YOUTH BANS: POLICY, IMPLEMENTATION, AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH AND STAKEHOLDERS

Final Report

Old Strathcona Community Mapping and Planning Committee

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Youth Bans: Policy, Implementation, and Perspectives

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This 2015-2017 community-based participatory research study responds to a need identified by service providers to investigate the banning of youth who are homeless or without secure and adequate housing. For this project, "banning" refers to the practice of formally informing a person they must leave an area, service, or property, and not return for a specified amount of time.

Previous research has examined the banning of activities associated with homelessness such as panhandling or squeegeeing in Canadian cities (Sommers et al., 2005; Douglas, 2011; O'Grady, Gaetz and Buccieri, 2011; Chesnay, Bellot and Sylvestre, 2013). The limited research that has been conducted on banning individuals and the impact of being banned while homeless indicates banning adds an "additional set of complications to already difficult lives" (Herbert & Beckett, 2010, p. 241). Previous research conducted by the Old Strathcona Community Mapping and Planning Committee (OSCMAP) in Edmonton, Alberta found that many youth are confused about their bans; youth may not know how long they are banned for, or how to find out more information about their bans (OSCMAP, 2015).

This study responds to a gap in knowledge on local banning policies and practices, how youth who are homeless or without adequate housing understand and interpret their bans, and the recommendations of youth and service providers working with youth.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) What are local banning policies that impact youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness? How are these bans implemented, and how are they communicated to youth?

2) What are the perspectives of youth without secure and adequate housing and who have received bans on banning policies and implementation?

3) What are the perspectives of stakeholders such as service providers working with youth on banning policies and implementation?

STUDY DESIGN

An environmental scan reviewed information about local banning policies and their implementation. Types of organizations invited to participate included youth-serving agencies, shelters, libraries, malls, post-secondary educational institutions, public transit systems, recreation centres, cafés or restaurants, and hospitals. Semi-structured individual interviews with youth and stakeholders captured perspectives from each group. Individual interviews were conducted with 39 youth ages 14-24 years who were homeless or without secure and adequate housing, and who had been banned from one location or more. Youth recorded locations they had been banned from on large maps, and completed an interview on their perceptions and thoughts about their bans, and on banning in general. Stakeholders working with youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness participated in semi-structured 1-2 hour individual or group interviews.

FINDINGS

Bans are one method of regulating behaviour and addressing safety concerns, and bans significantly impact youth without housing. The environmental scan indicates drug or alcohol use, violence, property damage, theft, trespassing or loitering may result in bans, and this was reflected in the experiences of the youth. Most organizations offer opportunities for bans to be reviewed.

The 39 youth participants described more than 175 incidents which included being banned from specific locations. Bans were implemented for a number of reasons, including theft, substance use or possession, violence, loitering, trespassing and sleeping. Most youth reported fewer than 5 bans each, and malls were the most frequent location youth were banned from. Other locations youth reported being banned from included libraries, shelters, stores, drop-in resources, post-secondary educational institutions, and transit centres. Youth most commonly believed they were banned for life, and one-year bans were common as well. As found in previous OSCMAP research (2015), for a significant number of incidents youth did not know how long they were banned for.

The bans sometimes made it more difficult for youth to meet their needs, and youth expressed frustration when they were asked to leave spaces they felt other people could access without being asked to leave. Some youth believed their ethnicity or appearing homeless made authorities more likely to interact with them and ask them to leave. Youth recommended approaching bans with a professional manner,

offering opportunities to review bans, reducing the length of bans, and clear communication and documentation.

Seven interviews were conducted with 15 stakeholders who were service providers working with youth in high-risk situations, including homelessness. Service providers described mall, library, and agency bans as the most common for the youth they work with. Stakeholders described the dilemma of banning someone to protect the safety of staff and other clients, but knowing the ban could mean the person who was banned was now at greater risk. Service providers believed that youth who were Indigenous, visible minorities, or appeared homeless were closely monitored, and that youth histories including trauma, FASD, substance use, mental health concerns and/or previous negative experiences with authorities could result in youth reacting poorly to being monitored or confronted, leading to an escalation which could result in the youth being banned. Stakeholders recommended meeting basic needs to prevent bans, implementing de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed practices, implementing bans only for serious incidents, safety planning, shorter ban lengths, improved communication about bans, and opportunities for ban reviews and resolution.

IMPLICATIONS

Being banned impacted youth beyond being unable to access a location. Youth without homes have few places they are welcome to spend time, and being banned from multiple locations could intensify feelings of rejection and unworthiness. Over half of the bans reported were for a year or more, an extensive length of time for a young person who may not have housing and depends on resources. Use of discretion, lack of documentation, substance use, multiple systems of enforcement, and stressful situations may all contribute to youth being confused about their bans, and how to best communicate bans requires further consideration.

Youth and service providers asked for greater consideration of the circumstances of youth experiencing homelessness. Addictions, histories of trauma, lack of resources for basic needs, and mental health concerns contribute to youth being banned. These characteristics are believed to be causes of homelessness, but can be the result of homelessness as well (Gulliver & Campney, 2015; Bender et al. 2015). Helping youth meet their needs protects their human rights, and may prevent negative interactions that lead to being banned.

Both service providers and youth believed youth were sometimes profiled, including for being Indigenous. Recognizing that a history of colonization,

residential schools and trauma contribute to an over-representation of Indigenous persons amongst the homeless, addressing bans can be an opportunity for organizations to engage in efforts towards reconciliation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Collaborative efforts involving youth and stakeholders to develop banning guidelines or protocol** for deciding whether and how to implement a ban. The protocol may include guidelines for:

   1.1. **Circumstances** which require banning
   1.2. **Ban length**
   1.3. **Documenting and communicating bans** - including documentation promptly provided to the youth, with contact information to inquire about bans and when they expire.
   1.4. **Safety planning & meeting youth needs** – may include modified provision of services to meet youth needs after a ban (e.g. outreach services or onsite staff accompaniment), an inter-agency response to provide services for youth with multiple or frequent bans, or provision of services such as contacting 24/7 Crisis Diversion to assist youth being asked to leave private property but aren't sure where else they can go.
   1.5. **Ban review procedures** – procedures to review, appeal, or resolve bans, using a restorative justice approach where appropriate
   1.6. **Consideration of extreme circumstances** - procedures for situations such as extreme temperatures or when a ban results in homelessness
   1.7. **Referrals** to address issues contributing to bans
   1.8. **Trauma-informed training and practices**, including de-escalation, and practices which reduce or eliminate any stigmatization and discrimination

2. **Funding for youth-serving agencies** to be open extended hours to provide safer spaces and resources for youth, or staggering hours between agencies.

3. **Increased access to housing, basic needs resources, mental health services, and addictions treatment** to protect youth rights and meet the needs of youth.

4. **Agencies or organizations which implement banning incorporate training and practices** on de-escalation, and social issues such as poverty, criminalization, stigmatization, and FASD.

Youth Bans: Policy, Implementation, and Perspectives

3. INTRODUCTION

This 2015-2017 community-based participatory research project addresses a need identified by local service providers to investigate the banning of youth who are homeless or without secure and adequate housing. For this project, "banning" refers to the practice of formally informing a person they must leave an area, service, or property, and not return for a specified amount of time.

An environmental scan reviewed relevant local policies related to banning, and their implementation. Interviews with youth who are homeless or without secure and adequate housing and with stakeholders such as service providers captured perspectives on the causes and impact of bans, and recommendations for future practice.

4. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Researchers have examined the criminalization of homelessness and poverty, including laws targeting activities such as panhandling or squeegeeing in Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto (Sommers et al., 2005; Douglas, 2011; O'Grady, Gaetz and Buccieri, 2011; Chesnay, Bellot and Sylvestre, 2013). In the United States, laws criminalizing homelessness are increasing (National Law Centre on Homelessness and Poverty, 2016), and may include sitting on sidewalks (Robinson & Sickels, 2015), and feeding homeless persons (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2014).

Less is known about the banning of people themselves, particularly those experiencing homelessness, and the impact of being banned. This project responds to a local need identified by Homeward Trust Edmonton for research on how personal bans impact youth (Community Strategy to Ending Youth Homelessness in Edmonton, Homeward Trust Edmonton, 2015). Project findings may also inform efforts to improve relationships between youth experiencing homelessness and authorities, as per Goal 2.7 Justice for All (End Poverty Edmonton, 2016).

Bans intended to protect people and property from harm (or intended to reduce behaviours which can result in bans) significantly impact youth who are homeless or without adequate housing as they further limit the already-limited number of services and places the youth can access. These bans potentially contribute to social exclusion, which negatively impacts homeless youth, who report being perceived by others as worthless, criminal or dangerous (Government of Alberta, 2015). Gaetz (2004) writes "being young and homeless invariably means winding up in

dangerous places, engaging in risky behaviours, and being exposed to potential offenders" (p445). Herbert & Beckett (2010) argue that extensive area bans in the Seattle area result in an "inability to maintain social contracts; reduced access to services; loss of work; and reduced physical security" (p. 237). Indigenous youth are over-represented in the homeless youth population (Government of Alberta, 2015), and any sense of exclusion and being negatively perceived (Environics Institute, 2010) may be intensified by banning.

Research conducted by Old Strathcona Community Mapping and Planning Committee (OSCMAP, 2015) on youth perceptions of safety and social exclusion found that many of the youth participants had been banned from one location or more. A number of youth were unclear on the conditions of their bans, but the majority of known bans reported were for a year or more, an extensive length of time for a youth who is homeless to be unable to access resources. Organizations serving the homelessness have indicated interest in banning practices, particularly the dilemma of banning from shelters (Ryder, 2015).

This study responds to a gap in knowledge about local banning policies and practices, how youth who are homeless or without adequate housing understand and interpret their bans, and the recommendations of youth and service providers working with youth.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4) What are local banning policies that impact youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness? How are these bans implemented, and how are they communicated to youth?

5) What are the perspectives of youth without secure and adequate housing and who have received bans on banning policies and implementation?

6) What are the perspectives of stakeholders such as service providers working with youth on banning policies and implementation?

5. METHODS

This project applied qualitative participatory research design methods. The project design, interview guidelines, and interpretation of results were developed with the Old Strathcona Community Mapping and Planning Committee, a committee of youth-serving organizations who all work with youth in high-risk situations. An

environmental scan was conducted to collect and review information about local banning policies and their implementation. Semi-structured individual interviews with youth and stakeholders captured perspectives from each group.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This project underwent a Second Opinion Review for ethical considerations through Alberta Health Innovates' A pRoject Ethics Community Consensus Initiative (ARECCI). Youth and stakeholders received an information letter and provided written consent. Organizations participating in the environmental scan also received an information letter, and provided verbal or written consent.

5.1. DATA COLLECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

OSCMAP member agencies identified locations where youth reported receiving bans for inclusion in the scan of local policies. Locations noted in the project interviews were also approached for participation. Organizations were contacted with information about the project by phone and/or email, and provided with a letter of information.   Types of organizations contacted included youth-serving agencies, shelters, libraries, malls, post-secondary educational institutions, public transit systems, recreation centres, cafés or restaurants, and hospitals. The scan was conducted spring 2016 – winter 2016/2017. The environmental scan questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

COMMUNITY MAPPING ACTIVITY & INTERVIEWS WITH YOUTH

Individual interviews were conducted with 39 youth ages 14-24 years who were homeless or without secure and adequate housing, and who had experienced being banned from one or more locations. 40 youth interviews were initiated. One interview was not completed due to health concerns for the youth, and this participant's information was withdrawn from the study. Youth participants were recruited from five youth-serving organizations, and interviews were held at the agency sites. An interviewer with experience working with youth experiencing homelessness conducted the interviews, occasionally accompanied by staff members with an existing relationship with the youth to facilitate a trusting relationship, and offer follow-up supports where necessary. As advised by OSCMAP members, the youth interviews were not audio recorded, and in lieu the interviewer

documented detailed notes. Youth recorded places they had been banned on large paper maps of Edmonton and completed an interview on their perceptions and thoughts about their bans, and on banning in general. Youth received a token of appreciation including a gift card and two transit tickets (total value $20). All youth interviews were conducted spring 2016. The youth interview guide is provided in Appendix A.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder participants were service providers working with youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Stakeholders invited to participate were perceived to have particular insight into how bans may impact youth, and were recruited through OSCMAP member organizations and other community organizations. Stakeholders participated in semi-structured 1-2 hour individual or group interview at locations convenient for the participants. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The stakeholder interviews were conducted summer and fall 2016. The stakeholder interview guide is included in Appendix A.

5.2. DATA ANALYSIS

Local banning policies that impact youth were consolidated and condensed into table format, and trends and observations were summarized. Notes from the youth interviews, and transcripts from the interviews with service providers were analyzed with NVIVO qualitative analysis software. An inductive coding key was constructed based on the interview guidelines, and iteratively refined as key themes emerged. Qualitative descriptive analysis was used to describe themes and summarize findings. The maps youth created recording the locations they had been banned from were digitized and collated using ArcGIS software. The digitized maps are provided in Appendix B.

5.3. PARTICIPANTS

Youth Participant Demographics

Age - Participation was available to youth between the ages of 14-24 years accessing services at five youth-serving agencies. Most participants were 20 years of age or over, and one youth who had recently turned 25 was permitted to participate.

Housing - Youth participants were most commonly staying in residential programs and shelters at the time of their interview.   Youth reported many different housing

situations over the year prior to the interview, most commonly specifying "homeless" on the demographic questionnaire. Some youth had also stayed with family or friends, in supported living situations, or outside. Youth selected responses they felt best described their living situations, leading to some overlap in categories.

Gender - 26 youth identified as male, 12 as female, and one youth identified as gender fluid, trans, non-binary assigned female.

Ethnicity - 20 of the 39 youth identified as Indigenous (First Nations or Métis), seven as white, six as multi-racial, three as African, two as European, and one as Caribbean. (This question was derived from Statistics Canada, 2011).

Child Welfare Status - 24 youth said they did not have Child Welfare status, 14 said they had status, and one was not sure.

Education, Employment & Program Involvement - 22 youth were involved in school, employment, and/or programs at the time of the interview, and 17 were not engaged in school, employment or programs.

Ages of Youth Participants
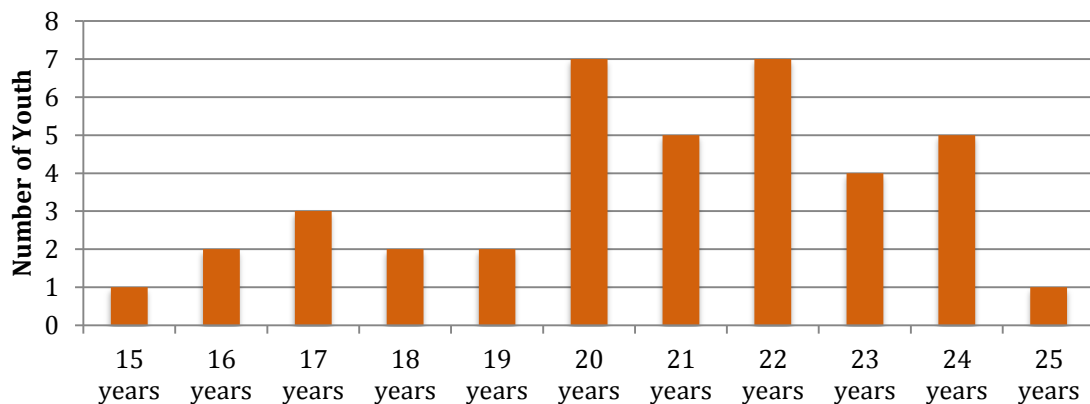
Current Housing of Participants
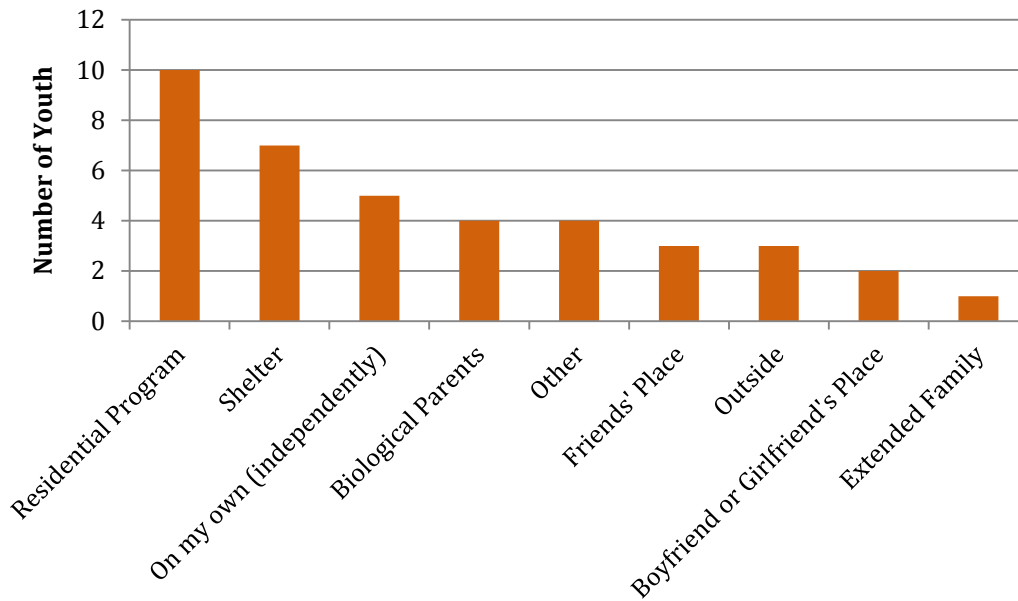
Previous Housing in Last Year
(as Identified by Participants)
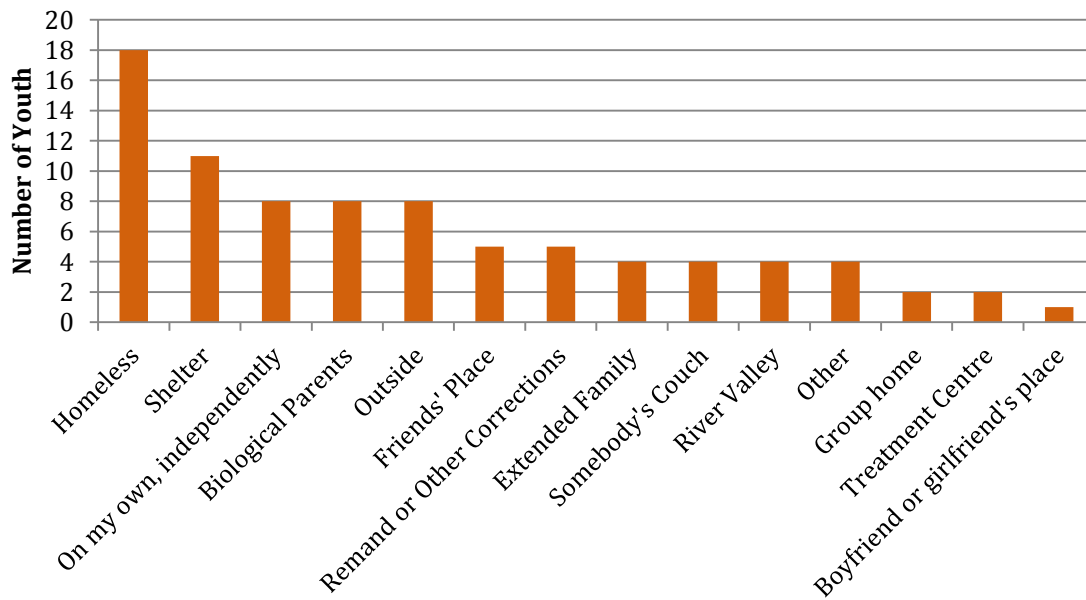
Ethnicity of Youth Participants
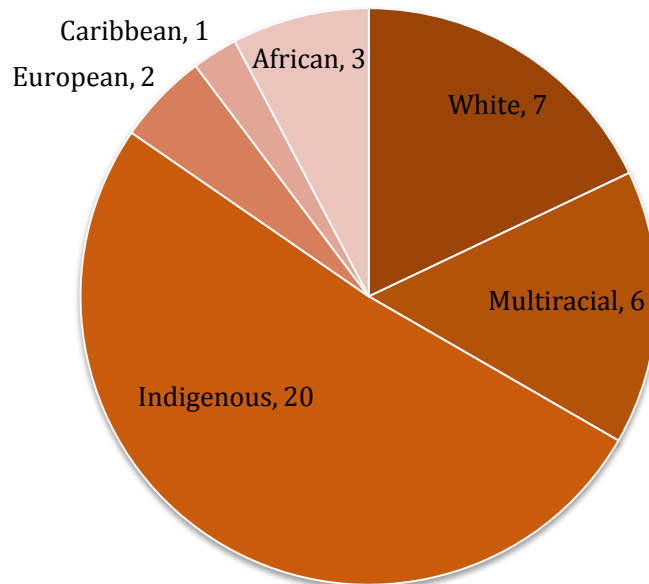
6. RESULTS

6.1. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE LOCAL BANNING POLICIES THAT IMPACT YOUTH WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS? HOW ARE THESE BANS IMPLEMENTED, AND HOW ARE THEY COMMUNICATED TO YOUTH?

An environmental scan was conducted to increase understanding of the policies and practices of local organizations, including reasons bans may be put in place and how bans are implemented. A table of local policies regarding banning and how the policies are applied is included in the accompanying document "Local Policies & Practices Related to Banning Individuals: Edmonton, AB".

A few observations can be made based on the information provided:

- The type of organization influences when bans are implemented. Business or retail organizations were more likely to ban for theft, for example, than youth-serving agencies.

- Many bans were communicated verbally, though some organizations provided written documentation. Some organizations used verbal communication for shorter bans, and written documentation for longer instances.
- Many organizations implemented 24 hour bans. Ban length could extend up to a few months for youth-serving agencies or for a number of years for retail spaces.
- Escalation and repetition of offence may affect ban length for many organizations, although some agencies and businesses have standards or policies with set lengths for specific offences.
- Few to no changes in policy observed for youth under the age of 18 years. A small number of organizations notify guardians of youth under 18 years.
- Few to no formal policies in place for addressing cognitive delays, however most agencies/businesses say they use their discretion and take cognitive delays into consideration.
- A few youth-serving agencies had Agent Status[1]. Other institutions, organizations, and businesses tended to either have Agent Status or other agreements with Edmonton Police Service.
- Majority of businesses/agencies are open to appeals or discussion with youths that have been banned; very rarely is a ban forever and unable to be appealed.
- Bans do not necessarily affect emergency services – e.g. access to emergency care at hospitals or use of public transportation.

It was also noted during the scan that some organizations use alternate terms such as suspended or restricted, intended to indicate that the bans were not permanent.

A number of organizations declined to participate. A few organizations were willing to share policy information only under the condition of anonymity, and were not included in the table.

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[1] For more information on Agent Status, please see accompanying document "Local Policies & Practices Related to Banning Individuals: Edmonton, AB"

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH WITHOUT SECURE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING AND WHO HAVE RECEIVED BANS ON BANNING POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION?

The 39 youth participants described more than 175 incidents which resulted in being banned from specific locations. Youth reported being banned from several locations for a variety of reasons, including criminal and non-criminal matters. The bans were implemented by staff, security guards, peace officers, and police officers. Many bans were for more than a year in length.

Number of Bans Youth Participants Reported

Most youth (n=26) reported less than 5 bans each. Three youth reported 10 or more bans. Some of the youth described more than one ban from the same location, and these were recorded as separate ban incidents. Two youth who reported at least 17 bans indicated they had more bans than shared but did not want to go through them all as there were "too many." The two youth with more than 17 bans each indicated involvement with substance use, violence, the criminal justice system, and for one youth mental health concerns as well.

Number of Bans	Number of Youth
1	10
2	4
3	8
4	4
5	2
6	1
7	2
8	2
9	3
10	1
17	2

Table 1: Number of Bans per Youth

Reasons Why Youth Were Banned

The most common reasons youth described being banned included: theft, drugs (possession of, under the influence of, or selling), alcohol intoxication or possession, and fighting or assault. Approximately a third of the bans involved drugs or alcohol, and roughly a quarter of the bans involved theft. When alcohol was involved youth were sometimes banned for being intoxicated or for other actions such as fighting or theft while they were intoxicated. The reason for the ban was often correlated to the type of organization; theft was a more common reason for bans from private businesses, whereas public services such as a libraries or youth-serving agencies implemented bans for service disruption or violence.

Less common reasons youth were banned included: loitering, verbal aggression, trespassing, and sleeping. A few youth described events which included property damage, brandishing a weapon, smoking, mischief, or being with friends who were breaking laws or rules. Other causes of youth being banned that were only mentioned once or twice each include arson, robbery, and transit fare evasion. In a small number of the incidents the youth themselves were not fighting but were with or near other people who were, and the youth were banned.

Locations Youth Were Banned

Youth were banned from several types of locations, most commonly malls. Malls and libraries are popular destinations for youth as they offer warm indoor space available to the public, Wi-Fi, and are available mornings and evenings when youth resources may not be open. Maps of the locations youth described being banned from are provided in Appendix B. The maps indicate youth are banned from many different locations throughout the city, including locations generally perceived as being accessible to the public.

Malls

Youth were most likely to report being banned from malls, with two-thirds of youth participants discussing mall bans. Theft was involved in approximately half of bans from malls. There were also a number of events which included fighting/assault, drugs, alcohol, loitering, trespassing, and a small number of bans were for sleeping or property damage.

Libraries

The most common reasons youth described being banned from a library were "fighting" and/or verbal assault, followed by drugs or alcohol (using or being under the influence of). A small number of youth were also banned for sleeping.

Shelters

Approximately half of the events that youth described as resulting in bans from shelters concerned violence or potential violence- fighting, verbal assault, or weapons. A small number of bans involved drugs and/or alcohol. Arson and theft were also mentioned once each.

Stores

Almost all of the bans from stores concerned theft. Intoxication, assault, and evading police were also mentioned once each.

Drop-In Resources

All of the bans from drop-in centres included violence and/or substance use. Youth mentioned drug or alcohol use in approximately half of the incidents that resulted in being banned from drop-in centres, and over half of the incidents involved fighting, assault, or property damage.

Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

Approximately half of the bans from post-secondary educational institutions involved loitering and/or trespassing. Youth sometimes described incidents where they were asked to leave the property and received trespassing tickets when they later returned. A small number of incidents included drug use or possession.

Transit Centres or Transit System

Youth who were banned from transit centres or the transit system described incidents with fighting/assault, and one instance each with sleeping, intoxication, fare evasion, robbery, or trespassing.

Other locations

A few youth were also banned from cafés or restaurants, specific geographical areas, Churchill Square (a public urban plaza in downtown Edmonton), and hospitals.

Youth were banned from these locations for incidents related to loitering, alcohol or substance use, theft, fighting, and sleeping.

Who Implemented Bans

Police, Security, Peace Officers and Staff

Police were involved in just over a third of the events youth described, and security guards were referred to in approximately one-third. In roughly a third of the events with security guards, police were also involved after being contacted by security.

Most of the bans implemented by staff were from youth-serving organizations such as shelters or resource/drop-in centres. Occasionally youth also reported being banned by staff from a library or private business.

Youth described peace officers implementing bans from post-secondary educational institutions, transit centres, and a few from malls, libraries, hospitals, and Churchill Square.

Interactions with Authorities

Youth described both relatively positive and negative interactions with authorities. There were times when the youth described the police or security officers as "nice" and trying to help them, even while implementing a ban or arrest. At other times youth felt that authorities were unnecessarily rough, rude, and trying to provoke the youth (for example, some youth described authorities using slurs, and one youth described being followed around by a guard who was opening and closing handcuffs). Some youth felt unfairly profiled because of their ethnicity or for being homeless.

How Bans Were Communicated

Youth reported that for over half of the events the ban was communicated verbally and for less than a third of the events written documentation was provided. Youth also specified their bans were part of court orders for a few incidents (e.g. probation order or bail conditions). Staff members were far more likely to implement verbal bans than written at the time of the event, though some mailed written documentation afterwards. For the events described by the participants, police officers were slightly more likely to verbally implement bans than provide written documentation, peace officers were slightly more likely to provide written documentation, and security guards were equally likely to verbally ban youth or

offer written documentation.   Examples of written documentation provided to two youth are included in Appendix C.

One youth described a situation where she was caught stealing food from a grocery store, and completed alternative measures through court to deal with the charges. Despite completing her alternative measures she continued to receive letters and numerous phone calls from the grocery store's legal representation stating she must pay the grocery store $300 and write a letter of apology to have the ban removed.

Tickets, Charges and Arrests

Youth described receiving tickets in less than a quarter of the events in which they were banned from a location. In over half of the events where youth received tickets, the tickets were for trespassing. A number of these resulted from youth returning to a location after being banned (i.e. they did not receive a trespassing ticket when first banned, but for returning afterwards). Trespassing tickets were also sometimes included when youth were banned for additional reasons such as intoxication, assault, substance use, loitering, sleeping, and theft. A few tickets were written for intoxication, and a couple of tickets for smoking.

Youth described being charged or arrested in less than a quarter of the ban events. Theft was involved in approximately half of the events resulting in bans with arrests or charges, and fighting/assault was involved in approximately half of the events.

Length of Bans

The most common ban lengths reported by youth were banned for life or for one year.   Some bans were in existence until a specific condition was met (for example, attending rehab, or talking to a staff member or the police), and youth described these as "banned for life" until the condition was met. Youth were also occasionally told "don't come back" and generally considered themselves banned for life when they were told this. A number of youth were unsure how long they were banned for.

Table 2 summarizes the number of bans youth received by ban length. The ban length "other" includes events without discrete timelines (and not described by the youth as life). For example, one youth reported being told by the police to "come back when you're not homeless," and for some events there was a discrepancy in length (e.g. a 2 year ban from security, but verbal ban for life from the police for the same incident).

Number of Incidents	Length of Ban
38	99 years[2] or Life
30	Not sure how long ban is for
29	1 year
13	2 years
12	6 – 8 months
11	1 week or less
6	24 hours or less
6	1 – 2 months
5	3 years
4	2 -3 weeks
4	5 years
3	3 - 6 months
3	7 years
2	10 years
13	Other

Table 2: Number of bans by ban length

Time of Day and Season

When youth could recall the season in which they were banned, roughly half of the incidents happened in winter, commensurate with a six-month winter season in Edmonton. More bans were reported in spring than in summer or fall. More of the banning incidents youth described happened during the day than at night or evening, which may reflect more spaces being closed at night.

Impact of Ban on Life

"During that time I didn't sleep at all. I would stay up so I didn't have to stay outside. It's pretty sad a lot of us take drugs to stay up... I freaking had nowhere to sleep basically. I was so tired I would sleep in stairwells. It was really shitty 'cause that's the one place I really have." 20 year old female youth banned from a shelter

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[2] A 99 year ban is documented in Appendix C.

Practical Impacts

An expected impact noted by many youth was that the resource or space they had been banned from was no longer available for them to access. For youth this sometimes meant long detours to avoid areas where they were banned, and if banned from services youth attempt to seek alternative resources. A number of youth said it was difficult to be banned from places such as malls or libraries in the winter as it meant there were fewer places to stay warm, particularly mornings and evenings when drop-in centres were closed. Being banned from shelters could mean youth had no place to sleep at night and some youth indicated using drugs to stay up so they didn't sleep outside.

A small number of youth indicated that bans also impacted them in the following ways:

- Having to take lengthy travel routes when banned from a location or transit centre
- Spending less time with friends or family who work or spend time at a space where youth were banned
- A few youth lost their belongings when they were removed from a space, or during interactions with authorities

Some youth stated that the ban had little impact on their lives other than staying away from the place they were banned. A few youth indicated that their bans did not impact them as they ignored their bans, did not wish to return to the space, or were no longer homeless.

Emotional Impacts

Some youth spoke to being afraid of going to jail during or after their bans. A 21 year old female youth said "it scared the crap out of me. I'd never been in trouble with the law before... the thought of going to jail was super scary." A few youth were embarrassed, either that they were banned or because they felt they had not done anything wrong.

A number of youth were angry about the ban because they felt they were targeted or the ban was unfair. Youth expressed frustration when they were asked to leave an area for loitering when other patrons were not, particularly when they had purchased a food item or otherwise felt they were not doing anything differently than the other people around them.

"I was just chilling and [the security guards] were like you've been here every day for the last week. I was like oh! I didn't know that was a crime. I see school kids here every day. Why can't I just chill and use the wi-fi? Maybe it's because I'm brown. I find that racial profiling is a big thing from being banned from places. Most of my people are banned from places because they are homeless so they get profiled. It's like you are trying to eradicate a certain race from an area. It's like oppression. Just cause I'm chilling, doesn't mean I'm passed out. I'm just chilling using wi-fi in a public place." 24 year old male youth

"Sitting in food court after buying Tim Hortons, and the mall security guard asked me to leave. I stated that I had at least an hour by law as I had just bought something. The police were walking through the mall, and the mall security called them over. I was banned by the mall security for 2 years for refusing to leave, and the police banned me for life. I was not loitering." 16 year old male

A few youth noted that at the time of the ban they were angry or "didn't care I was banned" but now they do try to react differently, thinking twice before acting or no longer engaging in activities which previously led to banning. Two youth indicated the ban was a positive impact on their lives as they were removed from negative influences in the area.

What Youth Think about Their Bans Now

Youth were open to reflecting on their bans, and sharing their insights about their experiences. Youth described a range of perspectives about the bans they had received. A few youth indicated each of the following thoughts about their bans:

- The ban was justified or reasonable because of the youth's actions at the time
- They made a poor choice or were careless, and shouldn't have done what they did
- They do not care that they are banned
- The ban doesn't matter, they go back anyway
- The ban involved discrimination for ethnicity or being homeless
- They were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time and now try to avoid situations that may lead to bans
- They no longer need the resource they were banned from so it no longer matters
- The ban (and potential criminal justice system involvement) was a wakeup call for the youth to change their actions

- The ban was unfair
- They now worry they will receive tickets if they interact with authorities
- The ban is resolved now and in the past
- They appreciate that they were not ticketed when banned
- They appreciate that the authorities treated them nicely
- They just have to abide by the ban and wait for it to expire
- The ban doesn't matter as there are new staff at the location now and the youth wouldn't be recognized
- They are unsure if they are still banned and would like to know if they are
- They would appreciate clarification on some parts of their bans they are confused about
- They wish there were other places for youth to go

How Youth Experience Being Banned from Multiple Places

"It really sucks. It makes your self-esteem really low, 'cause it makes you feel like no one wants you around." 21 year old male youth

"After you get banned from more than one place, you just accept that you're "that person" – just a hood rat. You're more than a hood rat, you're a burden on society and you don't really give a fuck. You just accept that, yeah, that's who I am. Especially if you don't have anything going for you."   22 year old gender fluid youth

The most common responses from the youth on how they experience being banned from multiple locations were that it made it more difficult to meet their needs and access resources, and that they felt isolated, rejected, or embarrassed. Three youth noted that multiple bans made it harder for them to stay away from drugs, or find a place to get sober.

A few youth indicated that their bans bothered them previously but they were now off the streets so the bans no longer impacted them as much. A small number of youth also said that they did not care about being banned, or that the bans were pointless.

Youth Suggestions for Supporting Youth with Bans

The most common suggestions for supporting youth who have bans were 1) support workers, and 2) ban reviews, with almost a third of the youth who participated recommending each. Youth suggested support workers could help youth navigate

and cope with their bans, or work on preventing similar incidents in the future. Youth also suggested reviews, appeals, and looking at ways to have bans resolved, such as restorative justice measures.

Youth also suggested the following ideas to support youth after they have been banned:

- Provision of clear information about the ban
- Legal support
- Anger management, or other education related to the ban
- Avoiding drugs and alcohol
- Focus on improving yourself
- Stay away from areas you have been banned
- Another chance
- Counseling
- Take responsibility for your actions
- More activities for youth to be involved in, and more places youth can go

Youth Thoughts on Preventing Bans

"Address the reason why they are getting banned in the first place. Getting down to the root perhaps!? Like why they are drinking in the first place. It's a very easy question. The ban doesn't solve shit. It makes it worse!"   22 year old gender fluid youth

Youth recommended supports and resources for youth such as programs, counseling and activities to help prevent youth bans.   Youth suggested more places youth could hang out, do creative activities, build relationships with workers, and keep warm.   One youth suggested helping youth locate resources to meet basic needs so youth did not resort to activities such as theft or fare evasion.

Youth asked for greater understanding of their circumstances. They wanted others to know they may be trying to keep warm, have nowhere else to go, or were unable to afford necessities. A few youth suggested that bans be reserved for severe incidents only, and authorities not implement bans where unnecessary.

A few youth suggested avoiding drugs and alcohol to prevent bans, and a small number of youth suggested avoiding areas where there is a high concentration of security. One youth suggested training youth on how to interact with police officers, another suggested training security guards how to interact with youth, and a youth

advised addressing root causes such as systemic issues. Two youth suggested no longer banning people altogether.

> *"I would say make them volunteer there. It's always just like "you're banned!" Make the ban not so long. Give warnings. When the cop saw me, he was like "I don't think this is who you are". He had all this compassion or empathy almost."*
> *21 year old female youth*

➢ Professional Approach when Implementing Bans

The most common recommendation from youth on how bans could be changed was a more professional approach by authorities. While sometimes expressing empathy for authorities enforcing bans, commenting that authorities "might have had a bad day" or "deal with lot of hostile people," youth overall suggested authorities be less threatening or aggressive. A few youth suggested racial profiling and looking homeless contributed to youth being targeted to be banned, one youth explaining "because of the way I'm dressed and my skin colour they accuse me of doing things that I'm not even doing. I'm not a bad kid." Some youth described being called slurs by authorities.

> *"Not to say I didn't deserve [the ban for stealing], but it could have been handled a bit differently. I remember being very scared."   21 year old female youth*

➢ Opportunities to Review Bans

Many youth suggested opportunities to review and discuss the ban. Youth were interested in reviewing bans to review the circumstances and actions which preceded it, seek potential resolution, and discuss opportunities for restorative measures where appropriate.

Youth suggested meetings with the youth, support workers, and authorities together to talk about the ban. Youth sometimes wanted authorities to understand why the incident happened. A couple of youth specified there could be extenuating circumstances such as fetal alcohol syndrome or needing a place to stay warm. Youth also recommended ban review opportunities to review bans to see if they are "reasonable." A 24 year old male youth described "a program that evaluates your

situation, if you've been rightfully or wrongfully accused... thefts and stuff, that's different. But if you've been banned for no reason you could get some help."

Many youth suggested options such as volunteer work or community hours to work off bans. One youth explained it would give youth an opportunity to help out the people they are banned from and to also get along with authority in different ways. A number of youth suggested writing letters of apology as part of resolving bans. A few youth suggested youth could attend programs to address any issues that contributed to being banned (e.g. anger management).

"I'd go mop the McDonalds every week to work it off." 25 year old male youth

➢ Reduce Length of Bans

Many youth recommended reducing the length of bans, suggesting a few weeks or months instead of a year or more. Warning youth before banning them was also suggested.

➢ Clear Communication & Provision of Written Documentation

Youth suggested always providing paperwork for bans, including how long the ban is for and how to deal with the ban, and that the paperwork be clear and easy to understand.

➢ Consider Alternatives to Banning

Youth expressed that they felt some bans were warranted due to criminal or unsafe actions, but other bans were unnecessarily implemented. One youth suggested considering whether the activity is a threat to other people before implementing a ban. Another youth suggested training security guards to deal with issues such as loitering and sleeping without involving the police or banning.

"If it's an ongoing thing like they are sleeping and they're not doing crime, I don't think they should be treated like a criminal." 24 year old female youth

6.3. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING WITH YOUTH ON BANNING POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION?

Interviews were conducted with stakeholders for further insight on the impact of bans on youth with insecure and inadequate housing. Seven interviews were conducted with a total of 15 stakeholder participants. Four interviews were conducted individually, and three interviews had three or more participants each. All of the stakeholders who participated were service providers working with youth and/or young adults living in high-risk situations, including homelessness.

Stakeholders usually discovered youth were banned when providing referrals to youth, and youth would then disclose they could not access the service or location due to being banned. Stakeholders described mall, library, and agency bans as the most common for the youth they work with. Stakeholders reported that public transit bans were especially challenging for the youth, but remarked that transit bans seemed less common recently[3]. Being banned from agencies, malls, and the library meant fewer places the youth could keep warm in the winter, and being banned from services such as recreation centres could reduce access to positive activities for the youth. Stakeholders discussed the dilemma of sometimes needing to ban youth from a shelter to keep other clients and staff safe, but that the shelter ban may result in making the youth themselves less safe, particularly in winter.

Stakeholders felt that there were some characteristics that contributed to the likelihood a youth would be banned. These characteristics included: fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), mental health concerns, being Indigenous or a visible minority, representing gang colours, addictions, or appearing homeless. Stakeholders thought that while people generally understand FASD exists, and perhaps even understand that youth with FASD are less able to link actions and consequences, in practice people implementing bans still demonstrate a lack of understanding about why youth repeat actions they said they would no longer engage in. Some stakeholders felt there was a lack of awareness of what FASD looks like in real life, and how to support individuals with FASD.

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[3] Edmonton Transit System and the City of Edmonton have recently engaged in collaborative efforts with youth-serving agencies to improve access to transit for youth in high-risk situations (End Poverty Edmonton, 2016), which may be reflected in these stakeholder observations.

"Youth with FASD are very likely to be banned because they are likely to repeatedly commit actions. The other group that is most likely to be banned are our homeless youth, most of which are struggling with addictions or mental health. I have had many youth be banned from locations for stealing feminine hygiene products, food, and clothing. This is most likely to happen when they are unable to get vouchers from social workers quickly enough, or have exhausted resources." Service Provider

"Youth with FASD have impulse control issues and they seem to go back to the same places and they will often go back to the place they are banned. Not necessarily to cause trouble but they want to go see their friends, so they go back there or 'well, my buddy was going, and yes I knew I had a ban but I didn't think they were watching me.' It's little things like that, and they don't quite anticipate the sequence of actions that are going to occur after that." Service Provider

Consistent with youth findings, stakeholders reported that youth are often confused about their bans, described by one service provider as "most of my experiences with bans have been youth or young adults saying I don't know how long it is, I think it's forever, or they're so confused about what exactly the rules are." When service providers try to follow-up on bans to get more information for youth, organizations can not always provide a clear answer as to any conditions necessary to remove the ban, or when the ban will expire. Stakeholders described youth as being angry at their bans, particularly when they did not understand them or felt they were unjust. Some stakeholders indicated that sometimes youth were banned because they resembled other youth who had been causing problems, and this occurrence was reflected in the youth interviews as well.

A small number of stakeholders believed that a local youth-serving organization banned higher-risk youth who were more challenging to work with, and that youth internalized the rejection of having a youth-serving organization no longer work with them. One youth participant described herself as banned after being told she was "too high risk" to continue accessing services from an organization.

Service providers described that abiding by bans could sometimes be very challenging for youth. One service provider provided an example of a youth who was banned from an area of the city for a number of years, and that the youth kept returning to the area because:

"...that was his home. He was very homeless and that was his safe space. That was where he felt comfortable. That was where his friends were. That was where he would sleep rough and know that he would be protected by the people around him...so he'd keep building up more and more charges by being in areas where he was banned because that was essentially his safe place because the system had completely failed him when it came to housing." Service Provider

Two stakeholders identified that bans could, on rare occasions, be positive for the youth, by removing youth from areas which were a bad influence, or by modeling boundaries.

Stakeholders were overall unaware of any current best practices or guidelines to develop banning policies, and all agreed guidelines would be helpful. Some stakeholders advised that guidelines could help bans be less subjective or reactive, while allowing some flexibility for individual circumstances. One stakeholder recommended organizations work with youth to develop values and guidelines which could inform policy.

Social Exclusion

Stakeholders identified restricted access to services and supports as a significant impact of bans for youth, and that youth with limited places to spend time are more vulnerable to exploitation. Overall stakeholders discussed that youth often have few safe places they are welcome to spend time in.

"I think half of the problem we run into with our youth comes a feeling of 'us versus them' a lot of the time, because there's very little public space for them to use. 'Where do we hang out? Wherever we go, we are in trouble.'" Service Provider

"I think what really stands out to me in terms of impact is the larger impact of what we take away about our own worth in those moments…. we already say in so many ways 'you don't belong, not here, don't sit here', but when we take a picture of you or write a thing, or whatever that looks like-- we just push you out and say 'you are not welcome here, don't come back', that's reinforcing what our society is saying all the time and it's a dangerous message." Service Provider

Stakeholders reported that the youth they work with are often highly visible and closely monitored by authorities in public spaces, especially youth who are Indigenous, visible minorities, dress in an urban style, or look visibly homeless. One

stakeholder shared a story of two youth who were waiting for a medical clinic to open and were asked by the police to leave the area or they would be ticketed for loitering. Stakeholders felt that being closely monitored or asked to leave areas fostered a sense of rejection and not belonging for the youth. One stakeholder asserted that a ban can have a profound impact for youth who have been trying to make positive changes in their life, and can result in youth feeling like no matter how hard they try, it is not good enough.

Stakeholder participants all believed the previous experiences youth had with authorities, histories of trauma, and FASD impacted how youth reacted when confronted by authorities. Stakeholders reported that being closely monitored resulted in youth feeling harassed and more likely to react poorly. One stakeholder explained "They follow the kids around, the kids get agitated, and it explodes almost instantly. Then they get banned for getting in a fight with the security officer."

> *"You can just see the kids who've been put through the wringer in life, you can just see that they've had such a hard time and it's like they are expecting the worst. You can just see it- "you hate me. Just say it already. Everywhere hates me. Nowhere wants me" and they want to push you away before you push them away." Service Provider*

> *"I've had several of the black youth that I work with complain that they feel targeted as well, and same with the Aboriginal youth, they feel like they are being followed and watched and according to some of them, they will say they get ticketed for everything, whereas other people get away with things." Service Provider*

Stakeholders suggested that more training and implementation of practices such as trauma-informed practice and a deeper understanding of FASD could help prevent incidents from escalating.

STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS:

➢ Meet Basic Needs to Prevent Bans

Stakeholders identified that having basic needs unmet significantly contributed to youth being banned and shared examples of youth being charged for shoplifting food or feminine hygiene products. Lack of mental health and addictions support were also believed to contribute to youth being banned as they impact youth decision-making and behaviour. Lastly, lack of housing means youth do not have

residences to keep safe and spend time in, so they are more likely to be spending time in spaces where they may be unsafe or unwelcome.

➢ Implement De-Escalation Techniques and Trauma-Informed Practices

Stakeholders recommended trauma informed practice and de-escalation techniques when interacting with youth in high-risk situations. Stakeholders recommended efforts to retain the dignity of the person throughout the banning process to prevent escalation.

➢ Ban Only for Serious Offences, and as a Last Resort

Stakeholders recommended bans from youth-serving organizations should be reserved for serious offenses, such as threats, violence, property damage, and for some organizations drug or alcohol use.

➢ Shorten Ban Lengths

Stakeholders expressed that most bans were implemented for too long, particularly for youth who are still growing and learning.

➢ Better Ban Communication

Stakeholders recommended providing written documentation for bans, particularly so youth or advocates could later follow up regarding the ban. Consistent, clear communication between internal staff was recommended, as stakeholders described times they unsuccessfully sought information about a youth's ban. Sharing information about the ban to other organizations working at the same site was also recommended.

When bans were necessary stakeholders recommended youth services ask youth to leave for the day, and return the next day when the situation had de-escalated to discuss the incident, rather than implementing the ban immediately. They felt this allowed the staff time to process the incident and the youth time to cool down, feeling that the addition of a ban to a stressful moment would further escalate and stress youth. Stakeholders recommended team decision making on bans, but that the decision be made promptly. For example, if a youth was asked to leave for the day, the situation would be reviewed with colleagues and coworkers and addressed with the youth the following day. Stakeholders felt this would make bans fairer and less subjective.

Stakeholders also recommended youth-serving agencies provide opportunities to process the bans with youth, explaining that when youth are struggling they may exhibit more extreme behaviours but having the opportunity to discuss the incident afterwards offers a chance to learn from each other and move forward in a more positive direction. Addressing the incident also provides a chance to address the reasons for the behaviour, versus having the behaviour be an ongoing issue.

> *"People resist, people get violent, people yell and kick and scream, and all of that can happen, but I think that will happen a lot less if we treat people in a kind and compassionate way and we communicate, and we be honest, and we be clear." Service Provider*

➢ Plan for Safety and Provision of Services

Safety planning for both the youth and support workers was discussed by the stakeholders. If youth are banned from services they depend on for their needs safety planning can be critical to ensure the youth's needs are met. Safety planning was also utilized by stakeholders to keep themselves and other clients safe when banning was necessary. Stakeholders recommended modified provision of services for youth after a ban, wherever possible. Modified forms of service delivery included: meeting off-site, staff accompaniment through the building to access service providers, working with other agencies to ensure needs are met, providing food or transit tickets for youth who could not stay at the service, connecting with youth through social media, and mobile services. Programming such as life skills programming was identified as a current gap in services that could potentially address some of the issues that may result in bans.

➢ Ban Review and Resolution

Ban reviews were recommended by stakeholders. Many stakeholders recommended restorative justice measures as a way for the youth to learn from the situation and make changes moving forward. One stakeholder suggested referring youth to restorative justice alternatives before matters escalate to the court system or as early intervention for younger youth. Restorative justice measures were also identified as a way to engage youth with lower cognitive capacity. Stakeholders advised any measures required for youth to address their bans be realistic and attainable by youth. For example, writing a letter demonstrating self-awareness and intention for change in the future may be challenging for lower-functioning youth, or may create an impression that the issue is resolved when the youth may be likely to repeat the behaviour again in the near future. Stakeholders also cautioned that

having youth attempt to make amends is not always well-received by an organization, and having a support worker with the youth through the process was recommended. Stakeholders also advised that restorative measures may not be appropriate if bans were unwarranted.

"For youth who may be considered nuisance doing something like a circle with the peace officers and the youth and their supports might be a very good thing because it might help get to the problem in the first place. Why does this youth keep heading back to this place? ....In terms of the peace officers or EPS, you are a person doing your job. You have a life and a family outside of that job, and you may not want to have to do this, but you also have a mandate to do certain things, right? I think it gives a level of understanding that issuing a ticket and going to court does not." Service Provider

7. DISCUSSION

This study explored local policies related to banning, the ban experiences of youth without secure and adequate housing, and perspectives on bans from both youth and stakeholders. Local policies indicate that drug or alcohol use, violence, property damage, theft, trespassing or loitering may result in bans, and this was reflected in the experiences of the youth. Local policies included in the environmental scan suggest more opportunities to review and address bans than perceived by youth and stakeholders, as both groups recommended greater opportunities for ban reviews.

Being banned impacted youth beyond being unable to access a location. Being banned from the grounds of a post-secondary educational institution could also mean being unable to access a major transit centre, or being banned from a drop-in centre could mean losing a regular source of food. Being banned from multiple locations intensified youths' feelings of rejection and unworthiness. Youth described feeling they were banned for life in situations where conditions had to be met to remove the ban. This may reflect that the conditions do not feel attainable by the youth, feeling they are unwelcome there regardless, that not pursuing a removal of the ban offers youth some control over the situation, or other reasoning. Over half of the bans were for a year or more, an extensive length of time for a youth or young adult who may not have housing and consequently depends on public services to meet their needs.

Youth described some confusion about their bans, and stakeholders echoed an interest in greater provision of information and transparency. A number of factors may contribute to the confusion: use of discretion by the person implementing the ban and resulting differences in practice, use of verbal communication and lack of documentation, and youth may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the incident. Stakeholders agreed the incidents are also largely stressful for the youth, and therefore it may be more difficult for youth to retain detailed information from the event. As well, an incident involving multiple systems of enforcement (such as a staff member, a police officer, and later court), may result in different ban conditions.

Given the above, how to best communicate bans remains a challenge. Written documentation was recommended by both youth and service providers, but may be difficult for youth without secure housing to store, or they may dispose of the documentation. During the interviews youth occasionally commented they wished they knew more about their bans- if the ban was still in place, more about why they were banned, or where to inquire about the ban. Further consideration of how to best communicate bans to youth is recommended, including options such as text or email.

Youth and stakeholders shared a number of challenges they believed contributed to youth being banned. Without homes, youth seek places to spend time, meet their needs, and have fun, especially when shelters and drop-in organizations are not open. Stakeholders reported that malls and libraries offer spaces that are warm, have Wi-Fi, are open longer hours, and are less stigmatizing to access. The recent opening of a day shelter in Edmonton offers one of the only spaces where people experiencing homelessness can sleep during the day (Hampshire, 2016a), which can be vital for people who may not have a safe place to sleep at night.

There were times youth were asked to leave a property and received ticket(s) only when they later returned. Focusing on how to help youth abide by their bans (or have their bans reassessed) may help prevent youth from receiving multiple trespassing tickets, which they are largely unable to pay. Approaches may include finding out if a ban is still in place, supporting youth to make alternate plans so they do not break their ban, or inquiring about potential exceptions (such as permission to ride a specific transit route to attend school and mandatory appointments).

Addictions can be the result of coping with homelessness and associated victimizations (Gulliver & Campney, 2015; Bender et al. 2015), and drugs or alcohol were the most common characteristic noted by youth participants during incidents

resulting in bans (using, under the influence of, intending to sell, or possession of). Youth without housing are accordingly more likely to use substances in public where they may face consequences including banned and ticketed, and stakeholders reported a lack of access to addictions treatment. Violence or potential violence resulted in some youth being banned as well, and may result in youth being banned from critical services such as shelters. Youth in high-risk situations, or with insecure or inadequate housing, are likely to have experienced trauma (Gaetz, 2014; Bender, 2014) which can impair cognitive development and decision-making (Gaetz, 2014). Mental health concerns are also more prevalent for youth in high-risk situations, including homelessness (Kidd, 2013), and FASD was noted by the stakeholders as a significant contributor to youth receiving bans.

Many youth were banned for theft-related reasons. While youth were sometimes embarrassed they were caught stealing, other youth considered theft a means of survival as they were homeless. A now-housed youth explained "I used to steal all the time back then but now I have no reason to." Helping youth meet needs such as food and housing protects their human rights (United Nations, 1966; United Nations, 1989), and may prevent bans, improve quality of life, and require fewer resources from the justice system.

Safety concerns play a fundamental role in banning. Youth are sometimes banned to keep other people in the area safe, but when youth have few places to stay safe themselves they are more vulnerable to harm and exploitation (Gaetz, 2004). Multiple bans further restrict places youth can access, and bans can impact sense of physical security when people are banned from places they know they can sleep relatively safely (Herbert & Beckett, 2010). Safety planning with the youth, where possible, can be a vital component of bans. As described by some stakeholders, inter-agency planning to meet youth needs may help provide services for youth who are banned from services or places they depend on to meet their needs. Ban modifications can help meet needs where safety is a concern (e.g. one youth participant was accompanied by staff into a banned location to receive medication). Restorative justice measures were mentioned by both youth and stakeholders and may be one approach to working with youth who have received bans to address the ban and prevent future occurrences. Working with youth to understand their bans and make efforts to address underlying issues can be learning opportunities for youth, and prevent future bans. Further discussion on potential approaches to help meet the needs of youth who demonstrate behaviours which restrict their access to essential services such as shelters is encouraged.

Feeling they were profiled was a source of frustration for the youth. Youth felt they were targeted by authorities for attention due to their appearance, and that being a visual minority or appearing homeless meant close monitoring. Stakeholders felt Indigenous youth and homeless youth were scrutinized as well, with less tolerance for negative behaviours compared to the general youth population. Recent events in Edmonton have generated dialogue on profiling and bans (Hampshire, 2016b; CBC News, 2015), with one business responding with further staff training (Ellwand, 2015). Alberta Justice has developed a working group to address concerns of profiling and discrimination (Huncar, 2016) and Edmonton Police Service completed an internal review on their street check policy in 2015 (Huncar, 2015)

Both youth and stakeholders identified Indigenous youth as more likely to be profiled or targeted for bans. A history including colonization and residential schools has led to an over-representation of Indigenous persons in populations experiencing poverty and homelessness (Menzies 2009; Johnson, 2013). Recognizing that Indigenous youth may be more likely to be banned due to circumstances related to colonization, historical trauma, discrimination, and poverty, there is an opportunity to address bans and any profiling of Indigenous youth as part of reconciliation. Addressing bans offers an opportunity for organizations to engage in reconciliation on a personal level, creating policies and practices which are non-discriminatory, and incorporate Indigenous education and training as called for by Action 92.3 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2012) and End Poverty Edmonton Goal 2, Action 12 (End Poverty Edmonton, 2016).

Over previous years, some organizations within Edmonton have demonstrated a shift from more punitive measures towards supporting patrons who may be in high-risk situations or experiencing homelessness. Local initiatives include outreach workers at Edmonton Public Library locations, and social workers in City of Edmonton recreation centres. Representatives from organizations including the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Commission, Edmonton Public School Board, and Edmonton Transit System have engaged in training opportunities through iHuman Youth Society's Uncensored, where youth educate service providers on how to engage positively with youth in high-risk situations. This approach of connecting with citizens in challenging situations can help address issues which may result in bans, and provide referrals to other supportive services to meet needs.

A very small number of youth and stakeholders noted that a ban may potentially be a positive influence for a youth. One youth explained "going there, I do tend to get

into trouble. I needed a break from there anyway." Two stakeholders noted that a ban could remove youth from an area with negative influences, or model boundary-setting.

This small exploratory study has a number of limitations. Greater participation in the environmental scan would offer a broader overview of local policies. While the intent of the research was to deepen understanding, there was some reluctance to share policy information from a number of organizations, which may indicate discomfort risking criticism or publicity. Regardless of whether policy information is shared publicly, the authors encourage careful consideration of policies and practices related to banning which impact youth without secure and adequate housing. Other limitations include youth recruitment from youth-serving organizations through convenience sampling, and participant opinions may differ from youth not connected to services. The participants in the stakeholder interviews were all service providers selected for their insight as to how bans impact youth, and perspectives of other stakeholders (such as law enforcement) are not included in the in-depth interview results. As the impact of being banned on individuals is largely unexplored, there are many opportunities for further research, including the perspectives of other stakeholders, or older persons experiencing homelessness. A larger study with quantitative methodology may identify broader trends which could be generalized to larger populations.

8. CONCLUSION

The impact of personal bans on persons experiencing homelessness has largely been unexplored. This study indicates youth without secure or adequate housing have few places they are welcome to spend time in, and bans make it more difficult for youth to meet their needs. Challenges such as trauma, addictions, mental health and lack of resources for basic needs contributed to the likelihood of youth being banned. Youth and stakeholders both asked for greater consideration of the circumstances of the youth. Development of banning guidelines may facilitate careful consideration of policies and procedures so bans are reasonable and the rights and needs of youth are protected.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Collaborative efforts involving youth and stakeholders to develop banning guidelines or protocol** for deciding whether and how to implement a ban. The protocol may include guidelines for:

    1.1. **Circumstances** which require banning
    1.2. **Ban length**
    1.3. **Documenting and communicating bans** - including documentation promptly provided to the youth, with contact information to inquire about bans and when they expire.
    1.4. **Safety planning & meeting youth needs** – may include modified provision of services to meet youth needs after a ban (e.g. outreach services or onsite staff accompaniment), an inter-agency response to provide services for youth with multiple or frequent bans, or provision of services such as contacting 24/7 Crisis Diversion to assist youth being asked to leave private property but aren't sure where else they can go
    1.5. **Ban review procedures** – procedures to review, appeal, or resolve bans, using a restorative justice approach where appropriate
    1.6. **Consideration of extreme circumstances** - procedures for situations such as extreme temperatures or when a ban results in homelessness
    1.7. **Referrals** to address issues contributing to bans
    1.8. **Trauma-informed training and practices**, including de-escalation, and practices which reduce or eliminate any stigmatization and discrimination

2. **Funding for youth-serving agencies** to be open extended hours to provide safer spaces and resources for youth, or staggering hours between agencies.

3. **Increased access to housing, basic needs resources, mental health services, and addictions treatment** to protect youth rights and meet the needs of youth.

4. **Agencies or organizations which implement banning incorporate training and practices** on de-escalation, and social issues such as poverty, criminalization, stigmatization, and FASD.

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11. APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are the behaviours, actions and situations that may result in banning (e.g. abusive language, sleeping, intoxication)?
2. How long are bans typically implemented for? What are the determinants of ban length?
3. Who communicates the ban to the youth? E.g. Staff, security guards, bylaw officers, police officers? How are the bans communicated?
4. Do banning practices differ for youth depending on their age (e.g. youth over or under 18 years of age)?
5. Are there any changes in practice for youth who may be known to have special needs such as FASD or cognitive delays?
6. Are any referrals provided to the youth when they are banned? (For example, is a youth who is banned for intoxication provided with addictions treatment referrals?)
7. Are warm-handoffs (where the youth is referred to a support service they have an existing relationship with) provided in any situations?
8. Is there an appeals process, or a procedure in place for youth to address their bans (for example, for youth who have made significant changes in their lives and are trying to maintain positive changes)? Is there someone they could talk to about their bans, accompanied by a youth worker
9. Does your building or organization have Agent Status?
10. We would like to share information about local policies so youth workers can help youth understand their bans. With your participation and permission, your organization will be acknowledged as supporting and contributing to our research project, and your policies will be noted. Do we have your permission to share your organization's name and policies related to bans? For example, this may be included in results in a table format for youth workers to reference.
11. We will be interviewing a few stakeholders more in-depth about their perspectives and experiences when it comes to banning. Would you be willing to participate in an interview on this topic?

YOUTH MAPPING EXERCISE & INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you please share with me the places you have been banned by placing stickers on this map? We'll go through each place one at a time.
   a. Why were you banned from this place? *(Probe: what happened?)*
   b. How long were/are you banned for?
   c. How were you told you were banned?
   d. What was the impact of the ban on your life? *(Probes: how did it change your actions? How did it make you feel?)*
   e. What are your thoughts on this ban now?
   f. What are your thoughts on the idea of reconciliation options? *(Probes: ways to resolve bans, such as being able to meet to discuss or appeal a ban, or being able to work off a ban? Do you have other ideas to resolve bans after a youth has been banned?)*
2. *What do you think could be done to help youth after they are banned?*
3. What do you think could be done to help youth not get bans?
4. When it comes to being banned from places, how do you think things could be done better? *(Probes: what would you recommend to service providers and people who enforce bans? What would you like to see done differently?)*

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you please tell me about how bans impact the youth you work with?
2. How do you usually find out that youth have bans?
3. What types of bans are most common amongst the youth you work with?
4. Do you think there are any characteristics shared by youth who are more likely to be banned?
5. What changes, if any, would you like to see to local banning policies?
6. If a youth needed to be banned, what "best practices" for banning would you recommend?
7. Our earlier research suggests some youth either do not understand their bans correctly, or the bans are communicated incorrectly. What are your thoughts on this? What are your recommendations to help youth better understand their bans?
8. Would you be in favour of potential reconciliation options for youth who are banned? *(Probes: Why or why not? Do you have suggestions or recommendations for how youth and organizations could reconcile bans?)*

APPENDIX B: COLLATED MAPS OF BAN LOCATIONS
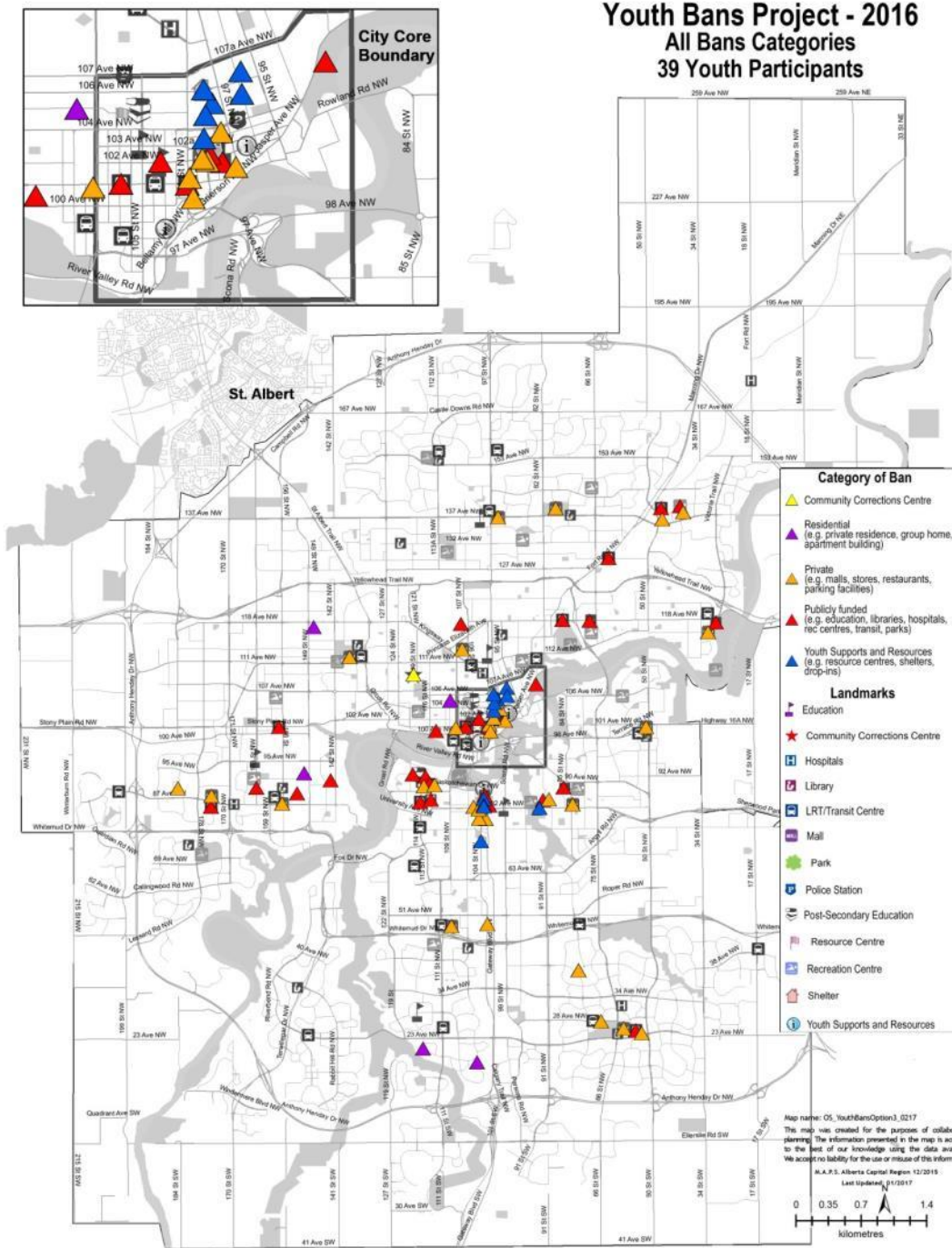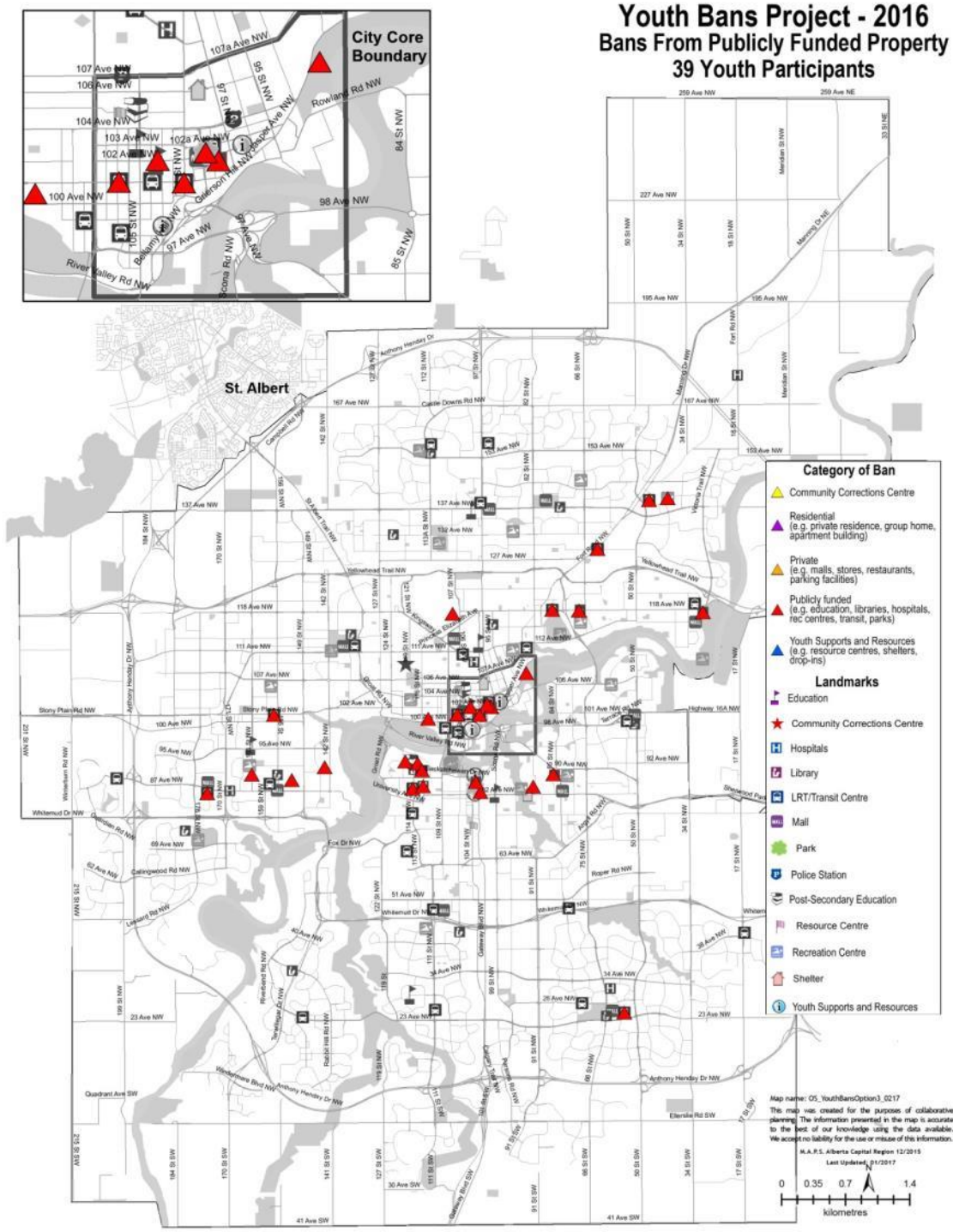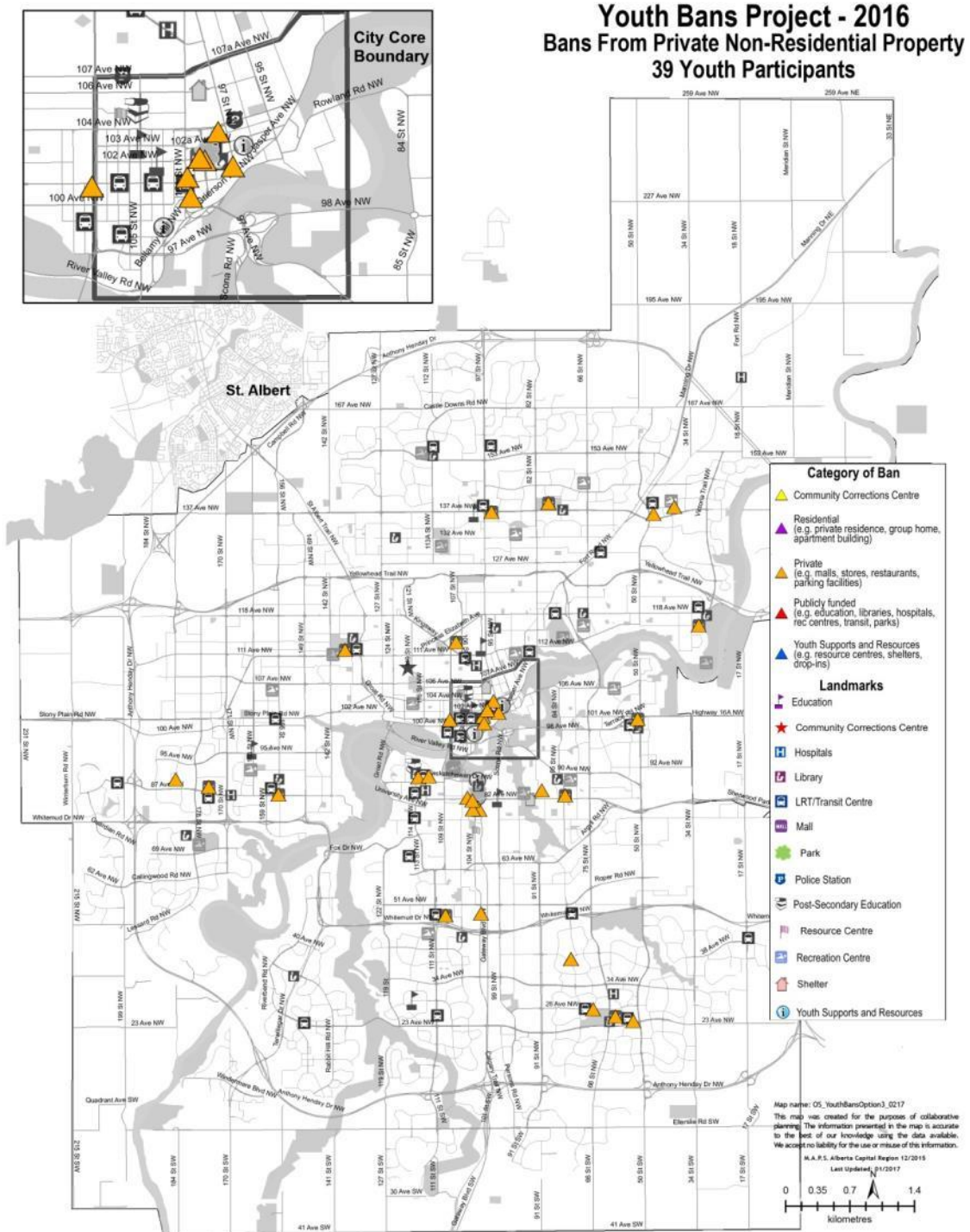
APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF BANNING NOTIFICATION