

# STREET ACTIVITY BASELINE STUDY 2011

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- Table of Contents ..... i
- Executive Summary ..... i
  - Background..... i
  - Perception Based Study..... i
  - Engagement From Those Consulted ..... i
  - Change of Focus..... ii
  - Key Themes ..... ii
    - Negative Street Activity..... ii
    - Is a Concern; Panhandling Is Not the Primary Concern ..... ii
    - Saskatoon Panhandlers ..... ii
    - Complex Issue; No Easy Answer ..... iii
    - Partnerships Are Critical..... iii
    - Uniformed Presence ..... iii
    - Accountability and Measurement..... iv
- Introduction ..... 1
- Methodology..... 2
  - Survey of Saskatoon Residents..... 2
  - Desk Research ..... 2
  - Interviews with Panhandlers..... 2
  - Interviews with Groups of Youth..... 3
  - Intercepts with Saskatoon Residents ..... 3
  - Intercepts with Saskatoon Businesses ..... 3
  - Interviews with Service Providers..... 3
- Reporting Considerations ..... 4
- Perceptions of Saskatoon residents..... 5
  - Importance of Measuring Perceptions..... 5
  - Overall Perceptions of Safety..... 5
  - Perceptions of Safety By Specific Location..... 12
    - In-Person Consumer Intercepts ..... 19
  - Areas and Events Saskatoon Residents Enjoy ..... 22

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Experience With Street Activity .....                                | 24  |
| Experience With Panhandling.....                                     | 29  |
| Details on Street Activity .....                                     | 35  |
| Defining Street Activity .....                                       | 36  |
| Busking.....   | 36  |
| Panhandling .....  | 37  |
| Loitering.....   | 38  |
| Perceptions of Street Activity .....                                 | 39  |
| In-Person Intercepts – Prevalence of Negative Street Activity.....   | 42  |
| Panhandling.....   | 44  |
| Impressions of Panhandling .....                                     | 51  |
| Impacts of Panhandling .....   | 57  |
| Addressing Panhandling.....  | 63  |
| Key Findings From the Survey.....                                    | 68  |
| Differences in Perceived Safety by Location .....                    | 68  |
| Major Concern for Safety is Not Panhandlers But Other Issues .....   | 68  |
| Programs are Viewed as Necessary to Address Panhandling .....        | 69  |
| People Feel Uncomfortable with Panhandlers .....                     | 70  |
| Different Levels of Government are Viewed as Being Responsible ..... | 71  |
| Consumer Intercepts .....  | 72  |
| Street Activity of Concern to Residents.....                         | 72  |
| Busking.....   | 77  |
| Solutions.....   | 77  |
| Saskatoon Business Community Intercepts .....                        | 78  |
| Street Activity of Concern to Businesses.....                        | 78  |
| Busking.....   | 89  |
| Solutions.....   | 89  |
| Saskatoon panhandlers .....  | 91  |
| Panhandler Intercepts Summary.....                                   | 91  |
| Panhandler Interviews .....  | 93  |
| Service Providers .....  | 102 |
| Other Municipalities & Desk Research.....                            | 105 |
| Calgary .....  | 105 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Toronto .....   | 108 |
| Winnipeg .....  | 110 |
| St. John's.....   | 112 |
| Halifax .....   | 113 |
| Montreal.....   | 114 |
| Colorado Springs .....  | 115 |
| Edmonton.....   | 118 |
| REACH Edmonton .....  | 118 |
| Using Enforcement to address Panhandling .....                    | 120 |
| Recent Saskatchewan Developments – Partnership Opportunities..... | 122 |
| Costs of Homelessness.....  | 124 |
| Secondary Research Summary .....                                  | 125 |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### BACKGROUND

A research project was commissioned by the City of Saskatoon to establish a base line study of street level activity in Saskatoon. The results of this study can be used to establish future programs needed to address the issues surrounding street activity that are experienced when there is significant growth in a city. This report details the results of this study. It provides a basis for future policy and program development, many of which likely spread across multiple levels of government.

To meet the objectives of this research project, Inshtrix Research conducted a number of research activities. These included a survey of the Saskatoon public, desk research, a focus group and intercepts with panhandlers, intercepts with the Saskatoon public as well as businesses, and interviews with local service providers.

In terms of the survey portion of this project, a total of 621 surveys were completed via the Inshtrix SaskWatch Research™ panel. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/-3.93%, 19 times out of 20. Inshtrix researchers also approached Saskatoon residents on the street in key areas of the city where street activity was frequently reported, including 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Broadway, Downtown, 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and around Confederation Mall. In total 154 intercept surveys were completed.

Inshtrix researchers also approached a variety of Saskatoon businesses in areas that reported a high concentration of negative street activity. The intercepts with businesses were conducted with the person managing the store at the time of the visit. In total 66 intercepts were conducted with businesses to get their perceptions and beliefs on street activity in the area.

Finally, to get additional context, our researchers consulted with service providers who regularly work with those on the street. These included service providers that work with at-risk youth, the homeless, those with mental health issues, and those struggling with addictions. These interviews provided additional insight on those who are on the street as well as the perceived gaps in the support systems.

### PERCEPTION BASED STUDY

Examining perceptions of residents was a key objective of the study and is important when understanding feelings of safety in a city. Perceptions are what people believe to be true, regardless of how reality may be comprised, and therefore form the basis of beliefs regarding safety in Saskatoon.

### ENGAGEMENT FROM THOSE CONSULTED

Overwhelmingly, almost all those consulted for this project were very engaged in the issue of street activity. This was evident in that businesses would spend significant amounts of time with the researchers, explaining their concerns and providing details of their experience with negative street activity. The panhandlers were also very open about their experience and willing to discuss why they

panhandle. Many panhandlers mentioned they were appreciative of being consulted. The residents were very engaged in the issue. This was evident in that 84.1% of the residents who answered the survey agreed that the subject matter of the survey was important to them personally.

## CHANGE OF FOCUS

Interestingly, the evolution of the research project led to the focus from an initial concentration on street activity and panhandling in particular, to a focus on broader issues including gang activity, public drunkenness, loitering, groups of young people (that to some appear intimidating), drug trafficking, and street fights. The change of focus was a direct result of consultations with Saskatoon residents, the businesses, and the panhandlers themselves. What became apparent as the research was carried out was that while the issue of panhandling is perceived as a concern, it was not the primary concern among those consulted.

## KEY THEMES

From the research conducted there were a number of key themes that emerged. These themes can be grouped into the following conclusions:

### **Negative Street Activity**

#### **Is a Concern; Panhandling Is Not the Primary Concern**

Negative street activity such as drug trafficking, street fights, public drunkenness, groups of young people, and perceived gang activity are of greater concern to residents and businesses than is panhandling. Panhandling is still an issue that people would like addressed, however other issues are of greater importance when it comes to safety concerns. The survey as well as the intercepts with both businesses and residents identified that the primary reasons for feeling unsafe in certain areas are related to issues such as sketchy/strange people, being afraid of being mugged/assaulted or criminal activities in general, perceived gang activity and/or groups of people loitering, and public drunkenness. Many residents and consumers regard panhandlers as mainly passive and having addictions or mental health issues. Businesses do not like having panhandlers outside their place of business or coming into their operation, but a majority commented that their primary concerns are the sketchy people, perceived gang activity, drug trafficking, groups of young people loitering, and public drunkenness. In some circumstances, this activity has negatively impacted their business by intimidation of their customers. In addition, the panhandlers also expressed concerns regarding their safety in terms of other negative street activity. Many do not panhandle after dark due to concerns of being “jumped.”

### **Saskatoon Panhandlers**

Saskatoon panhandlers are not making a lot of money on the streets and the majority do suffer from addictions and/or mental health issues (e.g. depression, schizophrenia). Average amount a panhandler makes a day varies between \$20.00 and \$40.00. In terms of addictions, the majority are addicted to the “softer” drugs including alcohol, pot/marijuana, and cigarettes.

Most residents are uncomfortable around panhandling and recognize the negative impacts it can have on businesses. Panhandlers themselves even mentioned they realize they probably have a negative impact on businesses.

Overall, however, most residents see the panhandlers in Saskatoon as passive in nature. The prevalence of aggressive panhandling is seen as fairly low, with most residents sharing speculations of what may happen rather than what *does* happen. Businesses themselves acknowledged there are other issues they contend with and the panhandlers, most of whom they know, are generally not their biggest concern but rather other negative street activity occurring in their area.

### **Complex Issue; No Easy Answer**

Businesses and residents alike recognize that the issue of panhandling and other negative street activity is a complex one and there is no easy solution. Many viewed the problem as having many issues including addictions, mental health, youth-at-risk, and poverty. When asked what solutions should be provided to deal with panhandling, in both the survey and the intercepts, the majority stated support programs needed to be developed to deal with the underlying cause of the issue and not fines or jail time. The primary reason for believing that fines will not be appropriate is that, for many, they will not be able to afford to pay the ticket.

Given the complexity of the negative street activity, there is acknowledgement that this is a problem requiring a long term solution. Examples of solutions brought forth to address negative street activity drop centers for youth (which are open all hours), wet beds, education opportunities to complete grade 12, paid training opportunities, and affordable housing options.

### **Partnerships Are Critical**

Partnerships are needed to work with a complex issue such as negative street activity. The issues are varied and no single agency can address all the different problems. Agencies need to deal with issues such as mental health, youth at risk, poverty, and addictions. Such a varied number of issues require agencies to work together in a coordinated approach so that those who need assistance can obtain it. Other municipalities have formed partnerships using many different structures. Almost all involve the business community, police service, health authorities, departments within provincial and municipal governments, and service providers. The goal is coordinated and targeted funding for programs that deal with the issues that matter most to the city residents.

### **Uniformed Presence**

Residents and businesses commented during the intercepts on what a difference a uniformed presence makes in Saskatoon. Many businesses were highly complimentary of “the beat” officers. There are a number of options possible to leverage this, including increasing the police presence and/or the creation of the role of Bylaw Officers in Saskatoon. As has been done in Calgary, the Bylaw Officers can be linked to the appropriate service providers that can offer help to those on the street. Their role is not just one of providing tickets. Since emphasis has been placed by the public and the businesses on assisting those partaking in negative street activity, having a Bylaw Officer operating as both someone who can give tickets (when necessary) as well as an outreach worker may be beneficial. A variety of communities are utilizing outreach workers in a number of capacities related to both street activity and panhandling. The effectiveness has been demonstrated in terms of fewer number of panhandlers on the street and more impoverished members of society being connected with service providers.

**Accountability and Measurement**

Ongoing research creates a unified understanding among policy makers, the public, service providers, and other stakeholders. It also measures the success over time of the initiatives. Measurement regarding changes in perceptions of safety is important to determine if the initiatives are working and making a difference. Other elements to examine include improved agency coordination, communication and growth, and effective and coordinated efforts of time and money in addressing and preventing negative street activity from occurring.



## Project Background

## INTRODUCTION

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Panhandling and other street level activity has created issues for residents and business owners/operators in Saskatoon. As the city has grown, these issues have become more apparent.

In 1999, the City passed a Panhandling Bylaw which was amended in 2003. The Bylaw recognizes that panhandling, in general, is a permitted activity. However, the Bylaw prohibits coercive (aggressive) panhandling and panhandling from the occupants of vehicles. The Bylaw also prohibits panhandling within ten metres of the doorway to banks, credit unions or trust companies, and within ten metres of ATMs, bus stops and bus shelters. Panhandling on a bus is also prohibited. In January 2011, the Bylaw was amended to prohibit panhandling while intoxicated by alcohol or under the influence of drugs. In March 2011, the Bylaw was again amended to prohibit panhandling within eight metres of a doorway to a liquor store or a beer and wine store.

The discussions regarding the changes in the Panhandling Bylaw prompted further discussion on other street activity that, while perhaps not criminal, may impact people's perceptions of safety. This then led to discussions on legislation, enforcement, buskers, street vendors, street vibrancy and street safety for all users. In response to this, a Street Activity Steering Committee was established that includes membership from the affected Business Improvement Districts, the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Police Service and civic staff.

From this committee, and with the approval of City Council, a research project was commissioned to establish a base line study of street level activity in Saskatoon. The results of this study can be used to establish future programs needed to address the issues surrounding street activity that are experienced when there is significant growth in a city. The project, upon which this report is based, has the following main objectives:

- **Scope of the Problem:** Identification of the areas throughout the City where street activity is a nuisance, identify what segment of this activity is panhandling, and the type of street activity and panhandling occurring in each area.
- **Impact of these Activities:** Identify the effect of street activities and who is being affected.
- **Who Is Involved:** Identification of who is involved in these street activities, their characteristics, and why they are there.
- **Best Practices:** Identify known best practices that may be suitable to address street activity and panhandling in Saskatoon (e.g. enforcement, outreach, and other services).

This report details the results of this study. It provides a basis for future policy and program development, many of which likely spread across multiple levels of government.

## METHODOLOGY

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To meet the objectives of this research project, Inshgtrix Research conducted a number of research activities. These included a survey of the Saskatoon public, desk research, a focus group and intercepts with panhandlers, intercepts with the Saskatoon public as well as businesses, and interviews with local service providers.

The overall goal was to better understand the Saskatoon experience in terms of street activity and to identify what other municipalities are doing given their unique circumstances. Below are the details on each component of this research project.

### SURVEY OF SASKATOON RESIDENTS

Inshgtrix, in consultation with the City of Saskatoon, developed the survey instrument. Inshgtrix worked closely with the Street Activity Steering Committee during the instrument design phase. The survey was programmed into an online CATI system.

Respondents were randomly selected from the Inshgtrix online SaskWatch Research™ panel, which consists of over 12,500 Saskatchewan members. Quotas were set to ensure that the sample matched the population of Saskatoon as a whole.

Data were collected from July 21 to August 6, 2011. Inshgtrix conducted the survey using an online methodology. A total of 621 surveys were completed via the Inshgtrix SaskWatch Research™ panel. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/-3.93%, 19 times out of 20.

### DESK RESEARCH

Inshgtrix researchers also conducted desk research to meet the objectives of the project. Specifically, our researchers conducted an exhaustive review of select cities identified as taking different approaches to the issues of panhandling and street activity. Examining different cities allows for a comparison of approaches and their success thus far while at the same time taking into account the uniqueness of each city itself.

### INTERVIEWS WITH PANHANDLERS

It was apparent that to come up with a solution to the problem of perceived negative street activity, understanding who is on Saskatoon streets and why was a fundamental part of this project. A focus group was held with a group of Saskatoon panhandlers (both current and former panhandlers) to better understand their situations, why they panhandled and their thoughts on what supports they needed in general. In addition to the focus group, Inshgtrix conducted individual interviews with panhandlers. Our researchers approached those asking others for money and asked for a moment of their time to answer a few questions. The interviews were frequently conducted by sitting down on the sidewalk with the panhandler or on a bench if one was nearby. Their stories are included in this report with names altered to protect privacy. Overall the panhandlers were very open in providing information and many expressed appreciation for being asked about their situation.

## INTERVIEWS WITH GROUPS OF YOUTH

Interviews were held with youth at select locations in the city to determine what activities were occurring at these locations and to find out why young people were regularly “hanging out” in certain locations.

## INTERCEPTS WITH SASKATOON RESIDENTS

Insightrix researchers approached Saskatoon residents on the street in key areas of the city where street activity was frequently reported, including 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Broadway, Downtown, 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and around Confederation Mall. In total 154 intercept surveys were completed. The goal of the intercepts was to understand the perspective of those currently in the locations of interest and their perceptions of safety in these areas. The intercepts also explored what solutions to the problems of negative street activity they thought was appropriate for that location as well as the city overall.

## INTERCEPTS WITH SASKATOON BUSINESSES

Insightrix researchers also approached a variety of Saskatoon businesses in key areas that reported a high concentration of negative street activity. The intercepts with businesses were conducted with the person managing the store at the time of the visit. In total 66 intercepts were conducted with businesses to get their perceptions and beliefs on street activity in the area (including panhandling). As was done with consumers, the interviews also explored what solutions to the problems of negative street activity they thought was appropriate for that location as well as the city overall.

## INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Finally, to get additional context, researchers consulted with service providers who regularly work with those on the street. This included service providers that work with at-risk youth, the homeless, those with mental health issues, and those struggling with addictions. These interviews provided additional insight on those who are on the street as well as the perceived gaps in the support systems.

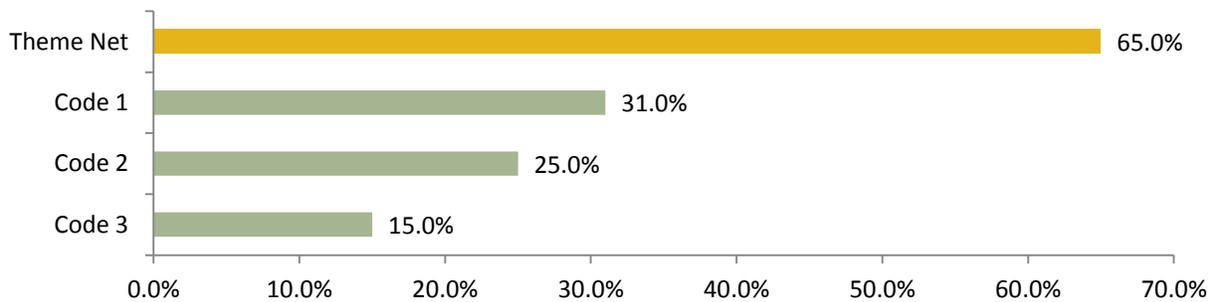
## REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS

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Please note that for the survey findings in this report:

- Each survey question includes a base description (n = #) which details the number of respondents who answered each particular question.
- Open ended questions were themed and coded into common response categories based on similar responses provided by respondents in order to better represent the subject matter being reported.
- Similar theme and codes were organized into Net themes based on overarching commonalities in the content of responses (i.e. positive or negative mentions). Net responses include individual coded themes in order to illustrate the overarching themes that emerge from open ended questions. Nets are coded in a different colour, and all codes underneath this color are included in the Net. The percentages of individual codes may not add up to the Net total as multiple responses may be possible.

### Net Example





## Perceptions of Saskatoon Street Activity

## PERCEPTIONS OF SASKATOON RESIDENTS

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### IMPORTANCE OF MEASURING PERCEPTIONS

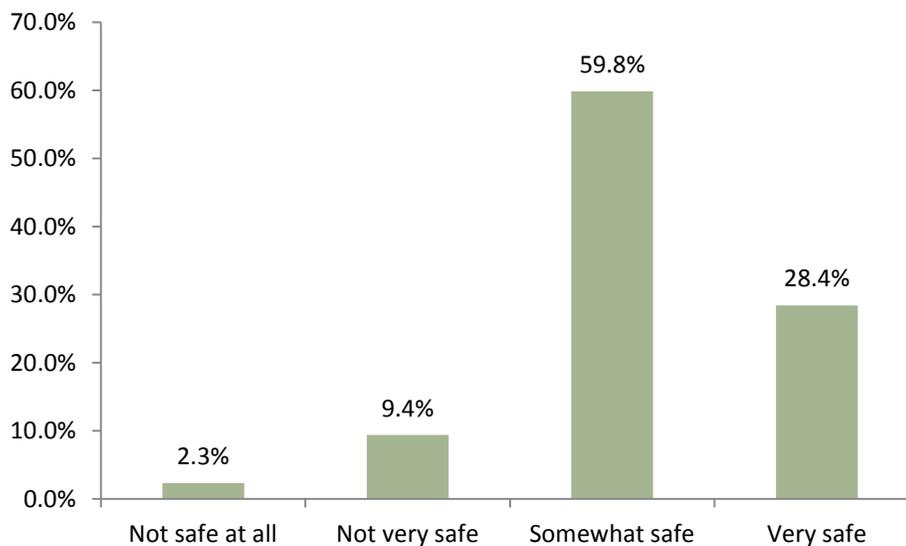
A total of 621 Saskatoon residents completed an online survey regarding their perceptions of street activity and safety in the city. Examining perceptions of residents is important when examining safety in a city. Perceptions are what people believe to be true (regardless of whether they are or not) and therefore form their basis of beliefs regarding safety in Saskatoon. Below is a quotation from a survey respondent discussing why he or she does not feel safe walking or cycling in the Broadway business area. It emphasizes the importance that perception plays in examining feelings of safety in a city.

*I think that after hours, it is a gathering place for vagrants, drug dealers, etc. I never go to these areas walking alone or walking at all, so am not sure any of this is correct. This is just my perception.----Survey Respondent*

The survey conducted forms a baseline from which future changes to perceptions can be measured.

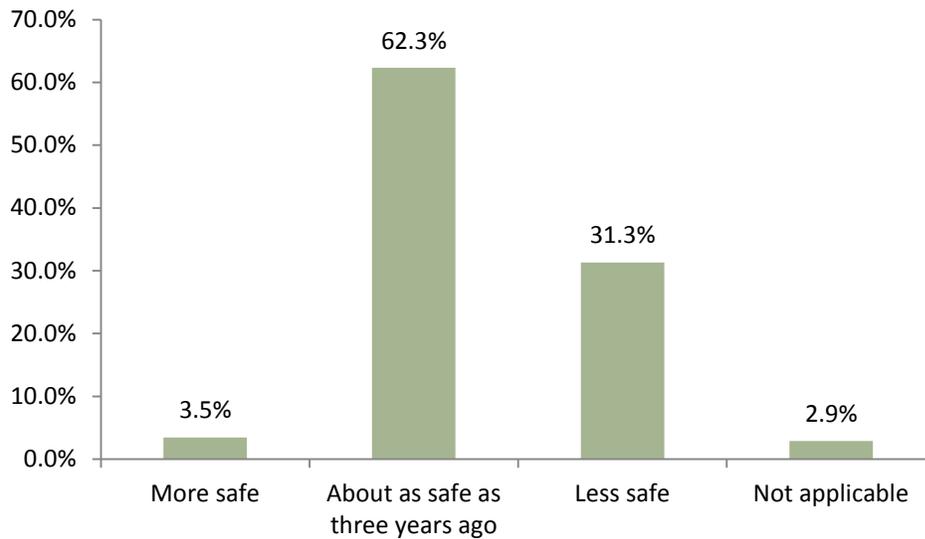
### OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

Overall, Saskatoon residents feel safe in Saskatoon. Of those surveyed, 88.2% reported feeling safe (either somewhat or very) while walking or cycling in public areas (i.e. streets, parks, outside of businesses) in Saskatoon.



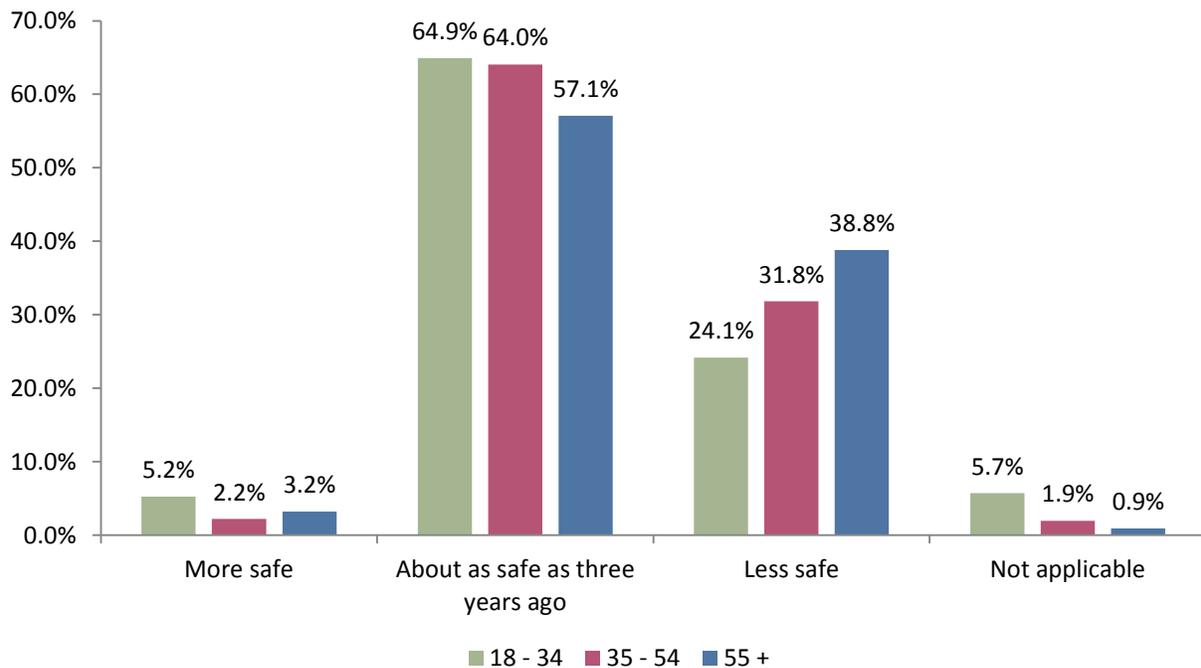
Q6. This study is about your impressions of street activity and public safety in Saskatoon. First of all, overall how safe do you feel walking or cycling in public areas (i.e. streets, parks, outside of businesses) in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

However, three in ten (31.3%) feel less safe than three years ago in Saskatoon.



Q7. Do you feel more or less safe than you did three years ago in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

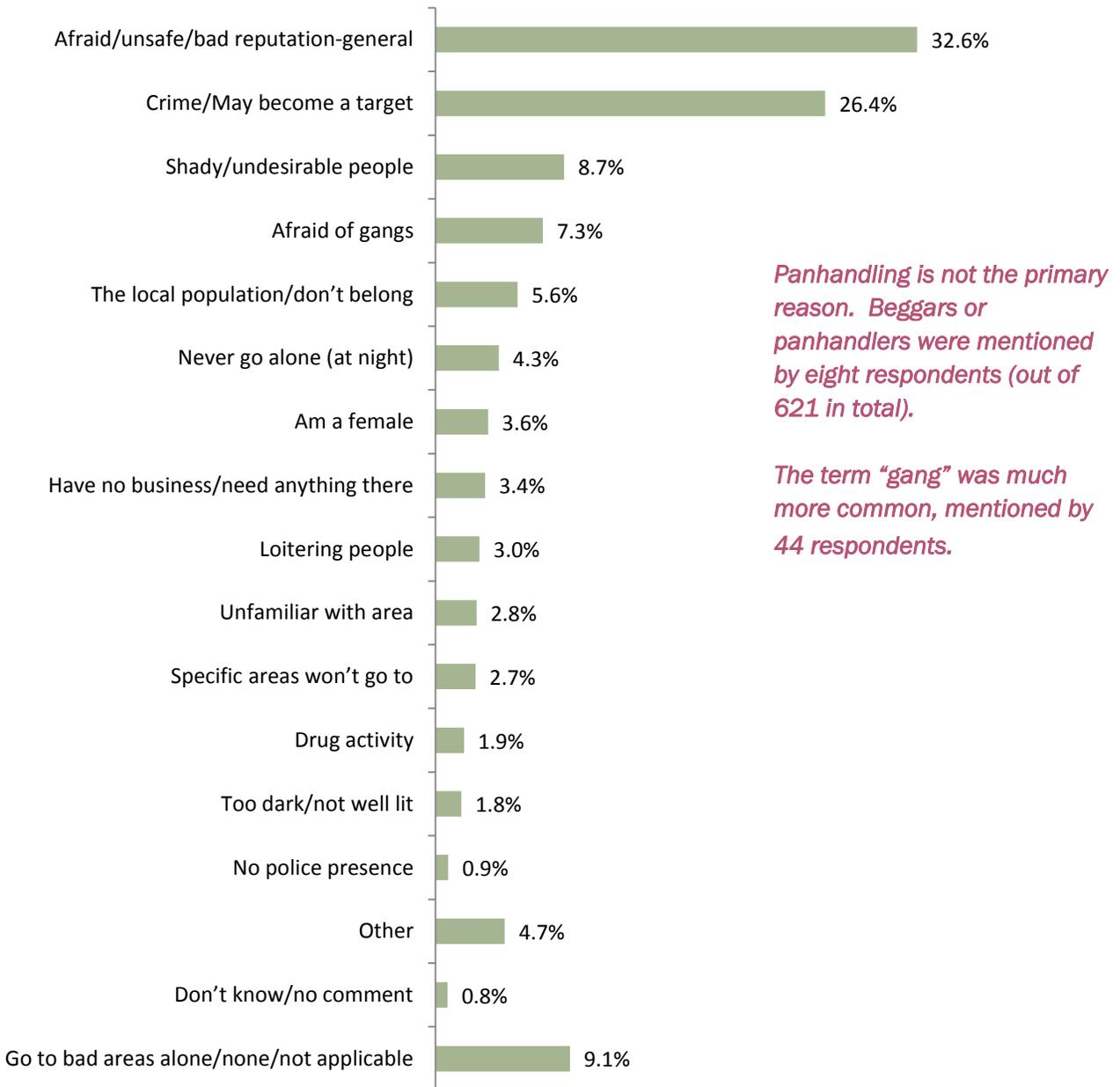
Feelings of safety do differ by age. Saskatoon residents aged 55 years or older are significantly more likely to feel less safe compared to three years ago (38.8%) versus 24.1% of 18 to 34 year old respondents.



Q7. Do you feel more or less safe than you did three years ago in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

To further understand which street activities make residents less likely to go to certain areas, survey respondents were asked to finish the following sentence: “There are places in Saskatoon I don’t go alone because...”

Approximately one third (32.6%) indicated that the reputation of the area is a determining factor.



Q10. Next we’d like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

Below are a few of the actual comments made by the survey respondents in regards to: “There are places in Saskatoon I don’t go alone because....”

The native gang activity, addicts, homeless, violent youths, drunks.

The west side has a lot of problems and I have no desire to go there, to be completely honest. I would like to go for more walks along the river in the later evening hours, but often don't feel safe.

I perceive a criminal element, be it gang activity, poor bar/night club reputation, prostitute boardwalk, etc., exists in that neighbourhood / part of town.

There are too many crazy people such as gangster types.

There isn't enough of a police presence in the area to discourage dangerous activity.

There is a lot of gang crime, muggings, etc.

They may have higher rates of crime and poverty.

Will avoid any place that young persons congregate.

You might get mugged by gangs in some areas of the city.

There is more illegal activity going on in that area whether it be the selling of drugs, prostitution or violence.

They have a history of being unsafe.

Too many knifings and gangs, robberies.

Unsavory people in the area.

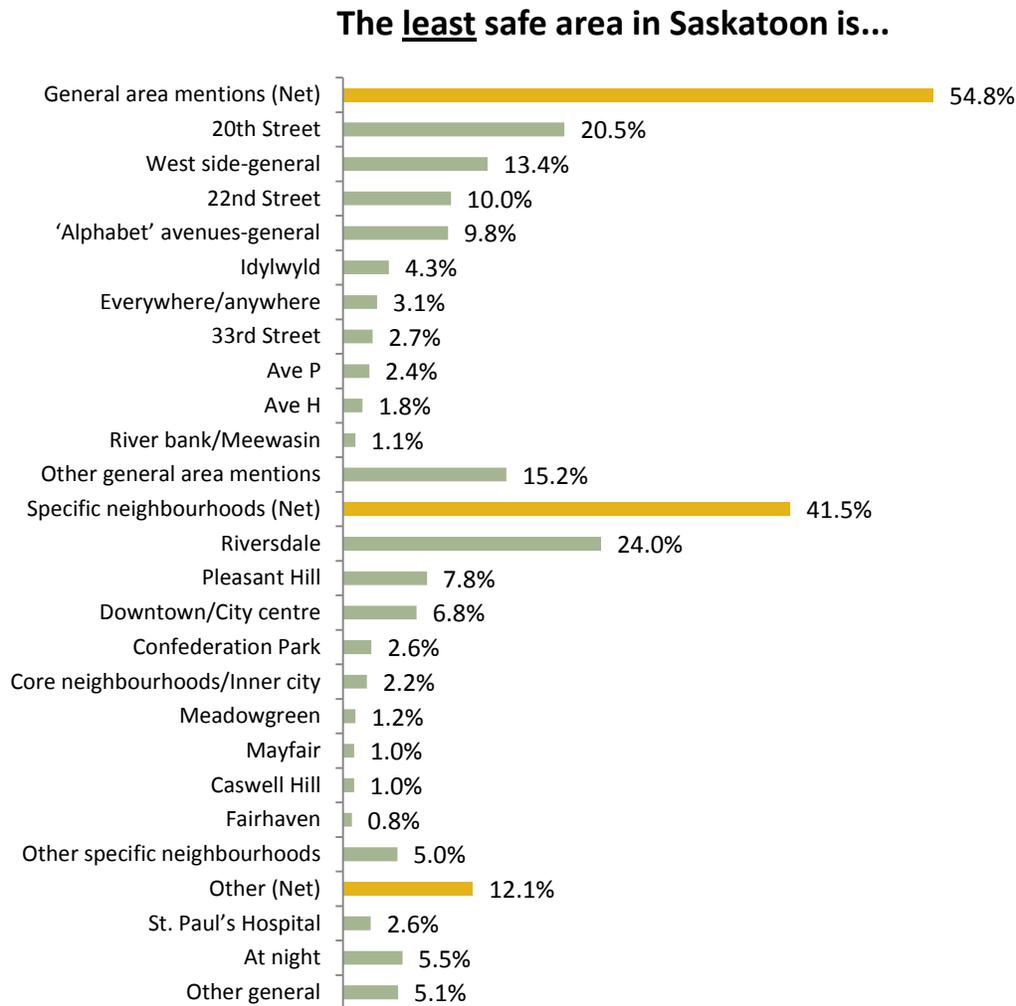
Too much gang stuff and hookers.

Unsure of young groups/gangs.

There are too many instances of robberies, assaults are happening all over the city.

In the survey, respondents were asked to finish the sentence, “The least safe area in Saskatoon is....” Overall 54.8% indicated a general area (e.g. the west side), while 41.5% indicated a specific neighbourhood.

The areas of the city referenced as the least safe areas of Saskatoon include 20<sup>th</sup> street (20.5%), the west side in general (13.4%), and 22<sup>nd</sup> street (10.0%). Specific neighbourhoods perceived as being the least safe include Riversdale (24.0%), Pleasant Hill (7.8%), and Downtown and/or the City Centre (6.8%).



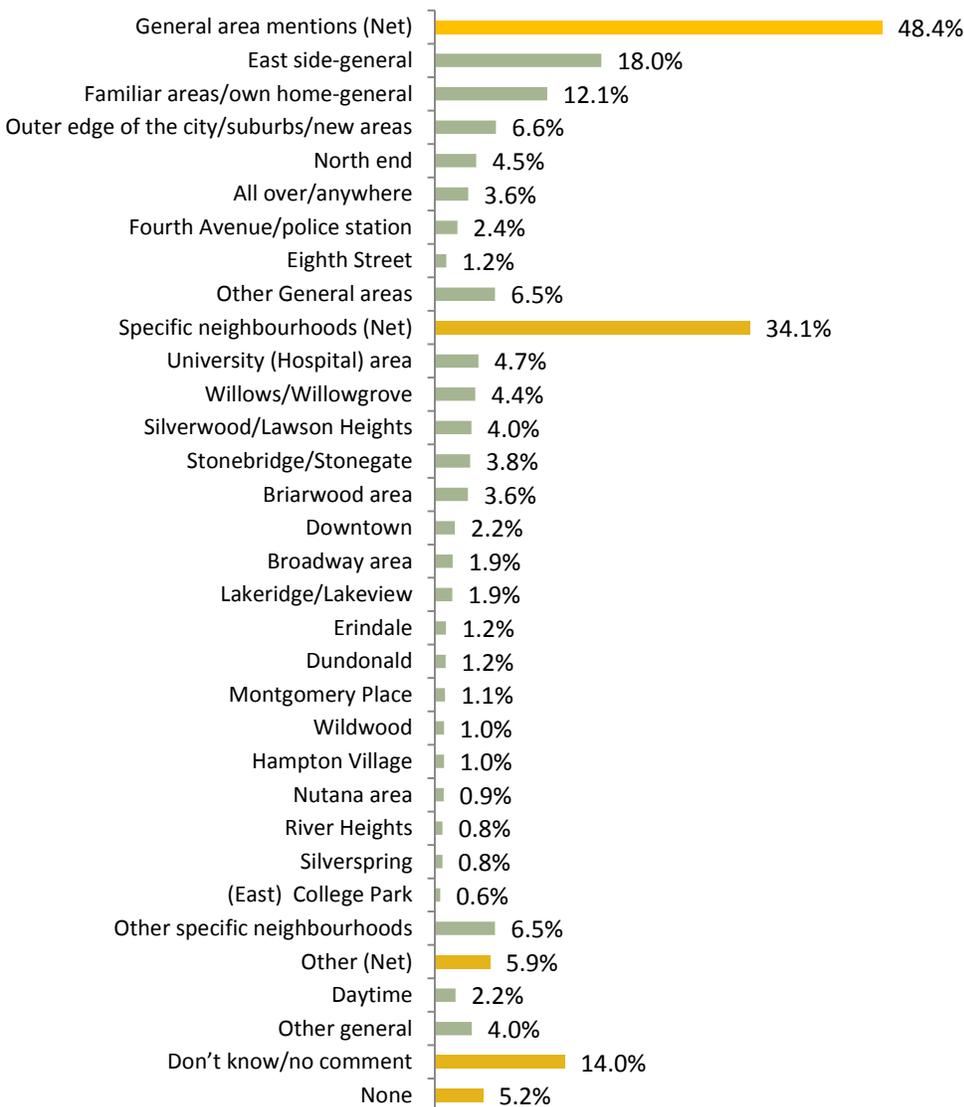
Q10. Next we'd like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

In the survey, respondents were asked to finish the sentence, “The safest area in Saskatoon is....” Overall 48.4% indicated a general area (e.g. the east side) while 34.1% indicated a specific neighbourhood. The east side of the city was referenced by 18.0% , while familiar areas, such as one’s own home/community/area, were referenced as the safest area by 12.1%.

Other areas were mentioned by less than one in ten, illustrating that there are few shared spaces that all residents universally perceive of as safe.

### The safest area in Saskatoon is...

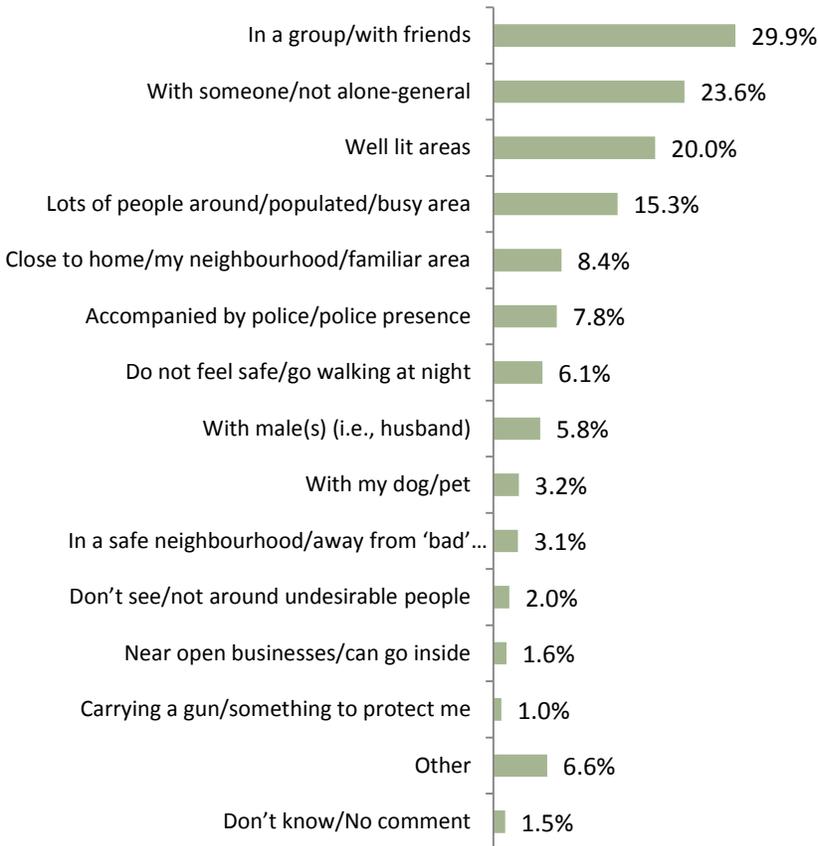


Q10. Next we'd like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

In the survey, respondents were asked to finish the sentence, “Walking in Saskatoon at night, I feel safer when....” The largest proportion of respondents indicated with a group of people or with friends (29.9%) or when not alone in general (23.6%). Others feel safer when in well-lit areas (20.0%) or when there are lots of people around (15.3%).

### Walking in Saskatoon at night, I feel safer when...



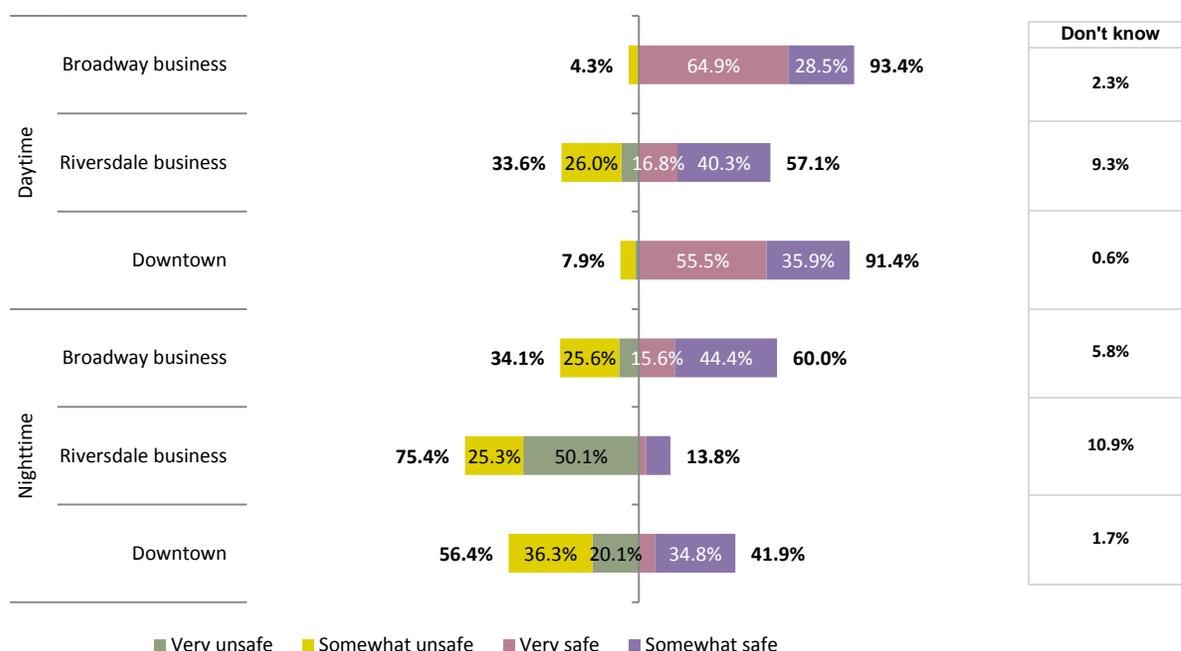
Q10. Next we'd like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

## PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY BY SPECIFIC LOCATION

During the day, over 90% of Saskatoon residents feel somewhat or very safe Downtown (91.4%) or in the Broadway business district (93.4%). This compares to 57.1% that feel safe in the Riversdale business area during the day.

During the night, safety perceptions change notably. Overall, 41.9% feel safe (either somewhat or very) Downtown and 60% feel safe (either somewhat or very) in the Broadway business district. This compares to 13.8% in the Riversdale business area.



Q8. How safe do you feel walking or cycling in each of the following areas of the city and situations? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

There is a difference by age group in terms of perceptions of feeling safe in certain areas. Younger residents are more likely to feel safe in Riversdale at night, while both the middle age and older age cohort are more likely to feel unsafe (78.2% and 84.9% respectively).

|              |            | 18 - 34 |        | 35 - 54 |        | 55 +  |        |
|--------------|------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|
|              |            | Safe    | Unsafe | Safe    | Unsafe | Safe  | Unsafe |
| <b>Day</b>   | Downtown   | 87.5%   | 11.6%  | 92.7%   | 6.8%   | 94.1% | 5.5%   |
|              | Broadway   | 92.1%   | 6.0%   | 96.9%   | 0.8%   | 91.3% | 6.4%   |
|              | Riversdale | 55.8%   | 26.5%  | 55.1%   | 39.7%  | 62.1% | 32.8%  |
| <b>Night</b> | Downtown   | 41.0%   | 57.7%  | 42.4%   | 39.7%  | 42.9% | 32.8%  |
|              | Broadway   | 66.7%   | 28.6%  | 56.7%   | 37.5%  | 56.6% | 36.5%  |
|              | Riversdale | 18.0%   | 63.8%  | 13.9%   | 78.2%  | 8.7%  | 84.9%  |

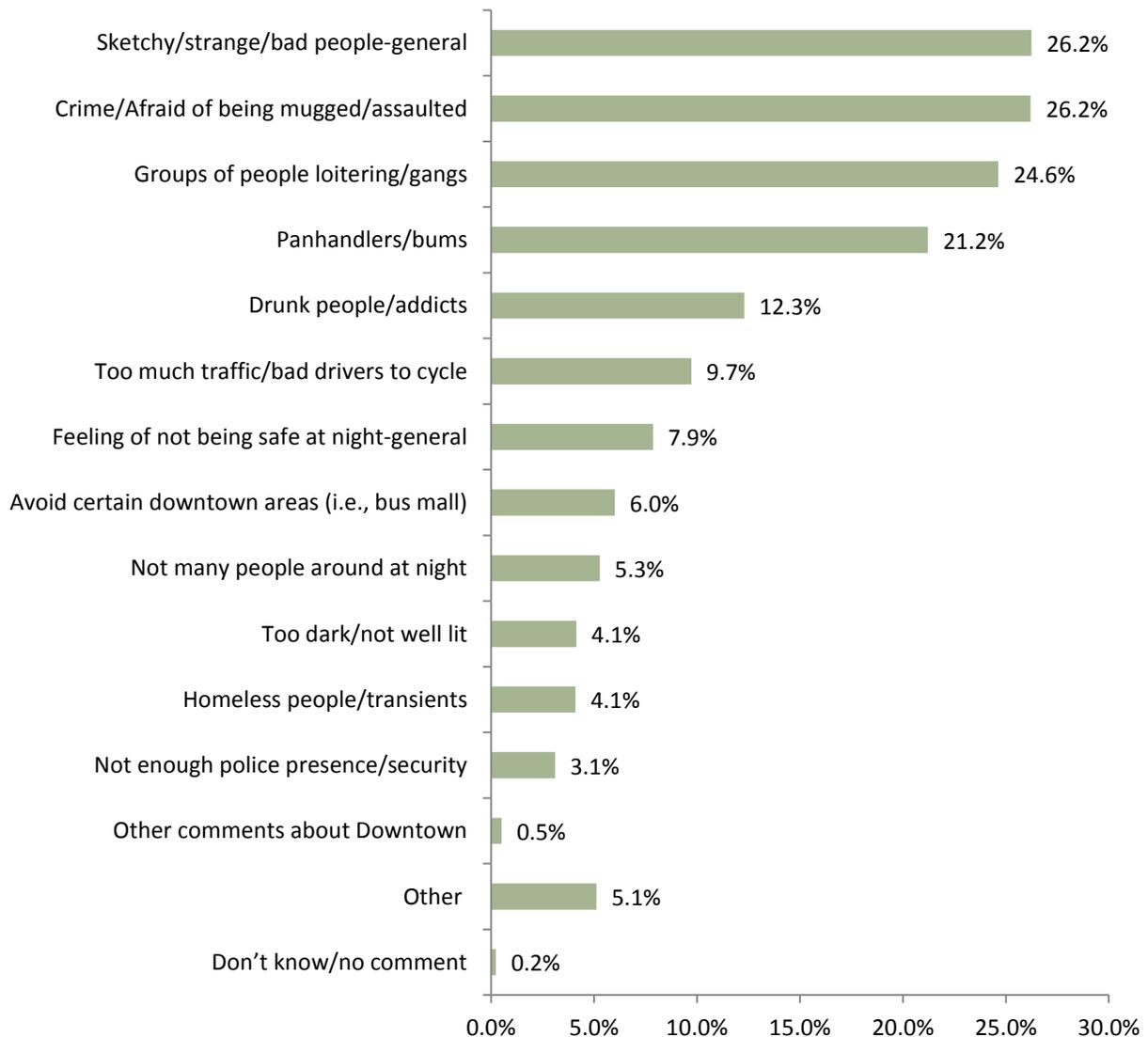
Q8. How safe do you feel walking or cycling in each of the following areas of the city and situations? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

Those respondents who felt unsafe walking or cycling in a particular area were asked to describe in their own words why they feel that way. Their open ended comments have been categorized and tallied as follows:

### Downtown

- Sketchy/strange/bad people in the Downtown area (26.2%)
- Criminal Activities/Afraid of being mugged or assaulted (26.2%)
- Groups of people loitering/Perceived Gang Activity (24.6%)
- Panhandlers or Bums (21.2%)
- Drunk People/Addicts (12.3%)

*Panhandling was NOT the first issue respondents identified as a reason for feeling unsafe downtown.*



\*Multiple responses possible

Below are a few of the actual comments made by the survey respondents in regards to why they feel unsafe walking or cycling downtown:

Constantly being asked for money. Often groups of young people and unemployed people hanging in groups around street corners. Overt drug use as well as drunks.

Different crowd at night without much police presence.

Drunks, bums, panhandlers. I am always afraid someone is going to hit me or take my purse.

Have heard about assaults and other types of violence in the area.

I am approached by panhandlers or others seeking money, and I don't know their intentions.

From listening to media reports of happenings.

Have heard about crimes in downtown area, beggars approaching.

I have personal knowledge of the gang activity downtown.

I find it has a lot of 'sketchy' people at night hanging around the streets. I just don't feel comfortable, especially around the bus depot area.

I have had slurs shouted at me once or twice in the past.

Lots of transients, youth gang members.

Panhandlers and youth can seem to get very aggressive.

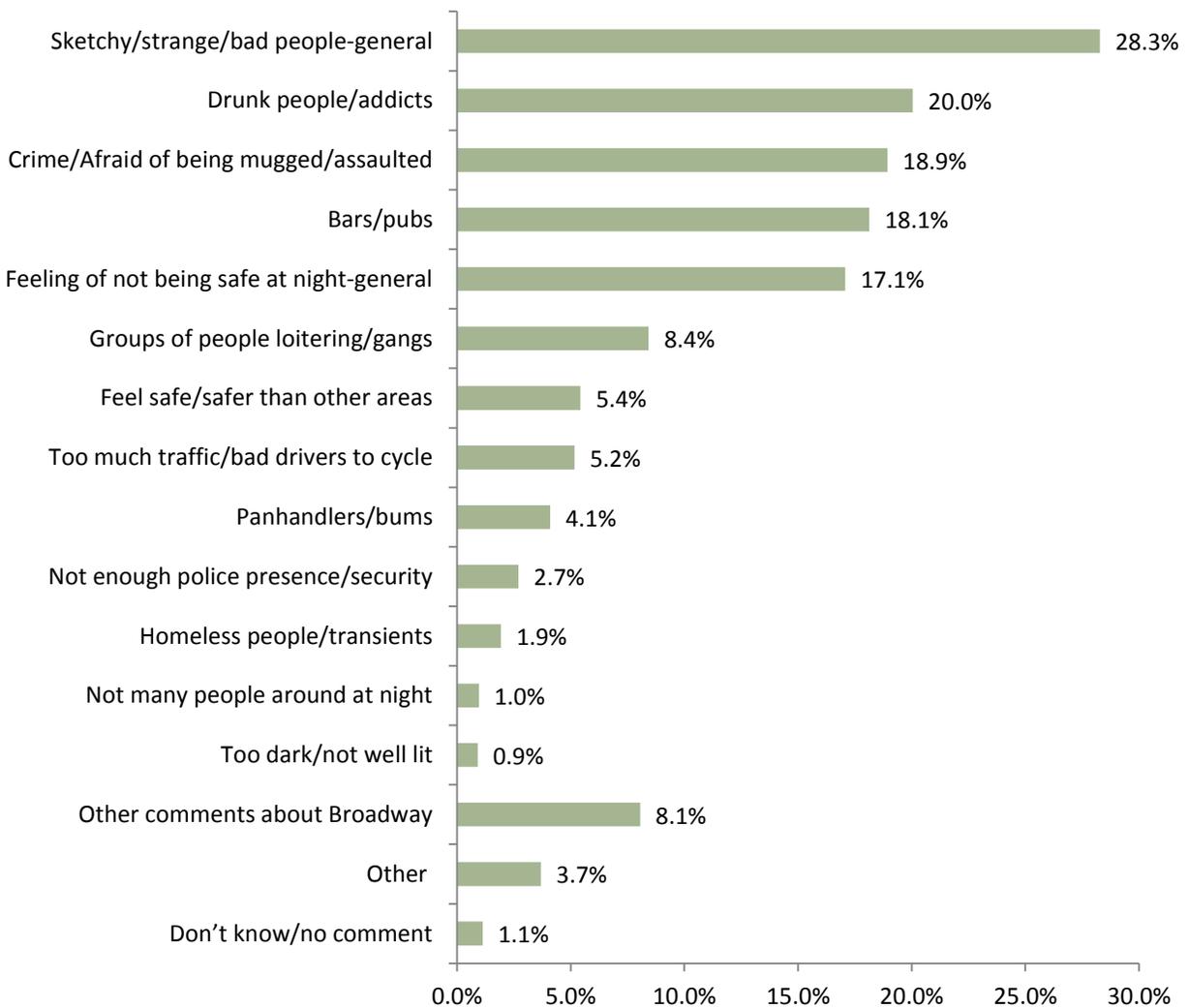
Some of the people hanging around, especially the McDonalds.

The bus terminal is quite filled with drugs and crime.

## Broadway Business District

- Sketchy/strange/bad people in the Broadway area (28.3%)
- Drunk People/Addicts (20.0%)
- Criminal Activities/Afraid of being mugged or assaulted (18.9%)
- The presence of the bars and pubs (18.1%)
- General feeling of not being safe in this area (17.1%)

*Panhandling was mentioned specifically by only 4.1% of survey respondents.*



\*Multiple responses possible

Street kids' have invaded Broadway at night. I have experienced them 'swarming' individuals.

Too many intoxicated people wandering the streets.

Too many large groups of people, mostly young, hanging around the numerous bars, walking the street. It is a balancing act avoiding the groups on the street.

Too many people getting jumped and beat up in Saskatoon.

Too many weird people over there.

Stories of people getting mugged by groups of teenagers, lots of people drunk at night on the weekend, drifters.

I work for a company that works with former criminals and am quite aware that this is a frequent area that they visit.

Heard that Broadway at night isn't a very safe place to be and that thugs and druggies hang around there a lot at night.

I've heard about robberies happening there lately.

Ever since this city has grown in the last three years, a lot more gangs have emerged and a lot more transients have moved into the city that makes me feel unsafe.

In the evening, there are many people drinking in the bars and it makes me feel uncomfortable to be around people who obviously have had too much to drink. Groups of young people are intimidating.

Gangs of younger people.

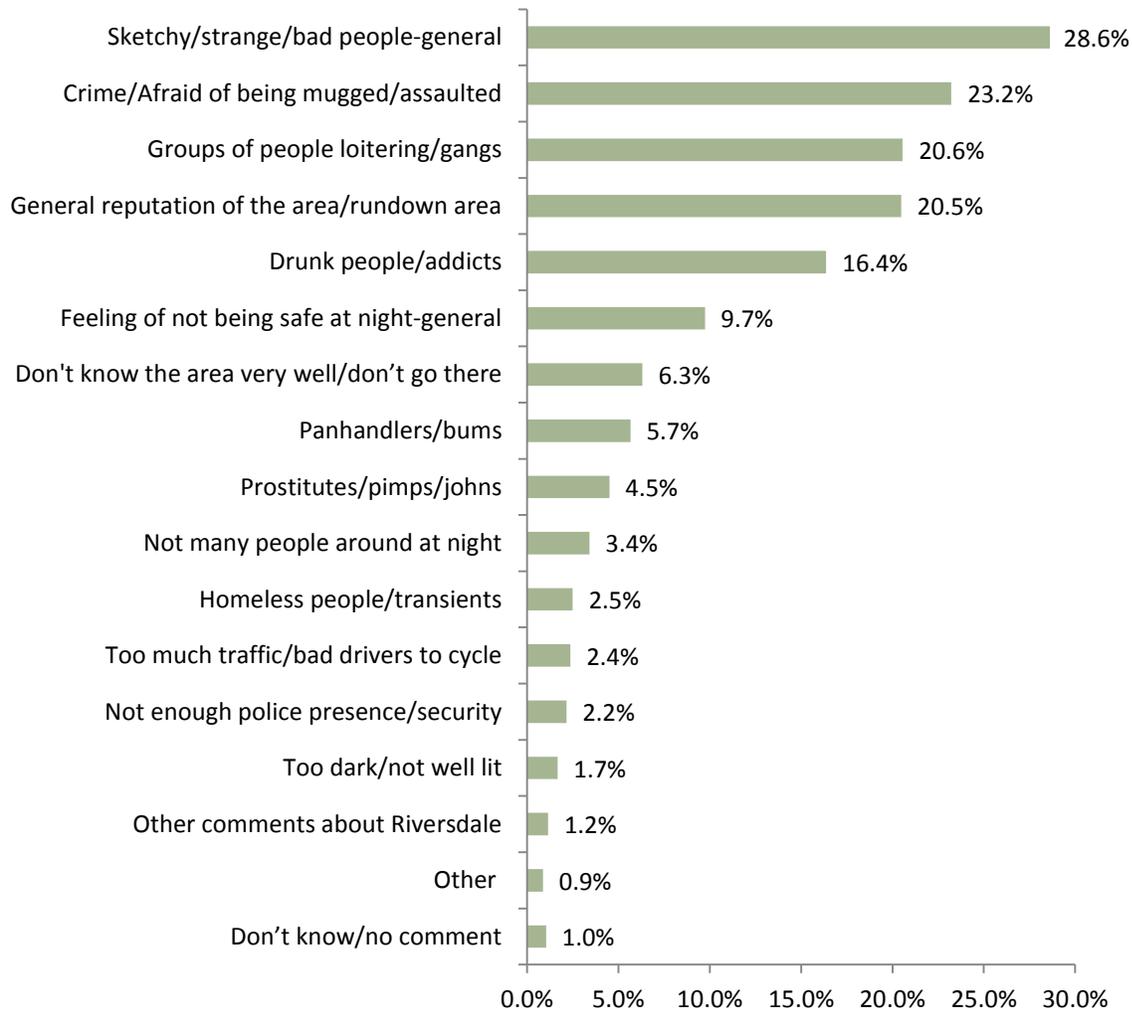
I would walk in the Broadway business area, but not alone. It is always safety in numbers.

Just the other night, I was walking around down there, I got approached by numerous people on different occasions asking me for money, smokes, if I wanted to come drink, etc.

**Riversdale Business Area:**

- Sketchy/strange/bad people in the Riversdale area (28.6%)
- Criminal Activities/Afraid of being mugged or assaulted (23.2%)
- Groups of people loitering/Perceived Gang Activity (20.6%)
- General reputation of the area (20.5%)
- Drunk People/Addicts (16.4%)

*Panhandling was mentioned specifically by only 5.7% of survey respondents.*



\*Multiple responses possible

Gang activity in this area is very prevalent. They seem to do as they please with immunity for their actions.

The area has a longstanding reputation that most Saskatoon residents would be lying about if they claimed to be unaffected by it. The reputation is, unfortunately, supported by more numerous/regular instances of public intoxication and other worrying behaviours.

Alcohol/drug users, lack of police presence.

I used to live there. Too many Indians and tough drunks and gang ties around.

Marginalized, financially desperate individuals are increasing in the Riverside business areas.

All the people that you see 'tweeted' out walking down 20th. The prostitutes and the riff raff hanging out on the streets. Went into Great West Furniture and the guy standing out front was so drunk he peed himself.... Nice...like I am going back there!

Choose one or more:  
Aboriginal thugs and lowlifes.  
Low income dipshit losers.  
Hookers, druggies and intoxicated crackers or meth-heads. Drunk, stoned and hairspray-huffing natives.

I do not see enough policing through the area at night in correspondence with the transient population who take shelter there in the evenings. I used to live on 20th Street and drove the main 20th, 19th and 18th Street corridors quite frequently and saw enough situations that I just avoid it all together in the evenings for the most part now.

The area is known for its high crime rate, drug use, and prostitution.

Have had my kids attacked in the area. Have been tailed by vehicles in the area. Walked through while pregnant and walking with a child.... Asked 'how much' if 200 was good.

Homeless people.

Low income area with problems with housing, graffiti, children out late at night because their parents don't care. I know it's not all, but quite a few. I was born and raised in Riversdale. Hate to see it deteriorate so much.

Quite a few beggars and panhandlers; groups of loiterers.

## In-Person Consumer Intercepts

The in-person intercepts with Saskatoon residents further emphasized the varying amount of street activity people perceive in these locations. Although somewhat qualitative in nature, highlighted below are some factors that impact the perceptions of residents regarding the specific locations they were visiting.

### Downtown

During the day it's fine because it's busy downtown and there are lots of people around. Also there are police walking around. During the night there is different people downtown. Also, there is lots of bars downtown and you see **people who are under the influence**.

During the day and at night you can walk on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in front of the Lighthouse down to McDonalds and it is pretty bad. Also by Odeon is bad Saturday and Friday nights. What looks to be **gang members** are out, it doesn't matter what time of night they are always **fighting** on the street by the McDonalds area. During the weekday it's okay. It is the weekends that are bad.

During the day the **panhandlers** are a nuisance. You can't even walk on 21st street in front of Midtown Plaza. The police got rid of the panhandlers in front of McDonalds but they are still in front of the Midtown Plaza.

At night I don't feel safe because I have seen **street fights**. They are pretty horrible and someone gets really hurt.

Day or night I don't feel safe because there are **people hanging around** and staring at you and you don't know what their purpose is. They might be on something and you don't know what they will do if they approach you. They seem unpredictable.

During the day I feel safe because I go into safe areas, like the mall or walking up the river, where there are lots of people around. At night I do not feel safe because of the **things that I heard on the news** and it's not just panhandlers it's **people getting attacked and stuff**. It feels like it's gotten more unsafe.

At night somewhat unsafe because people are stupid and willing to **stab** you for a smoke. That happened to me and my buddy. And during the day it is very safe because you can see a lot more things and a lot more people are out that could help you if someone was trying to hurt you.

You always feel safe during the day. The sun out. Who would jump a person when there are lots of people around?

Don't feel safe at night because you don't know if something goes wrong you might end up getting caught in a line of fire. Many **people hanging around downtown have weapons**.

I feel fine both during the day and the night because I am brown. I just mostly ignore what is going on.

Because it's Saskatoon and because they are not violent. They are friendly people minding their own business.

During the day I feel safe because there are other people around. At night I don't feel because you don't know who is walking around.

I've been approached by semi-aggressive sounding presumably **drunk or intoxicated people** downtown. This does not make me feel safe.

At night I don't feel safe because that's when **drug deals and stabbings** happen.

During the day there are lots of people around and at night time there are not as many people around and the people can be more **aggressive**.

During the day I feel somewhat safe. I think this is because I park in the parkade and there have been **people passed out** there and that's

kind of freaky. Sometimes when I am walking I see **smashed beer bottles and vomit**.

There are lots of **people loitering** downtown. This does not make you feel safe.

I feel comfortable when the Police are around.

I am **not scared of the panhandlers** but I am **scared of gang type individuals**.

During the day I feel unsafe because **drivers are rushing** to get where they need to go and not paying attention to pedestrians. It's not a pedestrian's world down here; it's an automobile world down here. At night it is the same issue. It's the traffic again.

I've called the police a few times. People are near the bus stops and they start **fighting** and I don't want them entering the store or coming after me if I am leaving work.

## Riversdale

I feel safe because people know who I am. Everyone knows everyone down here.

I feel unsafe during the day because there are cops and people around. At night time it is fine as nobody is really around.

There are many **street fights** in this area at day and at night, it does not matter what time of day it is.

No problems

I am well known and no one bothers me down here.

It helps that I work in the area and have an idea of what it's like.

Just need to take caution that something may or could happen.

I feel safer during the day because there are cops and people around.

Feel safer at night time as no one is really around.

'Daytime I feel safe as there are many people around and you can see what is going on. I don't feel safe at night time, as there are very little people around and there are some **groups walking around** and you just don't know what they will do.

Night time I don't feel safe because **cops harass you** all the time.

I feel unsafe in this area because every day there is something going on.

I feel unsafe because there are many **gangs** on the street walking in groups that is the problem.

I feel safe in the day time, because you can see people. Not so much at night. At night time, you can see nothing; there are less people out and cops around.

Any time I don't feel safe. There are **groups of young people** like to hang out for nothing and cause **fight** with people.

Lots of **fighting** everywhere with **gangs**. I have been robbed 5 times before.

At night I feel unsafe. They have more patrol of police (bikes) and on foot in the day! But at night they don't.

You must be with people to walk down here at night or **you might get jumped**. During the day is not bad at all.

At night I feel unsafe. **Young people are always around** at night. The young ones (youth) come down this way and hang out.

Many of us are not in the right state of mind, and the **young people bring booze** and get their friends together for a drink. Then they bother all the straight people. The youth are the problem.

### *Broadway*

I have been to Los Angeles; there is probably 50 times more crime rate. Have to be street smart. Stuff can happen anywhere.

During the day is fine as there is lots of people around and you see lots of police officers around and it's a main street.

Because I always have my dog with me and it doesn't seem like an unsafe area. I have no reason to feel unsafe.

Because it's Saskatoon. I don't scare easily.

I feel safer during the day because there are a lot of people around during the day. At night I don't feel as safe as there isn't as many people around.

**Young people make me nervous** because they don't seem gainfully employed and that's not a very good sign.

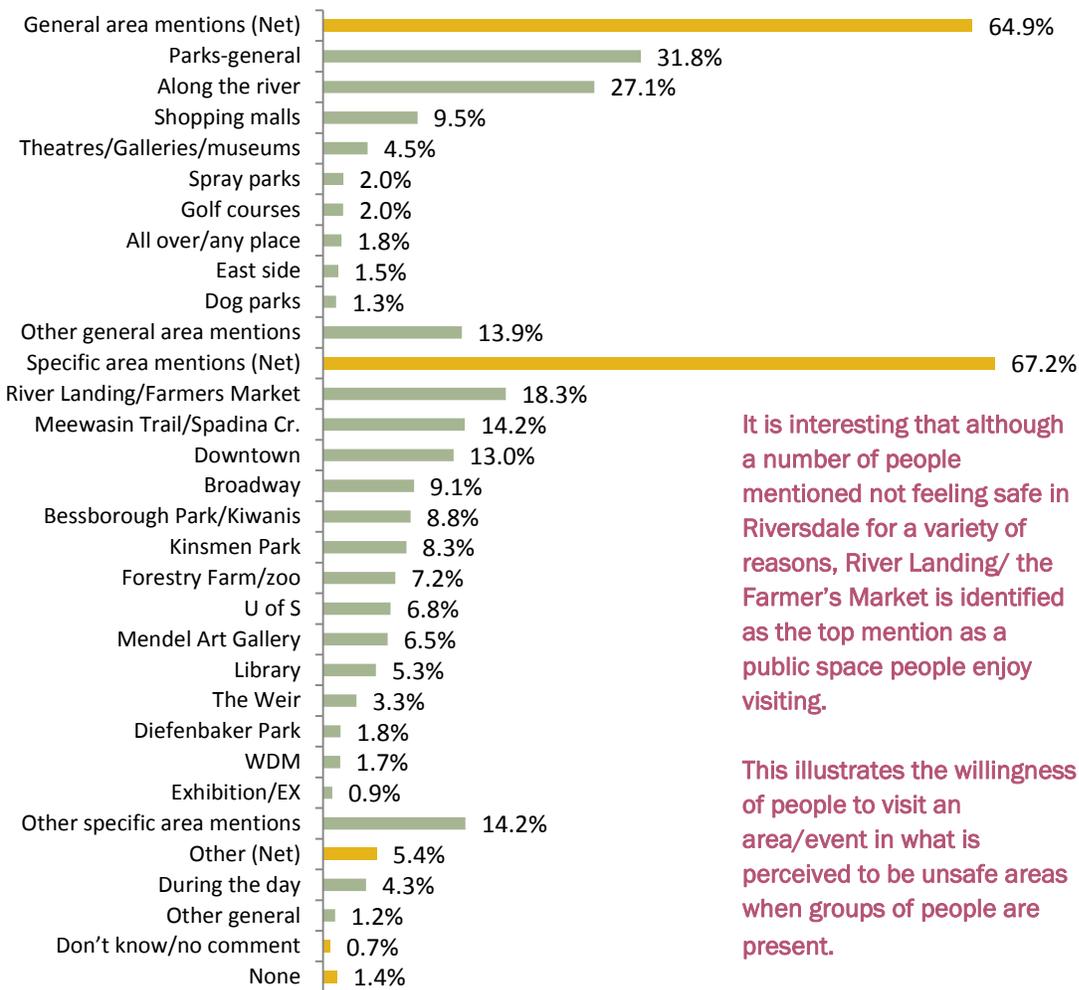
At night I don't feel as safe because people are loosing of their facilities when **they drink too much alcohol**.

*Intercept Question: How safe do you feel walking or cycling in this area of the city during the day or at night?*

## AREAS AND EVENTS SASKATOON RESIDENTS ENJOY

In the survey, respondents were asked to finish the sentence, “Public spaces I enjoy visiting include...” Overall 64.9% indicated a general area (e.g. parks) and 67.2% indicated a specific area (e.g. Broadway). In general, parks (31.8%) and along the river (27.1%) were commonly referenced. Among specific areas mentioned, River Landing and the Farmers Market (18.3%), the Meewasin Trail/Spadina Crescent (14.2%), Downtown (13.0%), and Broadway (9.1%) are notable public spaces enjoyed by residents.

### Public spaces I enjoy visiting include...



It is interesting that although a number of people mentioned not feeling safe in Riversdale for a variety of reasons, River Landing/ the Farmer's Market is identified as the top mention as a public space people enjoy visiting.

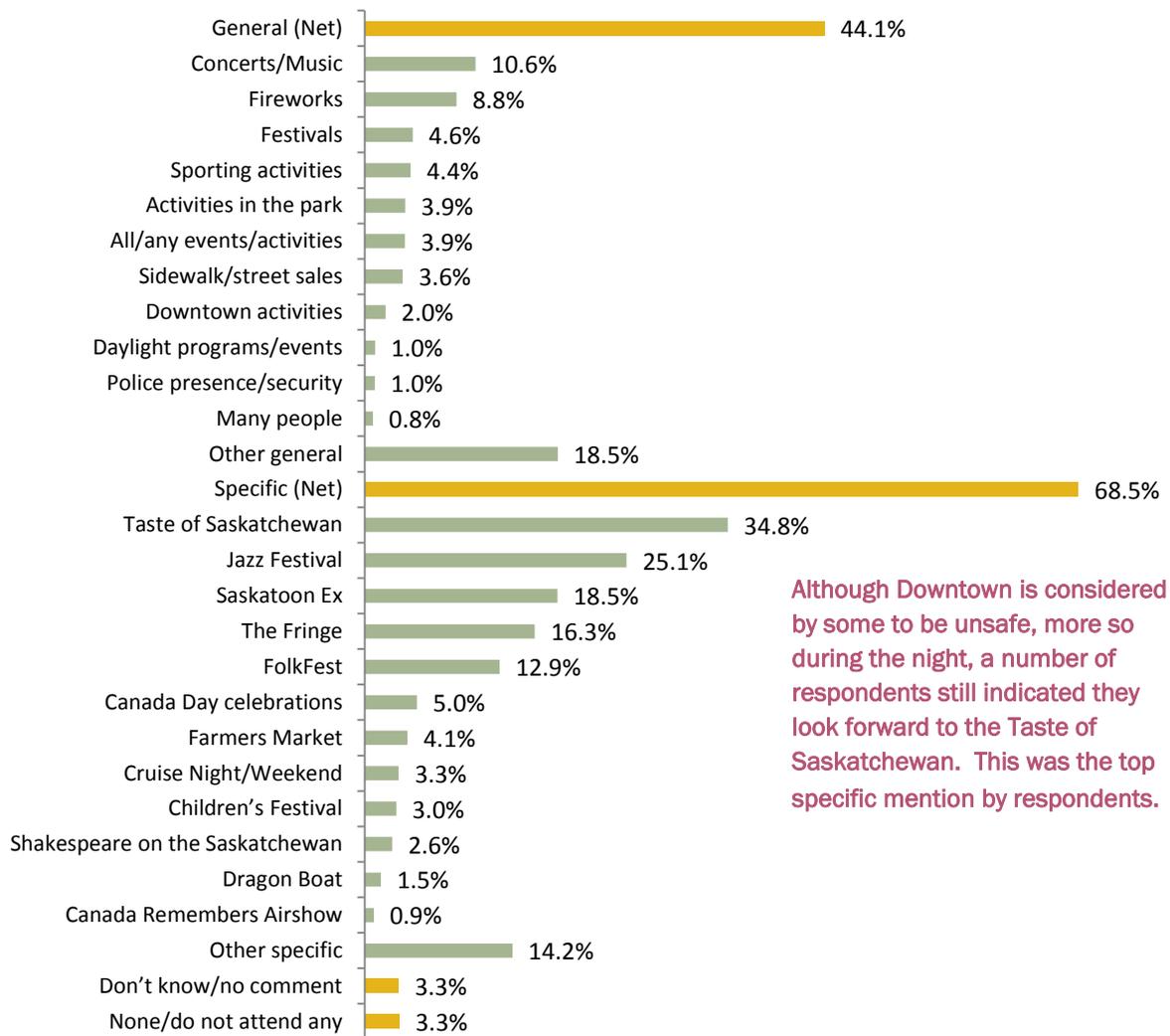
This illustrates the willingness of people to visit an area/event in what is perceived to be unsafe areas when groups of people are present.

Q10. Next we'd like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

In the survey, respondents were asked to finish the sentence, “Events in public spaces that I look forward to include....” Overall 44.1% indicated general events (e.g. festivals) and 68.5% indicated specific events (e.g. Jazz Festival). Among general events, concerts and music events are referenced by 10.6%, while fireworks are mentioned by 8.8%. The Taste of Saskatchewan is a specific event that over one third (34.8%) look forward to, while one quarter (25.1%) look forward to the Jazz Festival and two in ten (18.5%) look forward to the Saskatoon Ex.

## Events in public spaces that I look forward to include...



Q10. Next we’d like to understand how you feel about public spaces in Saskatoon. Please finish the following sentences: (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

## EXPERIENCE WITH STREET ACTIVITY

Survey respondents were asked the following question:

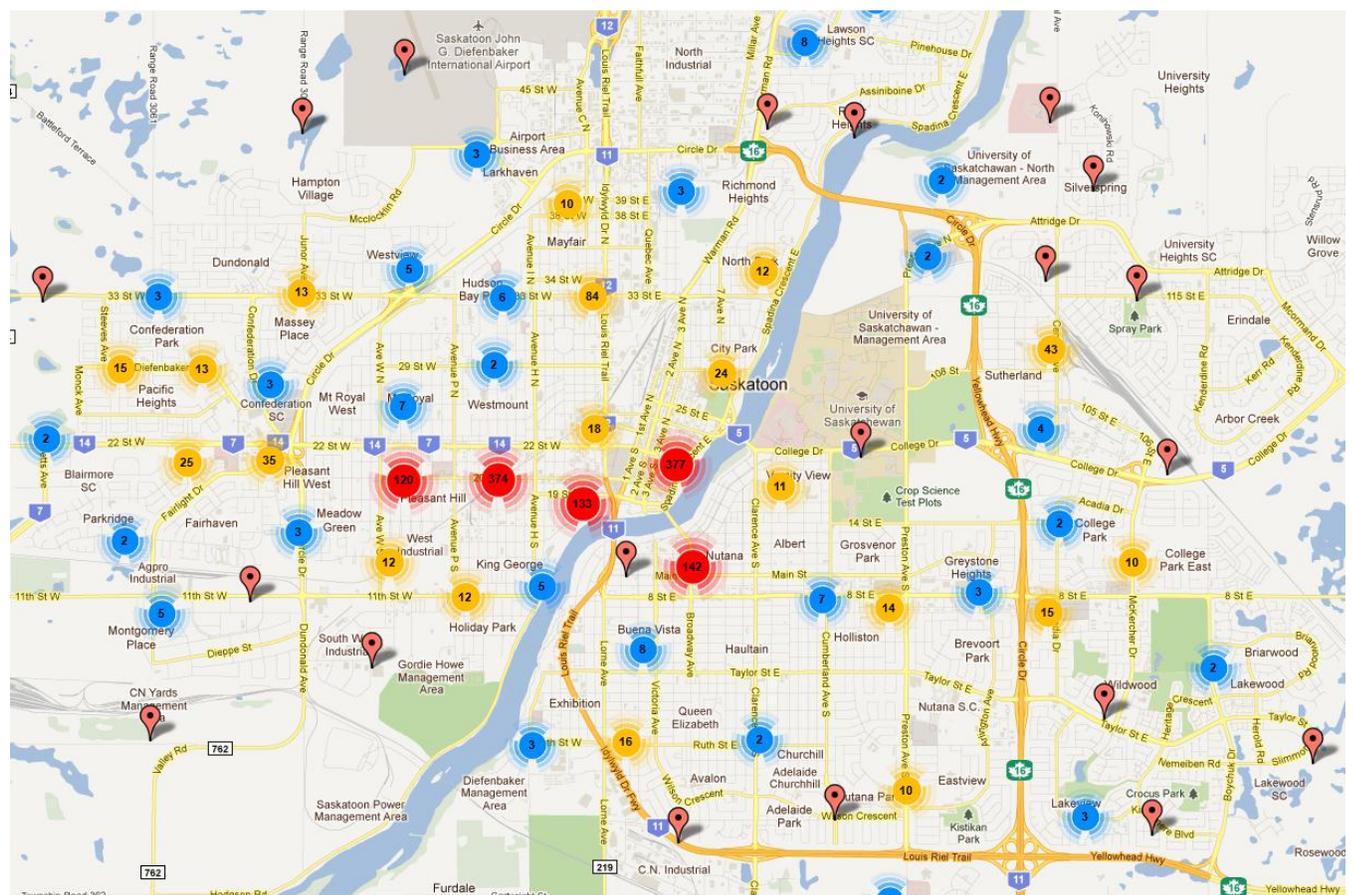
*Q12. Please indicate on the map where you have witnessed or encountered negative street activity in the past 12 months....*

Using Google Maps, respondents were able to zoom down to the street level to indicate where they had experienced what they had perceived to be negative street activity.

The following map illustrates the frequency of selection. The number displayed on the map represents the number of times respondents selected this area.

As can be seen in the map below, the incidence of street activity is heavily concentrated not only in the downtown area but in the Broadway area and along 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets.

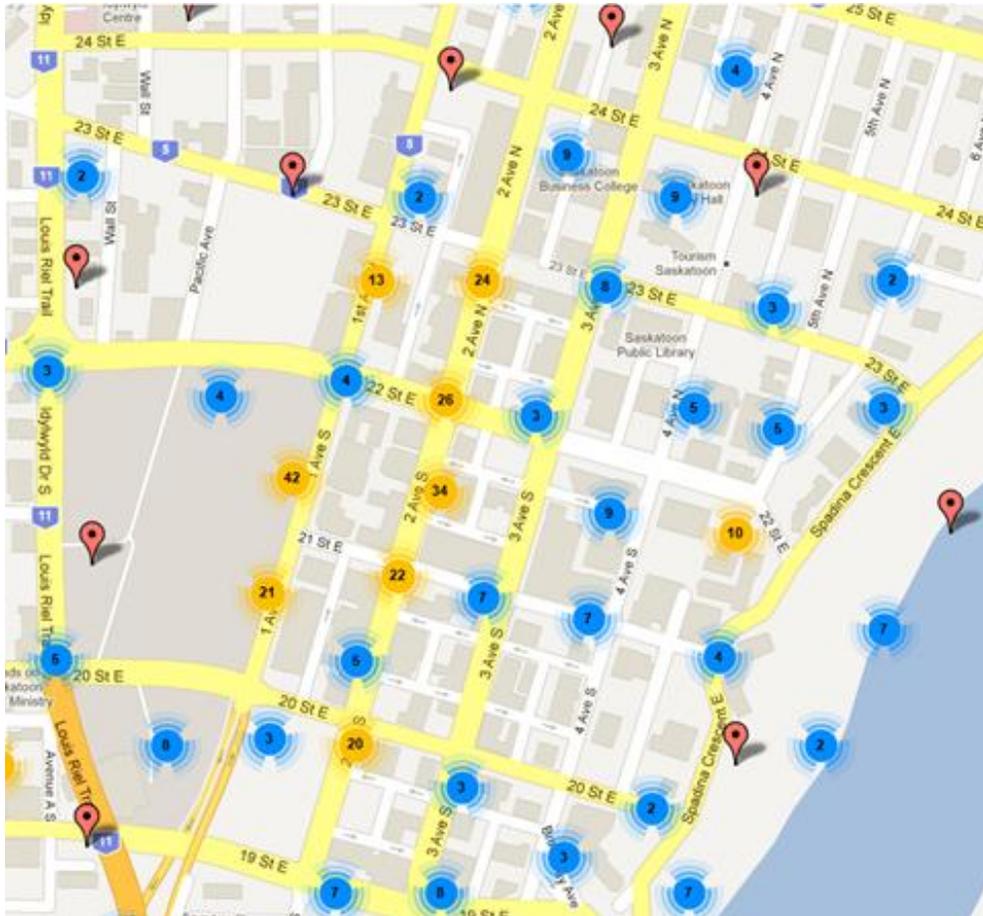
Map 1 - Survey Map of Street Activity



**LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE**

In the downtown area, both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues were the most commonly cited areas of street activity.

Map 2 - Survey Map of Street Activity in Downtown Saskatoon



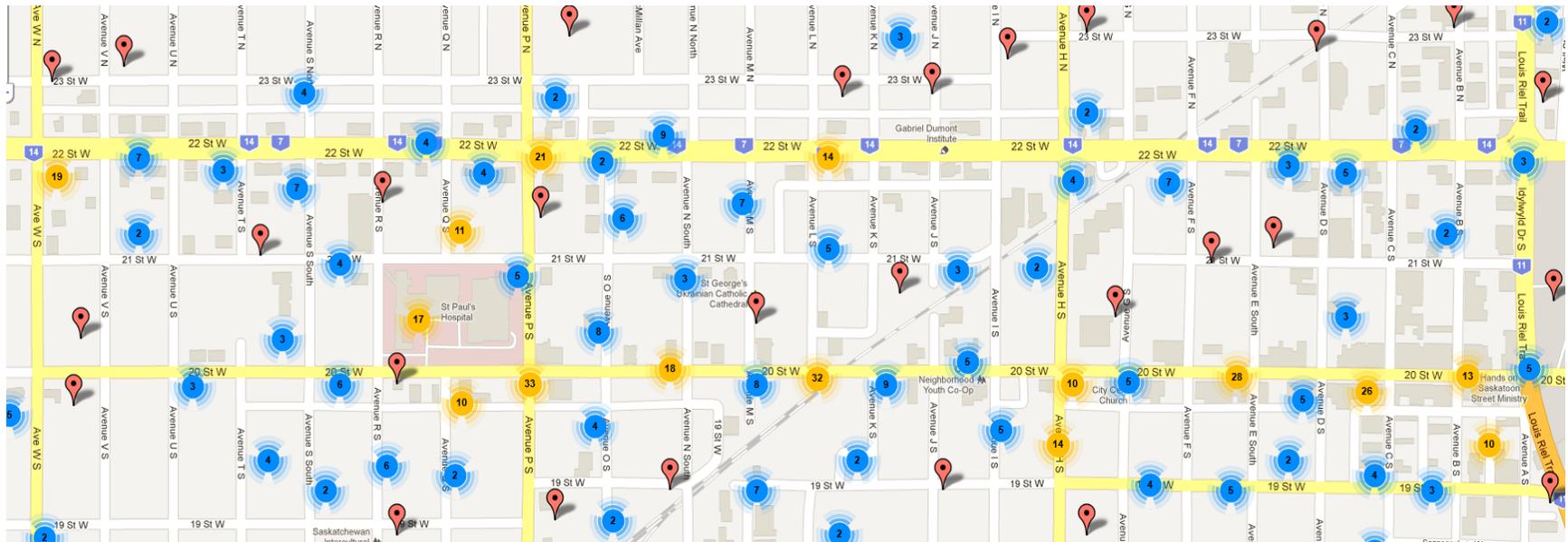
LEGEND: RED - AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW - AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE - AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE

Picture 1 - 2nd Avenue (between 21st and 23rd)



Street activity was also prevalent on streets such as 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Along 20<sup>th</sup> Street, the incidence is high at many corners, particularly Avenues B, C, E, H, L, N, and P. Following is a map regarding the prevalence of street activity in this area.

Map 3 - Survey Map of Street Activity on 19th, 20th, and 22nd.



LEGEND: RED - AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW - AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE - AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE

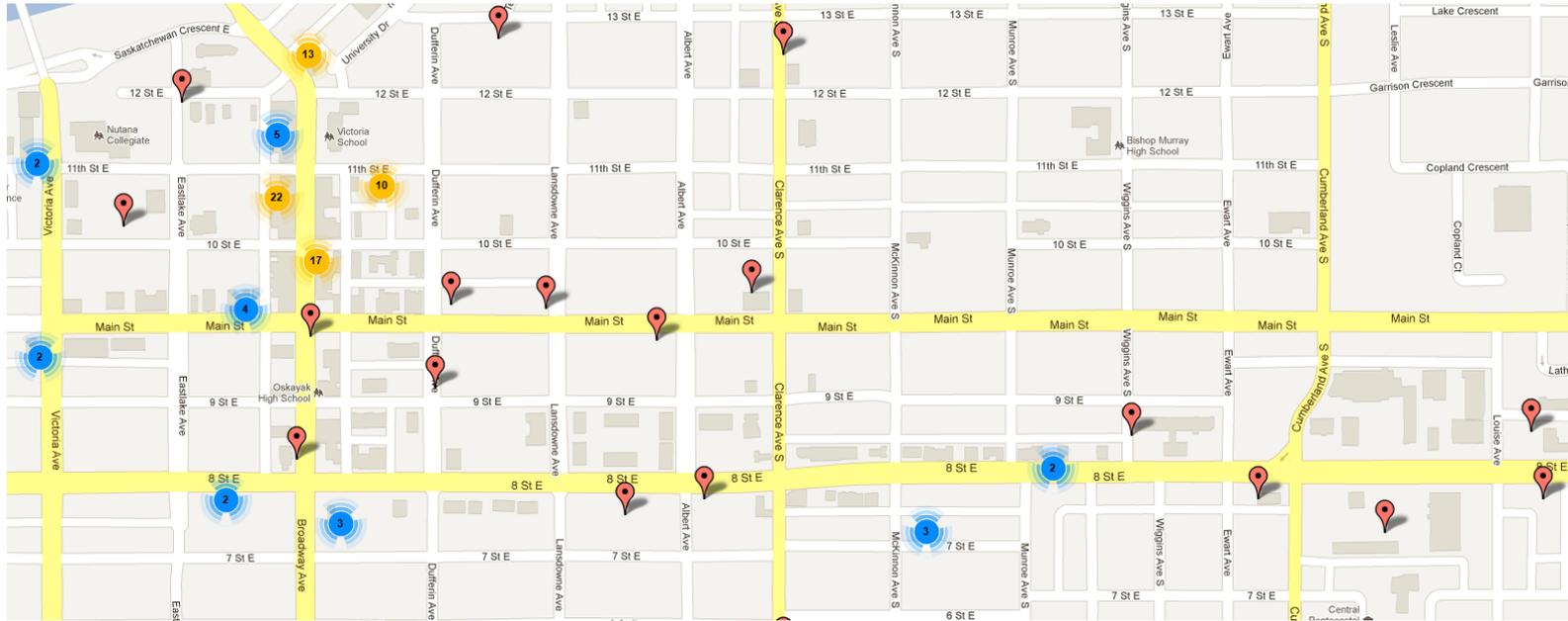
Picture 2 - 20th and Avenue E

Picture 3 - 20th between Avenue C and D



Street activity in the Broadway area was mentioned most commonly between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Map 4 - Survey Map of Street Activity on Broadway and 8th Street



LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE

Picture 4 - Broadway between 10th and 11th Street

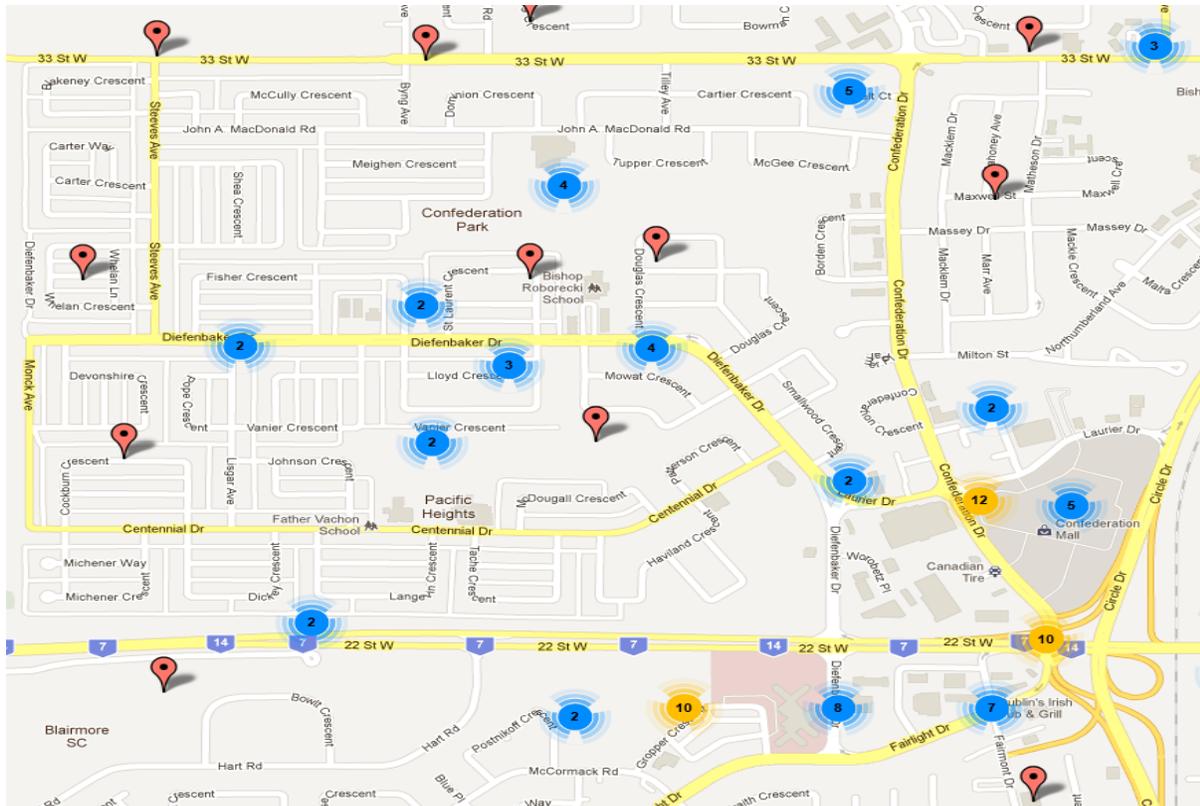


Picture 5 - Broadway (11th Street)



Street activity in the Confederation area was mentioned most commonly near the Confederation Mall.

Map 5 - Survey Map of Street Activity in Confederation.



LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE

Picture 6 - Confederation and Diefenbaker Drive



## EXPERIENCE WITH PANHANDLING

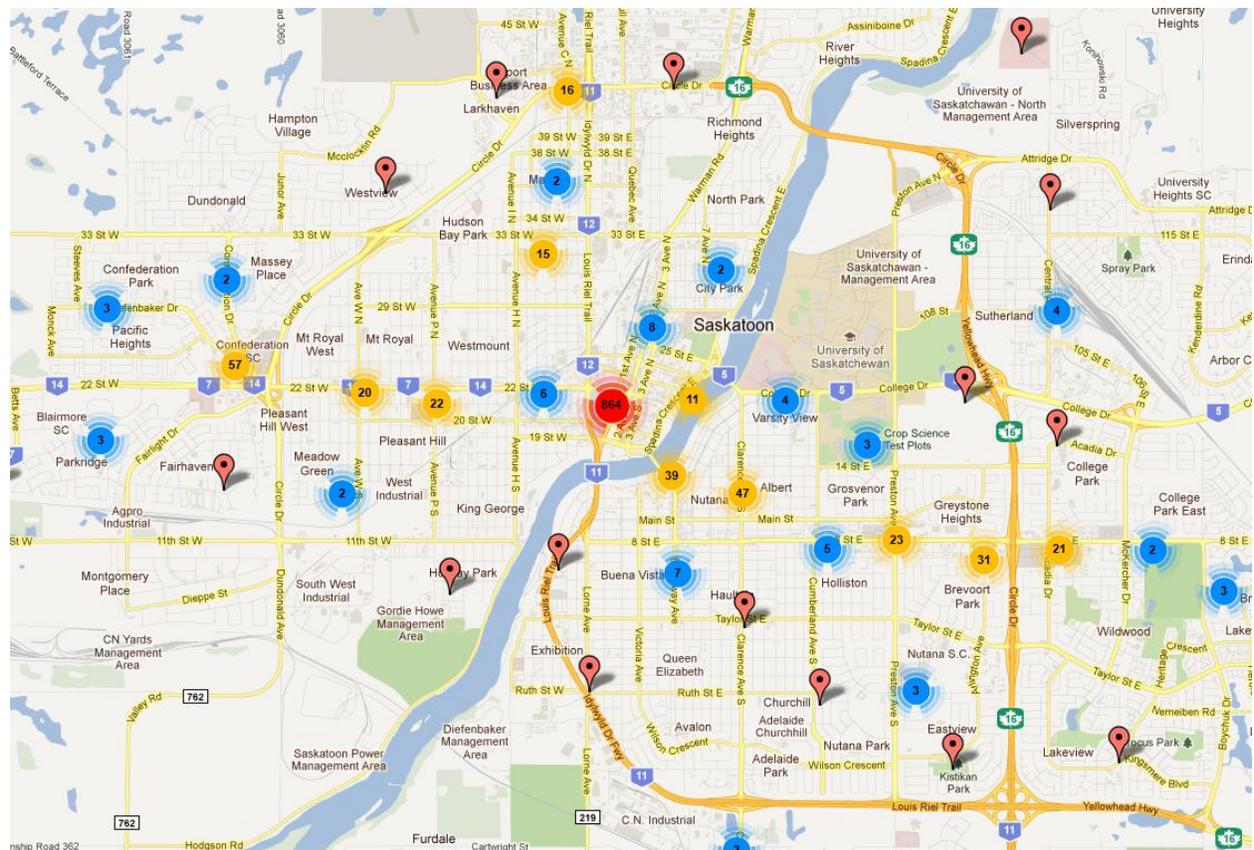
Survey respondents were asked the following question:

*Q12. Please indicate on the map where you have witnessed or encountered panhandling in the past 12 months ...*

Using Google Maps, respondents were able to zoom down to the street level to indicate where they had experienced what they perceived to be panhandling.

The following map illustrates the frequency of selection.

**Map 6 - Survey Map of Panhandling**



**LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE**

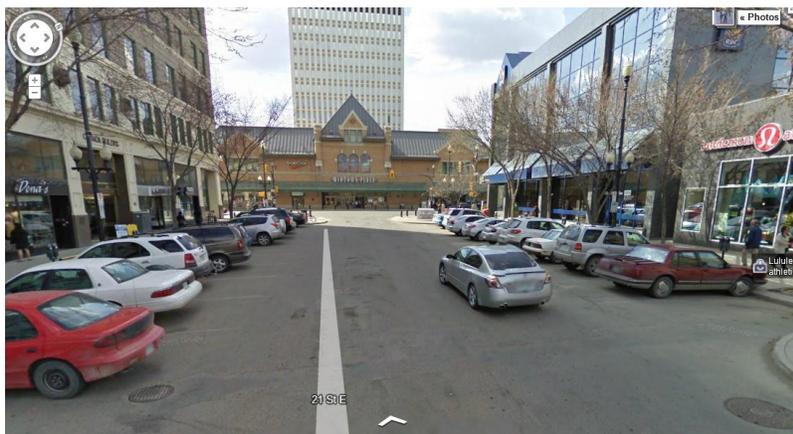
Focusing on the downtown area, the highest incidence of panhandling is in front of the Midtown Plaza and on 21<sup>st</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Map 7 - Survey Map of Panhandling in Downtown Saskatoon

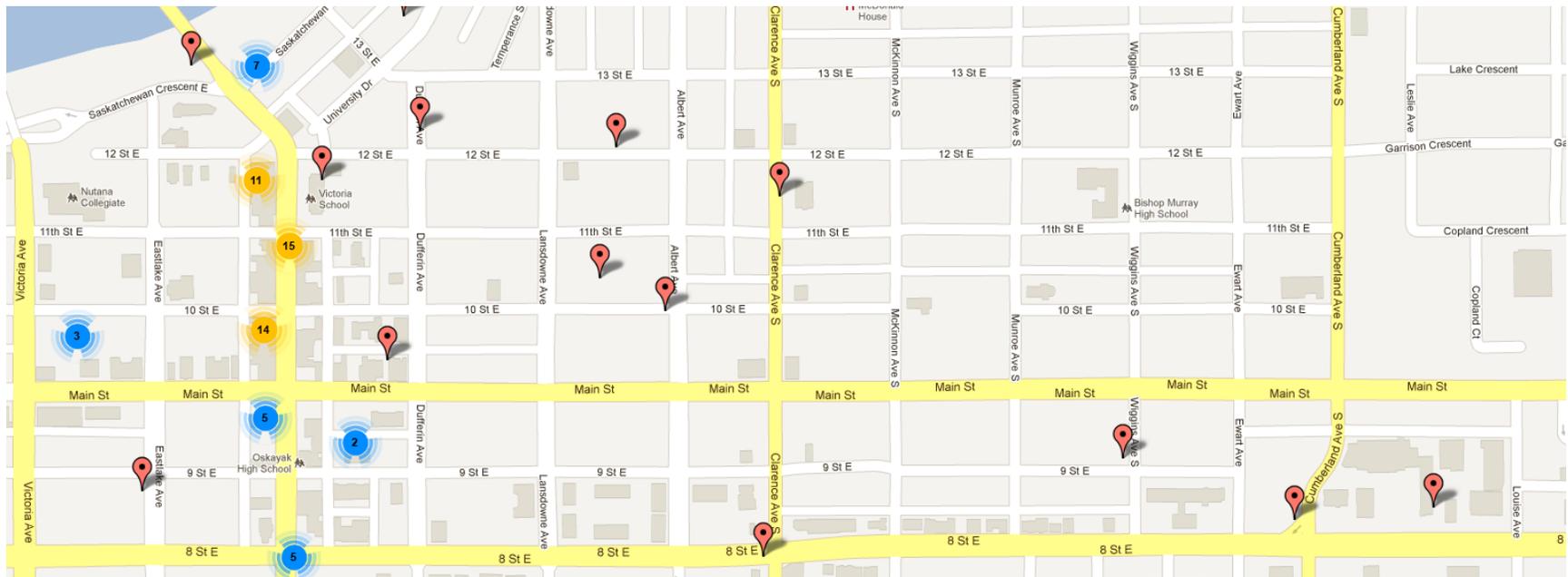


LEGEND: RED - AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW - AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE - AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE

Picture 7 - 21st Avenue looking towards Midtown Plaza



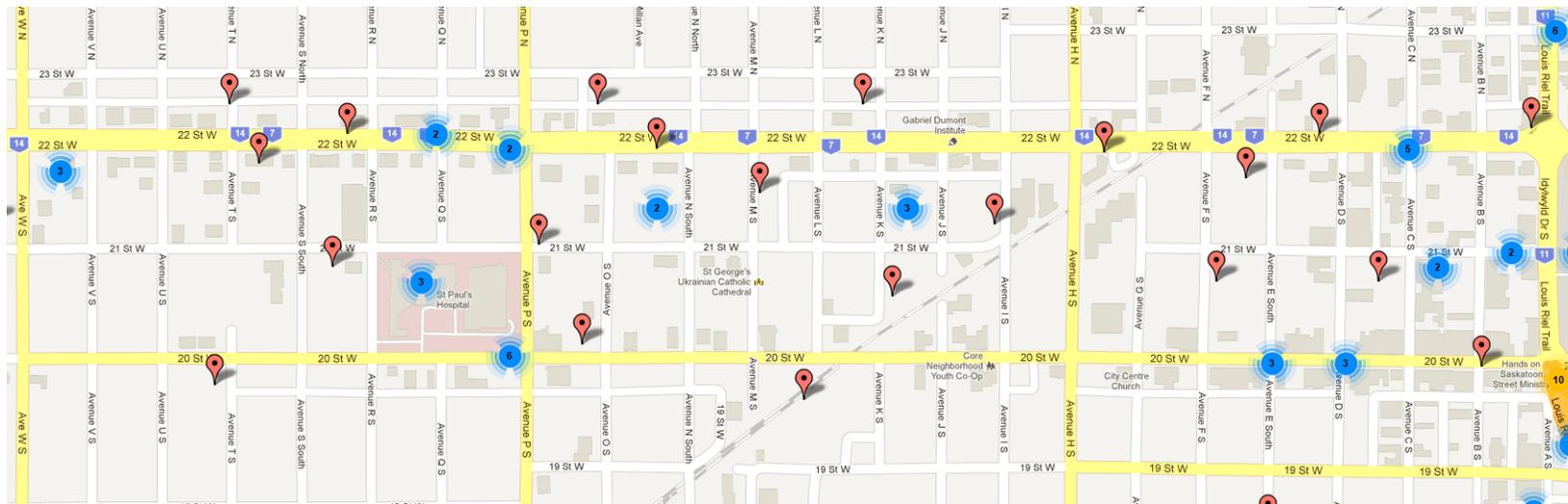
Map 8 - Survey Map of Panhandling in Broadway and 8th Street Areas



**LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE**

In terms of the incidents of panhandling on the east side of the city, the majority appears to be in the Broadway area as opposed to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, given the yellow clusters along Broadway Avenue. In particular, panhandling was concentrated between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Map 9 - Survey Map of Panhandling on 21st, 22nd and 20th Street**



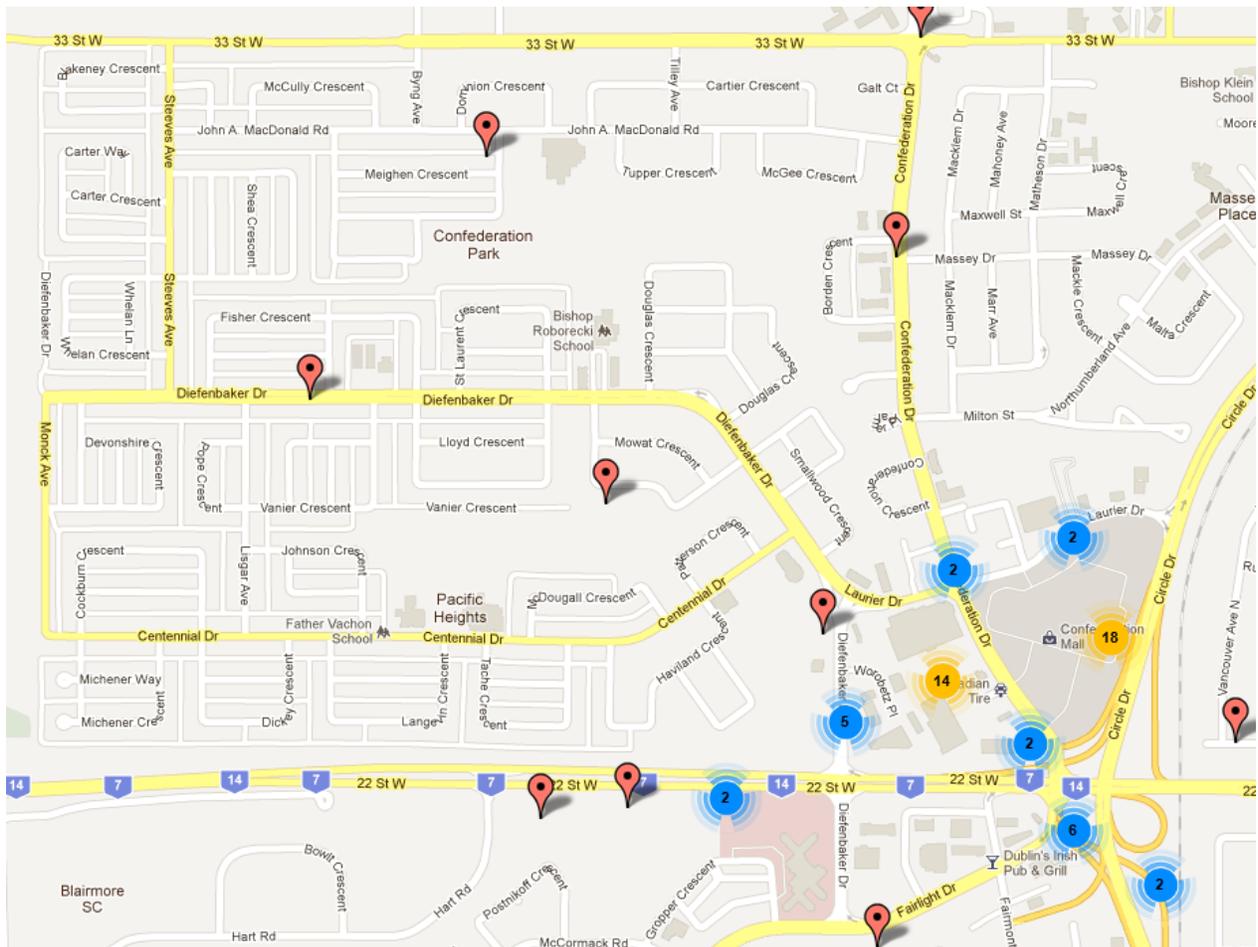
**LEGEND: RED – AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW – AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE – AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE**

The incidence of panhandling reported by survey respondents was generally less along 22<sup>nd</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Street compared to other areas of the city. This could be influenced by the number of times the survey respondents visit this area of the city. For those that did report panhandling in this area, it tended to occur in the same areas as other street activity, namely on 20<sup>th</sup> Street between Avenue C and E and near 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Avenue C.

**Picture 8 - 22nd and Avenue C**



Map 10 - Survey Map of Panhandling in Confederation

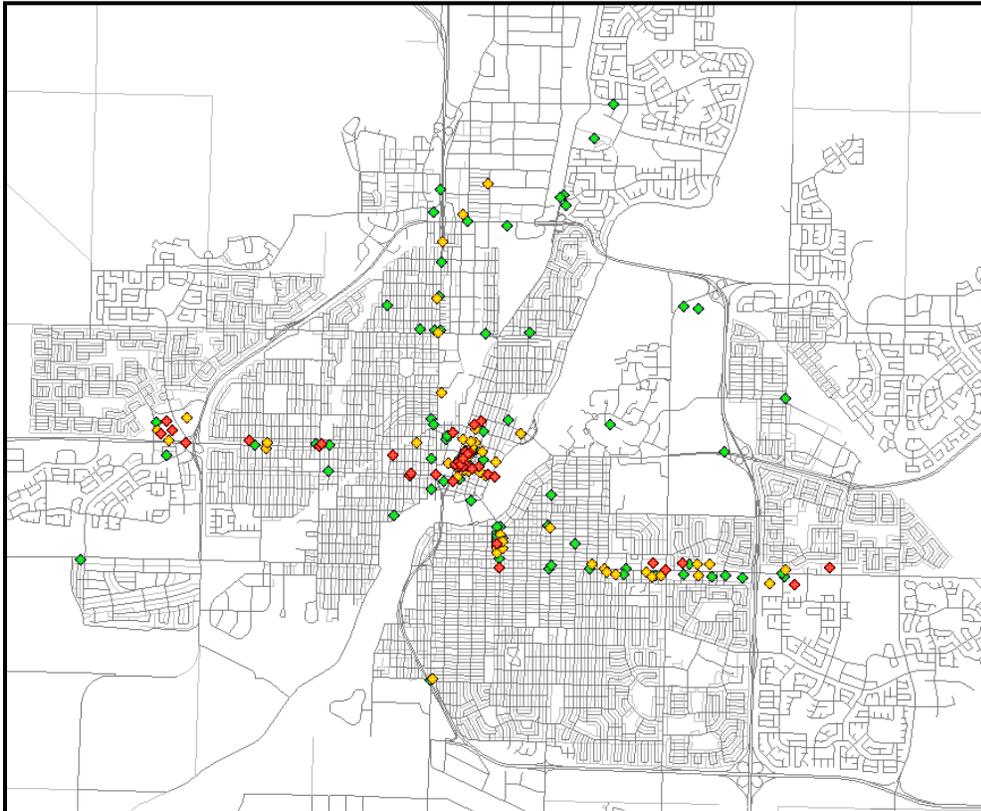


**LEGEND: RED - AREAS OF PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER INCIDENCE, YELLOW - AREAS OF MODERATE INCIDENCE, AND BLUE - AREAS OF LOW INCIDENCE**

In terms of panhandling, majority of the activity is beside the Confederation Mall and near the Superstore and Canadian Tire stores.

The researchers were also provided, by the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS), details on the actual number of reports of panhandling in Saskatoon. Below is a map of Saskatoon with the incidence of panhandling reported to the SPS.

Map 11 - SPS Reports of Incidences with Panhandlers (Spatial distribution of 10-83 CAD call in the past 5 years)



LEGEND: GREEN - 1 CALL; YELLOW - 2 CALLS; RED - 3 OR MORE CALLS

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate where in Saskatoon they had experienced panhandling. Similar to what was reported above, the incidences of panhandling were concentrated in:

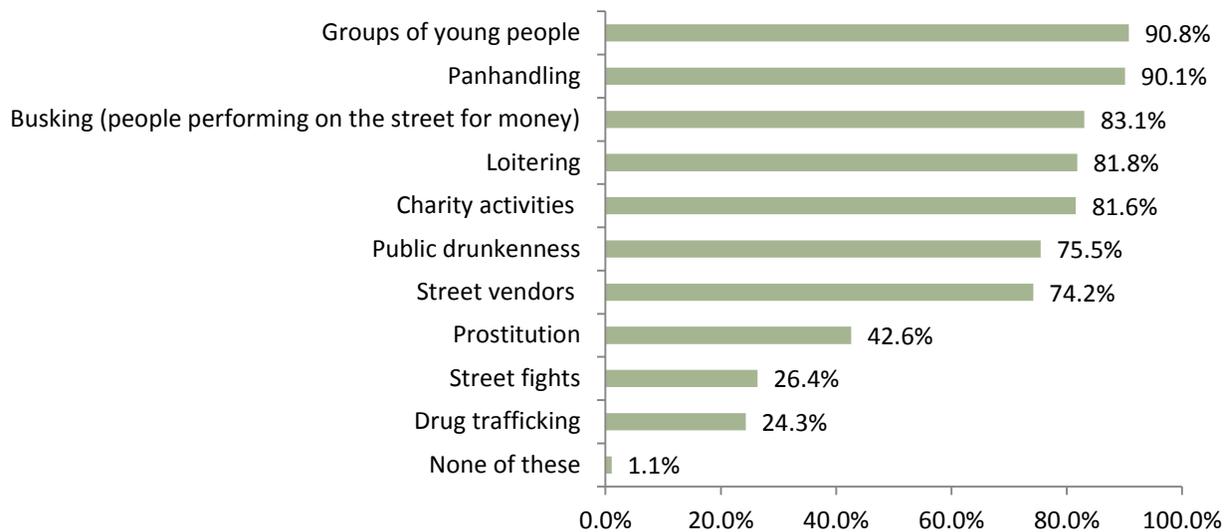
- Downtown,
- Confederation Mall,
- Broadway, and
- Along 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

However, the survey respondents were much more likely to indicate they had experienced panhandling in the downtown area. This difference is likely due to the proportion of survey respondents that have actually visited the different areas of the city.

## DETAILS ON STREET ACTIVITY

In addition to the location where the respondent experienced street activity, details on that experience were examined. In the survey, respondents were presented with a list of ten different public occurrences and asked which they have witnessed or encountered in public spaces in the *past twelve months*.

A majority have encountered many of these happenings, with groups of young people (90.8%) and panhandling (90.1%) being encountered with the highest prevalence. Busking (83.1%), loitering (81.8%), and charity activities (81.6%) were also commonly encountered, followed by public drunkenness (75.5%) and street vendors (74.2%).

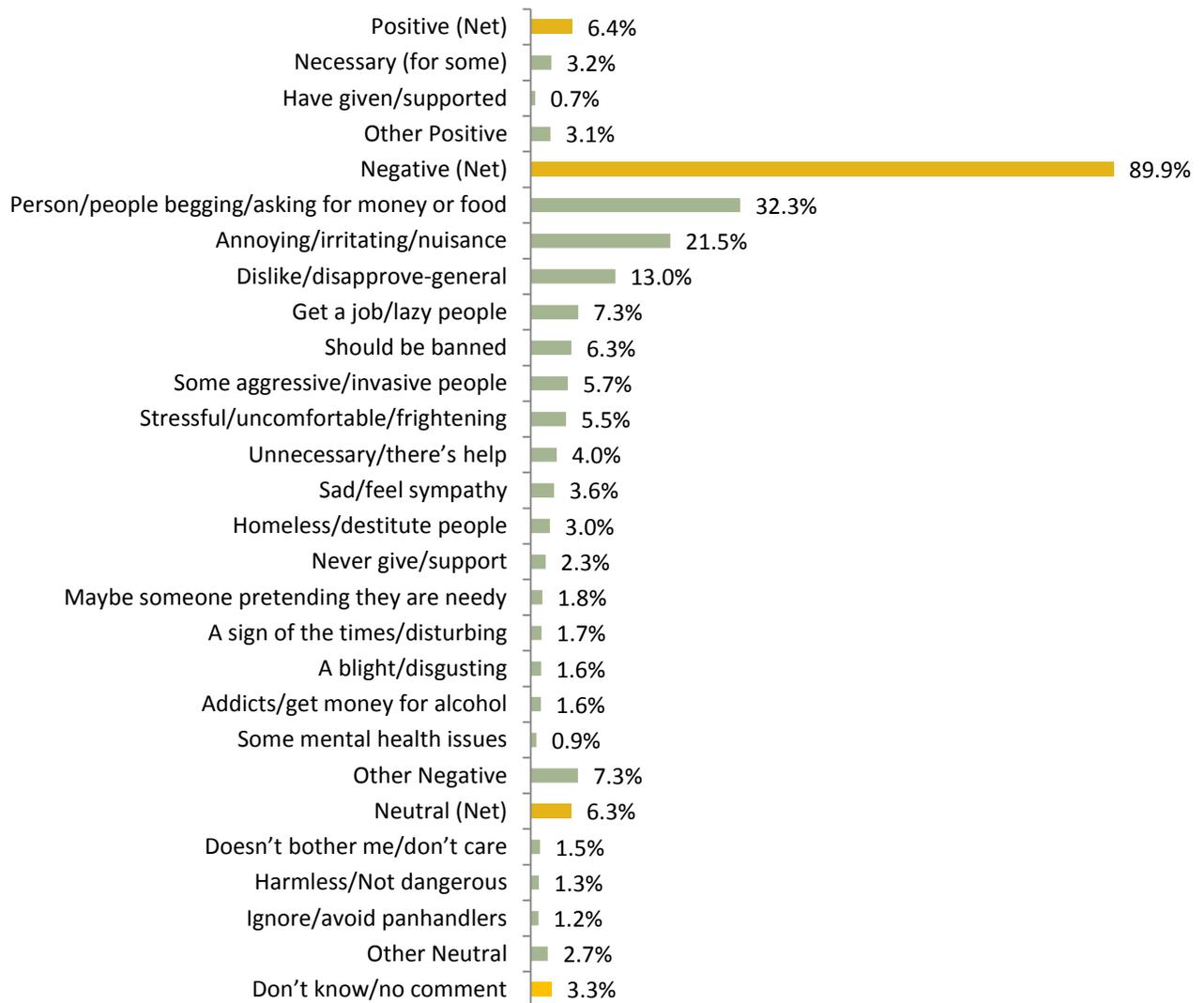


12. Which of the following activities have you witnessed or encountered in public areas in Saskatoon, such as on streets, in parks, or outside of businesses, within the past 12 months? Base: All respondents, n = 621.



## Panhandling

The unprompted, open ended descriptions of panhandling were more negative than previous descriptions of busking. Nine in ten (89.9%) described panhandling negatively, with one third (32.3%) described the occurrence as a person begging or asking for money. Two in ten (21.5%) described panhandling as annoying, irritating, or a nuisance, while over one in ten (13.0%) dislike or disapprove of panhandling in general.

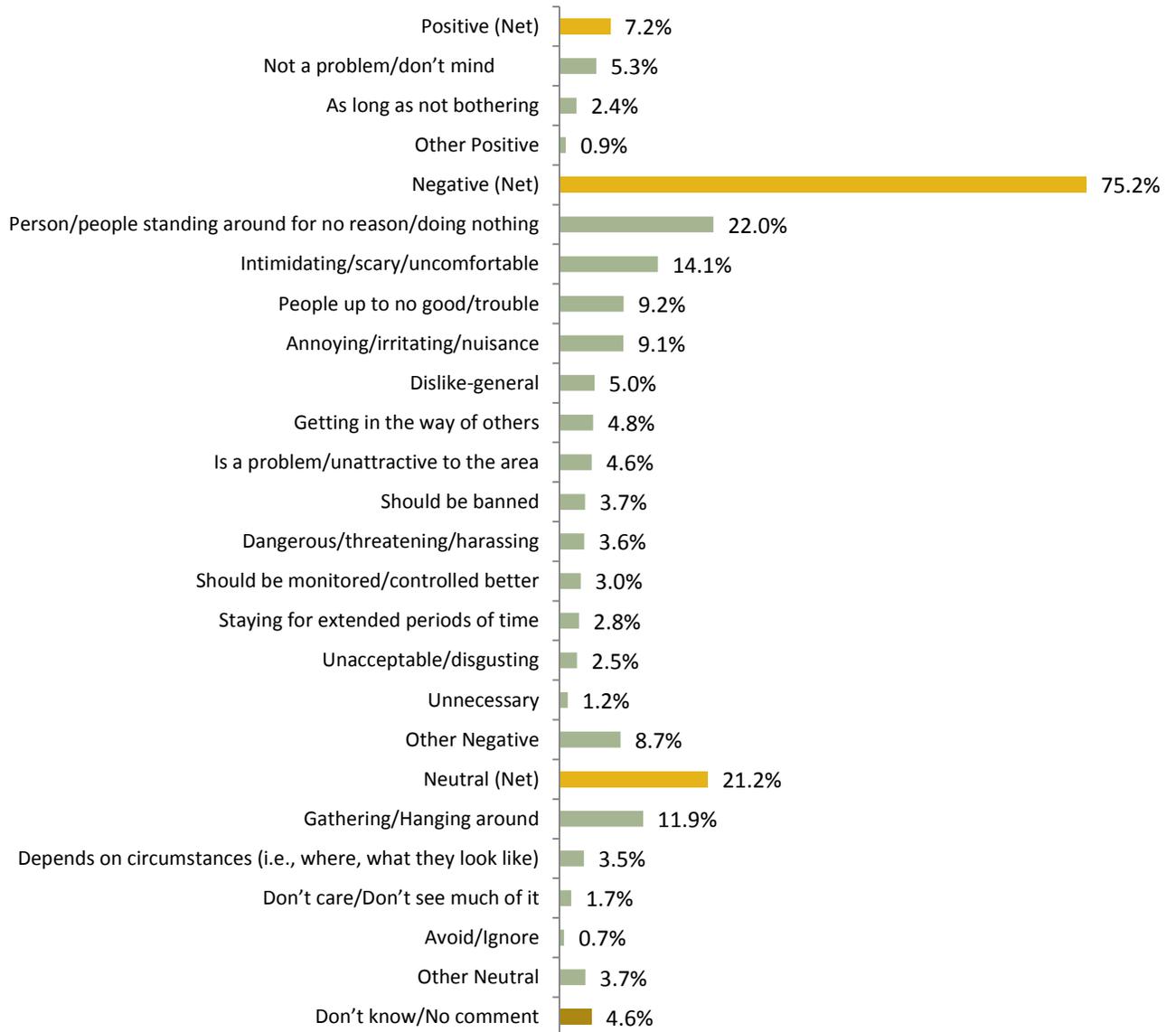


Q11. In your own words, how would you describe... (N=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

## Loitering

Similar to descriptions of panhandling, respondents described loitering in largely a negative way. Overall, three quarters of residents (75.2%) described loitering negatively, with two in ten (22.0%) describing people standing around for no reason and doing nothing, while over one in ten (14.1%) described being uncomfortable with loitering people.



Q11. In your own words, how would you describe... (n=621)

\*Multiple responses possible

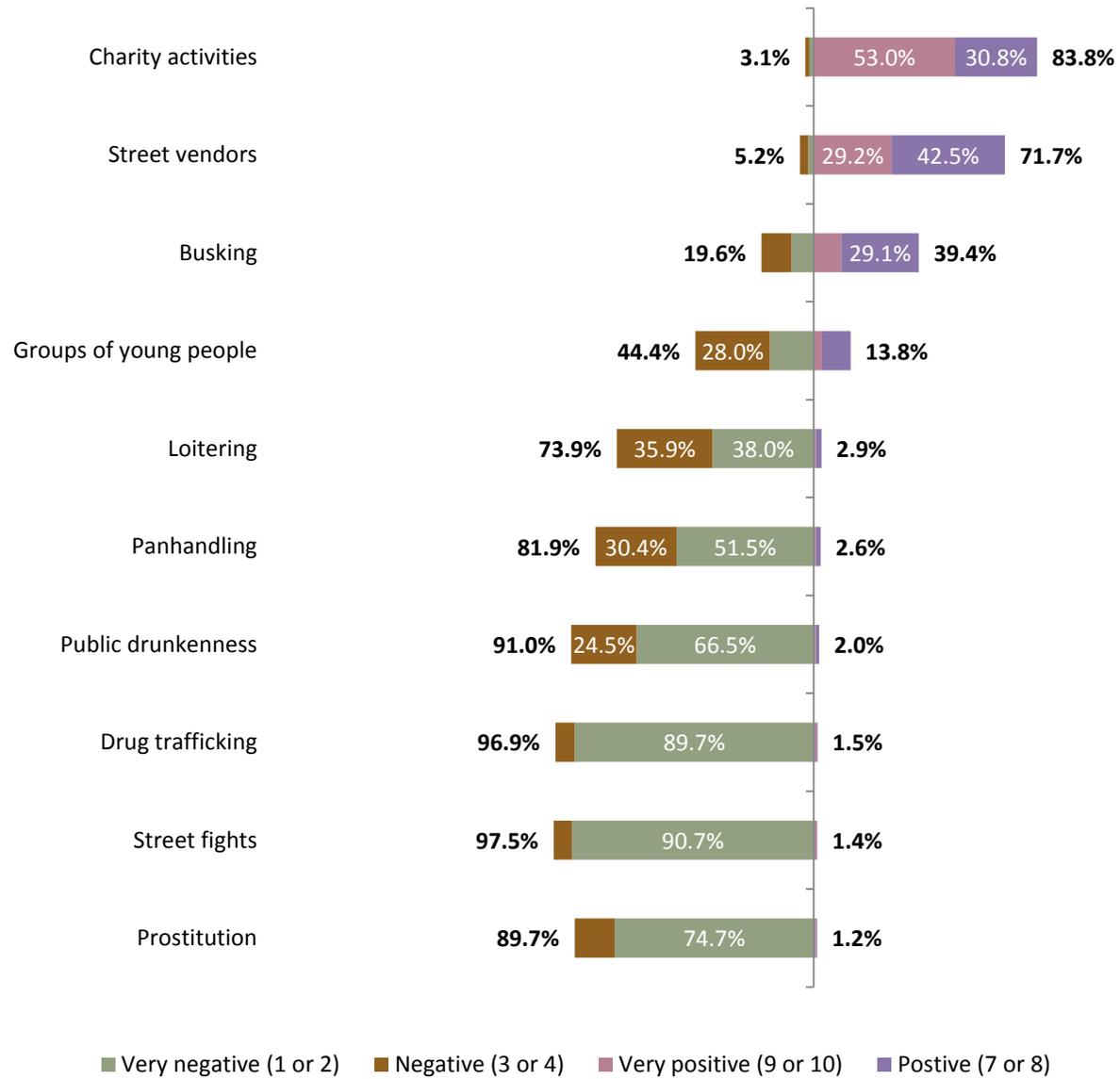
### Perceptions of Street Activity

Respondents were asked to indicate how much of an impact they feel each of the activities have on public safety in Saskatoon. When respondents used a ten point scale, where 1 is “very negative impact on public safety” and 10 is “very positive impact on public safety,” the activities seen to have the most positive impact overall, with residents rating it a 7 out of 10 or higher, include charity activities (83.8%), street vendors (71.7%), and busking (39.4%).

Most of the other activities were perceived of as largely having a negative impact on public safety, with approximately 90% mentioning drug trafficking and streets fights as being very negative. A lower proportion of respondents indicated panhandling as having a very negative impact on public safety (51.6%).

|                                | Charity activities | Street vendors | Busking | Groups of young people | Loitering | Panhandling | Public drunkenness | Prostitution | Drug trafficking | Street fights |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>Very negative (1 or 2)</b>  | 1.6%               | 2.0%           | 8.3%    | 16.4%                  | 38.0%     | 51.5%       | 66.5%              | 74.7%        | 89.7%            | 90.7%         |
| <b>Negative (3 or 4)</b>       | 1.5%               | 3.2%           | 11.3%   | 28.0%                  | 35.9%     | 30.4%       | 24.5%              | 15.0%        | 7.2%             | 6.8%          |
| <b>Neutral (5 or 6)</b>        | 13.2%              | 23.0%          | 40.9%   | 41.7%                  | 23.2%     | 15.4%       | 7.0%               | 9.2%         | 1.6%             | 1.2%          |
| <b>Positive (7 or 8)</b>       | 30.8%              | 42.5%          | 29.1%   | 10.8%                  | 2.1%      | 1.8%        | 1.2%               | 0.4%         | 0.5%             | 0.3%          |
| <b>Very positive (9 or 10)</b> | 53.0%              | 29.2%          | 10.3%   | 3.0%                   | 0.8%      | 0.8%        | 0.8%               | 0.8%         | 1.0%             | 1.1%          |

Following is a graph with the very negative, negative, positive and very positive percentages. **Neutral is excluded (a rating of 5 or 6)**. This illustrates the percentage of residents that perceive the activity as having a negative or positive impact on public safety.

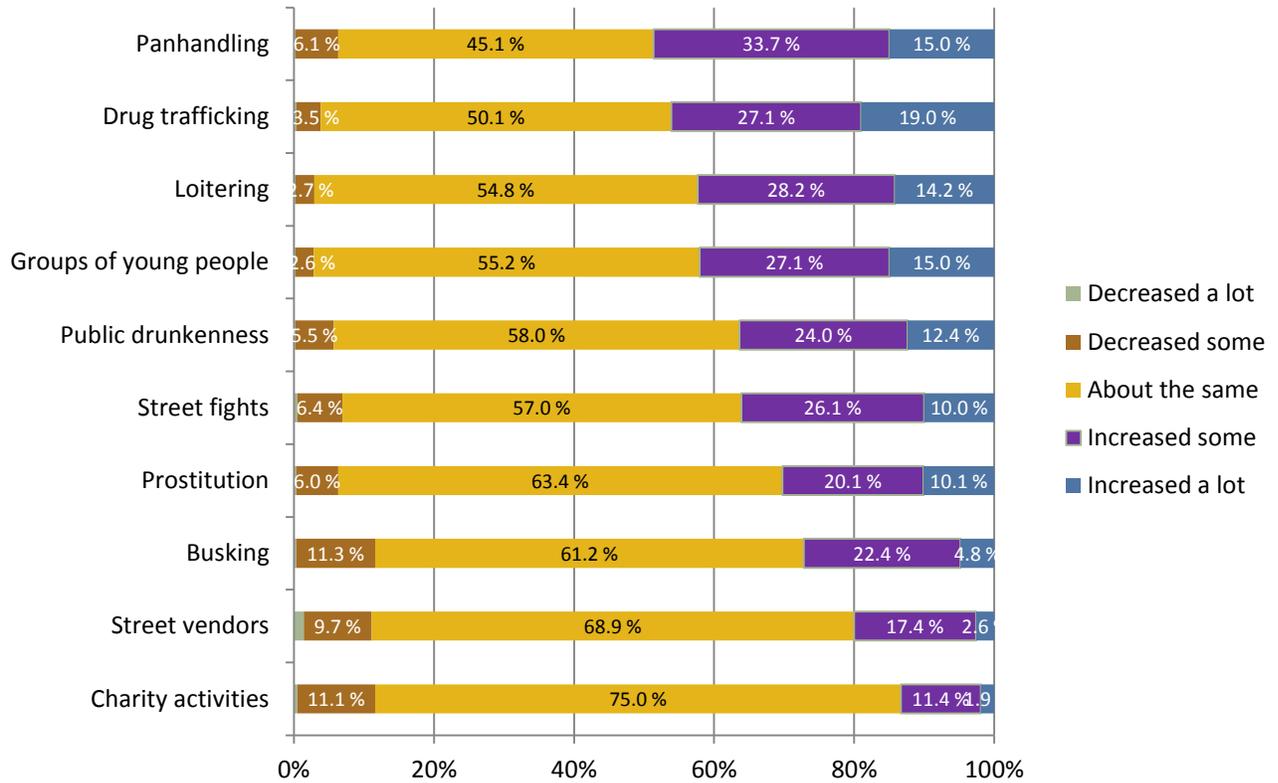


Q13. How much of a positive or negative impact does each of the following have on public safety in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they thought these activities were increasing or decreasing over the past three years.

Panhandling is seen by nearly one half of responding residents (48.7%) as increasing either some (33.7%) or a lot (15.0%).

Drug trafficking (46.1%), loitering (42.4%), and groups of young people (42.1%) are also seen as increasing either some or a lot.



Q14. Do you feel each of these activities has increased, decreased, or remained about the same, compared to three years ago?  
Base: All respondents, n = 621

## In-Person Intercepts – Prevalence of Negative Street Activity

To better understand the prevalence of panhandling and street activity in the different areas of the city, interviewers conducted intercepts with residents to better gain an appreciation for the types of activities occurring in the different areas. Of those interviewed, here are a few comments:

### Downtown

|  |
|--|
| <b>Panhandling</b>   |
| During the day they are a nuisance. You can't even walk on 21st street in front of Midtown Plaza, it's very bad.   |
| Panhandlers here are not dangerous.  |
| They are all the same people.  |
| Seeing the panhandling is like an everyday thing.  |
| They look like if you have money then they'll rob you  |
| Reading the paper makes me think they are very negative  |
| <b>Drunkenness</b>   |
| Alcohol can make people aggressive down here   |
| Most addictions like drugs and alcohol can make people do things like stabbing. It's worse now because people don't know where to go to get help.              |
| On 2 <sup>nd</sup> there is all the bars and young people can get pretty riled up.   |
| I've encountered when they've been in inebriated or on drugs and you don't know what can happen  |
| They might try to push you around  |
| <b>Criminal Activities</b>   |
| There is violence, drugs and gangs in this area.   |
| Gangs are a problem because there is a lot of young people that are influenced to join them.   |
| More gang activities, more rapid drug use.   |
| My friends move to Warman. They used to live by the bus terminal. There were more break-ins and drug activity, they're a young family and wanted to feel safe. |
| When they leave needles on the streets little kids could get hurt.   |
| You never know what they are doing in 22nd.  |
| <b>Fights</b>  |
| I have seen people that have been killed that tried to stop a fight.   |
| <b>Young People</b>  |
| It's like young people are roaming around at a younger age.  |
| The police are good they keep people moving along.   |
| More vagrants around this area. It should be policed more.   |
| Groups of young people like to hang out and cause fights with people   |
| It makes me feel that could be part of a gang  |
| They tend to have less sense of responsibility   |
| Nervous about the ones that hang around the bus mall   |
| <b>Loitering</b>   |
| Worry at the bus terminal. I worry about it because I am carrying a purse.   |

### Riversdale

|   |
|---|
| <b>Fights</b>   |
| Lots of fighting everywhere with gangs  |
| Many people are getting beat up   |
| <b>Loitering</b>  |
| Young people are always around at night. The young ones( youth) come down this way and hang out.                      |
| Many of young people around.  |
| <b>Criminal Activities</b>  |
| Gangs are the issue here. I have been robbed before.  |
| <b>Poverty</b>  |
| There are lots of social problems. To many people having babies that they can't afford it.                            |
| Rent and poverty are on the rise.   |
| Many people down here need help. They need help for health reasons, dealing with addictions and many homeless people. |

### Confederation

|   |
|---|
| <b>Panhandling</b>  |
| It is a bit scary, you don't know if they will grab your purse if you are getting change. |

|   |
|---|
| Being approached by scruffy people during the day, it's ok but does make me feel uncomfortable. |
| During my work hours I see them by the bus stops  |
| <b>Criminal Activities</b>  |
| It's the young people driving in the evening or morning with a beer in their hand.              |
| <b>Drunkness</b>  |
| They approach you and sometimes they are quite belligerent.                                     |
| Drunks are a big problem in this area   |
| <b>Prostitution</b>   |
| See them and I feel bad for the women who do it because it's unsafe for them                    |
| <b>Busking</b>  |
| See them and they don't worry me at all.  |
| I don't feel unsafe around buskers.   |
| <b>Groups of Young People</b>   |
| They won't get out of your way or they dare you.  |
| You see even girls. They are getting involved with wrong crowds and getting stabbed.            |
| Young people are very rude and aggressive   |
| Young people make me feel unsafe and uncomfortable.   |
| Sometimes they become excited when they are drunk   |
| <b>Loitering</b>  |
| It bothers me as I wonder if they are going to break into something.                            |
| They approach you sometimes. It is good we now have security out here.                          |
| I have to watch these people who hang around for no reason                                      |

## Broadway

|   |
|---|
| <b>Panhandling</b>  |
| I don't think the panhandlers are violent here.   |
| They should be trying to get a job.   |
| <b>Drunks</b>   |
| See them and a bit concerned. Because they don't make very good decisions when they are drunk and they are more easily angered. |
| There are a lot of bars in the area; not that is a criticism. Expect more of this given there are bars here.                    |
| Drunks end up panhandling sometimes.  |
| <b>Fighting</b>   |
| I've seen a lot of violence and street fights and found a machete lying around once   |
| <b>Vendors</b>  |
| Sometimes they block sidewalks and people have to push and shove to get by.   |
| <b>Young People</b>   |
| There is a lot of younger people loitering and littering.   |
| In this area there are no Indian posse that hangs around  |
| <b>Loitering</b>  |
| There is a lot of people that loiter in the area.   |
| <b>Prostitution</b>   |
| I haven't seen any prostitution around here.  |

## 8<sup>th</sup> Street

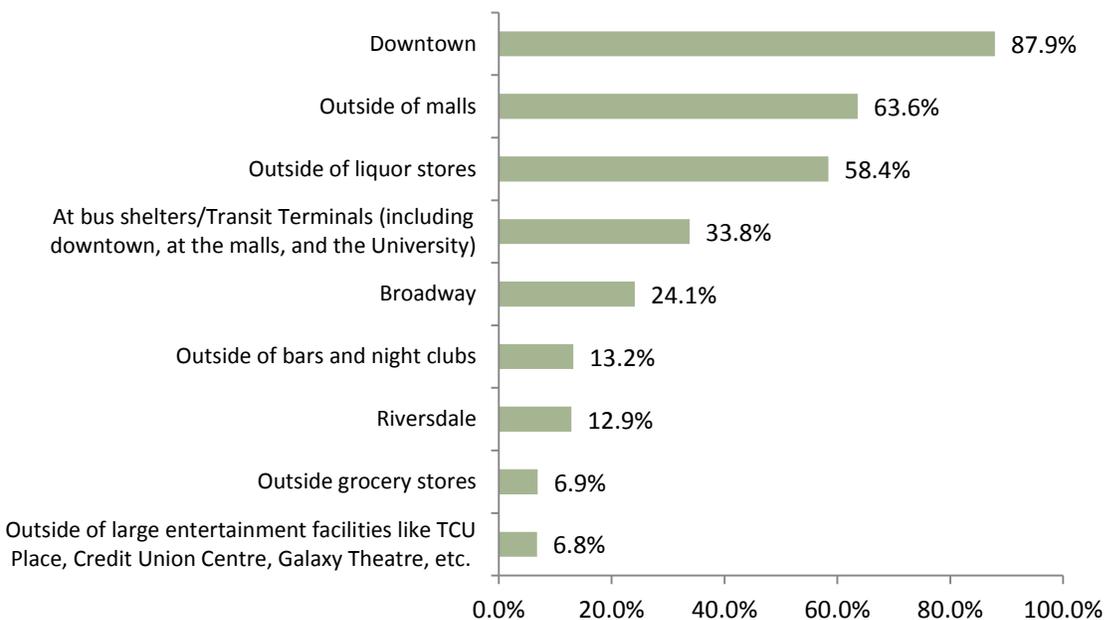
|  |
|--|
| <b>Panhandling</b>   |
| There are not many panhandlers. The youth and gangs are more in the low income area.   |
| <b>Criminal Activities</b>   |
| I always hear good stuff about this area   |
| I haven't seen anything that would make me feel less safe. There was a kid that was shot but those people came to this side of the city. |
| You can't build a wall around an area and think that'll make it safe   |
| The youth and gangs are more in the low income area.   |

As noted above, many of the comments related to panhandlers are that they are a nuisance, not nice to see, etc. However, there were a number of comments regarding the concern for one's safety in terms of gangs, criminal activities, and groups of young people.

## PANHANDLING

The survey did ask a few more questions in regards to panhandling specifically, as this was raised by the Steering Committee as an issue to look at closely.

Respondents were provided a list of locations and asked where they *think* panhandling commonly occurs in the city. Similar to the maps and their experience with panhandling, almost 9 in 10 associated panhandling with downtown (87.9%). Over six in ten (63.6%) referenced panhandlers outside of malls, while over one half (58.4%) referenced it outside of liquor stores. One third (33.8%) believe that panhandlers are most commonly found at bus or transit terminals. One quarter (24.1%) feel they are most commonly on Broadway.

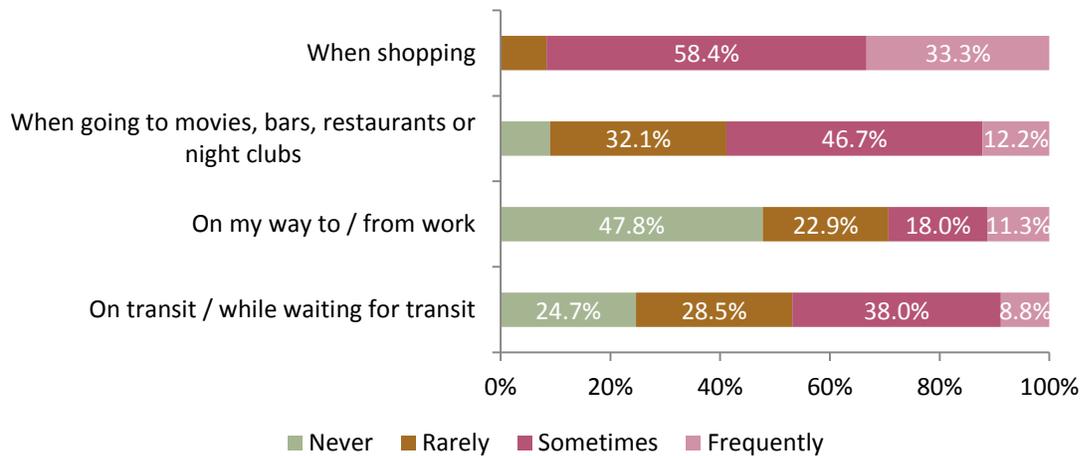


Q22. Where in Saskatoon do you think panhandling commonly occurs? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

\*Multiple responses possible

Those respondents who mentioned they had an encounter with a panhandler in the past 12 months (563 out of 621 respondents) were asked about the frequency of encountering panhandlers in different situations in the last 12 months.

One third (33.3%) encounter panhandlers frequently when shopping. Six in ten (58.4%) encounter them sometimes when shopping. Over one in ten (12.2%) frequently encounter panhandlers when going to movies, bars, restaurants or night clubs, while nearly one half (46.7%) sometimes encounter panhandlers in this circumstance.

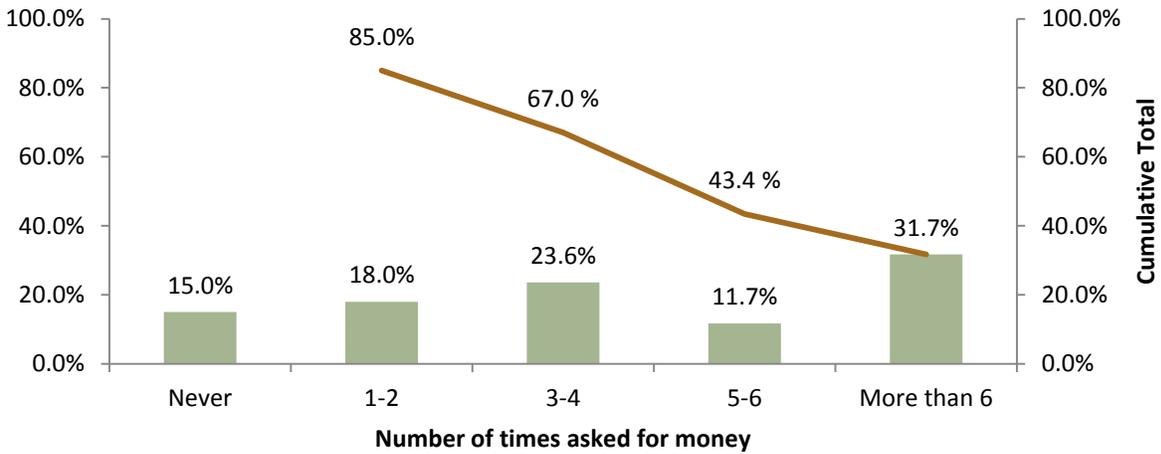


23. How frequently do you witness or encounter panhandlers in Saskatoon in each of the following situations? Base: Respondents who have encountered panhandling in the last 12 months, excluding not applicable, n = 563.

In addition to the above situations, respondents were given the ability to provide “other” situations in the survey. A sample of these verbatim responses can be found below, with a full selection being located in Appendix A.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Sometimes outside restaurants</i>                  | <i>Outside a bank branch I frequent</i>  |
| <i>Sunday, in front of St. Paul's Cathedral</i>       | <i>Those "travellers" standing on the side of the road looking to go to the west coast</i> |
| <i>Outside convenience stores</i>                     | <i>When driving in traffic they are sometimes on a boulevard with a sign!</i>              |
| <i>While waiting at bus stops west of 22nd street</i> | <i>Stores like 7-11, MACS</i>  |

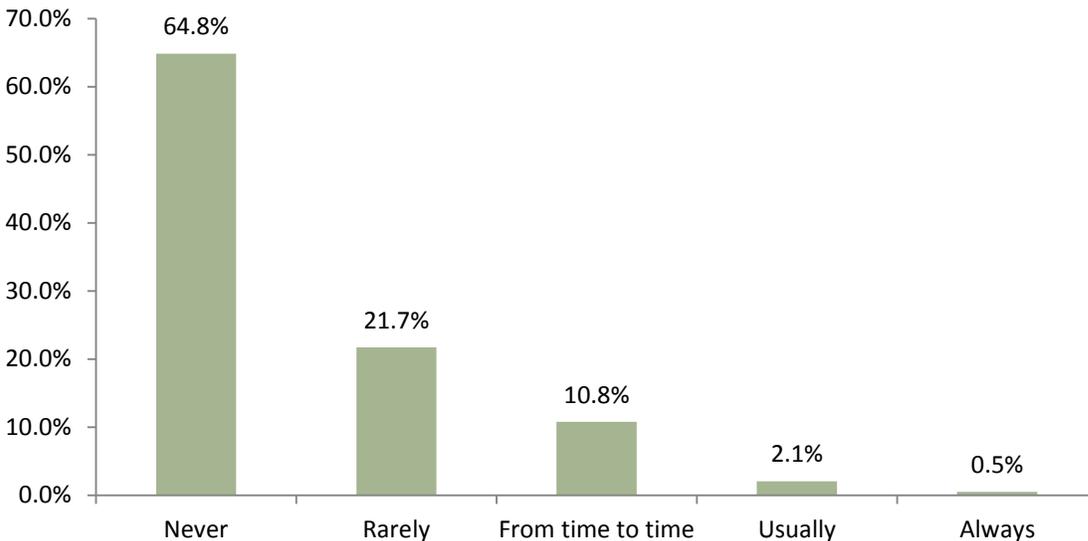
Among all respondents who answered the survey, a vast majority (85.0%) have been verbally asked for money at least once. Nearly one third (31.7%) have been asked more than six times.



Q26. Approximately how many times has a panhandler verbally asked you for money in the past 12 months?

Survey respondents were asked if they donate to panhandlers. More than six in ten (64.8%) say they never donate money, food, or any other items to panhandlers. Nearly one quarter (21.7%) rarely donate, while one in ten (10.8%) donate from time to time.

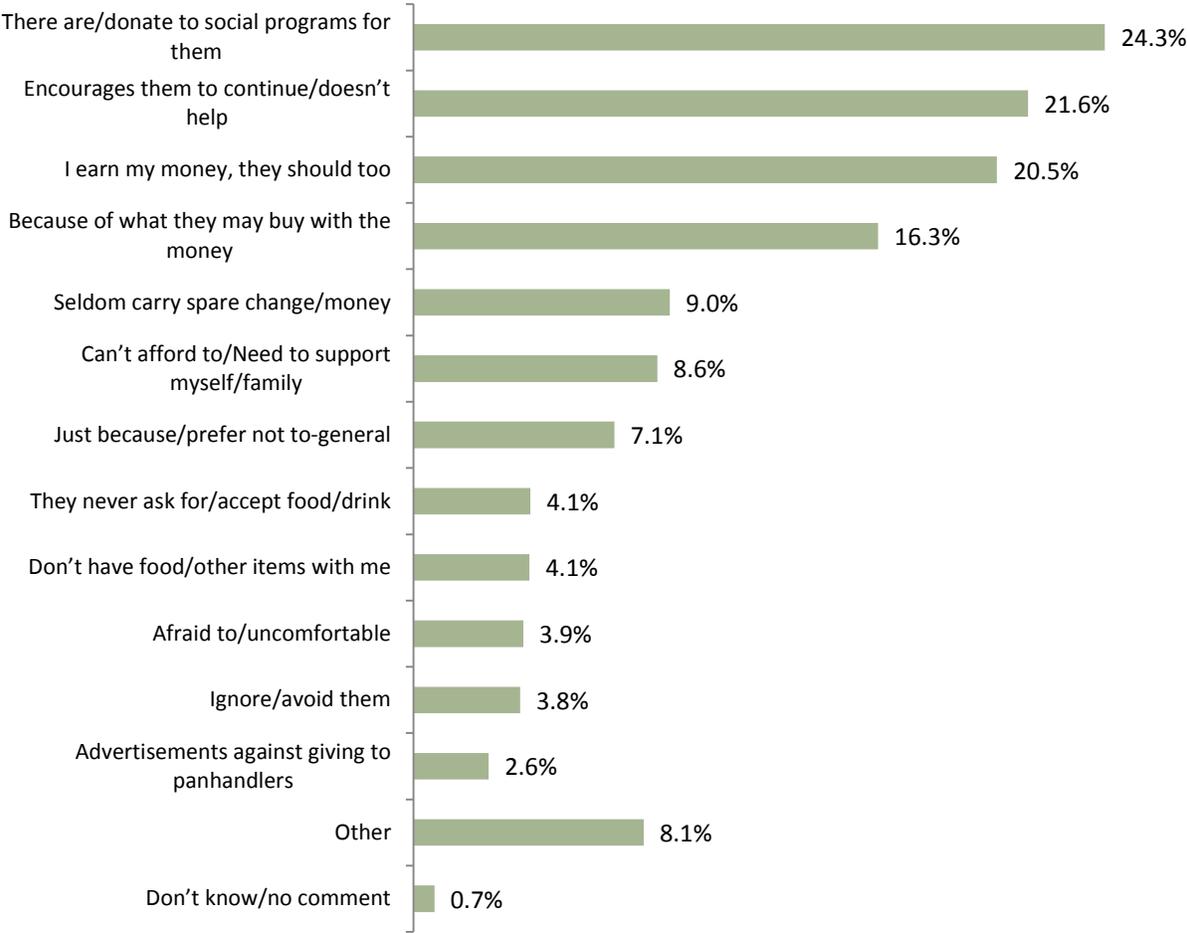
Aboriginal respondents are more likely to donate to panhandlers from time to time (28.6%) compared to non-Aboriginals (10.6%).



26. How often do you give money, food or other items to panhandlers? Base: All respondents, n=621.

Of those respondents who do not give to panhandlers (474 out of 621 total respondents), the main reasons for NOT donating to panhandlers vary.

One quarter (24.3%) do not donate because there are social programs available. Two in ten (21.6%) feel that it does not help panhandlers because it encourages the activity. 20.5% believe panhandlers should earn their money like everyone else, and over one in ten (16.3%) do not donate because they worry about what panhandlers may purchase with the money.



Q27. Why do you rarely or never give money, food or other items to panhandlers? Base: Respondents who have encountered panhandlers in the past 12 months and rarely or never give panhandlers food, money, or other items, n = 474.

\*Multiple responses possible

Of those respondents who DO give to panhandlers, the following reasons for donating were provided:

*I figure it takes guts to ask people for money. You need to either be really in desperate need of the money or enjoy conning people.*

*I feel it is kind. We are all responsible to help our neighbours. It is a rather insignificant amount and they are most likely in need of a 'hand'.*

*About 5 years ago, I saw a downtown business owner treat a panhandler poorly, so I gave him money just to piss the guy off and I have always given money since.*

*Usually food or coffee. It is a neighbourly action.*

*I've been there. I have more resources than they do. I am a kind person. I have compassion. What I give them can make their situation easier.*

*Because I have money to share.*

*Because our system doesn't provide enough aid for these people.*

*Because I feel bad for them.*

*I know they need it and it costs me little to contribute DIRECTLY with those who need it. The money does not go through ivory tower charities, who selectively give how they see fit.*

*I feel if I can afford it, they have a need that I can help with.*

*I have compassion for them.*

*I give food or coffee because I know then that they can't use it to support their addiction, and I know they are nutritionally deprived.*

*Depends on what I have.*

*Because they're people in need. I can spare it. The dollar or two dollars or McDonald's sandwich or coffee means more to them than it does to me.*

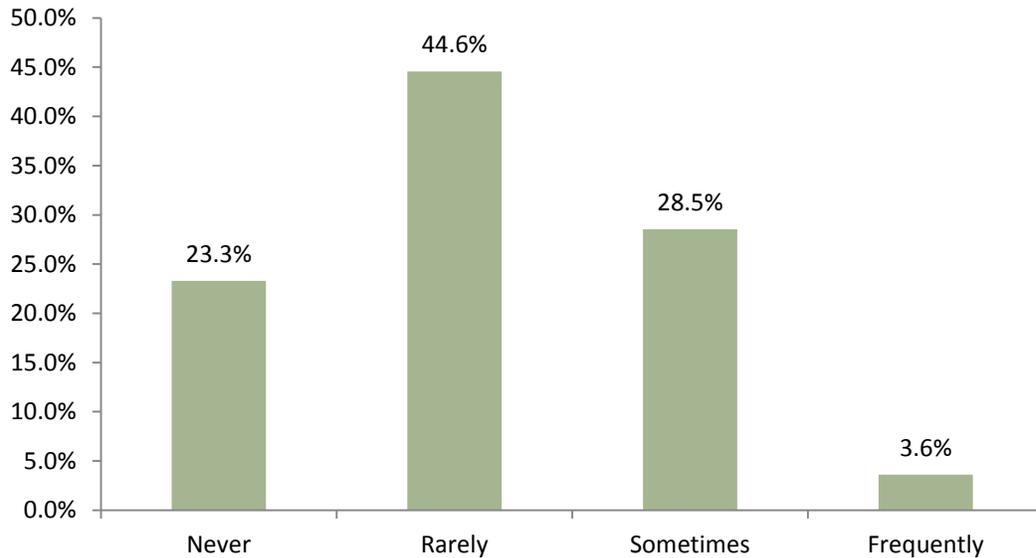
*Because there is a good chance that the panhandler is homeless, addicted and has mental health problems.*

*Because if I was in their situation, I like to think someone would do the same for me. I've been poor. It's not fun.*

*Mostly because I know them and I feel they need help with food.*

Q28. Why do you always or usually give money, food or other items to panhandlers?

Exposure to panhandling perceived as aggressive varies, with only 3.6% encountering aggressive panhandling frequently, and three in ten (28.5%) encountering such activity sometimes. Please note that aggressive behaviour was not defined, rather, emphasis was placed on the perception of the respondent as to what was aggressive.



Q29. How often have you witnessed or encountered a panhandler acting aggressively? Base: Respondents who have encountered panhandling in the last 12 months, n = 561

In order to better understand what residents thought was aggressive behaviour, during the intercepts, residents were also asked to describe any instances of aggressive behaviour they might have experienced. Many comments relate to someone asking for money repeatedly (and sometimes following them). Here are a few of their comments:

|  |
|--|
| Moo moo lady down here, she won't leave you alone, she'll keep bugging you.  |
| I was on 20th street picking up coolers and two guys came after me trying to jump me for my coolers.   |
| I wasn't followed but I have had derogatory (bitch, whore) terms yelled at me when I don't have money to give.   |
| There is a lady that walks down here all the time and she is kind of loud and in your face. I ignore her and walk right by. I have seen her down on 21st street and 22nd street. |
| Downtown bus mall-she was trying to grab my arm and I jumped into the traffic to get away.   |
| On 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue they won't leave me alone. They ask over and over again and panhandlers will go aggressive and ask 20 times and try to change your mind.               |
| On 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue - he swore at me over cigarettes.  |
| Downtown and Broadway, they are very obnoxious, foul language and spitting.  |
| Midtown Plaza. His manner of approach and tone of voice was threatening.   |
| Sometimes they are right in your face and push you around if you say you don't have money to give.   |
| There is a couple that will get in your face and are a little pushy with you to get money.   |
| Downtown they follow me asking for change and harass me.   |
| Demanding something and calling me white boy.  |
| They follow, yell at you and swear at you.   |
| A lady approached me and it made me very mad, and she bugs me always.  |
| They think they know you and they're conn artists. They try to make you believe what yours is theirs.  |
| A man was very persistent and he had to be told to leave this area by several people.  |
| It was in the parking lot at the Canadian wholesale. A woman gave me her sob story. She wouldn't take food she wanted money so I reported her.                                   |
| Sometimes they follow you for the distance as you are walking and they keep asking even if you don't have change.  |

A long time ago in the Confederation mall there was a guy who had a deaf card. I said no and he started yelling at me, calling me foul names and giving me the finger.

It was someone who I've seen a few times and asked me for bus money. I called him on it and he threw a cup of coffee at me.

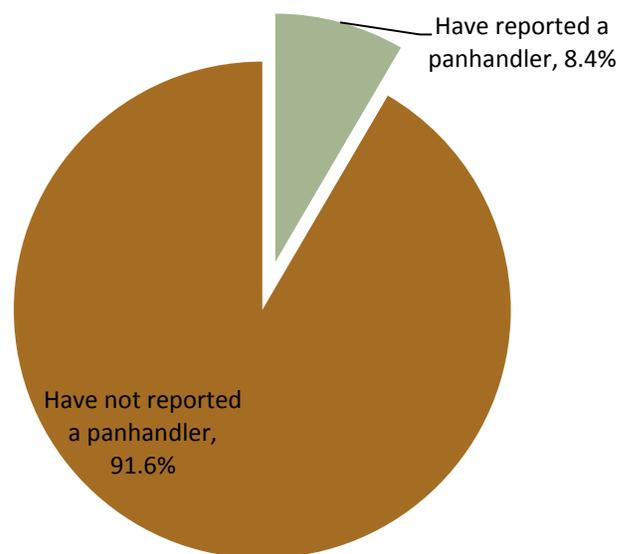
Downtown, they just yell wanting money and give their reasons why they want it.

There's one girl downtown who might be a crystal meth addict and she'll chase you down the street. I'm sure everyone who works downtown knows who she is.

In midtown, they're really pushy and they follow you around asking for money

They start yelling. There a woman downtown who tries to guilt me. She says "you don't know what it's like to be broke.

In addition, according to the survey, the prevalence of reporting panhandlers is fairly low; less than one in ten (8.4%) respondents indicated that they have reported such activity to someone (e.g. police, a business, etc.).



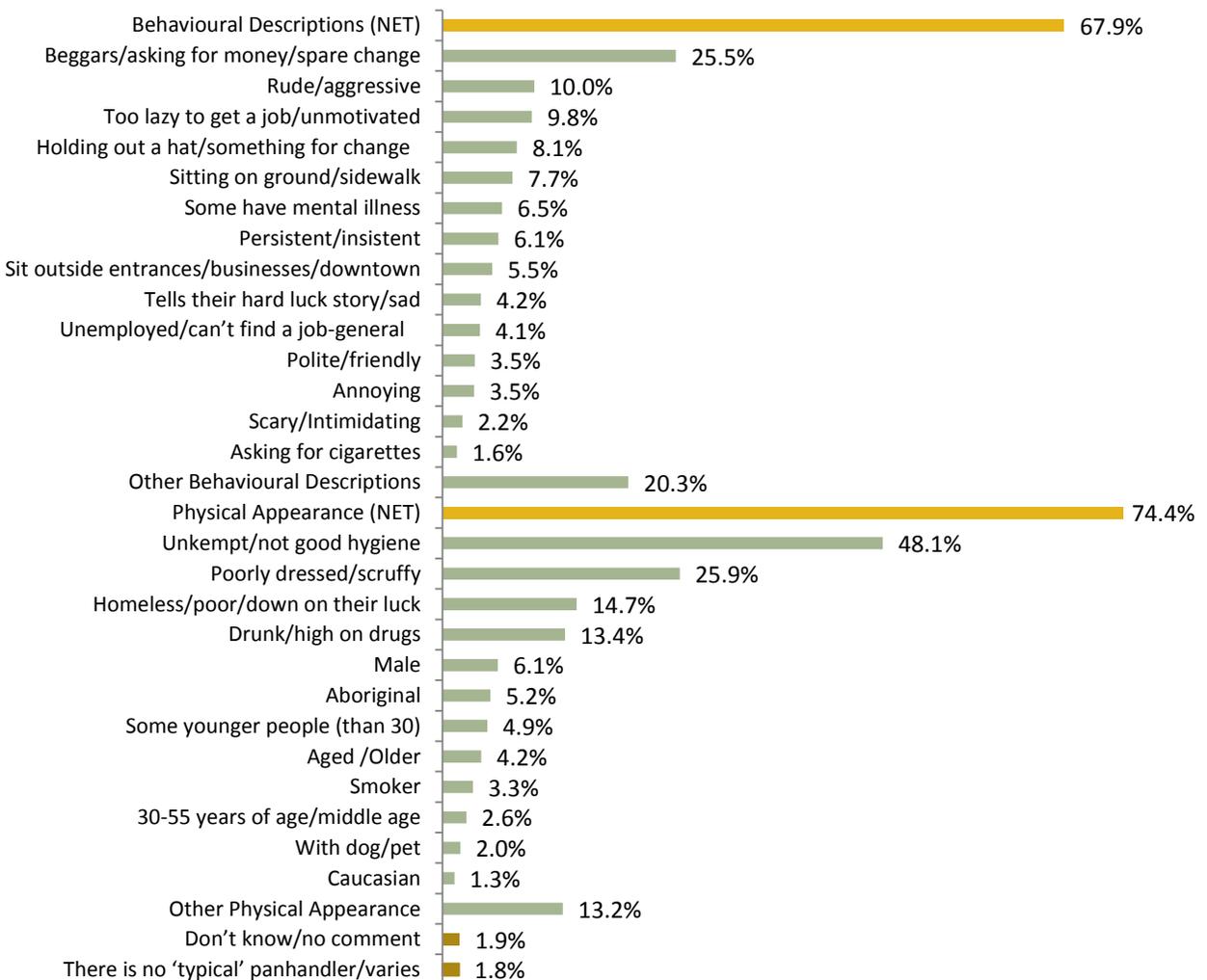
Q30. Have you ever reported a panhandler to someone (the police, business, etc.)? Base: Respondents who have encountered panhandling in the last 12 months, n = 561

## Impressions of Panhandling

In the survey, respondents were asked to describe their impressions and the defining characteristics of a typical panhandler. Most descriptions were either behavioural (67.9%) or physical (74.4%) in nature.

Among behavioural descriptions, one quarter (25.5%) describe a typical panhandler as a beggar or someone asking for money, while one in ten describe them as rude or aggressive (10.0%) or too lazy to get a job (9.8%).

Among physical appearance descriptions, one half of respondents (48.1%) describe a typical panhandler as unkempt or not having good hygiene. Other common physical descriptions include poorly dressed or scruffy (25.9%), being homeless or poor (14.7%) or being drunk and/or high on drugs (13.4%).

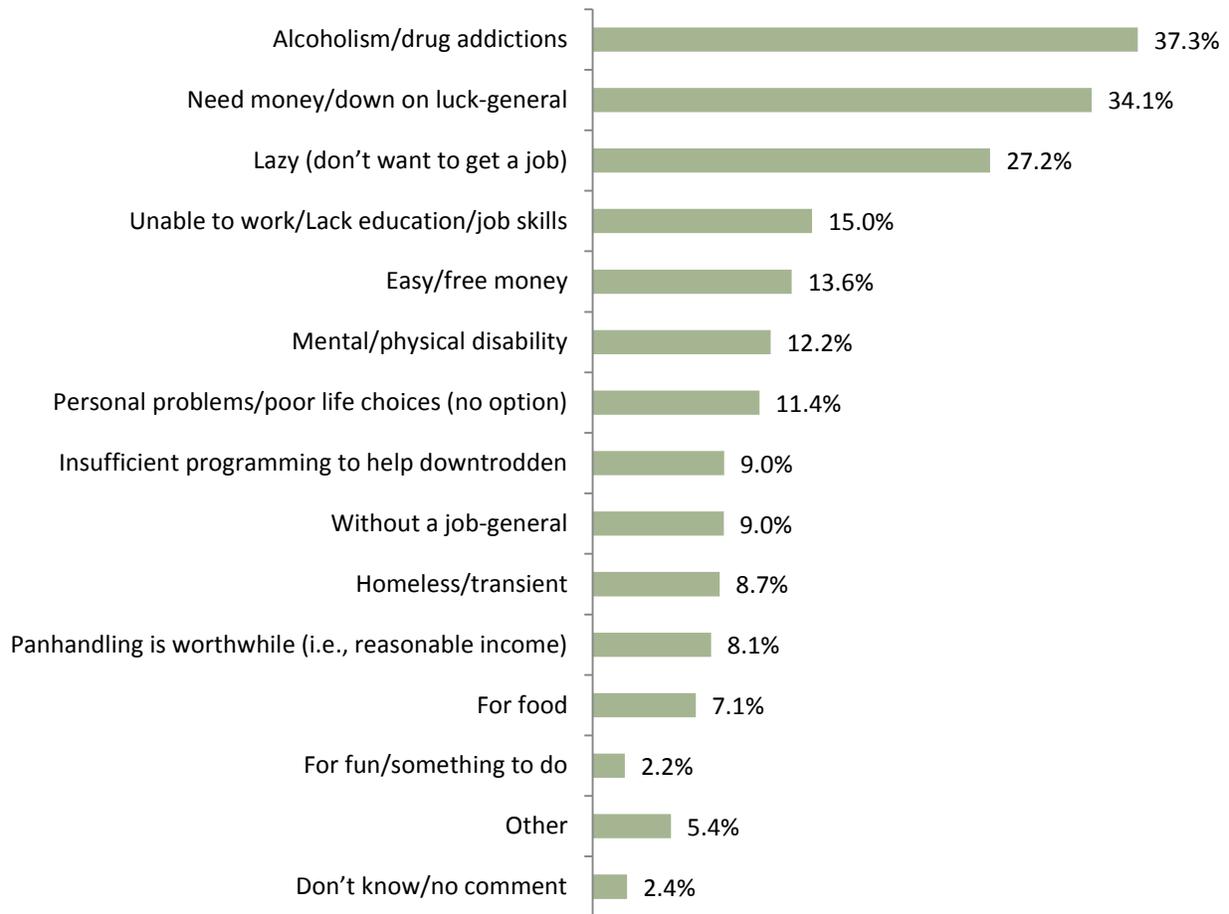


Q16. Please describe your impression of a typical panhandler. What are their defining characteristics? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

\*Multiple responses possible

When asked why they believe people panhandle, respondents most commonly mentioned reasons including alcohol and/or drug addiction (37.3%), people needing money or being down on their luck (34.1%), or people that are lazy and/or don't want to get a job (27.2%).

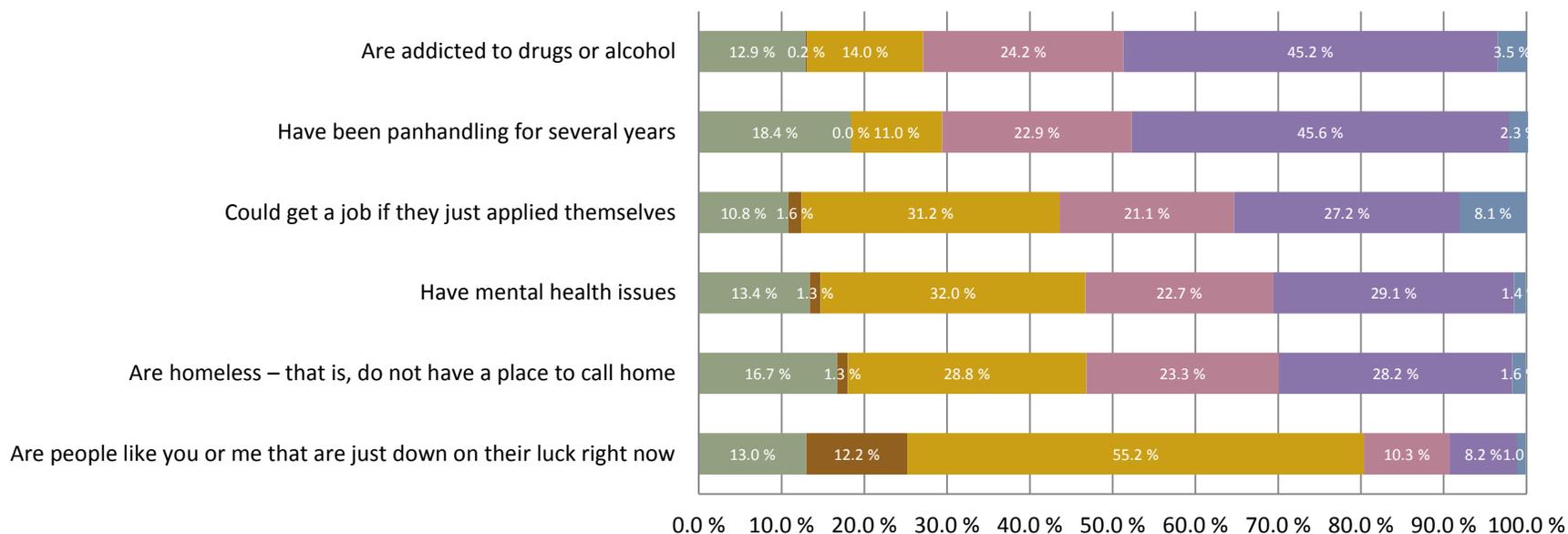
Over one in ten feel that the reason people panhandle relates to an inability to work (15.0%) or people seeking easy or free money (13.6%).



Q17. Why do you believe people panhandle? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

\*Multiple responses possible

Saskatoon respondents demonstrated a variety of beliefs regarding panhandler attributes. More than seven in ten respondents believe that about half or more of panhandlers are addicted to drugs or alcohol (72.9%) or have been panhandling for several years (70.8%). Similarly, over one half believe that half or more of panhandlers could get a job (56.4%), have mental health issues (53.2%), or are homeless (53.1%).



|              | Are people like you or me that are just down on their luck right now | Are homeless – that is, do not have a place to call home | Have mental health issues | Could get a job if they just applied themselves | Have been panhandling for several years | Are addicted to drugs or alcohol |
|--------------|--|--|---------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| ■ Not Sure   | 13.0 %   | 16.7 %   | 13.4 %                    | 10.8 %  | 18.4 %                                  | 12.9 %                           |
| ■ None       | 12.2 %   | 1.3 %  | 1.3 %                     | 1.6 %   | 0.0 %                                   | 0.2 %                            |
| ■ A Few      | 55.2 %   | 28.8 %   | 32.0 %                    | 31.2 %  | 11.0 %                                  | 14.0 %                           |
| ■ About half | 10.3 %   | 23.3 %   | 22.7 %                    | 21.1 %  | 22.9 %                                  | 24.2 %                           |
| ■ Most       | 8.2 %  | 28.2 %   | 29.1 %                    | 27.2 %  | 45.6 %                                  | 45.2 %                           |
| ■ All        | 1.0 %  | 1.6 %  | 1.4 %                     | 8.1 %   | 2.3 %                                   | 3.5 %                            |

Q20. What proportion of panhandlers do you think... Base: All respondents, n = 621.

## *In-Person Intercepts – Impressions of Panhandlers*

To better understand the impressions residents have of panhandling, interviewers conducted intercepts with consumers to gain an appreciation for the types of activities occurring in the different areas.

Many of the comments relate to people feeling uncomfortable around panhandlers and/or thinking they are a nuisance. Others feel sorry for them, while some think they should get a job.

Of those interviewed, here are the comments:

### Downtown

|  |
|--|
| I think they should control them a lot better and what they are doing.   |
| They harass you all the time by Midtown Plaza. As soon as they get money they go to the bar to get a beer and go to the VLT machines.  |
| Just ship them to downtown Regina because they don't have many there. I don't know how they are controlling them down there. A lot better policing, I guess.   |
| I have no comment because I have never been in that situation. It's annoying and it can ruin business. For example your wanting to go somewhere and they are right outside bothering you.  |
| Some of them I don't really like because they look like they are able to work. People in wheelchairs don't bother me but when there are some people that are my age or in their thirties and able to work it bothers me.                                 |
| There are a lot of jobs out there. Somebody sitting on a sidewalk with a sign and a hat; they have a sign because they are too embarrassed to say anything. They know they can work.   |
| I think sometime they have to turn to it because they are homeless and live on the streets and they don't have money for food. That's what lots of them do because they don't have money for food.   |
| I don't know why they are panhandling when they can get jobs. I know people worse off that don't panhandle.  |
| They have a lack of options. Not enough given for social assistance.   |
| People just sit there and are either in my face or peaceful. Some of them have mental illness.   |
| I wish we made as much as they do at times.  |
| Many have problems with drinking   |
| Get a job please!  |
| I feel bad that they're in a situation that they're begging for money, but many times I've offered them food and they've said no just money, So i don't want to support their addictions.  |
| They're also scary; you don't know how aggressive they might get for money.  |
| I don't think any less of them. I know there's lots of work out there, but you don't know their circumstances.   |
| It's okay. There is not that many here; Can't complain.  |
| I think that there is a better place that they could go for money. I don't believe in giving them my change. I would rather buy them food or something.  |
| They are kind of a nuisance when they are always calling out at you.   |
| They could be out working.   |
| I am not a fan of them. We pay taxes in order to give them welfare and such.   |
| They are annoying. Some of them are loud and kind of in your face (some of them not all) .Just annoying.   |
| Zero tolerance. That is basically it. I ignore them.   |
| Then can scare you off especially the hostile ones.  |
| I don't think they are good for the business. You can walk down here and on Saturday, I counted twelve of them from 22nd, 21st and 2nd avenue, particularly around McDonald's.   |
| It depends on their circumstances. You see someone in the wheelchair and sometimes i think they are playing on the sympathy of others. You don't know if they are homeless people and stuff. AS long as they are not harassing people I don't mind them. |
| I don't really mind them. I just ignore them.  |
| But I guess it makes the city a little gross.  |
| I don't mind when they are playing music. I don't mind them because there are lots of talented people out here playing music but when they ask for money that's what bugs me.  |

They have guts just to ask somebody for money. It's a bitter strong kind of feeling because they are showing they are in need. It takes guts. I think panhandling is an indication of poverty that any city has.

There is a difference between panhandling and busking. I busk because I like singing.

I think this is an indication that lots are homeless because of the high rents.

It disappoints me. Not that they bother me but it's too bad that it's a necessity.

It doesn't bother me. I come originally from Vancouver. I believe we are all responsible. You never know why they are out there.

They have to live. They are having tough times.

I don't know them and sometimes I feel uncomfortable with what I have and what they seem to not have. I guess what more can I do to help other than giving a few dollars and cents.

I feel bad for them. I just feel bad.

Most of them are nice.

Some sympathy- but there is Social programs they can access.

Don't think about it and don't let it bother me.

Depends if they smell of alcohol or drugs. I won't help them .If they are hungry and needs hygiene products i would help.

Get a job

Down on their luck and sometimes addicted to drugs.

Unfortunate or disadvantaged.

We don't need to panhandle because we have a social programs.

it is not their fault 9 time out of 10.

Homeless people.

I have learned to ignore them.

They are nuisance. Especially as it happens so often and I have been encountered 3 times on my lunch break.

They are kind of nuisance.

Get off your butt and get a job.

Panhandlers are just fine and I don't mind them at all.

Get a job or go on welfare.

## Riversdale

I don't think it is good for anyone. I shouldn't be supporting someone else when they can get a job.

They need help. There are lots of homeless people.

I feel sorry for that people in that situation.

They have addictions with drugs and alcohol and it's an example of poverty in the city.

If they are able to work they should be put to work. They are a nuisance and bother everyone for money.

They put themselves in that situation and I don't feel sorry for them.

Some people do need the money to support their families, but others do it for the wrong reasons.

They should get a job. If they can stand outside all day they should be capable of working.

It is bothersome; they make me want to avoid the area.

Get a job.

The make me upset.

Don't mind them but they are loud.

Poor souls. Every Sunday at the church, a young male always will ask me if I have change.

They are need of help.

Get a job. There is lots work out there, Saskatoon is booming, many of them don't want to work.

Many have health issues.

Get a job.

Get out of my way.

Don't mind them.

I don't think they are bad or negative.

It does not bother me.

They should have better housing. Better income. They don't get enough to live on.

Poor people

Some use it for drugs, or for food, some need it for health reasons.

## Confederation

I feel sorry for them that they have to do that rather than get a job.

Some of them are really needy or some need to get a job , it depends.

I feel sorry for them that in this day and age you can't get work. There are a lot of people that do it. Some people have to and some don't want to work

Poor, Homeless

Sometimes disgusting, they bother you, sometimes you feel sad for them depending on their situations.

## Broadway

Get a job. If they are healthy they should have a job.

I don't feel sorry for anyone who is healthy. They shouldn't be allowed on the streets because I know it freaks out some people and people shouldn't have to fear to be out on the street.

I think they are lazy. They probably have criminal records.

I don't have any thoughts at all. I don't notice them.

They are trying to make money.

I never give them money to panhandlers. I don't think it's a good use of time.

We should have to have a consistent policy about zero panhandling or not allowing.

I don't think much of them but they don't bother me.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Street

Lazy drugs addicts or booze hounds.

I feel bad for them mostly because it's self-brought upon.

The government is lacking in social assistance and support.

There are so many services in the city that they don't have to be panhandling.

I'm a little afraid of them. I think most of them are looking for money for drugs or alcohol and have some medical issues.

They're grabby

I feel sorry for them. I think it's tragic in this day and age.

I think they should get jobs. You can't just go beg for money.

Bums. I don't know what to say. I don't think much of them. The only ones you see are downtown and I hate going down there anyways.

They're homeless and i don't want to give them money because I don't know what they'll spend it on.

They drive me nuts, especially in Saskatchewan. There's way to many opportunities or programs or treatment. You don't need to do that.

I don't know, it's like "what made" you do panhandling?

They're intrusive

I don't like them, it annoys me. They probably make more money in a day than i do.

It's not necessary. It's annoying

I don't have an opinion on them because i don't know their situation.

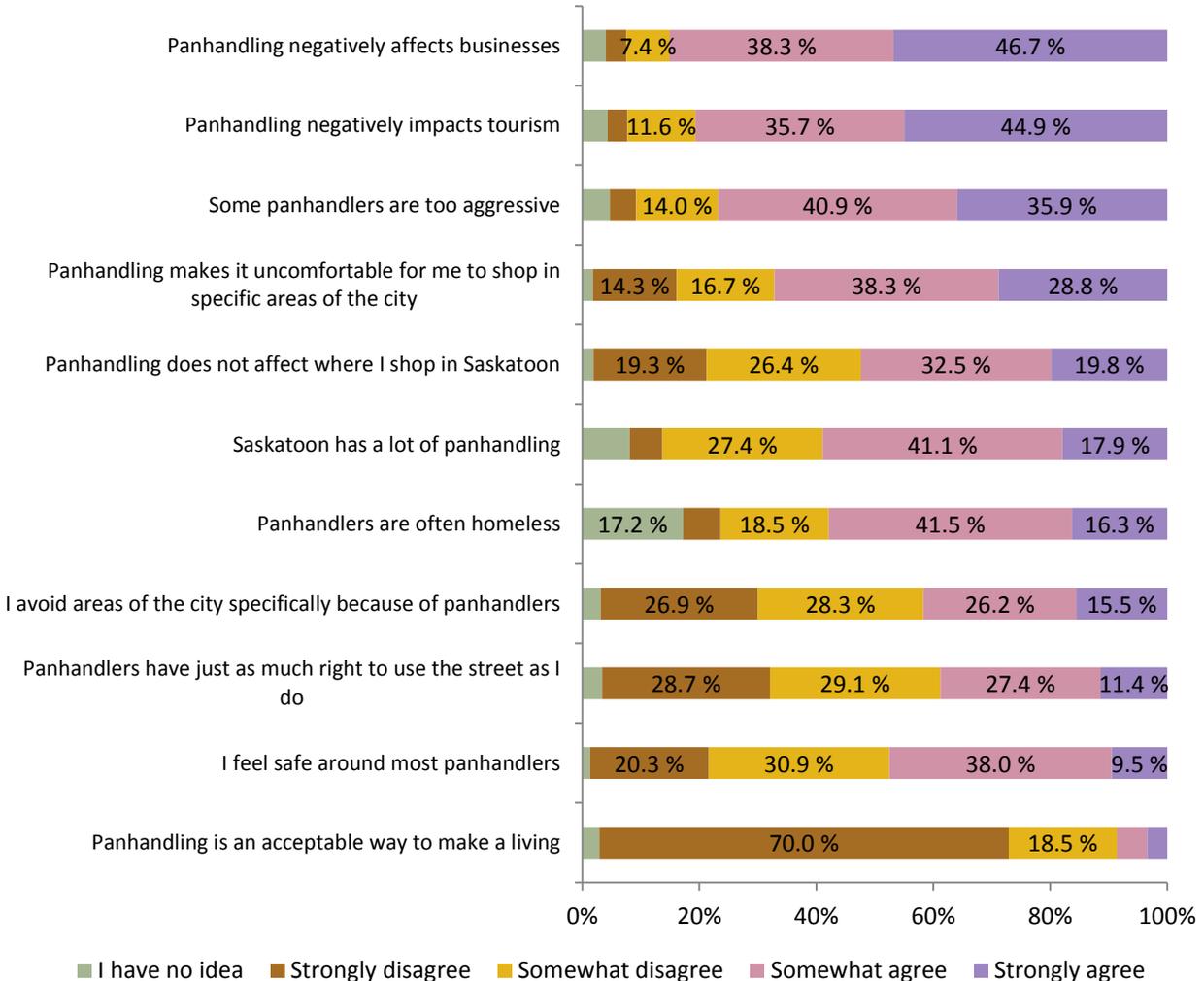
I don't mind buskers. I don't like giving money to panhandlers because I think it just encourages them. But i give money to buskers.

I don't agree with them. If they want money then they can do something. You see these people asking for money and then they have Starbucks coffee. I can't afford that.

## Impacts of Panhandling

Respondents were presented with a number of statements about panhandlers and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each.

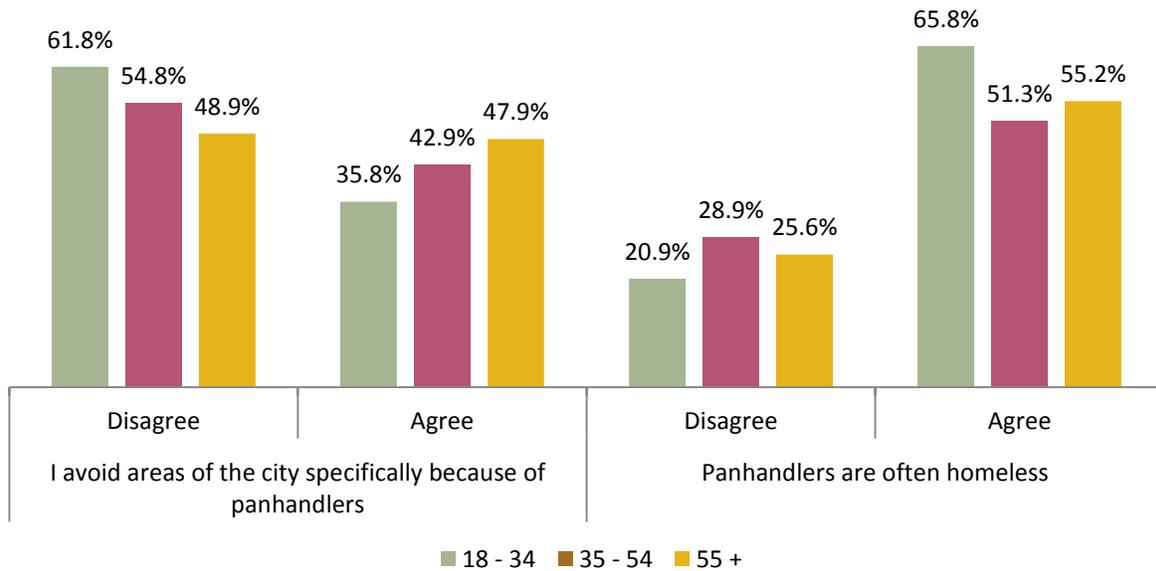
- Overall, 85% of respondents agree (strongly or somewhat) that panhandling negatively affects businesses and 80.6% agree (strongly or somewhat) that it negatively impacts tourism
- 67.1% agree (strongly or somewhat) that panhandling makes it uncomfortable for them to shop in specific areas of the city
- 41.7% agree (strongly or somewhat) that they avoid areas of the city specifically because of panhandlers
- 17.9% strongly agree that Saskatoon has a lot of panhandling (59% agree somewhat or strongly on this point)
- Residents do not see panhandling as an acceptable way to make a living, with 70% strongly disagreeing with this activity



Q18. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding panhandling: Base: All respondents, n = 621.

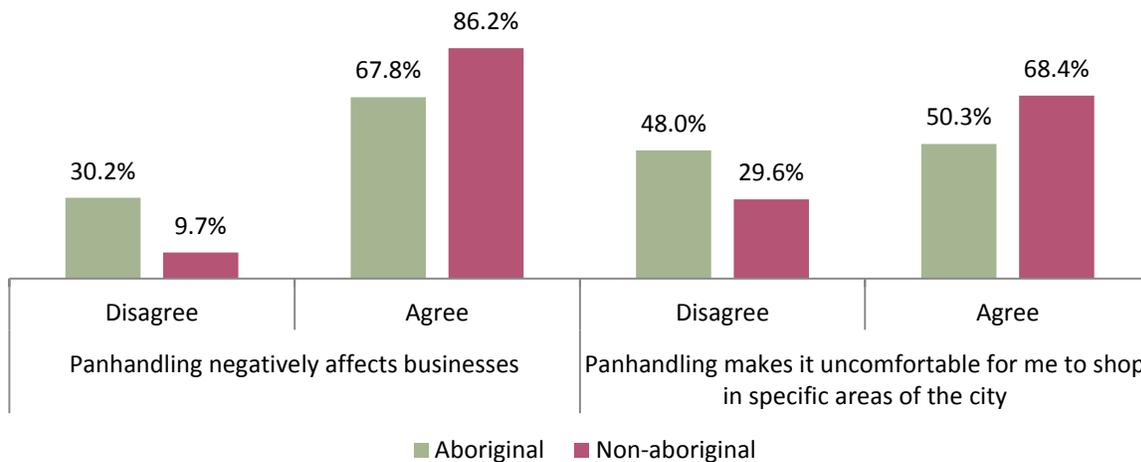
A couple of the previous statements did differ by age of the respondent. Respondents aged 55 years or older are more likely to avoid areas of the city specifically because of panhandlers (47.9%) compared to respondents from the youngest age cohort (35.8%).

Additionally, younger respondents (65.8%) are more likely to believe that panhandlers are often homeless compared to respondents from the other age cohorts (51.3% of 35 – 54; 55.2% of 55+)



Q18. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding panhandling: Base: All respondents, n = 621.

In terms of other differences, respondents who identify themselves as Aboriginal are more likely to feel that panhandling does not negatively influence businesses (30.2%) compared to non-Aboriginal respondents (9.7%). Similarly, one half of Aboriginals do NOT find it uncomfortable to shop in specific areas of the city because of panhandling (48.0%) compared to non-Aboriginals (29.6%).



Q18. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding panhandling: Base: All respondents, n = 621.

## *In-Person Intercepts – Interactions with Panhandlers*

Individuals within the locations of interest were approached on the street and then asked how they feel when they are approached by a panhandler and if it influences where they shop. Considering that many of those interviewed were already in the key areas of street activity and panhandling, it is not surprising to see many responses indicating it does not impact where they shop.

Of those interviewed, many indicated they feel uncomfortable or annoyed when encountering a panhandler.

Of those interviewed, here are the comments:

How do you feel when approached by a panhandler?

|   |
|---|
| I feel like they are just a very bad nuisance and they should be given tickets.   |
| I ignore them and walk away. Unless they are handicapped. I don't feel bad. But then again I can't because I didn't put them there. They did that to themselves.  |
| I kind of feel offended because I work hard for my money. I work hard and they sit around and get money for free. I know panhandlers that joke around about it afterwards about how much money they make and that makes me mad, But I'm still respectable.  |
| I just say I'm sorry, I can't help you.   |
| Sometimes I give and sometimes I don't.   |
| I just keep walking.  |
| I personally think it's a part of city life.  |
| I don't feel good. I feel bad. They don't have a right to ask people for money that are walking by.   |
| If they are aggressive i feel angry and bothered by them. If they are passive I have no problem and they don't bother me.   |
| Does not bother me.   |
| I feel sad for them sometimes, but then sometimes I feel like saying fuck off.  |
| Threatened  |
| Nervous, scared, sympathetic, angry   |
| They ask me if I can spare some change. I usually say "no" unless they're senior then I will give.  |
| Annoyed, especially when it's the same person every day. I wanna kill them.   |
| Kind of awkward. I don't look at them and I keep walking.   |
| I just walk by them. I think they could be working just like everybody.   |
| Bothered because they are intruding on my peaceful walk.  |
| I usually just ignore them.   |
| Annoyed. They create a very bad vibe for the area. They are a nuisance. You can't sit on any of these benches and have a nice coffee. What part of no don't they understand? The police needs to keep them moving. I lived in downtown Edmonton and never encountered them there. People say take the benches out but why should we? For the most part they are harmless; it's costly and you have to cross the street to avoid them. |
| I just walk by them. We people are not very judgemental. If they are bugging me and stuff it's kind of annoying.  |
| Kind of awkward I guess. I just want them to leave me alone. I don't know how to describe it.   |
| A little sad. I believe everybody is given gifts to excel in. Some people can be in such a bad environment when being raised that their mind set can be put into this defeated mindset. I feel sad, absolutely sad. It's sad because all they are saying is "excuse me, could you spare some change". It's a little heart breaking.   |
| It depends on if i have full tummy or not. Sometime I feel for them and sometimes I feel like as poor as them.  |
| I feel they are doing what they have to do to survive. I am very fortunate that I am not in their shoes.  |
| I feel compassion and sympathy. Sometimes i listen to them (buskers) and give them money.   |
| A little empathy for them.  |
| I think at first nervous but then after that it's not such a big deal.  |
| I feel sympathy for them.   |
| Indifferent- People ask for change and I say No.  |
| Little sympathetic and annoyed they ask so many times for money and a lot are in need.  |
| Buy a sandwich instead of giving money.   |
| Feel sorry and feel they could do more for their own selves.  |
| I feel concern they are asking for something.   |
| Conflicted- I feel bad and want to help and I can't help everybody.   |
| Violated and annoyed- if we can make money so can they.   |
| Somewhat sympathetic.   |
| Take my business elsewhere.   |
| Tell them to get a job or where they can get one.   |

|  |
|--|
| Feel sorry for them.   |
| Guilty I don't have spare change.  |
| Annoyed that people ask for stuff that I don't have.                           |
| Angry  |
| It disturbs me. You don't know if they will use the money for drugs or alcohol |
| Wish i could do more to help them  |
| I feel sad for them  |
| They make you angry, the gangs too, not just the panhandlers.                  |

### Does the presence of a panhandler influence if you will go into a particular shop?

|  |
|--|
| I think some businesses say the panhandlers are not good for their business. It seems like it hurts the business.  |
| No. I don't know. I need to get something from in there.   |
| No, it doesn't bother me. They don't bother me because I'm just as poor as them.   |
| No, because I'm not afraid of them.  |
| No they aren't doing any harm just looking for a buck. I usually don't give.   |
| Yes, because don't want to confront them.  |
| No it does not   |
| Sometimes it makes me not want to go in, It's not the shop fault, if i buy something and go out, I'm always worried they they might try to take it   |
| No, i just go in and just tell them no   |
| No, because I am going to ignore them. It's not going to change my mind. If I am going into a store I'm going to go anyway.  |
| No, because usually I have my destination picked before I come down here.  |
| No. I don't know. It's their choice. It's their preference.  |
| No, I don't let them bother me. I will just tell them no.  |
| No, because if I am going to go in there I'm going to go in there whether they're there or not . Not at all.   |
| Yes to a degree. I still agree to support businesses downtown because otherwise they win.  |
| No because it's just doesn't. If they were drunk on the street maybe because you don't feel safe because you don't know what they are going to be like. If I was a business woman I would not want them to be a public nuisance.   |
| Not really, no. Just because if I have a purpose to go in a store I just go in to it. I guess for those people who don't live here it would influence them. But I work here and the panhandlers are the same.  |
| No, not around Saskatchewan. They are not like up in your face like in Vancouver. I don't think panhandling is really outrageous in Saskatoon. I have seen some pests through. I do busking in Regina and I am respectable. I am not going to hog the place . You have to have a little bit of integrity as buskers. The core of it is the big difference of rich and poor. It is an indication of how the society is changing. I believe in some European countries they treat artists with respect and here sometimes artists are turned into beggars. |
| No, because they are doing their job. And it doesn't bother me.  |
| No, because they are human beings. It has no influence on the shop I am going into. Panhandlers are outside that has nothing to do with the tore. They don't bother you unless you let them bother you.  |
| No. I don't fear them. I like it when they play music or something.  |
| No. Because they are not threatening. They are hoping that someone would help then out. They are not preventing me from getting in.  |
| No, because they are just people. I am not afraid of them. If I want to go into a shop I am going into it for a particular reason and I'm not going to let the presence of panhandlers stop me.  |
| No- I will go in anyway  |
| Yes- if they stand in the door and are aggressive I will skip by the store.  |
| No- if there is more than one I would go in anyway.  |
| No I will go in store anyway.  |
| Yes I won't go in because they ask for things going into the store.  |
| Yes- it is an uncomfortable situation.   |
| No- will go anyway   |

### Does the presence of a panhandler influence if you will go into particular areas of the city?

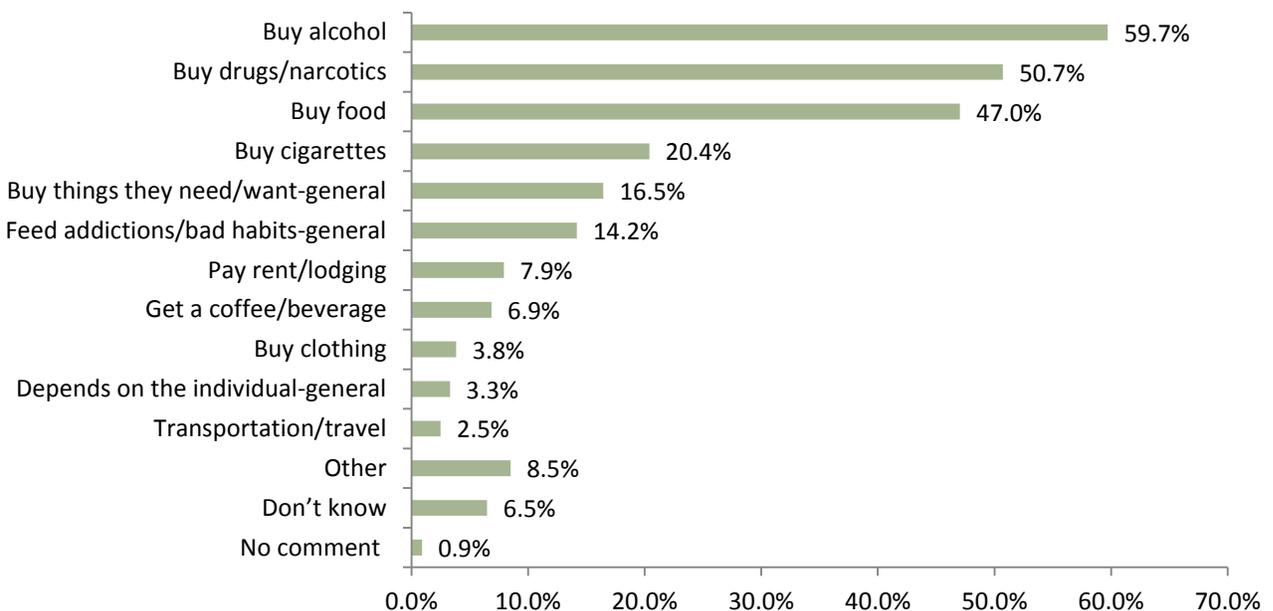
|   |
|---|
| Especially on 21st street. The business should do something about that too; about getting rid of panhandlers, not just the police. Business should get involved to get rid of them. |
| I feel safe with some of them. I feel better when people are around. At least they will see what happens.   |
| No, it doesn't matter what area of the city it is I'll still go there.  |
| No, If you go to the downtown core you'll find all sorts of people not just the rich people.  |
| Yes, if you walk down the same area they'll ask you for money. If you say no then they will swear at you.   |
| No because i never know where they will be.   |
| No it does not.   |
| No does not bug me at all.  |
| Sometimes yes, because if i don't want to deal with them I won't go downtown.   |
| No, I don't let them bother me.   |
| No, because I'm not a spaz. It's not that bad here unlike in Vancouver.   |
| No. Not at all.. I am not really intimidated by them or anything like that.   |

|  |
|--|
| No. It's their choice.   |
| No. I am not bothered by them very often.  |
| No, because I come down here all the time. Just because I tend to ignore them and walk by them.  |
| Yes, because they spoil the mood and leave a bad taste in your mouth. Can I not go without being hit on by all of them?  |
| Yes - If it looks like a seedy area. If it looks unsafe, panhandling will add to it. It will look like slums. It is not very posh and we are trying to promote our city.                           |
| No. I don't think so at all. Well I think because I worked for social services. I know people have hard times. I guess it doesn't really bug me because I see people going through this every day. |
| No I am not scared of panhandlers.   |
| No it doesn't bother me. They are doing their job and I am just doing mine.  |
| Panhandlers are usually fine. If its drugs then you have a problem. I come from Vancouver so I know how to handle them. You don't make eye contact and as soon as you do you're in trouble.        |
| No. I don't fear them.   |
| No, they are just people. No need to be afraid of people.  |
| No- except i won't go to the West side at all.   |
| Yes- my car had been jumped on avenue H!   |
| No- they understand when you say No.   |
| No not avoid the panhandler- avoid high crime rates from 20th street and back like in the alphabet ones- Avenue C, H and P   |
| Yes I would rather shop on the East side instead of downtown because of the panhandling.   |

### Money Earned by Panhandlers

Respondents were asked, unprompted, what they believe panhandlers do with the money they earn.

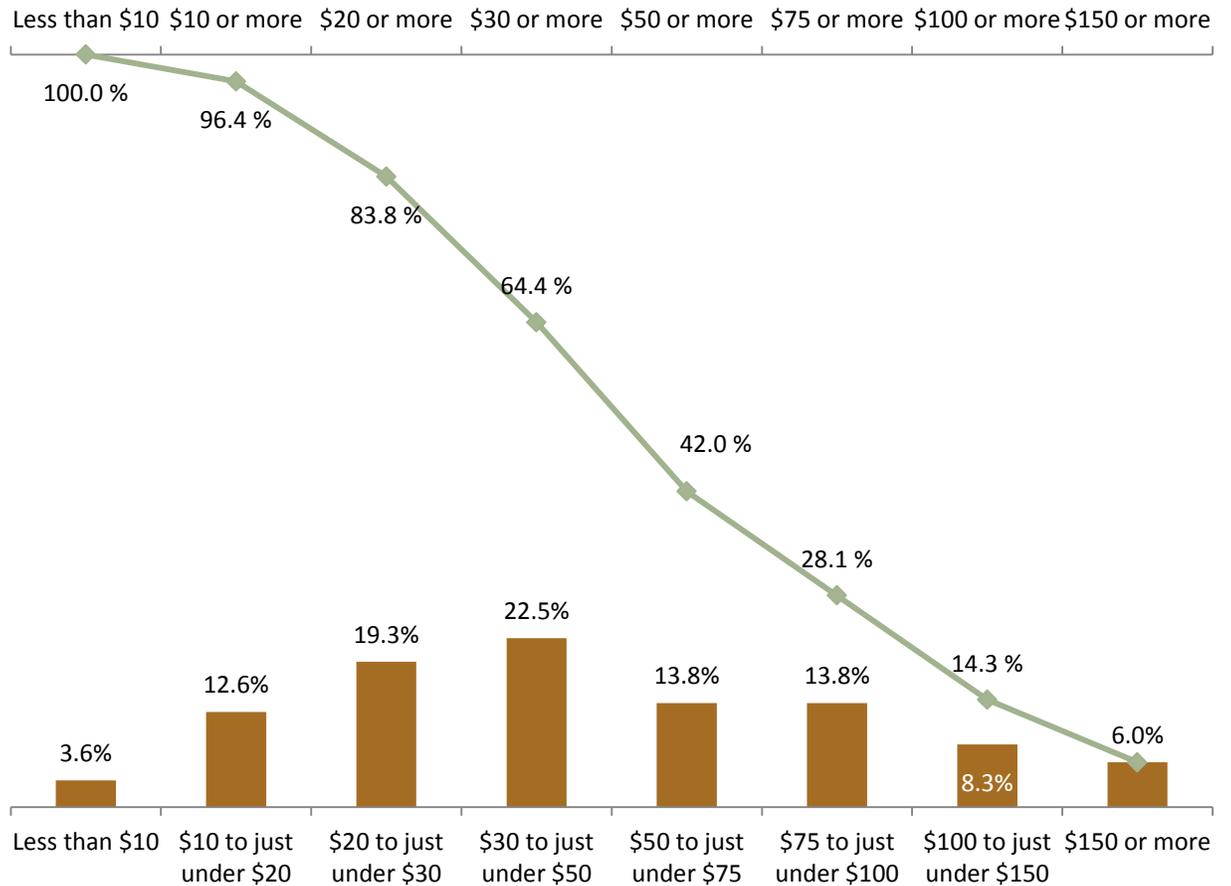
- 59.7% believe they buy alcohol with their money
- 50.7% believe they buy narcotics or drugs
- 47% believe they buy food with their money
- 20.4% believe they buy cigarettes with their money
- Only 7.9% believe they use the money to pay rent or lodging



Q19. What do you think panhandlers do with the money they get from panhandling? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

\*Multiple responses possible

When interviewers asked Saskatoon residents about their perception of typical daily panhandler earnings, a variety of ranges were provided. Excluding respondents who could not provide an impression, the most common range was between \$30 to just under \$50. Cumulatively, a majority (64.4%) believe that panhandlers typically earn \$30 or more per day. One third (32.5%) of residents indicated they did not know how much a panhandler earns in a typical day.



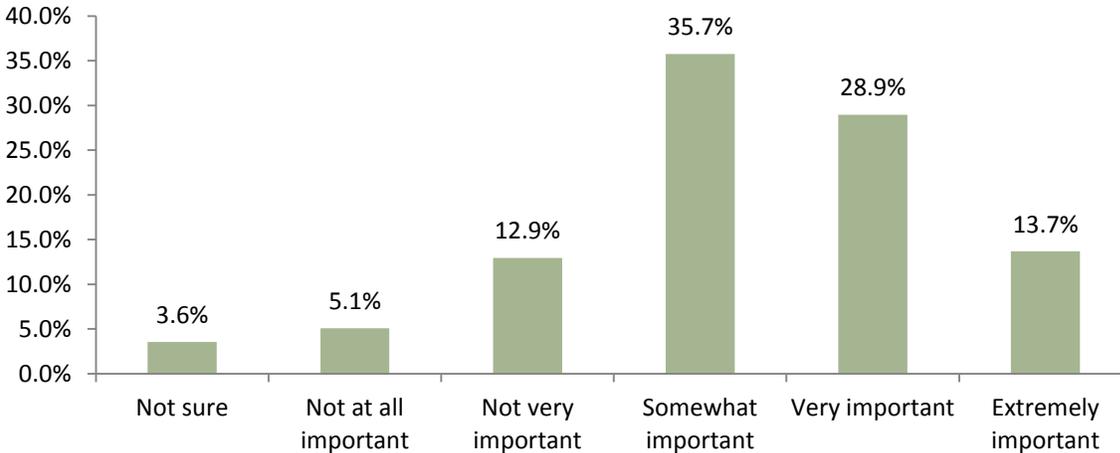
Q21. How much money do you believe the typical panhandler in Saskatoon collects in a day? Base: All respondents, excluding don't know, n = 419.

## Addressing Panhandling

Finally, respondents were asked about addressing panhandling.

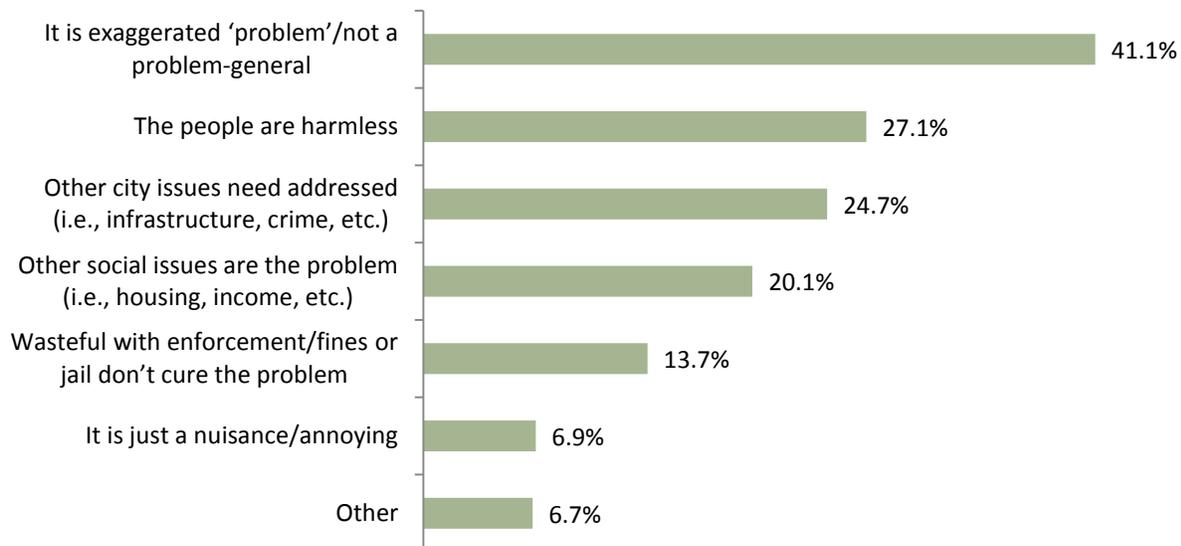
In this question, the level of importance is broken down into somewhat, very and extremely. This was done in order to better understand to what degree residents think panhandling is an issue. Overall about four in ten residents (42.6%) believe panhandling is a very or extremely important issue that needs to be addressed.

Another 35.7% believe it is a somewhat important issue that needs to be addressed.



Q32. How important is it that the issue of panhandling be addressed in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

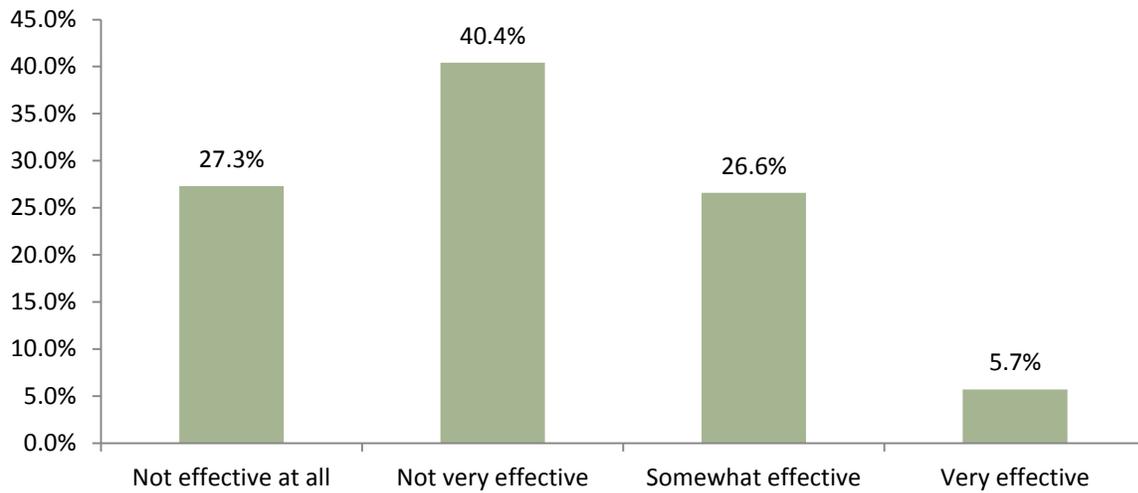
Among residents who feel that panhandling is either not very or not at all important to address, four in ten (41.1%) feel that panhandling is either an exaggerated as an issue or is not a problem. Over one quarter (27.1%) feel that the people panhandling are harmless, while a similar proportion (24.7%), believe there are other city issues that require attention.



Q33. Why do you feel it is NOT an issue that needs addressing in Saskatoon? (N=111)

\*Multiple responses possible

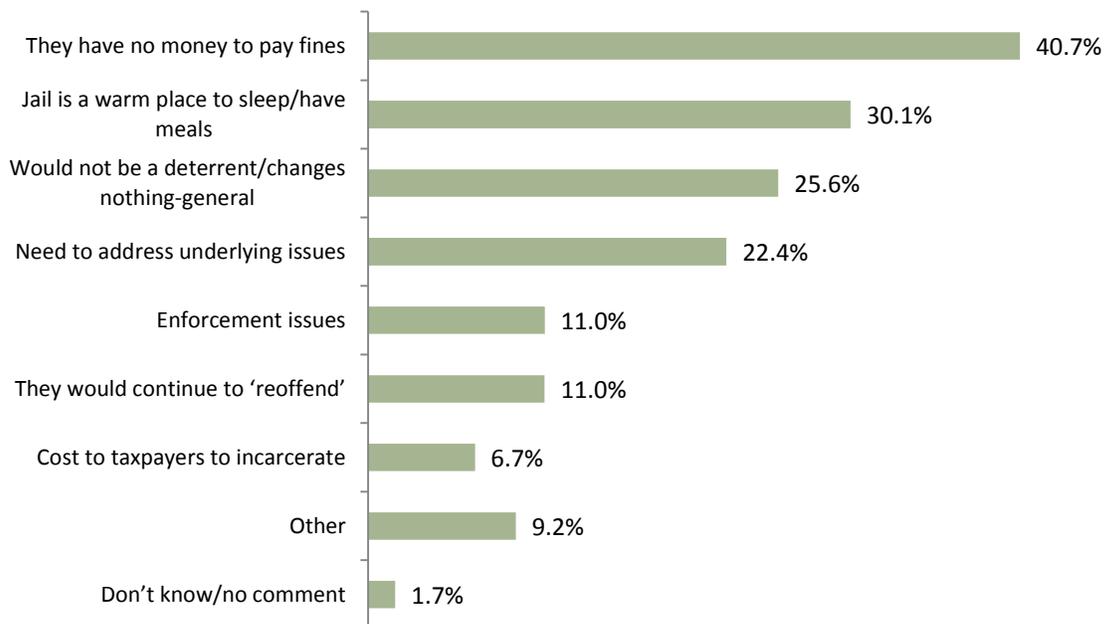
The majority of respondents believe that fines and jail time is either a not very or not at all effective deterrent for panhandlers (67.7%). One quarter (26.6%) believe that it is a somewhat effective deterrent, while only one in twenty (5.7%) believe it to be a very effective deterrent.



Q34. Do you believe that the potential of fines and jail time is an effective deterrent for panhandlers? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

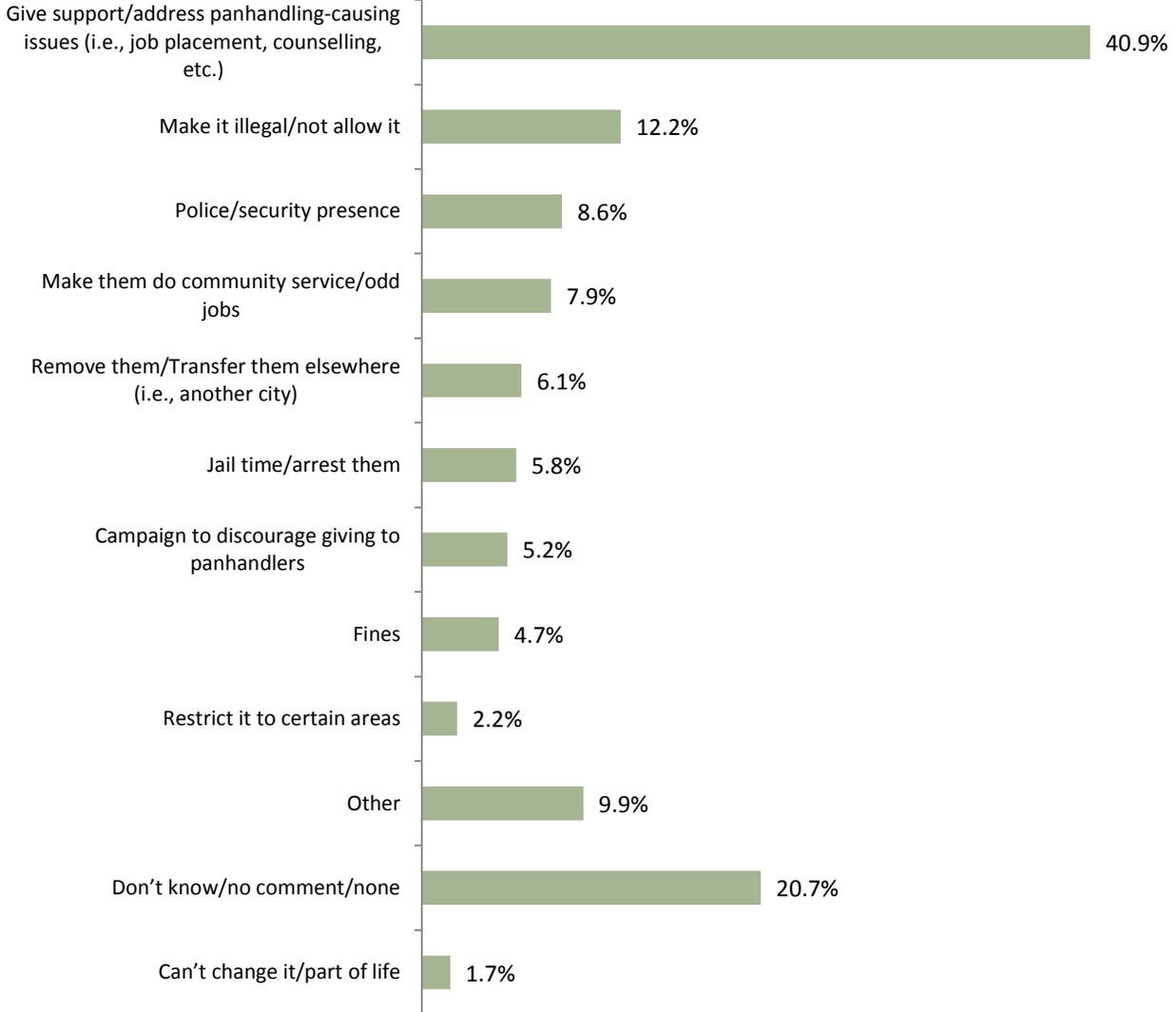
Of the responses of those who believe jail time and fines are not very or not at all effective (420 out of 621 respondents), the primary reason residents do not believe that fines and jail time are an effective deterrent is:

- Panhandlers have no money to pay fines (30.1%)
- Three in ten (30.1%) feel that jail represents a warm place to sleep and eat
- One quarter (25.6%) believe that it wouldn't be effective in general
- Over two in ten (22.4%) feel that it does not address underlying issues



Q35. Why do you believe that fines and jail time are not an effective deterrent for panhandlers? Base: All respondent who believe jail time and fines are not very or not at all effective, n = 420. \*Multiple responses possible

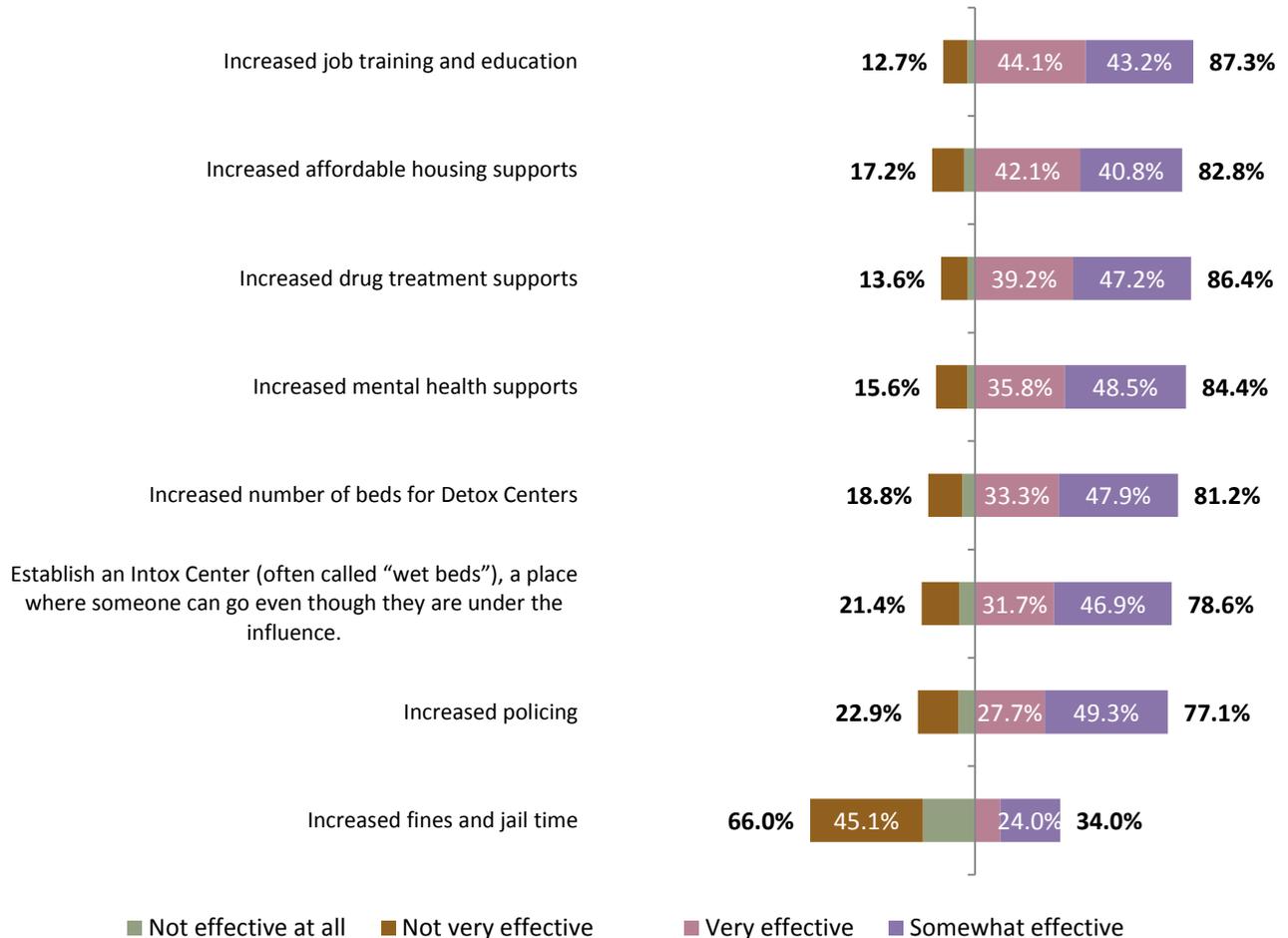
Of those residents who believe that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address (510 out of 621 respondents), four in ten (40.9%) suggest that addressing the root cause of the issues for panhandling is a way to address the issue of panhandling. Over one in ten (12.2%) want to make it illegal or not allow it, and less than one in ten (8.6%) suggest an increased police presence.



Q36. What suggestions would you have as a way to attempt to address the issue of panhandling in Saskatoon? Base: Respondents who feel that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address, n = 510.  
 \*Multiple responses possible

Finally, respondents were presented with eight potential methods of addressing panhandling and asked to rate their perceived effectiveness. Overall, most initiatives were seen to be at least somewhat effective by a majority of responding residents, with the exception of increased fines and jail time.

The two initiatives with the highest “very effective” responses include increased job training and education (44.1%) and increased affordable housing supports (42.1%).



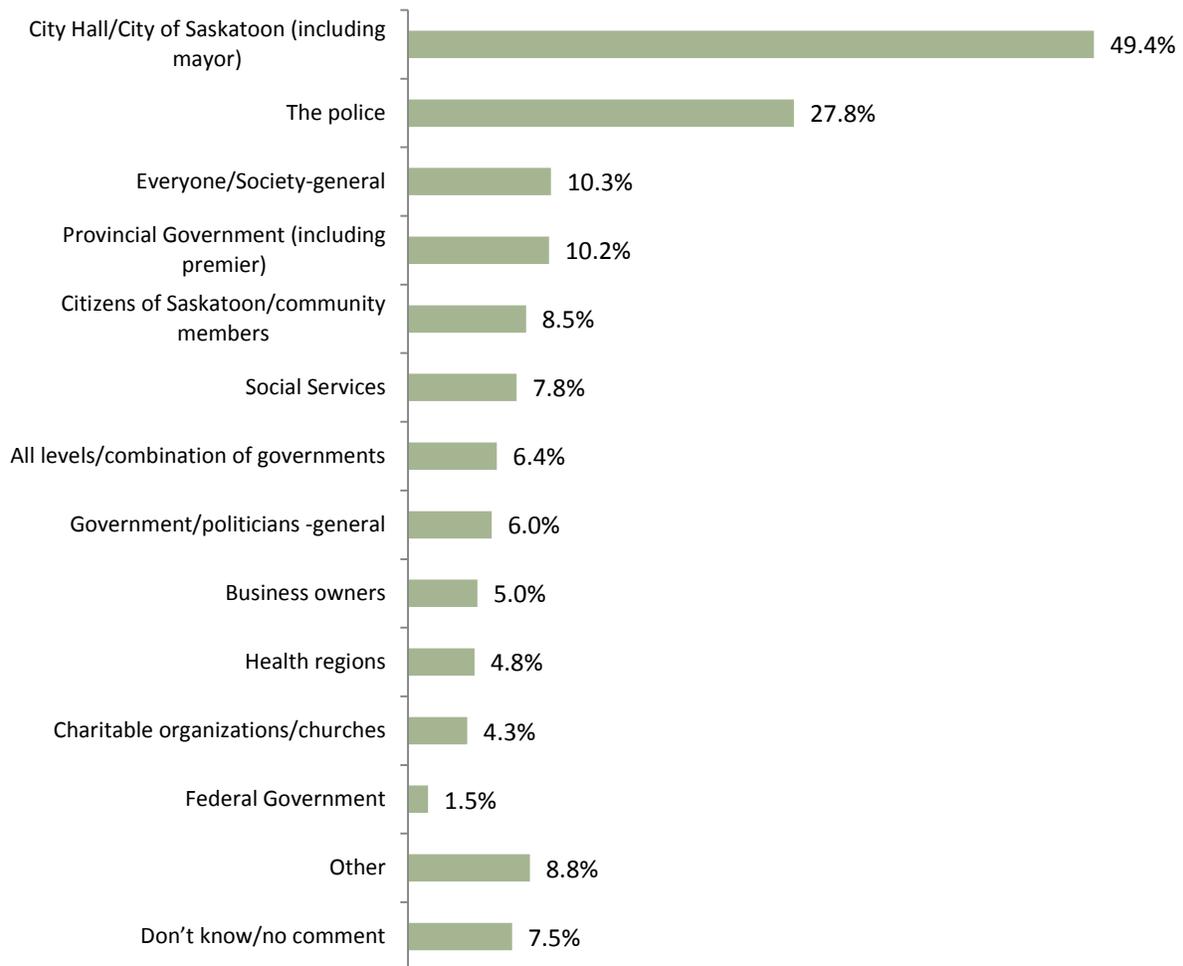
Q37. How effective do you think the following actions/programs would be in reducing the impact of negative street activity in Saskatoon? Base: All respondents, n = 621.

Of those residents who believe that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address (510 out of 621 respondents), one half (49.4%) believe that the City of Saskatoon should take responsibility for addressing the issue of panhandling.

Nearly three in ten (27.8%) feel the responsibility is that of the police.

One in ten feels that everyone shares a responsibility (10.3%).

One in ten feels that the provincial government should take responsibility for the issue (10.2%).



Q38. Who do you believe should take responsibility for addressing the issue of panhandling? Base: Respondents who feel that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address, n = 510.

\*Multiple responses possible

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

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### DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED SAFETY BY LOCATION

Saskatoon residents feel safe in Saskatoon. Of those surveyed, 88.2% reported feeling safe (either somewhat or very) while walking or cycling in public areas (i.e. streets, parks, outside of businesses) in Saskatoon. However, three in ten (31.3%) said they feel less safe than three years ago in Saskatoon.

In terms of what makes people avoid certain areas alone, approximately one third (32.6%) indicated that the reputation of the area is a determining factor, followed by perceptions of possibly being a target of crime (26.4%). Panhandling specifically was not a primary reason for not going alone in certain places in Saskatoon.

During the day, over 90% of Saskatoon residents feel somewhat or very safe walking or cycling Downtown (91.4%) or in the Broadway business district (93.4%). This compares to 57.1% that feel safe in the Riversdale business area during the day. During the night, safety perceptions change notably. Overall, 41.9% feel safe (either somewhat or very) Downtown and 60% feel safe (either somewhat or very) in the Broadway business district. This compares to 13.8% in the Riversdale business area.

It is interesting that although a number of people mentioned not feeling safe in Riversdale for a variety of reasons, River Landing/the Farmer's Market was identified as the top specific mention that people enjoy visiting. This illustrates the willingness of people to visit an area/event when groups of people are present in what is generally perceived to be an unsafe area.

### MAJOR CONCERN FOR SAFETY IS NOT PANHANDLERS BUT OTHER ISSUES

In terms of public safety, approximately 90% of respondents mentioned drug trafficking and street fights as having a very negative impact on public safety. A lower proportion of respondents indicated panhandling as having a very negative impact on public safety (51.6%).

Panhandling is seen by nearly one half of responding residents (48.7%) as increasing either some (33.7%) or a lot (15.0%). Drug trafficking (46.1%), loitering (42.4%), and groups of young people (42.1%) are also seen as increasing either some or a lot.

The primary reasons for residents feeling unsafe walking or cycling Downtown is sketchy people/strange/bad people (26.2%), they feel afraid of being mugged/assaulted or criminal activities in general (26.2%), and perceived gang activity and/or groups of people loitering (24.6%). In the Broadway Business District, the main reasons were sketchy people/strange/bad people (28.3%), drunk people/addicts (20.0%), and afraid of being mugged/assaulted or criminal activities in general (18.9%). In the Riversdale Business Area, the main reasons were sketchy people/strange/bad people (28.6%) and being afraid of being mugged/assaulted or criminal activities in general (23.2%), and perceived gang activity and/or groups of people loitering (20.6%).

In terms of experience with negative street activity, respondents indicated the downtown area, the Broadway area and along 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> street as areas with negative street activity. Panhandling was primarily experienced by respondents in the downtown area in front of the Midtown Plaza and on 21<sup>st</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. A strong majority have encountered groups of young people (90.8%) and panhandling (90.1%) in the past 12 months in Saskatoon. Busking (83.1%), loitering (81.8%), and charity activities (81.6%) were also commonly encountered, followed by public drunkenness (75.5%) and street vendors (74.2%).

In terms of describing the activities, a majority (67.0%) of respondent descriptions provided for busking were positive. 14.2% of survey respondents described busking negatively and 17.3% were neutral on the activity. The descriptions of panhandling were more negative than descriptions of busking. Nine in ten (89.9%) described panhandling negatively, with one third (32.3%) describing it as the occurrence of a person begging or asking for money. Two in ten (21.5%) described panhandling as annoying, irritating, or a nuisance (21.5%), while over one in ten (13.0%) dislike or disapprove of panhandling in general. Similar to descriptions of panhandling, respondents describe loitering in largely a negative way. Overall, three quarters of residents (75.2%) describe loitering negatively, with two in ten (22.0%) describing people standing around for no reason and doing nothing, while over one in ten (14.1%) describe being uncomfortable with loitering people.

## PROGRAMS ARE VIEWED AS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS PANHANDLING

The survey did ask a few more questions in regards to panhandling specifically, as this was raised by the Steering Committee as an issue to look at closely.

Overall, about four in ten residents (42.6%) believe panhandling is a very or extremely important issue that needs to be addressed. Another 35.7% believe it is a somewhat important issue that needs to be addressed. Among residents who feel that panhandling is either not very or not at all important to address (111 respondents out of 621), four in ten (41.1%) feel that panhandling is either exaggerated as an issue or is not a problem. Over one quarter (27.1%) feel that the people panhandling are harmless, while a similar proportion (24.7%) believes there are other city issues that require attention.

Of those residents who believe that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address (510 out of 621 respondents), four in ten (40.9%) suggest that addressing the root cause of the issues for panhandling is a way to address the issue of panhandling. Over one in ten (12.2%) want to make it illegal or not allow it, and fewer than one in ten (8.6%) suggest an increased police presence.

The majority of respondents believe that fines and jail time is either a not very or not at all effective deterrent for panhandlers (67.7%). One quarter (26.6%) believe that it is a somewhat effective deterrent, while only one in twenty (5.7%) believe it to be a very effective deterrent.

Of the respondents who believe jail time and fines are not very or not at all effective (420 out of 621 respondents), the primary reasons they do not believe that fines and jail time are an effective deterrent are:

- Panhandlers have no money to pay fines (30.1%)
- Three in ten (30.1%) feel that jail represents a warm place to sleep and eat
- One quarter (25.6%) believe that it wouldn't be effective in general
- Over two in ten (22.4%) feel that it does not address underlying issues

Finally, respondents were presented with eight potential methods of addressing panhandling and asked to rate their perceived effectiveness. The two initiatives with the highest “very effective” responses include increased job training and education (44.1%) and increased affordable housing supports (42.1%).

Among all respondents who answered the survey, a vast majority (85.0%) have been verbally asked for money at least once. Nearly one third (31.7%) have been asked more than six times. Survey respondents were asked if they donate to panhandlers and more than six in ten (64.8%) say they never donate money, food, or any other items to panhandlers. Nearly one quarter (21.7%) rarely donate, while one in ten (10.8%) donate from time to time. Another 2.1% indicated they usually give to panhandlers.

Of those respondents who do not give to panhandlers (474 out of 621 total respondents), one quarter (24.3%) do not donate because there are social programs available; two in ten (21.6%) feel that it does not help panhandlers because it encourages the activity; 20.5% believe panhandlers should earn their money like everyone else; and over one in ten (16.3%) do not donate because they worry about what panhandlers may purchase with the money.

Exposure to aggressive panhandling varies, with only 3.6% of respondents encountering what they perceive to be aggressive panhandling frequently, and three in ten (28.5%) encountering such activity sometimes. Please note that aggressive behaviour was not defined but, rather, emphasis was placed on the perception of the respondent as to what was aggressive.

When respondents were asked why they believe people panhandle, the most common reasons mentioned include alcohol and/or drug addiction (37.3%), people needing money or being down on their luck (34.1%), or people that are lazy and/or don't want to get a job (27.2%). Over one in ten feel that the reason people panhandle relates to an inability to work (15.0%) or people seeking easy or free money (13.6%).

## PEOPLE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH PANHANDLERS

Overall, 85% of respondents agree (strongly or somewhat) that panhandling negatively affects businesses and 80.6% agree (strongly or somewhat) that it negatively impacts tourism. 67.1% agree (strongly or somewhat) that panhandling makes it uncomfortable for them to shop in specific areas of the city. 41.7% agree (strongly or somewhat) that they avoid areas of the city specifically because of panhandlers. 17.9% strongly agree that Saskatoon has a lot of panhandling (59% agree

somewhat or strongly on this point). Residents do not see panhandling as an acceptable way to make a living, with 70% strongly disagreeing with this activity.

#### DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT ARE VIEWED AS BEING RESPONSIBLE

Of those residents who believe that panhandling is at least somewhat important to address (510 out of 621 respondents), one half (49.4%) believe that the City of Saskatoon should take responsibility for addressing the issue of panhandling. Nearly three in ten (27.8%) feel the responsibility is that of the police. One in ten feels that everyone shares a responsibility (10.3%). One in ten feels that the provincial government should take responsibility for the issue (10.2%).



**Intercepts**

## CONSUMER INTERCEPTS

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### Street Activity of Concern to Residents

The intercepts also illustrated that the major concern of residents is not that of panhandling but rather other forms of street activity. Below is a summary of the intercepts and the main findings by the particular area in which the intercept was conducted.

**Broadway** – Opinions are split on the issue of panhandling. Some people mentioned that they do not really see panhandlers in this area and that most panhandlers are downtown. Some consumers were very annoyed with the panhandlers. Some felt that panhandling is an issue that needs to be addressed in Saskatoon or that the city needs to create and enforce a bylaw to deal with panhandling. Other people said they think panhandling does not affect people in a negative way. Some “feel bad for them.” One female mentioned that she wished they had money because she felt bad knowing she had more than the panhandlers. She also wished that the city would be able to provide better programs that could help these panhandlers. A lot of consumers said they ignore the panhandlers and try not to take notice of them. Some consumers mentioned that there are a couple of panhandlers in the area on occasion but that they usually just ignore them.

Many consumers on Broadway said they would not avoid going to certain stores even if there were a panhandler present because they are not intimidated by the panhandlers and because most panhandlers are passive. A young female said a panhandler would not influence her decision to go into a store because “they are not hurting anyone.” Only one consumer said the presence of a panhandler would keep him from going into a certain store or area because he did not want people asking him for money.

Some consumers on Broadway felt that the issue of panhandling should be addressed, while others said it did not need to be addressed. People that wanted to address the issue did so because they felt that panhandling was not good for the city and tourists might associate the negative street activity in an area with the overall city. Some consumers felt it should not be addressed because there are not that many panhandlers in Saskatoon and panhandlers are common to all cities.

A few common suggestions made by most consumers in this area to address the issue of panhandling was to have more programs, bylaws, or a ticketing program to control panhandling. One person suggested a harsher way of dealing with the issue, which was to “shoot them all, put them in prison and give them tickets.” He thought shooting the panhandlers would eliminate panhandling entirely because they would know that they would get shot if they did panhandle. Another consumer said there should be a discussion about programs for them.

The consumers from Broadway said that they are concerned because of the bars and crimes. They mentioned public drunkenness being a concern because there is a correlation between alcohol and

violence. One male said that he has seen a lot of violence on Broadway and that he found a machete lying around. The same male said street vendors block sidewalks and people end up pushing and shoving. Also, the respondents talked about groups of young people. One man said that there is a group of the Indian Posse that hangs around that area. He mentioned that they sell heroine on Broadway and that bikers sell it at the coffee shops.

**8th Street** – The majority of consumers on 8th Street said that panhandlers are annoying, although only a few indicated actually encountering any panhandling on 8th Street. Respondents think the city should create programs that are directed towards the goal of eliminating this problem – such as counselling or employment workshops. Others suggested making a bylaw to make panhandling illegal or ticketing panhandlers. The majority of these consumers also said that they've never seen any panhandling on 8th Street. When they talked about panhandling, they were frequently referring to the downtown or 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue area. A lot of the consumers on 8th Street think negatively of panhandlers and feel that they should get jobs or treatment if they have mental illness or addictions. Some also said that panhandling is not the biggest issue in Saskatoon. Most of the people said that the presence of a panhandler would not affect whether or not they would enter a shop; however, about one in ten said that it would.

**1st Ave** – The majority of consumers seemed to be indifferent towards panhandlers on 1st Ave in front of the Midtown Plaza. They generally felt that the panhandlers should get jobs and that panhandling is more of a nuisance than a threat. They all said that the City or the police should be responsible for dealing with this issue. People here said that panhandling isn't a big issue.

Some people felt guilty after encountering panhandlers, some felt annoyed, and others felt bad for them. One consumer said that she thought most panhandlers were out on the streets to support their bad habits and therefore she does not like to give them any money. She would rather give her money to an organized association because then she would know that the money is going to people that really need it.

For the consumers on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave the presence of a panhandler would not keep them from going to a certain area or store because they did not feel threatened by them. One person said the reason a panhandler would not keep her from going into a particular store or area was because she would have already made up her mind about where she would need to go. However, many consumers felt panhandling should be addressed either by having bylaws or by banning it.

Respondents indicated that they are more concerned about groups of young people, street fights, loitering, and prostitution. They feel that the young people that loiter are members of gangs and that they have no sense of responsibility.

**2nd Ave** – Many consumers on 2nd Ave said that panhandlers should get jobs but that they are not one of the main issues that Saskatoon needs to deal with. Some said that panhandlers are down on their luck and just need more social assistance support, such as a bigger monthly allowance and access to programs and treatments. The majority felt safe with regards to panhandlers; however, many indicated feeling unsafe when it came to gangs and young people. This was stated by many as a major problem in this area.

Most of the consumers said they are not influenced by the presence of a panhandler and will continue to go into the store or areas they intend to go to because the panhandlers are passive. People did indicate that they felt bad for the panhandlers but also felt like the panhandlers put themselves in that position. One major reason consumers on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave felt that panhandling should be addressed was because it affects businesses. One female said panhandling used to mainly occur around the Midtown Plaza or McDonald's but that now panhandlers seem to be everywhere. One person said the issue should not be addressed because panhandlers are also people and some of them need to do this. A couple of common suggestions for dealing with panhandling were to have the panhandlers be fined or told to move from the area. One person said that the panhandlers who are not able to work should be allowed to panhandle.

There are a lot of concerns on 2nd Ave regarding groups of young people, public drunkenness, drug trafficking, and loitering. Gangs and young people cause a considerable amount of intimidation. Respondents cited gang members and young people "hanging around, staring at you," and said "they might attack you," that "there are these young people who mug or attack an honest working senior," and "there's more of them than there are of you."

Many consumers indicated seeing street fights, public drunkenness, drug trafficking, and gangs. One consumer said that the street fights can sometimes get really bad and people can get seriously injured during the fights. People also find street fights to be unsafe for those passing by because they can get hurt trying to get around the fight. One person said that, because the fights often occur right outside the buildings, if someone is trying to get out from inside of a building while people are fighting close to or outside the door, they may get caught in the middle.

Another person mentioned that the public drunkenness and drug trafficking create an unsafe environment; he felt that people will do whatever it takes to get what they need, even if that means stabbing someone. Another consumer said gangs exist more now because there is a shift in role models for younger people. He said more younger people are being influenced by negative role models rather than positive ones.

Some feel that the young people on the streets are always drunk or drinking. They also feel that they are outnumbered by these young people and it makes them feel nervous. Some feel the young people might attack them. Some seniors are very scared of possible violence. One woman says she is "afraid of drug trafficking because there might be altercations and someone might get hurt." People made the same type of comments with regard to street fights as well.

**21<sup>st</sup> Street** - Most of the consumers were not bothered by the panhandlers because they encounter them on a regular basis and know that they are not threatening. Some people said the panhandlers are "quite nice and humble mannered," and only one person mentioned fearing for their safety due to a panhandler. This individual said that this fear was because she does not always know how the panhandlers will act and also because they create an unpredictable feeling when she walks by them. She also fears for her safety because of the lifestyle difference. Furthermore, she does not know why they are panhandling, so if someone says no to them, she does not know how they will react. A lot of

people felt sympathy for the panhandlers, and some thought people who did panhandle did so as a last resort and therefore needed help.

People were generally not bothered by the panhandlers and usually just ignored them when they saw them. A few consumers said they would give to panhandlers if they had the spare change, while others preferred to buy them food instead of giving them money. A number of consumers on this street felt like the panhandlers were the responsibility of the people of the city to take care of because they are part of the society. One man in his late teens or early twenties stated he thought most people panhandled because they have been put into an unstable mental state due to their past experiences (i.e. the way they were raised or family influences).

Many consumers on 21<sup>st</sup> Street compared the panhandlers in Saskatoon to the ones in Vancouver, saying the ones here were not as bothersome as the ones in Vancouver. Consumers also said they enjoyed the ones that play some sort of music as opposed to people just asking for money because they felt like they were actually doing something to earn their money.

A couple of people said they were not bothered by them but that they did not really like the presence of panhandlers. One consumer said she did not mind the panhandlers but did not like that they make the city look unpleasant. She also did not think it was necessary to give to panhandlers because, being a social worker, she knows that there are programs available to help the panhandlers. One male felt sorry for the panhandlers but also felt that the panhandlers put themselves on the streets. He also mentioned that in order to address the issue of panhandling, the attitudes of the society would need to be changed. He thought that if more people tried to encourage the panhandlers to do better with their lives it would be helpful for the panhandlers.

There were a few consumers that were bothered by panhandlers and felt that they should be dealt with. Some said they feel that the panhandlers are a nuisance and do not help to promote the city. One woman said the panhandlers are sometimes “in your face” asking you for money, which can be quite annoying. Another male felt like he could not enjoy his time downtown without being harassed by the panhandlers. He was also the only one that said he would sometimes avoid certain stores or areas due to the presence of a panhandler because he was really tired of always saying no to them. He would, however, still go to certain stores regardless of a panhandler being there because he wanted to support the businesses and not let the panhandlers win. A lot of the consumers that were bothered by the panhandlers felt there were other ways for them to earn money and therefore they would not give change to them. A few of the consumers mentioned they would not give money to the panhandlers because then they would just be supporting the problem and allowing it to continue.

Some consumers felt the issue of panhandling needed to be addressed in Saskatoon because it makes the city look less clean and influences newcomers’ perceptions of the city. Still others felt that it is too broad an issue and, in order to address it, one would have to look at each individual person and their reasons for panhandling. A few people mentioned that panhandling is part of life and occurs in every city. One person said poverty is more of the issue that needs to be addressed rather than panhandling. He indicated that “panhandling actually defines the level of poverty in the city” and he felt that poverty is therefore the main thing that needs to be addressed. Some people felt that in order to address the issue of panhandling there should be more ticketing and more

programs to help them. Some people even suggested having groups that could voice the panhandlers' opinions for them as well as inform people of what they felt could be done to help their situation.

Other negative street activities that consumers on 21st Street mentioned were people being under the influence, people being attacked, gangs, and drug use. People felt these street activities make the area unsafe because people do not know what to expect. One person indicated that when she comes to work in the morning she finds people passed out in her parking area and she also often finds smashed beer bottles on the pavement. Another person mentioned that there has been an increase in drug use and gangs. A few people even mentioned traffic in the area being very bad. They said people are often driving fast and they are in a hurry to get somewhere, so they do not always watch out for pedestrians.

**20<sup>th</sup> Street** - Panhandling does occur on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, but it is not the "stereotypical" panhandling. People typically walk around asking for money. Few people sit and panhandle. There is a problem with aggressive panhandlers in this area. One person in particular stated that he was robbed by panhandlers. Consumers said they are reluctant to give to panhandlers as there are many with addiction problems. Panhandlers and the homeless are most likely to give to each other as they know how it feels to be in that situation.

Other street activity on 20<sup>th</sup> Street was stated by the consumers as common. Consumers said they have a big concern with groups of young people because they like to cause fights for no reason and they sometimes deal drugs. One consumer said that chances are very high that they have knives on them.

Consumers have some concern with safety during the day but mostly feel very unsafe at night. The night is when prostitutes come out and when most of the street fights happen. There is a lot of drug trafficking happening in this area, as well as a lot of public drunkenness. Loitering is most commonly seen in front of the liquor store on the corner of Avenue D and 20<sup>th</sup> Street. This loitering can sometimes create an issue for consumers, as they do not feel very safe walking through a group of people to go into the store.

**Confederation** – Overall, elderly females seemed to be afraid of panhandlers because they do not know what these panhandlers will do. One said she does not want to give them money because she thinks when she takes out her wallet they might snatch it from her and run away. Some individuals even mentioned that they find female panhandlers to be more aggressive than males. They say the issue with males is that they are just drunk or high. The females are more likely to yell or threaten.

The researchers also spoke to the security guard in front of the Superstore in Confederation. He said that he is not scared of panhandlers and that a lot of them are just intoxicated, so he is not worried about them being aggressive. A lot of people in this area were saying that panhandling is not a big issue. It is more the groups of young people that they are scared of, as they do not want to get robbed or hurt by these groups.

The consumers interviewed in this area find that the main problems here include public drunkenness, rowdy groups of young people, and loitering. Public drunkenness, and the violence associated with it, is a big problem in this area. There is a general fear and lack of trust for the groups of young people. There is also a sense of distrust with loiterers, and a few respondents in this area mentioned that they do not feel safe because of them. One man also mentioned that panhandling is not one of Saskatoon's main issues. He stated that the primary problems were gangs and drugs.

### **Busking**

Overall, a majority mentioned that they like buskers more than panhandlers because they are actually doing something for their money, such as "playing music or washing windows, etc." and not just sitting down, holding their hat out, asking for money. Most consumers do not view busking in the same negative light as panhandling.

People indicated that they enjoy listening to the buskers and felt that a lot of the buskers were really talented. One busker that was interviewed said he busks because he likes singing. He also felt that the "artists are sometimes turned into beggars here" because not everyone can afford to record in big studios. Another consumer said she really likes listening to the ones that play and will usually give money to them because she feels they have earned their money. Overall, consumers are not bothered or annoyed by the buskers because they find them to be entertaining.

### **Solutions**

Some solutions offered by the people interviewed to deal with the issue of panhandling were:

- Better social programs/treatment facilities
- Jail/fines
- Sending them to another city/outside the city limits
- Creation of a new bylaw
- Block out zones - i.e. panhandlers would not be allowed to go within a certain distance of a given enterprise or could not enter a particular area
- Have more police rather than security by the bus mall

There were some people that felt that panhandling is too broad a situation to be dealt with because no one knows why someone is panhandling. They felt that in order to address the situation one would have to look at each individual and find out why they are panhandling to be able to stop it or control the situation. Some people suggested providing the panhandlers with a certain number of warnings, and then if they do not leave or stop panhandling, they should be fined and serve jail time. Other people said ticketing them would not be helpful because they already do not have money and the laws against panhandling would just make them find other ways of earning money, such as drug trafficking or robbery.

A number of people said there should be better social programs in place to actually help panhandlers. One consumer suggested having programs to help them find work and get their lives back on track. Another consumer suggested having a committee for the panhandlers made up of some of the panhandlers as well as other people (e.g. service providers, law makers, etc.) in order to

actually find out what they really need, why they are panhandling, and what solutions they think would help their situation.

## **SASKATOON BUSINESS COMMUNITY INTERCEPT**

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### **Street Activity of Concern to Businesses**

#### **Broadway**

On Broadway, most managers on duty of businesses said they either had no problems or very minor dealings with panhandling in the area. The businesses mentioned that many panhandlers were located in the downtown area but not on Broadway. The businesses in this area did not feel that panhandling was of a particular concern for them. There was one business that did notice some panhandlers in the area, but they did not really consider it an issue because they are passive panhandlers. This business indicated they have had some panhandlers around the business, while others sometimes even come into the restaurant, for example, and start asking the customers for money. They found the panhandlers were usually the same ones. In order to deal with the panhandlers, they usually just ask them to leave.

A few of the businesses did say panhandling is an issue that needs to be addressed but mainly downtown. The reason the issue needs to be addressed is that the panhandlers make some customers uncomfortable and affect opinions of people who do not live in the city. One of the businesses said panhandling is not really an issue, so it does not need to be addressed, and another felt that panhandling would not go away even if it was addressed. A couple of common suggestions made by the businesses to address panhandling were to have better social programs and to have laws against panhandling.

Most of the businesses mentioned seeing busking, charity activities, and street vendors once in a while in the area; loitering and groups of young people were seen more often and on a more regular basis. The businesses found groups of young people to be negative because they either scared customers or made them nervous. Two businesses mentioned drug trafficking and one business mentioned public drunkenness occurring in the area. The businesses find that the groups of young people make other people uncomfortable and cause them not to come into the store.

The drug trafficking mentioned by one business is thought to have a positive *and* negative effect on the business because it brings a lot of people to the area, but it brings “ratty” people into the business as well.

Busking, charity activities, and street vendors were not really a concern for businesses. They found that these street activities actually attract customers and bring people out into the area. Busking was positive because it is considered appropriate for Broadway and is beneficial to this unique area, though a bank located on Broadway said that buskers irritate customers and some do complain.

Some of the businesses have never reported any street activities to the authorities because they have not had major problems with them. One business did report a drunk driver, while another

reported a street fight that occurred once three years ago. Other than that, no other street activities have been reported because the businesses either did not have any problems with them or did not think the activities to be severe enough to report to the authorities.

**Below are a few of the comments from the intercept surveys in regards to street activity experienced in the downtown area:**

*What types of street activities do you notice in this area? Are they positive or negative?*

### Groups of Young People

|  |
|--|
| Negative, it makes clients nervous.  |
| Negative, they hang around and litter  |
| Negative, because when you're dealing with seniors they panic and get scared.  |
| Would make some people uncomfortable about coming in because they are playing or hanging around. It's just the kids once in awhile and that is a result of Seven Eleven; there is littering. |

### Panhandling

|   |
|---|
| Negative, clients complain, it irritates them |
| Negative, people don't want to be approached  |
| Negative, people get scared                   |

### Busking

|   |
|---|
| Negative, clients complain—it irritates them                              |
| I don't care either way.  |
| Positive because it's Broadway; it's a unique area.                       |
| Positive because it attracts people and brings out a positive atmosphere. |
| It draws attention during the Fringe & stuff; get a lot of walk-ins.      |
| Positive because usually they busk enough to get a beer.                  |

### Loitering

|  |
|--|
| Negative, clients complain—it irritates them                 |
| Negative; it's hard to get in when there are people outside. |

### Charity Activities

|  |
|--|
| Negative, clients complain—it irritates them.    |
| Neutral.   |
| They have steak nights and suppers. They are OK. |

### Public Drunkenness

|  |
|--|
| Don't see that during the day.         |
| Negative, it makes people feel unsafe. |

### Street Vendors

|  |
|--|
| Don't see them.  |
| Positive, it brings people out to see something new  |
| Positive, we don't get many. The guy is making a living and is clean. It's art of culture. |
| Positive, they attract people.   |

### Prostitution

|                 |
|-----------------|
| Don't see them. |
| Not applicable. |

## Street Fights

Don't see them.

Negatively, it puts you at risk and damages property.

## Drug Trafficking

Don't see them.

Negative, I think it's obvious.

Can be positive or negative. It brings people into the business for drinks, but then it brings ratty people into the business.

## Downtown

**1<sup>st</sup> Avenue** - On 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, businesses indicated seeing groups of young people and busking occurring once in a while, but they felt that both of these activities do not really have any effect on the business. A business indicated that loitering occurs all the time, and public drunkenness occurs regularly. The loitering and public drunkenness both impact the use of their ATMs because sometimes people sleep there or there is vomit in the ATM room. They even have had to shut the ATM room down a few times between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am. They have also found that due to street activities occurring around the ATM room people will not use the machines or do deposits after 8:00 pm. They have had to call the authorities a few times to have the homeless people removed, but the police have asked them to come up with a solution on their own to deal with the problem.

One business indicated they had problems with the panhandlers. This business sometimes had about two to three of the same panhandlers around their business. Those at the business said they find panhandlers to be aggressive because they often sleep in front of their ATMs, which makes it inconvenient for others to use the machines. Panhandling affects this business in a negative way because they have lost ATM revenue, and many of their customers have moved to neighbourhood branches due to safety reasons.

This business also felt that people have become cautious about coming to their business because of the panhandlers. They have asked panhandlers to move away from their business and found that some do leave on their own, while others required police intervention in order to be removed. Managers here did not think reporting the panhandlers to the police helped because the same panhandlers would be back the next day. The business had some customers comment on the panhandlers, saying that "they are on every corner," "made it difficult to get into the mall," and that "downtown is not safe in the evenings."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue** – The businesses on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue indicated that they see panhandling around their business either all the time or regularly and that panhandling has a negative impact on their business because it keeps customers away. One business said they have anywhere from five to ten panhandlers around their business, usually consisting of the same people, while another said they have about five to six panhandlers within a block of their business, consisting of mostly the same people.

Businesses said they have asked panhandlers to move away from their business and they usually do move, but there are times when they have to ask them multiple times to move. One business has even called the police to report aggressive panhandlers, but they felt it did not have any effect because they found “the police really don’t do anything.” The businesses did feel panhandling is an issue that needs to be addressed because customers have indicated that it is bad for business. One business suggested having fines to address the issue.

One business said that the panhandlers are passive and quietly ask for money, while another indicated they have both passive and aggressive panhandlers around their business. One of the businesses felt panhandling has really impacted their business because they are supposed to be a family restaurant, and due to the people outside of their restaurant, parents do not want to bring their children there.

Most of the businesses on 2nd Avenue, however, said that they feel that panhandling is not the biggest issue that Saskatoon has. One businessperson said that there are persons who obviously have mental health issues and asked, “Why are they just being turned out to wander the streets?”

Most of the businesses found that the young people were intimidating and scared the customers as well as the employees. One female does not like walking around at night or using the transit system after 5:00 pm because of the young people. In some cases, the businesses find that young people loitering in the entranceways makes it difficult for clients to feel safe to walk into the establishment. One business claimed that young people intimidate customers, hit their windows, and smoke inside their doorway. Another problem is drinking in the alleyways and loitering.

They also indicated that on occasion they have seen street fights, prostitution, charity activities, and street vendors. One business did mention that the groups of people outside make customers hesitant about coming into the business because it looks like a “rough” crowd.

**21<sup>st</sup> Street** – The businesses on 21<sup>st</sup> Street said panhandlers do affect their businesses and that they often see the same panhandlers on a regular basis. These businesses indicated that they find panhandlers to be annoying and not good for the business because they cause people to leave or not come in at all. They also find some people are made uncomfortable by the presence of panhandlers. They said there are about four to five panhandlers, both aggressive and passive, that are regularly around their businesses. They indicated that whether panhandlers are passive or aggressive usually depends on whether the panhandlers are high or not at the time they encounter them.

One business on 21<sup>st</sup> Street said that the female panhandlers are more aggressive than the males. There was a young female customer that stayed in their store for quite a while because she was so scared of one particular female panhandler.

Many of the businesses do not consider busking a problem and, in fact, think of them as enjoyable. Charity events are no problem and usually add to the atmosphere. Public drunkenness has happened a few times. Regarding street fights, they have heard of them occurring, and they have heard a few yelling matches that drew them outside.

The homeless have gone into one store a few times. One business said that, once, a customer brought in a homeless female and asked them to let her stay in the store while she went to buy the homeless woman proper winter outerwear.

One business said that they've had no problems during the day and only a few times have people tried to break in at night.

**Below are a few of the comments from the intercept surveys in regards to street activity experienced in the downtown area:**

*What types of street activities do you notice in this area? Are they positive or negative?*

**Groups of Young People**

|   |
|---|
| Young people hang around thinking they own the streets. Negative.   |
| Young people obstructing business entrance.   |
| Loitering is destroying our business, every year it is getting progressively worse we are thinkig about moving                        |
| Natives always come in and bug me for money or try to steel.  |
| Some specific situations affect business, negatively such as theft or verbal abuse, but it doesn't happen too often.                  |
| Negative, young people are bad for business. They stand in the middle of the sidewalk and scare customers away.                       |
| Negative, groups of young people are bad for business- they stand in middle sidewalk scare customers away                             |
| With the Odeon next door we get large groups of young people waiting for concert and they block the doorway and intimidate customers. |
| Groups of young people intimidate some customers...typically the older demographic  |
| Groups of young people -they block the doorway  |
| Negative, some people are intimidated by these groups of young people.  |
| The groups of young people will probably develop into gangs and threaten us   |
| Groups of young people - They obstruct the entrance to the business, are intimidating to customers, are loud and rude                 |
| Groups of young people - intimidate customers, hitting window, smoke inside doorway   |
| Groups of young people - makes it difficult for client to feel comfortable and to be safe to walk into the salon.                     |
| Groups of young people - these activities do not give shoppers a feeling of security or comfort                                       |
| Groups of young people - Positive. Shop at the store, usually pleasant  |
| Groups of young people - Usually coming from the mall, they just walk by no effect.   |
| Groups of young people - If they are shopping it's good, but if just loitering not good   |

**Panhandling**

|   |
|---|
| Panhandling - keeps customer from coming downtown   |
| Panhandling - Has an overall effect of making people reluctant to come downtown   |
| Panhandling, It's disturbing that such a rich city cannot look after it's own people  |
| This is destroying our business, every year it is getting progressively worse we are thinking about moving  |
| Panhandling - Neutral for the most part.  |
| Panhandling - They are creepy, dirty, sick and scare customers away.  |
| Panhandling - Bad! creepy-scare customers, dirty, sick.   |
| Panhandling - Usually happens further down 2nd avenue.  |
| Panhandling - Asking for money when customers are leaving ATM area  |
| Panhandling - way too many people asking for money...many customers mention this as primary reason to avoid downtown                              |
| Panhandling - negative, just looks bad and gives people a uneasy feeling to come downtown   |
| Panhandling - Those people will affect our customers. They won't come downtown.   |
| Panhandling - We have people come in the store panhandling!   |
| Panhandling -customers being asked for money while plugging parking meters (which they are already unhappy about) scares them away from downtown. |

|   |
|---|
| Panhandling doesn't hurt the business but it might scare people                                     |
| Panhandling - Negative. Customers complain constantly   |
| Panhandling - not great for our business but they have mental health issues.                        |
| Often customers won't come into the store because panhandlers stand on the corner blocking our door |
| They sit on benches sometimes, no effect on business.   |
| Very annoying, causes people to leave or not come in  |

## Busking

|   |
|---|
| Love busking, positive.   |
| Busking - No effect on our business. See it but no effect.  |
| Busking - Positive, wish it was in every street as it promotes a fun light atmosphere & gives exposure to musicians       |
| Busking - Neutral for the most part.  |
| Busking - positive, love the street performance   |
| Busking - Don't see many  |
| Busking -very little in the way of quality entertainment. Most are very bad and very loud. Again a deterrent to shoppers. |
| I'm ok with busking cause at least they are adding something to the downtown experience                                   |
| I like buskers if they are good   |
| No real effect  |

## Loitering

|  |
|--|
| Loitering - Always around my store, negative.  |
| Obstructing traffic.   |
| Very intimidating, again keeps people from downtown  |
| Same as panhandling  |
| Unnerving  |
| This is destroying our business, every year it is getting progressively worse we are thinking about moving   |
| Neutral for the most part. Only some specific situations affect business, negatively such as theft or verbal abuse, but it doesn't happen too often. |
| Rough scary people that are drunk and out of it that block the sidewalk  |
| Bad-rough, scary, drunk, out of it, block sidewalk   |
| Again it blocks the entrance way but isn't a big problem.  |
| using the atm area for shelter from cold   |
| problem when blocks traffic flow or individuals are loud and aggressive  |
| negative, they make customers feel uncomfortable   |
| negative, people just waiting to make trouble  |
| They might come to our store and talk to our staff   |
| People hanging out on street corners, sometimes make people nervous coming downtown  |
| Block access to business, deters people from coming in   |
| Loitering people often sit on water pipe against the store   |
| Bring in business sometimes  |
| Again annoying-causes people to not want to come downtown  |

## Public Drunkenness

|  |
|--|
| Scary.   |
| More so in the evening continuously having to clean-up the mess from vomit, urines, etc. |
| Same as panhandling obnoxious drunk bothering customers in store                         |

|   |
|---|
| Someone threw up in front of my building-and we are not licenced.   |
| Negative, scares customers away & makes staff uncomfortable   |
| They are scary and pee on the sidewalk  |
| Bad-feel on sidewalk- scary   |
| There are several bars in the area so it's more of a night time issue but its usually not a problem for us. |
| Drinking while in ATM area mostly @ night & weekends.   |
| Negative, butts, puke, urine, just bad for business   |
| They might hurt people who are walking and affect our customers or staff.                                   |
| There has been the odd incident of public intoxication, this includes drugs as well as alcohol.             |
| Vulgarity intimidates customers   |
| Negative.   |
| Makes people very uncomfortable   |

### Street Vendors

|   |
|---|
| Positive-when kept controlled to corners-presents casual eating options & people use it over the summer |
| positive  |
| Positive, fruit stands, hotdogs etc. all add to the downtown experience                                 |
| That might cause less people to come to our store   |
| Food vendors are good for downtown! Keeps people out  |

### Prostitution

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| Never seen any                     |
| Not an issue in our area           |
| Negative we don't see much of this |
| They will affect our customers     |

### Street Fights

|  |
|--|
| Scary.   |
| Haven't seen one   |
| They cause crime and danger  |
| Dangerous!   |
| Negative-infrequent but very disturbing when happens- persons killed in street fight just around our corner. |
| Negative   |
| Negative usually from the bars downtown  |
| They will affect our customers and staff and might cause some hurt on them                                   |
| Scares people away, makes shoppers feel unsafe   |
| Negative, customers leave or don't want to come back   |
| Negative. Deters customers from shopping   |
| Very far and between, not usually a problem  |

### Drug Trafficking

|   |
|---|
| This seen a lot in front of McDonalds-that area at the bus mall |
| See needles   |
| Happens in the back allies and is unsafe                        |
| Negative "Herman Building"                                      |

The Olympia restaurant & at the bus mall area is infected with drugs, etc.

Happens on benches outside store

## Riversdale and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

**20<sup>th</sup> Street** - Businesses in this area are very bothered by panhandling because panhandlers come into the stores and ask for money. They tend to hang out in groups in front of some of the stores and customers do not want to walk by them. Some businesses said that they have been robbed by these groups of young people. The businesses also say that the groups are usually gangs. These groups of young people have been described as between the ages of 18 and 25, usually all male, and are of Aboriginal descent. The size of groups varies all the time. When you are walking outside, one business owner warns, do not make eye contact or you will be asked for money.

Businesses deal with street activity such as loitering, drug trafficking, and public drunkenness on a daily basis. One business has witnessed people passed out in the lane right behind their place of business. Businesses have tried calling the police about street activity, but the people have left by the time the police get there in most cases.

Another business talked about how different the young people in this area are compared to 20 years ago.

*“It used to be that as a business owner you could go out and “smack around” these youth if they were bothering you or your customers. Today you cannot do this.” – Business Owner*

There is a sense now that these youth are more dangerous and that they will really hurt you or burn down your business.

Staff members at the businesses on 20<sup>th</sup> Street carefully watch their merchandise. One business stated that they count the number of people who walk into the store and then count the number that leave. Frequently youth try to hide in the business so that when it closes they can rob the business after everyone has gone.

Businesses also mentioned the frequency of viewing criminal acts and said that the young people do not seem to care about who sees what. One business owner commented that he frequently sees drug deals occurring. The business mentioned they know that someone is watching them but they go ahead and do it anyway. Another business suggested that the location of the methadone clinic on 20<sup>th</sup> has caused many issues on that street.

Poverty is seen the largest culprit of why young people are getting into gangs and dealing drugs. As one business noted, criminal activities are also a source of social fun for many of the young people in this area. This business owner also stated that people in the area are very territorial and sometimes yell at people to get “out of their territory.” This business owner continued, “If they smell fear, you are a goner.”

Overall, it is the other types of street activity in this area that are of concern and less so the panhandling. There does, however, seem to be erratic and unpredictable panhandlers in this area that are cause for concern by business owners in terms of safety of their staff and customers.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Street** –Interviews were conducted with a few businesses along 22nd Street. The businesses interviewed mentioned they have concerns with panhandlers and other forms of street activity. In terms of panhandling, this area has aggressive panhandlers. According to the businesses, similar to those on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, these panhandlers are erratic and unpredictable. One business that has a drive through stated they will come up to the cars and bang on the windows. They panhandle for both coffee and money.

In terms of other negative street activity, drugs have been a problem. One store has locked their washrooms so that customers must be buzzed in. They did this due to problems with finding drugs and needles in the washroom. They have also changed the lighting to include black lights so that should someone try to “shoot up” in the washroom, they will have difficulty finding a vein.

When asked what was more important to deal with, the panhandling or these other street activities, the reply from the businesses in this area was “both.” Both are seen as equally scary and confusing to staff and customers.

**Below are a few of the comments from the business intercept surveys in regards to street activity experienced in the Riversdale and 22<sup>nd</sup> area:**

*What types of street activities do you notice in this area? Are they positive or negative?*

#### Groups of Young People

|   |
|---|
| Many are in gangs   |
| They are an intimidating bunch  |
| You can mess with them like you used to; they will come burn down your store  |
| Typically people of aboriginal descent  |
| Staff need to watch more than just who is coming in but what they are doing when they come and if they eventually leave or not. |
| They sell drugs right in front of you. They are not shy.  |
| They act like it is there territory.  |
| Gang problem is increasing.   |
| Minors do break and enters regularly. Lots of “kiddy” gangs in this area.   |

#### Panhandling

|  |
|--|
| Bad – they come in to the stores and ask for money from the customers          |
| They will follow them on the street asking for money                           |
| Employees have gotten jumped for cigarettes. Get jumped middle of the day now. |

#### Loitering

|  |
|--|
| Just don't make eye contact with them else they will ask for money or worse attack you |
| Lots around the liquor store. Not too much of a problem though.                        |

#### Public Drunkenness

See lots of this down here. People are high or drunk.

Regularly see people passed out on the street.

Intimidating for customers to see people passed out or talking to you but you can't understand them.

## Prostitution

See young girls out on the streets. Where are their parents?

The issue with this and other street activities is the concentration of poverty in this area.

## Street Fights

Always happening. These young guys are always fighting.

Related to gang activity in the area.

## Drug Trafficking

Methadone clinic on 20<sup>th</sup> has caused all sorts of concerns. You see young people selling stuff they get from the clinic.

Lot of drug activity. Pick up needles frequently in the back alley. A bit less now that the Barry is gone.

**Confederation** - The businesses did not all see a lot of panhandling occurring in the area. One business said they did not have any problems with panhandlers because they are within the mall and they have not noticed any problems around the mall area. There were two businesses that said they have had to deal with panhandlers. They have asked panhandlers to leave because they affect their business negatively. One manager said panhandlers "may discourage the odd person from coming into the store because they sit in front of the door." He also said if someone has a bad experience with the people outside, then they might not come back to his store. He said he has noticed about twelve people, always the same core group made up of people of various ages, panhandling in this area. Some of the panhandlers are young and there is a couple in their sixties or seventies.

The businesses indicated the panhandlers are passive and usually easy to remove from their stores. Once in a while the panhandlers will go into the business and ask for some water but rarely ask the staff members themselves for money.

One business manager said he has never had to report any panhandlers to the police because when he kicks them out they usually just go, and because of that he did not fear for his safety. He said, however, that some of his staff do have concerns for their safety if they are by themselves because they worry about getting robbed. The manager also indicated he had only been in the area for about a year at the time of the interview, and for the first three months that he was there, he did not see as many police patrolling the area as he does now. This increase in policing occurred about six months ago, and he said the police activity makes him feel safer in the area.

In addition to panhandling, one business interviewed indicated, many of the staff members have been robbed on the way to or from their business more than once. They have the same group of eight people that sleep in the lane behind their business every day. One employee calls them the "Lysol clan," as they are known for drinking it. They do not always cause trouble but have been known to ask people for money as customers walk to and from the restaurant. Some customers have been chased into the store to get away from them. The group of eight has been described as a

little older (in their late twenties to mid-thirties), all male, and most of them of Aboriginal descent. This business used to be open until 10:00 pm, but since it is too dangerous for the staff, they now close at 9:00 pm.

The staff takes garbage out in pairs, as they never know what will happen if they go alone into the lane, especially since the group that “lives” in the lane are often drunk or high. This business has thought of moving locations but would rather see something done about it before they have to make such a decision.

These “other” types of street activities mentioned by the businesses in this area are the main focus of concern, not the panhandlers. All of these activities have many people worried for their safety both day and night.

**Below are a few of the comments from the intercept surveys in regards to street activity experienced in the Riversdale and 22<sup>nd</sup> area:**

*What types of street activities do you notice in this area? Are they positive or negative?*

#### Groups of Young People

|  |
|--|
| It is not really an issue.   |
| I don't really think it's much of a deterrent.   |
| We always have to ask them to move; older people are afraid to come to the store because of the group. |
| They intimidate others.  |
| They can be negative; elderly public are concerned about the safety.                                   |

#### Panhandling

|  |
|--|
| They chase away costumers.   |
| Not applicable; we don't have panhandlers.                             |
| People are scared to approach panhandlers; it gives a bad image.       |
| It scares customers.   |
| Public may not feel safe entering a business with panhandlers present. |
| They are a bother to the customers.                                    |

#### Busking

|   |
|---|
| People think you need to give money. They help draw customers in. |
| Gives a perception of homelessness.                               |
| Some people may find them annoying.                               |

#### Loitering

|  |
|--|
| It's really bad; they sleep near here and people feel intimidated. |
| It doesn't affect our business.                                    |
| People are hanging around and not buying.                          |
| Gives a perception that they have nothing better to do.            |
| If the size of the crows gets too large issues arise.              |
| Customers are afraid.  |

## Charity Activities

Doesn't affect business. Occasionally people come and sell products.

Draws attention to the store and business increases because of the activity

Makes customers feel obligated.

## Public Drunkenness

It deters customers.

Doesn't happen here often.

Gives a bad public view of the store if drunks are around all the time.

Disgusting and sad.

Negative and unpredictable.

## Street Vendors

Doesn't draw people in; can deter customers.

Draws in good customers and increases profits.

## Prostitution

Not applicable.

People don't like being asked if they want to pay for sex.

Gives a perception of wasted youth and criminal activity.

## Street Fights

Not applicable.

Scares business away.

Creates fear.

## Drug Trafficking

It happens in the parking lot.

Not applicable.

People are scared to come to the store because they may be asked to buy drugs.

It drives customers away.

## Busking

A lot of the businesses said that they like buskers because they attract attention and might bring people into their business. One business on Broadway said busking is positive because it "attracts people and brings out a positive atmosphere." Another business said that during the Fringe Festival the people busking draw attention to the store and thus they tend to get a lot of walk-ins. A lot of the businesses preferred buskers over panhandlers because they feel buskers attract and create more business for them, while the panhandlers mostly annoy them and the consumers, sometimes driving business away.

## Solutions

Businesses did feel that panhandling is an issue that needs to be addressed because it affects business. Many suggested:

- Better programs or having fines

- Curfews
- More cops on the beat

Most businesses had solutions like tougher laws against crime, heavier jail sentences, and much more police on patrol and on foot to stop all of this. “The city really needs to step in and help its citizens and decide what’s best,” one business mentioned. Overall, however, most business in all areas saw other issues that need to be addressed, not just panhandling.



**Saskatoon Panhandlers**

## SASKATOON PANHANDLERS

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### PANHANDLER INTERCEPTS SUMMARY

Meeting with panhandlers within their environment helped construct a crucial understanding of what it is like for people asking for money and affected by poverty on the streets of Saskatoon. As panhandlers are often transient, living in different circumstances, or not routinely accessing social services, meeting with them wherever possible ensured a respectful approach and inclusion. Panhandlers were approached and engaged in conversation and in nearly every case were very open and willing to talk to researchers. In appreciation of their time, panhandling respondents were compensated with cigarettes.

Panhandlers were frequently open and willing to share their experiences and were often social when approached by researchers. Many identified their experiences with the public as being generally neutral or positive, with most people either not paying panhandlers much attention or donating a small amount of change. Panhandlers are not often harassed; however, some feel that they are second class citizens compared to consumers and businesspeople who walk by. While the public does not seem to openly harass or marginalize panhandlers, the omission of respect or recognition of panhandlers likely influences feelings of self-worth. This is a phenomenon examined more in depth in Arthur Schafer's *The Expressive Liberty of Beggars* (2007), where the author concludes that street-disorder problems should be dealt with "in ways that are respectful of such values as individual dignity, free expression, and individual liberty" (Schafer 24).

There has been a significant amount of research conducted in other Canadian municipal centres on the earnings of panhandlers, and research in Saskatoon suggests that panhandlers in Saskatoon earn a similar amount of money as panhandlers in other parts of Canada. On average, panhandlers interviewed report daily average earnings from about \$15 to \$25 dollars. These earnings are influenced by the amount of time panhandlers are on the streets asking for change, their location, as well as the number of other panhandlers on the street. Reports in Calgary, Toronto, and Winnipeg corroborate these experiences. A report for the Calgary Homeless Foundation found that panhandlers can earn \$10 to \$20 on average for a half day panhandling<sup>1</sup>, while panhandlers in Toronto are reported as earning \$15 to \$50 per day<sup>2</sup>. Bose and Hwang, the authors, go on to note that the income earned from panhandling is not considered to be substantial (Bose and Hwang, 2002). Some panhandlers in Saskatoon earn additional money through the recycling of discarded bottles and cans. However, this was not very common.

The typical panhandler encountered in Saskatoon was about 35 years of age or older, and typically had some form of long term housing arrangement. This ranged from rental of market property such as apartments, assisted living situations, and temporary living arrangements with friends or family.

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<sup>1</sup> Bender, Cori, *Informal Employment: Making a Living in Calgary*, September 2010

<sup>2</sup> Bose, Rohit & Wange, Stephen W., "Income and spending patterns among panhandlers," 2002

Individuals who currently panhandle cite past experiences and circumstances as primary factors that influence their current livelihood. Common circumstances include addictions, employment loss, changing family situations such as death or sickness, or being mixed up with criminal activity. The amount of time panhandlers have been panhandling varies; however, most interviewed have been involved in the activity for a number of years. Frequency and reasons for panhandling vary, with some panhandling every day and others panhandling only when a perceived need arises. Reasons people continue to panhandle include being unable to find work, being unable to work due to mental or physical disabilities, homelessness, and continuing addictions.

Most panhandlers encountered in downtown Saskatoon in particular have been present on the street for a number of years and are commonly known as regulars in the area by both business operators and consumers who frequent the downtown area. According to business respondents in the Riversdale area, while there are some individuals who are considered to be the regular panhandlers, these same individuals do not always panhandle on a daily basis. These individuals are commonly found in the areas loitering or visiting on the streets, particularly near the liquor store, and only panhandle when a need arises or when an opportunity presents itself.

Understanding when people turn to panhandling as a way to earn money illustrates a variety of different circumstances and catalysts. Most panhandlers primarily require money for subsistence, such as food and housing. In most cases, money from panhandling is utilized to supplement other income sources, such as social assistance. Others say they spend some of the money earned on coffee, cigarettes, alcohol, or for secondary subsistence. Many of the panhandlers encountered in Saskatoon admitted to spending some money earned through panhandling on drugs or alcohol consumption.

Panhandler perceptions of other panhandlers in Saskatoon demonstrate the shared experience that people subsisting off Saskatoon's streets commonly understand. Approached panhandlers commonly shared calculated and tested strategies for panhandling, including the best times of day and the best spots, as well as mutual understandings and agreements shared with other panhandlers on the streets. This was demonstrated to researchers when a panhandler in front of the Midtown Plaza related a perception that one side of the street provided more earning opportunities than another, but that if a particular panhandler was present on a given day, the first panhandler would yield the coveted location to the second.

Ultimately, panhandlers share a variety of reasons influencing their need to panhandle as well as an assortment of current living and financial situations. While some panhandlers interviewed live day to day, worrying about daily shelter and food needs on a short term basis, others live in permanent living situations that may at least partially be paid for with money earned panhandling. Complexities with health, addictions, and other characteristics of poverty were not universal in nature, and instead represented unique circumstances for each particular individual encountered. The single unifying factor among all panhandlers was the choice inherent when spending money earned through panhandling, including the perceived need for discretionary spending, be it on housing, food, or satisfying addictions.

## PANHANDLER INTERVIEWS

Below are the summaries of the individual interviews Inshgtrix conducted with the Saskatoon panhandlers. In order to find out why people panhandle on Saskatoon streets and what issues they are facing, Inshgtrix researchers met with a variety of panhandlers both in a focus group session as well as on the streets. The goal was to find out why they were panhandling and what they do with the proceeds they gather. To protect confidentiality of those who were interviewed, the names have been changed; the stories are based on their accounts of why they are panhandling on Saskatoon streets.



Name: John

Panhandler: Regular Basis

Location Interviewed: Downtown

John was born and raised in Saskatoon. He has been panhandling for many years in Saskatoon. What got him panhandling was the medical diagnosis of schizophrenia when he was 18 years of age. He admits to an alcohol and drug problem, explaining that the drugs and alcohol help him cope with his mental illness. The drugs have a secondary positive impact in that they provide him with a social life as he gets to know others who are using. He mentions he gets down a lot and has had thoughts of suicide. He explains that he met a personal goal by not committing suicide, for many with schizophrenia commit suicide by the time they are 35. He has surpassed this age and is happy he has done so.

John is a very polite individual. He talks about how his medication makes him very tired and he sleeps a lot of the time. He mentions that this makes it hard to hold down a job. He typically earns around \$20 to \$30 a day. He also gets some money from a family member and from social assistance. He does rent a place, to which his family contributes some money each month. He worries because the family member that does help him out has a terminal illness and will not be around forever to help him. He panhandles to pay his rent, purchase food, and purchase alcohol and cigarettes.

He has a bus pass through social services and panhandles at various locations throughout the city. He says you need to be respectful and people will help you out. He says he only feels like getting aggressive when people yell at him to get a job. He thinks they don't understand his situation. He jokes about becoming paranoid during the interview when the topic of the police is brought up. He says he doesn't know if it is psychosis talking or his true feelings. He says he still has a sense of humour. Overall, he is on good terms with the police but sometimes feels they ask questions they don't need to know, which makes him uncomfortable. He is well aware of the panhandling bylaws in Saskatoon and says he follows them.

He knows the other panhandlers and says that although they may at first seem scary, they are good people. He mentions that he is a bit afraid of some of the youth loitering in certain areas of the city, particularly downtown. However, he says, "I don't bother them and they don't bother me."

He eats one good meal a day and that is all he really needs. He also smokes and at times will ask people for a cigarette rather than money. He finds the business owners downtown are OK with him. The business owners on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, however, have less patience with his panhandling. Overall, he feels the people of Saskatoon are good but fears some of the baby boomers, especially those he refers to as “the tattooed ones.”



Name: Jake  
Panhandler: Former Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Jake left home at the age of 13. He has lived in various locations throughout Saskatchewan and has even been homeless, living under bridges. Jake is of Aboriginal background.

Jake has had various addictions in his life, including alcohol, cigarettes, cocaine, and morphine. He would panhandle so that he could buy these addictive substances. When he was panhandling, he did not have a home. He would sleep on the couches of friends or on the street. All the money he earned panhandling went to food, drugs, and alcohol. He earned between \$20 and \$40 a day.

He talks about the fact that successful panhandling is less about what tactic you use when you ask people than it is about the situations. He says he would look for couples because men will want to look good in front of their wife or girlfriend and will give money to a panhandler. Women are also more likely to give, as are those of Aboriginal descent. He says that those that look like they do not have much money are the most likely to give because they can relate to the situation he is in. He also mentions that panhandling near wine and beer stores is lucrative. If you just say you are \$5 short in getting a case of beer, they are likely to give you the money. He mentions overall that the ratio to giving to a panhandler, based on his experience, is 20:1.

He mentions that panhandling itself can be an addiction in that you are setting goals and, when you achieve them, you feel good about yourself. However, he no longer panhandles because he finds it hard to do now. He mentioned even when he was addicted to morphine and cocaine that it was hard to panhandle when he was “sober.” When he was going through withdrawals, it was next to impossible. It was easier to do so when he was under the influence. When he was sober, he felt bad about himself and what he was doing.

Jake has spent some time in jail. Jake is now HIV positive and has a variety of medical issues. He lives in supported housing. He no longer panhandles, but he is a busker. He feels he does not have enough money from social services and needs to busk to earn extra money in order to live and buy essentials.

Jake mentions in the interview that he does not know anyone who panhandles who is not addicted to something, be it cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol. He still feels it is important to give to panhandlers even if they spend it on items we may not approve of. It is his opinion that we still need to help out fellow human beings. He says they are likely in a tough spot and they need our help. He says if

panhandling was outlawed, then they would be doing criminal activities like break and enters, mugging, etc. to feed their addictions.



Name: Sally  
Panhandler: Regular Basis  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Sally is a regular panhandler in Saskatoon. She has a spot which she likes to frequent and ask people for money. At the beginning of the interview she reflects on when she had her own place, her own apartment, when her mother was still alive. She emphasizes she did not stay with her mother but she did have her own place when her mom was alive. Sally obviously faces challenges in regards to her mental development. She does, however, participate in the interview with interest and insight.

Sally is a panhandler for two main reasons: to buy a coffee each morning and to purchase two packages of cigarettes a day. Once she earns this, and she has this amount down to the cent, she says she quits panhandling for the day. She mentions that one day she made just more than enough so she could get Chinese food, her favourite.

She mentions she will only panhandle during the day because she had been mugged a few years ago by some young fellows. She says that they tripped her and took her money and cigarettes. She is proud, though, that they only got 50 cents.

In terms of who she targets, she says it is anyone but older people because they don't have any money, being on a fixed income. She does talk with pride about how two young Aboriginal boys gave her \$7 one day.

Sally now lives in supported housing. She is able to get her shelter and meals but panhandles for her cigarettes and coffee.



Name: Trudy  
Panhandler: Regular Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Trudy was interviewed in the downtown location after asking passers-by for change for the bus. During the interview she frequently cries. She indicates her life was not always like this. She had a good life before, she says.

She goes on to talk about how she got mixed up with the wrong group of people. Her boyfriend got her addicted to morphine. She says she has no home right now and is couch-surfing or simply sleeps outside. She talks about being scared of sleeping outside and getting jumped, as she has been jumped before and fears drug-addicted vagrants.

She does receive social assistance, however, she says she sends her social assistance money to a family member who is looking after her children. She is getting cleaned up now. She is taking methadone for her addiction to morphine. She wants to get off the methadone, however, as soon as she can.

She talks about problems in getting housing, how expensive it is and hard for people like her to ever afford a place to rent. She also complains that the shelters are frequently full. She does go to the food bank on occasion and says she is frequently hungry. She panhandles primarily for food and she says she makes between \$10 and \$20 a day.

She says it is hard for her to get a job now. She has medical problems that make it difficult, including being HIV and Hepatitis C positive. She also says it is hard to get a job when you do not have a home. You have no address to give them and no phone for a prospective employer to call you.



Name: Jim

Panhandler: Regular Panhandler

Location Interviewed: Riversdale

Jim discusses how he has been on the streets for 20 years. He says he couch-surfs and sleeps in back alleys. He wishes he had a home.

When asked why he doesn't work, he says he has grade 10 education and no papers to qualify for a job. When asked if he has put together a resume, he indicates that he does not know what a resume is.

When asked why he panhandles, he replies that it is to feed his addictions. He has been addicted at one point or another to a variety of drugs, including cocaine, Ritalin, and alcohol. He talks about the bad cravings he gets and why he needs the money from panhandling to get rid of the hurt he feels from withdrawals.

He talks about how he likes panhandling and says that Saskatoon people are pretty good. He says the Midtown location is the best location to panhandle. He doesn't really like panhandling but he cannot get a job. He does get social assistance but says he pays people for their address. He will give someone \$50 if they allow him to use their address to get his social assistance cheques. He has been banned from the shelters due to bad behaviour. With no home or address, it is difficult to get a job.



Name: Betty  
Panhandler: Regular Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Betty is a panhandler in the downtown area. She frequents a number of different areas downtown and has a few preferred locations. She frequently goes out at nights and panhandles near the bars and pubs. She finds that people will give her money after they have been drinking. She also regularly picks up cigarette butts from key locations downtown.

Betty has been mugged in the past, but she says she is not afraid to go out at nights. She indicates that young people mugged her once and took \$10 from her. She says it happened on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, near the McDonald's.

When asked why she panhandles, she indicates a few different reasons. First, she says, she panhandles because she likes to help people. Betty says she frequently uses her proceeds to buy pop and coffee for her friends. That makes her feel good. She also says she knows she shouldn't but does use the proceeds to buy dope. She typically makes between \$10 and \$20 a day.

Some of her preferred locations are the Olympia downtown, the hotels (Sheraton, Delta Bessborough, and Radisson). She is not homeless and lives in supported housing.



Name: Brian  
Panhandler: Occasional Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Brian is an alcoholic. He has been one for many years. He says he has been in and out of treatment centers approximately 15 times and seems to always slip back into alcoholism. He panhandles when he feels he needs a drink.

In terms of the dollar amount he panhandles for, it is just enough to buy a bottle of wine. When asked how much he needs, he says "not much, just \$5 to \$10, enough to buy a bottle." Brian says he likes to hang out at the bars to panhandle. When people are drinking, they will give money. He mentions Mano's on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Olympia, and Blue Diamond.

He says he does not make enough money from social services to meet his needs when he has a craving. He currently gets money from a pension, welfare, GST, and panhandling.

When asked what he would do if he could not panhandle, he says he might be forced to conduct more criminal acts to sustain himself. He would find a way, which could mean robbing someone.



Name: Francis  
Panhandler: Regular Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

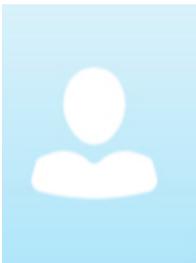
Francis is a panhandler in Saskatoon. He likes a particular spot downtown. He says he is learning guitar and has started singing so that he can busk in addition to panhandling.

When asked why he panhandles, he says he does it for his niece and nephew. He says his grandma is looking after them but she does not have much money because she keeps taking in additional kids and feeding them. So, he says, he panhandles to help support them. He also talks about an accident that left him with an acquired brain injury. He then mentions he went through a very depressive episode when his mother passed away, which caused him to try to commit suicide. He did not successfully kill himself but the manner in which he tried to kill himself left him with further health complications.

He goes on to say he feels very low about what he is doing. He says it was hard at first to panhandle. He says when he panhandles he doesn't say anything, he just puts his hat down and people give him money. He mentions that yesterday was a good day because he made \$31. In terms of location, he says Midtown is the best.

He does admit he smokes and drinks but does not feel he has an addiction. He says up to this point he has been living in a care home. He says he is paid by the week via a trustee and gets approximately \$320 a month. He also collects bottles and cans as well as panhandles.

He says it is hard to get a job due to his brain injury and lack of work experience. He says he would like to get into dry-walling, but, he muses, "Who would really hire me?" He says he is considering maybe doing volunteer work to get some experience. He does mention, however, that panhandling is addictive. It is "free" money and the lifestyle can be addicting.



Name: Boris  
Panhandler: Regular Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Broadway

Boris was interviewed in the Broadway area. He has a preferred spot to panhandle. When asked why he panhandles, he replies that it is for booze (he admits he is an alcoholic) and for food. After his mother died seven years ago, he said, he went downhill and lost his job, home, vehicle, and family. He knows he can go to the Friendship Inn but dislikes that they only have soup and sandwiches. He said he makes about \$10 a day on average, but on a good day he might make \$60. He has been panhandling for three years. He says he does not currently have a home and couch-surfs with friends.



Name: Ernie  
Panhandler: Occasional Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Ernie is in his sixties. He panhandles and collects bottles on an occasional basis on Saskatoon streets. He describes his past, providing insight into why he panhandles today. He was a little boy when he was taken from the reservation and forced to attend a residential school. The teachers were abusive at the school. He recounts one experience where a teacher was so upset that she made him stand in the middle of the room and take off his clothing. She had the other children call him names like “dirty Indian, dirty Indian” over and over again. He says he had a good family but when he was taken, his mom took to drinking and drank herself to death in her early forties.

As a young man, Ernie did work, but he had a dependency on alcohol and drugs that would haunt him for his entire life. He says he was introduced to alcohol and drugs when he was 11 years old. He was not able to hold down a job as a result of this dependency. He has spent much of his life homeless, and in and out of jail. He would actively try to go to jail so he had a warm place over the winter. When he could not get his next drink, he would use other substances, such as aftershave, Listerine, paint thinners, and spray paint. He would panhandle for change to get his next drink or next meal, often sleeping in graveyards or on the river bank. When the housing boom happened in 2008, he could not afford a place and was homeless during this time period. At one point, he had a tent set up in a baseball park where he stayed for much of the winter. He did receive monies from the residential school payouts, but family members, many of which he had not seen for years, came out the woodwork and took much of the money from him. He was also robbed on 20<sup>th</sup>, where he lived for a short period of time, when word got out that he had received a settlement.

Ernie has no more money left from the settlement, as others have taken it from him. He still panhandles once and while for coffee and cigarettes, and he still drinks.



Name: Sandra and Tim  
Panhandler: Regular Panhandlers  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Tim is approximately 25 years of age, and has lived on the streets for four years. He is from California and he feels he has no need to have a home. He makes his choice to live on the streets and has two dogs he keeps with him at all times and a female friend, Sandra. She is also homeless. They say they do not ask for money, “but if people want to give money to me, that is fine.” They sleep outside in safer areas, in places where there are many trees. This is also why they have two dogs--to help keep them safe. They love to travel and do not want to be tied down to a job or a home. They like to get up and go where they want, when they want.

They don't ask for money, but when they do get money, they buy dog food and food for themselves. They have no medical problems and no addictions besides smoking. They make around minimum

wage per hour, sometimes \$10 an hour. Nothing tragic has happened to them, they say. This is just who they are. They say that people need to have an open mind, as they are all different and reasons for being on the street are unique to each person. When it gets colder, they will go to British Columbia. When asked why they are on the streets, Tim says, “Nothing happened; I love living this way.”



Name: Groups of Young People  
Panhandler: N/A  
Location Interviewed: Riversdale Liquor Store

Insightrix researcher spent a few hours by the liquor store on 20<sup>th</sup> Street to find out some reasons a group of people are frequently present at this location. Overwhelmingly the reason stated was that it was a meeting place for the locals.

This was a place to meet their friends. Many stated they couch-surf and do not really have a regular telephone service, and therefore, getting in touch with them is difficult. This area has become an informal meeting place where people can get together and visit. None of the young people were panhandlers, however it is an area of the city where many people seem to congregate, to meet and to visit and share stories with friends.



Name: Carlos  
Panhandler: Current Panhandler  
Location Interviewed: Downtown

Carlos was approached at his regular panhandling location in downtown Saskatoon, where he can often be found in front of the Midtown Plaza during the morning, daytime, and early evening. He suffers from a physical disability acquired a number of years ago that leaves him dependent on a motorized scooter, and is a self-proclaimed regular panhandler. Carlos is an older man, and currently lives in an apartment near downtown Saskatoon. He often wakes up in the morning, moving downtown first thing to panhandle in front of the shopping mall as early as 7:00 am and will sometimes stay as late as 6:00 or 7:00 pm. Carlos shared that he commonly works eight-to-ten-hour days in downtown Saskatoon before retiring to his apartment to watch television. Carlos earns between \$20 and \$30 a day on average.

Carlos's experiences with consumers and people frequenting downtown Saskatoon are generally positive, and while some people can be unkind or rude at times, most people are either kind or do not pay him much direct attention. While interviewers were talking to Carlos, a woman donated some change after establishing an agreement that Carlos would watch over her bike that she had locked up near his panhandling location while she shopped in the mall for a few hours. Carlos was more than happy to oblige this woman, and she was courteous and respectful when asking for his assistance.

Carlos has lived in a number of different areas in Canada, including Ontario and Vancouver. He worked for years in a blue collar industry job and was also employed in the service industry. He

illustrates that he used to lead a bit of a rough lifestyle, and used to drink a fair amount of alcohol in the past, but does not currently drink to excess. Since a long-term relationship dissolution a few years ago and the manifestation of a physical disability, Carlos has been unable to work a normal job. He tires easily, and being limited to his motorized scooter further restricts the work he could do. Panhandling provides Carlos with some secondary discretionary income, which he commonly spends on groceries, such as food for his dogs, rent, and the occasional beer.

An informal code of conduct established between panhandlers was expressed by Carlos. He related calculated and tested strategies for panhandling, including the best times of day and the best spots that yielded the most donations, as well as the mutual understanding shared with other panhandlers on the streets. This was shared through an understanding that one side of the street provided more earning opportunity than another, but that if a particular panhandler was on the streets on a given day, Carlos would yield the coveted location to the second. On a separate occasion, researchers had an opportunity to observe this very situation play out as described.



## Service Providers

## SERVICE PROVIDERS

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Insightrix conducted research with a variety of local service providers, namely the Salvation Army, AIDS Saskatoon, Saskatoon Mobile Crisis Intervention, the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Inc., the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, and the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, to gain insight into their perspectives of street activity in Saskatoon. Below are some of the main findings from these interviews.

First, the importance of the current negative street activity being a social problem was emphasized, and considered one that cannot easily be fixed with enforcement. Some of the main comments from their perspectives were as follows:

### Panhandling

- Panhandlers in Saskatoon are a mixed bag of transients and regulars
- Panhandlers in Saskatoon tend to be addicted to softer drugs such as pot, alcohol, and cigarettes. For those addicted to harder drugs like cocaine and heroin, they will likely find alternative means to getting cash quicker to feed their addiction problems. Also, panhandling during withdrawals would be difficult
- The majority of panhandlers are passive in Saskatoon
- Most panhandlers in Saskatoon have a place to stay. Many are in care homes or supported living arrangements
- Most panhandlers are panhandling simply because they do not have enough money to support themselves, with many making on average \$30 a day
- The activity of panhandling itself is addicting to people
- Many panhandlers have mental health and addiction issues
- Social security rates could be higher, especially for single persons as well as those with children
- Panhandlers do not seem to be using the services of one specific City shelter

### Other Street Activity

- Crimes are getting more complex today than in prior periods. We are now dealing with violence, addiction, and misdiagnosed health/mental conditions
- Increased loitering downtown by young people
- Seeing more instances of drug trafficking in Saskatoon, with many deals occurring in plain sight of Saskatoon residents
- Older residents are less inclined to go downtown due to the groups of youth or young people loitering by businesses
- Seeing increased prevalence of criminal and “kiddy” gangs in Saskatoon

- Sense that youth and young people are getting increasingly frustrated and having feelings of hopelessness due to the increasing levels of poverty, much of which is due to the rising house prices. Young people, in order to rent a place, are more enticed to get involved in criminal activities. There is a sense of sadness among many of the young people in Saskatoon, a feeling that life is terrible and there is no way for them to get out
- Increased prevalence of mental health issues with those on the street, largely brought on by prolonged drug use coupled with being unsure of where they can access services to help their condition
- Still seeing evidence of the damage caused by residential schools. This has resulted in multi-generational distrust of organizations designed to help individuals involved in negative street activities
- Some of those on the streets are undertaking criminal activities as a source of entertainment. They have no home and no entertainment, so conducting criminal acts gives them something to do

#### Solutions to Panhandling and Negative Street Activity

- It is good to have street fairs and events downtown so that all groups and walks of life can be brought together in a central location
- We need to understand the root causes of negative street activity, including youth loitering downtown, and as a society take ownership of the problem
- The solution is not simply more police. However, we need more police on the beat, building relationships and trust with those on the street. Once the trust happens, those on the street will be more open to accessing services that help their situation. Outreach services need to be emphasized as opposed to enforcement
- Create a social awareness committee that is comprised of staff from the City, everyday residents, at-risk youth themselves, panhandlers, and service providers. Discuss the issues and make recommendations on what can be done to address the issue of addictions, panhandling and crime prevention
- A true approach to community policing is required. It seemed that prior efforts failed because there was never a true definition of what community policing is. The police service needs to communicate to the officers what community policing is and live up to that standard
- Housing first is a good crime prevention strategy. By getting some of the homeless into a home where supports can be brought into them to help them deal with their issues will reduce crime in the city
- The creation of “Trust Events” would be helpful if attended by the police, fire department, city counsellors and the mayor, so that locals can get to meet the authorities in their community and tear down the wall of distrust. This corresponds to the need to build a sense of community using events like sports, dinners, and cultural events
- Need additional drop-in centers so that people who are “turned out” by the shelters during the day have a place to go other than the streets
- Stop changing all apartments to condominiums. This is seen as further driving up housing prices and creating increased situations of homelessness

In terms of engaging at-risk youth, there were a number of specific suggestions provided by service providers.

- Youth need drop-in centers that cater to their lifestyle, which means *not* being open only during business hours or early evening. We need a 24/7 drop-in center where youth can come in at all hours. They just need a place they can go to get off the streets. The service provider can then start to build trust with the youth and get them open to changing/improving their lifestyle
- Need more late night programming for youth, with examples including physical events like midnight flag football. These events can give youth something to do and help build trust with at-risk youth, making them open to access services that can help them finish school and/or find employment
- Need increased programs/accessibility to getting their GED. Education is a huge barrier for youth in getting a job and so they take the road of crime and/or living on the streets
- Youth need life skill training. Many come from broken and abusive homes and therefore do not know how to live as a responsible citizen. They need to learn the basics, such as finding shelter and meals, cleanliness and hygiene, using public transportation, shopping, and money management, to more complicated functions, such as finding and maintaining employment, recreation, and basic socialization skills
- There needs to be more paid training programs whereby youth can be treated as employees during their training periods and by extension learn what is like to be an employee and earn money as a benefit



## **Other Municipalities & Desk Research**

## OTHER MUNICIPALITIES & DESK RESEARCH

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Insightrix conducted desk research to identify what other municipalities were doing in terms of panhandling and other street activity. Following are summaries of each of the municipalities examined.

### CALGARY

Calgary currently has a concentrated effort to address poverty and homelessness in their city. In identifying issues of poverty, Calgary has conducted a wide body of research to count and understand panhandlers as well as monitor change on an ongoing basis. Notably, according to a survey of panhandlers and bidders conducted on behalf of the Calgary Homelessness Foundation, only about one in five respondents are housed. In similar research findings submitted to the Calgary Homelessness Foundation in September of 2010, findings suggest that panhandling is in decline in the city.

Addressing poverty in Calgary is primarily addressed through the city's "Housing First" initiative. The priority of this initiative is to quickly relocate homeless individuals into appropriate housing first, then subsequently provide them supports to address the catalysts that drove them to homelessness. Much of housing provided is in fact market housing accessed through prior agreements with landlords. Within this model, Calgary boasts an 85% success rate, with only 15% of clients who are connected with housing returning to homelessness.

While panhandling activities are seemingly on the decline in Calgary, a panhandling bylaw is still in place that specifies a number of restrictions:

- You cannot panhandle within 10 metres of the entrance to a bank, automated teller machine, transit stop, or pedestrian walkway (pedestrian walkways include +15, or any below or above grade walkway, but not a sidewalk)
- You cannot panhandle between 8:00 pm and 8:00 am
- A panhandler cannot obstruct the passage of, walk next to, or follow the person being solicited
- You cannot solicit money from an occupant in a motor vehicle
- A panhandler cannot continue to engage a person who has declined the solicitation

Bylaw and peace officers in Calgary are primarily responsible for dealing with city bylaws, including panhandling, and have partnerships with the Calgary Homelessness Foundation and other service providers in the city in order to connect panhandlers and homeless individuals with the services they need. While bylaw and peace officers have the authority to issue tickets, these officers are largely directed to provide assistance to people found on the streets in order to connect them with social services as opposed to simply ticketing based on behaviour. This increases the visibility of officers in and around the Calgary downtown, contributing to positive public perceptions, and also serves to connect people on the streets with support services.

The Calgary Homeless Foundation was established in 1998, with an objective established in 2008 of eliminating homelessness in 10 years. Interestingly, the foundation was founded by a local businessman. The late Mr. Art Smith, a leading Calgary entrepreneur, politician and philanthropist, founded the CHF in order to create a unified front to fight homelessness.

Calgary's experience with panhandling and street activity is largely addressed through partnerships between service providers, Calgary Police Service, the private sector and the municipal government. In order to encourage these partnerships, the Calgary Homeless Foundation was established with 12 guiding principles to guide their 10 Year Plan to eliminate homelessness. These principles include:

1. Ending homelessness is a collective responsibility. This includes those experiencing homelessness taking personal ownership and accountability in ending their homelessness
2. Our Plan will aim to help people move to self-reliance and independence
3. All people experiencing homelessness are ready for permanent housing, with supports as necessary
4. The first objective of homeless-serving systems, agencies, programs, and funding is to help people experiencing homelessness gain and maintain permanent housing (Housing First)
5. The most vulnerable homeless populations need to be prioritized
6. The selection of affordable housing and the provision of services should be guided by consumer choice
7. Resources will be concentrated on programs that offer measurable results
8. Affordable housing is safe, decent, and readily attainable. Diverse, integrated, scattered site affordable housing, close to services, is preferred
9. Ten Year Plan funding should be diverse and sustainable
10. The use of markets will be maximized by involving the private sector in the implementation of the 10 year plan
11. The economic cost of homelessness will be reduced
12. A well-educated, well-trained, and adequately funded non-profit sector is central to the success of the 10 Year plan

The guiding philosophy inherent in these principles provides a unified direction for stakeholders in both the public and service oriented sectors. A clear understanding of the goals amounts to common affirmation and understanding, and serves as a unifying point for stakeholders and partners.

The Homelessness Foundation has established ongoing targets and measurable goals, along with utilizing ongoing research measures, in order to evaluate success and challenges. Having a strong grasp on research outcomes and community realities ensures that programs and partners share a common understanding of the realities of homelessness in Calgary, and can effectively and appropriately target efforts for maximum efficiency. Similarly, encouraging partnerships between service providers allows for the sharing of information and experience between service specialists. These initiatives create a network of understanding between all providers, which enhances the community's ability as a whole to understand and appreciate the realities and challenges of poverty in Calgary.

The Homelessness Foundation has set methods of consulting with the community through a series of committees and information sessions. These serve as another method to engage agency stakeholders as well as the general public. These initiatives include:

- 10 Year Plan Advisory Committee
- Housing Strategy Review Committee
- Calgary Homelessness Foundation Board of Directors
- Research Symposium
- Agency Input

In the published 2011 update on the 10 Year Plan, building a coordinated system is a phase that is beginning and continuing until 2014. The Foundation seeks to ensure the above objectives through the definition of and bringing together of system components, including shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing, rapid rehousing, prevention services, outreach, affordable housing, and supportive services. Establishing connections between these systems allows the Homeless Management Information Systems to provide intake of clients who need services, triage to priority resources for the most vulnerable, and assessment services to link people with the housing and support that best matches their needs.

The City of Calgary is involved in a number of partnerships between the municipal government and service providers at the grassroots. At the center of service provision, Calgary is the first city in Canada to have created a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which hopes to provide coordinated service delivery by collecting data on homeless in Calgary as well as their demographic characteristics. Service providers, agencies, and policy makers will have access to the system in order to quickly and succinctly diagnose clients and provide support based on particular needs. These needs are accessed through an understanding of the different systems providing services in Calgary, including shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing, rapid rehousing, prevention services, outreach, affordable housing, and supportive services. This system can assist in unifying the role of social services and agencies to provide effective support to those individuals in need.

For more information on the Homeless Management Information System's ongoing development and capabilities, visit the Calgary Homeless Foundation website at:

<http://calgaryhomeless.com/what-we-do/research/hmis/>

Other key partners in Calgary:

- Calgary Alpha House Society
  - A 24-hour-a-day facility that offers sleeping accommodations and one meal per day to clients. Includes on-site mental health evaluations, medical care, and a detox centre
- Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS)
  - In partnership with the Calgary Alpha House Society, forms the Downtown Outreach Addiction Partnership
- Downtown Outreach Addictions Partnership (DOAP)
  - A harm reduction program focusing on clients with addictions. DOAP partners closely with shelters in order to accommodate and provide service to individuals found to be intoxicated in the community. Funded by the Calgary Homeless Foundation

- Operates the DOAP Encampment Team, a Housing First initiative which connects clients with housing and ongoing stabilization through connection with service providers

## TORONTO

Toronto offers a number of support services to their diverse population in and around the city's downtown. In 2007 and 2008, Toronto approached poverty and panhandling in particular through a panhandling pilot project. The project targeted panhandlers in three areas of downtown Toronto, and included three particular objectives. First, the project sought to inform panhandlers of the services that are available to them, second, to better understand panhandling in order to better inform future policies and programs, and third, to inform and educate businesses and public on poverty in the city and the social services that are available.<sup>3</sup>

In order to provide services to downtown panhandlers, the pilot project workers have ongoing partnerships with shelters, the Streets to Homes program, as well as other services, including drop-in centres, employment, income supports, support programs, and addictions counselling. This initiative was largely based on social service inclusion, and understands panhandling on the base principle that panhandling is representative of poverty and need.

Contrary to other municipalities' strategies for addressing issues of poverty, Toronto's panhandling pilot project attempted to address panhandling and issues of homelessness separately, defining the former as an action and the latter as a state of housing. In particular, the pilot project targets panhandlers who are housed, while homeless individuals are referred to the Streets to Homes program detailed below.

Through the pilot project, panhandlers acting in a legal manner were approached and approached by community workers, and worked with panhandlers to access appropriate services. Key findings documented from the pilot project suggest that while different types of panhandlers are commonly involved in the activity for a variety of reasons, the activity is generally peaceful and unobtrusive. In an outcomes report released in 2008, the program objectives were described as "an intensive social service response that proved to be successful".<sup>4</sup>

As previously mentioned, the Streets to Homes program provides outreach services to people living on the streets of Toronto in order to connect them with housing solutions. It operates under the strategy of "Housing First" and helps people to find permanent housing before addressing and supporting the scenarios that influenced homelessness in the first place. Service is offered primarily through a partnership with City outreach workers and partner community agencies that provide ongoing support services after clients have become settled in their homes. The program largely recognizes that complex problems require long term solutions. While not all panhandlers are

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<sup>3</sup> Panhandling Pilot Project Update, [http://www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/panhandling\\_jan08.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/panhandling_jan08.pdf), retrieved September 27<sup>th</sup> 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration Division, *Business Consultation on Panhandling*, Toronto, January 2008

necessarily homeless, and not all homeless people panhandle, Streets to Homes offers a socially conscious connection between the streets and the support structures that can help people in need. In Ontario, the Safe Streets Act represents provisional legislation that restricts aggressive solicitation in public places. This provincial legislation is applicable in Toronto and includes the following provisions and restrictions.

#### **Solicitation in aggressive manner prohibited**

No person shall solicit in an aggressive manner. 1999, c. 8, s. 2 (2).

#### **Examples**

Without limiting subsection (1) or (2), a person who engages in one or more of the following activities shall be deemed to be soliciting in an aggressive manner for the purpose of this section:

- Threatening the person solicited with physical harm, by word, gesture or other means, during the solicitation or after the person solicited responds or fails to respond to the solicitation.
- Obstructing the path of the person solicited during the solicitation or after the person solicited responds or fails to respond to the solicitation.
- Using abusive language during the solicitation or after the person solicited responds or fails to respond to the solicitation.
- Proceeding behind, alongside or ahead of the person solicited during the solicitation or after the person solicited responds or fails to respond to the solicitation.
- Soliciting while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs.
- Continuing to solicit a person in a persistent manner after the person has responded negatively to the solicitation. 1999, c. 8, s. 2 (3).

#### **Solicitation of captive audience prohibited**

No person shall,

- solicit a person who is using, waiting to use, or departing from an automated teller machine;
- solicit a person who is using or waiting to use a pay telephone or a public toilet facility;
- solicit a person who is waiting at a taxi stand or a public transit stop;
- solicit a person who is in or on a public transit vehicle;
- solicit a person who is in the process of getting in, out of, on or off a vehicle or who is in a parking lot; or
- while on a roadway, solicit a person who is in or on a stopped, standing or parked vehicle. 1999, c. 8, s. 3 (2).

In contrast to the socially motivated homelessness pilot project, Toronto has in recent years refocused their efforts on curbing panhandling. Rumours and public officials in the media have ignited discussion surrounding proposed bans on panhandling. These discussions seem contrary to earlier objectives demonstrated in the panhandling pilot project, and it remains to be seen how Toronto will address panhandling in the coming years.

## WINNIPEG

Winnipeg has a number of unique resources and organizations that are aimed at panhandling and poverty reduction in the city. These stakeholders include the University of Winnipeg, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, and the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC). These organizations largely share a mandate of working with resources that are currently available to maximize effectiveness in the provision of support services to people in need. These three organizations operate primarily independently of the City of Winnipeg and in a non-partisan role.

The WPRC principally cites the modeling of community action, collaboration based on common objectives, and being accountable to the community. Most notably within this context, WPRC will not attempt to recreate service areas that already exist nor create new infrastructure, instead opting to utilize and capitalize on existing experiences and resources.

Winnipeg has conducted multiple research studies on panhandling and poverty published through the University of Winnipeg and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. Of notable contribution, the University conducted research in 2007 to illustrate the effectiveness of legislation and support services on panhandling in Winnipeg. This report serves to define the issue of panhandling in Winnipeg and to create an understanding of the issues and catalysts. The focus on legislative approaches represents a unique aspect of the report, which concludes that while legislation has been attempted in numerous municipalities in Canada and the United States, “there is no empirical support to suggest legislation measures are working effectively.”<sup>5</sup> The report suggests that bylaws has been ineffective because most do not target the underlying cause of panhandling, and instead serves to force panhandlers to relocate to other areas of the city rather than connecting them with support structures and services that would assist in influencing positive change.

As illustrated above, while the report is critical of the effectiveness of panhandling bylaws, a number of socially oriented program solutions were suggested. Sourced from a report from 1998, broad solutions focused on long term supports including job creation, skills upgrading and job training, community economic and social development, provision of adequate health care, and higher welfare rates.<sup>6</sup> Solutions for addressing panhandling are characteristic of solutions that address all poverty in Winnipeg. This suggests that by addressing the cause of poverty that municipal governments can hope to reduce the prevalence of panhandling.

In 2007, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg partnered with Human Resources Social Development Canada to facilitate the creation and operation of a Homeless Individuals and Families Information System Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg. Program philosophies include connecting shelters and service providers through clients’ information in order to better manage their operations. Notably, part of this initiative receives funding from the federal government and employees act as federal liaisons to local communities.

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<sup>5</sup> Carter, Tom, “Panhandling in Winnipeg – Legislation vs. Support Services vol 2,” University of Winnipeg, 2007 Pg. 34

<sup>6</sup> Carter, Tom, “Panhandling: Do municipal by-laws effectively address the problem?” 1998

The City of Winnipeg relies on the engagement of their downtown business association to connect and inform consumers and citizens in the downtown area on safety and what to do when approached by a panhandler. This information is disseminated primarily through their website (<http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com>) and suggestions for dealing with a panhandler include:

- Smile and say, “No, Sorry.”
- Carry food like granola bars with you to hand out
- Refer them to a social agency for help

Specific information is also included on addressing aggressive panhandling should a citizen be faced with it. These suggestions include:

- Walk with a purpose
- Don't initiate conversations
- If they talk to you, don't ignore them, because they might think you didn't hear and may persist
- Say firmly, “No, I'm sorry, I can't help you.”
- If possible, walk away from the situation
- Call the Winnipeg Police Service and then your local foot patrol
- If you feel uncomfortable, call a foot patrol for a SafeWalk: 958-4627

Community ambassadors representing the SafeWalk program are individuals who are experienced in conflict mediation and offer car escort services for those citizens visiting downtown. This program operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and offers quick reporting to the Winnipeg Police Service should the need arise. Currently, this program is largely driven by volunteers, including 200 volunteers who patrol the area and communicate with downtown residents and business owners. Notably, the SafeWalk program is sponsored by Manitoba Hydro, representing a unique partnership between the utility and the community.

Similar to the SafeWalk program, the Winnipeg Police Service offers community policing as an important consideration for downtown Winnipeg. Foot patrol officers "act as a community team leader in identifying problems that damage the quality of life, and then work with the community as a whole to find and apply solutions to those problems."<sup>7</sup>

The specific bylaw enforced in Winnipeg is known as the Obstructive Solicitation Bylaw, and includes the following restrictions and provisions:

- Prohibition on captive audience solicitation
  - Around automated teller machines, public pay phones, transit stops and taxi stands, public transit vehicle, elevators, specific downtown pedestrian walkways, a person getting in or out of a vehicle, or people in a parking lot, or a person who is seated in an outdoor area of a restaurant or bar
- Prohibition on causing an obstruction in the course of solicitation
  - Obstructing or impeding the passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic
  - Continual solicitation after a person has made a negative response

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<sup>7</sup> Downtown Winnipeg Biz Safety Information,  
[http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/home/safety/watch\\_ambassadors/](http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/home/safety/watch_ambassadors/)

- Verbal threats or insulting a pedestrian in the course of or following solicitation
- To physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more

## ST. JOHN'S

The City of St. John's and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador have several programs and strategies available to help combat poverty. The bulk of the initiatives are focused on homelessness problems, with few initiatives found regarding panhandling in particular.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy is an area within the government's Human Resources, Labour and Employment department. It takes an intergovernmental approach to promoting self-reliance, opportunity, and access to key supports for persons vulnerable to poverty. The strategy currently includes more than 80 ongoing initiatives that strive to meet the needs of groups most vulnerable to poverty.<sup>8</sup>

The Poverty Reduction Strategy works in collaboration with the following Departments and Agencies:

- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Finance
- Department of Education
- Department of Child, Youth, and Family Services
- Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development
- Department of Justice
- Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
- Rural Secretariat
- Women's Policy Office
- Labour Relations Agency
- Newfoundland Labrador Housing
- Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat

### **Provincial Homelessness Fund (PHF)**

The Provincial Homelessness Fund (PHF) is operated through Newfoundland Labrador Housing. It works to provide capital funding for registered non-profit organizations for the development of support services space for the provision of on-site and outreach services. These services aim to promote housing stability and greater reliance for those at risk of homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Human Resources, Labour, and Employment Poverty Reduction Initiatives  
<http://www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/poverty/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nlhc.nl.ca/programs/homeless.html>

The PHF provides a maximum of \$200,000 per fiscal year to each non-profit support organization. Registered non-profit groups can apply for funding in multiple years, but priority is given to applicants who have not previously received funding.<sup>10</sup>

### **City of St. John's Non Profit Housing Division**

The St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness was formed in 2000 through the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) to address homelessness in a coordinated and collaborative way.<sup>11</sup> This organization administrates and operates over 400 houses or apartments found throughout the city and targets low- and moderate-income earners.

## HALIFAX

### **Bylaws**

Currently Halifax does not have a panhandling specific bylaw. Instead, police refer to the 'Nuisance Bylaw' (bylaw N-300) to deal with those who are seen as causing a nuisance on city streets. For this bylaw, as it applies to panhandling, nuisance is defined as:

Engaging in any activity or pastime which:

- Obstructs any person;
- Creates a disturbance; or
- Causes any damage to any structure, object, sod, plant or tree.

Penalties under this bylaw are fines of not less than \$50 and not exceeding \$1,000 for each offence. Default of payment is punishable by imprisonment for a period not exceeding 30 days. Different attempts have been made by various groups to enact other forms of regulation, including attempts to adopt the provincial Safe Streets Act used currently by Ontario and British Columbia, or to create a more specific bylaw. The Safe Streets Act would prohibit persons from soliciting in an aggressive manner, which is defined as a "manner that is likely to cause a reasonable person to be concerned for his or her safety or security," and would carry a penalty of fines and jail time.

The Downtown Halifax Business Association has also asked the Halifax Regional Municipality to create a bylaw to help regulate panhandling. As of this writing, neither the Safe Streets Act nor panhandling specific bylaws have been enacted in Halifax.

In the mid-1990s, the Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) began to take steps to address the issue itself. In addition to hiring private security to assist in keeping more aggressive panhandlers from obstructing shoppers, SGABA manager Bernard Smith also began paying some panhandlers to water flowers or shovel snow. He was even able to find some of them jobs in local recycling depots. This eventually became what is now known as the Navigator program. Under this program, a 'navigator,' who is a trained social worker, works directly with panhandlers to help them find ways to improve their personal situation. Navigators assist in pointing panhandlers in the direction of programs and services that will address their specific needs. Additionally, the navigator

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.growinghomes.org/>

will be able to identify any gaps in the existing system and make recommendations. The program also assists by providing computers to help create resumes, money for work boots, bus fare, and sometime even the first month's rent. Additionally, the Navigator program will provide a daily \$12 lunch allowance for participants until a first paycheque is received. One of the theories behind the Navigator program is a consideration that giving money to some panhandlers may be spent satisfying addictions, and so the objective of connecting clients with social service supports is central.

Three other business districts have partnered with the program; the Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, and the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission. These business districts, along with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the provincial Justice Department jointly fund the program, at a cost of about \$150,000. Currently this money covers program and administration costs and the salary for a single navigator who serves all four business districts.

Paul MacKinnon, Executive Director of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, admits he does not know how much of an impact that the program will have, but the hope is that they are able to make a difference in the lives of a few people on the street.

### **Homelessness**

According to the 2010 Halifax report card on homelessness, published by the Community Action on Homelessness, 1,718 people in Halifax were homeless and stayed in a shelter in 2009, an increase of 466 people from the same study done in 2008. The report also notes that, while average rents continue to increase, the availability of housing does not. In Halifax, income assistance for rent for a single person with a disability is \$535, while average rent on a bachelor suite is \$638.

Some supportive housing does exist in Halifax, and it aims to transition the homeless back into society by providing them a place to live and access to the services they require. According to a 2006 study by Dalhousie University in Halifax, people in supportive housing, on average, spend only about a third as much time in hospitals, psychiatric care, prisons, and jails as the homeless.

## **MONTREAL**

Homelessness in Montreal is primarily a target for social services and municipal planners. Montreal has approximately 25,000 homeless who are served by three major shelters operating independently: the Old Brewery Mission, Welcome Hall Mission, and La Maison du Pere. These shelters are actively involved in helping people make the transition away from the streets by providing various programs aimed at assisting with social reintegration and finding affordable housing, as opposed to simply providing emergency food and lodging.

In 2009, the Quebec Human Rights Commission repealed bylaws, such as bylaws closing parks at night, which made homeless people the target of police monitoring and surveillance. Although the homeless make up about 1% of the total Montreal population, they received 31.6% of municipal

bylaw tickets issued by police in 2004, and 20.3% in 2005. These tickets were for such infractions as jaywalking and lying on public benches, infractions for which other citizens were rarely ticketed.

The president of the commission, Gaetan Cousineau, said, "We must fight homelessness without fighting against the homeless. We cannot solve this problem by simply handing out tickets."

As of 2010, Montreal police are receiving training and direction to help them better understand the city's homeless population in order to help shift police focus away from disproportionately ticketing those that live on the street. They have also initiated a program called EMRII (Equipe mobile reference et d'intervention en itinérance), a two-officer task force that seeks to collaborate with street workers to offer social services to those homeless most often ticketed or arrested on vagrancy charges.

The mayor of Montreal has also announced that the city will be building 750 new housing units for the homeless, which are to be completed by 2013. The entire project will cost about \$85 million, with the city itself contributing around \$7 million per year, and the provincial and federal governments contributing the rest.

According to one article, police and shelter workers say they recall no major assaults involving the homeless or panhandlers in Montreal in years, although some storeowners complain about unruly behaviour. In 2007, Montreal's Ville Marie borough began banning street kids and homeless people from 15 downtown squares from midnight to 6 a.m. This year it banned dogs from two city squares frequented by squeegee kids. In the three years leading to 2006, Montreal police and subway officers issued 15,000 tickets to people with no fixed address.

## COLORADO SPRINGS

Similar to the Saskatoon bylaw, Colorado Springs has regulations (article 9.2.111) that prohibit aggressive panhandling. The purpose of these regulations is not to prohibit lawful solicitation, but to "regulate behaviours that contribute to the loss of access to and enjoyment of public places and an enhanced sense of fear, intimidation and disorder." The ordinance also limits where panhandlers can ask for money, such as around ATMs, near the entrances to buildings, or on public transportation.

The ordinance includes the following provisions and restrictions:

**Aggressive Soliciting Prohibited:** It shall be unlawful for any person to:

1. Engage in aggressive soliciting in any public place. "Aggressive solicitation" is defined as:
  - Continuing to solicit from a person after the person has given a negative response to the soliciting;
  - Intentionally touching or causing physical contact with another person without that person's consent in the course of soliciting;
  - Intentionally blocking, obstructing or interfering with the safe or free passage of a pedestrian or vehicle by any means, including unreasonably causing a pedestrian or vehicle operator to take evasive action to avoid physical contact in the course of soliciting;

- Using violent or threatening conduct toward a person solicited which would cause a reasonable person to be fearful for his or her safety;
  - Persisting in closely following or approaching the person being solicited and continuing to solicit after the person has informed the solicitor by words or conduct that the person does not want to be solicited or does not want to give money or anything of value to the solicitor;
  - Using profane or abusive language which is likely to provoke an immediate violent reaction from the person being solicited or would cause a reasonable person to be fearful for his or her safety;
  - Soliciting money from anyone who is waiting in line for tickets, for entry to a building or for another purpose;
  - Approaching or following a person for solicitation as part of a group of two (2) or more persons, in a manner and with conduct, words, or gestures intended or likely to cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or damage to or loss of property or otherwise to be intimidated into giving money or other thing of value.
2. Solicit on any private or residential property after having been asked to leave, or refrain from soliciting, by the owner or other person lawfully in possession of the property.
  3. Solicit within twenty feet (20') of any automated teller machine. Provided, however, that when an automated teller machine is located within an automated teller machine facility, the distance shall be measured from the entrance or exit of the facility.
  4. Solicit in or upon any public transportation vehicle or public transportation facility within or at any bus stop or in any parking lot, structure or other parking facility.
  5. Solicit within six feet (6') of an entrance to a building.
  6. Solicit any person entering or exiting a parked motor vehicle or in a motor vehicle stopped on the street.
  7. Solicit any person located within the patio or sidewalk area of a retail business establishment that serves food and/or drink.
  8. Solicit after dark, which shall mean one-half (1/2) hour after sunset until one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise.
  9. Nothing in this subsection C shall be construed to prevent a person from acting in accord with a license or permit. (Ord. 02-214)

Violators of these regulations would face the same punishment as other municipal violations, a fine of up to \$500 and/or 90 days in jail.

### **Miracle Meters**

Like most other places, the effectiveness of the use of fines and jail time to address the issue of panhandling is often called into question. An alternative to fines and jail time is the alternative-to-panhandling program known as the Miracle Meters. This program was originally initiated by Councilman Jerry Heimlicher in 2007 after exposure to research that showed that 95% of money given to panhandlers is spent on drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes.

This program has about 90 used parking meters placed at businesses around the city to encourage people to donate their loose change to the program rather than give it directly to panhandlers. The meters are colourfully decorated by volunteers, some of whom were formerly homeless, and are located in participating businesses.

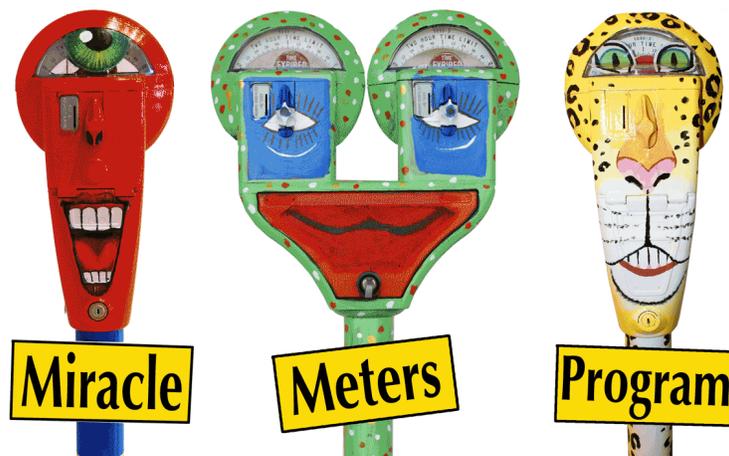
Initially, all money collected in the meters was given to Housing First Pikes Peak, an organization that provides housing to the homeless before seeking to address any other problems, such as alcoholism or drug abuse.

Housing First, also known as rapid re-housing, is an approach to housing the homeless that is founded on the belief that vulnerable and at-risk individuals are more likely to respond to programs and support once they are housed, as opposed to while they are in a transitional state of living, such as at a shelter or other housing program.

Bob Holmes, director of Homeward Pikes Peak, estimates that the homeless population costs the community about \$55,000 per year due to emergency room visits and the cost of police, fire, and ambulance, but under the Housing First program, these costs are reduced to about \$18,000 per year.

Donations to meters assist Housing First Pikes Peak in paying for case management, which costs approximately \$3,000 per year per client, and will allow them to expand their client base from 20 up to a planned 40.

Currently, donated money goes to Urban Peak, a drop-in centre for youth. In a few years, Urban Peak will pass the torch to another organization and allow them to use the funds from the meters. In the first year in use, the meters pulled in around \$8,000, enough to cover start-up costs. Urban Peak hopes the meters will bring in between \$10,000 and \$12,000, as well as increase the visibility of the organization as a whole.



## EDMONTON

In 2009, the City of Edmonton created a new entity to take responsibility for street safety. The recommendation to create a new coordinating council for community originated in the REACH Report, unanimously endorsed by Edmonton City Council in September 2009. The REACH Report aimed at creating a culture of community safety within one generation in Edmonton, and called for an overarching coordinating body to provide new leadership and catalyze this change.

Within this framework of innovative, preventive, and evidence-based efforts to build a safe community, a Transitional Board, composed of citizens and representatives from various agencies and levels of government, began the implementation of the REACH Report recommendations. Through its efforts, a new REACH Edmonton council is the hub or centre of excellence that inspires citizen engagement, connects community partners, and provides learning opportunities, resources and best practice information on community safety.

REACH Edmonton, as it is called, “takes the community safety agenda to the next level, building on a twenty year legacy of collaborative and leading edge approaches to community safety. The vision of REACH Edmonton is a city in which all citizens contribute to a healthy community where they feel safe and *are* safe.”

### **REACH Edmonton**

REACH Edmonton is a community-based organization that’s all about making Edmonton a safer place to live, work, and play. REACH Edmonton focuses on three key areas:

- investing in children, youth and families;
- catalyzing change;
- Engaging Edmontonians in community safety.

Its operational funding is from the City of Edmonton, but it was set up as a non-profit community based organization so that they can respond to community needs without any politics or bureaucracy.

In 2009, the Taskforce on Community Safety heard loud and clear from Edmontonians that the community needs someone to own the ‘R’ for responsibility: a community-led body that will connect the dots and play a lead coordinating role. And that’s exactly what REACH Edmonton was created to do. They are integrating efforts, not duplicating services that are already offered.

Their Mandate:

- implement the REACH Report recommendations;
- guide a culture shift to the prevention of crime;
- engage citizens;
- enhance more integrated efforts to address community safety.

REACH Edmonton also provides support, advice and help to Edmonton City Council and to civic agencies on community safety issues.

Their Principles:

REACH Edmonton is building a safer community with an approach based on several key principles.

They are:

- community and membership driven;
- inclusive of many voices;
- nimble and action oriented;
- focused on preventing crime before it happens;
- innovative and independent of all levels of government;
- evidence-based with a focus on social return on investment.

REACH receives funding from the City of Edmonton, as well as the province and federal governments. They do not develop programs but oversee the disbursement of the funds to different agencies for different programs. The Executive Director is, however, a City of Edmonton employee. They report to a Board comprised of people with various backgrounds.

REACH encourages proposals for programs to have a partnership approach between agencies. The view is that since the problems are complex, no one agency can do it alone. REACH is not a government organization but works with government officials, the business community, and service providers.

One recent pilot project funded through REACH was the Integrated Panhandling Project. Edmonton's Downtown Business Association knows moving panhandlers along may free up the business zone, but it doesn't get street people the help they need. As the head of the association commented, "If you react by getting physical or calling the police, you're only solving part of the problem in moving that person away. You can turn it around and solve both problems by having someone who knows what they are doing, intervene." This is why they funded an experienced outreach worker to work with panhandlers and others on the street. This outreach worker helps people on the streets access the services they need.

The project was started through a partnership between Boyle Street Community Services, Edmonton Downtown Association and the Edmonton Police Foundation. One of the goals is to make the downtown area feel safer. Safety and security are always issues for a downtown area. There were real issues identified in Edmonton in terms of resident perceptions of safety and security that come from seeing street people who are sitting on the sidewalk, those who are drunk, and those that may have mental health issues. They may not hurt anyone, but the general public had concerns, according to the City's research.

Normally a business owner would call the police if a panhandler is bothering patrons. No owners call the designed outreach worker directly. The outreach worker is always out and about. He starts walking the streets and alleys where people might be and the food courts. He hits those places and connects with people. He engages people in conversation. He then finds out what services they may need. Sometimes, it might be a warm pair of socks. Other times he will take them to a doctor, an addictions counselor, or a housing shelter.

Every downtown business has his business card and can call him if they see someone in need. The philosophy of the program is that people get lost at times or disconnected from family or the

community. The city and its people all have a responsibility to make sure people do not get left behind. They see the issue of panhandling and street activity as a community responsibility, not a single person's fault. All three organizations hope to gather statistics on the success of the project so it can be shared as a template for other cities looking for ways to deal with panhandlers.

## USING ENFORCEMENT TO ADDRESS PANHANDLING

The City of Toronto is again battling the issue of panhandling. In addition, a recent survey of Canadians reveals that the stance toward panhandling is getting harder.<sup>12</sup> Intolerance has led to an enormous increase in tickets handed out under the Safe Streets Act in Ontario. In 2010, police laid 15,000 charges as compared with about 2,000 in 2004.

Homeless and poor people panhandling barely have enough money for food and rent, much less to pay a ticket. The province's Safe Streets Act came into force in 1999 to prohibit people from panhandling for money in an aggressive manner and forbid panhandling near ATMs, pay phones, and public transit stops.

Canada's top courts have ruled against panhandling bans and have said that it is a protected form of expression. One of the biggest problems with the Safe Streets Act is that when people who have been on the streets for a number of years and accumulated several thousands of dollars in fines begin to make positive life decisions, to battle their addiction issues, commit to their recommended medical treatment, or enter a job placement program, and they finally get a phone, the first phone call they get is from creditors asking for money to pay their fines.

In our culture, people do not like to see somebody who is destitute on the street asking for money. Those with a strong social stance say that panhandling is not a problem of individuals. Society produces it in some way, but people do not generally look at the causes or sources; we live in a type of society that tends to blame individuals either for their successes or for their failures.

Published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2007, *The Expressive Liberty of Beggars* details the implications and conflicts between poverty stricken Canadians and the perceptions of the general public. The author argues against restrictive bylaws on passive panhandling on the grounds that non-aggressive panhandling should be protected as expressive communication and the freedom of expression. Subsequently, the author states that restrictions on panhandling fail to demonstrate benefits, and instead further marginalize and force poverty out of sight and, as such, out of mind.

Forcing panhandling "out of mind" implies that the comfort of the middle class in public spaces is more important than facing a representation of the realities of poverty. "When a panhandler asks us for money, it's sometimes heart-wrenching, sometimes bothersome, sometimes maddening, sometimes all three... the beggars appeal may force us to wrestle with ourselves."<sup>13</sup> In order to gain public support for issues of poverty, the public must be exposed and compelled to support programs

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<sup>12</sup> Poll calls for tougher panhandling laws; Leger Marketing; September 13, 2011

<sup>13</sup> Schafer, Arthur, *The expressive Liberty of Beggars*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2007

and causes; additional conversations about the issues are needed as opposed to a lack of exposure to the issue which banning the activity would create.

In the context of balancing the costs of panhandling relating to the public benefits, the author describes a number of costs of panhandling and negative street activity that influence consumer perceptions (Schafer 16).

**Direct Costs** -> The discomfort of the middle class consumers in shopping areas that results from encountering street people or panhandlers.

- Primary research experience suggests that direct costs of panhandling are primarily prevalent among consumers visiting downtown Saskatoon.

**Indirect Costs** -> The perceived decay of public space quality due to the prevalence of undesirable street people and activities in urban areas. Consumers avoid these areas because of undesirable activity.

- Research experience suggests that indirect costs of panhandling were prevalent among consumers relating to visitation of the Riversdale area of Saskatoon.

**Environmental Costs** -> Occurs after a prolonged lack of commercial activity in an urban area due to indirect costs. Continual decline is prevalent.

- Research findings and intercepts suggest Riversdale is currently experiencing an ongoing environmental cost associated with ongoing negative perceptions of street activity in the area.

While recognizing that there are negative costs associated with panhandling, ultimately the author defends the right to peaceful panhandling on the principle that defending freedom of expression and protecting panhandlers from being unfairly marginalized brought about largely to the middle class's discomfort with poverty. "Defending the right to peaceful panhandling is not the same as arguing that panhandling is desirable. Rather, the question is: Are the negative aspects of panhandling so seriously harmful as to justify legal interventions that may contravene other fundamental social values? Critics of anti-panhandling legislation argue as the core of their case that there is a very real danger that the cure will be worse than the disease" (Schafer 21).

The survey of Saskatoon residents and the intercepts with Saskatoon business owners and consumers suggest that panhandling and street activities are characterized differently in different parts of the city. In particular, panhandling downtown is largely perceived as commonly passive, while consumer discomfort is still a prevalent occurrence. Street activity in Riversdale was generally seen as a distinct barrier for visitation to this area by a noteworthy proportion of residents and associated with being unsafe and involving criminal activity.

## RECENT SASKATCHEWAN DEVELOPMENTS – PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Published in September of 2011, the Saskatchewan Government, in conjunction with the provincial Police Services, published a report aimed at creating partnerships with the objective of reducing crime. Primarily, the report suggests a three-pronged approach of intervention, prevention, and suppression to create safer communities in the province. Community oriented solutions and working collaboratively are two of the philosophies that are noted as being critical to long term success, particular at the intervention and prevention stages.

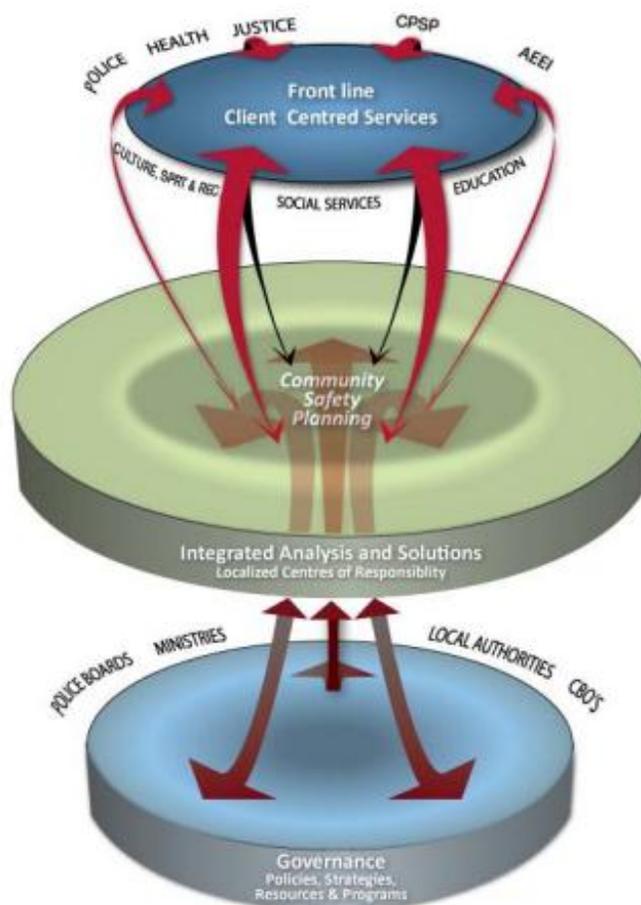


Fig. 1.1 – Three Level Partnership Model for Community Safety

This above figure illustrates the proposed connections between the different levels of government, local authorities, and social service structures.

Provincial government and Police Service partnerships outlined in this new report demonstrate an openness and willingness to partner with community leaders and service providers in the context of the greater public safety. This initiative encourages service providers at the grassroots to be involved in concentrated public safety approaches and illustrates supports to come from levels of governments and ministries. While it remains to be seen, this philosophy will hopefully allow local

stakeholders to work more closely with stakeholders at the provincial levels and police at the community level.



**Intervention:** Services such as substance abuse treatment, education and employment are used to change behavior and the environment in a manner that mitigates the risk factors that lead to victimization and offending.

**Prevention:** Information, public education, social supports and other activities engage individuals at risk of victimization or offending and reduces the potential for crime and disorder.

**Suppression:** Uses the law to deter and control crime. This includes surveillance, arrests, prosecution and incarceration.

Government of Saskatchewan, "Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime," September 2011

## COSTS OF HOMELESSNESS

In a report published in 2007 for the Calgary Homeless Foundation, the costs of homelessness in the City of Calgary were calculated. The Foundation utilized the services of a private consulting and accounting firm, and the costs of providing emergency services, shelter, food, health care, and social services in the City were estimated based on agency accounting records and direct costs of organizations. The calculated average annual cost of a homeless individual was published as **\$92,202** per annum for the provision of services. When distinguishing between the costs of transient homeless and chronically homeless individuals, the costs adjust accordingly based on frequency of service needs. Costs for transient homeless are published as **\$72,444** per annum, while chronic homelessness was quoted at a cost of **\$134,642**.

While these costs do not necessarily directly relate to the costs of service delivery to panhandlers who may be housed, commentary offered by the Calgary Homeless Foundation illustrates a fundamental philosophy that “it costs less to provide appropriate housing and support to a person at risk of or experiencing homelessness compared with providing that same person with short-term and ongoing emergency and institutional responses. Most studies indicate those people with the highest needs incur system costs of \$100,000 or more per year. This is two to three times higher than the cost of providing housing and support. <sup>14</sup>”

As the consideration of cost is an important contemplation when planning for service delivery and funding, the above commentary may represent an opportunity for additional study into the future for Saskatoon.

Additional studies on the costs of homelessness can be referenced in the following reports:

“Costs Associated with First Time Homelessness by Families and Individuals”

<http://calgaryhomeless.com/assets/10-Year-Plan/CostsHomeless.2010USDepartmentofHousing.pdf>

“Report on Cost of Homelessness in Calgary”

<http://calgaryhomeless.com/assets/10-Year-Plan/ReportonCostofHomelessness-v1-RSMRichter2007.pdf>

“The Cost of Homelessness: Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities”

<http://calgaryhomeless.com/assets/10-Year-Plan/CostofHomelessness-FourCitiesMarch2005FINAL.pdf>

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<sup>14</sup> Calgary Homeless Foundation, “Fundamentals to Calgary’s 10 Year Plan,” retrieved from <http://calgaryhomeless.com/10-year-plan/fundamentals/> September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

## SECONDARY RESEARCH SUMMARY

Stakeholders recognize that partnerships between municipal governments, provincial and federal interests, service providers, the private sector and other stakeholders are central to the successful provision of services to impoverished members of the community. While not all associations and organizations included a clear connection between municipal governance and service delivery, many service providers shared partnerships with likeminded organizations. This approach was demonstrated as a favourable best practice in nearly all municipalities and among program delivery specialists, and addressed a diversity of poverty issues from homelessness to addictions to panhandling.

A number of methods of connecting stakeholders emerged as commonly favourable across Canadian constituencies.

1. The existence of a central organization to unify and connect service providers as well as educate and direct service provision capabilities and specialties was commonly utilized to maximize effective service delivery to clients. This was prevalent in Calgary (The Calgary Homeless Foundation), Winnipeg (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg) and Edmonton (REACH) and was less formally observed in other centers where partnerships between organizations were common.
2. A secondary method of connecting service affiliates was noted through new technological innovations found in Calgary via the Homeless Management Information System. The objective of this system is to improve data and systems knowledge relating to homeless and at-risk members of the community. When fully implemented, the system will provide service providers with a centralized database of those who access social service and the ability to better meet the needs of clients through improved co-ordination and informed program referrals.
3. A number of municipalities have conducted ongoing research on panhandling and poverty in their communities, with the common objective of better understanding the experience and realities facing panhandlers and community members on the streets. Most of these research projects cite that creating this understanding fosters a more appropriate reaction and holistic service delivery context.

Research findings published by the University of Winnipeg directly assert that strong legislation responses, such as bylaws, do not represent an effective solution to reduce panhandling activities in municipal areas. Research on the costs of homelessness advocates that socially oriented solutions and strategies found in municipalities may represent the most cost effective and reliable way to address poverty through addressing issues such as program access, effective program delivery, and education.

Recent guidance published by the Government of Saskatchewan suggests a willingness to partner and collaborate with grassroots organizations in Saskatchewan communities in the interests of public safety. This willingness represents an area of opportunity for decision makers at the civic level in Saskatoon who want to promote such public safety partnerships in both their civic service delivery and third party service delivery.

The complexity of catalysts that influence poverty and panhandling cannot be simply addressed with a single solution. Long term investments in creating and maximizing support structures can help to ensure poverty stricken Canadians have opportunities to receive support services they need to enable them to become contributing and responsible citizens.