular to communicative planning. This overlooked fact contrasts with rational comprehensive planning models whose impact on place has been primarily characterized by a narrative of loss (Mayher, 1999). Communicative placemaking and sense of place are mutually supportive.

Following a review of the literature on sense of place and the discipline of planning, this thesis explores the relationship between place and planning as it exists within the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) of Old Strathcona, Edmonton, Alberta. This area was selected based on its rich history, composition of historic and contemporary architecture, compact human scale, and pedestrian character. Furthermore, the commercial area exhibits sustained pedestrian activity, contains a wide range of businesses and services, and is widely acknowledged as unique within the Edmonton urban context. During the 1880s the commercial core area served as the northern railway terminus between Calgary and Edmonton. Since this time, much of this area's physical character has been preserved through a mix of favourable economics and local concern. Over time, this area has continued to evolve, accommodating both economic booms in housing and physical growth (i.e. expansion), historical preservation and revitalisation movements. Collective awareness, interest, and effort have greatly contributed to this area's continued success and distinct sense of place.

The success of the commercial area has also brought a number of challenges with it, including pedestrian congestion, parking standards, increased number of alcohol establishments and area seats in such establishments, and general nightlife. To deal with these and other issues arising from the commercial area's growth, a core group of citizens formed in 1993, eventually becoming the Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC) later formalised under the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study approved by City Council in 1994. This thesis therefore seeks to understand not only the commercial area's particular sense of place but its evolution via collaborative planning (i.e. communicative placemaking) and impacts.

Using the WACA as a formation case study and qualitative grounded theory research procedure, critical analysis of semi-structured interviews with key individuals was conducted with community members who participated in the Whyte Avenue Land Use Study. This revealed unique experiences, meanings, thoughts and perceptions of the commercial area's sense of place in relation to communicative placemaking. Findings were then explored in terms of their

potential implications and considerations for contemporary and future planning theory and practice.

1.1.1 The Importance of Place

Place is central to human existence. It sets us meaningfully in time and space and is "at once the limit and condition of all that exists" (Relph, 1976). It forms an essential setting for life that is fundamental to human survival, psychological well-being, social and cultural interaction, actualisation and fulfilment. Place is significant because it carries the capacity to enable and/or constrain human need and development.

This fact is obvious given the essential biological and physiological human requirements place affords (e.g. oxygen, water, food). These are crucial to human survival in that absence in one poses a direct if not immediate threat to life. Human survival is therefore contingent upon strong visual elements of place. Images and cues within the environment help facilitate spatial orientation and navigation necessary to the security of water, food, refuge or defence, prospect and mobility (Appleton, 1975; Hiss, 1990; Lynch, 1977).

Aside from these basic needs, place also supports personal enlightenment and social cohesion. They serve as centres of personal existence where people can engage in social contact, alleviate feelings of stress, loneliness and alienation. Places offer individuals and groups informal and formal opportunities to "make and maintain effective contact with the world around them" (Nelson, personal communication, August 2001).

The need for face-to-face communication, sharing of ideas and knowledge in place is also important in terms of empowerment. That is, people are empowered through their interaction with place. The individual and collective exercise of power in place imbues a sense of self-respect, satisfaction, confidence and worth. These are important elements of personal and social development (Maslow 1954). An example of this might be elementary, junior and/or high school, which serve to

establish and develop self-exploration, actualisation and fulfilment in their students. Finally, place may serve to inspire or summon work capable of uplifting and enlightening human aesthetic (e.g. art gallery or museum), morality (e.g. court of law or national capital) or spirit (e.g. cathedral or great oak).

These are important aspects of place that help establish, maintain and enrich human life. However, they do not come automatically or confirm our being-in-the-world in and of themselves. Rather, each of these facets of place must be recognised, understood and acted upon. The individual and or collective must be consciously aware, open to experience, and intentionally interactive with their world in order to complete these life transactions. Herein lies the importance of and need for sense of place in planning today.

1.1.2 Planning and Place

This thesis was inspired by a personal interest in the experience and meaning of place. How people sense, interact and assign meaning to the world around them is fundamental not only to life but also to the practice of placemaking. This necessarily involves the concept of sense of place and how it may be preserved, enhanced and recreated through planning. Current conceptualizations and applications of sense of place remain unclear and uncertain with respect to planning theory and practice.

On the one hand, planning theory is confronted with the challenge of defining what sense of place is, how it is articulated and transformed into planning knowledge. On the other, planning practice itself continues to evolve as a discipline. Shifting away from traditional planning practices towards more communicative models, this presents further challenges and opportunities for integrating the concept sense of place within the planning discipline. These issues have immediate implications for planning theory, practice and transformation of meaningful places.

Planning needs to identify ways of facilitating greater public awareness, meaning and concern for place. As a field of study and professional practice, planning is obligated to broaden public interest and involvement in place that encourages greater environmental, physical and social responsibility. This is particularly challenging for two major reasons.

First, the concept of sense of place is not clearly understood within the current literature on place. It is partitioned by a number of disciplines (e.g. cultural and humanistic geography, sociology, psychology) making it difficult to define. This has done little to inform planning academia or inspire professional practice. As a result, further examination of the concept sense of place is required in order to clarify and connect it meaningfully to planning theory and practice.

Secondly, planning must realise the significance of sense of place as a beneficial concept and tool. Seldom has planning discourse approached sense of place as an important topic worthy of inquiry. Academia must therefore engage, inform and assist planning practice in the confirmation and interrogation of sense of place as a valuable source of knowledge. Planning practice must find new and innovative ways of translating and integrating new concepts and knowledge such as sense of place. Lastly, planning has a responsibility to push the boundaries of its knowledge and capabilities by engaging and involving public sense of place in transforming place.

1.2 Problem Statement

Place is endangered in the widest sense. Environmental degradation (Hiss, 1990; Register, 2002), globalization, information communication technology (Stephanovic, 1998), mass media (Gustafson, 2001), international style architecture (Norberg-Schulz, 1979), hyper-mobility (Agnew, 1987), technical rationality and expert knowledge (Innes & Booher, 1999) threaten human sense of place. This is underpinned by a series of emergent themes within the literature on place. Lack of awareness or consciousness of place, loss of meaning (e.g. placelessness) and

limited public involvement characterize a narrative of loss within the planning field (Mayher, 1999). The dominance of the traditional rational comprehensive planning model has failed to mediate these challenges. This has immediate theoretical and practical implications for place and placemaking. Research that clarifies the concept sense of place and makes certain the role of contemporary and future placemaking is therefore essential to making and maintaining meaningful, healthy and vibrant places.

1.3 Goal and Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the phenomenon and concept of sense of place in relation to collaborative planning, and to examine potential implications and considerations for communicative planning theory and practice. Specific objectives of this investigation are as follows:

- To assess, clarify and further develop the concept sense of place. *What is sense of place?* This entails review of literature on place and conceptualisations of sense of place
- To examine the relationship between sense of place and placemaking. *How does placemaking affect sense of place?* This involves review of planning literature for theory and practice linkages to sense of place outcomes
- To explore the relationship between sense of place and communicative placemaking process in the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) (located in Old Strathcona, Edmonton, Alberta) as a result of the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS). *How has the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study influenced (or not) Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's sense of place?* This involves use of the WACA as a case study with which to describe and explore the relationship between sense of place outcomes and communicative placemaking process used through in-depth interviews with key participants.
- To identify theoretical and practical implications and recommendations for maintaining and enhancing a sense of place through placemaking. *How should*

placemaking with a sense of place best proceed? This requires consideration of significant sense of place and placemaking linkages identified through case study analyses that may be locally informative or their benefits generalised to similar commercial areas and contexts.

1.4 Significance

It is through sense of place, that human awareness, identification, meaning and attachment transform space into place. More importantly “the places where we spend our time affect the people we are and can become” (Hiss, 1990, xi). It follows that failure to establish and advance a sense of place stands to jeopardise a person’s or group’s immediate and/or future self. Failure to be aware of, identify with, recognise and respect the meanings and symbols of place carries risk of individual and collective loss associated with:

- Creativity, expression, and spiritual development
- Image, respect, confidence and empowerment
- Love, belonging and social contact
- Security and safety
- Biological and physiological needs

The important need for an accentuated sense of place today is increasingly evident given the threat of increasing environmental degradation (Register, 2002), declining clean air and drinking water (Janigran, 2002), persistence of gated neighbourhoods (Hall, 1998), suburban sprawl (Stephanovic, 1998), transient and characterless urban landscapes (Rybcznski, 1999). Understanding the nature of sense of place is therefore vitally important to the practice of professional placemaking.

1.5 Study Importance

This research is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, this research addresses the need to further examine, clarify and

ground the concept of sense of place as it currently exists within the literature. Furthermore, it challenges traditional planning practice assumptions, methods and decision-making in light of more recent theoretical advances by communicative action. Lastly, this research is innovative in that it links communicative planning theory with the concept of sense of place as place knowledge.

The practical significance of this research is that it examines planning practice in terms of maintaining and enhancing a local sense of place. More specifically, this research documents the phenomena of sense of place as it occurs within the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) in consulting with local members of the community. It examines participant accounts of collaborative planning as they relate to the formation of the Old Strathcona Area Community Council and the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study initiated to improve local sense of place, identify lessons and future opportunities for the WACA.

Using the grounded theory approach, this process encouraged individuals to reflect upon and share their feelings, experiences, and understanding of place and communicative placemaking. Subsequently, this research is important in that it seeks to strengthen local community awareness and development of sense of place. Finally, because the study area represents early 20th Century small town business districts, research findings are generalisable to many other main streets, urban villages and focal points throughout North America.

1.6 Hypotheses

This research is guided by the following hypotheses:

- Sense of Place is an experiential phenomenon that can be identified, articulated, and described
- The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) has an identifiable sense of place within Old Strathcona

- The structure of sense of place may be revealed through critical grounded analyses of implicit meanings, experiential views and reflected upon assumptions and understanding
- Sense of Place is composed of various place components that can be theoretically modelled
- The process of placemaking influences components of place and therefore sense of place

1.7 Limitations

A number of methodological limitations were identified for this research. First, not all participants possessed “strong micro-world” experiences. This was not surprising given that some stakeholders reside outside the commercial area or frequent the area less than they used to, and take parts of Whyte Avenue for granted. What was important was that they were willing to share their reflective experience, knowledge and understanding as it relates to sense of place in the WACA and collaborative planning process.

This research also acknowledges that because participants were different from one another, they did not always collectively agree on what constitutes the WACA study area. However, this was addressed by selecting the formally recognised commercial area outlined in both the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS, 1997) and Old Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan (OSARP, 1998). Community members demonstrated familiarity with these documents, study area, and ability to articulate sense of place experiences and descriptions within the WACA.

Another limitation was the availability and number of research participants. Agreement to participate is never a full guarantee (Warren, 2002), and not all initial contacts proved successful. It should be noted however that participating community members were especially accommodating and helpful during the interview process. This was very encouraging and as the number of interview

sessions increased, so did the level of questioning, confirmation and understanding of participant discussions. In addition, while no single rule exists as to number of interviews required or their optimum length (Johnson, 2002), attempt was made to saturate collected data by further engaging participant assumptions, meanings and experiences. As such, interviews proceeded as conversations informed by previous interviews, relevant literature review, personal experience and knowledge of the area, and participant interest in the area. While the semi-structured interview set the basis for discussion, its open format permitted in-depth discussion of the topic of place and placemaking.

This study was also challenged by limited resources with which to collect and analyse data. For this reason, a convenience sample of community interests who participated in the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS) and or who were involved in the Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC) were selected. Thirteen in-depth interviews ranging between one and three hours were conducted. No follow-up interviews were conducted due to project resources and scope. However, by providing a cross-section of perspectives, theoretical sampling and comparative analyses of experiences, feelings and thoughts, study rigor and power were maintained. This is further discussed in Chapters four and five.

1.8 Organisation

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to material to be presented and discussed in this thesis. This includes a summary of investigation aims, objectives and method of inquiry. Chapter two begins with a literature review of sense of place covering its significance, development and current conceptualisation. Chapter three continues with a literature review of contemporary planning theory and practice entitled placemaking. This section examines modernist and post-modernist planning theory and practice in relation to sense of place impacts. Traditional rational comprehensive and communicative action models are explored as frameworks for

creating, enhancing and maintaining a sense of place. Chapter four explains the research method used to collect and analyse information for this thesis. It identifies the study rationale, objectives, area selected, background, method used and limitations. Chapter five examines case study interview research findings based on data analysis and interpretation. Chapter six provides a synthesis of thesis findings and recommendations.

2 SENSE OF PLACE

This literature review begins by emphasising the importance of place. In so doing, it provides the groundwork for establishing the significance and necessary development of the concept sense of place. Definition and theoretical challenges associated with sense of place are examined. Components or elements of sense of place are identified and introduced as a means of exploring current conceptualisations of sense of place and, in the next section, traditional and contemporary planning practice.

2.1 Background

Sense of place research encompasses a number of disciplines within the social sciences including environmental psychology, urban sociology, humanistic and cultural geography, anthropology and political science. Early work stressed a positivist orientation and, therefore, a rational objective approach to place research (Moore, 1987; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Shamai, 1991).

Quantitative description, measurement, prediction and control of observable (i.e. tangible) phenomena characterise this traditional scientific method of inquiry (Abercrombie et al. 1988; Reber 1995). Demographics, physical landscape, location, objects, economic market analysis, socio-economic status, indicators of quality of life and content analysis of social and personal discourse are all examples of a positivist research concern that continues to influence sense of place research (Low & Altman, 1992; Moore, 1987; Svirplys, 1999).

Since this time, research has increasingly focused on the subjective structure of place meaning (i.e. sense of place). This movement reflects the need to include experiential data (i.e. human subjectivity) in order to complement existing objective understanding of place (Tuan, 1977). For a number of researchers the subjective dimension of individual and social settings play an essential role in determining the meaning or sense of place (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993). Major work focuses on human perception and experience, social and community beliefs, values, meaning

and its attribution to place. Qualitative research methods focus on narration, exploration, interpretation and description of information as the primary means of revealing sense of place (Moore, 1987; Stephanovic, 1998).

Recent theoretical research has become increasingly aware of the need for an interdisciplinary approach that includes a multidimensional conceptualisation of sense of place (Gustafson, 2001). This view is supported by the literature that acknowledges the multidimensional and transactional nature of place. Thus, sense of place is created through person-environment interactions structured by individual, socio-cultural and physical dimensions of place (Steele, 1981; Gustafson, 2001).

This subjective-objective relationship remains theoretically problematic however. To begin, the amount of literature and research specifically devoted to the topic of sense of place remains sparse. Explanations for this gap in knowledge include the cursory treatment of the topic of place, its conceptual generalisation, and multidisciplinary interpretation within the literature (Gustafson, 2001, Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, Paradis, 2000). Furthermore, attempts to precisely define sense of place remain particularly elusive and generalised (Paradis, 2000; Relph, 1976; Shamai, 1991). For example, the terminology used to define sense of place is also associated with place experience (Steele, 1981), place meaning (Gustafson, 2001), genius-loci and spirit of place (Norberg-Schulz, 1979), essence of place (Relph, 1976) and conceptual entity (Canter, 1977). This demonstrates the need for further clarification of this term within the literature if it is to be meaningfully wielded in planning discourse and practice.

2.1.1 Definition

Sense of place is defined as the meaningful experience of place and all that this encompasses. It is an interactional concept whereby a place is distinguished based upon its collective set of traits over time and whose feeling and meaning are

structured by human experience, knowledge, social context, culture and physical environment (Agnew, 1987; Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Steele, 1981; Tuan, 1975; Wong, 1993). This implies both objective and subjective elements of place.

According to Svirplys (1999, 11),

“There are several dimensions of what contributes to a sense of place including the tangible physical components, the social, cultural and institutional components as well as the [intangible] perceived, or experienced values and meanings”

The interactions among these dimensions of place transform physical space while structuring human experience responsible for establishing a sense of place.

2.2 Dimensions of Place Experience

What are the dimensional components of place that constitute sense of place or meaningful experience in both space and time? As mentioned above, a series of dimensions and their components influence sense of place as identified within the literature. Throughout, three primary dimensions of place, each housing a series of components, are referred to and frame this review. These include individual, socio-cultural and physical dimensions of place.

2.2.1 Individual

A considerable amount of the literature on sense of place focuses on the significance of individual experience. Given the highly subjective nature of individual experience, qualitative research is primarily used to describe, structure and understand the feelings, emotions, ideas and meanings of sense of place. For a number of authors, sense of place represents a holistic or gestalt-like concept best described as ‘greater than the sum of its parts’ (Buttimer, 1980; Relph, 1976; Stephanovic, 1998; Tuan, 1977). Moreover, sense of place is conceptualised as irreducible to any one element, characteristic or dimension capable of constituting its entirety. This further supports the notion that multiple dimensions of place are essential to creating a sense of place including: symbolic, emotional, biological,

social and even cultural meanings we may or may not even be conscious of (Buttimer, 1980, 167; Steele, 1981; Tuan, 1974, 1977).

Individual dimensions of sense of place are significant in that they link the subjective worlds of self and society with the physical material world. Through human subjectivity the individual “[becomes] actively immersed in the environment, interpreting, intuiting, sensing, responding emotionally and intellectually, and meaningfully assigning signification [meaning] in a complexity of ways” (Stephanovic, 1998, 32-33). Contribution to sense of place includes components of personal experience, place consciousness, a sense of home and reach, insidedness and outsidedness.

Personal Experience

Real places “[involve] our whole being, all our senses” (Tuan, 1977, 146). Individual experience, values, attitudes and intentions structure our perception of place and its attribution of meaning. When the spatial and physical elements of place are fully experienced, a place becomes real and, if allowed, imbued with value over time. Experience of place is also directed outside the self toward the external world. Through human interaction with place, people come to meaningfully understand it (Canter, 1977, 177). It may be passive or proactive encompassing modes of sensation, perception and cognition. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, conceptualisation of space (in relation to the human body), abstract knowledge and symbolisation structure sense of place (Tuan, 1974; Lynch, 1977). This is in turn further shaped by individual capacities affected by age, biological needs, personal temperament, and culture (Tuan, 1974; 1975). Human experience and intention significantly ground sense of place (Relph, 1976).

Place Consciousness – Connectedness

The degree to which people are aware and think about their experiences and meanings of place reflects another important component of sense of place – place

consciousness. As mentioned earlier, the experience of place is not always a conscious act. Hence, sense of place may reside within the background of one's mind as an object, or summoned to the fore of consciousness as a subject of further examination (Relph, 1976). This supports phenomenologists' assertion that sense of place is obscured by the unconscious, and that the experience of place must be revealed through qualitative research (Canter, 1977; Moore, 1987; Walmsley & Lewis, 1993).

Place and people's sense of it may also be experienced unselfconsciously. That is, both sense and place become fused, in which the person-place relationship becomes whole, mutual and complete. Sensation, identity, attachment and belonging merge, forming a relationship that is known yet taken-for-granted and unself-conscious. Hence, sense and place become unconscious, acting as a background to objects, groups and events, which interact to define it (Relph, 1976). Tony Hiss (1990) describes this as a form of simultaneous perception or sixth sense that operates continually. For Hiss, the individual *in place* is always (sub)consciously connected.

This implicit connection with place suggests consciousness can be raised, reflected upon and intentionally experienced. Hence, the experience and meaning of place (i.e. sense of place) may be self-conscious in which place becomes an "object of understanding and reflection" (Relph, 1976, 66). The capacity, quality and intensity of opening oneself to the experience of place influences its identity, attachment, belonging and essence. In this case, place and sense are summoned to the foreground of our mind as a subject of personal, social and cultural intentions and experiences. Connection with place forms an important if not fundamental source of planning knowledge.

Home and Reach, Rest and Movement

Sense of place has also been investigated in terms of the reciprocal movements of home and reach, rest and movement (Buttimer, 1980; Tuan, 1977).

Home is where life comes to rest and take pause. It provides a centre for life's interests (Tuan, 1975). Reach exists as outward movement from home in search of life's needs and desires. As our knowledge and articulation of space increases, so too does our reach of the external world (Tuan, 1977). This has particular implications for sense of place. As Buttimer (1980, 171) explains,

"For any individual the home and reach of one's thought and imagination may be quite distinct from the home and reach of one's social affiliations, which may again be distinct from the actual physical location of physical home and reach."

Overlapping dimensions of home-reach suggest "a centre of action and intention... [where] events and actions are significant in the context of certain places, and are influenced by the character of those places even as they contribute to that character" (Relph, 1976, 42).

Rest and movement also imply a sense of space and time that is "largely subconscious" (Tuan, 1977, 118). Because space is experienced through movement, place is represented as pause and a locality where biological needs may be met and a centre of felt value (i.e. sense of place) developed (Tuan, 1977, 138). Time is experienced through phases of tension and ease, biological rhythm and seasonal change. Thus, human activity creates a spatio-temporal structure conceived as flow or movement. To pause is to invite a sense of place. Attachment, sentiment and even affection for place based on intimate experience over time contribute to the phenomena of sense of place.

Insiderness and Outsiderness

Sense of place is also defined by the dialectic of inside and outside. According to Relph (1976, 49), this is fundamental to our experience of the "lived-world" and our "essence of place". It is through the distinctive experience of being 'inside', its space, physical form, objects, activities, symbols and meaning that separates and distinguishes it from an 'outside'. Relph (1976) defines three dialectics

of insideness including existential, empathetic-objective, and behavioural-incidentals.

At the existential level, individuals know they belong and identify with a place (or not) implicitly. For them, a bond is formed in which they become a part of place and place becomes a part of them contributing to a sense of place. Empathetic insideness is characterized by an attitude of openness, appreciation, respect and empathy for the social and cultural meanings of place. Behavioural insideness is the perception of place in terms of its particular "set of objects, views, and activities" that are "arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities" (Relph, 1976, 52). Thus, "[t]o be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with place" (Relph, 1976, 49).

2.2.2 Socio-Cultural

The socio-cultural dimension forms another important dimension of sense of place. Research has concentrated on social groups located at the neighbourhood, city and regional scale to further understand sense of place. Because of the scale of inquiry involved, empirical and quantitative approaches have dominated this field. Research has focused on social factors such as age, generation, gender, race, ethnicity, class and socio-economic status producing variable findings (Shamai, 1991; Mazumdar et. al., 2000; Low & Altman, 1992; Hummon, 1992; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). It is generally regarded however, that social and cultural components of place are integral to the creation, maintenance and transformation of sense of place.

The primary reason for this is that society, institutions, communities and groups form the context in which individual experience, knowledge, beliefs and values are situated and place experienced (Pred, 1983, 1986; Rapoport, 1977; Tuan, 1977). People do not exist independent of their social context (environment), nor are they powerless to transform it and the meanings attributed to place (Butz &

Eyles, 1997; Pred, 1983, 1986). Thus, on the one hand, individuals are immersed in social and cultural contexts that provide them with common knowledge, values and behaviour that filter their experience and sense of place (Tuan, 1974). On the other, individuals are constantly engaging, questioning, confirming and framing social and cultural meanings of place (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995). This communicative inter-subjectivity is essential to structuring sense of place. Literature on sense of place identifies a series of influential components that include social processes, place identity and attachment.

Social processes

Social processes form an important element in transforming sense of place. Recent work in this area identifies individual perception, knowledge of and behaviour in place as being socially and culturally mediated. According to authors Butz and Eyles (1997, 6) "social interaction, place and sense of place are mutually constitutive". The idea that personal and social senses of place implicate and define the other is also shared by a number of other authors (Agnew, 1987; Hummon, 1992; Pred, 1983, 1986). Among them, it is commonly agreed that person and group are not independent of each other in determination of a sense of place. Rather, it is because the "life world is always reproduced, negotiated and rationalized through a social process of communicative action" (Butz & Eyles, 1997, 6).

Social processes are therefore dynamic and diverse. Dynamic in that they are constantly being transformed through collective agency (i.e. social groups and institutions), communication, individual development and physically evolving place (Paradis, 2000; Pred, 1986). Social processes are diverse in that they are composed of numerous overlapping, conflicting, merging and developing individual meanings. Diverse social processes connect individuals through social activity in place (i.e. meaningful space and time) (Butz & Eyles, 1997). Formal and informal social institutions structure human social activity, meaning, experience and therefore sense

of place. Examples include political, religious, educational and mass media communications (Agnew, 1987). Informal social institutions may include cultural or community organisations, social groups, and familial / kinship ties. The affect of various institutions on people inevitably leads to commonly shared daily life paths (i.e. experiences, rituals and activities) commonly held social histories and formalised knowledge (Pred, 1983; 1986). Social processes therefore shape sense of place and are constantly evolving.

Place Identity

Human experience and knowledge transforms space into a distinguishable and meaningful place. Such places evoke a distinctive identity shaped by both objective and subjective phenomena. Notwithstanding the physical landscape, its unique spatial features and objects, it is human subjectivity that grounds sense of place and distinguishes the self or group and its identity. Individual experience, knowledge and socio-cultural context are therefore essential to place identity, a component of sense of place.

At an individual level, personal experience “transform[s] the local landscape into a symbolic extension of the self by imbuing it with the personal meanings of life experiences” (Hummon, 1992, 258). Individual sensations of place, daily interactions, rituals, customs, insights, stories and meanings are invested in place (Tuan, 1975; Stephanovic, 1998). These life acts distinguish both self and place from others by providing an expressed symbolic permanence and shared identity (Canter, 1977, 179). This identification with place becomes an extension of personal experience, the relationship held between the two, and sense of place that develops. Each defines and identifies the other. Both the number of identities and senses of place become as infinite as the number of ways of experiencing place by people.

Common values, beliefs, knowledge and understanding also play a role in the identity and sense of place. As indicated earlier, individuals do not live in an

existential vacuum. They both influence and are influenced by the world around them (Butz & Eyles, 1997). This further shapes individual experiences and meanings of place used to transform the local environment into a symbolic extension of the self. Hummon (1992, 262) points out that community identity is “grounded in both social integration and environmental experience” and “appears to build particularly on the personal meanings of life experiences and the public images of local culture”. Just as place and personal identity is bound together, so too is the community and its sense of place. Community values, messages and symbols communicate local identity and sense of place through an intentional “collectively conditioned place consciousness” (Aldo van Eyck, 1969, 109 in Relph, 1976, 34). Social groups actively seek to “‘retrieve’, ‘engrave’, and ‘enclose’ segments from their collective memory, ... collective past [and future]” (Mazumdar et. al., 2000). These are made explicit in public place and serve to identify social identity and sense of place.

Further research suggests that positive place identity may contribute to favourable physical appearance of communities, local health of business and development, and pride in one’s community and home (Hummon, 1992). Positive personal and social place identity has immediate implications for human development and the need for affirmative individual and collective image, respect, ego and worth. Local demographics, social affiliations and activity therefore serve as important determinants of identity and sense of place. Social activity, group formation, interests, values, relationships, politics and geography may influence these (Paradis, 2000)

Place Attachment

Place attachment is another element responsible for structuring sense of place. In essence, place attachment is the bonding that occurs between people and place. A review by Low and Altman (1992, 4) reports that “place attachment has many inseparable, integral, and mutually defining features, qualities, or properties”

and that “it is not composed of separate or independent parts, components, dimensions or factors”. This point is reflected in the literature on place that recognises affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects of attachment to place (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001).

Human bonding with place is also dependent upon and shaped by the “quality and intensity of [human] experience” rather than the duration of dwelling in place (Tuan, 1977, 198). Experience is influenced by individual capacities, social interaction, ethnicity and culture (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Mazumdar et. al 2000; Pred, 1983; Tuan, 1974). Individual experience, attachment and thus sense of place may not always be conscious, put easily into words or necessarily lasting (Tuan, 1977). For example, attachment to place may not be discovered until a break or separation occurs through loss or distance. Intimate feelings such as solace, security or restoration may be difficult to articulate especially if unconscious and fleeting.

In addition to human subjectivity, objective physical variation in terms of scale, specificity and tangibility also affect attachment and sense of place. As individual ties with place increase, so too does their emotional bond. This has potential carryover effects to larger scales (Tuan, 1977). As Tuan (1977, 171) points out,

“[e]motion begins to tinge the whole neighbourhood – drawing on, and extrapolating from, the direct experience of its particular parts – when the neighbourhood is perceived to have rivals and to be threatened in some way, real or imagined.”

However, what neighbourhood means to residents, where it begins, and ends often remains unclear.

Different actors and social relationships also affect place attachment. As with place identity, individuals, social groups, institutions and wider cultural context are transactional, dynamic and diverse. All of these features contribute to sense of place, its identity and potential for cultivating experience, sentiment and attachment.

2.2.3 Physical

Space is fundamental to the existence of place. Without it, human beings would cease to exist as they depend on the material world for its natural ecosystems and human structure to sustain, enrich and make life meaningful. In this sense, place becomes a real, physical, tangible phenomenon. Accordingly, place manifests itself in natural and human landscapes, features, materials, objects and artefacts. These may be given or deliberately created phenomena that take on specific meanings or symbols. Research on physical aspects of sense of place has received the most attention from quantitative and empirical approaches. Focus has primarily rested upon place location, landscape and image in structuring sense of place.

Location

Most if not all places have a fixed location or position in space. Tuan (1977, 161) suggests that place "is whatever stable object catches our attention". For example a rocking chair is stable, unfixed, and affords a potential centre of felt meaning qualifying it as a unique place. Objects, materials, features and symbols are important elements in defining location. They identify, distinguish, orient and give meaning to different scales of place (Norberg-Schulz, 1979).

However, literature on place also suggests that a specified location is "neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of place" (Relph, 1976, 29). For example, advancements in information and communication technology have changed the way place is conceptualised in terms of its location, experience and meaning (Buttimer, 1980, Gustafson, 2001). Movement and rest, whether physical or virtual, play an important role in defining place location. The reason for this is pause and rest occurs at a given point (i.e. location) in time and space. This enables the conceptualisation and formation of place and sense.

Landscape

Fundamental to sense of place is the natural and human-made landscape. These represent the physical, tangible phenomena composed of material features, objects and forms of life (Norberg-Schulz, 1979). Landscapes impact sense of place by influencing human experience and their interaction with the environment. This is primarily achieved by, but not restricted to, what the landscape provides humans, "for good or for ill" (Gibson, 1979).

Physical elements in natural and human landscapes affecting individual sense of place include: verticality and horizontality, light, exposure, enclosure, mass, volume, form, texture, colour and durability of physical material (Tuan, 1977, 116). Depending on what is afforded by the local environment (and recognised by the individual), a place may also provide orientation, direction, prospect, refuge and movement in addition to other information (Appleton, 1975; Gibson, 1979). A tree, for example, affords protection from the sun, rain and even wind. Add to this personal experience, informal and formal knowledge, and an individual might also recognise that its fruit is edible, water is available nearby, or refuge from predators may be sought here.

Landscape also evokes human values, intentions and meanings that affect sense of place. Deliberately created spaces can articulate social order, instruct and even teach (Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Tuan, 1974). They directly impinge upon human senses, feelings and emotions distinguishing it from other places and providing a unique experience. Landscapes are also capable of eliciting ideas and history through distant memories (Svirplys, 1999). They encourage imagination and help to restore psychological well-being (Tuan, 1977). In short, landscapes influence how people come to sense, and perceive a sense of place uniquely.

Image

The image of place is the set of characteristics that distinguish it to insiders and outsiders (Svirplys, 1999; Wong, 1993). It also refers to something that is not

real, a construction based on conception and sense, which allows one to interpret information from one's surrounds (Canter, 1977, 21). Image is the impression of a place filtered through a mix of individual, socio-cultural and physical aspects of place that give it spatial and non-spatial form (i.e. sense of place) (Montgomery 1998; Rapoport, 1977). Since change in any of the elements of place is ongoing, it follows that an image of place is similarly dynamic (Canter, 1977, 21). Place image therefore requires the successful association of physical elements of place (objects) with personal, group or culturally held meanings (subject).

Strong place images rely on the effective symbolisation and communication of its material elements. Symbols in turn transform objects beyond what is fully given and understood into "knowledge of something greater beyond" (Tuan, 1977, 114). Lynch (1977) has identified several physical features of place that account for such image. These include:

- Path – channels of customary, occasional or potential movement (e.g. sidewalks or roadways)
- Edges – linear boundaries that separate physical space or phases (e.g. water ways or walls)
- Districts – mentally conceived and identifiable medium to large sections of a city (e.g. Chinatown)
- Nodes – strategic and intensive points of concentration, connection or convergence that an individual may enter into (e.g. district core or meaningful street corner)
- Landmarks – an exceptional physical external point of reference (e.g. clock tower, historic building or ancient oak tree)

Strong place images emanate from physical settings that are rich and intense, resilient and engaging, inviting and formative (Steele, 1981). From the direct and intimate experience of one's home and street, to conceptualised neighbourhood, city or region, symbols help locate physical place. These are communicated through personal narratives, various literary sources such as newspapers, archives, poetry, novels, autobiographies, magazines and visual media including posters,

advertisements, photography, television and electronic video (Svirplys, 1999). Sense of place therefore constitutes many ways of knowing place.

2.3 Summary

Place confirms our sense of being and therefore existence in the world. Through sense of place, the world is experienced, made meaningful and transformed by people. Increasingly, sense of place is recognised as an important concept and cause of affective (i.e. feeling), cognitive (i.e. thinking) and intentional (i.e. meaningful) behaviour. Furthermore, research indicates sense of place is composed of individual, socio-cultural and physical dimensions of place that interact to constitute a distinctive experience. This experience, as asserted in the following chapter, forms an important source of planning knowledge and understanding of place that has traditionally been excluded and not conceptualised within contemporary planning.

3 PROFESSIONAL PLACEMAKING

Place and our sense of it, forms the basis of planning's *raison d'être*. Sense of place is fundamental to the discipline in that it distinguishes place based on its unique qualities, experiences and meanings. It answers *why* a place feels the way it does, *what* makes it special or unique, and *how* it contributes to maintaining effective person-place relationships. Understanding sense of place is critical to the creation, maintenance and enhancement of places that are meaningful, vibrant and liveable. Sense of place is therefore central to the discipline of planning and the general act of placemaking.

3.1 Sense of Place as Planning Knowledge

Sense of place offers planning a valuable source of place knowledge that has traditionally been ignored in theory and practice. Instrumental rationality, (Sandercock, 1998), formalised decision-making (Tuan, 1977), poor understanding of space and time, and inability to integrate emergent place concepts (Healey, 1999), have contributed to the exclusion of sense of place in planning and its recognition here as an important source of knowledge.

This shortage represents a significant gap in planning understanding and therefore practice. Sense of place offers many ways of knowing place that provide multiple sources of information, knowledge and understanding as a result. Beside objectively constructed forms of knowledge, sense of place represents an equally valid subjective form. Sense of place is meaningfully grounded in human

experience, complements existing knowledge, and strengthens understanding of places people value and cherish. This is significant in that sense of place offers to broaden theoretical discourse and transform professional planning practice.

From a theoretical perspective, sense of place unifies the many ways people come to experience, structure meaning, knowledge and understanding of place. This prompts planning theory to further explore the different ways meaning and knowledge of place are constructed and used in planning. Historically, this has been a weakness of traditional planning. Rational comprehensive planning emphasised instrumental rationality, expert knowledge, objective facts and formal laws of science. This severely constrained the types of information, knowledge, and understanding that could be used to solve new and complex problems while maintaining meaningful person-place relationships. As a result, modernist planning alienated and thereby provoked diverse societal interests challenging it to respond to a host of critiques. These included racial, gender, political-economic, environmental, and more recently, sexual orientation planning issues (Sandercock, 1998). The concept of sense of place offers to open up theoretical discourse by expanding traditional planning knowledge.

As an important source of planning knowledge, sense of place also compels the planning academy to reconsider existing problems and emergent perspectives on place (Green, 1999). For instance, how does (or might) current planning theory utilise the concept of sense of place as knowledge to further awareness, meaning, or public involvement in placemaking? What current planning processes encourage

local or regional sense of place? How is the concept and phenomena of sense of place used to inform the planning discipline itself? Traditional planning fails to answer these important questions. Contemporary planning research must therefore investigate the phenomenon of sense of place as well as find new ways of integrating it within professional planning practice (Innes, 2000; Szolds, 2000).

From a planning practice perspective, sense of place offers to provide valuable information and knowledge of local and regional place. Direct experience, continuous interaction, practical wisdom, reflection (via storytelling and dialogue) and symbolisation (through visual art, poetry or music) are different forms of place knowledge people use to structure their perception and sense of place. This can be communicated via personal narratives, social dialogue, literary sources (e.g. newspapers, archives, poetry, novels, autobiographies, magazines) and visual media (e.g. posters, advertisements, photography, television and electronic video) (Svirplys, 1999).

The structuring of place experience, its meaningful relationships and subsequent knowledge as embodied within the concept of sense of place is important to planning practice in that it can assist:

- Mobilisation of community interest, participation and involvement in urban development processes and projects
- Clarification of complex issues, innovative solutions, strong consensus and or successful mediation outcomes

- Framing normative planning policy and improvement in technical ability and skill
- Preservation and or conservation of natural ecosystems, social histories, economic vitality and urban design in the built environment.

In summary, both the discipline and profession of planning has much to gain by incorporating the concept of sense of place. However, research must further investigate and construct new ways of integrating sense of place within planning theory and practice (Innes, 2000; Szolds, 2000). This thesis asserts that sense of place offers an alternative source of planning knowledge that can be used to open and inform dialogue, explore and confirm place meaning, test assumptions and construct solutions to complex planning problems. Sense of place is therefore fundamental to planning healthy, meaningful, vibrant places.

3.2 Situating Sense of Place: A Review Professional Planning in Placemaking

“Placemaking is the way all of us human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live.”
(Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, 1)

According to Schneekloth and Shibley (1995) the art and practice of placemaking consists of opening up public dialogue, confirming and interrogating meaning, and framing action that is place-based with people-in-place. This includes a number of ‘discrete acts’ where people engage place (e.g. planning, architecture, research, design, construction, maintenance, destruction) toward some shared goal or outcome. These are also basic acts shared across time, space, disciplines of

knowledge and people who continuously engage in the iterative and ongoing making, maintaining and un-making of places.

Professional planning represents a significant component of formal placemaking carrying with it its own inherit set of values, forms of knowledge and power that shape it. Conceptualised in this manner, formalised placemaking may represent a number of different modes of planning (e.g. rational comprehensive, incrementalism, mixed-scanning, advocacy, radical, communicative action) along with their respective epistemologies, theories and practices. Thus, planning “can be done with the support of others or can be an act of defiance in the face of power” (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, 1). By extension, formal placemaking outcomes will vary in terms of the senses of place they evoke.

The purpose of this next section is to examine how traditional rationalist (i.e. modernist) comprehensive and post-modernist communicative placemaking influence sense of place in the urban landscape. This is critical because it informs how different placemaking models of planning serve to create, sustain, or diminish sense of place.

3.2.1 Modernism and the Traditional Rational Comprehensive Model

Background

Traditional planning continues to influence contemporary substantive and procedural planning. This has direct implications for the creation, maintenance and enhancement of sense of place. However, traditional planning has a mixed past and

draws from a number of influences. In her book *Collaborative Planning* (1997) Patsy Healey (10) points out that,

“The culture of spatial planning as it has arrived in our times has been woven together out of three strands of thought which have grown up in the context of this inheritance”

Healey (1997) goes on to review each of traditional planning’s three origins: economic planning, physical planning and policy planning. These origins provide an informative basis and framework for exploring traditional planning sense of place outcomes elaborated in the following section.

Economic planning and the business of place

Economic planning is the deliberate management of economic forces at the regional and national level in order to realise particular social policies or order. Historically, economic planning includes a number of distinctive social theories that includes Marxism, communitarian anarchists, Keynesian economics and neo-liberals. This mode of planning established itself in response to the economic and social failures of capitalism at the turn of the century.

Deplorable working conditions and harsh living standards of workers spurred a number of proposals by writers calling for economic change (Healey, 1997). Most influential of these was Karl Marx, who wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, a scathing indictment of early nineteenth industrial capitalism. Competition for profit, exploitation of labour and natural resources, and general disregard for social welfare frustrated Marx. Accordingly, Marx believed that class struggle (i.e. social revolution) was required in order to remove the capitalist means of production and

replace this with state control, until it could be effectively governed and managed at the local level. For Marx and his proponents, rational central planning offered the efficient production and distribution of goods that could be shared fairly and sustained (Healey, 1997).

With time, communist and socialist governments rose with centralised planning and programming replacing capitalist production processes. State economic targets replaced capitalist profit goals and political regimes, instead of *withering* away in favour of local economic governance, increased their state control (Healey, 1997, 11). However, a number of criticisms of this model emerged, including economic inefficiency, political corruption and unresponsiveness to social welfare (Healey, 1997).

Communitarian anarchists represented a similar, albeit different form of economic planning. They espoused local governance as opposed to large organisations, which they believed threatened personal and collective freedoms. Bottom-up or grassroots self-management characterized the intent of this economic planning model. Most notable of these was Ebenezer Howard who proposed the Garden City, which sought to integrate home, work and play in order to achieve better health, efficiency and moral enlightenment.

Following the great depression and the implosion of capitalism, economic planning in the form of welfare capitalism took root. John Maynard Keynes theorised that market slumps were linked to a crisis in consumer demand. People needed to feel they could purchase goods, and if they couldn't, they would

withhold spending. This lack of confidence in their long-term future meant no investment in the economy, no demand for production and resultant market sag. The solution according to Keynes, was to stimulate consumer demand through government intervention. Part of the key was to enable full employment (or 2-4% unemployment rate), and to provide social assistance in the form of education, health, and subsidised housing. Under Keynesian theory, economics and politics conjoined to create a mixed-economy that sustained growth while attending to the social welfare of the state.

Over time, government spending and debts swelled, calling into question the effects of Keynesian economics. Neo-liberalism, a new form of economic planning emerged, in which the market was seen as the key organising principle of life. Downsizing, de-regulation of state run services and programs followed, with renewed confidence in private sector entrepreneurialism. This resulted in lower government spending and debt, at the cost of workers impoverished during downsizing and now faced by an uncertain labour market. This further reduced consumption, lowered production and tightened competition among industries, resulting in less innovation and marked conservatism in the market place. Ultimately, the economic planning perspective failed to secure social order and welfare within the urban landscape.

Physical planning and the construction of place

Physical development planning was shaped primarily by utopians, architects and engineers. Beginning in the 1920s, urban planning became significantly influenced by Le Corbusier and the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), and the set of urban principles they espoused. These normative principles outlined a new form of city which was egalitarian-based, reflected a rational machine metaphor, and restructured social organisation through urban form and function via planning instruments. Not only did this model encourage environmental determinism, but it denied local history through architectural defamiliarisation and techniques of shock, as well as the fusion of art, life and politics (Sandercock, 1998). This significantly influenced future visions of what urban planning *should* be. Hence, functionalism and a focus on materials came to dominate concern over built form and the urban landscape.

Immediately after World War 2, these ideas began to coalesce under the University of Chicago's Program of Education and Research in Planning. Eventually this became known as the Chicago Model of planning, based rigidly upon positivist social science. Major assumptions held by the rational comprehensive planning model assert:

- Planning direction, evaluation and decision-making is based on instrumental rationality
- Effective planning is comprehensive, coordinative, integrative and hierarchical

- Planning should be based on positivist science and expertise
- Planning is a project of the state as opposed to an economic project
- Planning is positivist, objective and value-neutral

This physical mode of planning focused on the physical interface of urban form. That is, traditional planning sought to address issues concerning health, pollution, and safety followed by aesthetic expression and social re-organization. This physical (i.e. substantive) focus led to an emphasis on professional knowledge, and a focus on master planning and land use development, in order to bring about functional, rational cities. This meant re-organising the physical space of cities in order to facilitate economic growth and modern social life that was also aesthetically pleasing (Healey, 1999, 642). Until the 1960s, spatial organisation and urban form dominated planning discussion

As discourse within architecture began to shift from a modernist to post-modernist perspective, by extension, new ideas began to infiltrate traditional development planning. More specifically, rational planning was criticised for its professional arrogance, failure to incorporate social science as a basis for understanding social goals and objectives set through master planning, and understanding of regional dynamics and inter-connections. During the 1970s, this wave of criticism expanded to include planning's failure to address issues concerning social welfare (e.g. poverty, racial and gender discrimination) and environmentalism. This led to a re-focus within planning aimed at policy and how it

could be used as a tool to manage economic, social and environmental change within urban regions (Healey, 1999, 646).

Policy planning and the politics of place

Desire to improve local government and public administration, and to respond to socio-economic and environmental changes, established policy planning. Political corruption and lack of public accountability were identified as key concerns within local governance. As part of a larger evolution toward better, more open and accountable public administration and management, new forms of decision-making were sought through the science of policy analysis. This directly impacted the profession of planning.

Under this model, planning incorporated rational techniques and therefore a rational process of framing and making decisions affecting urban form. These included identifying and setting objectives, developing options, and strategising means of implementation. In so doing, corruption could be better controlled, decision-making made more open and accountable, and responsiveness to new planning problems and policies preserved. In essence, this established a rational planning process in which scientific analysis, instrumental reason and deductive logic formed the basis of decision-making and management in planning. This enabled policy planning to apply science as a means-end instrument in balancing a plurality of interests on the merit of facts versus values. As the science of policy analysis progressed, procedures for informing, framing, and executing decisions

expanded. The role of planning evolved with an emphasis on policy analysis, goal formulation, evaluation, and movement toward these through the application of rational technique and management.

Over time, the rational planning process became increasingly criticised for its unrealistic expectations and bounded knowledge. Political uncertainty, commitment to the rational process, and the uncertain dynamics of change (i.e. economic, social and environmental) challenged the notion that decisions based on instrumental rationality were in any way binding. Rational planning was therefore unable to respond to increasingly 'wicked' problems that were unique, complex and without known solution. It also led to further criticism that rational planning was bounded by limited knowledge, understanding of situations and potential alternatives.

The role of the planner as technician, and the associated value-neutral stance was also identified as a significant limitation to the rational planning process. Critics charged that planners not only had their own values, but that they had an obligation to balance these and their clients with that of the public and under-represented interests within society. Only by opening up the political forum to share and question these values, could situations, opportunities and impacts of decisions be more fully understood within an urban context. This led to a re-conceptualisation of planning in which other forms of knowledge, bottom-driven processes and value diversity became increasingly engaged.

Rational Places: Impacts and Outcomes of Place

Place, and our sense of it, is fundamentally linked to planning and general meaningful human activities that comprise placemaking. However, modernist planning has failed to fully realise this connection as demonstrated through the economic, physical and policy planning models previously discussed. As such, the modernist movement continues to influence contemporary planning thinking, teaching and practice (Healey, 1997; Sandercock, 1998, 27). From a substantive (i.e. physical) position, modernism has continued to define progress and success in the form of material growth, modernisation, mass production, accumulation and consumption (Sandercock, 1998, 27). From a procedural (i.e. process) standpoint, modernism proceeds on the basis of top-down planning, an emphasis on pragmatism, objective (quantitative) knowledge, functionalism, efficiency, and impartiality (detachment) toward issues governing place.

Where other forms of knowledge began to surface in the public planning arena, modernist assumptions and practices were mobilised to staunchly discredit alternative ways of knowing place (Sandercock, 1998). Moreover, modernist planning has continued to situate planners in the role of 'knower' and build around them a hierarchical power structure delivering decision-making from the top down. This has contributed to a weakened sense of place in the urban landscape, resulted in a narrative of loss within the literature, and a call for 'better' planning (Mayher, 1999). This loss of place is characterized by a diminished consciousness (i.e. awareness) of place, loss of place meaning and person-place relationships. This

represents a narrowing of sense of place in contemporary planning and, by extension, meaningful human existence.

Place Consciousness

Modernist planning does not encourage public place consciousness. Rather this is a matter of state concern where expert knowledge and experience can be brought to bear on integrating components of place. This perspective however, encourages an undifferentiated sense of place. It ignores the act of experiencing, being conscious *in* and *of* the local environment, whereby space can become imbued with meaning and transformed into place. Hence, modernist planning controls *what* is to be experienced, *how* and for *whom*. Modernism has, in effect, discouraged the public from recognising the importance and relevance of places they interact with on a daily basis. Such indifference may help explain the persistence of places that are endangered, unhealthy, unsafe, character-less, homogenised, meaningless, unstable and vulnerable to change (Hiss, 1990).

Place Meaning

Loss of meaning represents another criticism of rational comprehensive planning that is emphasised in the literature. It follows under this model, that the loss of distinctive and meaningful public and private places is necessary to ensure progress, continuous growth, consumption, competition and success. Modernism supports this loss of meaning through capitalist greed (Norberg-Schulz, 1979),

hyper-mobility and globalisation (Agnew, 1987; Stephanovic, 1998), technical rationality and expert knowledge (Walter, 1988), rationalist-bureaucratic planning (Buttimer, 1980), cultural flatness (Pred, 1983), and mass media communications (Gustafson, 2001). Threat or actual loss of sense of place under the rational comprehensive model continues to evoke feelings of resentment, alienation, and indifference while negatively impacting personal well-being (Green, 1999; Hiss, 1990).

Place Involvement

Privileged expert knowledge and exclusionary planning practice has advanced the fragmentation of person-place relationships. Combined with economic rationality, individualism, and greater personal and social freedoms, modernist planning diminishes individual and community influence, power, responsibility and contribution to placemaking (Buttimer, 1980). Formalised planning eliminates informal and commonly held rites and ceremonies that contribute to creation of personal and social lived worlds (Tuan, 1977, 116). Rational comprehensive planning therefore fails to recognise and incorporate the many senses of place that make and un-make public place. In short, solutions are imposed and senses of place excluded.

Modernist planning has contributed to a lack of awareness, meaning and public involvement in place. Not only does this present a significant information gap within planning theory, it raises questions over the legitimacy of knowledge

used in planning practice. How does planning define sense of place? How is this information or knowledge used (or not) to open dialogue, inform debate, arrive at decisions and better transform place? How does contemporary planning maintain or enhance sense of place based on such knowledge? These are all important questions modernist planning has raised, but failed to provide answers.

Subsequently, sense of place has received little emphasis within the social sciences let alone planning. Existing research in human and cultural geography, sociology and environmental psychology is rare and only vaguely linked to planning theory and practice. The discipline of planning has done little to improve conceptual understanding and clarity of sense of place. This has been attributed in large part to planning's outdated conceptualisations of space and time (Healey, 1999). Moreover, attempts by planning academia to make existing work available and more accessible to practitioners is also largely absent (Healey, 1999). As a result, sense of place remains largely unexplored within planning and therefore an obstacle to further beneficiation of place.

The fact that sense of place has received so little attention within planning is particularly disturbing. It suggests a continued indifference toward awareness of, meaningful and public involvement in place. This further implies that planning knowledge and understanding of place remains insufficient and is used to inform and guide decisions in procedural and substantive placemaking. As a concept and phenomenon, sense of place represents a significant gap in planning knowledge and practice that must be further examined.

3.2.2 Post-Modernism and the Communicative Turn

In response to rational planning's failure to ameliorate these and other place issues, calls for change from within and outside the planning discipline have continued to grow. Beginning with rational comprehensive planning's inability to deal with 'wicked' problems, critiques based on race, gender, class, political-economics, and the environment have continued to slowly unravel modernist assumptions. Over the last four decades it has become increasingly clear that new ways of conceptualising and making place is needed (Healey, 1999).

Unfortunately, the need for a better understanding of place and the meaningful relationships it supports has not been fully acknowledged by planning. Instead, discourse has focused on new conceptualisations and theories of procedural planning. This style of planning represents a 'communicative' turn in which professional and experiential knowledge is bridged in order to find solutions to novel, complex problems (Healey, 1999; Sandercock, 1998). Early research in this area focused on a transactive style of planning that emphasised interpersonal relationships, mutual learning and communicative rationality. Later research focused on the social construction of knowledge, collaborative planning, negotiation and consensus-building (Sandercock, 1998). This formed the basis for a communicative movement in planning known as communicative action. This emergent form of planning responded to criticisms of modernism and encouraged:

- Subjective wisdom in addition to objective rationality

- Concern over negotiation, politics and focused planning
- Access to other ways of knowing besides quantitative science
- Community empowerment and planning from the ground-up
- Recognition of diverse publics and cultures (Sandercock, 1998, 30)

Communicative planning offers great promise for incorporating sense of place. First, sense of place provides a diverse and deep source of knowledge implicitly supported through collaborative planning. Central to this notion is that sense of place presents many different ways of knowing that have, until recently, been traditionally excluded. This includes knowledge whether it is learned through direct experience, practical wisdom, symbolism (non-verbal), contemplation (appreciation), dialogue or intentional (inter)action with place (Sandercock, 1998). Secondly, maintenance and enhancement of sense of place through communicative placemaking serves to inform citizens willing to become meaningfully involved in re-making local, regional or global places of importance. Situating sense of place within communicative action offers a natural fit.

Communicative Place and Contemporary Need

The planning profession is in a state of transformation and this has implications for the inclusion of sense of place within the discipline. More specifically, planning theory (modernist and post-modernist alike) has paid little attention to conceptual development and significance of place and how procedural planning plays a role in shaping socio-spatial awareness, meaning, and relations.

Hence, this study focuses on communicative action, more specific collaborative planning, and their relationship to local sense of place impacts and outcomes.

Collaborative Planning through Consensus Building

According to Innes and Booher (1999), consensus building is a 'systematic and sophisticated' form of collaborative, communicative planning. It involves learning, experimentation and openness to change via commonly agreed upon information and shared understanding. Decision-making is based on critical argumentation where equally informed and empowered stakeholders deliberate face-to-face. This is inclusive deliberation that seeks consensus based on shared understanding and decision-making. Innes and Booher (1999, 419) outline a list of key criteria associated with successful consensus building and therefore collaborative planning. They are:

- Relevant and diverse representation of interests
- That the problem and tasks are real, practical and commonly shared
- A self-organizing body of participants that decide on ground rules, objectives, tasks, working groups and discussion topics
- Engaging participants, keeping them at the table, interested, learning through in-depth discussion, drama, humour and informal interaction
- Encouraging challenge of the status quo fostering creative thinking
- Incorporating diverse types of high-quality information in which its meaning is agreed upon

- Seeks consensus only after issues, interests, and innovative options have been thoroughly explored

The authors then list a series of outcomes associated with successful consensus building. While not all of these outcomes may be possible as a result of collaborative planning, it is assumed that the more criteria met initially, the greater likelihood of overall success. Positive outcomes may be immediately realised, occur in parallel with another event or remain dormant for a number of years. Potential outcomes include:

- Produces high quality agreement
- Ends stalemates
- Compares favourably against other planning methods in terms of cost-benefits
- Produces creative thinking
- Results in learning within and outside the group
- Creates social and political capital
- Produces information that stakeholders understand and accept
- Sets in motion a cascade of changes in attitudes, behaviours, partnerships, practices or institutions
- Results in practices and institutions that are flexible, networked (connected) and therefore creatively responsive to change and conflict

This evaluative collaborative planning framework provides an important means of identifying and exploring successful communicative placemaking.

Furthermore, this framework is used to assess the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS) as a collaborative form of planning and its relation to maintaining and enhancing a local sense of place within the Old Strathcona / Edmonton urban context.

3.2.3 Contemporary Planning

Contemporary planning needs to reconstruct the public's traditional role in placemaking. Under traditional modernist planning systems, emphasis on expert as opposed to local experiential knowledge has limited public participation and involvement. This has excluded many members of the public and, with it, their experiences, feelings and the knowledge sense of place provides.

In response to this, professional planning has begun to re-evaluate itself, attempted to integrate theory and practice more closely, and shift more toward communicative rationality. Although this bodes well for maintaining and enhancing sense of place, it remains a difficult journey.

Ideally, theory and practice inform and ground one another. Theory informs practice of new discoveries, issues and perhaps ways of thinking about problems or practice itself. Planning practice informs theory by testing hypotheses and grounding theory in practical experience and knowledge. Together, each strengthens and builds planning as a field of study and professional practice.

Planning has not been able to close this theory-practice gap. Instead, it remains an on-going issue widely recognised by planning academics, practitioners,

and in the literature itself. The effect is that recent advances in planning theory (i.e. communicative action) remain unconnected to practice, and practical knowledge and experience (i.e. sense of place) remain unexamined and unacknowledged by theory as result. This has implications for maintaining and enhancing sense of place through placemaking.

To begin, sense of place is faced with the challenge of having to negotiate this planning theory-practice void. In addition to its already vague state within the social sciences (Shamai, 1991), it is not surprising that sense of place has failed to transcend planning theory into meaningful practice. Secondly, modernist planning practice discourages sense of place. This is exemplified by an existing amalgam of modernist assumptions, methods and forms of decision-making that continue to comprise contemporary planning practice. The effect is that modernist planning continues to endorse expert knowledge, objective facts and privileged values that dominate decision-making affecting sense of place.

3.3 Summary

The discipline and profession of planning must continue to integrate theory and practice. It must do so in order to raise the concept of sense of place within planning theory and situate it within contemporary planning practice. This thesis asserts that communicative theory provides a basis in which to establish sense of place in both theory and practice, thereby transforming place in society.

In the following chapter, the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area located in the Old Strathcona area of Edmonton, Alberta is identified as an appropriate case study in which to explore and inform the role of communicative placemaking in maintaining and enhancing a local sense of place.

4 RESEARCH METHOD

4.1 Background

The study area selected for this thesis was the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area, located in the neighbourhood of Strathcona, Edmonton, Alberta. It was chosen for its rich main street history, unique character and strong sense of place. Located in the heart of Old Strathcona, the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) is characterized by a unique concentration of older wood and brick buildings, low density compact arrangement of shops and a human scale reminiscent of early 20th century architecture (see photographs in Appendix D). A high level of public access, exposure, and meeting places coupled with a vibrant business community evokes a strong sense of place.

Much of the commercial area's rich history dates back to early development in the 1880s in which it served as the north terminus for the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company. During the early 1900s, the town (and later City) of Strathcona thrived as a government, cultural, commercial and transportation centre until its amalgamation with the City of Edmonton in 1912. This significantly depressed local business and investment helping to preserve much of its rich railroad heritage until today (Alberta Community Development, 2000).

Since 1912, Strathcona has undergone considerable change. Economic booms between 1913-1915 and 1946-1950 triggered significant housing and commercial development north of Whyte Avenue and south along the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) corridor respectively. In the 1960s, higher density residential

development in the form of walk up and elevator service apartments were constructed. Following this period of construction, demand for rail transport and associated light industry declined. Throughout the 1970s government services and commercial businesses located within Old Strathcona began to relocate within Edmonton proper.

During the early and mid 1980s, an attempt was made to re-establish the area's character through single-family housing and commercial revitalisation via the Old Strathcona and Scona East Plans. Over time, trendy shops began to move into the area and local interest in Whyte Avenue's revitalisation grew. Co-operation and agreement among property owners, the city and local businesses resulted in the initiation of a property, building and streetscape improvements program. This proved a first for Edmonton leading the way for other commercial revitalisation programs throughout the City and helping to secure Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's success into the 1990s (Old Strathcona Area Community Council, 1997).

Yet, with prosperity came new challenges. The success of the area drew larger numbers of people choosing to live, work, play and visit Whyte Avenue. This attracted new entertainment and service industries as well as increased traffic, parking, pedestrian congestion, and pressure to redevelop the area. In addition, overlapping area plans contributed to regulatory differences in planning uses, parking standards, complexity, uncertainty and inconsistency in granting variances for new businesses (City of Edmonton, 1998).

In 1994, a group of concerned citizens officially formed the Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC) to deal with these and other issues affecting Whyte Avenue and their community. Composed of ten different interest groups, this council co-ordinated and initiated the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study in 1995 under approval of City Council. A number of organisations, including various Civic Departments, property and business owners, special interest groups and residents formed to investigate issues related to the area's popularity, pressure to redevelop and changing nature (Old Strathcona Area Community Council, 1997). This study endeavoured to preserve Whyte Avenue's small town appeal, commercial mix, and historical character; reduce the impacts of parking congestion, night clubs and major events; and improve local accessibility and communication among local interests. In essence, this study was an attempt to understand what made Whyte Avenue special and discover new ways of maintaining and enhancing it locally through a more open, communicative planning process.

This reflected a different approach to planning as compared to the more traditional, rational planning process employed by the City of Edmonton. People within the community felt the existing system did not adequately address issues affecting local residents and businesses (e.g. increased bars and nightclubs, pedestrian congestion, parking). For a select core, this prompted action and taking responsibility for engaging one's community. This core group later became the Old Strathcona Area Community Council with the addition of other stakeholder groups.

It should also be noted that this was not the first time people within Old Strathcona, and therefore Whyte Avenue, had mobilised politically. In the early 1980s there was tremendous pressure to turn this area around, including Whyte Avenue, preserve its heritage and combat urban blight. This led to widespread investment in the area that strengthened groups such as the Old Strathcona Foundation (OSF), Farmer's Market, and Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA) and encouraged projects aimed at revitalising Whyte Avenue's main street (e.g. streetscaping, historical building designations, Fringe Festival). Strong community leadership and support helped to successfully transform this area beyond traditional rational planning at the time. Much of this knowledge and experience gained has since been carried forward or passed on. This has since affected how various community members approach local placemaking and therefore WALUPS.

Understanding how people become aware and involved in more communicative forms of placemaking (e.g. consensus building – collaborative planning) is therefore important for Whyte Avenue and to future place. For, however unique and strong a spirit of place may be, it still remains susceptible to people and time. This is especially the case for Whyte Avenue, which continues to evolve with events like the Fringe Festival drawing more people each year, a recent moratorium on bars and nightclubs as a result of the Canada Day riot in 2001, and fires claiming historic buildings and long-time businesses. Places can and do evolve.

This research is therefore important to understanding how formal placemaking such as planning affects place and the people that comprise it. The lessons learned from community members regarding Whyte Avenue therefore provide an opportunity to inform future place, practice and placemaking at the local and general level.

4.1.1 Rationale

The research method chosen for this thesis is the theory building formative case study. It was selected because it seeks to describe the phenomena of sense of place in relation to formal placemaking, formulate hypotheses and infer causal processes (Warne et al., 1994). Moreover, it sought to achieve this in an intensive and comprehensive manner utilising in-depth interviews with community members to develop grounded theory concerning place and planning.

The case study method is particularly appropriate to both place and planning research. The primary reason for this is that more quantitative methods (such as formal surveys or questionnaires) tend to truncate the complexity, depth and subtlety of place investigation (Gustafson, 2001, Stephanovic, 1998). In addition, the case study in conjunction with in-depth interviews permits placemaking assumptions, meanings and experiences to be explored in greater detail. This is key in that research documenting formal placemaking in relation to the concept of sense of place and its outcomes is virtually non-existent. Preliminary understanding of planning's relationship to place is therefore best begun with the case study method

as it is new research, and provides a broader context for analytical-reflective study, theorization and generalisability.

Two primary criteria were used to select the WACA as a potential case study suitable for this thesis. First, the area must be recognised by insiders and outsiders for its unique distinctiveness or character, and secondly, having engaged in formal placemaking encompassing principles of communicative action in planning. The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (Edmonton, Alberta) strongly supports each of these criteria. To begin, the commercial area is widely recognised and documented as a distinctive place within Edmonton by its citizens. A rich main street history, and distinctive visual character dating back to the early nineteenth century has established this area within Edmontonians' consciousness. Located in the heart of Old Strathcona within south-central Edmonton, the commercial area is composed of a unique concentration of older wood and brick buildings, is compactly arranged at a human scale, and includes a number of shops reminiscent of early 20th century architecture. Add to this a high level of public access, exposure, meeting places, businesses and vibrant social activity, the WACA was easily identifiable and unique among other commercial areas within Edmonton, all of which lacked most of these characteristics.

In terms of communicative placemaking through formal planning, this area was identified as a particularly strong case study based on its espoused principles and collaborative planning-type qualities. More specifically, these suggested a grass-roots initiation of placemaking, self-organisation, broad inclusion of community

interests, focus on real problems and their resolution, level of engagement, openness and emphasis on consensus seeking. These criteria identified the WACA as distinctive within the Edmonton context and of research significance.

4.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:

1. Further develop and clarify the concept sense of place
 - What is the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's sense of place today?
2. Examine the relationship between sense of place and planning with placemaking in mind
 - How does planning (i.e. formal placemaking) in the WACA affect local sense of place?
3. Examine sense of place in relation to the practice of communicative placemaking using the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area located in Old Strathcona, Edmonton, as a case study
 - How has sense of place changed in the WACA since the creation of the Old Strathcona Area Community Council and initiation of the Whyte Avenue Land Use Study?
 - What positive or negative changes can be attributed to this formalised placemaking process?
 - How did this impact the WACA's sense of place? How was this form of communicative placemaking successful or not?

4. Identify theoretical and practical implications and recommendations for developing sense of place through communicative placemaking
 - What lessons can be learned from the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area?
What role can and should planning theory and practice perform in sustaining and improving a sense of place via placemaking? What planning tools can be used to assist sense of place maintenance and enhancement in the WACA and elsewhere?

4.1.3 Study Area

The study area selected for investigation included the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) located south-centrally within the City of Edmonton (Figure 1) as identified in the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (Old Strathcona Community Council, 1997) (Figure 2). This was based on existing plan boundaries confirmed collectively by residents, community groups, community leagues, and civic departments, reflecting an easily identifiable location and centre of felt meaning (i.e. sense of place).

Figure 1: City of Edmonton

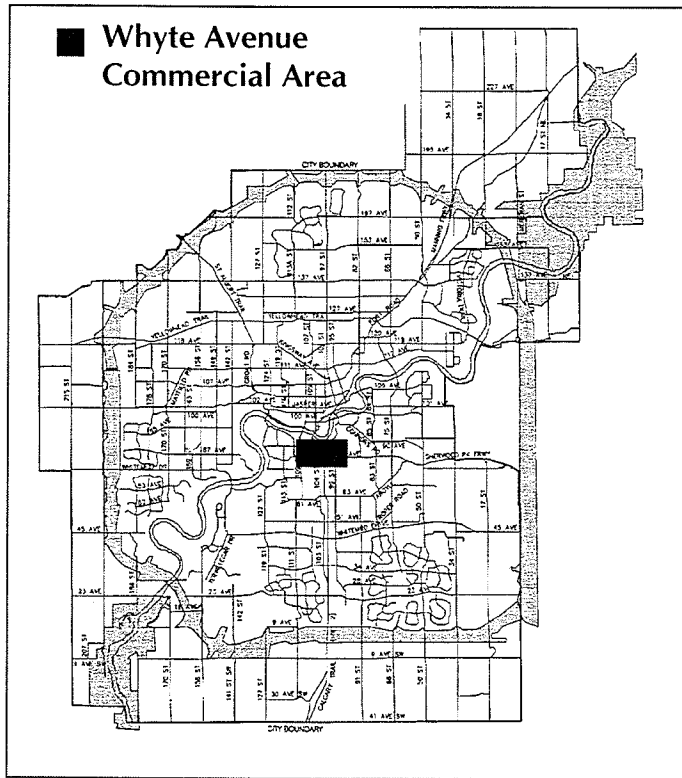
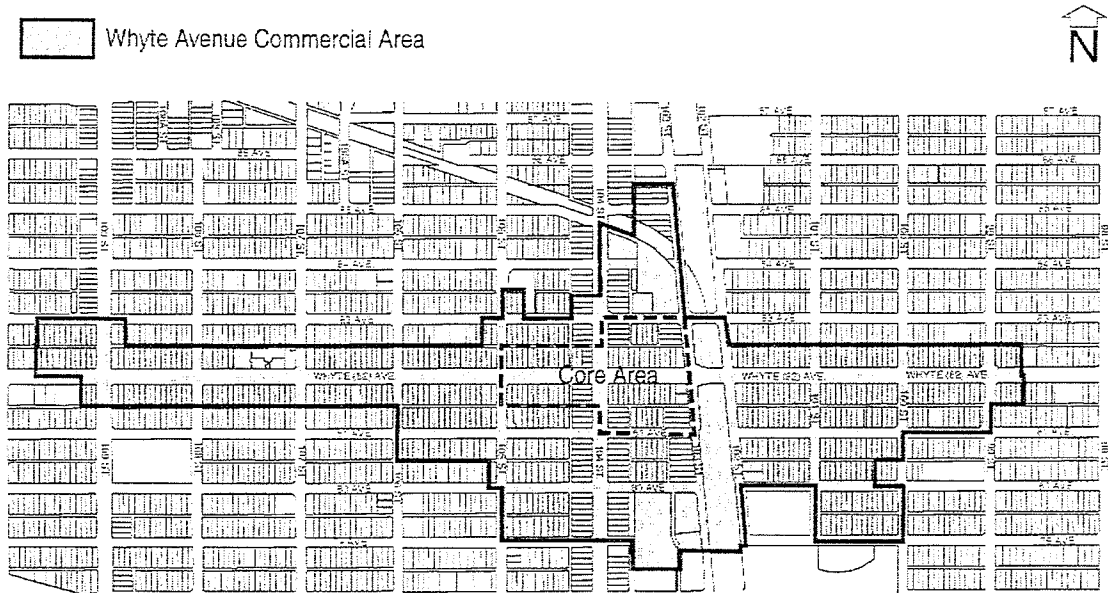


Figure 2: Map of Whyte Avenue Commercial Area in Old Strathcona



Not to Scale

4.1.4 Method

This formative case study used the grounded theory procedure to investigate and conceptualise understanding of sense of place and the formalised placemaking process of collaborative planning. The reason for selecting this analytical approach rests in its tendency “to be more constructionist than positivist” thereby allowing the interpretation and analysis of subjective meaning to be derived from respondents themselves (Warren, 2002, 83). This case study therefore used a formative / constructionist approach to knowledge building and understanding.

Grounded theory encourages a concentration on phenomena where data collection and analysis are products of researcher and participant shared experience and relationships (Charmaz, 2002, 677). Because it is able to employ a variety of qualitative methods, it is able to reach beyond strictly objective facts or laws. It encourages meaning to be framed “substantively and interactionally” in further understanding of “respondents’ experiences and life worlds” (Warren, 2002, 83).

With this in mind, grounded theory provides a set of guidelines that facilitate:

- Study of social and social psychological processes
- Direct data collection
- Data management and analysis
- Development of an abstract theoretical framework that explains the studied process (Charmaz, 2002, 657)

Using the grounded theory approach, an inductive system of data collection and analysis evolved. Emphasis during data collection and analysis was therefore on

how community members constructed meanings and actions concerning sense of place and planning in Whyte Avenue. Specific strategies employed as outlined by Charmaz (2002, 677) were:

- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
- Pursuit of emergent themes early on in data analysis
- Discovery of basic social processes within the data
- Inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesise these processes
- Continued theoretical sampling to refine categories through comparative processes
- Integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions, and consequences of the studied processes

Research Instrument

The research tool used in support of the grounded theory approach was the in-depth interview. Selection of this instrument provided investigative flexibility and intensity. In terms of flexibility, informed semi-structured research questions framed and provided focus to the interview. This also allowed opportunity for community members to “tell their own story on their own terms” (Svirplys, 1999). Advantages of the semi-structured interviews included high validity and rigor. Information presented by community members was explored through on-going discussion, clarified at key points through questioning and confirmed. The primary advantage of

this included data richness and responsiveness to time and other resource constraints (Warren, 2002).

In terms of intensity, in-depth questioning provided greater access to gaining deeper knowledge and understanding of local phenomena. This included a range of subject matter including feelings, emotions, life experiences, values, and individual perspectives on complex shared activities (Johnson, 2002, 105). According to Johnson (2002, 107), this instrument provides a number of benefits including:

- Knowledge that can be used to further explore, evaluate and encourage understanding of phenomena (e.g. sense of place, placemaking)
- Reflective understanding and catharsis
- Revelation of common assumptions, practices and means of communication that influence one's interests and understanding of the life-world
- Comprehension of "multiple views, perspectives on, and meanings of some activity, event, place or cultural object"

Use of informed consent and education of participant rights helped facilitate involvement in this research. More specifically, participants were informed of their freedom to participate and withdraw from the interview, the nature of the study, how information would be used, their identity protected and interview data destroyed at study end.

Procedure

Thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted. In-depth interviews were arranged with community members at agreed to locations running between one and three hours. This included 9 female and 4 male participants between the ages of 35 – 70 who were familiar with Whyte Avenue for an average of 24 years, and lived within the neighbourhood of Old Strathcona an average of 4 years. In addition, community members reported involvement in their respective social / professional organisation, on average, approximately 14 years, participation in the OSACC 5 years and WALUPS 2 years (of a possible 3 years).

A convenience sample representative of the Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC) stakeholder group was selected to provide a comparative analysis of experiences, perspectives and understanding of sense of place and relation to communicative placemaking in Whyte Avenue. Representative interests sampled included:

- Civic Departments
- Business Association
- Heritage Group
- Attractions
- Institutions
- Old Strathcona Farmer's Market
- Strathcona Centre Community League
- Arts and Cultural Groups

- Local Citizen
- Non-local Citizen

In addition, individuals were selected who were likely to possess “strong micro-world experiences”, that is, know the study area in depth, its features, meanings, patterns of change and interactions as a result of spending considerable time there (Steele, 1981).

Selected participants were provided a consent form outlining the general purpose of the study, their freedom to participate, withdraw, withhold / amend comment(s) at a later date and remain anonymous. Data regarding respondent age, gender, occupation and time spent in the WACA was also collected. Materials required included informed consent forms, interview guide, reference map of study area, paper for note taking and tape recorder.

During the interview process, participants were asked a series of general, intermediate and end-type questions concerning Whyte Avenue’s sense of place and potential communicative placemaking process (see Appendix B). These were meant to explore a range of phenomena through an open-ended style of questioning and discussion. The intention was therefore to create a conversational atmosphere that avoided a sense of interrogation. Emphasis was placed on learning about community members’ subjective meanings and actions as they relate to local sense of place, and how communicative placemaking has served to affect this in some way.

4.2 Summary

A formative case study was employed in an attempt to better understand the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's unique sense of place and how communicative placemaking was used to maintain and enhance it. The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area study area was selected based on its rich main street heritage, history and character as identified by local community members. It was also chosen for its potential engagement of collaborative planning principles in response to new growth and issues concerning the local community.

Using the grounded theory approach to collect and analyse information, in-depth interviews were used to learn community members' experiences, meanings and actions in describing the area and placemaking process involved, formulate hypotheses, and infer causal processes. Chapter five reports the findings of this case study.

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The grounded theory method of analysis was used in this study to collect, analyse and synthesise interview information. Interview data was analysed as it was systematically collected throughout the process so as to form a collect-analyse dialectic. This enabled the researcher to respond to emergent themes and identify gaps in the data collected. Careful attention and consideration during the interview process was exercised in order to push understanding of phenomena beyond the surface, to engage and fully saturate it. Analysis proceeded from coding, to memo writing, to theoretical sampling and finally, integration.

5.1 Analysis of Findings

Interview data was collected from 13 interviews with key stakeholders involved with the Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC), Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS) and Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA). Audio tapes from each interview were transcribed for analysis resulting in approximately 280 single-spaced pages of textual information to be examined. Analysis proceeded with coding, memo writing, theoretical sampling and finally integration of interview data.

Initial coding “moves the researcher from description toward conceptualisation of the description” (Charmaz, 2002, 684). Researcher knowledge and disciplinary assumptions were used to form “sensitising concepts” during open coding of the data. Following this, more frequently appearing concepts were

focused on in order to organize, integrate and conceptualise the data. Initial interview questions were used to assist coding and analysis.

Throughout the coding process memo writing provided an intermediary step in linking concepts. More focused codes were then “fractured”, categorically analysed in terms of their properties, conditions of occurrence, change, consequences and relationships to other categories. Memo writing also served as a creative and spontaneous process in which data collection, analysis and report writing were linked. This level of analysis further compressed transcribed interview data to approximately 120 pages.

As coding and memo writing proceeded, theoretical sampling was then used to provide further analytic power to grounded theory by sharpening concepts and deepening the level of analysis (Charmaz, 2002, 690). That is, with each interview and analysis of its codes and categories, the need for further evidence was assessed, explored during subsequent interviews and within alternate sections of transcribed texts. As more information was added, categories strengthened becoming “more precise, explanatory and predictive” (Charmaz, 2002, 689). Theoretical crystallization through the comparative analysis of categories occurred throughout the entire data collection and analysis process.

Integration of the data involved assembling memos written in order to bring about greater understanding of the phenomena being studied (i.e. sense of place and placemaking). At this stage, theoretical clarity and strength intensified. Memo categories were organised, mapped through tables, and selected as to their

appropriate analytical order and conceptual clarity. This final stage reflected a logical presentation of a particular “theoretical direction...or stage[s] of a process” (Charmaz, 2002, 690). The use of grounded theory to interpret in-depth interviews was therefore used to piece together a collective analytic story that identifies, explains and predicts participants’ sense of place.

The following sections describe, reveal and inform the concept of sense of place as it exists within the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area and its relation to communicative placemaking practice as experienced by key informants. As such, the following results reflect a particular sample population based on particular stakeholder interests and do not necessarily reflect the absolute sense of place for the WACA or final interpretation of the planning process. Results are presented and summarised as they relate to early Whyte Avenue’s sense of place, planning process, stakeholder identified impacts, and contemporary sense of place.

5.2 Evolving Place: Reflections of Early Whyte Avenue

This section reports participants’ descriptions of the Whyte Avenue area in the early 1990s prior to formation of OSACC and initiation of the WALUPS. Participants were asked to report their experiences of WACA in terms of its physical, social and personally meaningful attributes as described in the following sections. A summary narrative and synthesis describing the collectively articulated sense of early Whyte Avenue is further provided.

5.2.1 Physical Dimension

Community members described Whyte Avenue set in the early 1990s in terms of its physical boundaries, qualities of rest and movement, and image. In terms of Whyte Avenue's physical boundaries, participants identified 83 Avenue to the north, CN rail spur to the east, 81 Avenue and 106th Street to the south and west respectively. St. Josephs Hospital (largely unused over this time) formed an important visual marker signalling the end of the Avenue for a number of respondents. This confirms Tuan's (1977) position that place is not only fixed in space, but defined by tangible objects and features. Lower traffic, issues over parking, and human scale also influenced participants' physical sense of early Whyte Avenue contributing to a sense of early growth, success and uniqueness of this area. This supports general findings by Appleton (1975), Gibson (1979), and Tuan (1977) that the physical landscape impacts human experience and therefore sense of place.

In terms of image, many community members described this area as possessing a greater number of small shops, commercial services and fewer bars and nightclubs developed to a human scale. Moreover, participants reported that while their image of Whyte Avenue included an attractive surrounding residential neighbourhood, it also contained areas in transition further described as seedy, run-down, unsafe and unattractive. During this time, the Old Strathcona Foundation held considerable influence over the area's physical development via City funding, access to employees, planning applications and building permits information. These

findings support research by Svirplys (1999) and Wong (1993) that sense of place may be articulated, described, and in the case of early Whyte Avenue, image identified by both insiders and outsiders alike. Table 1 summarizes how boundaries, traffic and image influenced early Whyte Avenue's physical sense of place.

Table 1: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Physical Dimension

Theme	Impact on Whyte Avenue	Community Sense of Place
Boundaries	In late 80s area was bounded typically by 105 – 106 street and the railway tracks to the east (at 103 Street) St Josephs Hospital largely remained un-used; People stop walking west when they came up to this point and turned back to the core area Railway tracks establish an east-west divide	No connection to places outside this area Difference exists between east and west Whyte Avenue
Traffic	Mid to late 90s area has grown west and south along Calgary trail Increase in traffic Parking has and always will be an issue	Sense of growth and success Sense of change
Image	Developed according to human scale OSF had funding, access to City staff, planning applications and building permits More neighbourhood oriented businesses and services; Parts of Whyte Avenue were run down During the 1970s and 1980s this area was in poor shape	A lovely, attractive neighbourhood Greater sense of community control over evolution of Whyte Avenue and its future Seedy; Perceived unsafe Unattractive

5.2.2 Socio-cultural Dimension

Sense of place is structured by social and cultural components of place that mediate individual experience and influence collective meaning. This necessarily involves groups, organisations and institutions (Agnew, 1987; Hummon, 1992; Pred, 1986). Community members described early Whyte Avenue in terms of its socio-cultural attributes. This included various social groups, broader communities (i.e. interest groups), and volunteerism contributing to this area's distinction. Families, familiarity among businesses and their patrons, fewer crowds of people at night, family and small businesses, a broader mix of neighbourhood services,

smaller scale theatre companies and large number of volunteers that came out in support of events defined early Whyte Avenue for many participants.

In addition, community members also described a sense this area was “on the way up” and beginning to undergo a positive transition beginning in the late 1970s contributing through the 1980s. However, as one resident described this transition, Whyte Avenue was “still a place where you sat with your back to the wall”. Overall, participants identified features of Whyte Avenue’s social setting as contributing to a sense of place characterized as family oriented, unique, interesting and community commitment. This highlights the social processes influence on local placemaking and evolution of sense of place via communicative action (Butz & Eyles, 1997). Table 2 summarizes how social groups, community stakeholders and volunteerism influenced early Whyte Avenue’s socio-cultural sense of place.

Table 2: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Socio-Cultural Dimension

Theme	Impact on Whyte Avenue	Community Sense of Place
Social groups	More families frequented area Provided a safe place for kids to go and hang out Fewer crowds at night	Family oriented Safe place for kids A greater sense of safety
Community stakeholders	Provided a broader mix of neighbourhood uses (e.g. Restaurants, concerts) More small businesses; more mom and pop operations A lively, artistic, creative arts community served the people who lived and worked there Area was undergoing positive transition; long term stakeholders remained in area	A sense of uniqueness Interest in area Renaissance; passion for area
Volunteerism	Volunteered; worked hard on various projects of interest	Community commitment

5.2.3 Individual Dimension

Sense of place is the linking of self, society and material world. It is the immersion of self, sense, and experience within place framed by society and culture that people come to understand (Canter, 1977; Tuan, 1977). This was revealed in

interviews with community members who reported a range of individual experiences, feelings and emotions in relation to early Whyte Avenue. Experiences most often cited by participants focused on higher levels of commitment to area (i.e. volunteering in one's community) and engagement of activities in terms of type, frequency, and duration (e.g. shopping twice a week for 2-3 hours at night).

Significant personal meaning was also attached to the area's people and relationships held with them. Community members noted individuals who were not only familiar, but also committed, and passionate about Whyte Avenue that made this area different. For a few others, their feelings and emotions toward Whyte Avenue have remained unchanged. Table 3 summarizes participants' personal experience of how social groups, community stakeholders and volunteerism influenced early Whyte Avenue's individual sense of place.

Table 3: Early Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Individual Dimension

Theme	Impact on Whyte Avenue	Community Sense of Place
Experience	People were more committed to the area; greater participation made this a great area; greater volunteering People were more helpful to area Stayed out later Frequented area more; met and befriended people on Whyte Avenue	Active caring for place Helpful neighbourhood More safe Sense of attachment to area and people

5.2.4 Summary of Early Whyte Avenue

Early Whyte Avenue reveals physical, socio-cultural and individual dimensions of place. In terms of Whyte Avenue's physical form, its boundaries, traffic and image are most notable. During the early 1990s, Whyte Avenue was bound by 106 Street to the west, CN railway tracks in the east and a block or two north and south at its core. These boundaries clearly defined the WACA. Both the

CN tracks (located east of 103 Street) and St. Joseph's Hospital (located at 106 Street) served as major visual boundaries that distinctly separated the commercial area from its surrounds. An increase in traffic and ongoing parking issues characterized more negative elements of the commercial area's growth and sense of change. The historical character and scale of buildings intact helped preserve the WACA's attractive neighbourhood image. This was further reinforced by neighbourhood oriented businesses and services along with an involved Old Strathcona Foundation and City Planning Department in how the area developed. Funding, access to knowledgeable and experienced staff, planning applications and building permit information all helped achieve a greater sense of community control over the commercial area's evolution and broader future. This was an improvement in that during the 1970s and 1980s the area was in poor shape with parts of it run down giving it a seedy, unattractive and unsafe image.

From a socio-cultural dimension, Whyte Avenue in the early 1990s was particularly community-oriented. It provided a place for entire families, safe area for kids to hang out and less active night life. This gave the area a safer, more family-oriented feeling. Additional neighbourhood services, small family run businesses and growing arts community played a major role in establishing this area as unique and interesting. High volunteerism and commitment to the broader community in addition to long-term stakeholders helped stimulate the area's more positive transition.

At a more personal level, individuals within the commercial area demonstrated commitment to the area through volunteering with local community organisations and respecting the area. Increased use along with interaction with people in Whyte Avenue supported greater feelings of safety, care for the area, attachment, and community support.

5.3 Engaging Place: Collaboration and Consensus Building in Whyte Avenue

This section summarises community members' planning experiences as they relate to principles of consensus building and collaborative planning in Whyte Avenue. In-depth interviews with community members have been analysed, arranged and synthesised according to dominant categories and themes concerning consensus building and in relation to OSACC and WALUPS. These include: stakeholder interests, involvement, issues and tasks, self-organisation, placemaking process, information, consensus and planning experience. A summary narrative of collaborative planning as a discrete placemaking activity is provided at the end of this section.

5.3.1 Relevant and Diverse Interests

One of the key criteria of successful consensus building is the inclusion of relevant and diverse interests. These may form at the grass-roots or institutional level in response to a particular set of issues or concerns. Inclusion of a range of stakeholders opens up collective discourse on place and widens dialogue where

information may be shared and learned. Under the right conditions, this can build trust among stakeholders, establish common interests, and empower processes driven from the bottom up (Connick & Innes, 2003; Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000). Furthermore, diverse representation can contribute to the collective stock of knowledge that may be heard, challenged, confirmed and ultimately agreed upon as working toward a common goal.

Interviews with community members in Whyte Avenue identified many of these characteristics. Throughout discussions, extensive stakeholder involvement and participation was cited. In addition, members identified the grass-roots formation of OSACC at the community level prior to its formalisation under the community council and WALUPS. As one participant stated:

“...[W]e were just a disparate group at the time with people not quite sure what was happening but we saw changes coming that were happening very quickly and were becoming very concerned about it. And it was visionary in that we identified those problems long before the city had recognised them.”

This reflects the natural formation of stakeholder interests characteristic of consensus building within collaborative planning (Innes & Booher, 1999). Participants also commented on specific issues raised within this forum, and how initial stakeholder input and contact developed. With time, OSACC grew to include wider stakeholder representation and interests described as legitimate, open and even caring by community members.

“And when we started looking around we started saying we need to do something about this area and there were people from all communities, all concerned. Churches, the police, social groups, residents, people who had businesses, people from the OSF. So we started to meet. We had actually done a lot of brainstorming, wrote all

these things down and said you know, we should start some form of organisation. And that's how the OSACC started. We started meetings with a handful of people who volunteered to take part in this and initially this did not include all the stakeholders, eventually it did."

In some instances it was also noted that fewer than expected businesses participated. For some businesses, participation was strategically directed. In addition, community members also described consensus building within Whyte Avenue as dynamic and progressively formalized as the process neared completion. The formation of relevant and diverse interests, their qualities and evolution are summarized in Table 4 as embodied by collaborative planning through consensus building.

Table 4: Relevant and Diverse Interests

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Formation of interests	A number of stakeholders involved in WALUPS including: Parks and Recreation, Community Services, Transportation, Planning, Police, OSF, Community Leagues Community identification of issues	Diverse representation Concern over increasing bars; alcohol sales; unsure over community future; sense of urgency; something must be done
Qualities of interests	Diverse representation OSACC core group formed officially in 1993, participated in WALUPS from 1994-96 up to approvals in 1998 and implementation Core group of community volunteers doing all the work; small talented and motivated core group of people in community who were educated in a variety of areas such as planning, law, research, organizing volunteers, communications, media relations, political connections	Creative environment; impressive the breadth of representation; sense of openness; legitimacy interest groups Not surprising this many people got involved; expect to have many interests, but also inherent conflict Community police were very supportive and involved People cared for area and got involved in process Fewer than expected businesses involved in process Informed / knowledgeable; effective; motivated - power to make things happen and effect change
Interests placemaking approach	Planning assessment; formalizing intervention; liaison with OSACC, opening process to public and arena of stakeholders	

Table 4: Continued

Public consultation process - town hall meetings were held for community - providing info on process progress and next steps and opportunity for input; composed of information and input session followed by working session.
 Approximately 300 people involved over time in working committees of 3-4 to 40

5.3.2 Stakeholder Involvement and Participation

Literature on collaborative communicative planning often describes who and why various interests become involved in placemaking. How this occurs is often less clear. From a general perspective, depending on participant background, both planning involvement and participation in re-shaping Whyte Avenue was affected based on their reported community involvement. This included interaction with a social or professional organisation, affiliation and or community involvement. Participants involved in a social organisation tended to report their decision to become involved in planning based primarily on a sense of responsibility to their community. Those involved in a professional organisation reported both interest and a sense of challenge of working with stakeholders in addition to various activities they engaged in.

In terms of placemaking participation, differences were identified between social and professional organisation based participants. Those involved in a social organisation reported a distinct lack of communication regarding issues affecting their community and, to a lesser degree, a dated Land Use Bylaw for the area, unresponsive to emerging issues and or needs of the community. Accordingly, community members identified the need to participate in OSACC and WALUPS for a variety of reasons including to protect individual interests, improve

communication and involvement in their community, and learn more about one's community. Participation reported by individuals representing professional organisations was based on responsibility as well as ongoing involvement (i.e. work) within the community.

Participants described a wide range of placemaking activities. These included canvassing or mobilizing support among community interests, holding meetings, establishing ground rules of communication, brain-storming sessions, education / learning sessions; identifying interests and issues, forming decisions and executing actions (i.e. implementation). Reports of these activities indicate both formal and informal placemaking processes occurred, at different times, and sequence. The combination of these activities over the entire placemaking process was characterized as complex, long and limited by resources. Table 5 summarizes the consensus building process of collaborative planning as it relates to stakeholder involvement and participation in Whyte Avenue during the formation of OSACC and initiation of the WALUPS.

Table 5: Stakeholder Involvement and Participation

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Involvement: Social	Involvement via organisation representation; sitting on boards, meetings	Sense of community responsibility
Involvement: Professional	Departmental liaison; assisted coordination and undertaking of study	Obligation; responsibility; Interest
	Overlapping placemaking roles of facilitating process, providing representation of various interests and department, advocating interest(s), community developer	Difficult and or conflicting interests
Participation: Social	Became involved in community league in response to lack of communication as to what was happening in community; debating development proposals for area	Sense the Land Use Bylaw was becoming dated – ineffective; need to expand debate concerning community development Poor community communication Concerned about issues affecting the community

Table 5: Continued

	Means-end involvement	Self-preservation / benefit; contribution to area
	Already working with diverse stakeholders to identify community issues	Interesting; educational / enlightening
Placemaking : Skills and Activities	Canvassed community; identification of stakeholders; education; procedural planning facilitated meetings; organised activities; public consultation; brainstorming sessions; mobilizing community support; plan approval and implementation	Very long process; extremely complex; limited resources

5.3.3 Real Problems and Practical Tasks

Collaborative planning and consensus building is about collective meaning-making and the connection of ideas among people (Innes 1999, 34). This necessarily involves opening dialogue concerning issues of place. Community members demonstrated this concept by identifying a number of issues of concern to them. These included impact of bars and nightclubs, vandalism, noise, increase in street youth, lack of parking and intrusion into residential areas, historical preservation and conservation of the area, and lack of planning regulation and enforcement for Whyte Avenue. Where bars and nightclubs seemed to be the initial focus, issues evolved over time through collaborative dialogue facilitated by planning. This is reflected in the following comments by participants,

“[It] started from everywhere with no real common ground.”

“It never was strictly about the bars. The bars thought it was strictly about the bars. But there were many other issues, as well.”

“Everybody had their own [issue]. Everybody came into it with their own pet peeves, their own vested ideas of what they needed to get out of it and so on.”

Issues raised by community members identified particular problems affecting Whyte Avenue. These were described as complex, without readily identifiable solutions, and having to deal with clefts between residents, business and landowners. Aside from these inherent challenges and perceptions, there was also a sense that something greater could come out of a collaborative process and willingness to address common issues together. This supports the notion of

flexibility and adaptability characterised by collaborative communicative planning (Innes, 2000).

Participants described a number of practical tasks used to address community concerns. These included mobilizing a wide range of stakeholders, engaging a common vision for the area, confirming interest groups and committees, composing tasks under the WALUPS, engaging the wider community at Town Hall meetings and working collectively to implement study findings. The issues, attributes of problems, and tasks involved in addressing concerns in Whyte Avenue are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Real Problems and Practical Tasks

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Issues	Stakeholders raised a number of issues; originally increased bar seats and impact on community	Desire to protect residents from external affect of bars and nightclubs which had the most identifiable impacts on community
	Increasing number of street youth	Desire to find solutions for youth
	Historic character of community and WACA	Desire to preserve and maintain historic character and area heritage
	Lack of planning regulation enforcement as it relates to business licensing (bar seats and building capacity) and parking (shared parking lots)	Concern over exceeding capacities; lack of parking creating traffic in residential neighbourhoods; resident - patron conflicts (vandalism/theft, noise, concern for safety)
	Issues raised concerning condition of WACA after hours, vandalism (street furniture; bus shelters, window glass, graffiti, lawns, cars), vendor and customer safety, parking availability; monster houses; cleanliness of area (garbage; posters)	Need to prevent vandalism; perception of decreasing area safety; lack of parking and intrusion into residential area; land use intensity impact on existing residential scale (e.g. Shadow print)
Problem attributes	Not just about one problem and solution; multifaceted issues (e.g. Parking; historic preservation; street youth)	Sense there was a wide cleft between residents, resident business owners, non-resident business owners in terms of community / area interest
	Wicked problems - unique to area, complex, involved time constraints, objectives to be met; vested interests affecting process	Sense other good things can come out of this process besides focusing on one issues (e.g. Bar and nightclub growth in seating) Sense not all ideas and suggestions were practical; NIMBY-ism
Practical tasks	Early stages were about trying to get people together to talk about the area	
	Planning department initiated a visioning process for the area	Sense the city felt they needed to examine area issues

Table 6: Continued

Confirmed necessary stakeholders; communities of interest	Sense that group needed a vision for the area and mission focus
Formed committees of various interests, organisations	
Educated groups as to formal planning process	
Groups identified issues within sub-committees	
Community town hall meetings were held and communicated through fax 'blasts', word-of-mouth, posters, and advertising to bring residents and community out	
Decision was made to do a land use study of the area	
OSACC had no money or budget just volunteers so planning invested resources into the process; other civic departments and agencies assisted in various ways (e.g. sending faxes, providing paper)	Could have marked a considerable shift in thinking for the area

5.3.4 Self-Organizing Placemaking

Another key trait of collaborative planning through consensus building is its self-organizing nature. That is, stakeholders mobilize and proactively engage issues based on formation of ground rules and discussion. As placemaking evolves, this becomes more formalised through working groups, set goals or objectives and discrete tasks (Innes & Booher, 1999). Interviews with community members identified this trait prior to the OSACC, in which a grass roots organisation formed to deal with community issues from the bottom up. Once recognised and further formalised by City Council as the OSACC, the organisation and processes it engaged gained greater political power. While still active in the community today, many participants described the OSACC as more politically energized then as compared with today.

Community members described three themes of self-organised placemaking, which involved structure, time, and participation. The formative structure of placemaking was described as involving a number of elements organised around

procedural phases. These included the formation of interests, endorsement of study process by City Council, and initiation of the WALUPS. More specific tasks identified included: issue identification through dialogue, joint problem solving, building local capacity through ownership and consensus building, public consultation and implementation of agreed to actions.

The second component of formative placemaking identified or reported by participants was that of time. More specifically, time was often cited as a constraint and directly linked to the process structure described above which was characterized as time intensive.

“But the big problem was always time. You know, the people involved were all involved in other things and other businesses, and they could only devote a certain amount of time to it.”

In terms of stakeholder participation and engagement, interviewees reported no overly formalised decision-making process. Instead, participants described the process as open, casual, and relaxed at times.

“[E]very time [something] comes up for a vote ‘should we be doing this?’, I’d always vote –even though nobody has a vote, technically... in OSAC there is no ‘vote’, it’s consensus-based.”

For some, this represented a too relaxed process where meetings ran longer than necessary, were not overly productive, and increased uncertainty within the process in terms of project progress and outcomes. As one participant reported,

“I mean, if you could have asked any one of those people outside of that meeting, you would have got the same thing then. If you would have sat all those people down for five, ten minutes individually, and said, “This is what’s going on,” okay, and then asked them how they felt about things, they’d tell you. But to put them all in that room and have them bitch and argue at each other ... some people were very malicious, I thought.”

According to some, this was further complicated by 'strategic' participation of particular stakeholders on matters impacting their specific interests. This 'issue shopping' underscored the perception of some participants that some businesses and land owners were not supportive of the process and therefore community. This resulted in feelings of frustration, anger and resentment at various points throughout the process.

All participants reported a series of open houses or Town Hall meetings that were held to confirm information, hearings and directions proposed by OSACC, its sub-committees, and report back to the community on its progress. Participants described this in the following ways:

"Residents, businesses, institutions, interest groups within the area, the general public were invited to these town hall meetings, where we would go through what we had, what the process was, where we were in the process, what we had completed, where we were going next, and getting input. So half of the town hall meeting would be providing input. The other half of the town hall meeting would be a working meeting, where we would ask for those in attendance to give us input on the next portion."

"[I]f there was something that had to be addressed [within the community], [people] went back to the bodies that [they] were representing and got input or action. "

"Generating public involvement and participation was also a way for planning to protect itself from negative outcomes, "...that way they can always say, "Well, we gave you your opportunity to contribute, and if you didn't do it then, then it's not our fault."

The work emanating from the formation and interaction of stakeholders, participation and structuring of placemaking activities resulted in both positive and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes reported by community members included increased involvement and communication with City departments, local community

contact, education and issue awareness, dissemination of information, and overall novel consultation process for the area. Negative outcomes included the noted lack of mandate, direction and resources from particular civic departments necessary to support effective placemaking, gradual shift from community development to more formalised planning process, less community involvement as process came to an end. This was identified by participant reporting a lack of support and direction from their departments, loss of community participation, input and sense of ownership of the placemaking process.

Research findings demonstrated consensus building is not a clean, staged, linear process. This supports the literature on collaborative planning that describes an iterative process in which placemaking can be new, complicated and at times overlapping. Table 7 summarises the formation, interaction, process and work of self-organizing placemaking reported by participants.

Table 7: Placemaking Formation, Interaction, Process and Work

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Formation	OSACC organisation was previously formed and involved a limited range of stakeholders. Planning sought to initiate the WALUPS and collaborate with OSACC and other community stakeholders	Grassroots movement to improve area Planning formalised and gave credibility to OSACC
Interactions	Community organisations and other members were allowed the opportunity to be proactive instead of traditionally reactive to change Inclusion of civic departments insured representation at an institutional level Placemaking involved establishing good relationships among stakeholders, respect for interests, traditions of place Informal collaborative face-to-face contact among group members and civic departments; work overlapped among core group	Sense of change, something different was taking place Gave a sense of authority; credibility Sense of trust; openness; confidence in partnerships Efficient; productive problem solving / information sharing
Process: Structure	Study included the following phases / stages: study initiation; process approval; establishing goals and objectives; identifying the issues; problem solving / identifying possible solutions; building ownership in solutions to problems / mobilization; public consultation; plan approval and implementation	
Process: Time	Limited time available to achieve necessary tasks	Not enough time, pressure, sense of obligation, heavy investment

Table 7: Continued

	Process went on over a period of years from start to finish; skills shortage due to limited time	Went on for too long; burnout; took too long of a time commitment for OSACC members
Process:	City and community planners liased, identified issues with the community and respective agency / department, and tried to find ways of solving identified problems	
Participation	No formal voting process but worked on principle of consensus building; those causing rifts were asked not to return Loose formation to meetings and what was to be achieved	Casual, fairly relaxed, polite at times; No sense things were going to end up anywhere; poorly organized; poor communication of progress and potential outcomes
	Open house invitation to community; town hall meetings provided public forums, and workshops to draw as much information from the community, to identify main concerns / interests – or descriptions of the area. This was driven in part by the City	
	Many meetings were held throughout the process to ensure communication within and among groups occurred	Very difficult to maintain over time
	Strategic participation by specific stakeholder / interest groups weighted process outcomes (e.g. Bar / club owners coming out for specific issues and populating committees)	Unbalance representation of issues and biased decision-making; frustrating; difficult
Work aspects:	OSACC managed, coordinated and worked with city departments, and other founding groups via core and sub-committees	Expanded the process to more interest groups; very active
Positive	OSACC hosted workshops to involve the public, identify issues, develop a strategy to address these with affected interest groups OSACC stakeholder interests were responsible for taking information back to their own entities; provided a means of assembling core representation and spreading information to wider constituent groups	Group began to gel; solidify as a unit; novel process Sense of accountability
Work aspects:	Civic department / agency mandate could have been more clear; minimal resources provided	Little support; direction
Negative	Gradually became less bottom-driven (community development processes) and more formalized; less community involvement toward end Participant workload in OSACC increased leading to greater involvement and responsibility	Loss of community participation, input; ownership of WALUPS Very hard and long process

5.3.5 Process Engagement

A good consensus building process is one that engages participants in dialogue, sustained sharing, learning, involvement and interaction among various interests (Innes & Booher 1999, 419). It engages the collective “emotions and imagination” of stakeholders involved in re-conceptualising meaning, framing action and (re)shaping place. Participants described the process of placemaking engagement in the WALUPS in both positive and negative aspects. Positive aspects

identified by participants included willingness of resident stakeholders to become involved in shaping their community, formalisation of OSACC and inclusion of diverse stakeholders in face-to-face contact, development of organisational synergies, and commitment of stakeholders. Participants further reported a sense of passion, vision, promise, openness, commitment, determination and love central to placemaking engagement in the WACA. In addition, the following comments were made:

"[People did] it because they wanted to help preserve the area,... and put a lot of extra effort into it over and above what they needed to do. And without people like that doing and putting that effort into it, the area would have deteriorated a lot worse than it has."

"[W]e saw the vision of what OSACC could be. And in retrospect, I am thinking that if we had become successful, if OSACC had had more time to become strong, and if we wooed more diversity in the community in terms of participation, we might have been able to put together and craft a process that was more representative of the community."

"And we've had some good planning advice over the years. And they were always approachable. So we could phone them [and] I still do. I phone ...at least once a week to get an update or if I have a problem I just say, "...what do you think about this?" ...And so those contacts go way back."

"And it was a phenomenal amount of commitment from the entities that were involved in here. We had probably [an] estimated in excess of 300 people involved. We had working committees from the small, at three or four, to as large as 40. We had four town hall meetings. We had the OSACC group, who basically went right through it, from '94, '95, '96, right through until approval in '98, and then into implementation. So it was basically a dedication and a love for the area."

Negative aspects associated with engagement reported by participants included lack of involvement by some key stakeholders (e.g. businesses,

landowners), process length leading to membership attrition, and need for professional facilitation, consensus building and dispute resolution skills.

Participants characterized negative aspects as related to low interest in improving the area for some businesses, a long, tiresome process leading to volunteer burnout, sense of obligation and pressure, frustration with stakeholder input and lack of control over engagement process. These aspects are reflected in the following comments by participants:

“[T]hey should bring in...an independent arbitrator, I guess, somebody from outside the area, that can say, you know what? You’re coming here and you’re just disruptive.”

“I think different people should have been selected. I think they should have said, “You know what? If you’re going to come with your own agenda and just make this a big bitch fest, then it’s time to leave.”

The foregoing confirms the potential for consensus building to tap into local concern, dedication and passion for place in sustaining an engaging process through collaborative dialogue, learning and interaction. However, findings also highlight the importance of communicative planning skills such as facilitation, negotiation and at times, mediation. These are important skill sets in terms of establishing a ‘safe’ environment where information and knowledge may be questioned without poisoning relationships and trust (Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000, 137). This may also save time, resources, morale, and participant burnout. Positive and negative aspects of process engagement experienced through consensus building and collaborative planning in Whyte Avenue are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Process Engagement

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Positive	People chose to live in area, become involved in shaping their place, invest 100s of hours into the process	Passion
	OSACC was created in order to achieve a new vision of area and actively involved the inclusion of multiple stakeholders	Sense of vision; feeling that OSACC was a very attractive and promising concept
	Various stakeholders fought right up to the very end before and in council to invest greater meaning into the process	Determination; stubbornness; "Sheer force of will" against group interests (business/bars/clubs)
	Organisational synergies pushing together moved the process forward	Sense of wide commitment to process; synergy at work
	High degree of face-to-face contact	Sense of approachability; help / assistance
Negative	High degree of commitment on the part of stakeholders demonstrated by number of participants (+ 300), working committees, town hall meetings, continued participation through entire process lasting over 4 years, followed by implementation of goals and objectives	Concern for area; dedication and love for area
	Lack of merchant investment in improving the community (while they profited from its success / attraction)	Lack of concern; low interest in improving area
	Process went on for years; committee member turnover; sub-committee drop outs	Too long; tiresome; burnout; revolving door
	Process did not enlist aid of professional facilitators or independent arbitrator to manage groups more tightly (dynamics, behaviour, organize and frame tasks)	Keeps people from poisoning the potential for a healthy work environment, process, forum, outcomes and implementation / future working relationships)
	Select / screen participants pre-participation so they do not hold up process, damage working relationships, waste resources	Sense that no one is listening or cares; frustration; resentment
Issues are constantly unfolding in a heterogeneous community such as Old Strathcona that impact the WACA	Once you get involved, you can't get out; burned out; your tied into place; constant pressure; increasing sense of obligation	
Volunteers get burned out	Constant fight / struggle; cranky; frustration; ill-identification; jaded	

5.3.6 Information Creation, Traits, Integration and Outcomes

One of the primary challenges facing contemporary planning is the increasing need to adapt to new information and issues. From a collaborative planning perspective, this entails challenging the status quo, thinking creatively about new problems, and questioning old ways of doing things through consensus building (Innes & Booher 1999). To this end, consensus building seeks to incorporate high-quality information that is commonly agreed to by stakeholders.

This was exemplified in the WALUPS in which participants reported diverse stakeholder input, the creation of new information and knowledge. The breadth and depth of information exchanged signalled a sense of community depth for a number of people.

“I think how far reaching it was, in terms of getting input, providing information, and so on. I mean, it’s a phenomenal amount of people that were involved in this thing. Some on the long term, some of the very short term. You know, they attended one of the town hall meetings, provided some input, and that was it. Others consistently came out... to aid in the project.”

Through small groups, participants described both informal and formal types of information created/shared, organised, challenged/interrogated, and confirmed through numerous meetings. The dissemination of information was described as adding greater value to the process through learning and increased sense of appreciation among stakeholders. As one participant reported:

“I would probably say that there was a heightened awareness of issues that ...the stakeholders individually had brought in. And I think they grew to get a better appreciation of what their neighbour was thinking versus simply saying, “Oh well, you just don’t like me,” or, “You don’t like this,” or, “You don’t like what I sell,” or, “You don’t like what I do.” [T]hey knew there was more to it. It didn’t necessarily negate the fact that there would be conflict. But it did, I think, to a lesser degree, help create some level of understanding, if you can call it that, while the conflict ensued.”

The product or outcomes of information and knowledge through collaborative dialogue was that stakeholders reported a number of innovative ideas and potential solutions, a broader vision for the area, formation and later formal recognition of OSACC, community partnerships, formalised local knowledge, mobilized action leading to local physical improvements and addressing issues

related to growing street youth. This is reflected in community members reported sense of uniqueness, creativity, excitement, community and connectivity associated with incorporating diverse types of information. Other outcomes identified as a result included a more attractive and pleasant local environment (via physical improvements), greater social awareness, identification and commitment to solving community issues through a more informed approach. Table 9 summarizes the diverse types of information created, its traits, and immediate identified outcomes via consensus building process and collaborative planning in Whyte Avenue. These confirm stakeholder intention to try something different, confirm information regarding Whyte Avenue, find common agreement it, and share this among various interests.

Table 9: Information Creation, Traits, Integration and Outcomes

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Creation	Diverse stakeholder participation, sustained input. Stakeholders presented many creative and innovative ideas and solutions to problems	Sense of community depth; guts Sense of new; innovation; excitement
	Small groups of stakeholders assembled in private and public meetings shared and created information concerning specific issues in the form of written reports and/or verbal descriptions Initiated visioning process providing a foundation for the WALUPS; stakeholders presented unique visions for the area	Formal and informal information was valued during the process Innovative; new; idealistic, creative; unwieldy
Traits	Information was organised and coordinated among stakeholder groups for further dissemination and analysis	Openness; challenging through analysis and confirmation of information
	Stakeholders shared many personal experiences of Whyte Avenue	Respect, understanding and general validation of experiences Sense there was less process, facts and more opinion; difficulty in interpreting facts/information
Integration	Information was consistently prepared and disseminated by OSACC among committees and sub-committees; high internal communication through interchange of ideas and information	Consist representation; connectivity; up-to-date
	Information was organised and coordinated among stakeholder groups for further dissemination and analysis Sharing of information by stakeholders	Openness; challenging through analysis and confirmation of information Added understanding, appreciation
Outcomes	Civic administration gathered, organised and disseminated info Physical area improvements (including murals, graffiti removal, rebuilt McIntyre Park, Creation of End of Steele Park; streetscaping)	Attractive and pleasant environment;

Table 9: Continued

Knowledge formalized by this process provides direction for future development	Sense of informed awareness; information is power to control / manage future development
Formation and ongoing operation of OSACC within the WACA to provide information on area and partnerships; build community capacity to deal with issues	Community connectivity; collectivity
Stakeholder action to address growing street youth and panhandlers in area	Sense of common ground; identification; consensus
Final report and process outcome	Poor communication of process completion
Project closure was not communicated thoroughly for some participants	Hurtful; frustrating; anti-climatic

5.3.7 Consensus Building

A key principle of consensus building is that a motion to obtain consensus occurs only after discussion has fully vetted the issues and information put forward by relevant interests. This includes confirmation and interrogation of information and knowledge through critical debate / argumentation where creative responses may be considered collectively (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995). Throughout the WALUPS process, participants collectively engaged a number of issues in which consensus was broached. These included increased alcohol service in the area, limited parking, maintaining community history, enhancing the attractiveness of the area, and improving area safety and services.

Of these, respondents identified the expansion of bars and nightclubs and parking as the most significant and contentious issues directly challenging consensus building. Discussion concerning bars and nightclubs involved a host of issues including alarm over the expansion of the number of alcohol seats within the commercial area, lack of enforcement of applicable regulations, and disagreement over measurement of enforcement standards (i.e. number of seats based on fire code, square footage, number of seat standards). Obstacles to consensus building

identified by participants were individual egos, unwillingness to share power (personal / organisation) and/or compromise.

Parking was identified as another contentious issue. This was in part due to the important regulatory role it plays in the development permit stage affecting business operation and expansion in the area.

“Surprisingly enough, at the end what became the biggest issue that the whole thing almost didn’t get approved on, by OSACC anyway, was parking. We had this last meeting. And this is when I said it was hard. It was this last meeting when we had to basically approve this and say OSACC would give its seal of approval and then Planning could take it to administration for approval. ...I remember sitting in this meeting [and]...it was basically [a] community group all of a sudden wanting more than what we had agreed on, and the business people deciding to dig in their heels...I thought, we’re going to lose this whole thing based on a couple of parking spots. It was an amazing thing to me. At the end it came down so close.”

This demonstrates the challenge and risk involved in seeking consensus after significant investment of resources by all stakeholders involved. Overall, participants identified both positive and negative outcomes related to consensus building. Positive outcomes included education, opportunity to engage, confirm and validate information and its sources, building and strengthening community relationships, and in the longer term, enhanced the community’s (political and social) placemaking capacity. Accordingly, respondents described their experience in consensus building leading to greater awareness, understanding and (at times) empathy for various stakeholders and interests in the community. Moreover, participants described a sense of common vision, community and capacity to engage future community issues through sustained placemaking activities.

"[I]t was to get people to, for the purposes of the study, get them to be able to drop their own entities, objectives or goals or whatever, and look at the broader picture of Strathcona, and work towards consensus...part of the biggest work was bringing people up to date in terms of the [range of issues] ...[and] putting everybody on an equal footing in terms of regulations, requirements, processes, goals, objectives, all that kind of stuff."

"We looked for what we needed to resolve the conflict. If it was information, if it was expanding upon a need, or even looking at it in terms of, "Okay, well this is what you say your concern is. But what is the real issue?" What actually can be done to resolve that issue...it was just a long process of learning, of listening, and of basically putting on the other guy's shoes."

"We have to figure out how to live and work together...I think a lot of people had to learn how to compromise. And at the beginning I think there was a lot of suspicion from the community people towards the businesses. And some of it was quite justified. But I think over the course of time a lot of that mistrust was smoothed over a bit. Not completely gone, but, you know, a little more smoothed over."

"The memories that I have of working in a neighbourhood that you may not have agreed with your neighbour, but they had the same passion as you did about differing things. And I think, for me, that's one of the things I'll never forget, is the excitement that came from that debate that went on. It wasn't easy. But it always ended up allowing for something better to come with it, at least in my mind, during those years."

Negative aspects identified included moderate community engagement and support for OSACC, lack of technical skills and resources necessary to create and engage new information, limited community control over the planning process as it evolved, time constraints, and inability to deal with certain issues that continued to grow later on (i.e. expansion of alcohol seats in area). Community members described this process as limited by a lack of resources, community representation, control and support (e.g. buy-in) leading to feelings of frustration, sense of constant struggle and dejection. Comments included:

"I felt sorry for some of the community representatives, because they were way in over their head on OSACC, in the sense of really being able to have a strong voice. Because they were often representing...a community league, [essentially] a community...in some cases they were accused of not being representative, not really having the pulse of their community league and not knowing what their community league members or their community members really wanted. So they were struggling all the time to communicate and find out what people wanted. And they'd have little meetings and nobody would come or a few people would come. So they had their own difficulties, too, in representing their certain groups."

"And I was just amazed at some of the behaviours and things that went on. People wouldn't go to any of the planning meetings, wouldn't even read what was proposed, but would stand up in a meeting and shoot it all down, without being informed. And that, to me, is wrong. If you're going to have an opinion, make it an informed one...Some reasonable people acted most unreasonably at the time, thinking they would come in, do an end run at the last minute and change everything. And that's not really [possible] if you're going to have an opinion on something, do your homework."

One respondent spoke directly to the loss of community input as the WALUPS and process neared completion,

"And you know, there were a few times when I remember having conversations about it and saying, "We've got to do something about this thing. It's like a runaway horse," you know. But the momentum of it was just [too much] and it was very difficult to see how we were going to change it in midstream. We had a lot of discussions... about how we needed to back off...and let it be more community-driven. [W]e did another couple of focus groups and a bit more work. But by the end I think we were too far along to... start over, which it just wasn't feasible. Too much time had already gone in."

"So I think that there are issues that have...continued to grow, under the surface. [P]eople only wanted to look at what the top layer of the issue is. I mean, there's people who say, "If we had known it was going to take a riot to get people's attention, we would have organized one years ago."...[N]ow people focus on that as being a catalyst as opposed to the fact that people have been trying to tell them the same thing for years. And it was the community who were originally saying something. It was the people who lived there and who were passionate about it, who had identified the very original

problem. And they weren't listened to. And the organizations inside that area weren't necessarily listened to because I think there was a perception of, "They are just being like that because it's in their back yard."

In sum, consensus seeking in the WALUPS confirmed positive outcomes associated with learning and understanding, empathy and commitment to the process. It also demonstrated the inherent risks incurred in relation to community representation and buy-in, available resources, time constraints, and the formalising nature of placemaking. Table 10 summarises positive and negative consensus seeking outcomes reported by community members in Whyte Avenue.

Table 10: Consensus Seeking Outcomes

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Positive	Process educated people as place-makers regarding history, issues, interests, processes, regulations	Better understanding; empathy
	Building relationships in the community	Common vision; empathy, community; consensus
	Engaging; interrogating, confirming - healthy conflict in community	Empathy; appreciation; awareness
Negative	Supported placemaking capacity and continued maintenance of place-relationships	Continuation; sustained activity / placemaking
	Planning process directed and controlled community placemaking	Controlled process; less freedom; not genuine community process
	Community lacked the technical planning skills and resources to create information	Lacked necessary infrastructure
	OSACC lacked stronger community representation	Not strong community driven entity
	Planning process did not fully engage the community (in terms of forming common readiness for change, commitment to this, and shared set of goals and values.	Half-baked; limited community buy-in; Sense not all issues were dealt with and have continued to grow
	Time constraints and investment prevented community from revisiting issues / matters	Run-away train; too late to turn back; make do with work to date
Community members challenging representation of OSACC membership	Frustration; struggle; demoralizing	

5.3.8 Placemaking Experiences and Lessons Learned

Participants described the WALUPS in terms of a mixture of experiences. Responses were grouped in terms of positive and negative experiences. In terms of

positive experience, participants identified professional enrichment, learning experience, and tangible-intangible outcomes as key elements. Collaborative dialogue and sharing information significantly contributed to raising awareness of Whyte Avenue, its issues and forging a common direction to address them.

“[U]ntil you get intimately involved, like on one of these committees...you don’t realise the amount of effort and the amount of things that are going on in the background, both from the positive or negative point of view.”

“I think we were able to educate local people [and] interest groups...[in terms of] the other guy’s way of looking at things. So there were a lot of good lessons in it.”

“I think [the vision] solidified and had people look at directions they wanted to go. Whether there was actually the impetus to move those forward was... on the part of the community, as well as the other agencies involved.”

“I believe that in the end we solved an awful lot of problems, not all of them.”

“[W]ithout a planning document you have nothing to back you up...[it] is there to set up the rules of engagement”

A number of participants described their experience in Whyte Avenue from a professional level as extremely valuable, worthwhile and even enlightening. Others felt the process significantly contributed to their understanding of place and community relationships. In general, respondents identified positive change occurring as a result of this process. Comments by participants included,

“Well, I think after the WALUPS there was some cohesiveness among the people who had participated. As much as we might have thought it was a flawed process, we did feel very connected to one another and established some pretty solid working relationships with a variety of stakeholder groups in the area. I think people valued each other for their contribution.”

“I think the process itself was – the process I’d rate high, fairly high. I think that there was good stakeholder participation. I think people were heard. I think there were lots of ideas put forward. I think it was a good public process. There was lots of opportunity for people to follow what their concern was right through an entire process in a small group, until they were happy with the solutions that they came up with, and that it was very stakeholder-driven, except in the areas of the bars and the conflicts between free enterprise and regulation.”

Negative experiences cited by participants focused on execution of the process (e.g. inefficient, too controlled), lack of organisational mandate to guide decision-making and allocate resources, and lack of political will to finally implement and enforce study recommendations. According to one respondent:

“...There was no political will. You know, a lot of the recommendations that we made ended up having no teeth whatsoever, because there was no political will to really go up against the interests of business, especially the restaurant and bar businesses. You know, at that point Whyte Avenue was in a bit of a crisis. And there was really a need to look at some of the big issues that had developed around the numbers of drinking establishments that there were. But when it came right down to it, there was no buy-in by the restaurants and bars, [and] by City Council for that matter, in my view....City Council really didn’t buy in until after that riot. [Only] then huge resources got put in there to try to deal with some issues and a whole community development process happened.”

Discussion of the WALUPS experience naturally led community members to talk about important lessons they had learned and how these might be transferred to Whyte Avenue and communities considering a similar collaborative planning process emphasising consensus building. These are summarised as follows:

- Planning documents are valuable in that they establish rules or parameters to guide future development

- Collaborative planning is adaptive to new situations and contexts. While it may not have been thoroughly successful initially, it remains a viable process that can be built on and further customised
- The motivation or energy to initiate and support a community planning process should come from the community itself, its various interests and stakeholders.
- Community 'buy-in' is essential to a community driven process and placemaking with people-in-place. This requires time and patience.
- Planning process should be initially framed by taking an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).
- Planning processes should be clearly articulated and defined according to shorter timelines. This allows stakeholders to assess available resources, level of commitment and intensity of involvement. This can reduce burnout, repetition, and other inefficiencies.
- Communities need the necessary resources and tools to effect positive outcomes at the local level. This includes the opportunity to learn formal placemaking information, knowledge, skills and processes.
- Communication, facilitation, negotiation and mediation skills are essential to successful consensus building throughout the collaborative planning process.
- Maintaining the constant flow of information is key. It enables collective stakeholder awareness, confirmation and interrogation of information, ideas and meaning necessary to advance common goals and objectives. The more

connected the networks, the faster, and the greater the likelihood that information can and will be disseminated.

- Issues may be better split or staged (where possible) for greater efficiency. As well, stages should have clearly communicated beginnings and endings. These provide observable (i.e. measurable) outcomes, as well as sense of closure and motivation for stakeholders.
- While seeking consensus should be the ideal, it cannot be the rule as it is not always possible and should not be forced. Sometimes it's okay to 'agree to disagree' on points to advance the broader process.
- Building and managing consensus is risky in that it renders people and knowledge vulnerable to questioning and challenge. Moreover, everybody has an equal say and right to be heard. However, individuals or interests may be destructive to the process, at which point they should be removed to protect developing or strengthening relationships.
- Political voice and support are key. Collaborative planning should encourage broad representation and commitment from community stakeholders as this is necessary to politicise action and attention. More generally, people need to become politically active to empower their community, its vision and goals. As well, communities need the willing and active support of politicians who are in a position to enact change at a structural level.
- Planning documents are living documents invested with hundreds and even thousands of person hours. The right to challenge such plans, while

supported in principle, should carry with it a sensitivity and level of respect for those who heavily invested in them.

5.3.9 Summary of Communicative Placemaking

One of the primary goals of this research was to explore how communicative placemaking could influence sense of place at the neighbourhood level. The information compiled, organised and synthesized in the latter part of the interviews conducted revealed that collaborative planning is an influential social process and experience. The affect of this formalised placemaking process on place, as demonstrated in Whyte Avenue, is reported in the subsequent section. The following narrative summary provides an overview of participants' accounts of the placemaking process, as experienced in WALUPS.

The Whyte Avenue placemaking process began with a grass-roots movement within the community to address issues affecting the area at large. This led to the formation of the OSACC in 1993 with the aid and endorsement of the City of Edmonton Planning Department, and City Council, to conduct a study of the area (later known as the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study). Through OSACC and Planning Department involvement, a diverse number of stakeholder groups assembled to address issues concerning the broader community that included Whyte Avenue. The sense was that something had to be done in response to the increasing number of bars and nightclubs in the community. As this process progressed, other issues were identified including concern over area safety,

attractiveness of the area, impact of special events, and homelessness. The diversity of representation brought with it a sense of breadth, legitimacy and openness to the process. Many people were not surprised about who became involved and the support they provided. The formation of a talented core group of volunteers brought valuable knowledge, experience, and skill into the placemaking process, which proved not only effective, but also motivational in instances. This led to a greater feeling that the community had the power to make things happen, to effect change. This was a new placemaking approach that involved more open, inclusive and informed decision-making to new problems. Extensive volunteering, working committees and community meetings in the form of town hall meetings were conducted, involving up to 300 people over the course of the process along with thousands of volunteer hours.

Initial stakeholder involvement originated with social and professional organisations involved in the larger community. These included various positions on boards, committees, departments or agencies in which a sense of community or professional responsibility motivated involvement. Participation within the overall placemaking process flowed from either social or personal concern for the commercial area. A broad range of activities were engaged in by participants as part of the placemaking process including, canvassing the community for wider representation, an educational planning component, meetings, public / community consultation (i.e. town hall meetings), efforts to mobilise community support and implement the approved plan. Aside from participant interest, education, and

extensiveness of the process it was also cited for its considerable length, complexity and limited resources.

Over the course of the planning process, community members reported a number of issues affecting them. At first, the growing number of alcohol seats within the commercial area and associated impacts on the community dominated discussion leading to concern over building capacities, traffic and lack of parking. As discussion deepened within the process, other concerns were raised including, vandalism, historic preservation, area attractiveness and impact of special events on the area and how these could be addressed. What collaborative planning in the WACA revealed was that these problems were new to the area were not being addressed by the current planning regulations, were complex and constrained by time and resources. Moreover, the process revealed value disparities among residents, business and land owners. By addressing these issues collectively, there was a sense that something greater could come out of the entire process.

Both OSACC (prior to its formalisation in 1993) and the City's Planning Department initiated a visioning process for the area. These exercises helped organise a shared community vision to lead future development of Old Strathcona and WACA. Stakeholder groups were confirmed along with specific committees, education sessions and meetings held to address identified issues. The products of these placemaking activities were then shared with the greater community at town hall meetings where members of the community could come and voice their comments, concerns and questions. This represented considerable work on the part

of many volunteers despite a significant lack of resources. This was especially the case of OSACC members who, besides volunteering, were accountable to the City, the community of Old Strathcona, and their own committee(s) in terms of achieving their mandate.

The OSACC was formalised from a grass-roots movement within the community to address concerns over its unmanaged growth and low political involvement of the community at large. Composed of a limited range of stakeholders, this core community group was later broadened and formalised as the OSACC under the WALUPS. Initiation of the WALUPS enabled various community interests to become proactively involved in shaping the area, setting a tone of openness, trust, and a sense that something different was occurring. Inclusion of civic departments and community organisations not only built credibility into the process, but confidence in its working relations and partnerships. This led to more efficient and effective problem solving and sharing of information.

The structure of the WALUPS comprised a number of phases including study initiation, process approval via City Council, identification of issues, problem solving solutions, public consultation, plan approval and implementation. This required considerable time investment to achieve necessary tasks, creating at times significant pressure, stress, obligation and personal investment on the part of participants. As the process unfolded over a period of years, a number of participants dropped out due to 'burnout' and personal cost.

During the actual process of placemaking, participation involved liaison with community members, organisations, city departments and agencies with the intent of finding solutions to new problems. A number of committee meetings were held in which information was shared, created and disseminated in an effort to arrive at common ground on specific issues. Meetings were (mostly) casual and relaxed among participants, who did not rely on formal voting processes but, rather, agreement based on consensus. At times, this lack of formal structure contributed to a sense of poor organisation and future outcome(s). Also noted was selective participation by specific stakeholders on particular issues leading to skewed decision-making outcomes, difficulty and frustration with the process.

As the process continued to develop, OSACC expanded the placemaking process among a broader set of interests in novel ways through its involvement and work with the City, community and various sub-committees. However, civic mandates could have been clearer at times, and more resources could have been invested in the process to reach deeper within the community. More support and direction at the civic level would have improved the process. Furthermore, as the end of the WALUPS neared, the process of placemaking became more formalised and less community driven resulting in less participation, involvement and ownership from a community perspective. With less community involvement, OSACC's role in the completion of WALUPS increased, along with their responsibility and need for additional resources.

In terms of the level of participant engagement in the WALUPS, a number of positive elements kept people 'at the table' and the process moving. The formalisation of OSACC under the WALUPS was instrumental in harnessing motivated and talented community members already working toward improvement of the area, including a range of interest groups. This further tapped into local passion for the area, and the familiarity and comfort of those actively involved in social and professional organisations. Concern for the area, dedication to community, and love for Whyte Avenue strongly influenced participants' high degree of involvement and commitment throughout the entire four (plus) years process. Over this period of time, some participants left because it was too long, tiresome and or frustrating. Access to professional facilitators and or mediators at times may have prevented individuals from delaying the process and in some cases from poisoning relationships and wasting limited resources. This is especially important given the diversity of issues encountered throughout the process, and the increasing work load, obligation and pressure experienced by key participants. For those who did not burn out and left, some returned for later stages to continue the process.

Information was a key factor in the progression of the WALUPS in terms of its creation, traits, integration and outcomes. Stakeholders represented many diverse groups bringing considerable knowledge of the area and experience (i.e. sense of place). Together in groups, many innovative and creative ideas were shared as to how issues might be addressed. This represented both informal and formal creation

of information in the form of personal experience (e.g. description, story) constructive discussion (e.g. argumentation), meeting minutes, and written reports. This proved exciting, idealistic and at times unwieldy in terms of the breadth and depth of information being handled. However this was successfully coordinated among stakeholder groups providing another layer of open discourse and confirmation. In general, community members respected each other's claims and worked toward their understanding and validation of these. At times, collaborative dialogue involved less formality, factual information and therefore more opinion. This made critical interpretation and confirmation of stakeholder information more difficult. Overall, the integration of information was constant by virtue of high connectivity and dissemination among community stakeholder organisations, committees, working groups and civic departments. This resulted in implementation of a series of physical improvements, formalised knowledge, organisational infrastructure and relationships, and a clear response to the issue of homelessness and street youth. Moreover, this contributed to enhanced area attractiveness, information and awareness of area and potential, community connectivity and positive response to the social needs of the community. As the process came to an end, and submission of the final report to council drew near, study completion was not fully communicated among community members proving anti-climatic and frustrating for some participants.

Consensus building within the WALUPS generated both positive and negative outcomes for the commercial area. From a positive standpoint,

collaborative planning's emphasis on consensus resulted in the education of local place-makers, new relationships within the community, constructive dialogue and ongoing support for maintaining and enhancing the WACA. Consensus seeking therefore led to greater understanding of the commercial area, a common vision of it, stakeholder empathy, appreciation and understanding, and need for continued placemaking efforts. However, consensus seeking also brought with it less freedom and community input as the WALUPS neared completion, constrained by a lack of: community technical skills and resources, broader community support of OSACC, planning process and time. In striving for consensus, there was also a marked sense that the community was not all 'there', and fully supportive in light of the issues. Limited time meant certain issues could not be opened for further debate or redress.

A number of valuable experiences and lessons were learned from the WALUPS. These included sharing and learning experiences through collaborative dialogue leading to increased personal and community awareness. Negative features included process inefficiencies, lack of resources, clearer organisational mandates in certain instances, and political will. This provided a number of collaborative planning lessons for future placemaking on Whyte Avenue and in other urban areas facing similar challenges.

5.4 Placemaking Impacts

This next section reports the influence of collaborative planning on local sense of place identified by community members. Results have been organised according to major themes identified by participants along with their perceived impact and or outcome on people's sense of place concerning Whyte Avenue.

5.4.1 Business and Commerce

In terms of business and commerce, community members associated a number of positive and negative affects of collaborative planning on Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's sense of place. Collaborative planning (i.e. WALUPS) was positively associated with: improved local stakeholder communication, a more active business association aimed at balancing area interests (e.g. historic preservation vs. active nightlife), increased business expansion and enhanced composition of services within the area (i.e. greater business diversity), regulations on size of business entities within area, higher end goods and services, and an increasing number of overall customers and visitors to area. Accordingly, many respondents reported a sense of business and commerce within the WACA as being more successful, a unique environment, more diverse / varied, and a great place to find higher quality of goods and services. As one participant stated,

"I think the sophistication of the merchandise at the market has changed. Ten years ago there might have been Breen selling organic produce. I think now probably half the vendors there sell organic produce. Well, considerably more. So I think there you have an example of things that have changed for the better. I think that that's a big improvement for us."

Respondents went on to describe their sense of business and commerce within the WACA as a popular pedestrian environment within Edmonton, frequented by more people, and generally more successful than in the past.

Participants also identified negative outcomes of business and commerce within the WACA. These included: higher rental rates, absentee landlord(s) and less community support, change in business composition (e.g. more bars and nightclubs, attraction of retail franchises), loss of retail / business diversity and character, larger businesses displacing smaller family-run businesses, increased migration east and south of Whyte Avenue, and parking requirements. Respondents went on to describe their sense of business and commerce within the WACA as expensive, increasingly profit-driven, declining in affordable rental space for businesses, less community-oriented, less unique, too many alcohol establishments, and unaccommodating parking. These negative outcomes are reflected in the following statements,

“We had more of a mixture of businesses and so on. We had a quilting shop, I remember. And we had more small businesses. [Some] chains have moved in. We have lost some of the mix, which is regrettable, because they helped make the place what it was. But they just can’t afford to be here anymore.”

“I don’t think the [overall] evolution is moving ahead any faster than it was, other than the fact that the space rental continues to rise for the area and is definitely squeezing out some of the smaller organizations. And I think it’s probably doing it faster now than it was before. When you think back of all the businesses that were in the area that were small family-owned ones, that number is decreasing quite proportionately, at a faster rate.”

Table 11 summarises positive and negative impacts associated with collaborative placemaking in Whyte Avenue as they relate to business and commerce outcomes.

Table 11: Collaborative Planning Affect on Business and Commerce

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Active business association aimed at balancing area interests (e.g. Historic preservation vs. Active nightlife)	Successful business environment
	Communication among stakeholders in response to solving problems	Co-operation; better relationships
	Protection of business composition via WALUPS; encouragement of business diversity by OSBA; regulations on size of business entities within area	Diverse service area; variety
	Change in business composition to more higher end / upmarket stores versus second hand (i.e. Beauty related spa / salon; eyewear); better goods and services offered	Higher quality of goods and services
Negative	Area has successfully attracted consumers / people to area	Successful
	Increasing rental rates and perceived high business turnover rate in area	Profit driven; greed
	Business migration east of the railway tracks and south of Whyte Avenue	Expensive; declining affordable rental space for business
	Absent landowners	Non-community minded
	Significant business expansion	Benefits for the few with costs borne by the city and its residents; not putting back into the community
	Larger businesses displacing smaller businesses; overall city loss of family run businesses	
	Change in business composition in terms of increase in bars and nightclubs and associated impacts (e.g. garbage, noise, traffic)	Too many bars and nightclubs; disruptive
	Decrease in diversity of businesses	Too many drinking establishments
Today the bars and nightclubs have greater influence over the area by becoming involved in the OSBA	Loss of residential community influence and control over WACA	
Cannot meet parking requirements; moving 2-3 blocks off Whyte to do business	Unaccommodating	

5.4.2 Attractions, Culture and History

Community members described a series of collaborative planning outcomes related to Whyte Avenue's attractions, culture and history. Positive outcomes of collaborative planning identified by respondents included: planning policies and regulations established to help guide / govern area, physical streetscaping improvements, adaptive reuse of building stock and historical designations, preservation of physical character and enhanced physical image, increased regulation of establishment sizes, improved parking, enhanced arts area, increased social activity and success of the Fringe Festival.

Participants described these influences as contributing to a sense of overall area improvement, importance of Whyte Avenue's physical history, and greater control over growth and manageability of area activities. Participants' reflect this in following comments:

"The heritage within this area is an important component. And that was recognized through the zoning that was put in place, as well as policies that were put in place, not only calling for preservation of heritage buildings, but also for infill development to be compatible in style and architectural treatment...from glazing to number of storeys to location relative to the pedestrian, or the sidewalk. All kinds of things were built in to ensure that not only would the heritage buildings be retained, but that new development that would come in would be compatible with that."

"I am well aware of the amount of effort that they put in... to try and preserve the historical nature of the area. And only because the Planning Department of the City has allowed these commercial organizations to utilize the historical buildings as they are have we been able to preserve a lot of them. In many cases they would just as soon have knocked the building down and built a new building instead of having to spend a lot of money renovating the existing ones."

This further reflects participants' reported sense of a re-emphasis on neighbourhood scale development and services, vibrancy and uniqueness of the Whyte Avenue area within Edmonton.

Negative influences associated with collaborative planning outcomes included a changing demographic, impacts associated with the Fringe Festival, and declining presence of historical attractions within the area. Participants described the impact of these influences on the area's sense of attractions, culture and history in terms of a sense of unfriendliness, increased congestion and wear on the area, loss of history, and decreased political voice at the community level. Positive and

negative outcomes associated with collaborative placemaking in relation to attractions, culture and history are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12: Collaborative Planning Affect on Attractions, Culture and History

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Physical streetscaping of Whyte Avenue (e.g. Improved railway line pedestrian crossing, trees and lighting, street lights, signage, streetscape standards); creation of End of Steel Park; pedestrian environment enhancements	Area has greatly improved; improved physical image
	Planning policies and regulations established for the preservation and conservation of historical buildings and area; architectural controls	Sense of historical recognition; importance
	Historical building designations underway	Generally successful at preserving historical heritage
	Adaptive re-use and building variety	
	Regulations set in response to traffic issues and pedestrian congestion in light of operators and local residents	Controlled growth; managed growth
	Increased control and management of area arts and entertainment	Sense of control over activities
	Restriction on establishment sizes	Emphasis on smaller neighbourhood scale services
	Social activity has increased; is busier with more people	Vibrant; become a part of the Edmonton experience
Negative	Increased number of younger demographic present at night	Unfriendly
	Impacts of Fringe event on community - blocked streets, pedestrian / traffic / parking congestion	Congestion
	Area has been and continues to be subject to wear and tear (e.g. Pedestrian use, vandalism, heavy trailer trucks driving down Avenue damaging road surface, shaking building foundations)	Heavy use
	Loss of historical attractions (e.g. Telephone Museum, Model and Toy Museum, CNE Station)	Sense of loss
	Increase in rental housing and lower tenureship in area	Less community power

5.4.3 Accessibility, Services and Safety

Throughout the interview process participants identified accessibility, services and safety as impacted by collaborative planning outcomes. Positive affects included improved parking within the area (e.g. assigned parking), alternative transportation options, community development and youth co-op, increased police interaction and communication with licensed alcohol establishments, and an increasingly more mature demographic staying out later.

The sense of accessibility, services and level of safety reported by participants is that the commercial area has become more accessible and pedestrian-

friendly, socially supportive of those in need, and generally safer as a result of increased monitoring and police presence. As participants stated:

“[T]here is a whole host of things that people are doing or have done to try and encourage a variety of transportation alternatives for this area. [For example] OSBA has been looking at improved taxi service on weekends to stop people from drinking and driving and stuff.”

“I see nothing wrong with traffic lights, gridlock and pedestrians. I think that’s a desirable state of affairs because people then have to find alternatives....I would never worry about access. I like the parking. I think it’s convenient. It’s short term... an hour, two hours max”

Participants also cited an increase in bar and nightclub traffic, fewer services and improvements in amenities, a greater emphasis on commercial versus community land uses (e.g. sale of city lands and loss of public services / amenity potential), younger demographic that is less community-oriented and need for additional police presence in community. This led to a sense of little if any change in Whyte Avenue’s services, increased commercialisation of area, increased traffic congestion, less concern for the community, and need for greater security during night time. Table 13 summarises positive and negative outcomes associated with collaborative placemaking in relation to accessibility, services, and safety within the WACA.

Table 13: Collaborative Planning Affect on Accessibility, Services and Safety

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Assigned off-site parking east of 103 Street developed by Farmers Market; regulations enacted to prevent shared/over-claimed off-site parking	Improved parking; more accessible
	Increased traffic congestion as a result of area success; preservation of pedestrian commercial strip	Encourages alternative transportation options; walkable
	Community development of youth co-op	Supportive; more needs to be done
	Introduction of Barwatch program and SecureClub for bars and nightclubs to monitor and screen patron activity and behaviour	Improved monitoring and regulation of bad patrons; better, safer more enjoyable night life
	Older more mature demographic staying out later using the area	Improved sense of safety
Negative	Few service improvements in terms of amenities	Same; little, if any change
	Sale of city owned property resulting in a loss of health clinic and attempt to close Strathcona library	Less community services
	Emphasis on commercial versus community services	Increased commercialisation of area
	Bar and nightclub traffic increased	Parking conflicts, traffic, congestion
	Perception that younger demographic has a "me first" attitude	Area has become more aggressive during night time; unsafe
	Don't walk area during night time	Uncomfortable at night; sense area could get worse if not addressed

5.4.4 Communication

Respondents identified increased communication within and outside the community as a direct positive outcome of collaborative planning. Key impacts acknowledged included: formation and continued functioning of OSACC, improved community connectedness and awareness of issues and events, problem solving communication among stakeholders, and improved communication between businesses and civic departments. For many community members, collaborative planning imparted the commercial area with a greater sense of connectivity and awareness of what was happening in the broader community. As one participant described,

"[Communication] is not necessarily always written. Although there is written communication back and forth between the organizations, as well. They tell who's working on what and what they're doing, just so everybody in the area is a little more informed on what everybody is doing. And those organizations that meet include the [Farmer's] Market, [Old Strathcona] Foundation and Business Association, Fringe Theatre not to mention smaller groups. But also the Police Services come to these meetings and let us know what's going on with the police and different City departments, you know, what's going on. So a lot of the time the information, the things that the City are going to do, improvements they're making and stuff, that's how it gets communicated to us through the Old Strathcona Area Community Council."

"Over the last few years there has been more communication because of the land use study. It has brought some of the key players in the area together on a more familiar basis. In the early part of it, of course, there was the work on the study, to see the direction that the City should take and the area should take and what they can do to mold that. And because they wanted the key people or organizations in the area to be involved in those discussions it has brought all of us together."

Table 14 summarises outcomes associated with collaborative placemaking in relation to participants sense of community communication within the WACA.

Table 14: Collaborative Planning Affect on Community Communication

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Formation and continued functioning of OSACC	Increased connectivity; awareness
	Improved community connectedness via WALUPS induced communication infrastructure	Increased flow of information; informal and formal
	Improved inter-business communications	
	Improved inter-departmental communications	Openness; sharing of information

5.4.5 Summary of Planning Impacts on the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area

Four major areas concerning the WACA's sense of place were impacted by the WALUPS: business and commerce; attractions, culture and history; accessibility, services and safety; and communication. Business and commerce with the WACA

experienced both positive and negative impacts related to collaborative planning actions. A more active and involved business association along with improved community communications has led to a more successful business environment, better community relationships and co-operation. Site regulations developed through the WALUPS helped protect business composition and diversity. These impacts, combined with a general shift toward more higher end products, services and stores, have helped to attract consumers to the area.

In spite of these advances, rental rates have increased, leading to high business turnover, displacement of small and family run businesses, decreased diversity and continued increase in the number of area alcohol seats. This creates a sense of “profit over community”, benefits for the few, and inability to deal with associated impacts of bars and nightclubs within the WACA.

Through the WALUPS, the commercial area’s attractions, culture and history have experienced positive change. The image of the area has improved through physical streetscape enhancements and maintenance as well as control over area growth through increased regulation of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Commitment to increased control and management of the arts district and restriction on establishment sizes has led to greater control, sensitivity to surrounding community and success as a vibrant cultural focal point in Edmonton. Renewed emphasis on historical designations, and adaptive re-use supported by planning policies and regulations, have resulted in improved historical preservation, awareness and recognition of Whyte Avenue’s past.

Despite these positive impacts, special events and increasing wear and tear on the commercial area contribute to congestion and heavy use during the daytime. A younger more active demographic at night-time contributes at times to a sense of unfriendliness and insecurity. Increased rental tenureship and loss of historical tenureship have diminished the community power and voice necessary to maintain part of the area's history.

Accessibility, services and safety were impacted by the WALUPS. Improved daytime parking and encouragement of alternative transportation modes resulted from the addition of assigned parking, greater enforcement of parking standards, road congestion and enhanced pedestrian environment (i.e. streetscaping). Development of a youth co-op by the community, introduction of Barwatch and Secureclub programs, and an older demographic beginning to stay out later have resulted in a more supportive and safe community. Few service improvements (i.e. public amenities), sale of City property in the area and an emphasis on commercial development have not improved community services or support. Increased bar and nightclub traffic along with younger demographics have not improved associated parking conflicts, poor behaviour of patrons and (for some) personal sense of safety.

Area communication has also improved as a result of the WALUPS. The OSACC continues to disseminate information at the community level maintaining a sense of local connectedness and awareness of issues and events. Communication between business and City departments was improved resulting in increased flow of information informally and formally, and greater sense of openness.

5.5 Contemporary Whyte Avenue

The following section describes the contemporary commercial area of Whyte Avenue, post-collaborative planning interventions. Moreover, this section provides a more detailed description of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area, as it existed in the spring of 2003 according to key participant interviews. Information regarding Whyte Avenue and its sense of place is presented according to dominant place dimensions (i.e. physical, socio-cultural and individual) and categories identified within the literature, along with unique themes revealed by participants during interview discussion.

5.5.1 Physical Dimension

Location

Location represents a discernible point of rest in space and time (Tuan, 1977). This may be a virtual or fixed position in space defined by a particular symbol, set of objects, materials or features that capture attention and afford meaning (Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Relph, 1976; Gustafson, 2001). Research findings support Whyte Avenue's physical location in space as revealed by themes of physical and conceptual information. A number of participants described the WACA in terms of its physical attributes, locating it south of the North Saskatchewan River, within central Edmonton, demarcated physically by its core of historic buildings. Additional physical descriptions were used to indicate boundaries to the west (e.g.

the Old Post Office) and east (e.g. CN railway tracks along Whyte Avenue). Physical features, landmarks and boundaries provided a sense of history, meaning, and definition to the location of the commercial area.

The location of the subject area was also described using conceptual information. This included defining Whyte Avenue's boundaries by street address (e.g. from 109 Street to the west to 99 Street in the east, approximately 84 Avenue to the north and 80 Avenue to the south), and as a historical area (e.g. from 103 to 105 street along Whyte Avenue and a block north and south). Throughout the interview process, respondents identified these boundaries as evolving, shifting south and to the east. For participants, conceptually, the location of the commercial area denotes technical meaning, history of place, and ongoing development over time. Table 15 summarises the commercial area's physical location in space in relation to sense of place.

Table 15: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Location

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Physical	South of North Saskatchewan River	Historic location
	Central location is demarcated physically by the area's buildings	Historic buildings and core area establishes Whyte avenue area
	Western boundary demarcated by Old Post Office (an historic building) and cuts off connection to Garneau Eastern boundary identified as railway line	Western limit Area east of tracks not strongly associated with being a part of Whyte
Conceptual	Boundaries of Whyte avenue are defined by 109 to 99 street (west-east) and 83-84 Ave (to north) and 80-81Ave (to the south)	More technical boundary
	Historic core area is from 103-105 street on Whyte, with a block north and south	Historic locale
	Boundaries of Whyte are shifting south and strengthening to the east with the relocation of traditional businesses	Growing; developing

Landscape

Natural and human-made landscapes form the physical basis of place. These include tangible features, physical elements that not only impact human experience (e.g. exposure, mass, form, texture, food, mobility) but symbolisation as well (e.g. danger, order, history, peace) (Gibson, 1979; Appleton, 1975; Norberg-Schulz, 1979). As such, place communicates with people in terms of its physical affordances and collective symbols. Community members described the physical landscape of the commercial area in terms of themes related to urban design and architecture (see Table 16). As findings corroborate, positive and negative aspects of landscape were identified that influence both Whyte Avenue's objective affordances and subjective meanings.

Urban Design

In terms of urban design, participants described the commercial area as a rectangular strip providing opportunity for variation in building styles, designs, arrangement and scale. This provides a sense of variation, novelty and interest along the avenue. The design of the commercial area is of a human scale, utilizes a compact form, has narrow streets providing a greater sense of accessibility (e.g. walkability), and manifests attractiveness and soul. Older historic buildings adapted for reuse provide contemporary services and amenities while contributing to the commercial area's function and form. Attention to building character, streetscaping (e.g. tree plantings), and materials serve to maintain area character, add variety and interest. This further contributes to the areas character and sense of history.

Participants also identified negative elements related to aspects of urban design within the commercial area. These included lack of green space, traffic congestion as a result of narrower streets, lack of on-street parking, short-cutting through the community, wear and tear on the area (e.g. street garbage, damaged sidewalks, roadways), and a large tract of commercial land bisecting Whyte Avenue developing southward. This elicited a sense of separation from nature, crowdedness, congestion, heavy use / wear, and lack of safety within the area. As one participant pointed out:

“the problem with [traffic] is it leaves people shortcutting through your neighbourhood, which ruins the neighbourhood. Nobody who has small children in a neighbourhood where there is too much traffic likes that.”

Architecture

In describing Whyte Avenue, participants frequently cited the area's architecture. This encompassed Whyte Avenue's diverse range of building types, composition of historical buildings, and distinctive landmark structures. As such, participants described the commercial area as welcoming, unique in character, and having a rich architectural history rare for Edmonton.

In addition, participants identified the commercial area's architecture as distinctly non-mall like, non-chain store nor big box franchise, and containing a mix of old and new stores in addition to developed pedestrian focal points. According to participants, this provided a sense of uniqueness to this area, compactness, pedestrian-orientation, and rich experience. Negative aspects associated with area architecture included the increased number of bars and nightclubs and construction

of lower quality residential development nearby, contributing to a more homogenous physical character.

Table 16: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Landscape

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Urban design Positive	Whyte comprises a rectangular strip, not a square, and this lends itself to greater variation in building styles, designs, arrangement, and scale.	Lack of uniformity; variation; novelty
	Human scale and compact form; human scale development of one and two storey buildings; composed of narrower streets	Attractive; highly walkable and accessible; appropriate human scale; has soul; has humaneness
	Contains a high number of adaptive reuse historic buildings to provide contemporary services and amenities	Paramount to areas attractiveness and draw
	Streetscaping using trees, brick sidewalks, lights, park space	Attractive, relaxing, escape; trees form a living history of area
	Utilizes urban design to maintain and augment district character (e.g. Light standards; open spaces, sidewalks design to minimize congestion, compact development)	Maintains physical character
Negative	Lacks green space	Limited interaction with nature
	Traffic congestion caused by thorough-fare arterial; pedestrian environment affected by vehicle traffic	Congestion; crowding;
Architecture Positive	Wear and tear on Avenue (e.g. Street garbage, vehicle and pedestrian use impacts)	Sense of wearing out the area; unclean and not safe area
	Range of diverse building types (e.g. Post office, train station, hospital, hotel, clock tower, fire hall, library, school)	Sense of welcome; real character; unique style
	Historic buildings; land mark buildings (e.g. Old Post Office, Strathcona Hotel, Army and Navy building)	Sense of historical breadth and depth; architectural distinctiveness; rare character in Edmonton
	Non-mall, chain store or big box franchises Mixture of old and new shops	Sense of local activity, vibrancy Rich environment and experiences
Negative	Has developed focal points accessible by foot composed of a concentration of place activities	Pedestrian friendly; compact; dense
	Increase in bars and nightclubs Poor quality residential development	Homogenous; lack of variety, no soul

Image

Image refers to the impression of place derived from collectively held meanings of specific elements or features within the physical environment. It is recognisable to both visitor and everyday users, relying on symbolisation and communication of meaning(s) through its physical and material form (Lynch, 1977).

As place evolves over time, objective components and their associated symbols change and, with it, image of place. Interviews with community members support this assertion, and identified both personal and socially held meanings contributing to Whyte Avenue's image associated with the commercial area's physical character.

Personal Meaning

From a personal perspective, participants identified the importance of this area's historical meaning. That is, the image of Whyte Avenue was one of preservation and maintenance of historical elements important to local history and personal meaning. The physical character of Whyte Avenue and the image derived from it contributed to a sense of respect for the area's past, historical value and personal meaningfulness as a unique place (e.g. to interact with people, share with friends and family, reminisce). Loss of certain physical features (e.g. buildings burned down, damaged street furniture, graffiti) was identified with feelings of loss, frustration and in some cases anger. For some participants, working within the area tended to filter their interaction with Whyte Avenue. For them, the commercial area did not reveal overly meaningful elements or features contributing to a deepened personal image of place.

Social Meaning

In terms of broader social meaning associated with the commercial area's physical features, participants revealed a temporal image of place. Social meanings of features of Whyte Avenue's character revealed a past, present, and future image of place. Participants identified a past image of place in terms of their description of

the area's older buildings. For them, these serve as indicators of a shared social history and symbol of early pioneer achievement eliciting a sense of community roots, shared history and early pride in (Old) Strathcona. Analysis further revealed that through adaptive reuse and preservation of the area's historic buildings, participants reported a sense of local history and experience with its past.

Preservation of the area's historic buildings contributed to a sense of social value, rootedness, that one is part of something greater, more permanent and enduring.

Participants tended to describe the present image of the commercial area in terms of its vibrancy and heavy use. For a number of respondents, the physical presence of historic buildings, cafes, bistros, unique shops and services significantly contribute to Whyte Avenue's positive image. Participants described their image of Whyte Avenue as enduring, cosmopolitan, European, anti-suburban and a complete neighbourhood. For others, Whyte Avenue represents a heavily used place, worn, and at times at conflict and unsafe. This was attributed to annual major attractions (e.g. Fringe Festival, Silly Summer Parade), type of businesses (e.g. bars and nightclubs), general "wear and tear" associated with a successful pedestrian environment, and the set of diverse interests brought together in one place.

In terms of Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's future image, many participants identified this area's provision of enduring community functions over time as a significant factor. This included physical features contributing to a place where kids can still go to hang out, families and friends meet, and to work. This elicited a sense of permanence, solidity (i.e. roots), and inspiration in Whyte

Avenue's future based on participant knowledge of where this area came from, what it has achieved, and where it can go tomorrow. Table 17 summarises the contemporary image of Whyte Avenue associated with a physical sense of place.

Table 17: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Image

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Image		
Personal Meaning	Maintaining historical elements of Whyte Avenue's past; valuing of local history through preservation	Respect for area past; historical value; personal meaningfulness
	Loss of physical place elements	Frustration, anger, disappointment
	Working in area filters communication, interaction and relationships to place	Few meaningful features
Social Meaning	Buildings serve as indicators of history	Sense of roots, history
	Early achievements of pioneers to area	Sense of pride in area; sense of future / hope linked to history
	Adaptive reuse buildings enable experience with past history in place	Sense of roots; part of something greater, stronger, permanent; living history
	Contribution of cafes, bistros, and unique shops and services	Cosmopolitan; European, alternative to suburban culture / lifestyle; complete neighbourhood
	Buildings symbolise community value for the past and the need for reinvestment in present	Pride in the present; used heavily; wearing out;
	Environment / landscape draws together many different users; area combines conflicting interests	Unsafe at times; conflict
	Contrast of people today to the buildings of yesterday built before their time	Enduring
Provides enduring community functions for residents (e.g. A place where kids can still hangout, families meet, work)	Sense of permanence; solidity to area; sense of inspiration, hope linked to history	

5.5.2 Social Dimension

Through key participant interviews, a series of themes relating to the social dimension of place were revealed. These included social experience, place identity, and attachment. Analyses identified emergent patterns within each theme which are described in the following sections.

Social Experience

Sense of place emerges and is projected from repeated and sustained individual and socio-cultural interaction in place (Butz & Eyles, 1997). At one end, social institutions (e.g. family, work) and cultural groups (e.g. community organisations) mediate individual knowledge, behaviour and perception. On the other, individuals engage formal and informal group structures influencing values, challenging processes and norms. Together, this inter-subjective interplay (i.e. social experience) constitutes a collective sense of place. Community members in Whyte Avenue revealed a number of unique social experiences comprising the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (see Table 18). Particular themes involved type of people (i.e. user) and intent, activities, and time that combine to elicit a particular social experience and collective Whyte Avenue sense of place.

People

Participants described the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area as a highly socially diverse area in comparison to other areas in Edmonton. More specifically, the commercial area is composed of a wide range of people from all ages, including: residents, students, patrons, friends and families, tourists, and those representing specific public / private interest groups (e.g. institutional, historical, theatre, Police, local business, street people).

Each group influences the sense of Whyte Avenue differently, in terms of contribution to its social experience. Residents form a diverse group of interests that vary by age, tenureship and community involvement and are characterized as caring

and involved in the area. University students were described as hard working within the area, different in terms of their fashion, and contributing to problem bar and nightclub situations associated with public intoxication, and obnoxious and poor behaviour. That is, while students were seen to positively contribute to the area, a small percentage (i.e. problem patrons) was identified as demonstrating a lack of respect for the community and self. Negative patrons were associated with an increased sense of aggressiveness and problem for the Whyte Avenue area. Friends and families were characterized as frequenting the area on weekends for special events, festivals, goods and services (e.g. Farmer's Market) and are credited for contributing to a friendly and family-oriented area. Tourists and special public and private interest groups were acknowledged as comprising part of the area's social experience, but were not linked to specific feelings or conceptions of place, save for the Police. Participants reported that the small number of Police officers working the area have become increasingly involved in the community, while responding to primarily alcohol-related problems (e.g. assaults, vandalism, drunk people wandering through residents' yards). This noticeable involvement has contributed to participants' improved sense of safety and security within the area.

Intent

Participants revealed a marked difference among users of the area in terms of their level of intention. That is, people seemed to come to the commercial area with a particular focus or not. Focused users came with a particular itinerary of what they wanted to do (e.g. meet over supper, shop, have a drink with friends) and where

(e.g. restaurant, store, nightclub / pub) contributing to a sense of activity. For those individuals or groups who came to Whyte Avenue without focus or agenda (e.g. go to hang out, stroll the Avenue), this provided a sense of ease, support and discovery.

Activities

Participants described a number of activities people engage in within the commercial area that contribute to its unique social experience and sense of place. Generally, participants described the commercial area as a place to fulfil basic and special needs, socialise and interact with people, and find entertainment. In terms of social experience, the wide range of activities was seen to add to the vibrancy and excitement of the area.

Furthermore, participants tended to separate activities according to time of day, (i.e. day and night). During the daytime, participants described area activities as primarily work-related, strolling the Avenue, shopping, eating and drinking at a wide variety of locations within the area, socialising with friends, meeting people, and visiting / attending a wide selection of arts and theatre opportunities. Activities during the daytime contribute to a sense of normalcy, relaxation, pleasantness, interest, enjoyment, memories and excitement.

During the night time, participants described the primary activities as socialising with friends, interacting with people, eating at restaurants, drinking at bars and dancing at nightclubs (i.e. night-clubbing), and attending theatre events. Participants identified night time activities contributing to rich place experiences and a range of personal feelings toward area safety from safe to unsafe.

Time

Participants revealed time as a significant factor influencing the commercial area's social experience and sense of place. It was identified that people use the area not only in distinct ways, but also at different times of the week and day, and for particular reasons. During the daytime, the area was described as filled with a broader spectrum of people (e.g. grandparents, parents, children, teenagers) carrying out an equally diverse set of activities (e.g. shopping, browsing, going for coffee, talking / meeting, catching a movie). As night approaches, participants reported a demographic shift and associated change in activities engaged in place. Older and younger people tend to retire during the night leaving young and middle-aged adults to engage the area (i.e. go out for dinner / coffee, attend a movie, meet at a pub, go dancing at a nightclub). The impact of time was generally identified as contributing to a sense of family and quiet during the day, and less order, more excitement at night.

Table 18: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Social Experience

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Type of user	Socially diverse; range of all ages and types of people compared to other areas in Edmonton	Character strength; Interesting, fascinating; challenging place to work in; importance of diversity; tolerance
Residents	Form a diverse social grouping according to age, type, tenureship, involvement in the community	Caring; active involvement
Students	Work in area; different / extreme fashion (e.g. Coloured hair, facial piercings); contribute to negative area patrons	Responsible; hard working; irresponsible
Negative patrons	Public intoxication; bad attitudes; obnoxious behaviour	Irresponsible, party attitude; lack of respect for community and self; aggressiveness; problem for area
Friends and family	Visit area on weekends for special events, festivals, parades, unique services and goods, family activities	Friendly; family oriented; interesting
Tourists, Interest groups	Churches, theatre groups, Old Strathcona Foundation, schools, Community Leagues active in the background.	

Table 18: Continued

	Small Police patrol; active in community (e.g. Barwatch and Secureclub); respond to alcohol related problems	Greater safety and security
Intent		
Focused	People come to the area with purpose, an agenda, particular intent	Activity, energy
Unfocused	People come to the area to just be there, find something to do	Ease; support; discovery
Activities		
	Provides shopping, place to meet, sit, eat Place to see and be seen Provides an entertainment area, nightlife	Vibrant; alive Enjoyment Excitement
Day time		
	Working within area; solving problems and issues in the community Offers a place to stroll, recreate, relax Eating and drinking at a variety of places Socializing, meeting friends and people Wide selection of arts and theatre opportunities Place to shop for common or special items	Normalcy; restricted from experiencing area; Relaxation, pleasantness Fun, enjoyable Personal memories A non-mall / utilitarian shopping experience; Value-added shopping experience; sense of want to go shopping, not a need to
Night time		
	Socializing with friends; going to bars / nightclubs Eating and drinking Combination of many daytime activities	Safe; less safe; unsafe at night Rich experiences
Time		
Day	Diverse range of people; different users at different times of week and day; composed primarily parents with children, shoppers, business people; many activities going on	Family oriented; quiet during the daytime
Night	Day and night time users are distinct from each other; Distinct transition around 11pm at night with a shift in users seeing older adults leaving the area and 25 yrs and younger come out; less diversity of people as night approaches; older, more well dressed people staying out later	Change in dynamics; less orderly as night approaches; More aggressive; not uncommon of other areas

Place Identity

The identity of place is defined by its physical distinctiveness and particular subjective meanings. Unique location, landscape and image contribute to an objectively identifiable place. However, place is also identified by its individual and collective meaning. Places gain personal identity through the symbolic extension of meaningful individual interaction with place (Tuan, 1975). That is, people imbue places with personal meanings through daily life or encounters that come to

distinguish person and place distinct from others (Canter, 1977). Collective interaction and integration with place operates similarly, whereby social groups imbued and share meaning with place (Mazumdar et. al., 2000). Research findings support objective and subjective themes said to underlie place identity, and this is further confirmed by participant comparison of Whyte Avenue to other commercial areas. As such, participants described Whyte Avenue as distinctly unique, having its own identity and meaning derived from objective (physical) and subjective (i.e. social and individual) phenomena as shown in Tables 19, 20 and 21.

Objective

Community members described the commercial area as physically distinct in terms of its concentration of place experiences, setting for many activities, pedestrian-friendly environment, accessibility (i.e. walkability) and urban compactness. Combined, location and landscape features were identified and felt to contribute to the area's identity and sense of opportunity, freedom and energy.

Table 19: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Objective Place Identity

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Objective: Physical distinctiveness	High concentration of place experiences in several focal areas	Opportunity; comfort
	Many activities contribute to its draw	Shopping is unique, different
	Social activities are set within a pedestrian environment that is walkable, accessible	Sense of independence, freedom
	Compactness of area adds to intensity of social activities and uses	Sense of energy

Subjective

From a subjective standpoint, participants identified both social and individual distinctions regarding the commercial area that contribute to its identity

and, therefore, sense of place. More specifically, participants identified Whyte Avenue as socially distinctive from other places in Edmonton. In particular, participants cited the commercial area's range and diversity of social activities, demographic and pedestrian traffic contributing to a sense of completeness, visual display and interest. Respondents also distinguished Whyte Avenue as a place for people watching, to find ongoing social events (e.g. parades, festivals), small and family run businesses, and where a number of stakeholder groups continue to work together for the area. This contributed to the commercial area's sense of attraction, activity, entrepreneurship and community. As one participant observed:

"The social activity, I think it's very diverse. Because, actually, when you are over there and you do look at the street, you see such a variety of age groups and activity going on, particularly in the summer months, when you'll see the seniors strolling the street, you'll see the middle-aged guys sitting at the coffee shops watching the crowd go by, and then you have the kids themselves. And the kids will be doing anything from playing hacky-sack on the corner to actually sitting down doing ...hair weaving or whatever. Or you even have the panhandlers out there. So there is a very big cross-section of social activity and social needs happening.."

Participants also identified the WACA as distinctly unique (i.e. having a strong place identity) based on their individual experience and relationship with place. That is, respondents distinguished the commercial area in terms of how they influence it as a place, as well as how it influences them. Analysis revealed that people not only shape place but are also affected by it. Accordingly, participants reported having an effect on Whyte Avenue's identity through personal and community investment in place. From a personal perspective, this included working with people on a personal and / or spiritual level while demonstrating one's own

personal values within the community. This was associated with contributing to the area's sense of openness, equity and fairness. Other individual-related activities such as working within the community, upkeep of one's home and a general contribution to help keep the community clean, were associated with contributing to a sense of identification with the area, empowerment, pride, and respect.

From a community perspective, participants reported a range of activities that help add to the area's unique identity. These included involvement in community activities, becoming actively involved in local issues of importance, investment of personal resources (e.g. time, energy, money) in the community, and working with stakeholders to help manage area growth. As such, these contributed to the commercial area's sense of community, care and respect for the area.

Not only did participants report influencing the WACA in some way through their personal interactions, some felt affected by it as well. This place affect included influence over where people chose to live, personal understanding and insight, and expression. The historical character of the area, contemporary lifestyle, amenities and opportunities of the commercial area contribute to a sense of what a community is and / or could become. Interaction with Whyte Avenue was also associated with enhancing place identity by facilitating personal insight and community understanding and eliciting a sense of self, identification and history.

In addition, the WACA was also identified as unique in terms of providing opportunity to express oneself. That is, the commercial area provided a setting allowing participants to be themselves, self-expressive, and to observe or actively

engage others. According to respondents, this provides a sense of welcome, openness, and character unlike other commercial areas in Edmonton.

Table 20: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Subjective Place Identity

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Subjective: Social distinctiveness	Place for people watching and strutting	Display; voyeurism
	Diverse social activity; many things to do; people come to Whyte for more than just one thing; people traffic	Attraction; diversity
	Many consistent social events (parades, festivals)	Activity; always something going on; incomparable to other areas in Edmonton; no peace and quiet
	Concentration of small family run businesses Many stakeholder groups working together for this area	Entrepreneurship Commitment to community and area
Subjective: Individual distinctiveness Person influence on place Personal investment	Becoming part of the community via work; via work related activities	Direct influence on place; unconscious placemaking ; sense of community
	Working to reach out to people on a personal and spiritual level	Identification with place
	Demonstration of personal values; Being respectful of community, and elements that make this up (residential, commercial, institutional)	Equity, openness, flexibility, freedom
	Maintaining homes, yards, not littering, keeping area clean	Pride, positive self and community image
Community investment	Becoming involved in day-to-day activities, businesses, residents, and politics.	Sense of understanding of place
	Social investment via volunteering time, energy, and even money	Enjoyment; sense of support for area
	Economic investment in business(es) Support those aspects of community that are important to it (businesses, institutions, parks, services)	Sense of support for area; success Importance; meaningfulness
	Becoming socially active in community by being vocal on issues of importance, defend area on legal basis through planning and community issues; controlling / moderating the number of alcohol service seats	Caring; protection; concern
Place influence on Person Decision-making	Selective of where to live in Edmonton -that is, in Old Strathcona; actively seek to find a historical house in area	Wouldn't want to live anywhere else; feel comfortable here
	Provides a measure of what a community is and or could be; live the Whyte lifestyle	Sense of community; neighbourly; character
Understanding	Has given insights and wisdom into community, political and professional aspect of life through interaction with it	Experience; wisdom
	Provides insight into self understanding; need for self understanding	Sense of self; personal history
Self-Expression	Provides insight into personal history, how one was raised, who made up your community	Sense of community values growing up; history
	You can be yourself, be different, express self on Whyte; people are a mixture on Whyte; different generations on Whyte	Sense of ease; acceptance; eclectic character
	A place to see and be seen; where people go to watch others	Voyeuristic

Comparative Identity

When asked how the commercial area was different from other places, participants frequently contrasted the WACA with 124 Street among others (e.g. Jasper Avenue – 109 Street, West Edmonton Mall, and other cities such as Calgary and Ottawa). Responses focused on physical (i.e. objective) and social (i.e. subjective) dimensions of 124 Street highlighting its identifying characteristics in contrast to the WACA. From a physical standpoint, participants identified 124 Street as distinct in terms of its small pedestrian commercial area, low physical connectivity (i.e. places are spread out), limited community services and variety (e.g. grocery and other neighbourhood level services), and light pedestrian traffic. This was perceived to contribute to a lack of commercial and therefore pedestrian attraction to the area. From a more positive perspective, it was noted that commercial growth within the 124 Street area had not contributed to parking conflicts (unlike Whyte Avenue) in residential areas or side-streets. Furthermore, businesses were perceived as more oriented to the community, were non-alcohol service focused, and that this likely contributes to lower rental rates within the area. Housing density and form were positively linked to a sense of social cohesion.

In terms of 124 Street's social distinctiveness, this area was identified as having historical roots, a place where businesses and people communicate with each other and are actively involved in their community. Combined with high tenureship and low residential mobility perceived by respondents, these elements were associated with a distinct sense of community, neighbourhood and community

league power. However, participants also identified 124 Street as limited in terms of its arts, theatre, and night time activities. In addition, the area was described as offering limited neighbourhood and business services such as places to meet / gather, eat and drink. Participants expressed a sense of incompleteness and lack of draw in terms of 124 Street's social distinctiveness.

Table 21: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Comparative Place Identity

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Comparative Identity		
124 Street area		
Physical distinctiveness	Is a small pedestrian commercial area Low physical connectivity of places - too linear and permeable Not enough community services (e.g. Grocery, essential resident services) Lacks pedestrian traffic Businesses are community oriented; not liquor license focused; rental rates are lower Commercial growth does not contribute to parking in residential areas or side streets; growth of Whyte was not managed Has mixed residential types and densities on street level with commercial, office space	Lacks commercial pull and attraction Local support Have space for vehicles and customers People know each other
Social distinctiveness	Area has history at 102-124 street People communicate with each other; people know each other Involved in placemaking; cleaning up area Has less renters, more residents and therefore powerful community league Limited arts and theatre, night time activities; not a social destination due to lack of events; limited neighbourhood services; lacks variety of businesses and foods (places to shop, eat and drink)	Sense of history Sense of community; neighbourhood Care for community Incomplete commercial area; has a limited draw

Place Attachment

Place attachment contributes to structuring sense of place. The bonding between people and place affects how it is felt, thought of and interacted with (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001). The quality and intensity of place experience directly impacts attachment in addition to personal variables, and cultural and social context (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Tuan, 1977). Research findings indicate community members in Whyte Avenue hold personal, social and physical relational bonds with

place. Participants reported attachment to the commercial area in terms of their own individual relationship with Whyte Avenue, along with its social and physical components (see Table 22). These themes are further described in the following sections and reveal the many person-place relationships created, maintained and potentially lost by people.

Personal Relationship

Participants described their attachment to the WACA in terms of their personal relationship to the area, that included past place experiences, and the meeting of physical and social needs. For some participants, previous place experiences played an influential role in shaping their personal attachment to the commercial area. This included both rural and urban backgrounds, where a strong sense of community was present, and the positive experience of a shared community mindset resulting in a sense of attachment. One community member described this as,

“For me, it’s like going to Granville Island. I mean, that’s my equivalent. Granville Island, the Kensington area of Calgary, going to any of the “little”, Little Greece, Little Italy in Toronto. I mean, they all bear the same characteristics that attract you to them.”

Participants who reside within the area further described their attachment to place in terms of the physical needs it fulfills. That is, for those participants deciding to reside with the commercial area, this was based on desire for ownership of a particular housing structure (e.g. historical building; character), area services, access and mobility options. For them, this contributed to a sense of home, community and attachment to the area. Besides the physical needs afforded by the commercial area,

participants also identified a number of social needs supported by this area. These included the opportunity to become a part of one's own community, share in community values, customs and history, and contribute to greater community well-being. Participants attributed feelings of rootedness, home and commitment to the area to social needs provided by the WACA.

Social Relationship

Participants reported a number of elements of social relationships that contribute to their attachment to the WACA. These included place relationships related to the work place, community volunteering, involvement in social organisations, and long-term personal relationships (i.e. friendships) with people in the area, contributing to a sense of friendliness, camaraderie, and passion for the area. In addition, participants noted that their attachment was also tied to available activities within the area, that the work place can transform one's attachment to the commercial area, and that it can be difficult to detach oneself from place.

Depending on one's social relationship with the commercial area, this may result in a sense of interest, ambivalence and even anger.

Physical Relationship

In describing their attachment to the WACA, participants identified the core area, McIntyre Park and their changing relationship to the area. Participants identified the core area's businesses for their variety and mix, its historic buildings and general attachment to the area as important to their relationship with the commercial area and their attachment to it. As such, participants described these

elements as contributing to an awareness of the area, local history and attachment. Participants noted particular attachment to McIntyre Park and its specific features. These were identified as its many physical elements (e.g. gazebo / bandstand, fountain, grassy knoll) providing a hub of activity, its use and therefore change through the seasons, and use by many groups (e.g. Fringe Festival, families, teenagers) for many activities (e.g. strolling, relaxing, meeting, reading a book).

This physical relationship was seen to contribute to a feeling that this is a people place, is alive and is shared by a community. A final element related to participant physical relationship and attachment to the WACA was area evolution. That is, participants revealed attachment to both old and new development (sensitive to the area's character), change in physical landscape, and areas used differently over time within the commercial area. As time passes and commercial area evolves, participants noted that this contributes to increased attachment, change and evolution in personal attachment to the commercial area.

Table 22: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Attachment

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Personal relationship		
Past place experience	Rural or urban background experience; Community mindedness experience People share similar community attitude and do small things to reinforce this (e.g. Watch another person's house for common shared security, lend tools, shovel walks)	Sense of community connection; affection; nostalgia; attachment Sense of community
Physical relationships	Chose residence based on house and community area home ownership, home-making; willingness to pay more	Sense of home; emotional attachment to area
Social relationship	Moved to area for services, transportation linkages Choosing to voluntarily become part of a community than happenstance	Sense of community attachment Feeling of rootedness; more than a commitment to personal home (place) but to the community at large

Table 22: Continued

	People share similar community mindset and do small things to reinforce this (e.g. Watch another persons house for common shared security, lend tools, shovel walks)	Sense of people helping each other in the past
Social relationship	Memories of past events, places	Nostalgia
	Community minded philosophy to see area be a rich, diverse and safe community for people to live in	Commitment to area improvement; positive vision
	Work place interactions	Friendship
	Volunteering in community	Vibrancy
	Involvement in social organisations	
	Long-term working relations and friendships; interacting with other people at work, on the street, friends	Comaraderie; shared passion for area
Physical relationship	It has varied activities of personal interest	Interest; enjoyment
	Work-relationship transforms place attachment	Low attachment; ambivalence
	Trying to detach oneself from place	Frustration; anger
Core area	Core area businesses, variety / mix and types	Awareness of commercial area
	Concentration and complement of historic buildings	Local history
	Attachment to core area, not just a single part (e.g. Store)	Attachment to area
McIntyre Park site	Composed of many physical elements and acts as a hub of activity in conjunction with other surrounding uses and activities	People place
	Changes with the seasons	Alive
	Has many uses for many different people	Community backyard; pleasant place to be
Area evolution	Old and new development (sensitive to local architecture)	Increased attachment
	Change in place (e.g. New development)	Strengthen; weaken attachment
	Used different areas of Whyte differently over time; people interacting with area (strolling the avenue, going to theatre, work, home, stores, bars / nightclubs, restaurants)	Attachment evolves

5.5.3 Individual Dimension

The individual dimension of place was revealed through key participant interviews. Participants described a number of themes relating the individual person with place concerning place experience, awareness (i.e. consciousness), rest, movement and inside-ness. These categories and themes are further described in the following sections and Table 23.

Place Experience

Sensation, perception and cognition ground the physical material world, assign it meaning, and link it to self and society (Stephanovic, 1998; Tuan, 1977). Through internalised place experiences, individual capacities, values, emotion, mood, attitudes and behaviours structure sense of place (Canter, 1977; Lynch, 1977). Two primary place experience themes dominated community members' descriptions of Whyte Avenue: emotion and mood evoked by place. These are further organized into positive and negative elements.

Emotion

Participants revealed several elements related to place experience and emotions evoked by the WACA. These included urban design, social activity (daytime) and their role in local placemaking. More specifically, participants identified the area's unchanging human scale of architecture and emphasis on the people who use it as familiar and pleasurable. Furthermore, participants observed the area as functional within the surrounding community, composed of a small commercial strip as opposed to an enclosed mall, and a pedestrian-friendly environment with narrower streets and boulevard trees. These elements, along with a variety of niches where people can visit and socialize, were associated with a sense that the area works, has a human feel, is easy to get around, and is generally pleasant.

Participants also cited social activity during the daytime, and involvement through placemaking, as important to emotions evoked by the commercial area.

During the day, the commercial area was described as a socially diverse place, not limited to a specific group of people, and where people generally accepted one another. For many participants, this contributed to a sense of enjoyment and ease within the area. Through interaction with the WACA, helping to make it what it is today and sharing their experiences with others, participants reported a sense of pride and ownership evoked by the commercial area.

In describing positive emotions the WACA evoked at the level of self, participants also commented on those more negative emotions focusing primarily on social activity at night time. Uncomfortable, intimidating and unsafe responses to the commercial area at night-time were linked its businesses, potential for unexpected events, many alcohol seats in the area, and congestion on the street (especially during the summer).

Mood

Mood or feeling influenced by the commercial area was positively attributed to landscape, area history and community elements. In terms of the area's landscape, positive components of mood included the small size and un-enclosed commercial strip, the residential neighbourhood surrounds, historic buildings and architecture, walkable environment, and the setting for varied activities. These were perceived to contribute to feelings of specialness, affection, freedom and energy.

Another mood component revealed about the commercial area was area history. Participants described the presence of historic buildings and their survival in the face of new growth not only as counter-intuitive, but adding to a feeling of

contrast and area character (i.e. special-ness). Furthermore, participants acknowledged the WACA as a historic settlement area, a place where people chose to live together, and continue to do so today. This was explained to contribute to a feeling of community, shared values, and personal affection for the area.

Participants cited community as a third component of mood influencing their experience of the WACA. More specifically, participants identified the area's many stakeholders, different interests, values and viewpoints as important components of mood, prompting feelings of both challenge and strength of character (i.e. depth).

Negative mood state was ascribed to certain people, loss of personal relationship, and loss of spirit of place of Whyte Avenue. People formed a large share of the negative feelings. Specifically, participants cited (mostly younger) people outside the community disrespecting the area in some manner (e.g. misbehavior, vandalism), followed by cyclists, in-line skaters or skateboarders on the sidewalk, large groups of people, panhandlers and "street people". For them, these people tended to elicit feelings of disrespect, risk and even sadness.

From a personal perspective, select participants revealed a loss of individual relationship with the commercial area. This was characterized as fewer visits, visits based on functional need, and general decline in use of area as a destination point for multiple activities. As such, those affected participants described their feeling towards the area as practical based on loss of familiar relationships and attachment to the area.

In terms of the commercial area's spirit or essence of place, a few participants identified it as diminished in comparison to the mid-1980s. For these individuals, Whyte Avenue was once Edmonton's best-kept secret. Others cited the area as still "the place to be" except that coming into its own has brought a number of challenges with its success (e.g. increased alcohol seats, attraction of homeless and street youth, concern over safety, and intense use of the area.). The resultant feeling evoked by this loss of spirit is described in terms of a loss of magic.

Table 23: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Experience

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Emotion evoked by place		
Positive		
Urban design	Establishes a human scale of architecture; unchanging scale; designed with people in mind	A familiar place that is pleasurable
	Small commercial strip, non-mall, streets not too wide, boulevard of trees	Nice; comfortable
	Functional for surrounding community	Works
	Pedestrian friendly environment	Sense its for people, not automobile
	Encourages people to linger, stroll, socialize	Sense of ease (non-rushing); people come just to be here
Social activity (day)	Not limited to a specific group of people	Enjoyment; pleasurable
	People accept others	Acceptance of others; warmth; people fit in
Placemaking	People helped make what it is today	Sense of pride
	People tell others about this place	Sense of ownership
Negative		
Social activity (night)	Many people on the street; 15,000 – 20,000 during the summer at one time	Congested
	8500 of 12500 seats are strictly alcohol service only	Not as safe; intimidating
	Unexpected events; Just about anything has happened	High energy; novel; interesting
	Very busy area	Uncomfortable
Mood evoked by place		
Positive		
Landscape	Consists of a small commercial strip surrounded by a residential neighbourhood; un-enclosed mall	Special
	Place contains heritage buildings with some consideration for the past	Affection (for heritage buildings)
	Walkable environment;	Freedom
	Place provides exciting street activity, festivals, parades; encourages families during the daytime and younger people at night; is a place to meet familiar people	Energy; familial
Area history	Existence of heritage buildings; survived new growth, comprises rarity in Edmonton	Special-ness, character
	Human settlement where people purposefully built their homes and stores close together	Feeling of community; valuable; a real community
	Personal interaction with place and (re)creation of history	Love of area; affection; nostalgia

Table 23: Continued

Community	Many stakeholders (e.g. Commercial business / property owner, residential land/property owner, absentee landlords, heritage groups, civic, provincial and federal agencies); Many different interests and viewpoints	Challenge; strength in diversity; character depth
Negative People	Non-community members disrespecting area, misbehaving, doing whatever they want to do People approaching on rollerblades, bikes, skateboards; crowds of people in large groups on sidewalks; so crowded people cannot move; having to step over people (panhandlers) sitting on the ground	Risk; unpleasant
Loss of personal place relationships	Street people not being cared for Hardly visited anymore Does not offer what is needed; do necessary things in place and leave	Sadness Loss of sense of being in the neighbourhood Utilitarian relationship to place; no longer relationship to people or place;
Loss of spirit	Not a destination anymore Was once a best kept Edmonton secret in the 80s It has become the place to be, an area unto itself; brought a number of challenges with it (e.g. Bars, homelessness, safety, parking)	Its everyone else's place, not mine Loss of magic

Place Consciousness

People share an implicit connection with place that merges sense, identity, and attachment (Relph, 1976). This may be a conscious (e.g. subject) or unconscious (e.g. object) connection (Hiss, 1990). Community members primarily reported a conscious awareness of Whyte Avenue and interaction with the commercial area. Reports were in terms of their interaction with place, consciousness of the neighbourhood and sensitivity to the area's loss of character (see Table 24). Of particular interest was the impact of place on individuals. That is, Whyte Avenue was attributed as influencing community members' consciousness of the area; in effect, communicating with them.

Person-Place Communication

During the interview process, participants reported an awareness of the commercial area based on their sensation and interaction with place. That is, people reported a consciousness of Whyte Avenue based on their communication with place. This included internalising information regarding the area's physical and social settings (e.g. architecture, features, history, activity and vibrancy). In some cases, a heightened awareness leading to active engagement with place (e.g. watching, noticing subtle changes, taking photos of area) was reported. This conscious sensation and awareness of the commercial area was reported to confer a sense of place identity, vibrancy and fascination. As one participant described,

"That neighbourhood community feeling I think is critical in these days of increasing separation and disconnection... happening around us. I do all kinds of things to establish, re-establish, reconnect everywhere I go. Its part of my life. And that's what Old Strathcona held for me in that way. And I could not imagine living anywhere else when I lived here."

Place-Person Communication

Participants also acknowledged a conscious awareness of the WACA in terms of its physical and social features. In this regard, place is identified as initiating communication or relational transaction with one's person (i.e. participants' self). Physical features identified included location and boundary of commercial area, residential, business and entertainment structures. These were reported to add a sense of community and liveability to respondents' consciousness of the commercial area and sense of place. Social elements identified by participants

comprised work, shopping and lifestyle (i.e. social interaction) opportunities, and their contribution to the area's sense of completeness.

In addition to these messages broadcast by the commercial area and internalised by respondents, participants reported an increased emphasis on area commercialisation, increase in traffic, people and noise, loss of smaller businesses and area character, and an emphasis on historical preservation. Accordingly, participants reported a conscious awareness of what the area used to be like, the passion that once existed, and the emphasis on area history. As one participant described,

"It excites me to no end when I see things happening that are blatant, in terms of all that we have learned doesn't seem to apply all of a sudden. When you see new developments coming in on the avenue and stuff it excites me. Not in a good way."

Table 24: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Consciousness

Theme	Influence on Category	Resulting Sense of Place
Person-Place: Sense and interaction	Distinctive physicality; non-mall; has a distinct district; architecture, buildings, streets, windows; older area of city, is historic	Has an identity and character
	There are places to go, see and do; there is a certain level of bustle on the street	Activity; vibrancy
	Looking at things constantly, take photos of area, watching and noticing changes in place	Fascination; deep interest
Place-Person: Location and loss	Provides a reasonable defined boundary; commercial; entertainment; residential	Identifiable location; community
	Provides a place for people to work, shop, live; residential and entertainment opportunities; people know each other unlike at a mall where anonymity exists	Completeness; liveability
	Emphasis on commercialisation of area; lots of traffic, noise, people (congestion); people struggle to maintain character; fewer original shops in area	Sense of loss; area is not what it used to be; less passion for area
	Low business interest and support for history of area; decreased historical preservation and history of area	Low interest in area history; for profit interest in preservation of area

Rest and Movement

Sense of place is further impacted by the reciprocal relationship between rest and movement. Rest provides pause, potential for life needs to be met, and a centre of felt meaning to be developed within a particular locality. Movement affords mobility, freedom and the prospect of attaining life's additional needs and desires (Tuan, 1977). Overlapping points of rest and movement give rise to place, shape identity, influence attachment and therefore sense of place (Relph, 1976). This relationship was identified throughout the interview process. Descriptions by community members highlights particular themes of rest and movement within Whyte Avenue that influence its unique sense of place. These themes and related components are provided in Table 25. Points of rest identified included the historic core district, places of work and entertainment, and personal place-histories. Dominant themes of movement included travel mode and compact development.

Historic core district

The historic core district was described as providing a general point of rest within the commercial area for its historic architecture, and redevelopment or adaptive re-use of historic buildings. Moreover, the historic core district was identified as an important hub of activity, well situated in proximity to residences and work places, social and cultural opportunities, business and entertainment services, and concentrations of people. This is attributed to creating a unique sense of history, energy and diversity within the WACA.

Places of work

Place of work was described as another general focal point relating individual experience back to sense of place. Participants described this feature in terms of being surrounded by a residential neighbourhood, composed of small, independent and family run businesses, and a concentration of diverse services. These were accredited with encouraging a sense of choice, sophistication and support for local goods. Despite these positive qualities, respondents also acknowledged negative aspects of places of work within the commercial area. More specifically, the gradual decline of smaller, family-run and independent businesses (e.g. George's Cycle, John's Hats, Garneau Bakery, Café le Gare), increase in bars and nightclubs, and higher rental rates. Participants identified these elements as contributing to a loss of area uniqueness, greed, insecurity and lack of concern for the broader community.

Places of entertainment

In terms of place of entertainment, the WACA was cited as providing layers of social opportunities and experiences contributing to the enjoyment and heart of Edmonton's arts and cultural scene. A rise in the number of bars and nightclubs, alcohol-licensed seats and service, occupancy levels and use of area were all identified as negative attributes of the general area. These were described as contributing to a sense of too many bars, greed, party atmosphere and lack of respect for area.

Personal place histories

Participants shared personal rest points within Whyte Avenue in the form of personal histories of place that provided a broader sense of time. This included places described in terms of their present state and integrated place experiences (e.g. sensory, social interaction, physical affordances), past place in terms of perceived changes (e.g. remembering businesses that were once a part of ones childhood growing up) and future place in terms of its preservation and enduring character. Participants' description of place through time revealed a sense of ownership and future expectation. As one person described,

"I think things that have a history with me, buildings that I know, like the old St. Joseph's Hospital that's now Garner Lofts. I mean, that was a hospital when I first knew it. Then it was abandoned and it was an eyesore and it had an ugly fence around it. And it was like that for several years. Then the renovations began. And I watched that, watched them happen. And there's a lovely bakery there. So I go in the French Meadows Bakery and buy stuff. But I go in there and I take ownership there."

Travel Mode

In terms of movement and its relationship to sense of place, participants primarily focused on the area's travel modes followed by its compact form of development. A number of features regarding the area's travel mode theme were cited. Pedestrian travel was cited as both the primary and best means to move within the commercial area. Participants described the sidewalks and roadways as heavily used during special events (e.g. parades, festivals) or for business purposes. Expansion of walkable areas of interest in the east and south has contributed to a feeling that the commercial area is an accessible people place.

Vehicle movement within the commercial area was also frequently reported among participants. This was in terms of the high traffic volume along Whyte Avenue, demand for on-street parking in front of stores (as opposed to parking lots), and increase in vehicle-oriented development south of the WACA. Although vehicle travel within the WACA was regarded as slower by most participants, this constraint was also felt to contribute to the area's pedestrian feel. Furthermore, demand for free parking along and associated conflict with residential and business areas was also identified. This feature of vehicle movement within the WACA was associated with unrealistic expectations that contribute to a sense of inconvenience, frustration and loss of the area's "village" quality.

Cyclists, people on skateboards, and rollerblades on Whyte Avenue were reported as particularly bothersome, surprising pedestrians and adding to a feeling of congestion during peak periods of pedestrian use. Transit service was identified as an additional transportation mode, yet providing poor service and experiencing limited use within the area.

Compact development

Another theme identified by participants was compact development. Throughout the interviews, participants noted urban compactness as a significant factor in moving through and within the WACA. This compactness was further described in terms of its shorter street frontages, and shorter distance between its many points of rest (e.g. shops, restaurants, pubs). This was highly regarded as adding to the area's sense of human-ness, interest and European feel. Table 25

summarises themes of travel mode and compact development as they relate to Whyte Avenue's sense of place.

Table 25: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Rest and Movement

Theme	Influence on Category	Resulting Sense of Place
General area		
Core district	Affords music, culture, history, learning and family opportunities, retail choice unavailable elsewhere in Edmonton; has a wide variety of services and opportunities for people; interesting people, places and things; Many different things draw people to this area not just one (e.g. History, theatre, night life, dining available);	Energy; alive; diverse people and experiences Feel of a local town
Place of work	Consists of a small commercial strip surrounded by a residential neighbourhood; provides a place to meet, work with others; comprised of small business opportunities (e.g. Small gift stores, market stand / vendors); family businesses; local ownership, independent operation; non-large retail chains; un-enclosed mall; agglomeration of diverse and unique services; offers a variety of products and services (e.g. Food selection, specialty stores)	Choices; selection; cosmopolitan; special; locally supportive
Place of entertainment	Offers many social opportunities, interaction; provides shared social experiences; provides unique arts and cultural entertainment	Enjoyment; excitement; cultural heart of Edmonton
Personal place histories	Seen place (and greater area) change over time [In the Past] businesses serviced the needs of the community; remembering businesses that were a part of childhood growing up	Sense of ownership Sense of personal history; memories; diminished support for community businesses
Travel mode		
Pedestrian	Provides many opportunities for walking, foot travel; heavy pedestrian traffic during summer and special events; expanded walking areas to the east and south	Best mode of travel; people place, not a car place; ease of access; pedestrian
Vehicle	High traffic volume along the avenue; provides on street parking as opposed to parking lots Greater vehicle oriented development south of Whyte Avenue Paid parking is available; people look for free parking and ignore paid parking lots; residential conflict; business conflict	Travel is slow by car; pedestrian travel preferable Convenient Inconvenience, frustration; and loss of village quality
Compact development	Contains many shops densely packed together; short street frontages; many points of rest / places to stop on foot	Human feel; dense; interesting; European

Inside-ness

Distinctive experiences, including place identity and attachment, attitudes and activities, define place and separate it from those outside it. This inside-outside dialectic as experienced by individuals influences sense of place. It binds space,

experience and meaning separating it from the outside world. In general, participants identified the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area as having a distinctive 'inside-ness' defined by themes of landscape, movement and activity (see Table 26).

Landscape

For many participants, being inside the commercial area meant being able to distinguish its physical landscape from the surrounding urban fabric. Accordingly, the commercial area was defined according to its unique visual character (both within the area and in Edmonton), historical core area and number of heritage buildings, its particular human scale of development, lack of billboards and tall buildings, modest architecture and materials, adaptive re-use of historical buildings, pedestrian-friendly streetscaping and open shopping area. Being inside the commercial area evoked a sense of exclusivity, small town, respect for history and comfort for participants.

Movement

Movement was identified as a distinctive theme of being inside Whyte Avenue. This was further described by its high vehicle and pedestrian traffic along the avenue, associated congestion, and diversity of people moving within the commercial area at nearly all hours. These features were explained as creating a feeling one was inside a small town on the fringe of a larger city, and feelings of congestion, safety and a sense of "where the people are".

Activity

Being inside the commercial area for community members also meant exposure to a unique concentration of activities within Edmonton. That is, the WACA area was described according to its many socio-cultural activities (e.g. places to visit, meet people, dine, theatre, art festivals) and its diverse set of businesses and services. As such, participants described their experience of being inside the commercial area as friendly, open and special.

Table 26: Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Inside-ness

Theme	Influence on Category	Resulting Sense of Place
Landscape	Distinct visual character from the rest of Edmonton; high number of historic core and heritage buildings;	Distinctiveness; exclusive
	Human scale of development; no tall buildings, not uptown; can see over buildings, the sky and sun;	Small town feel; village
	No billboards, original facades intact, materials; innovative and adaptive reuses of historical buildings;	Respect for history / past
Movement	Streetscaping, lighting, trees; open shopping area	Comfortable
	High volume of vehicles and people moving up and down the avenue; congestion of both cars and people; many different types of people walking on the street you won't find anywhere else in the City; people wandering the streets late at night	Feels like a small town on the fringe of the city; congestion; uncomfortable; safety in numbers; where the people are
Activity	Many activities due to diversity of businesses (e.g. Restaurants, theatres, bars), presence of the theatre and arts,	Sense of friendliness; courtesy; support
	Business service and hospitality; trendy shops and services	Special; cool; neat;

5.5.4 Summary of Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area

One of the primary imperatives of this research was the documentation of contemporary Whyte Avenue's sense of place. That is, what comprises this area, how is it experienced, and what does it mean to those in the community who helped make it what it is today. The following section summarizes Whyte Avenue's contemporary sense of place according to dominant place dimensions and

categories along with its unique themes and component features. Note however, the following narrative summary does not reflect Whyte Avenue's absolute sense of place; rather it is more of an overview of the sense of place of select stakeholders, experienced and knowledgeable in the area.

The physical form of Whyte Avenue plays an essential role in shaping its unique sense of place. This is primarily based on its particular location, characteristic landscape and distinctive image. The location of Whyte Avenue is defined in terms of its physical proximity to the North Saskatchewan River, the CN rail line to the east and the Strathcona Public Building to the west. A core area of historic buildings anchors the commercial area providing a strong sense of local history. Conceptual boundaries of Whyte Avenue's commercial area extend further west to 109 Street and east to 99 Street with auto-dependent development growing southward along Calgary Trail. As well, the heart of Whyte Avenue is fixed to its' historic core area located between 104 Street and 103 Street along Whyte Avenue.

Whyte Avenue's characteristic landscape is comprised of positive and negative urban design and architectural elements. A rectangular strip of varied building sizes, adaptive uses, styles and designs give this area novelty and visual interest. Its human scale and compact form encourage alternative means of travel while imparting a sense of human-ness and spirit. Attention to streetscaping, building materials and design elements enhance Whyte Avenue's attractiveness, character and sense of living history. Yet, limited green space, increased traffic and

congestion, and wear and tear on the area diminish people's interaction with nature, space and, at times, perception of safety.

Many historic buildings, such as St. Joseph's Hospital, Strathcona Public Building, Canadian Pacific Railway Station, the Dominion and Strathcona Hotels, contribute to Whyte Avenue's authentic architecture, character and small town feel. Moreover, these buildings provide important local landmarks, rich in history and unique to the City of Edmonton. Preservation and conservation of Whyte Avenue's architecture has resulted in the successful integration of new shops with old, addition of activities and development of vibrant pedestrian focal points. The success of the commercial area has also resulted in an increase in local bars and nightclubs.

Whyte Avenue has a strong physical image that is both personally and socially meaningful. Personal meaning is associated with historical elements that connect with the commercial area's past. These signify respect for local history, and are imbued with value and personal significance over time. However, historical features responsible for Whyte Avenue's distinctive image may be taken for granted by people focused on other aspects of place (e.g. work). Loss of historical elements is often met with personal disappointment, frustration and sometimes anger.

Historic buildings and their adaptive re-use to cafés, specialty shops and services contribute to Whyte Avenue's sense of living history, permanence, and spirit of place. Due to the nature of features that comprise the commercial area and its image, many stakeholders are implicated, giving rise to conflict but also sense of

inspiration and hope. Because Whyte Avenue provides a vibrant and enduring place to socialize with others, its image is also one of pride and permanence rooted in its unique history.

Another fundamental dimension of Whyte Avenue's sense of place is social setting, specifically experience, place identity and attachment. Whyte Avenue's sense of place is significantly influenced by its social experience consisting of its users, their intentions and activities, and time of day. The commercial area is composed of many different types of users including residents, students, families, visitors and patrons. These groups contribute to the area's complex social character and sense of caring, hard work, family orientation, interest and character. Both individuals and groups come to the commercial area for a particular reason or to find purpose. This further contributes to Whyte Avenue's sense of energy and passivity, as there are many activities to choose from. Aside from work, there is shopping, dining, entertainment, opportunities to socialise, stroll and relax that give the area a sense of normalcy, enjoyment, and life. However, social activities are also influenced by the time of day. Daytime activities draw out a more diverse range of users throughout the week offering a greater sense of family, pleasantness and richness than at night. A distinct shift occurs on Whyte Avenue in the late evening seeing an increase in young adults, frequenting restaurants, cafés, bars and nightclubs. This results in divergent feelings of enjoyment, excitement, aggressiveness and insecurity. Night-time activities experience less order, formality and therefore sense of safety.

Whyte Avenue's identity is strongly influenced by its physical features that provide a supportive social setting. The concentration and compaction of many place experiences and social activities within easy walking distance along Whyte Avenue contribute to the commercial area's distinctive identity characterised by a sense opportunity, freedom and energy. However, it is also the people themselves that give Whyte Avenue its unique identity. At a socio-cultural level, groups of people interact with the commercial area in ways that are distinctive from other parts of Edmonton. People come to Whyte Avenue to 'see and be seen', and more often than not for multiple activities. This is manifest in terms of pedestrian and vehicle congestion, parades, festivals, and community activism of its various stakeholders. It is a diversity of social groups that contribute to the commercial area's identity as an attractive and vibrant community.

Another important component of Whyte Avenue's identity is individual influence and investment. Persons within the Whyte Avenue area define it through on-going personal and community investment or acts of placemaking. This includes working with community organisations, reaching out to those in need, maintaining one's home, and demonstrating personally held values which in turn shape what Whyte Avenue is and can be. This is not always a conscious act, but an identification with place that carries with it a sense of pride and positive community image. Investment in one's community businesses, institutions and social causes imbue Whyte Avenue's identity with a sense of support, meaningfulness and caring. This facilitates a Whyte Avenue where people want to live nearby and enjoy it,

learn what community can mean, learn and grow as a person. By interacting with Whyte Avenue, people come to not only shape its identity, but also understand who they are and can become.

Whyte Avenue is unlike any other commercial area in Edmonton, as contrasted to 124 Street for example. Located north of Jasper Avenue and south of 118 Avenue in west Edmonton, 124 Street is physically distinct from Whyte Avenue by way of its smaller unified pedestrian strip, low connectivity, limited number of neighbourhood and alcohol related services, and increased mix of residential and commercial uses on the street. In terms of 124 Street's social distinctiveness, this area does not have as strong a historical presence and focal points offering a concentration of multiple day and night time activities. Compared to Whyte Avenue, 124 Street lacks attraction and synergy despite its history and sense of community.

In addition to Whyte Avenue's unique and distinctive identity, it is the centre of personal, social and physical attachment. People have a personal relationship and attachment to Whyte Avenue grounded in past experiences of community. People choose to live within Old Strathcona not only for its amenities and services, but its potential to re-create a sense of community value and connection at the neighbourhood level. The commercial area establishes a common setting for people to pursue placemaking activities, a sense of home / community and, therefore, attachment to Whyte Avenue.

Attachment to the commercial area is also defined by the social relationships people form with it. Work, volunteering, and the friendships and activities engaged in over time, build up an attachment to Whyte Avenue characterized as friendly, vibrant and committed. However, type of work, level of engagement and place may change, affecting relationships with others and degree of attachment to Whyte Avenue.

Lastly, physical features of the commercial area and people's relationship to them influence attachment to Whyte Avenue. Most notable is the commercial area's core area, its buildings and businesses that provide history and character. Many of these have been around for decades and, because of it, an ongoing formative relationship with people in place. McIntyre Park is another significant object of attachment within the commercial area. It affords a number of uses and activities throughout the year for many different groups of people. As a result, people are attached to its many opportunities as a vibrant, pleasant, people place. Attachment to Whyte Avenue is also in a state of constant evolution. Emphasis on maintaining older architecture styles is linked with increasing physical attachment to Whyte Avenue while on-going (re)development and daily use by people may be responsible for either its strengthening or weakening.

An individual dimension also influences Whyte Avenue's unique sense of place. This is comprised of personal experience, place consciousness, rest, movement and inside-ness. Experiencing the commercial area evokes particular emotions and moods that structure Whyte Avenue's sense of place. Acute, positive

emotions are evoked by the commercial area's urban design. A human scale, non-mall atmosphere, planted trees and pedestrian environment give the area a sense of function, pleasure and comfort. Diverse social activity and placemaking involvement of the community elicit acceptance and pride. Negative emotions evoked by the commercial area are attributed to its night-life. Pedestrian congestion, alcohol service and unexpectedness give Whyte Avenue a crowded, uncomfortable and at times unsafe feeling.

The commercial area also evokes sustained positive moods that contribute to its unique experience and overall sense of place. This includes Whyte Avenue's urban landscape, which is surrounded by residential areas, centred at its core by historical buildings, while walkable and layered with activities throughout the day that elicit a sense of life. The area's history, by way of its surviving buildings and architecture, early settlement and lasting personal histories make Whyte Avenue a rare and cherished local place. Community involvement further adds to the commercial area's strength and depth of character.

Negative mood evoked by Whyte Avenue is to be found in those people disrespecting the area. Whether abusing its buildings with graffiti or vandalism, behaving rudely or being uncaring, these actions bring the area down. As well, loss of personal relationships with people, amenities and services create a sense of loss characterized by impersonal-ness and disconnection. Once one of Edmonton's best kept secrets, the success and challenges associated with alcohol service, safety, parking, and homelessness have diminished Whyte Avenue's magic.

People are actively conscious of their ongoing relationship with Whyte Avenue. This is made possible by people's active sensing of the commercial area's distinctive landscape and identity, and interaction with it through its many activities. This reflects individual interaction with place. However, the opposite is also true. Whyte Avenue engages people in terms of what it affords them. More specifically, Whyte Avenue engages people by providing them an identifiable location, opportunities for work, entertainment, and opportunities for self-actualisation (i.e. personal fulfilment) within an "urban village". People are therefore aware of Whyte Avenue's liveability. Changes in the commercial area are therefore consciously felt. Over commercialisation of the area, loss of local businesses and historical buildings (e.g. fire), and declining interest in the area for some are communicated to the individual resulting in a sense of loss.

Points of rest within Whyte Avenue significantly affect its sense of place. These are primarily located within the central core district of the commercial area and include a diverse set of cultural opportunities and business services. Theatres, open space and a range of shops form the heart of Whyte Avenue giving it energy and a small town feel. A mix of local, independent and family-run businesses and entertainment along the commercial strip provide additional employment opportunities and services. This further contributes to Whyte Avenue's selection of places, choices, interest and cultural success.

The degree of movement within the commercial area also contributes to its sense of place. Whyte Avenue is highly regarded as an interesting and people-

friendly place due to its compact development, many points of rest, pedestrian orientation, and high walkability. Inclement weather and overcrowding pose negative elements during winter months and special events. However, it is generally accepted that walking is the best mode of travel and requisite to experiencing Whyte Avenue's sense of place. Travel by vehicle is slow along the avenue with high volumes of traffic during peak periods. While providing convenient access to the area, free parking for vehicles is uncommon, is particularly frustrating during special events and is a source of conflict for residents living nearby.

Lastly, Whyte Avenue's sense of place is influenced by its feeling of inside-ness. That is, Whyte Avenue has a particular feeling of what it means to be inside it. This is determined by the commercial area's landscape, degree of movement and level of activity. People know they are inside Whyte Avenue from a landscape perspective, based on its distinctive visual character, historic building preservation and re-use, small town feel and scale, and comfortable streetscaping. Unlike other commercial areas in Edmonton, people know they are inside Whyte Avenue given its high vehicle and foot traffic, pedestrian access, congestion and popularity. In addition, being inside the commercial area is characterized by layers of business services, social activities and cultural opportunities throughout the year, making Whyte Avenue a friendly and fashionable place to be.

6 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the concept of sense of place in relation to communicative (i.e. collaborative) planning principles and to examine potential implications and considerations for planning theory and practice. Five primary hypotheses guided this research and are addressed in this final chapter.

These include:

- Sense of Place is an experiential phenomenon that can be identified, articulated, and described
- The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) within Old Strathcona has an identifiable sense of place
- The structure of sense of place may be revealed through critical grounded analyses of implicit meanings, experiential views and reflected upon assumptions and understanding
- Sense of Place is composed of various place components that can be theoretically modelled
- The process of placemaking influences components of place and therefore sense of place

6.1 An Experiential Phenomenon

Research findings confirm that sense of place is an experiential phenomenon as identified, articulated and described by community members. Sense of place is recognisable by both insiders and outsiders on the basis of its physical, social and individual dimensions of place, categories, themes and attributes. Extensive

discussion with participants demonstrated that sense of place can be articulated and that verbal expression of individual place experience is especially rich. In-depth interviews with participants further established that substantial information regarding place such as the Old Strathcona area of Whyte Avenue may be obtained within a short period of time. As such, this proved to be a highly successful research instrument and one that can be replicated elsewhere.

Interview responses also highlighted the influence of time on memory of place. More specifically, while participants were able to identify both a past and present sense of Whyte Avenue (i.e. place) within Old Strathcona, more recent descriptions were more easily expressed and detailed. Moreover, people sustain an implicit connection or awareness of place that can be raised, reflected upon and reported. This supports findings by Hiss (1990) and Relph (1976) that suggest experience and meaning of place (i.e. sense of place) forms a conscious subject and sub-conscious object within the mind.

Findings confirmed assertions within the literature that qualitative research is best suited for investigation of a sense of place. Moreover, qualitative research forms a valuable first step in raising awareness of place, its identity and understanding within planning. Knowledge learned provides a basis for more discrete placemaking activities (e.g. research, planning, design, programming) and may be expanded in pursuit of a common vision or set of goals. In sum, sense of place can be meaningfully articulated and described in sufficient detail to render greater understanding of a place.

6.2 An Identifiable Place

The second hypothesis, which stated that the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) has an identifiable sense of place, was confirmed through extensive discussion with community members and subsequent analysis of research findings. In-depth interviews elicited substantial description and detail from participants regarding the commercial area's unique and identifiable sense of place.

Conversations with community members encompassed all three primary dimensions of place (i.e. physical, socio-cultural and individual). Interviews provided opportunity to consider and explore relevant dimensions and categories of place that made Whyte Avenue distinct from other Edmonton areas. From these discussions, divergent themes emerged along with identifiable features of each. As interviews progressed and descriptions deepened through questioning, Whyte Avenue's uniqueness crystallised around community members' collective place knowledge. This resulted in the emergence of the commercial area's distinctive sense of place as summarised in chapter five.

In selecting a range of different stakeholders to participate, this study also revealed differences in individual senses of place. This supports research by Butz and Eyles (1997) and Tuan (1974; 1975) who assert individual effectivities and capacities structure personal senses of place in addition to culture and society. Memory, residence, degree of interaction (e.g. frequency, duration, quality) and personal held meaning for Whyte Avenue represented individual factors suggested

to affect participants' sense of place. This may prove a viable research direction in the future. In summary, research confirmed that not only is Whyte Avenue an identifiable place, but people possess individual interpretations and meanings of place that combine in structuring a collective sense of place.

6.3 A Meaningful Structure

The third hypothesis suggested that the structure of sense of place may be revealed through critical grounded analyses of implicit meanings, experiential views and reflected upon assumptions and understanding. This was confirmed through extensive discussion with community members involved in OSACC and the WALUPS using in-depth interviewing and grounded theory method of analysis.

Through in-depth interviews, learning what made the commercial area distinctive to participants enabled a common and increasingly sophisticated map of Whyte Avenue's meaning to be structured. Initial questioning provided a common basis (i.e. starting point) from which to explore more sophisticated categories, themes and component features of Whyte Avenue's meaningful structure. Interested and animated discussion with community members provided substantial place knowledge concerning the commercial area. Originally, interviews were agreed to between an hour and a half. As discussions evolved and deepened, many increased to two and three hours. This confirms the concept of knowledge through dialogue asserted by Sandercock (1998) and how it formed the principal means by which stakeholders chose to communicate personal and collective sense of place.

Use of the grounded theory method enabled verification of the structure of Whyte Avenue's sense of place. Throughout participant interviews, opportunities were selected to compare findings among respondents, correlate and confirm meanings associated with place. This included descriptions of the commercial area as well as emerging themes and features within different categories and dimensions of place. This collect-analyse dialectic revealed a number of overlapping and distinctive experiential views of Whyte Avenue shared by participants that comprise its unique sense of place. Findings therefore confirmed that a collective structure of Whyte Avenue's sense of place exists among participants based on commonly shared themes and features of place.

6.4 A Theoretical Model

The fourth hypothesis – sense of place is composed of various place components that can be theoretically modelled – was confirmed. Use of grounded theory to investigate Whyte Avenue's collective sense of place revealed general and more specific meaningful structures of place. As confirmation of hypothesis three demonstrated, Whyte Avenue has a distinctive sense of place based on a meaningful structure of distinctive themes and features of place. Through active dialogue with participants, clarifying meanings, and seeking a deeper understanding from their experience and perspective, deep structures of place were identified within a more general structure of place.

Analysis of place dimensions, categories, themes, component elements and their patterns not only revealed a particular structure of the commercial area's sense of place, but also contributed to a more generalisable model. Categories of place remained stable followed by increased variation in themes and component structures of place. This suggests that while different places may share globally significant structures of meaning, each reflect local contexts and intricacies (e.g. people, community, society, geography, and landscapes). Both universal and context specific relevancies and applications may therefore be derived from this research.

Within broader discussions of Whyte Avenue's place dimensions and categories, community members identified characteristic themes and components. Combined, these reveal the cumulative structure of sense of place for Whyte Avenue and are summarised in Table 27 – Structure of Sense of Place in the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area.

Table 27: Meaningful Structure of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area

Dimension	Category	Theme
Physical dimension	Location	Physical
	Landscape	Conceptual
		Urban design
Social dimension	Image	Architecture
		Personal
	Social Process and Experience	Social
		User
		Intent
	Place Identity	Activities
		Time
	Place Attachment	Object(ive)
		Subject(ive)
		Comparative
Personal relationship		
		Social relationship
		Physical relationship

Table 27: Continued

Individual dimension	Personal experience	Emotion
	Place consciousness	Mood
	Rest	Person – Place interaction
	Movement	Place – Person interaction
	Inside-ness	General
		Travel mode
		Compact development
		Landscape
		Movement
		Activity

6.5 Summary

The phenomenon of sense of place is crucial to understanding place and pursuit of effective placemaking. This research has addressed the need to examine, clarify and ground the concept of sense of place using the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area as a formative case study. As a result, it has demonstrated that this gap in knowledge can be closed through the articulation, description and structuring of sense of place through grounded (i.e. critical) analysis.

This research is significant in that through an understanding what makes Whyte Avenue unique – why and how it is important to community members – action may be taken to maintain and enhance it. Findings may be used to expand future research in this area, supplement existing studies, or focus on particular concerns (e.g. bar and nightclub activity). As a result, research findings provide a deeper understanding of Whyte Avenue as a unique place, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints. Furthermore, it demonstrates how sense of place knowledge can be shared and how communicative placemaking (i.e. collaborative planning) can be used to strengthen and enhance it. Potential place enhancement

therefore remains limitless insofar as awareness, intention, and resource support for placemaking exists.

6.6 Placemaking Impacts and Implications

The final hypothesis, that the process of formal placemaking (i.e. professional planning) influences components of place and therefore sense of place, was also confirmed. This is explored in the following sections in terms of formal placemaking, its impacts, considerations and place outcomes.

6.6.1 The Whyte Avenue Experience and Professional Practice

The WALUPS demonstrated a number of collaborative communicative planning principles as outlined by Innes and Booher (1999) framework. It demonstrated formation of local interests at the grass roots level, evolution and formalisation of interests under OSACC, and enhanced public discourse through town hall meetings. This motivated local involvement and participation in formal placemaking, and confirmed community commitment and empowerment.

With so many stakeholders and interests involved, this naturally led to conflict on some issues more than others. In some cases, not all stakeholders chose to become involved. Community members for example, identified fewer than expected businesses involved in the process. Future placemaking should not stray from conflict but learn to manage it better. This may include pre-stakeholder consultation in order to assess the basis (i.e. dialogic space) for healthy collaborative

planning or trained facilitators to frame a positive consensus building process (e.g. trust, openness, respect). These formative aspects of communicative placemaking should be encouraged in future planning undertakings in Whyte Avenue and considered within the broader professional context.

How community members became involved in the WALUPS is of particular interest in that literature on collaborative planning focuses on need. Findings suggest that people who do become involved in formal placemaking, do so based on previous social, cultural and or professional connections. These may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. The benefit of understanding how it is that people become involved lies in the knowledge, skills and activities they bring to the placemaking process. Nurturing this can be particularly complex in light of conflicting values, interests, and resources.

Future placemaking should consider means of facilitating greater stakeholder involvement and participation. Lessons learned from the WALUPS point to the important role of social organisations in mobilizing interest and involvement. Investment in and facilitation of placemaking roles, work load, learning opportunities and resources are vital to mobilizing stakeholder involvement and sustaining participation throughout the planning processes. Community planning therefore has a fundamental role to play in the placemaking process.

The WALUPS demonstrated a formal response to real concerns previously identified by community members. Common issues shared by those in Whyte Avenue included public drunkenness, limited parking, concern over historical

preservation, vandalism and homelessness. Collaborative dialogue concerning these issues provoked a number of potential recommendations, practical strategies and solutions among stakeholders who shared a common desire to improve their place. Positive aspects included endorsement of the planning process, creative thinking and social learning. These contributed to clarification of common issues and resolve to address these through communicative, collaborative planning.

Constraints identified by community members included limited time to achieve tasks, complexity of issues, perceived cleft between stakeholders, and lack of community resources. These are important factors in consideration of future collaborative planning projects in Whyte Avenue and other communities. Failure to address these may result in poor process outcomes, failure to frame issues and effectively address them, poison relationships and burn out communities involved in lengthy processes. Professional planning therefore needs to be cognizant and prepared to manage these constraints in order to further open up collective placemaking.

The formation, interaction and processes engaged in (and prior to) the WALUPS distinguish this process from previous planning practice. More specifically, the WALUPS integrated and built upon a core interest group already active within the community. This act broadened stakeholder involvement, and granted greater credibility and authority to the community through the OSACC. In addition, stakeholder relationships improved, as did communication efficiency, and sharing and learning of information through increased trust, openness and

confidence within OSACC. This planning process demonstrated an intense level of formal and informal communication among stakeholders (in contrast to what might have been expected by the rational comprehensive planning process). However, this also came at a cost.

The WALUPS took four years to complete during which it placed increasing demands on key participants and resources. This resulted in a very long, challenging process in which some participants burned out due to work load, frustration, and lack of perceived outcomes. Consequently, community input diminished. This represents a significant challenge for communicative placemaking models that emphasize opening up collective discourse without unduly constraining its bounds. Professional planning practice therefore needs to address the bounds or framing of communicative processes through increased emphasis on facilitation and mediation skills. Through these practices, common issues may be properly acknowledged, effectively engaged (i.e. confirmed, interrogated), action framed and executed. These represented some of the sharpest criticisms identified by community members and should therefore serve as a guide to future placemaking in Whyte Avenue and other communities seeking a more open and communicative style of planning.

Another defining collaborative feature of the WALUPS was the strength of engagement it garnered among various community stakeholders. This maybe somewhat misleading in that, much to the credit of the larger community of Old Strathcona, it possesses many passionate and dedicated people who care about it and Whyte Avenue. Nevertheless, a communicative process needs such people who

are willing to be engaged and become meaningfully involved in reshaping place.

The WALUPS demonstrated that, throughout a number of levels, including informal face-to-face contact, working committees and town hall meetings, organisational synergy can keep people actively engaged within a collaborative process. This is to Whyte Avenue's credit, loss and lesson for future placemaking practice.

While the WALUPS demonstrated it was particularly successful at tapping into community stakeholders' dedication and passion for the area, and motivating and challenging participants from within, it also contributed to participant turnover, burnout and risk of damaging stakeholder relationships. As the process wore on, an increased need for facilitation, negotiation, and at times, mediation skills was identified. These are important communicative skill sets in terms of establishing a 'safe' environment where information and knowledge may be questioned without poisoning relationships and trust (Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000, 137). Future placemaking practice should integrate these skill sets in order that time, resources, and morale may be preserved.

Throughout the collaborative process, community members shared, learned and created information based on their experience of Whyte Avenue, informal and formal working groups and meetings. This is distinct from rational planning processes that control participation, are time sensitive and do not emphasise relationship building with (potentially) conflicting interests. Accordingly, the WALUPS fostered excitement and value in communicative processes (e.g. visioning exercise), wide dissemination and integration of information, stakeholder

relationships, and broader community outcomes (e.g. youth aid, streetscaping, graffiti removal, improved communication with bars / nightclubs, community connectivity). Furthermore, it demonstrated how diverse interests willing to work together can infuse the placemaking process with new ideas, respectfully challenge information and or beliefs, and arrive at a shared understanding of issues.

This is significant in terms of how professional planning can mobilize interests, organize collective discourse, and focus resources on creating new, high quality information that is agreed to and challenges the status quo. Leadership, coordination among community organisations, cooperation among civic agencies and departments, and ability to sustain the flow of meaningful information and communication among relevant interests are key determinants of a successful collaborative planning process. Future placemaking in Whyte Avenue should maintain existing communicative relationships as well as explore new ones (e.g. historical preservation – land development industry). Professional planning should aspire to develop a leadership role in developing ways of establishing communicative relationships within an increasingly pluralistic society.

One of the primary directives of the WALUPS was to seek community consensus on issues of concern. This incorporated a range of information from a variety of sources that educated the community on broader issues, improved stakeholder relations and established a relatively open and safe environment to confirm and challenge information. These demonstrate key elements in support of laying the necessary groundwork for collaborative dialogue capable of common

agreement on information people can understand and accept. Numerous informal and formal meetings held by various sub-committees and working groups attest to the WALUPS length, thorough exploration of issues, interests and potential options in support of achieving consensus. This has led to sustained communication among organisations and placemaking within Whyte Avenue that are more responsive to change (e.g. Arts Theatre proposal, loss of historical buildings to fire, 2001 Canada Day Riot).

However, insofar as consensus being achieved, some issues proved more contentious than others (e.g. number of alcohol seats, parking). These are still being addressed today and support the notion that consensus cannot always be achieved within time constraints or through lack of resources, lack of stakeholder agreement and commitment, and lack of necessary skills. These are important considerations in assessing future consensus building processes that seek to energize stakeholder participation, mediate conflict and end stalemate. Moreover, professional planning practice should explore the potential benefits of generating social and political capital within communities and how this relates to attitudinal, behavioural and institutional change.

In summary, the WALUPS may not represent a pure collaborative planning experience. However, it does confirm many of the qualities and outcomes associated with its consensus building process. In demonstrating what was done (or not), in terms of its impacts and interpretation by community members, the

WALUPS provides a number of lessons on what worked and can be improved upon within future Whyte Avenue-related professional planning practice and theory.

6.6.2 Planning with Place in Mind

Sense of place provides a legitimate and valuable form of planning knowledge. It is valid in that knowledge created is grounded in the experience of place and the communicative relationships that define it. This establishes sense of place as an important way of learning and coming to understand the world. This is particularly constructive in terms of communicative placemaking as research demonstrates sense of place can broaden collective discourse, contribute to confirmation and interrogation of information, frame action and provide a *real* gauge of planning outcomes. Because sense of place is innate to human existence, this form of knowledge and understanding does not preclude non-experts from becoming involved in placemaking. Instead, sense of place encourages relevant interests to share their experiences and knowledge of place. Professional planning practice should therefore recognise and encourage (i.e. empower) relevant interests participation and involvement in placemaking on this basis.

Furthermore, sense of place provides unique information and place perspectives that may be confirmed or challenged within a broader public forum. This enables information as well as inter-subjective meanings to be shared, in which individual senses of place may be filtered and transformed. This is critical to establishing common ground among many different stakeholders and even more so

in terms of fashioning consensus on controversial issues. Sharing sense of place therefore confirms person-place relationships as well as build new ones.

Professional planning should examine ways in which sense of place may be better communicated collectively within formal placemaking practice.

Sense of place can also aid the framing and implementation of action. In drawing from previous place experience, skills and relationships, individuals and groups are more intuitively informed about place. This further enables more creative problem-solving ideas and strategies based on understanding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a particular place. Sense of place is also valuable in terms of monitoring the implementation of placemaking activities on a conscious and unconscious level. One can consciously interrogate sense of place in terms of changes in person-place relationships as well as unconsciously *feel* how things are going (or not). As a result, sense of place outcomes can provide a useful indicator of placemaking impacts and outcomes (e.g. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, visual preference and community surveys).

In summary, sense of place as knowledge is integral to the pursuit of inclusive stakeholder representation and participation, critical discourse, and consensus building particular to formal communicative placemaking.

6.6.3 Sense of Place Outcomes

As this research has shown, there are many placemaking activities or projects that people engage in, in the fields of physical, socio-cultural and individual place

that cumulatively comprise it. Both informal and formal placemaking acts are sensed, perceived and internalised whether consciously or not. Accordingly, community members identified a number of collaborative planning activities impacting sense of place in Whyte Avenue. These represent observable (i.e. manifest) place impacts that participants reported during in-depth interviews. However, broader analysis of placemaking activities and sense of place influences suggest the presence of latent sense of place outcomes. The linkages between activities, influences and broader outcomes signal the connection between placemaking and sense of place that community members may or may not be consciously aware of.

Using tabled research findings, formal placemaking activities and their influences may be meaningfully linked to latent sense of place outcomes. The following example (see Table 28), illustrates the series of connections or place relations between placemaking activities aimed at preserving Whyte Avenue's physical history and their manifest and latent effect on sense of place outcomes. Note, comprehensive analysis of these linkages is beyond the scope of this research.

Table 28: Collaborative Planning Impact on Whyte Avenue's Physical History and Sense of Place

Manifest Impact	Placemaking Activity	Sense of Place Outcome
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Planning policies and regulations established for the preservation and conservation of historical buildings and area; architectural controls	Sense of historical recognition; importance
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Historical building designations underway; adaptive re-use and building variety	Successful preservation and historical conservation
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Physical streetscaping of Whyte Avenue; creation of End of Steel Park; pedestrian environment enhancements	Improved physical image

Table 28: Continued

Latent Impact	Influence on Sense of Place	Sense of Place Outcome
(Location: Physical)	Central location is demarcated physically by the areas buildings	Historic buildings and core area establish area
(Location: Conceptual)	Historic core area is from 103-105 street on Whyte, with a block north and south	Historic locale
(Landscape: Urban Design)	Contains a high number of adaptive reuse historic buildings providing services and amenities	Paramount to areas attractiveness and draw
(Landscape: Architecture)	Historic buildings; land mark buildings (e.g. Old Post Office, Strathcona Hotel, Army and Navy building)	Sense of history; distinctiveness; character
(Image: Personal Meaning)	Maintaining historical elements of Whyte Avenue's past; valuing of local history through preservation	Respect for area past; historical value; personal meaningfulness
(Image: Social Meaning)	Buildings serve as indicators of history	Sense of roots, history
(Image: Social Meaning)	Early achievements of pioneers to area	Sense of pride in area; sense of future / hope linked to history
(Image: Social Meaning)	Adaptive reuse buildings enable experience with past history in place	Sense of roots; part of something greater, permanent; living history
(Place Identity: Place influence on Person)	Selective of where to live in Edmonton -that is, in Old Strathcona; actively seek to find a historical house in area	Desirous location to live; comfortable
(Place Attachment: Physical Relationship)	Old and new development (sensitive to local architecture)	Increased attachment
(Place Attachment: Physical Relationship)	Concentration and compliment of historic buildings	Local history
(Place Attachment: Emotion)	Establishes a human scale of architecture; unchanging scale; designed with people in mind	A familiar place that is pleasurable
(Place Experience: Mood)	Place contains heritage buildings with some consideration for the past	Affection (for heritage buildings)
(Place Experience: Mood)	Existence of heritage buildings; survived new growth, comprises rarity in Edmonton	Special-ness, character
(Place Experience: Mood)	Human settlement where people purposefully built their homes and stores close together	Feeling of community; valuable; a real community
(Place Consciousness: Person - Place)	Distinctive physicality; has a distinct district; architecture, buildings, streets, windows; older area of city, is historic	Has an identity and character
(Inside-ness - Landscape)	Distinct visual character from the rest of Edmonton; high number of historic core and heritage buildings;	Distinctiveness; exclusive

As shown in Table 28, placemaking activities designed to preserve and enhance Whyte Avenue's physical history, have both immediate and underlying impacts on the area's sense of place. Planning policies and regulations, historical designation and sensitive streetscaping elicit a sense of this area's importance and

have contributed to its preservation and improved image. These are identifiable impacts on Whyte Avenue. However, these activities also positively influence Whyte Avenue's location, landscape, image, place identity and attachment, and overall experience. Placemaking activities reinforce Whyte Avenue's historical location physically and conceptually, support its local landscape in terms of urban design and architecture, and sustain its image on a personal and social level.

In addition, formal placemaking activities have helped to maintain its identity and appeal as a place to live, physical attachment people have to its architecture and buildings, and experience as a place that has character and a feeling of community. By acting to preserve Whyte Avenue's physical history, people remain conscious of this area's special identity and rare distinctiveness within the Edmonton context. As these findings illustrate, the effects of placemaking may be more pervasive than may be immediately apparent, and that placemaking acts can be meaningfully linked to sense of place. This demonstrates the broader value and importance of placemaking activities as they relate to latent sense of place outcomes.

6.6.4 Summary

This research demonstrates how the concept and phenomenon of sense of place may be effectively situated within professional placemaking and impacts further revealed through person-place relationships. Sense of place as knowledge is ideally situated within collaborative planning to broaden stakeholder involvement, dialogue, and action as a post-modernist project. Moreover, sense of place reflects

meaningful, communicative person-place relationships in space and time that are integral to the 'art and practice' of placemaking.

6.7 Recommendations

Recommendations proposed by this research take aim at the three primary losses of place (identified in chapter three) ever present within the urban landscape. This approach responds to the need to overcome the level of disregard and fragmentation that characterises contemporary place, including Whyte Avenue. As such, the following recommendations do not offer a detailed blueprint for Whyte Avenue in the form of a definitive set of 'answers' or 'solutions'. To do so would be to ignore and discredit the detailed strategies and actions created through thousands of hours invested by hundreds of volunteers, community groups, City departments and agencies under the WALUPS. Rather, the following proposals provide three core directives for creating, maintaining, and enhancing Whyte Avenue and place in general. Readers seeking specific information regarding place relationships revealed between placemaking and sense of place are directed to the research findings described and tabled in chapter five. Recommendations presented in the following sections advocate greater public awareness, meaning and concern for place can be achieved through formal and informal placemaking.

6.7.1 Awareness

This research advocates raising local place awareness through engagement of sense of place at the physical, socio-cultural and individual level. This has immediate and long-term implications for both formal and informal placemaking practice. From an immediate standpoint, raising awareness of place offers the potential to increase interest and mobilise local involvement in placemaking capable of optimising personal, social, economic, and environmental benefits and resources. Long-term implications suggest critical awareness of place can be cultivated over time and can help frame broader global issues (e.g. urban sustainability) at the local level. Accordingly, professional placemaking needs to further explore means of raising public place awareness that is innovative, enables participation, and mobilises interest. Communicative placemaking processes that include alternative knowledge, experience and meanings of place offer particular promise.

6.7.2 Meaning

Meaningful places are multidimensional. They are comprised of overlapping physical, socio-cultural and individual meanings that form communicative relationships over time and space. How people sense, interact and assign meaning to the world around them is fundamental to shaping place, life and therefore placemaking. Research on Whyte Avenue has shown that formal placemaking can influence the making and re-making of meaningful places over time. Landscape

enhancements, identifiable location, strong image, diverse social experiences, distinctive identity, opportunities for attachment, meaningful personal experience, many points of rest and modes of travel are some of the ways place can be meaningfully maintained and enhanced through formal and informal placemaking practice. Professional placemaking therefore needs to (re)invest the contemporary landscape and people in place with greater meaning and emphasis on their interrelations. This requires the inclusion of relevant placemaking interests that form a unique constellation of cooperation, skills and knowledge. This is best achieved through collaborative planning and consensus building processes that aim to broaden collective discourse through communicative placemaking.

6.7.3 Communication

Meaningful places establish communicative relationships between the physical and subjective world. Communication between people and place is therefore a continuous and reciprocal act. This has direct implications for professional placemaking that seeks to create, maintain or enhance place in some way. More specifically, planning needs to further investigate the meaningful relationships formed between people in place as they relate to its broader dimensions, particular categories and emergent themes. This is critical to understanding placemaking impacts and outcomes via sense of place in relation to collective goals and common vision. Communicative planning, critical theory, and

grounded theory provide a solid research basis with which to explore meaningful person-place relationships in relation to placemaking.

6.7.4 Future Research Considerations

Seven directions for future research are provided for further consideration. These include:

- Continued research on the relationship between physical, socio-cultural and individual dimensions of place and linkages between their respective categories, themes and components. (e.g. influence of age, gender, memory, culture, length of residence).
- Research on the communicative relationship between place and person from a dialectical perspective. This idea is briefly raised in sections 6.6.2-4 and should be further explored in recognition that place is constantly communicating with people and vice versa.
- Integration of sense of place (as a legitimate way of knowing) within communicative post-modern planning practice and research.
- There is an increasing need for planning theory to transform ways of knowing within collective discourse on place. Use of the grounded theory method may provide a useful means of translating subjective phenomena (e.g. sense of place) and should be considered within communicative planning research.

- Professional planning must continue to find new and innovative ways of engaging sense of place and integrating this knowledge within practice (e.g. virtual design charettes, visual preference surveys, visual zoning criteria, urban stewardship)
- Planning academia should continue to explore and examine theoretical linkages between communicative action, critical theory, and grounded theory. This is anticipated to provide additional insight into the translation of subjective place knowledge (e.g. sense of place) into planning knowledge in relation to communicative placemaking.
- Research on the impact of adaptable (malleable) urban spaces on the development of meaningful place. Research suggests that people prefer familiar places and those that afford flexibility. Such places are more likely to be appropriated, assigned meaning and value over time. This has implications for raising place awareness, meaning and developing person-place relationships (i.e. communication).

6.8 Conclusion

Sense of place offers an important source of placemaking knowledge that can be identified, articulated, described and modelled. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon composed of meaningful physical, socio-cultural and individual person-place relationships set in space and time. Hence, sense of place reflects an on-going dialogue or communication between person and place. This constant

communication with place grounds human experience within the physical and subject world in the form of knowledge. This may be used to broaden collective discourse, confirm and interrogate information and meaning, and enhance problem-solving within communicative (post-modern) placemaking.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix A – Informed Consent Statement

This study is being conducted in order to determine the relationship between sense of place change and placemaking in the built environment. The information gained from this study will be used to further investigate and clarify the concept of sense of place. Information will also be used to explore change in sense of place in relation to the planning practice.

This study is being conducted by Michael Strong as part of the requirements to graduate with a Master in City Planning degree from the University of Manitoba. This thesis work is being advised by Dr. David van Vliet and Dr. Ian Wight of the Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba and by Dr. Thomas Nelson of the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta. This interview process conforms to standard ethical guidelines and has been reviewed and approved by the above thesis committee.

This interview process will be audio taped in order to permit later ease and efficient analysis of material. Written notes will also be taken to further supplement audio taping. If at any time during the interview, you feel uncomfortable in any way, you may choose to have the tape recorder turned off for your response, omit a section all together, or terminate the interview. If you have any questions or concerns during the interview session feel free to ask immediately.

Your identity will be kept confidential. This means that your name, your position, your organisation's name, and any other information that would give your identity away will not be included in the final report of the study. Where information occurs within the session transcripts that will be included in the final report, names and other information that is confidential will be omitted.

If you are interested in viewing the final report, it will be made available for you to read in October 2003. This work will be published as a thesis and will be placed in the Architecture and Fine Arts Library at the University of Manitoba. This information may also be considered for future publication within planning journals by the researcher.

If you have any questions or concerns after the interview is completed, please feel free to contact myself at 780-231-2633 or turbine2@hotmail.com or Dr. David van Vliet at 204-474-7176 or vanvliet@cc.umanitoba.ca.

Thank you for giving your time to participate in this focus group session. Your input is extremely valuable to this research project and is greatly appreciated.

I, _____, give Michael Strong permission to use the information gathered during this interview under the conditions stated above for the purposes of researching sense of place in placemaking.

Respondent's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

8.2 Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

I would like to begin by thanking you for taking the time to meet with me today. Before we begin, it is important that you take a moment to learn a little bit more about this study before you proceed. Please take time to read through the following informed consent form, ask any questions you may have, and sign and date it below. A copy will be left with you for your records including my contact information.

Alright, before we begin, I just want to let you know there are 4 general areas we will try to explore in the next hour. The **first section** focuses on your *more recent experiences* of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area. The **second section** steps back in time and *looks at the early 1990s* before the formation of OSACC and the type of place Whyte Avenue was. The **third explores changes that may or may not** have occurred since 1990 and the conclusion of the WALUPS. The **forth and final section contemplates the planning process** of the WALUPS.

SECTION ONE – PLACE ELEMENTS that define the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area's sense of place

General 1. (Self / Individual)

When you think of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area, what are some of the things it means to you? Positive – Negative?

What are some of these aspects/features/parts of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area?

Intermediate 1. (personal experiences)

How would you describe this area?

What physical sensations characterise this place?

What feelings or emotions does it conjure up?

Are there any experiences or memories that make this place special?

Intermediate 2. (consciousness / awareness)

When you are in this place, would you say you are always conscious(aware) or unconscious(unaware) of it? How/Why so?

Intermediate 3. (rest and movement)

What can you tell me about this area's set of places you find particularly unique or engaging in some way?

What makes these special?

In terms of getting around this area, how would you describe this?

What do you find affecting this? (e.g. mode of transport, time of day, season, special event(s))

Intermediate 4. (inside versus outside)

How would you describe to someone seeking to visit the WACA (e.g. a tourist, relative) that they have finally arrived at/in it?

Put another way, how would someone know they are inside the WACA or not?

How might you describe this experience?

General 2. (Socio-Cultural: Assumptions, Knowledge, Values, Intention, Behaviour, Place Meaning)

Can you tell me about the different types of people or groups in this area?

How would you describe your relationship to them in context of the WACA?

Positive/Negative

Long (Old) /Short (New)

Friendly/Hostile

Similar/Dissimilar

Easy/Difficult

Improving/Deteriorating

Intermediate 1. (social processes: is WACA shaping your social experience of place or vice versa?)

What is a typical day for you in this area?

What can you tell me about the different types of people or groups in this area?

What are some of the kinds of activities you engage in?

What types of social activities do you typically find yourself engaged in here?

What other social activities does the WACA provide?

Intermediate 2. (place identity)

In terms of social activity, how is this area different from other places (i.e. commercial strips) in Edmonton?

When you think of Whyte Avenue, how would you say this area defines you? (i.e. who you are as an individual / what it means to be you? e.g. funky, classy, active, alive, reflective...)

Others persons or groups within the WACA?

How would you say you contribute to this area's identity or meaning? (e.g. safe, secure, active, supportive?)

Others persons or groups within the WACA?

Intermediate 3. (place attachment)

In terms of the (quality and intensity of) experiences this area provides you, can you tell me how Whyte Avenue compares to other areas in Edmonton or similar commercial strips you may have visited?

For how long has this been the case? e.g. since moving here...

Since this time, what place(s) would you say you have become emotionally attached to here today?

How did this occur?

Can you describe the types of feelings you have toward these objects, persons or groups?

Where did your attachment in this area first begin? How has it progressed/regressed?

MAP – Green Pen Can you indicate this/these place(s) by circling them on the map provided?

Can you identify any particular objects, persons, or groups you may have also become attached to in this area?

How did this occur?

Can you describe the types of feelings you have toward these objects, persons or groups?

MAP – Red Pen Can you indicate this/these place(s) by circling them on the map provided?

General 3. (Physical)

What can you tell me about this area's physical character?

Intermediate 1. (location)

If you had to describe to someone visiting from another country where Whyte Avenue is, where it begins and ends, what would you tell them? (e.g. Where does this area begin, extend, end? what might they use to define this area?)

Intermediate 2. (landscape)

What physical elements seem to best signify or make this area distinctive? (e.g. Objects, materials, textures, mass, orientation, form, colour)

Intermediate 3. (image)

Thinking more about the physical features of this area, what underlying meanings, messages or intentions would you say it suggests?

Which of these features do you think best reflects this meaning?

(e.g. Do certain materials evoke a sense of history? Memory? Imagination? Order? Instruction?

Teaching?

SECTION TWO - IDENTIFYING CHANGE that has occurred in the WACA since initiating the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (WALUPS) (i.e. Communicative Placemaking)

Before we move on to the next section, I'd like you to think back to what this area was like in the early 1990s, before formation of the Old Strathcona Area Community Council in 1994.

General 4. (Change in overall sense of place)

Looking back on this time, what was this area like?

What did you think of it then?

How would you say it has most changed compared with today?

Overall, how would you describe this? e.g. positive/negative

Intermediate 1. (Change in Self/Individual)

How, if at all, would you say **your**:

Experience of this area has changed?

Overall awareness of this area has changed?

What about this **area's**

Special places? How have these changed or not for **you**?

What about this area's distinctiveness? Would you say it has changed?

Intermediate 2. (Change in Socio-Cultural)

Thinking back again to the early 1990s, can you think of anyone, a group or organisation who influenced your interaction with this area in any way?

Can you tell me about how he/she/they influenced you?

How has this changed in comparison to today? (e.g. interaction frequency, duration, intensity, direction)

Intermediate 3. (Change in Physical)

What was this area physically like during the early 1990s?

Can you describe this?

How is it different today?

Can you tell me how this area made you feel at the time? What feelings or emotions come to mind when you think back? Why?

How does this compare with today?

SECTION THREE - LINKING CHANGE in WACA Sense of Place to WALUPS Placemaking Actions

Moving on to the next section, I'd like you to think about the types of activities and changes that may or may not have taken place in the WACA since 1990.

General 5. (Locating overall sense of place change via placemaking action)

To the best of your memory and knowledge, are you aware of any changes since the WALUPS that have influenced this area today?

Intermediate 1. (Linking sense of place change to changes within the community)

What can you tell me about the following aspects of the WACA in terms of how they may or may not have changed (since 1990)? Please describe.

Business (diversity, retention of small independents, compatibility & balanced mix)

Services (community encroachment, full range, enhanced local communication or relationships, amenities)

Attraction & Vitality (clean & attractive, tourism, non-peak activity, green space for recreation, beautification plan, human scale)

History (historical resources, designations, new development conformity, enforced architectural controls)

Arts, Culture & Entertainment (major event-community alliances, opportunities)

Communication & Involvement (involvement & interaction, community pride, stakeholder communication, retain friendly small town atmosphere (sense of place)).

Safety & Security (safety & security, night atmosphere, individual awareness & responsibility)

Accessibility & Movement (transit service, safe ease of pedestrian movement & alternate forms of transport, traffic flow, parking)

How, if at all, has any of this affected the way you feel, think or use the WACA today?

SECTION FOUR - LINKING PLACEMAKING Actions with WALUPS Processes

Moving on to the final section, I would like you to think back to your involvement with the Old Strathcona Area Community Council created in 1994, and your participation in the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study (1995-1997).

General 6. (Linking sense of place change and action with the communicative placemaking process)

What can you tell me of your participation in the Old Strathcona Area Community Council?

Why did you become involved?

What role did you play?

How did you become involved in the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study?

What did you do? (e.g. participate in working groups, presentations, attend Town Hall meetings?)

Intermediate 1. (Collaborative planning process criteria)

Relevant and diverse representation of interests

Who else became involved? Were you ever surprised by who else was included?

Problem and tasks are real, practical and commonly shared

What initial problems or issues initially came out? How did this happen? Who raised these? How did you feel about this? How did the group respond to this?

Participants are a self-organizing body who decide on ground rules, objectives, tasks, working groups and discussion topics

How did this group come to meet together? How was work organised as a group? Were their special rules, goals, objectives, tasks?

Process engages participants, maintains commitment, interest, and learning through in-depth discussion, drama, humour and or informal interaction

What kinds of things would you say kept you involved in this ongoing process?

Incorporating diverse types of high-quality information in which its meaning is agreed upon

What types of information were brought up during this process? (e.g. formal studies, surveys, police reports, stories, personal experiences) Was it understandable? Accepted / Dismissed by the group?

Was its meaning commonly agreed upon?

Encouraging challenge of the status quo fostering creative thinking

Can you think of any particular creative or novel ideas that came out of this process?

Consensus seeking after thorough exploration of issues, interests, and innovative options

Can you think of any particular conflict that arose? How was this resolved or not?

In general, how would you rate your experience of this planning process, positive / negative? Why?

General 7. (Lessons learned and Practical Wisdom)

Lastly, can you tell me about how your views of the WACA that may have changed as a result of your experience with this planning process?

What advice would you give to someone seeking to maintain or enhance this area in some way?

What advice would you give to someone seeking to use this type of planning process in their community in the future? What would you change?

Is there anything you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this interview?

T H E E N D

Alright, before we end today, I just have a few final demographic-type questions to ask. This is basic information that will help characterise the group of people I will have interviewed by the time this thesis is complete. You do not have to answer any of these if you do not wish to.

Awareness of the WACA (in years) How long have you known of WA?

Neighbourhood of residence (in years) Do you live in OS?

Participation in OSACC (in years) How long were you a part of OSACC?

Participation in WALUPS (in months) How long did you participate in WALUPS?

Organisation affiliation (in years) How long were you/have you been part of your ORG?

Current Occupation. How would you describe your current occupation?

Cultural Heritage / Ethnicity How would you describe your cultural background?

Lastly, Which of the following age categories do you fit into?

Age. 26-30;31-35;36-40;41-45;46-50;51-55;56-60;61-65;66-70;71-75;76+

(Record Gender)

Thank you once again for all your help today.

Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Accurate transcription and interpretation of this interview and material collected is important. Can you be reached in the case further clarification is required? (If so, ask when is an appropriate time).

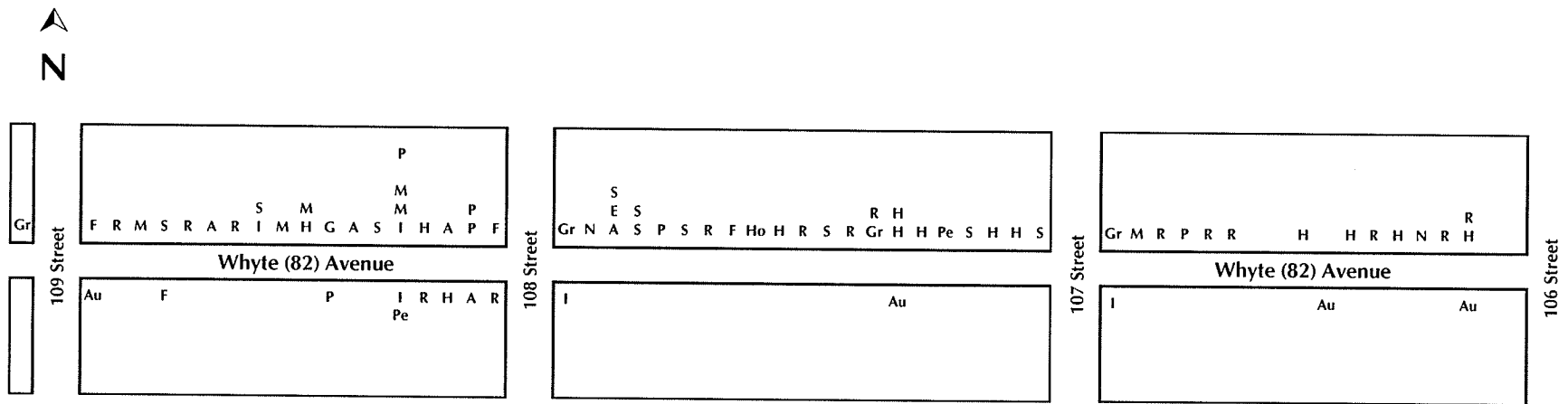
A final copy of this thesis will be left with the Old Strathcona Foundation should you wish to view a final copy this work

Thank you for your time and assistance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

(Can you think of a resident who took part in the WALUPS who was not part of OSACC?)

8.3 Appendix C – Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition

Figure 3. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (109 Street – 106 Street)

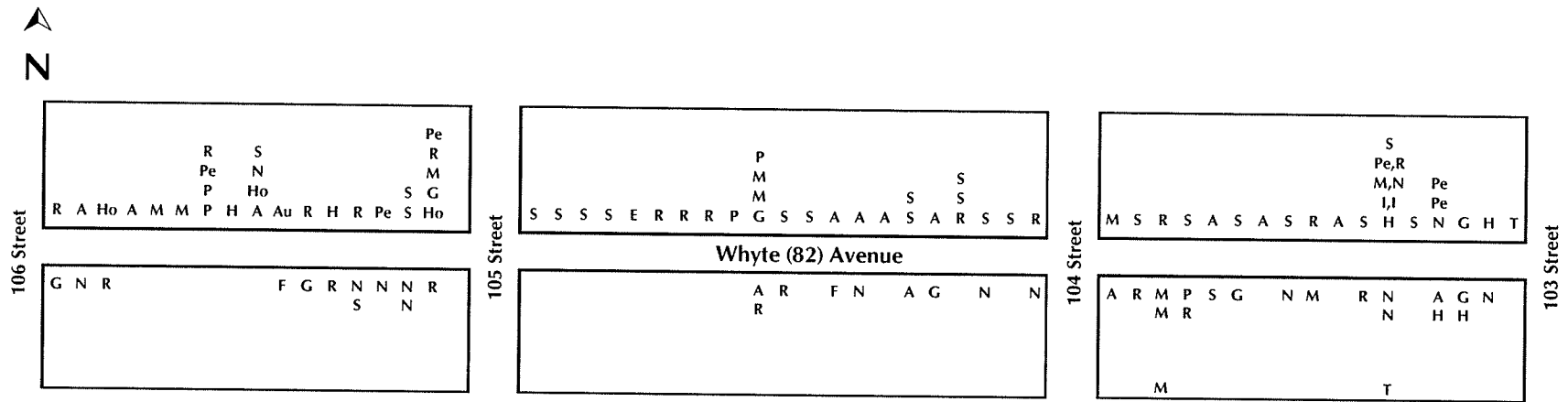


Not to Scale

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| P Professional Services | S Specialty & Gift | H Health & Beauty Services | T Travel & Accommodations |
| G General Merchandise | Au Automotive Services | E Educational Services | N Nightclubs, Pubs & Liquor |
| A Apparel & Accessories | Pe Personal and Family Services | Gr Grocery & Convenience | M Miscellaneous Services |
| F Financial Services | I Institutional / Community Services | Ho Homewares & Furnishings | R Restaurant & Café |

Figure 4. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (106 Street – 103 Street)

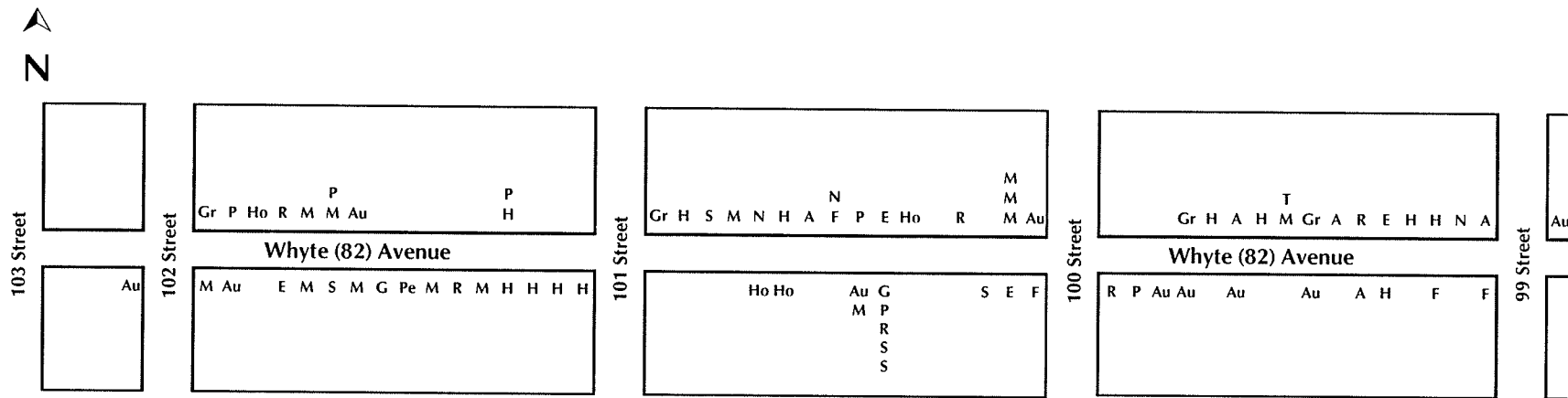


Not to Scale

LEGEND

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| P | Professional Services | S | Specialty & Gift | H | Health & Beauty Services | T | Travel & Accommodations |
| G | General Merchandise | Au | Automotive Services | E | Educational Services | N | Nightclubs, Pubs & Liquor |
| A | Apparel & Accessories | Pe | Personal and Family Services | Gr | Grocery & Convenience | M | Miscellaneous Services |
| F | Financial Services | I | Institutional / Community Services | Ho | Homewares & Furnishings | R | Restaurant & Café |

Figure 5. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area Business Composition (103 Street – 99 Street)



Not to Scale

LEGEND

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| P | Professional Services | S | Specialty & Gift | H | Health & Beauty Services | T | Travel & Accommodations |
| G | General Merchandise | Au | Automotive Services | E | Educational Services | N | Nightclubs, Pubs & Liquor |
| A | Apparel & Accessories | Pe | Personal and Family Services | Gr | Grocery & Convenience | M | Miscellaneous Services |
| F | Financial Services | I | Institutional / Community Services | Ho | Homewares & Furnishings | R | Restaurant & Café |

8.4 Appendix D – Photographs of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area in Old Strathcona

Figure 6: Example of old historic buildings located along Whyte Avenue between 103 and 104 Street in the heart of Old Strathcona

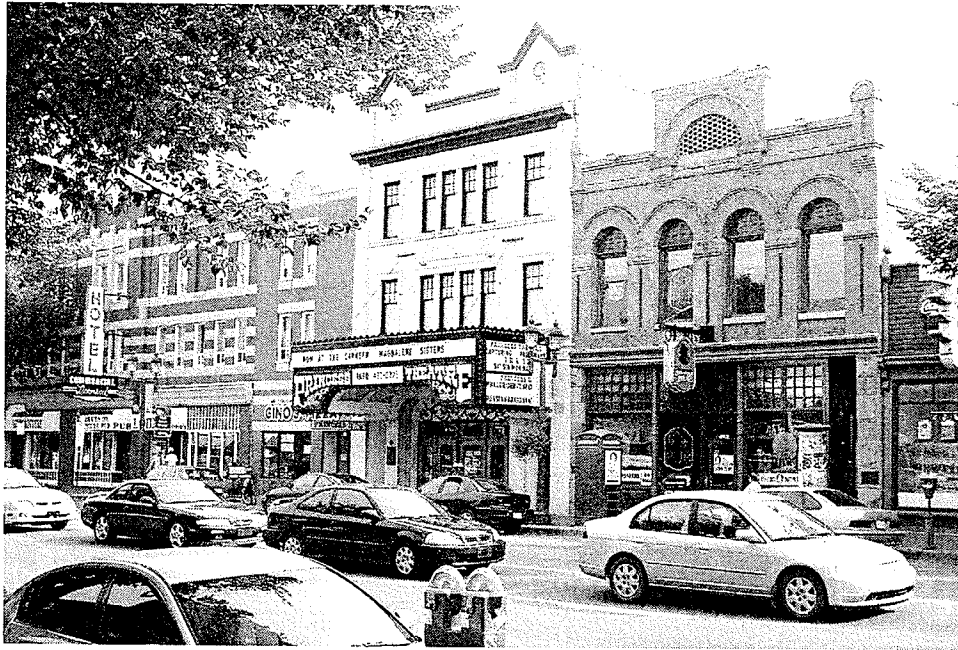


Figure 7: Example of streetscaping and architectural detail along Whyte Avenue located in the historic core area.

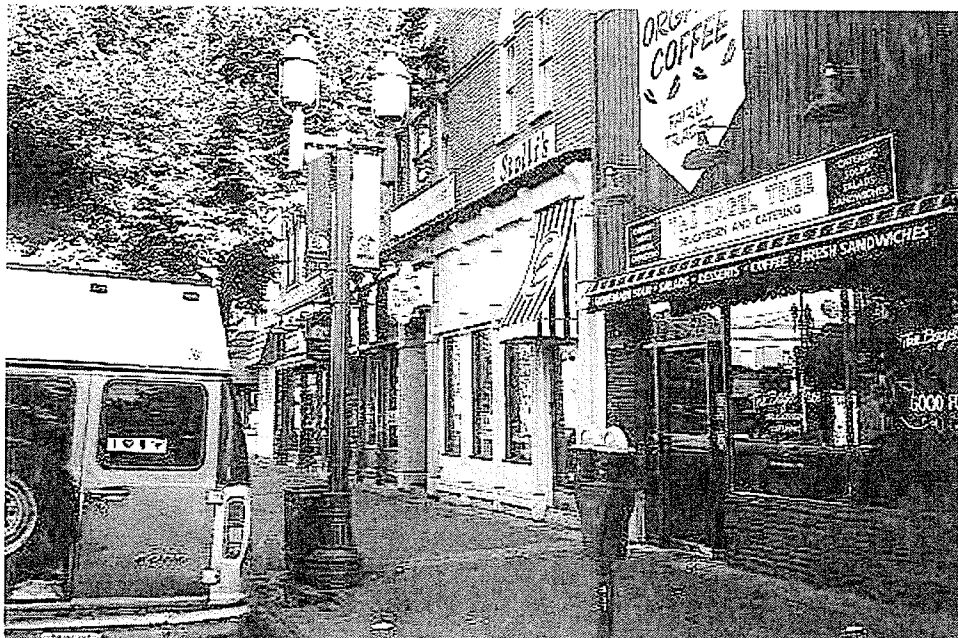


Figure 8: Photograph of public art located adjacent McIntyre Park and Farmer's Market near Fringe theatre.

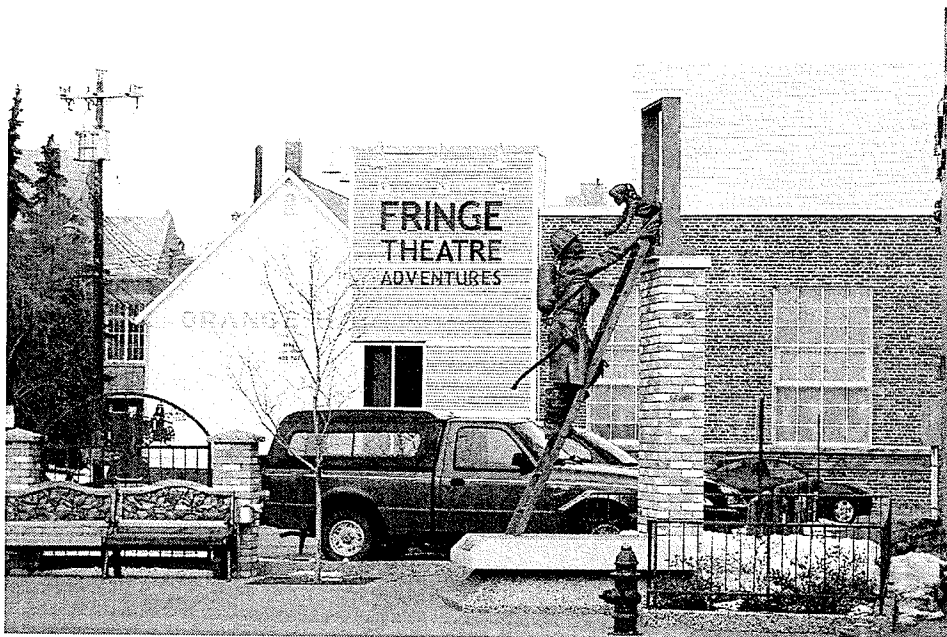
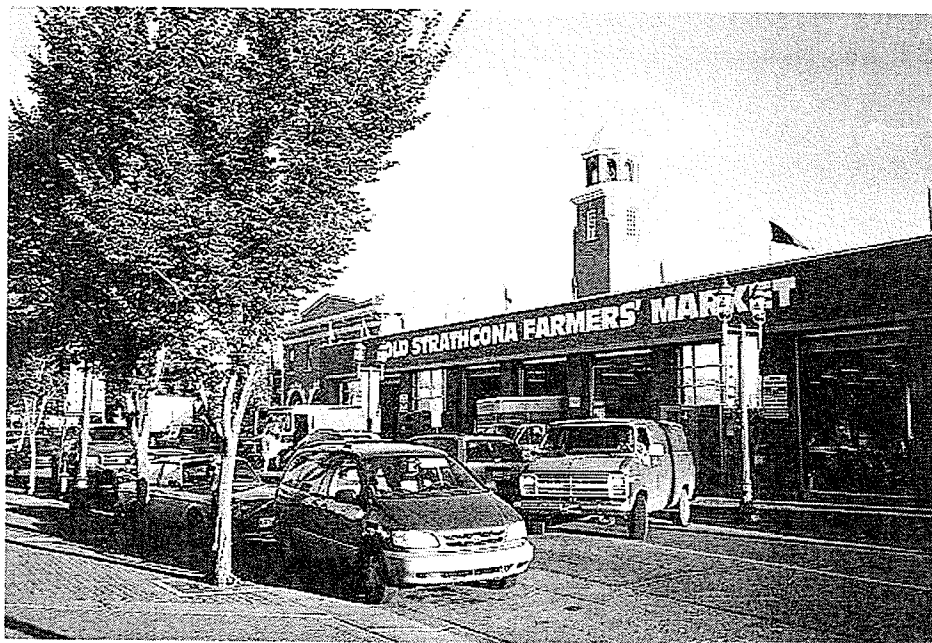


Figure 9: Photograph of Farmer's Market, a successful adaptive re-use project located immediately north of (i.e. behind) Whyte Avenue at 103 Street.



8.5 Appendix E – Thesis Presentation, 22 March 2004



Making Sense of Place

**A Formative Case Study of Whyte Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta**

**Thesis Presentation
By
Michael J. Strong**



Orientation

This Master's research explores:

- **The importance of place as it relates to professional placemaking**
- **Phenomenon of sense of place as planning knowledge**
- **Sense of place in relation to collaborative planning practice and consensus building process**
- **Potential implications of integrating sense of place within professional placemaking**

Significance

Understanding place and its meaningful experience is fundamental to planning as it relates to:

- Biological and physiological needs
- Security and safety
- Love, belonging and social contact
- Image, respect, confidence and empowerment
- Creativity, expression, and spiritual development

Sense of place meaningfully transforms space into place through awareness, assignment of meaning and interaction (communication)

Problem

Place and human sense of it is threatened by:

- Environmental degradation
 - (e.g. polluted streams / lakes)
- Globalisation
 - (e.g. economic markets)
- Communications Technology
 - (e.g. virtual place)
- Hyper-mobility
 - (e.g. world travel)
- Mass Media
 - (e.g. making meaning)
- Emphasis on technical rationality
 - (e.g. making place)

Study Importance

This research is important for both theoretical and practical reasons:

- **Theoretical**
 - Addresses need to further examine, clarify and ground concept of sense of place
 - Challenges modernist assumptions of what constitutes knowledge (i.e. what does this place mean? for who?)
 - Bridges Communicative Action with the concept of sense of place (an innate and formalised way of knowing) through Critical and Grounded theory.
- **Practice**
 - Examines professional planning practice in terms of maintaining and enhancing place and people's sense of it
 - Explores collaborative planning experience of participants in relation to improving place, its lessons and opportunities
 - How might research findings be generalisable to other places

Research Aims

Goals of this research were to answer the following:

- What is sense of place?
- How does formal placemaking practice affect sense of place?
- What were some of the impacts and lessons that could be learned from the Whyte Avenue Land Use Planning Study?
- How should placemaking with a sense of place best proceed?

Hypotheses

1. Sense of Place is an experiential phenomenon that can be identified, articulated, and described
2. The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) has an identifiable sense of place
3. The structure of sense of place may be revealed through critical grounded analyses of implicit meanings, experiential views, and understanding
4. Sense of Place is composed of various place components that can be theoretically modelled
5. The process of placemaking influences components of place and therefore sense of place itself

Method

A formative case study was used to study the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA)

- Grounded theory research procedure used to collect, analyze, structure and synthesize sense of place data
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews used as research instrument (technique)
- Conducted 13 in-depth interviews with community members from a range of interest groups
- Interviews audio recorded and transcribed generating approx. 30hrs. / 500 pages of raw data for analysis

Research Findings

Hypothesis 1. – Sense of Place is an experiential phenomenon that can be identified, articulated, and described

- Research confirmed people possess individual and collective senses of place
- Research demonstrated sense of place is primarily articulated through speech / dialogue
- Described in terms of its physical, socio-cultural and individual dimensions

Personal Experience

Research Findings

Hypothesis 2 – The Whyte Avenue Commercial Area (WACA) has an identifiable sense of place

- Identified as distinctive by both residents and non-residents.
- Described in terms of physical, socio-cultural and individual dimensions, categories, themes and component features.

Whyte SOP

Image

Identity

Research Findings

Hypothesis 3 & 4 – Structure of sense of place can be revealed and theoretically modeled.

- Sense of place is structured by:
 - Place Dimensions (e.g. Physical)
 - Categories (e.g. Landscape)
 - Themes (e.g. Urban Design)
 - Components (e.g. Positive – Human scale)
- Sense of Place can be theoretical modeled based on meaningful structures
 - Specifically unique to a particular place (e.g. Whyte Avenue Commercial Area) and,
 - Shared among common place (e.g. location in space and time, rest-movement, identity)

Structure

Research Findings

Hypothesis 5 – The placemaking process influences components of place and therefore sense of place

1. Collaborative planning through consensus building:

- Relevant & Diverse Interests
 - Involvement, Participation, Skills
- Real Problems & Tasks
 - Issues, Attributes, Tasks
- Self-organized & Directed
 - Formation, Interaction, Process, Work
- Process Engagement
 - Positive & Negative Aspects
- Diverse information
 - Creation, Traits, Integration, Outcomes
- Consensus seeking
 - Positive & Negative Aspects

Interests Problems Self-organized Process Information Consensus

Research Findings

2. Collaborative Planning impacts on Sense of place

- **Business and Commerce**
 - Positive & Negative Aspects
- **Attractions, Culture & History**
 - Positive & Negative Aspects
- **Accessibility, Services and Safety**
 - Positive & Negative Aspects
- **Communication**
 - Positive Aspects

Business

Attractions

Accessibility

Communication

Research Findings

3. Collaborative Planning Lessons Learned

- Value and respect of/for planning documents
- Adaptability of collaborative planning (e.g. future worth)
- Community planning requires community initiative and energy
- Community planning requires community “buy-in” and support
- Planning process should be initially framed by SWOT

Research Findings

3. Collaborative Planning Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- Shortened planning phases or projects dealing with fewer issues (where feasible)
- Resources and tools are necessary for success
- Communication skills and flow of information are important
- Consensus should remain the goal, not necessarily rule
- Political action and support is necessary

Implications

Implications for the phenomenon and concept of sense of place:

- Place is identifiable by both insiders and outsiders on a conscious and unconscious level.
 - Planning and design have a direct responsibility in enhancing place.
- Understanding the meaning of place is best begun with sense of place research.
 - Establishes base knowledge for strategic and more discrete placemaking activities
- Placemaking should proceed with an understanding of the meaning of place.
 - Sense of place reveals the values, interests and powers that (stand to) shape it.
- Place is readily articulated verbally and should not be overlooked as a viable source of knowledge.
 - Critical dialogue can yield rich information.

Implications

Implications for the phenomenon and concept of sense of place (cont'd):

- Sense of place is a dynamic phenomenon collectively shaped as well as individually influenced.
 - No placemaking act is too small.
- Sense of place is malleable over time.
 - Societal values, people and therefore place changes
- Sense of place can be identified, articulated and described
 - Awareness of place can be raised, reflected and reported on
- Sense of place is a multi-dimensional concept.
 - Sense of place reflects the cumulative layer of communicative person-place relationships
- Sense of place may be structured on a global and local level
 - Places share commonalities, but can be modeled more specifically

Implications

Implications for communicative placemaking:

- Sense of place represents an intrinsic and legitimate form of place knowledge.
 - Grounded knowledge in individual and collective person-place relationships (e.g. experience, learning)
- Sense of place knowledge is fundamental to communicative placemaking as it can:
 - Supports non-expert involvement and participation in placemaking (e.g. broadens interests)
 - Broadens information, challenges and confirms place meanings and relationships
 - Assists establishing a common ground / shared understanding of place (i.e. consensus)

Implications

- Sense of place knowledge is fundamental to communicative placemaking as it can:
 - Can invest place experience, skills and relationships in assessing placemaking strategies (e.g. SWOT), framing action, and implementation
 - Can serve as conscious evaluation of placemaking impacts (e.g. feel unsafe after 10pm) or unconscious assessment of outcomes (e.g. area feels better)
- Formal and informal placemaking activities influence dimensions of place and therefore sense of place. These may be
 - Observable (manifest) impacts
 - Unobservable (latent) impacts

Manifest Impacts

Latent Impacts

Recommendations

Awareness

- Planning should engage local interest in place, enable participation and mobilize action
- Can help to frame broader issues as they relate to urban sustainability

Meaning

- Formal and informal placemaking needs to re-invest place with greater meaning that emphasizes layered person-place relationships
- Planning should consider ways in which constellations of interests can be arranged to enable greater inclusion of cooperation, skills and knowledge in placemaking

Communication

- Planning needs to further investigate (in theory and practice) the meaningful relationships formed by people with place


Conclusions

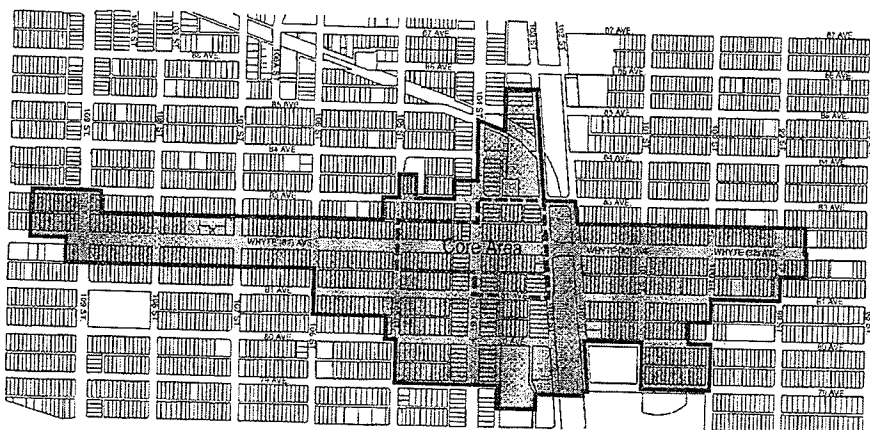
Sense of place

- is an important source of placemaking knowledge
- is a multi-dimensional concept and phenomenon composed of meaningful and communicative person-place relationships
- can be linked and situated within communicative / post-modern planning
- can broaden collective discourse, shared place meaning, and solutions based on common understanding and consensus

Research Area

Figure 5

 Whyte Avenue Commercial Area



[Back](#)

Structure

TABLE 27
Meaningful Structure of the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area

Dimension	Category	Theme
Physical dimension	Location	Physical
	Landscape	Conceptual Urban design
	Image	Architecture Personal
Social dimension	Social Process and Experience	Social User Intent Activities
		Time
	Place Identity	Objective) Subjective) Comparative
Individual dimension	Place Attachment	Personal relationship Social relationship Physical relationship
	Personal experience	Emotion
	Place consciousness	Mood Person – Place interaction Place – Person interaction
	Rest	General
	Movement	Travel mode Compact development
	Inside-ness	Landscape Movement Activity

[Back](#)

Personal Experience

TABLE 23
Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Place Experience

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Emotion evoked by place		
Positive		
Urban design	Establishes a human scale of architecture; unchanging scale; designed with people in mind	A familiar place that is pleasurable
	Small commercial strip, non-mall, streets none to wide, boulevard of trees	Nice; comfortable
	Functional for surrounding community	Works
	Pedestrian friendly environment	Sense its for people, not automobile
	Encourages people to linger, stroll, socialize	Sense of ease (non-rushing); people come just to be here
Social activity (day)	Not limited to a specific group of people	Enjoyment; pleasurable
	People accept others	Acceptance of others; warmth; people fit in
Placemaking	People helped make what it is today	Sense of pride
	People tell others about this place	Sense of ownership
Negative		
Social activity (night)	Many people on the street; 15,000 – 20,000 during the summer at one time	Congested
	8500 of 12500 seats are strictly alcohol service only	Not as safe; intimidating
	Unexpected events; just about anything has happened	High energy; novel; interesting
	Very busy area	Uncomfortable

[Back](#)

Image

TABLE 17
Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Image

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Image		
Personal Meaning	Maintaining historical elements of Whyte Avenue's past; valuing of local history through preservation Loss of physical place elements	Respect for area past; historical value; personal meaningfulness Frustration, anger, disappointment
	Working in area filters communication, interaction and relationships to place	Few meaningful features
Social Meaning	Buildings serve as indicators of history Early achievements of pioneers to area	Sense of roots, history Sense of pride in area; sense of future / hope linked to history
	Adaptive reuse buildings enable experience with past history in place	Sense of roots; part of something greater, stronger, permanent; living history
	Contribution of cafes, bistros, and unique shops and services	Cosmopolitan; European, alternative to suburban culture / lifestyle; complete neighbourhood
	Buildings symbolise community value for the past and the need for reinvestment in present Environment / landscape draws together many different users; area combines conflicting interests Contrast of people today to the buildings of yesterday built before their time	Pride in the present; used heavily; wearing out; Unsafe at times; conflict
	Provides enduring community functions for residents (e.g. A place where kids can still hangout, families meet, work)	Enduring Sense of permanence; solidity to area; sense of inspiration, hope linked to history

[Back](#)

Identity

TABLE 20
Contemporary Whyte Avenue Commercial Area – Subjective Place Identity

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Subjective: Social distinctiveness	Place for people watching and strutting	Display; voyeurism
	Diverse social activity; many things to do; people come to Whyte for more than just one thing; people traffic Many consistent social events (parades, festivals)	Attraction; diversity Activity; always something going on; incommensurate to other areas in Edmonton; no peace and quiet
	Concentration of small family run businesses Many stakeholder groups working together for this area	Entrepreneurship Commitment to community and area
Subjective: Individual distinctiveness Person influence on place Personal investment	Becoming part of the community via work; via work related activities	Direct influence on place; unconscious placemaking; sense of community Identification with place
	Working to reach out to people on a personal and spiritual level Demonstration of personal values; Being respectful of community, and elements that make this up (residential, commercial, institutional) Maintaining homes, yards, not littering, keeping area clean	Equity, openness, flexibility, freedom Pride, positive self and community image
Community investment	Becoming involved in day-to-day activities, businesses, residents, and politics. Social investment via volunteering time, energy, and even money Economic investment in businesses Support those aspects of community that are important to it (businesses, institutions, parks, services)	Sense of understanding of place Engagement; sense of support for area Sense of support for area; success Importance; meaningfulness
	Becoming socially active in community by being vocal on issues of importance, defend area on legal basis through planning and community issues; controlling / moderating the number of alcohol service seats	Caring; protection; concern

[Back](#)

Whyte Avenue Sense of Place

Location

- (historic; growing)

Landscape

- (attractive; walkable; character; variety)

Image

- (historic; roots; pride; worn; unsafe at times)

Social experience

- (rich; interesting; responsible/irresponsible; friendly/aggressive; enjoyable; pleasant; non-mall)

Place identity

- (opportunity; freedom; activity; positive image; comfort; acceptance)

Whyte Avenue Sense of Place

Place attachment

- (community connection; home; nostalgia)

Personal experience

- (pleasurable; comfortable; ownership; affection; community; loss)

Place consciousness

- (identity; activity; interest/un-interest; loss)

Rest – Movement

- (energy; cosmopolitan; excitement; people place; pedestrian; convenient/inconvenient)

Insideness

- (distinctive; village-like; respect for history; friendliness; where the people are; special)

[Back](#)

Business & Commerce

TABLE 11
Collaborative Planning Affect on Sense of Business and Commerce

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Active business association aimed at balancing area interests (e.g. Historic preservation vs. Active nightlife) Communication among stakeholders in response to solving problems Protection of business composition via WALUPS; encouragement of business diversity by OSBA; regulations on size of business entities within area Change in business composition to more higher end / upmarket stores versus second hand (i.e. Beauty related spa / salon; eyewear); better goods and services offered	Successful business environment Co-operation; better relationships Diverse service area; variety Higher quality of goods and services
Negative	Area has successfully attracted consumers / people to area Increasing rental rates and perceived high business turnover rate in area Business migration east of the railway tracks and south of Whyte Avenue Absent landowners Significant business expansion Larger businesses displacing smaller businesses; overall city loss of family run businesses Change in business composition in terms of increase in bars and nightclubs and associated impacts (e.g. garbage, noise, traffic) Decrease in diversity of businesses Today the bars and nightclubs have greater influence over the area by becoming involved in the OSBA Cannot meet parking requirements; moving 2-3 blocks off Whyte to do business	Successful Profit driven; greed Expensive; declining affordable rental space for business Non-community minded Benefits for the few with costs borne by the city and its residents; not putting back into the community Too many bars and nightclubs; disruptive Too many drinking establishments Loss of residential community influence and control over WACA Unaccommodating

[Back](#)

Attractions, Culture & History

TABLE 12
Collaborative Planning Affect on Sense of Attractions, Culture and History

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Physical streetscaping of Whyte Avenue (e.g. Improved railway line pedestrian crossing, trees and lighting, street lights, signage, streetscape standards); creation of End of Steel Park; pedestrian environment enhancements Planning policies and regulations established for the preservation and conservation of historical buildings and area; architectural controls Historical building designations underway Adaptive re-use and building variety Regulations set in response to traffic issues and pedestrian congestion in light of operators and local residents Increased control and management of area arts and entertainment Restriction on establishment sizes Social activity has increased; is busier with more people	Area has greatly improved; improved physical image Sense of historical recognition; importance Generally successful at preserving historical heritage Controlled growth; managed growth Sense of control over activities Emphasis on smaller neighbourhood scale services Vibrant; become a part of the Edmonton experience
Negative	Increased number of younger demographic present at night Impacts of Fringe event on community - blocked streets, pedestrian / traffic / parking congestion Area has been and continues to be subject to wear and tear (e.g. Pedestrian use, vandalism, heavy trailer trucks driving down Avenue damaging road surface, shaking building foundations) Loss of historical attractions (e.g. Telephone Museum, Model and Toy Museum, CNE Station) Increase in rental housing and lower tenureship in area	Unfriendly Congestion Heavy use Sense of loss Less community power

[Back](#)

Accessibility, Services & Safety

TABLE 13
Collaborative Planning Affect on Sense of Accessibility, Services and Safety

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Positive	Assigned off-site parking east of 103 Street developed by Farmers Market; regulations enacted to prevent shared/over-claimed off-site parking	Improved parking; more accessible
	Increased traffic congestion as a result of area success; preservation of pedestrian commercial strip Community development of youth co-op	Encourages alternative transportation options; walkable Supportive; more needs to be done
	Introduction of Barwatch program and SecureClub for bars and nightclubs to monitor and screen patron activity and behaviour	Improved monitoring and regulation of bad patrons; better, safer more enjoyable night life Improved sense of safety
Negative	Older more mature demographic staying out later using the area	Improved sense of safety
	Few service improvements in terms of amenities Sale of city owned property resulting in a loss of health clinic and attempt to close Strathcona library Emphasis on commercial versus community services	Same; little, if any change Less community services
	Bar and nightclub traffic increased	Increased commercialisation of area Parking conflicts, traffic, congestion
	Perception that younger demographic has a "me first" attitude	Area has become more aggressive during night time; unsafe
	Don't walk area during night time	Uncomfortable at night; sense area could get worse if not addressed

[Back](#)

Communication

TABLE 14
Collaborative Planning Affect on Sense of Communication

Theme	Influence	Resulting Sense of Place
Communication	Formation and continued functioning of OSACC	Increased connectivity; awareness
	Improved community connectedness via WALU/PS induced communication infrastructure	Increased flow of information; informal and formal
	Improved inter-business communications	
	Improved inter-departmental communications	Openness; sharing of information

[Back](#)

Manifest Impacts

TABLE 28
Collaborative Planning Impact on Whyte Avenue's Physical History and Sense of Place

Manifest Impact	Placemaking Activity	Sense of Place Outcome
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Planning policies and regulations established for the preservation and conservation of historical buildings and area; architectural controls	Sense of historical recognition; importance
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Historical building designations underway; adaptive reuse and building variety	Successful preservation and historical conservation
(Attractions, Culture, History)	Physical streetscaping of Whyte Avenue; creation of End of Steel Park; pedestrian environment enhancements	Improved physical image

[Back](#)

Latent Impacts

TABLE 28
Collaborative Planning Impact on Whyte Avenue's Physical History and Sense of Place

Latent Impact	Influence on Sense of Place	Sense of Place Outcome
(Location: Physical)	Central location is demarcated physically by the areas buildings	Historic buildings and core area establish area
(Location: Conceptual)	Historic core area is from 103-105 street on Whyte, with a block north and south	Historic locale
(Landscape: Urban Design)	Contains a high number of adaptive reuse historic buildings providing services and amenities	Paramount to areas attractiveness and draw
(Landscape: Architecture)	Historic buildings; land mark buildings (e.g. Old Post Office, Strathcona Hotel, Army and Navy building)	Sense of history; distinctiveness; character
(Image: Personal Meaning)	Maintaining historical elements of Whyte Avenue's past; valuing of local history through preservation	Respect for area past; historical value; personal meaningfulness
(Image: Social Meaning)	Buildings serve as indicators of history	Sense of roots, history
(Image: Social Meaning)	Early achievements of pioneers to area	Sense of pride in area; sense of future / hope linked to history
(Image: Social Meaning)	Adaptive reuse buildings enable experience with past history in place	Sense of roots; part of something greater, permanent; living history
(Place Identity: Place influence on Person)	Selective of where to live in Edmonton -that is, in Old Strathcona; actively seek to find a historical house in area	Desirable location to live; comfortable
(Place Attachment: Physical Relationship)	Old and new development (sensitive to local architecture)	Increased attachment

[Back](#)

Relevant and Diverse Interests

TABLE 4
Relevant and Diverse Interests

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Formation of interests	A number of stakeholders involved in WALUPS including: Parks and Recreation, Community Services, Transportation, Planning, Police, OSF, Community Leagues Community identification of issues	Diverse representation Concern over increasing bars; alcohol sales; unsure over community future; sense of urgency; something must be done
Qualities of interests	Diverse representation OSACC core group formed officially in 1993, participated in WALUPS from 1994-96 up to approvals in 1998 and implementation Core group of community volunteers doing all the work; small talented and motivated core group of people in community who were educated in a variety of areas such as planning, law, research, organizing volunteers, communications, media relations, political connections	Creative environment; impressive the breadth of representation; sense of openness; legitimacy interest groups Not surprising this many people got involved; expect to have many interests, but also inherent conflict Community police were very supportive and involved People cared for area and got involved in process Fewer than expected businesses involved in process Informed / knowledgeable; effective; motivated - power to make things happen and effect change
Interests placemaking approach	Planning assessment; formalizing intervention; liaison with OSACC, opening process to public and arena of stakeholders Public consultation process - town hall meetings were held for community - providing info on process, progress and next steps and opportunity for input; composed of information and input session followed by working session. Approximately 300 people involved over time in working committees of 3-4 to 40	

Stakeholder Involvement & Participation

TABLE 5
Stakeholder Involvement and Participation

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Involvement: Social	Involvement via organisation representation; sitting on boards, meetings	Sense of community responsibility
Involvement: Professional	Departmental liaison; assisted coordination and undertaking of study Overlapping placemaking roles of facilitating process, providing representation of various interests and department, advocating interests; community developer	Obligation; responsibility; interest Difficult and or conflicting interests
Participation: Social	Became involved in community league in response to lack of communication as to what was happening in community; debating development proposals for area Means-end involvement	Sense the Land Use Bylaw was becoming dated - ineffective; need to expand debate concerning community development Poor community communication Concerned about issues affecting the community Self-preservation / benefit; contribution to area Interesting; educational / enlightening
Placemaking: Skills and Activities	Already working with diverse stakeholders to identify community issues Canvassed community; identification of stakeholders; education; procedural planning facilitated meetings; organised activities; public consultation; brainstorming sessions; mobilizing community support, plan approval and implementation	Very long process; extremely complex; limited resources

[Back](#)

Real Problems and Tasks

TABLE 6
Real Problems and Practical Tasks

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Issues	Stakeholders raised a number of issues; originally increased bar seats and impact on community	Desire to protect residents from external affect of bars and nightclubs which had the most identifiable impacts on community
	Increasing number of street youth	Desire to find solutions for youth
	Historic character of community and WACA	Desire to preserve and maintain historic character and area heritage
	Lack of planning regulation enforcement as it relates to business licensing (bar seats and building capacity) and parking (shared parking lots)	Concern over exceeding capacities; lack of parking creating traffic in residential neighbourhoods; resident - patron conflicts (vandalism/theft, noise, concern for safety)
Problem attributes	Issues raised concerning condition of WACA after hours, vandalism (street furniture; bus shelters, window glass, graffiti, lawns, cars), vendor and customer safety, parking availability; monster houses; cleanliness of area (garbage; posters)	Need to prevent vandalism; perception of decreasing area safety; lack of parking and intrusion into residential area; land use-intensity impact on existing residential scale (e.g. Shadow print)
	Not just about one problem and solution; multifaceted issues (e.g. Parking; historic preservation; street youth)	Sense there was a wide cleft between residents, resident business owners, non-resident business owners in terms of community / area interest
	Wicked problems - unique to area, complex, involved time constraints, objectives to be met; vested interests affecting process	Sense other good things can come out of this process besides focusing on one issues (e.g. Bar and nightclub growth in seating) Sense not all ideas and suggestions were practical; NIMBY-ism

[Back](#)

Self-Organized and Directed

TABLE 7
Placemaking Formation, Interaction, Process and Work

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Formation	OSACC organisation was previously formed and involved a limited range of stakeholders. Planning sought to initiate the WALUPS and collaborate with OSACC and other community stakeholders	Grassroots movement to improve area Planning formalised and gave credibility to OSACC
Interactions	Community organisations and other members were allowed the opportunity to be proactive instead of traditionally reactive to change	Sense of change, something different was taking place
	Inclusion of civic departments insured representation at an institutional level Placemaking involved establishing good relationships among stakeholders, respect for interests, traditions of place Informal collaborative face-to-face contact among group members and civic departments; work overlapped among core group	Gave a sense of authority; credibility Sense of trust; openness; confidence in partnerships Efficient; productive problem solving; information sharing
Process: Structure	Study included the following phases / stages: study initiation; process approval; establishing goals and objectives; identifying the issues; problem solving / identifying possible solutions; building ownership in solutions to problems / mobilization; public consultation; plan approval and implementation	
Process: Time	Limited time available to achieve necessary tasks Process went on over a period of years from start to finish; skills shortage due to limited time	Not enough time, pressure, sense of obligation, heavy investment Went on for too long; burnout; took too long of a time commitment for OSACC members
Process: Participation	City and community planners lapsed, identified issues with the community and respective agency / department, and tried to find ways of solving identified problems No formal voting process but worked on principle of consensus building; those causing rifts were asked not to return Loose formation to meetings and what was to be achieved	Casual, fairly relaxed, polite at times; No sense things were going to end up anywhere; poorly organized; poor communication of progress and potential outcomes

[Back](#)

Process Engagement

TABLE 8
Process Engagement

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Positive	People chose to live in area, become involved in shaping their place; invest 100s of hours into the process OSACC was created in order to achieve a new vision of area and actively involved the inclusion of multiple stakeholders Various stakeholders fought right up to the very end before and in council to invest greater meaning into the process	Passion Sense of vision; feeling that OSACC was a very attractive and promising concept Determination; stubbornness; "Sheer force of will" against group interests (business/bars/clubs) Sense of wide commitment to process; synergy at work Sense of approachability; help / assistance Concern for area; dedication and love for area
	Organisational synergies pushing together moved the process forward High degree of face-to-face contact High degree of commitment on the part of stakeholders demonstrated by number of participants (~ 300); working committees, town hall meetings, continued participation through entire process lasting over 4 years, followed by implementation of goals and objectives	
Negative	Lack of merchant investment in improving the community (while they profited from its success / attraction) Process went on for years; committee member turnover; sub-committee dropouts Process did not enlist aid of professional facilitators or independent arbitrator to manage groups more tightly (dynamics, behaviour, organize and frame tasks)	Lack of concern; low interest in improving area Too long, tiresome; burnout; revolving door Keeps people from poisoning the potential for a healthy work environment, process, forum, outcomes and implementation / future working relationships Sense that no one is listening or cares; frustration; resentment Once you get involved, you can't get out; burned out; your tied into place; constant pressure; increasing sense of obligation Constant fight / struggle; cranky; frustration; ill-identification; jaded
	Select / screen participants pre-participation so they do not hold up process, damage working relationships, waste resources Issues are constantly unfolding in a heterogeneous community such as Old Strathcona that impact the WACA	
	Volunteers get burned out	

[Back](#)

Diverse Information

TABLE 9
Information Creation, Traits, Integration and Outcomes

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Creation	Diverse stakeholder participation, sustained input. Stakeholders presented many creative and innovative ideas and solutions to problems Small groups of stakeholders assembled in private and public meetings shared and created information concerning specific issues in the form of written reports and/or verbal descriptions Initiated visioning process providing a foundation for the WALUP; stakeholders presented unique visions for the area Information was organized and coordinated among stakeholder groups for further dissemination and analysis	Sense of community (depth); guts Sense of new; innovation; excitement Formal and informal information was valued during the process
	Stakeholders shared many personal experiences of Whyte Avenue	Innovative; new; idealistic, creative; unyielding Openness; challenging through analysis and confirmation of information Respect, understanding and general validation of experiences Sense there was less process, facts and more opinion; difficulty in interpreting facts/information Consist representation; connectivity; up-to-date
Integration	Information was consistently prepared and disseminated by OSACC among committees and sub-committees; high internal communication through interchange of ideas and information Information was organized and coordinated among stakeholder groups for further dissemination and analysis Sharing of information by stakeholders	Openness; challenging through analysis and confirmation of information Added understanding, appreciation
	Civic administration gathered, organized and disseminated info Physical area improvements (including murals, graffiti removal, rebuilt McIntyre Park, Creation of End of Steele Park; streetscaping) Knowledge formalized by this process provides direction for future development Formation and ongoing operation of OSACC within the WACA to provide information on area and partnerships; build community capacity to deal with issues Stakeholder action to address growing street youth and panhandlers in area Final report and process outcome Project closure was not communicated thoroughly for some participants	Attractive and pleasant environment; Sense of informed awareness; information is power to control / manage future development Community connectivity; collectivity Sense of common ground; identification; consensus Poor communication of process completion Hurtful; frustrating; anti-climatic

[Back](#)

Consensus Seeking

TABLE 10
Consensus Seeking Outcomes

Theme	Activity	Mindset
Positive	Process educated people as place-makers regarding history, issues, interests, processes, regulations	Better understanding; empathy
	Building relationships in the community	Common vision; empathy, community; consensus
Negative	Engaging; interrogating, confirming - healthy conflict in community	Empathy; appreciation; awareness
	Supported placemaking capacity and continued maintenance of place-relationships	Continuation; sustained activity / placemaking
	Planning process directed and controlled community placemaking	Controlled process; less freedom; not genuine community process
	Community lacked the technical planning skills and resources to create information	Lacked necessary infrastructure
	OSACC lacked stronger community representation	Not strong community driven entity
	Planning process did not fully engage the community in terms of forming common readiness for change, commitment to this, and shared set of goals and values.	Half-baked; limited community buy-in; Sense not all issues were dealt with and have continued to grow
	Time constraints and investment prevented community from revisiting issues / matters	Run-away train; too late to turn back; make do with work to date
	Community members challenging representation of OSACC membership	Frustration; struggle; demoralizing

[Back](#)